ISSN: 1595-4943

Sapientia

JOURNAL OF PHILOSOPHY

VOL. 22, NO. 1, 2026



A Publication of the Department of Philosophy, University of Uyo

SAPIENTIA

JOURNAL OF PHILOSOPHY
VOLUME 22 NO. 1. 2026
ISSN: 1595-4943

A Publication of the Department of Philosophy
University of Uyo

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Charges:

- Vetting charge - - N5,000.00
- Page charge - - N25,000.00

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Printed by:
Uniuyo Printing Press and Digital Ltd
University of Uyo
Nwaniba Road, Uyo,
Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria.
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THE DIALOGICS OF LEGAL METHOD: TOWARDS A DIALOGICAL RECONSTRUCTION OF LEGAL REASONING, INTERPRETATION AND ADJUDICATION

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Abstract

Traditionally, legal method has been presented through competing models of legal reasoning such as formalism which emphasizes rules and deduction; legal positivism which stresses the identification of valid legal rules; natural law theory which emphasizes morality and justice; interpretivism which highlights principles and constructive interpretation; and critical approaches which expose the influence of power, history, ideology and social context on legal judgment. These approaches or models have generated substantial jurisprudential insight, although they often treat legal reasoning as if it were fundamentally a monological activity in which the legal interpreter identifies, discovers, applies or constructs a legal answer. In this article, attempt is made to advance a dialogical reconstruction of legal method. The paper argues that legal reasoning is best understood not as a solitary intellectual operation but as a structured dialogue among legal rules, principles, precedents, institutional practices, competing interpretations, moral claims, social expectations and the parties affected by legal decisions. Leaning particularly upon the philosophies of H.L.A. Hart, Ronald Dworkin, Lon L. Fuller, Hans-Georg Gadamer and Jürgen Habermas, this article demonstrates that the apparent opposition between positivism, interpretivism and deliberative theories can be reconceived through dialogics. Hart provides an account of institutional dialogue through primary and secondary rules; Dworkin reveals the dialogical character of interpretation through principles, integrity and constructive justification; Fuller establishes the reciprocal relationship between lawgiver and legal subject; Gadamer explains interpretation as a dialogical encounter between text and interpreter; and Habermas connects legal validity with communicative rationality and democratic discourse. This article further argues that dialogical legal method is particularly significant in plural and postcolonial legal systems such as Nigeria, where statutory law, constitutional norms, customary law, religious values, judicial precedent and international human rights norms frequently interact. This article concludes that the dialogics of legal method offers a more realistic, inclusive and normatively defensible account of contemporary jurisprudence.

Keywords: Adjudication; Dialogics; Dworkin; Habermas; Hart; Jurisprudence; legal method; legal reasoning; legal interpretation; Nigeria.

Introduction

In my Ph.D Dissertation titled 'The Dialogics of Legal Method in the Philosophies of Law of H.L.A. Hart and Ronald Dworkin', which was submitted to the Department of Philosophy, Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka, in 2018, and which was also a follow-up of my Master Degree thesis titled 'Legal Reasoning in Neil MacCormick's Philosophy of Law' submitted to the Department of Philosophy, University of Nigeria, Nsukka in 2013, I noted that one of the critical problems in philosophy of law for two decades was the clash between Hart's views and those of his student and successor at Oxford University Ronald Dworkin. While Hart's account of law, as presented in those two works, is purely rule-based, Dworkin focuses on moral principles and policies as standards that make up what law is. While many seem to see Hart-Dworkin debate as confrontational, I have tried to differ by seeing their works as a form of 'legal dialogue' that could be necessary for understanding the concept of law, legal reasoning, interpretation and adjudication.

In the present work, I have chosen to advance the argument further. The aim is to arrive at a dialogical reconstruction of legal reasoning, interpretation and adjudication in law. At a time when the general public appear to have lost confidence in the legal system; when it appears that the poor man on the streets of Nigeria is reluctant to seek justice in court for fear that he/she may not succeed because it is assumed that the scale of justice tilts to the highest bidder, and when the court is replete with conflicting judgments; it has become necessary to reconstruct and present the nature of legal method from a dialogical perspective rather than from a confrontational angle where judges and lawyers are seen to be in a legal battle between one another. This is what we have done here by moving beyond Hart-Dworkin debate to incorporating the views of Lon L. Fuller, Hans-Georg Gadamer and Jürgen Habermas into the race.

The question of legal method occupies a central position in jurisprudence because every legal system requires some account of how legal actors move from legal texts, rules, precedents and facts to authoritative conclusions. The question then, is: how should law be interpreted and applied? Behind it, however, lies a deeper jurisprudential problem concerning the nature of law itself. If law is principally a system of rules, as Hart has argued, legal method may appear to consist largely in identifying applicable rules and applying them to facts. But if law includes moral principles as Dworkin thinks, then interpretation becomes more evaluative. On the other hand, if law is understood as an institutional practice as we have seen in Lon Fuller, then legal reasoning becomes embedded in social and political structures. Also, if law is conceived as a communicative practice as Georg Gadamer and Jürgen Habermas have portrayed, then legal method necessarily involves dialogue.

Between Law as it is and Law as it Ought to be

Classical legal positivism sought to distinguish questions concerning what the law is from questions concerning what the law ought to be. Hart's account of law as a union of primary and secondary rules represents one of the most influential attempts to explain the institutional structure within which legal reasoning occurs (Hart, 2012). The third edition of The Concept of Law, which incorporates Hart's postscript and Leslie Green's introduction, remains a foundational text in contemporary jurisprudence.

Ronald Dworkin's interpretivism challenged the sufficiency of a rule-centred account. In Taking Rights Seriously and Law's Empire, he argued that legal reasoning cannot be reduced to identifying rules because principles also form part of legal practice. The adjudicator,

particularly in hard cases, must interpret legal practice in a way that gives it the best moral and institutional justification (Dworkin, 1977, 1986).

John Fuller, from a different theoretical position, argued that law contains an "inner morality" arising from the requirements of legality itself (Fuller, 1969). Also, Gadamer's philosophical hermeneutics further challenges the assumption that interpretation is a mechanical recovery of pre-existing meaning. Interpretation involves an encounter between interpreter and text in which meaning emerges through historically situated understanding (Gadamer, 2004). Habermas, meanwhile, situates law within communicative rationality and democratic discourse. His Between Facts and Norms develops a theory connecting law, legitimacy, rights, democracy and communicative action.

These traditions appear to disagree profoundly. However, the disagreement conceals a common problem which is: how does legal meaning emerge from the interaction of competing claims to legal authority? This article proposes that the answer can be approached through the concept of dialogics. Dialogics differs from dialogue in a narrow conversational sense. It refers to a structural conception of legal reasoning in which legal meaning is generated, tested and justified through interaction among different normative and institutional voices. These voices include legislation, precedent, constitutional principles, judicial reasoning, advocacy, administrative interpretation, customary norms, international law, moral values and the experiences of affected communities. According to Mikhail Bakhtin (1981 and Ike Odimegwu (2015), it is a process of evolving a new meaning or reality out of an existing one by means of rejoining and conjoining. In dialogical process, new ideas are developed from existing ones by means of communicative interaction, relationship and involvement rather than counteraction, disagreement or refutation.

Based on the above framework, this article therefore advances the thesis that legal method is inherently dialogical because law acquires practical meaning through a continuing interaction between text and interpreter, rule and principle, precedent and present circumstances, institution and citizen, majority and minority, and legal authority and claims of justice. Recent scholarship provides support for reconsidering adjudication in precisely these terms. Etxabe's account of a dialogical model of human-rights adjudication argues that contemporary adjudication is constituted by interaction among multiple voices, normative perspectives and institutional standpoints rather than by a self-contained judicial logic. Similarly, Encinas Duarte's recent work identifies "dialogic and procedural turns" in contemporary legal reasoning.

The contribution of this article is therefore threefold. First, it reconceptualizes legal method as dialogical rather than merely interpretive or deductive. Second, it reconstructs the apparent opposition between Hart, Dworkin, Fuller, Gadamer and Habermas as different dimensions of a broader dialogical theory. Third, it demonstrates the relevance of this conception for plural legal systems, with particular attention to Nigeria.

Conceptualizing Legal Method

Legal method concerns the procedures, principles and modes of reasoning through which legal actors determine the meaning, relevance and application of law. It encompasses statutory interpretation, constitutional interpretation, precedent, analogy, legal classification, purposive reasoning, textual reasoning, balancing, principled reasoning and argumentation. Traditional accounts have frequently treated these methods as competing techniques. Formalism privileges textual fidelity and deductive reasoning. Realism emphasizes judicial choice and institutional context. Positivism emphasizes legally recognized sources. Natural law

connects legality with morality. Interpretivism emphasizes principles and constructive interpretation. The problem with treating these as isolated methodologies is that actual legal reasoning rarely conforms exclusively to one method.

A judge interpreting a constitutional provision may begin with the text, examine precedent, consider constitutional structure, evaluate competing principles, consider historical context, assess consequences and ultimately justify a conclusion in terms of constitutional values. Legal reasoning is therefore neither purely deductive nor purely moral. It is an interaction. Hence the concept of dialogics captures this interaction.

Dialogics may be distinguished from monological legal method. Bakhtin contrasts the dialogic and the monologic work of literature. A monological method assumes that legal meaning can ultimately be established from a single authoritative source or method. A dialogical method assumes that legal meaning is tested through confrontation and interaction among competing reasons. This does not mean that every legal answer is endlessly negotiable. Dialogicality is compatible with legal authority. Indeed, legal dialogue occurs within institutional constraints. Courts are constrained by constitutions, statutes and precedents; lawyers are constrained by rules of professional practice; administrative agencies operate within statutory mandates. Thus, dialogics should not be confused with legal relativism.

The central proposition that this paper wants to advance is that legal authority is strengthened, rather than weakened, when legal conclusions emerge from publicly intelligible engagement with competing legal reasons. This is particularly important in hard cases, where legal texts do not mechanically determine outcomes. Contemporary research on legal methodology continues to identify the problem of explaining how specifically legal decisions can remain legally grounded when conventional sources appear indeterminate.

From Monological to Dialogical Legal Reasoning

The history of jurisprudence can be interpreted partly as a movement away from confidence in a single method of legal reasoning. Classical formalism imagined adjudication as something approaching mechanical deduction. The judge receives a general legal rule and subsumes the facts beneath it. The conclusion follows from the premises. The weakness of this model becomes evident when legal rules are ambiguous, conflicting or incomplete.

Legal realism responded by emphasizing the role of judicial discretion, social interests and institutional behaviour. Yet realism can generate another difficulty: if judicial decision-making is primarily a matter of choice, what distinguishes legal reasoning from political preference? H.L.A. Hart attempted to occupy an intermediate position. His distinction between the core and penumbra of legal meaning acknowledged that language has an open texture. In hard cases, judges may exercise discretion because existing law does not uniquely determine the result (Hart, 2012). Ronald Dworkin, on the other hand, rejected the idea that such cases should ordinarily be understood as gaps in law. Legal principles, he argued, provide reasons that can guide judicial judgment even where no determinate rule exists (Dworkin, 1977).

At this juncture, the dialogical approach reframes the disagreement. Hence the crucial question becomes not whether rules or principles should exclusively govern adjudication, but how rules, principles, precedents and competing interpretations interact within legal reasoning. A legal argument is therefore not merely: Rule → Facts → Conclusion but rather: Text → Interpretation → Counter-interpretation → Principle → Precedent → Institutional response → Justification → Decision → Subsequent dialogue. This shows that the decision itself becomes a contribution to an ongoing legal conversation. This conception is consistent with research into procedural models of legal reasoning, which rejects the assumption that legal conclusions

are simply true or false independently of the reasoning process through which they are produced.

Hart and the Institutional Foundations of Legal Dialogue

H.L.A. Hart's jurisprudence is often presented as an account of law's rule structure, but it also contains resources for a dialogical theory. The distinction between primary and secondary rules is central. Primary rules impose obligations, while secondary rules regulate the creation, modification and identification of primary rules (Hart, 2012). For him, the rule of recognition is especially significant because it represents a shared social practice among officials concerning the criteria of legal validity.

However, from a dialogical perspective, the rule of recognition can be understood as institutionalized agreement concerning how legal claims are to be evaluated. This does not mean that Hart's positivism is itself a theory of dialogue. Rather, it provides the institutional infrastructure within which dialogue becomes legally meaningful. Judges do not engage in an unrestricted philosophical conversation. Their arguments must be recognizable as legal arguments because they occur within a system of institutional rules.

The dialogical interpretation of Hart therefore emphasizes three dimensions. First, law involves institutional recognition. Second, legal interpretation involves reasoned disagreement. Third, legal development involves institutional response. A judicial decision may reinterpret an earlier precedent. A legislature may respond to judicial interpretation. Another court may distinguish or reject the reasoning. Legal scholars may criticize the decision. Subsequent courts may incorporate elements of the reasoning into new doctrine. The legal system therefore resembles a continuing institutional conversation. Hart's model helps explain why this conversation is not arbitrary: it is structured by secondary rules.

Dworkin and the Dialogical Character of Interpretation

Ronald Dworkin provides an even more explicit foundation for dialogical legal method. His distinction between rules and principles demonstrates that legal reasoning involves different types of normative reasons. Rules ordinarily operate in an all-or-nothing manner, whereas principles possess weight and may compete with other principles (Dworkin, 1977). The famous “chain novel” analogy in Law's Empire is particularly important for the present argument. Judges inherit an existing legal practice but must interpret it in a manner that both fits its history and provides the best justification for it (Dworkin, 1986). This is fundamentally dialogical.

The judge does not begin from nothing. The present interpreter is responding to previous legislative and judicial voices. At the same time, the judge addresses future legal actors who will inherit the decision. Law therefore has a temporal dialogue: that is to say that past legal practice equals to present interpretation that leads to future legal development. Also, Dworkin's theory of integrity reinforces this idea. Legal interpretation seeks coherence across the institutional history of law while giving history its best moral justification. The dialogical theory extends Dworkin by arguing that interpretation is not only a relationship between present judges and past legal materials. It also involves interaction among competing institutional perspectives.

The advocate presents one interpretation. The opposing advocate presents another. The judge evaluates both. Minority judgments may challenge the majority. Legislatures may subsequently amend the law. Later courts may revisit the original judgment. From this dialogical interaction, the meaning of law therefore emerges through structured disagreement.

Recent work on separate judicial opinions provides a particularly useful contemporary illustration. Research into dialogical reasoning in judicial opinions shows how minority judges may rebut majority reasoning and introduce alternative legal arguments, thereby contributing to pluralism within judicial discourse.

Lon Fuller and the Reciprocity of Legality

Lon Fuller offers another dimension of dialogical legal method. Fuller's conception of the "inner morality of law" identifies requirements such as generality, promulgation, clarity, consistency, prospectivity and congruence between official action and declared rules (Fuller, 1969). The deeper significance of Fuller's theory is relational. For him, law presupposes communication between legal authority and legal subjects. A legal rule cannot successfully guide conduct if citizens cannot understand it. A government cannot reasonably expect obedience to rules that are secret, contradictory or constantly changing. Legality therefore creates a reciprocal relationship. Also, the state communicates expectations through law, while citizens organize their conduct in response. Government officials are consequently also constrained by the legal rules they administer.

The relationship is dialogical because law is not merely an instrument through which the state commands subjects. It is a communicative structure through which public authority and citizens coordinate conduct. This provides an important corrective to purely positivist accounts. Validity cannot be reduced entirely to formal pedigree because the functioning of legality depends upon communicative conditions. Thus, Fuller's contribution to dialogical legal method can therefore be summarized as follows: legality is possible only where law communicates intelligible reasons to those whom it governs.

Gadamer and the Hermeneutics of Legal Understanding

The dialogical conception becomes more philosophically sophisticated through Gadamer's hermeneutics. Gadamer rejects the idea that interpretation consists simply in extracting a fixed meaning from an object. Understanding occurs through a historically situated encounter between interpreter and text (Gadamer, 2004). This is particularly relevant to legal interpretation. For Gadamer, a statute enacted decades ago may confront circumstances never anticipated by its authors. A constitutional principle formulated in one historical context may be applied to technologies and social relationships unknown to the constitution's framers. The interpreter therefore approaches legal texts with historically conditioned assumptions. Gadamer's concept of the "fusion of horizons" helps explain how meaning emerges from the encounter between the horizon of the text and the horizon of the interpreter. The legal text speaks, but it does not speak in isolation. The interpreter also brings questions to the text. The dialogue therefore produces understanding through reciprocal engagement.

For Gadamer, this exercise does not entail that judges may simply impose their preferences upon legal texts. Instead, the text constrains interpretation. Historical meaning constrains interpretation. Institutional practice constrains interpretation. But interpretation is nevertheless creative because present circumstances generate questions that earlier legal actors could not have anticipated. With this therefore, dialogical legal method consequently occupies the space between textual determinism and judicial subjectivism.

Habermas and Communicative Legal Rationality

Habermas provides the strongest bridge between dialogical jurisprudence and democratic legitimacy. In Between Facts and Norms, Habermas develops a theory of law that attempts to mediate between factual social power and normative legitimacy. The work

explicitly addresses the relationship among law, democracy, constitutionalism, rights, adjudication and deliberative politics. The significance of Habermas for legal method lies in the idea of communicative rationality. For him, legal legitimacy cannot depend exclusively upon the fact that an institution possesses coercive power. Citizens must also be able to regard legal norms as justified through procedures of public reasoning. Thus, the judiciary occupies a difficult position. However, courts must interpret law authoritatively while remaining responsive to democratic constitutionalism.

Also, judicial legitimacy cannot simply mean that judges announce conclusions. Rather, it also requires reason-giving. In that sense, a judgment becomes dialogical when it identifies the legal question; recognizes competing arguments; explains the relevant legal materials; addresses counterarguments; identifies the normative principles involved; explains why one interpretation is preferable; and remains open to subsequent legal development. This is close to Habermas's conception of legitimate normativity through reasoned discourse. The dialogical theory in respect to Habermas therefore treats reason-giving as a constitutive component of legal authority rather than merely a rhetorical supplement to judicial power.

The Dialogics of Precedent

Precedent provides one of the clearest examples of dialogical legal method. A precedent is simultaneously a product of past reasoning and a resource for future reasoning. When a subsequent court cites a precedent, it enters into a relationship with the earlier judgment. It may affirm it, distinguish it, extend it, narrow it or overrule it. Thus, precedent produces a legal dialogue across time. The relationship can be represented as: Earlier judgment equals to subsequent interpretation which leads to modification and future precedent.

This reveals the dialogical nature of precedent as it shows that precedent is neither static nor purely evolutionary. It is dialogical. The authority of precedent derives partly from institutional continuity, but its meaning is continuously reconstructed through later legal reasoning. This is particularly important in constitutional adjudication. Constitutional courts frequently encounter questions that previous generations could not have anticipated. New technologies, changing social practices and emerging rights claims require courts to engage inherited constitutional principles in new contexts. The dialogical conception therefore rejects both extreme originalism and unconstrained judicial creativity. It understands constitutional interpretation as an ongoing conversation between constitutional text, historical practice, institutional precedent and contemporary democratic values.

The Dialogics of Hard cases

Hard cases provide the strongest test for any theory of legal method. In easy cases, legal rules may provide relatively straightforward answers. Hard cases arise where rules are ambiguous, conflicting, incomplete or challenged by competing principles. Hart interprets such cases through the open texture of legal language and judicial discretion (Hart, 2012). But for Dworkin, judges should instead search for principles that provide the best interpretation of legal practice (Dworkin, 1986). This shows that a dialogical method combines insights from both approaches without collapsing them.

The existence of disagreement however, does not prove that law is indeterminate. Conversely, the existence of legal principles does not mean that every case has an objectively discoverable answer independent of argument. The relevant question is whether a legal conclusion can survive reasoned confrontation with plausible alternatives. This suggests a dialogical test of legal justification.

The Dialogical Justification Test

At this point, a legal conclusion is adequately justified when it identifies the relevant authoritative legal sources; acknowledges plausible alternative interpretations; explains why the preferred interpretation fits the legal system; addresses relevant moral or constitutional principles; responds to opposing arguments; demonstrates institutional consistency; remains capable of rational criticism and subsequent revision. The test transforms legal method from a search for an allegedly isolated "correct method" into a disciplined process of justification.

Dialogics, Power and the Limits of Dialogues

A serious theory of dialogical legal method must avoid romanticizing dialogue. Not all voices possess equal institutional power. Judges have authority that ordinary citizens do not possess. Legislatures possess law-making power. Wealthy litigants may have greater access to legal representation than marginalized communities. Certain forms of knowledge may receive greater institutional recognition than others. Etxabe's recent account is particularly useful because it cautions against treating dialogue as inherently harmonious. Dialogical adjudication may involve conflict and unequal participation; dialogue does not eliminate power relations. Therefore, the dialogical model must incorporate a critical dimension.

A legal system cannot be regarded as dialogical merely because multiple arguments appear in a judgment. The decisive question is whether competing reasons receive meaningful consideration. This is especially important in plural societies where indigenous, customary and community-based perspectives may be marginalized by formal legal institutions. Consequently, dialogical legal method therefore requires institutional openness to legally relevant forms of knowledge that have historically been excluded.

The Dialogics of Legal Method in Nigeria

Nigeria provides an especially important context for developing the dialogical theory. Nigerian law operates within a complex normative environment involving the Constitution, statutes, judicial precedent, customary law, received English law, Islamic law in appropriate jurisdictions, international human rights norms and diverse community practices. The result is not a single normative system but an interaction among different legal traditions. The dialogical method provides a useful jurisprudential framework for understanding this pluralism. Consider customary law for example.

Customary law cannot simply be treated as a historical residue external to modern law. Where legally recognized, it participates in the normative life of communities and interacts with constitutional principles, legislation and judicial interpretation. The judiciary therefore performs a dialogical function when determining whether a customary norm is legally recognizable, whether it satisfies constitutional requirements and how it should be reconciled with competing legal norms. This is particularly important in relation to human rights. A customary practice may be deeply rooted in community identity while simultaneously raising questions concerning equality, dignity or individual autonomy. On the other hand, a monological approach might insist upon either the supremacy of customary tradition or the supremacy of modern constitutional norms. A dialogical approach therefore asks: How can competing normative claims be brought into a legally structured process of justification?

This does not require treating all claims as equally valid. Some practices may ultimately be rejected because they conflict with constitutional rights. But the rejection itself should emerge through reasoned engagement rather than through the assumption that one normative

tradition possesses automatic legitimacy. Nigeria therefore illustrates the potential of dialogical jurisprudence to mediate between legal pluralism and constitutional supremacy.

Dialogical Legal method and Constitutional Democracy

Constitutional democracy depends upon more than elections. It requires institutions capable of explaining and justifying the exercise of public power. Courts are particularly important because they frequently decide disputes involving minorities, governmental power and constitutional rights. The dialogical conception of adjudication offers an alternative to the simplistic opposition between judicial supremacy and parliamentary supremacy. Courts need not be conceived as institutions that possess the final word on every political question. Nor should they be reduced to passive instruments of legislative will. They can instead be understood as participants in an institutional dialogue.

A court interprets a constitutional provision. The legislature may respond with legislation. The executive may implement or challenge the interpretation. Civil society may contest its implications. Future courts may refine the doctrine. This model distributes constitutional reasoning across institutions. Habermas's theory is particularly relevant here because his account of law explicitly addresses the relationship between judiciary and legislature and the legitimacy of constitutional adjudication. The constitutional order becomes dialogical rather than purely hierarchical.

Dialogics and Legal Argumentation

Legal argumentation provides the practical mechanism through which dialogics operates. The work of legal argumentation theorists such as Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca (1969), Alexy (1989) and MacCormick (1978) demonstrates that legal justification involves more than formal deduction. Arguments must persuade audiences operating within institutional standards of reasonableness. Lodder and Herczog's DiaLaw model is especially relevant because it explicitly models legal reasoning as a dialogue in which opposing positions make moves and respond to attacks. This reinforces the central proposition of this article, which is that legal reasoning is not merely a relationship between premises and conclusions. Rather, it is a procedural activity involving claims, objections, rebuttals and responses.

Legal argument therefore has at least three dimensions: there is internal coherence which shows that the argument must be logically consistent. Also, there must be a legal validity which admits that the argument must be connected to recognized legal sources. The third one is the dialogical responsiveness which insists that the argument must adequately respond to serious competing interpretations. And this third dimension is often underemphasized in traditional accounts. A judicial judgment that reaches a plausible conclusion but fails to address powerful counterarguments is jurisprudentially weaker than one that demonstrates why competing arguments should be rejected.

Toward a General Theory of Dialogical Legal Method

The preceding analysis permits a more systematic formulation of the theory which is that the dialogical legal method can be defined as a structured method of legal reasoning in which legal meaning and justification emerge through the reciprocal engagement of authoritative legal materials, competing interpretations, institutional actors, normative principles and affected communities within legally recognized procedures. The model contains six elements which we shall highlight here.

The first is text which claims that legal reasoning begins with authoritative legal materials. The second is context which argues that texts are interpreted within historical, institutional and social contexts. The third is contestation which insists that alternative interpretations are articulated and tested. The fourth element is justification which maintains that the preferred interpretation must be supported through legal and normative reasons. The fifth one is the institutional dialogue which contends that judicial, legislative, executive and societal institutions respond to legal interpretations. And the sixth one is continuity and revision which admits that legal meaning develops through subsequent interpretation and criticism. In all, one can say the model can therefore be represented as: text equals to context and context equals to contestation. And contestation equals to justification. And justification equals to institutional response. And institutional response equals to revision. This cycle does not eliminate legal certainty. Instead, it reconceives legal certainty as the stability generated by publicly accessible and institutionally constrained reasoning.

Why Dialogical Legal Method Matters

The proposed theory offers several advantages. First, it provides a bridge between positivism and interpretivism. Hart explains the institutional conditions of legal validity, while Dworkin explains the role of principles and constructive interpretation. Dialogics places both within an interactive structure. Second, it incorporates hermeneutics without abandoning legal authority. Gadamer explains why interpretation cannot be mechanical, while institutional rules continue to constrain interpretation. Third, it connects jurisprudence with democratic legitimacy. Habermas demonstrates why reasoned communication is central to legitimate law. Fourth, it explains legal change. Law develops not simply because legislators enact new rules but because existing norms are continuously interpreted and contested. Fifth, it accommodates plural legal orders. This is particularly relevant to African legal systems, where state law interacts with customary and community-based normative orders. Finally, dialogical legal method provides a framework for understanding contemporary challenges involving constitutional rights, artificial intelligence, biotechnology, environmental governance and digital regulation. These areas generate questions that cannot always be answered through inherited legal categories. Their regulation requires interaction among legal doctrine, technical expertise, ethical reasoning and democratic participation.

Critical Objections

A dialogical theory is not without difficulties. One must recognize that the first objection concerns indeterminacy. If law is dialogical, one might argue that legal meaning becomes permanently open to revision. The response is that dialogicality does not imply unlimited interpretive freedom. Dialogue occurs within institutional and doctrinal constraints.

Again, the second objection concerns judicial activism. If judges engage with moral and social arguments, they may exceed their institutional role. The response is that dialogical reasoning actually strengthens judicial accountability because it requires judges to expose their reasons to public criticism. The third objection concerns unequal participation. Dialogue may reproduce existing power structures. This objection is valid. The theory therefore requires attention to institutional inclusion and the capacity of marginalized voices to participate in legal processes. The fourth objection concerns efficiency. Extensive engagement with competing arguments may make adjudication slower. Yet efficiency cannot be the only criterion of legal legitimacy. In constitutional and human-rights adjudication, the quality of justification is itself a central legal value.

Conclusion

This article has argued that legal method should be reconceptualized as dialogical. The conventional image of legal reasoning as a process in which an individual judge identifies a rule and applies it to facts is inadequate for contemporary jurisprudence. Legal reasoning is more complex. It involves interaction among texts, principles, precedents, institutions, lawyers, judges, citizens, historical practices and competing conceptions of justice.

Hart demonstrates the importance of institutional rules in structuring legal reasoning. Dworkin shows that principles and constructive interpretation cannot be excluded from legal practice. Fuller demonstrates the reciprocal communicative character of legality. Gadamer explains interpretation as a historically situated encounter between interpreter and text. Habermas connects legal legitimacy with communicative rationality and democratic discourse. These theories need not be regarded exclusively as competing paradigms. Read through dialogics, they illuminate different dimensions of the same phenomenon. The central claim is therefore that law is not simply a body of rules; it is an ongoing practice of reasoned interaction.

Legal method is dialogical because every legal interpretation responds to something that came before and addresses something that may come after. A judgment answers arguments made by litigants; interprets statutes enacted by legislatures; engages precedents produced by earlier courts; invokes principles embedded in constitutional practice; and establishes reasons that future legal actors may accept, reject or modify. The dialogical character of law is particularly important in plural societies such as Nigeria. Here, constitutional law, legislation, judicial precedent, customary norms and international legal principles intersect. The challenge is not simply to determine which normative system is superior but to develop institutional mechanisms through which competing claims can be confronted, justified and reconciled where possible.

The proposed Dialogical Legal Method therefore offers a jurisprudential model that moves beyond the binary opposition between rule and discretion, positivism and natural law, text and morality, judge and legislature, or law and society. Its fundamental proposition is simple but consequential: The legitimacy of legal reasoning depends not merely upon the conclusion reached, but upon the quality of the dialogue through which that conclusion is legally justified. In this sense, the future of jurisprudence may depend less upon discovering one universally correct method of legal reasoning and more upon developing institutions capable of sustaining rigorous, inclusive and legally disciplined dialogue.

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ORI, IWA AND THE OMOLUABI MORAL IDEAL: A RETHINK OF NIGERIA'S SOCIAL ORDER CRISIS

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Abstract

This paper examines the crisis of social order in contemporary Nigeria through indigenous Yoruba moral philosophy rather than through introduced Western moral structures alone. Common accounts of civic dysfunction emphasize colonial legacies, poverty, and structural inequality; while necessary, these explanations may understate or devalue individual moral agency. Through the Yoruba conceptions of Orí (head) and Ìwà (character), the paper explores how given circumstance and cultivated character together offer an indigenous basis for negotiating the tension between constraint and responsibility. Appealing to Segun Gbadegesin's account of destiny and character, Oladele Balogun's soft-deterministic interpretation of Orí, and the ethical or moral ideal of the Omolúàbí (a person of good character), the paper argues that Yoruba philosophy presents a non-derivative account of moral responsibility accommodating both existential limitation and personal accountability. It develops the Omolúàbí ideal as a model for civic responsibility in Nigeria, arguing that the weakening of character formation constitutes a substantial scope of the country's social crisis, and concludes that rebuilding social order requires institutional reform alongside the cultivation of virtuous persons.

Keywords: Orí, Ìwà, Omolúàbí, Moral responsibility, Yoruba philosophy, Moral luck, Civic responsibility, Contemporary Nigeria

Introduction

Nigerian public discourse has a familiar way of explaining civic dysfunction. Corruption, electoral violence, and the erosion of public trust are often traced to colonial legacies, structural inequalities, and the character of the postcolonial state. Colonial institutions and postcolonial arrangements have indeed shaped African political experience (Ekeh 91-112). Achebe similarly traces Nigeria's difficulties to failures of leadership and the moral conditions sustaining public life (1-10). However, a deeper question remains: once structural forces are identified, has individual moral responsibility been addressed, or simply deferred? This paper argues that it has often been deferred, and approaches the question through the Yoruba relationship between Orí and Ìwà, as developed by Gbadegesin and Balogun.

This model illuminates the relationship between circumstance and responsibility. Western considerations of moral luck, predominantly espoused by Bernard Williams's and Thomas Nagel's, examine the difficulty of holding persons responsible when outcomes are shaped by factors beyond their control (Williams 20-39; Nagel 24-38). Yoruba thought contains a comparable concern in Orí, the dimension of existence connected with destiny and the conditions within which individuals act (Idowu 171-176; Gbadegesin 39-52), yet it does

not treat human beings as passive products of destiny. Through Ìwà, understood as cultivated character and moral disposition, individuals remain responsible for the quality of their choices and the development of their moral personality (Hallen 91-110; Gbadegesin 77-86).

The Orí and Ìwà distinction offers an indigenous basis for negotiating structural constraint and individual responsibility: Orí acknowledges conditions persons do not entirely determine, while Ìwà emphasizes the responsibility of cultivating character through deliberate action. Yoruba thought consequently avoids both extreme determinism and excessive individualism. As Balogun argues, Yoruba destiny is better interpreted through a soft-deterministic context that preserves moral accountability while recognizing the limits imposed on human agency (116-130).

This paper covers five sections, reconstructing Orí, then Ìwà and the Omolúàbí ideal, then applying this ideal to Nigeria's crisis of social order, then developing an Omolúàbí model of civic responsibility, before considering assessment and concluding. The paper's contribution is to demonstrate that Orí, Ìwà, and Omolúàbí have independent philosophical importance rather than functioning simply as cultural material adopted from Western classifications. It begins from Yoruba classifications, using the moral-luck literature only relatively, and contributes to debates in African philosophy concerning agency, virtue, and social reconstruction (Gyekye, Tradition and Modernity 35-55; Wiredu 1-18).

Orí, Àyànmọ́, and Kádàrá: The Yoruba Problem of Destiny

In Yoruba metaphysical thought, human existence originates within a network of conditions prior to conscious agency. Traditional accounts hold that before entering the world (ayé), a person encounters Olódùmarè, the Supreme Being, and assumes an Orí, a personal principle connected with destiny, identity, and the possibilities available within earthly existence (Idowu 169-172; Abimbola, Ifá 35-42). Interpretations differ over whether Orí is chosen, received, or divinely constituted, but Yoruba reflection generally treats it as a substantial determinant of life's situation. Interrelated ideas such as Àyànmọ́ (that which is affixed or agreed upon) and Kádàrá (a word shaped by Islamic ideas of divine decree) express more aspects of destiny and precedent condition (Gbadegesin 39-52; Balogun 117-119).

Orí's philosophical importance depends on the tension it creates between limitation and responsibility: if individuals begin life with unchosen circumstances, such as talents, opportunities, and temperament, to what extent can they be held responsible for their lives' outcomes? This re-echoes the problem of moral luck raised by Williams and Nagel (Williams 115-135; Nagel 137-151). Yoruba thought, nevertheless, does not resolve this tension through strict determinism. Gbadegesin argues that destiny must be understood alongside Ìwà, or character, the domain of human cultivation and moral accomplishment (77-86): Orí supplies initial conditions and possibilities, but does not eliminate or remove responsibility for developing character through choice and conduct. A person with favourable Orí may still fail through poor character, while another facing hardship may attain honour through perseverance; a life's moral quality depends less on what one receives than on how one responds.

Balogun develops this through a soft-deterministic notion: Orí establishes a range of possibilities without determining every decision within it (116-124). So, human beings act within conditions that limit but do not jettison or disregard agency, remaining accountable for how they exercise choice. This is pertinent to Western moral-luck discussions not because Yoruba philosophy anticipated them, but because both traditions confront the same problem, namely how responsibility survives when human beings are shaped by factors beyond complete control, through different routes: control and judgment for Williams and Nagel, the Orí and

Ìwà relationship for Yoruba thought. This is further mirrored in Ifá divination, which assumes that knowledge of one's circumstances is accompanied by the possibility of correction: individuals are advised toward appropriate conduct, including ẹbọ (prescribed corrective action), so that action remains significant within a world structured by destiny (Abimbola, Ifá 121-135). Many ẹsẹ Ifá (a verse of oracle) strengthen this: individuals encounter conditions tied to their Orí, yet their success or failure depends on the quality of their conduct. Yoruba destiny, then, does not abolish moral agency; it situates agency within human limitation.

Ìwà and the Omolúàbí Ideal: Character as the Sphere of Responsibility

If Orí represents conditions a Yoruba person does not entirely choose, Ìwà represents the dimension for which the individual bears responsibility: the moral quality of a person expressed through conduct, disposition, and relationship, more than simple personality. The expression Ìwà l'ẹwà (character is beauty) captures the conviction that human worth is determined not by appearance, wealth, or status but by character (Abimbola, Yoruba Culture 85-93); it is not simply inherited but cultivated through deliberate action and engagement with communal life. This is evident in Yoruba moral reasoning, where virtues such as honesty, respect, courage, and self-restraint develop through social experience. Hallen and Sodipo demonstrate that moral knowledge is rooted in everyday practice and communal judgment rather than abstract theory (68-75). Ìwà therefore represents a process of moral becoming: individuals form themselves through repeated choice and interaction rather than being born with fixed moral identity.

This ideal is personified in the Omolúàbí, "a person of good character," defined not by ancestry, wealth, or formal education, but by demonstrated virtues: òtítọ́ (truthfulness), ìwà rere (good character), ọ̀wọ̀ (respect), ìfaradà (perseverance), ìfẹ́ (compassion), and ìwà tútù (composure) (Makinde 45-52; Fayemi 167-171), through which one becomes both morally admirable and a contributor to social harmony. The Omolúàbí ideal treats character as the basis of social trust: in traditional communities, moral reputation influenced access to authority regardless of wealth, so a poor person could have excellent Ìwà while a wealthy one could lack moral worth if guided by greed. This replicates the claim that external conditions shape opportunity but do not exhaust the basis on which persons is morally assessed.

This associates directly to moral luck: Yoruba thought does not deny that people begin life under unequal conditions belonging to Orí, but the Omolúàbí ideal insists individuals retain responsibility for cultivating character within them. The proverb ìwà rere ni a fi ń dá ènìyàn mọ̀ ("it is through good character that a person is recognized") expresses that moral identity begins from sustained conduct rather than inherited condition. Ìwà's formation reveals a distinctive theory of moral education, conducted through proverbs (òwe), stories, elder correction, praise (ìyìn), and criticism (ẹ̀gàn), mechanisms teaching the virtues of responsible participation (Fayemi 169-173). Character is as a result not the product of isolated decisions but emerges through accumulated everyday action. This equivalent virtue-ethical traditions emphasizing character formed through habituation, but adds a communal element: character sustains social relationship and collective wellbeing, making Ìwà the point where personal agency and social obligation converge.

Structural Explanation and the Erosion of Ìwà in Nigerian Public Life

Nigerian civic dysfunction can be reconsidered through these classifications rather than through copied contexts alone. Ekeh's account of the "two publics," explaining how colonialism separated primordial obligations to kin from the inherited civic public, remains an essential structural explanation of Nigeria's political challenges (91-112), a problem further reflected in analyses of how colonial arrangements and weak state legitimacy continue to influence civic behaviour (Ake; Agbiboa). Such conditions form part of inherited circumstance; yet, consistent with Orí and Ìwà, inherited condition influences moral action without wholly determining it.

Achebe's diagnosis that Nigeria's crisis is basically one of leadership rather than resource scarcity (1-10) can be read through Ìwà: leadership failure is not just institutional but ethical; since public office requires persons whose character mirrors integrity and commitment to communal wellbeing. African political ethics similarly argues institutional reform is insufficient without attention to moral formation among political actors and citizens (Gyekye, African Cultural Values; Motadegbe and Ibiyemi).

Contemporary corruption indicators emphasize this: Transparency International continues to rank Nigeria among countries facing serious public-sector corruption. From the Omolúàbí perspective, corruption cannot be explained exclusively by historical condition, since differing governance outcomes among African societies sharing comparable colonial experience suggest structural inheritance alone does not completely determine civic morality; differences in political culture and cultivated civic disposition also contribute. Everyday practices, such as "settling" an official, unethical shortcuts normalized as cleverness, and the aspiration captured by the term "japa", reveal this moral aspect of decline. These are tied to economic hardship, yet from an Omolúàbí perspective they also indicate weakened Ìwà cultivation: virtues like honesty and diligence become difficult to sustain when environments repeatedly reward their opposite. Motadegbe and Ibiyemi similarly argues that globalization has transformed the moral expectations traditionally tied to Yoruba personhood (17-27).

This does not imply individuals bear sole responsibility for conditions produced by historical injustice; following Gbadegesin and Balogun, external limitation does not remove continuing responsibility for character developed within those circumstances, avoiding both structural determinism and an individualism ignoring social condition. The prevalence of examination malpractice in Nigerian educational system is regularly explained by inadequate resources and intense competition, real structural concerns. Yet similar conditions do not produce identical moral response: some students resist dishonest practice despite pressure, others do not, a difference reflecting moral education and cultivated character as much as external condition. Oil bunkering and pipeline vandalism in the Niger Delta are similarly connected to environmental degradation and historical grievance, yet variation in participation among communities facing similar hardship suggests agency operates alongside structure: circumstance shapes available possibilities; character shapes how they are pursued.

Political godfatherism offers a final illustration: Nigeria's centralized resource distribution creates incentives for patron-client arrangement, but such arrangements require moral agents who choose to reproduce or resist them. Exchanging public responsibility for private advantage is a failure of Ìwà; those who resist demonstrate that structural pressure does not eliminate moral agency. The Omolúàbí idea therefore complements rather than rejects structural explanation: institutional reform remains necessary, but sustainable transformation also requires cultivating persons whose character supports accountability. Nigeria's crisis of social order is thus not only institutional but a crisis of Ìwà (character).

An Omolúàbí Model of Civic Responsibility

The Orí and Ìwà distinction supports a two-dimensional model of civic ethics for Nigeria, emerging from Yoruba moral thought rather than imposed externally. The first dimension concerns the transformation of institutions and incentive structures: transparent governance, effective legal institutions, and mechanisms of public accountability, which shape the environment within which moral agents act and so remain an important part of addressing civic disorder (Ekeh 91-112). The second concerns the deliberate cultivation of Ìwà among citizens and officials through moral education, mentorship, and exemplary leadership, reflecting the Yoruba understanding that character formation is a social process developed through communal interaction and instruction (Gbadegesin 77-86; Hallen and Sodipo 68-75).

Civic and moral education rooted explicitly in the Omolúàbí ideal would frame virtues such as òtítọ́ (truthfulness), ìṣẹ́ (diligence), ọ̀wọ̀ (respect), and ìwà tútù (composure) as concrete dimensions of responsible personhood rather than abstract moral appeal. Historically, Yoruba institutions, including family structure, age-grade association, and community leadership, performed important functions of moral education and social accountability (Fadipe; Awolalu). Re-engaging such institutions in contemporary civic life need not mean rejecting the modern state, but recognizing that formal institutions alone cannot replace the moral communities through which character is cultivated. Public discourse that acknowledges structural injustice while preserving the language of individual responsibility is itself an exercise of civic Ìwà, since how societies interpret responsibility shapes the dispositions they encourage.

This model does not require Nigerians to ignore structural injustice; rather, it argues that structural cause cannot constitute a complete explanation of civic failure, and that transformation requires attention to both external condition and internal moral formation. In view of the fact that it emerges from Yoruba categories which are already entrenched in Nigerian intellectual history, it presents a culturally significant vocabulary for discussing responsibility and public obligation (Gyekye, Tradition and Modernity 35-55; Wiredu 1-18). A practical implication concerns the relationship between enforcement and moral formation. Nigerian anti-corruption bodies such as the EFCC and ICPC operate chiefly through investigation, prosecution, and deterrence. These functions remain necessary, but an Omolúàbí-oriented approach suggests that preventing misconduct also requires attention to the moral conditions preceding wrongdoing: strengthening civic education, encouraging community-based responsibility, and recognizing legitimate traditional institutions as contributors to ethical formation, addressing a moral dimension institutional reform alone cannot resolve.

The Nigerian media environment presents a further sphere for cultivating civic Ìwà. Traditional communities relied on ìyìn (praise) and ẹ̀gàn (public criticism) to reinforce desirable conduct and discourage harmful behaviour (Hallen and Sodipo 95-102). Contemporary media perform a similar function at extensive scale: sustained attention to integrity and public service, alongside scrutiny of misconduct, can help shape the moral expectations of civic life, not uncritical celebration of political actors, but the Yoruba insight that moral community is sustained through both condemnation of wrongdoing and recognition of admirable conduct. The Omolúàbí model consequently offers civic responsibility as a relationship between institutional reform and character formation. A society cannot achieve social order through law and structure alone, nor through individual virtue while ignoring unjust institutions. The Orí and Ìwà distinction holds these dimensions together: circumstance shapes the conditions of action, while character determines how individuals respond within them.

Assessing the Limits and Possibilities of the Omolúàbí Moral Ideal

A first objection holds that appealing to Orí risks reintroducing the fatalism this paper rejects, since everyday uses of Àyànmọ́ and Kádàrá may convey resignation towards predetermined outcome. In reply, this paper follows Gbadegesin and Balogun in distinguishing popular interpretations of destiny from philosophical accounts of Orí as a condition that limits possibility without eliminating agency. The reconstruction defended here does not imply passive recipients of an unalterable future, but presents destiny as a basis within which responsible action remains possible.

A second objection notes that Yoruba communitarian thought, like African communitarianism generally, understands persons as constituted through social relationship (Menkiti 171-181) which may appear to conflict with this paper's emphasis on individual Ìwà. Gyekye's moderate communitarianism resolves this tension by arguing that individuals have genuine moral agency even as their identity and capacity develop within communal context (Gyekye, Tradition and Modernity 35-55). Discussions of African relational ethics similarly emphasize that communal embeddedness does not eliminate personal responsibility but provides the environment within which moral agency is formed and exercised (Metz). Within Yoruba thought, Ìwà is cultivated through communal interaction and evaluated relationally, but remains the achievement of an individual moral agent whose choices gradually form stable character.

A third objection questions whether a traditional cosmological structure can offer meaningful civic guidance given Nigeria's religious plurality and modernization. Since literal belief in Orí as a pre-natal choice before Olódùmarè is not universally maintained even among Yoruba people today, the Omolúàbí ideal's practical relevance may be doubted. In reply, the ethical significance of Omolúàbí has always extended beyond strict metaphysical commitment: it continues to function as a moral vocabulary of integrity and good character even among those who interpret its origin differently, much as ethical concepts elsewhere continue to shape social life beyond their original religious context. What this paper recovers is not universal acceptance of a cosmological doctrine but the ethical insight in the distinction between circumstance beyond human control and the cultivation of character through responsible action.

A fourth objection concerns scope: Nigeria is a multi-ethnic federation, and Yoruba concepts cannot represent the entirety of Nigerian moral thought. This objection is legitimate and the paper's claim is accordingly modest. It does not present Yoruba philosophy as the sole Nigerian resource for thinking about responsibility, but as one philosophically developed tradition among several capable of contributing to broader Nigerian ethical reflection; comparative study of African moral systems shows that different traditions develop distinct conceptual resources for negotiating inherited condition, agency, and communal obligation (Wiredu; Gyekye, Tradition and Modernity). The Orí and Ìwà basis is offered as a significant indigenous contribution inviting further comparative engagement, not an exhaustive theory.

A fifth objection concerns the risk of overstating agreement between Gbadegesin and Balogun, who differ on how far Orí constrains human possibility: Balogun's soft-deterministic interpretation is more explicit, Gbadegesin's account more interpretively flexible. This is an important scholarly issue, but the argument here does not depend on resolving it: both approaches share the claim that, whatever the influence of Orí, Ìwà remains a sphere of cultivated moral achievement for which individuals can be held responsible. The precise degree of constraint Orí imposes remains a valuable subject for further inquiry without undermining the argument that Yoruba thought preserves a meaningful relationship between limitation and responsibility.

Conclusion

This paper has argued that the crisis of social order in contemporary Nigeria can be critically understood through the Yoruba distinction between Orí and Ìwà. Rather than reducing civic failure to either structural condition or individual blame, the Omolúàbí model demonstrates how inherited circumstance and cultivated character interact in shaping moral responsibility. Through Gbadegesin's account of destiny and character, Balogun's soft-deterministic interpretation, and the ethical ideal of Omolúàbí, Yoruba philosophy provides an indigenous framework for addressing responsibility under constraint. Recovering Ìwà as a basis of civic life does not replace institutional reform but complements it through moral formation. Nigerian philosophy, this paper affirms, possesses its own resources for diagnosing and responding to contemporary civic challenge.

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TRANSACTIONAL RELATIONSHIPS: AN EVALUATION OF ARISTOTLE'S CLASSIFICATION OF FRIENDSHIP

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Abstract

The paper examines the notion of transactional relationships through a critical evaluation of Aristotle's classification of friendship in the Nicomachean Ethics. Aristotle distinguishes three forms of friendship that include – friendship based on utility, friendship based on pleasure and friendship based on virtue. While the first two are often regarded as conditional and transactional because they depend on the benefits or pleasure that individuals derive from one another; virtuous friendship is seen as a more enduring relationship that is based on mutual goodwill and appreciation of the other for their own sake. Friendship is an essential aspect of human life; for Aristotle, "friendship is a certain virtue or it is accompanied by virtue and it is most necessary with a view to life. This is because without friends, no one would choose to live even if he/she possessed all other goods". But some friendship brings emotional pain, encourage God-fatherism, breed social chaos, and sometimes national crises. So, why do some friends become enemies? Why do some people who once lived happily with each other go for one another's jugular? These questions are problematic and fundamental. The objective of this work is to evaluate Aristotle's notion of friendship, with emphasis on the nature and types of friendship especially the transactional form of friendship which is a friendship where interactions are based on utility rather than genuine emotional affection. The analytic method was used; the paper argues that Aristotle's classification of friendship added a valuable philosophical framework for understanding different motivations for human relationships. The paper concludes that an exclusively transactional conception of friendship risks reducing human relationships to instrumental

exchanges which at the end will weaken the ideals of trust, loyalty and genuine concern for the well-being of others which are the hallmarks of true friendship.

Keywords: Aristotle; Friendship; Godfatherism, Transactional friendship, Utility; Virtue.

Introduction

Friendship is an essential aspect of living. It plays a vital role in people's emotional, mental and spiritual wellbeing. Good friendship provides companionship, emotional support and a sense of belonging which are crucial for overall happiness and quality of life; friendship creates lasting bonds between people. Genuine friendship is essential for nation building and development. Furthermore, friendship gives opportunity for people to offer valuable advice, encouragement and new perspectives that can help the other to navigate life's challenges. However, not all friendships are positive and healthy. Some friendships are susceptible to abuse and exploitation and a toxic friendship can have devastating effect on people's lives; lead to emotional distress, loss of self-esteem and sometimes, physical harm. The consequences of bad friendship can be devastating, leaving emotional scars that can erode faith in others.

Friendship involves more than one-person; it involves shared values and future expectations and that is why philosophers have longed recognized the dangers of bad company, warning against the influence of bad friends or being a bad friend. But the question here is: what could cause people that started out as friends to end up in enmity?

In a seeming answer to the above question, Homer in his work the Iliad, thinks selfishness is the root cause of friendship gone awry. Here, he portrayed the friendship of Achilles and the Patroclus as being very exclusive. According to him, Achilles did not consider the plight of the people outside his friendship (10). This exclusive character of friendship as portrayed by Achilles makes friendship selfish. In the same vein, Hegesias of Cyrene in Lives of Eminent Philosophers holds the notion that friendship is nothing except for selfish motives of those who engage in it. This motive may as a matter of fact involve selfishness of purpose. This is because love is dissolved as soon as their needs disappear.

In his view, Immanuel Kant in Lecture of friendship on other selves was of the opinion that friends should confide in each other and that friendship is what everyone seeks to deserve (14). R.W. Emerson seem to agree with Kant in his work - Friendship on other selves when he said that man finds whom he can relate with benevolently (15). But Aristotle thinks that this relationship can be inferior or superior (12). For him, the friendship of utility and pleasure are inferior because they are for self-interest of those who engage in it but superior friendship is perfect because those who engage in it do not consider their self-interest. While friendship of utility and pleasure is selfish and dissolves with the disappearance of what is profitable; perfect friendship subsists and is not selfish.

The Meaning of Friendship

Friendship is a distinct form of mutual, chosen and caring relationship valued for its own sake. It is voluntary and involves care for the other for their own sake. It recognises the other as irreducibly particular. Friendship is built on a shared history that creates meaning between those engaged in friendliness. For Voltaire, in the Philosophical Dictionary, friendship is "the marriage of the soul; and this marriage is subject to divorce. It is a tactical contract between two sensitive and virtuous persons" (131). Chowdbury on his part looks at friendship from the philosophical perspective where he sees friendship as a "deep knowledge of another" (17). By this, he means that sharing of information about one's experiences, beliefs, values,

and so on requires getting to know the person. Friendship, then, is a relationship that aspires to be intimate, personal, caring, and empathetic; it is a practice of self-disclosure and vulnerability that aspires to attachment and connection.

For Johnny Golding, "friendship is a kind of sticky belonging, a cohesive, raw 'blood poetics' whose very re-cognize-ability, whose very responsibility, is best expressed at the moment of its strange-cohesive together-apartness of encounter, mired in the senses, multiverse in its duration and relationally, expressively 'alive' in its being-with/apart" (263). Thomas on his part looks at friendship from the perspective of companionship. He introduced the idea of utility and pleasure in perfect friendship using the example of two friends playing cards at a community center. According to him:

> Two friends who play cards together at the community center might not meet otherwise. likewise, for the two folks who regularly have a drink after work at the local tavern. Of course, it is easy enough to imagine that one kind of friendship might carry over into the other. For instance, two people who study together could also end up playing a sport together. This would be rather natural, given that they both like the same sport and are more or less equally good at it. Just so, it is easy enough to imagine that two people who meet regularly at a bar after work for a drink, and who occasionally play volleyball together after work, nonetheless keep their interactions limited to just these forms of interaction. For instance, they might understand that in view of both their religious and social differences, as well as family concerns, it would simply be a mistake for them to try interacting outside of the tavern. Each is comfortable with the limited interaction and wants no more. (353)

Aristotle however disagrees with Thomas' assertion; this is because friendship for him, is either inferior or superior.

Aristotle's Notion of Friendship

Aristotle, in the book 8 of the Nicomachean Ethics sees friendship as an essential factor of human life and happiness (155). He sees friendship as an inevitable phenomenon that one must experience in bad times and in good times, in wealth and in poverty. We need friends when we are young to keep us from error, when we are old to care for us, when we no longer have enough strength to execute our tasks and in the prime of life to help us in noble deeds. For him, friendship is the glue that binds nations and individuals together in an inextricable bound of mutuality. According to him:

> Friendship seems to hold states together, and law givers, to care more for it than for justice; for concord seems to be something like friendship, and this they aim at most of all, and expel faction as their worst enemy; and when men are friends, they have no need of justice, while when they are just, they need friendship as well, and the truest firm of justice is thought to be a friendly quality. But it is not only necessary but also noble; for we praise those who love their friends, and it is thought to be a fine thing to have many friends. (Nicomachean Ethics, Bk viii,155).

Aristotle is also of the view that people who are likeminded have the likelihood of becoming friends. This according to him, is the origin of the saying "like to like", "birds of a feather flock together" (155).

The imperativeness of friendship

In his elucidation of the notion of friendship in book 8 of the Nicomachean Ethics, Aristotle made some obvious statements that holds true in every circumstance and in every clime. According to him "friendship is a certain virtue or is accompanied by virtue; and, further, it is most necessary with a view to life: without friends, no one would choose to live, even if he possessed all other goods; and indeed, those who are wealthy or have acquired political offices and power seem to be in need of friends most of all. What benefit would there be in such prosperity if one were deprived of (the opportunity to perform) a good deed, which arises and is most praiseworthy in relation to friends especially? Or how could one's prosperity be guarded and preserved without friends? For the more prosperity one has, the more precarious it is. In poverty as well as in other misfortunes, people suppose that friends are their only refuge. And friendship is a help to the young, in saving them from error, just as it is also to the old, with a view to the care they require and their diminished capacity for action stemming from their weakness; it is a help also to those in their prime in performing noble actions, for "two going together" are better able both to think and to act" (164). The point to be deduced from Aristotle's elucidation above is that friendship is a very important aspect of human nature; in other words, man's happiness and survival on the earth is dependent on friendship. Friends help each other in surmounting the challenges they face in different aspects of life; they help each other to climb up the ladder of leadership in the society and friends also celebrate or rejoice with one another in times of joy. But friendship does not always end in joy, sometimes, it ends in catastrophe and Aristotle thinks this happens because there are different types of friendship. Some friendship according to him are purely utilitarian and therefore inferior.

Kinds of friendship

For Aristotle, friendship "differ in form from one another; The forms of friendship, then, are three, equal in number to the things that are lovable; in accord with each is a reciprocal love that does not go unnoticed, and those who love each other wish for the good things for each other in that respect in which they love each other'. These three forms of friendship are:

1. Friendship of utility and pleasure
2. Complete friendship
3. Friendship of equals and unequal

Friendship on account of utility and pleasure

Those who love each other on account of utility do not love each other in themselves, but only insofar as they come to have something good from the other. Similar too is the case of those who love on account of pleasure, for people are fond of those who are witty, not because they are of a certain sort, but because they are pleasant to them. Therefore, those who love on account of utility feel affection for the sake of their own good, just as those who love on account of pleasure feel affection for the sake of their own pleasure. He who is loved in each case is not loved for himself but only insofar as he is useful or pleasant. And these, then, are friendships incidentally; for it is not for being what he is that the person loved is loved, but only insofar as he provides (in the one case) something good or (in the other) pleasure. These sorts of friendships, then, are easily dissolved when the people involved do not remain the same as they were. For, if they are no longer pleasant or useful, those who love them will cease to do so. And what is useful does not remain constant but is different at different times. When the basis of which they were friends is nullified, then so too the friendship is dissolved, since the friendship exists with a view to the thing in question. This sort of friendship seems to arise especially among the old (for those of such an age pursue not what is pleasant but what is

beneficial to them) as well as among all those in their prime, or the young, who pursue what is advantageous. And such people do not frequently live with each other either, for sometimes they are not even pleasant to each other. They therefore have no additional need of this sort of association if they supply no benefit to the other, for they are pleasant to each other only insofar as they foster hopes of obtaining something good from the other.

But the friendship of the young seems to be based on pleasure, for they live according to passion and most of all pursue what is pleasant to them and at hand. But since this time of life is prone to undergoing change, the pleasures too come to be different. Hence the young swiftly become friends and cease being so: the friendship changes together with what they find pleasant, and change in this sort of pleasure is swift. The young are given to erotic love as well. For the greater part of erotic love is bound up with passion and is based on pleasure, which is why they love and swiftly cease loving, often changing in the course of the same day. But the young do wish to pass their days together and live together, for in this way they attain what friendship for them involves (167).

Complete friendship

Complete friendship according to Aristotle is the friendship of those who are good and alike in point of virtue. For such people wish in similar fashion for the good things for each other insofar as they are good, and they are good in themselves. But those who wish for the good things for their friends, for their friends' sake, are friends most of all, since they are disposed in this way in themselves and not incidentally. Their friendship continues, then, while they are good, and virtue is a stable thing. Each person involved is good simply and for the friend, since good people are good simply and beneficial to one another. So too are they pleasant, for the good are both pleasant simply and pleasant to one another. To each person, his own actions and those like them accord with his pleasure, and the actions of those who are good are the same or similar.

It is with good reason that this sort of friendship is stable, since it combines in itself all those things that ought to belong to friends. For every friendship exists on account of a good or pleasure; either simply or for the person who loves, and in accord with the likeness involved. And in this complete friendship, all that has been spoken of is present in the friends themselves, since in this respect the friends are alike and the remaining reasons for forming friendship are present as well - both the good simply and the pleasant simply - and these things are lovable most of all. So, it is among these people that both loving and friendship are especially prevalent and best. Yet friendships of this sort are likely to be rare, since people of this sort are few. Those who swiftly make proofs of friendship to each other wish to be friends but are not such unless they are also lovable and know this about each other. For a wish for friendship arises swiftly, but friendship itself does not.

Friendship of equals and unequal

There are friendships based on equality and others based on inequality. For those who are similarly good become friends, or a good person befriends a worse one; and those who are pleasant and those who are useful become friends in like manner, whether they are equal in the benefits they confer or different. Those who are equal tend to love each other equally, in accord with the relevant equality, whereas those who are unequal tend to render to each what is proportional given the relevant superiorities. This kind of friendship, from the analysis so far, is based on utility. Aristotle is of the opinion that accusations and blame arise in any friendship based on utility. This is because friendship based on utility is prone to accusations. For those

who use each other with a view to some benefit always want more and suppose they obtain less than what is proper. And so, they blame the other because they do not obtain as much as they want and think they merit, and those who perform the benefactions are not able to supply as much as the recipients want.

Aristotle explains further that, just as there is a twofold distinction in what is just - what is unwritten and what accords with law - so also is the friendship based on utility, there is the moral friendship and the legal one. Accusations arise, then, especially when people do not dissolve the friendship on the same basis on which they entered into it. And the legal type of this friendship depends on stated terms: one kind belongs wholly to marketplace transactions that happen immediately; another is more liberal as regards the time to pay but depends on an agreement that one thing is exchanged for another. The debt is clear and undisputed in this latter case, but it bears the mark of friendship because of the deferral of the payment to the seller. For this very reason, there are no legal arbitrations of these agreements in some places, but people suppose instead that those who entered into agreements on trust ought to feel affection for each other.

The moral type of this friendship, on the other hand, does not depend on stated terms. Instead, a gift (or whatever else) is given as to a friend; but the giver thinks he deserves to receive what is equal, or more than that, in return, on the grounds that he has not given anything but lent it. Yet if someone dissolves the friendship in a way different from that in which he entered into the agreement; the other friend will level an accusation. This happens because all or most people wish for noble things but choose the beneficial ones instead. It is a noble thing to perform a benefit without expecting it to be requited, but it is of course beneficial to receive a benefaction. He who is able, therefore, must give in return, the worth of what he received, and do so voluntarily for he must not make a friend of someone who is not voluntarily one. On the grounds that he erred completely in the beginning and was done a good deed by someone by whom he ought not to have been done - for it was not done by a friend or by someone doing this for its own sake - he must therefore dissolve the relation, just as if he had received a benefaction on stated terms. And a person ought to agree to repay whatever he is able to, whereas if he should be unable to repay something, not even the giver would expect him to do so. As a result, he must repay it if he can; yet at the outset, he must consider the person from whom he receives a benefaction and on what terms, so that he may submit to these terms or not (183-185). The implication from the foregoing is that some forms of friendship are transactional and transactional friendship can be classified as the friendship of un-equals.

Following from above, a keen observer may liken Aristotle's submissions to Nigerian politicians. In Nigeria, those in power tend always to recruit those that will take over from them based on unwritten agreement between the "Oga and the boy" which always go soar as soon as the unequal friend assumes position of power. The friendship of un-equals is the bane of many political acquaintances where the benefactors in every case expect more than the beneficiary is able to give. In Nigeria, the benefactor is simply called a god-father. Godfatherism in Nigerian politics has in a way exposed the negative side of friendship of un-equals. It is purely transactional in nature and character

Transactional friendship

Transactional friendship refers to a relationship where interactions are based on mutual benefits, exchanges or utility rather than genuine emotional attachment or affection. It is characterized by quid pro quo (something for something) kind of relationship where friends expect something in return for their actions or support. The relationship is conditional and

valued for its practical benefits on both sides. Transactional friendship is exemplified most times in politics and social relations. A typical example is found in political godfatherism. According to Adeoye (72), godfatherism is used to define the connection between a godfather and a godson. A godfather is a kingmaker, boss, mentor, and principal, while the godson is the beneficiary and recipient of the legacy of a godfather. For Edigin (175), a godfather is a human being who plays god to his people. He provides their basic needs, protects them and assists them to secure and achieve their objectives but his support for them is an investment which he believes must yield some profits in the future. The Wiktionary (online dictionary) on the other hand sees godfatherism as a Nigerian creation and defines it as a form of political corruption in which an influential individual handpicks another, often less influential, to attain leadership position in order to exert authority or influence. Historically godfatherism can be traced to electoral politics in the city of Chicago in the United States of America in the pre-World War II era when according to Bernard the heads of criminal gangs sponsored politicians in elections, manipulated the results to get them elected and, in turn, receive protection and contracts from their political godsons (23).

The point to note from the above definitions of a godfather is that it is a transactional friendship based on the immediate or future gains of the godsons or the godfathers as the case may be.

Godfatherism as Transactional friendship

Godfathers are found all over the world. Nigeria has a plethora of godfathers both at the federal level and in all the states of the federation: the 'political godfathers' in Nigeria build an array of loyalists around them and use their influence, which is often tied to monetary considerations, to manipulate the rest of the society. Political godfathers use their influence to block the participation of others in politics. They are political gatekeepers: they dictate who participates in politics and under what conditions. The role of such people is highly injurious to the advancement of popular, participatory democracy in Nigeria. Political godfathers are responsible for most of the pre- and post-election violence that have been witnessed in Nigeria. It is thus necessary to have a better understanding of their activities as a way of generating new ideas on how to make political process less violent and more democratic. And it can begin when aspiring politicians understands the kind of friendship there are venturing into when they begin to associate with those other politicians that are already in positions of power. Those already in positions of power are only interested in what Albert (82) describes as transactional leadership. According to him:

> Transactional leadership takes place when leaders and followers interact with a view to exchanging valued things. What is exchanged could be economic, psycho logical or political: trading of votes, hospitality to a person on the account of a contribution to helping to sustain the leader's position, etc. In other words, both the leader and the follower are familiar with what they benefit from each other, and the relationship is solely based on this. A major short coming of this kind of leader-follower relationship is that the parties 'have no enduring purpose that holds them together; hence may go their separate ways. A leadership act took place, but it was not one that binds leader and follower together in a mutual and continuing pursuit of a higher purpose.

Transactional friendship manifested greatly in Nigeria's politics at the outset of democratic governance in 1999. According to Albert (97), the most controversial and most

celebrated of godfather-godson conflicts in Nigeria was the one between Governor Chris Ngige of Anambra state and Chief Chris Uba. Dr Chris Ngige's ambition during the 2003 elections was to become a Senator, having lost in his first bid for the position in 1999. He soon came in contact with Chief Uba, who pledged to make him a governor and not just a senator. Ngige was said to have rejected the offer initially, citing the risks, the money involved and the tradition of political violence in Anambra State as his excuse. Chief Uba assured Ngige of all necessary support and encouraged him to accept the nomination. He provided Ngige with all that was needed to become the governor of the state. Chris Ngige won the election.

Victory at the polls did not translate to victory for friendship. Accusations between the two friends began almost immediately the elected governor was sworn into office. The godfather – Chris Uba ordered the abduction of Chris Nigige to an unknown location for failing to keep to their terms of agreement after he - Chris Uba used his financial resources to bring him – Chris Ngige – into office. These men were friends prior to the election of Chris Ngige as governor but the point made clear by the accusations and counter accusations that followed shows that their friendship was purely based on utility and on an unequal degree.

Impact of Transactional Friendship

The case of Anambra state is just one example among so many. The story is the same in Akwa Ibom state between the former governor Victor Attah and Godswill Akpabio; between former governor Godswill Akpabio and Gabriel Udom Emmanuel. In Edo State it was between Adams Oshiomole and his godson Godwin Obaseki. In fact, that of Edo state took a violent and satirical dimension in the run-up to the governorship election of 2020 to the extent that the factions of the gladiators in the state house of assembly resorted to removing the roofing sheets in the state house of assembly to prevent the other faction from sitting or have access to the facility. In Abia state, it was between Orji Uzo Kalu and his godson Theodor Orji. In Rivers state it was between Peter Odili and Chibuike Amaechi, then Between Amaechi and Nyesom Nwike, and now between Nyesom Nwike and Sim Fubara and the list goes on and on. The point to note is that godfatherism does not help the growth of democracy. It stifles genuine participation in politics by virtuous persons because of the accusations and counter accusations of disloyalty between supposed godfathers and their godsons.

For Aristotle, equality and likeness constitute friendly affection, and especially the likeness of those who are alike in point of virtue: since they are stable in themselves, they remain the same also in relation to each other, and they neither need base things nor offer aid of this sort; rather, they even obstruct it, so to speak, for it belongs to good people neither to err themselves nor to permit their friends to do so. Those who are corrupt are without steadiness, for they do not remain alike even to themselves; yet for a short time they do become friends, when they delight in each other's corruption. But those who are useful and pleasant remain friends for a longer time, for however long they provide pleasures or benefits to each other (176).

From Aristotle's assertion above, it can be seen that the phenomenon of godfatherism, most especially of the type that is seen in politics, is a worst-case scenario of transactional friendship. Their main goal is to use their client to attain selfish goals; the latter too do the same. The relationship between the two of them thus has little or nothing good for the larger society which the two of them claim to lead. The relationship between the godfathers and their clients has little or no enduring purpose that could hold both of them together. It is thus common to find them going in separate directions shortly after a 'contractual agreement' is reached

between them. The problem is that both of them lack a higher goal that could bind them together. Instead, they often have contradictory higher goals.

Conclusion

The notion of transactional friendship takes place when leaders and followers interact with a view to exchanging valued things. What is exchanged could be economic, psycho logical, political or hospitality to a person on the account of a contribution to helping to sustain the friend's well-being. Aristotle identified three types of friendships; those based on pleasure and utility, the perfect kind of friendship and the friendship of unequals. This distinction provides a detailed understanding of the different types of friendships people get involved in, and the underlining importance of recognizing the different bases upon which these kinds of friendship are formed. In addition, Aristotle's notion of friendship emphases the importance of virtue and moral character in forming and maintaining friendships because true friendship can only exist between people who share a common commitment to virtue and moral excellence. This emphasis on virtue provides a strong foundation for friendships as it ensures that relationships are built on a shared sense of values and principles rather than Transactional.

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A PHILOSOPHICAL EXPOSITION OF THE ILLUSIVENESS OF THE SELF IN THE DIGITAL AGE

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Abstract

The question " who am I?" or " what is the nature of my being?" seeks to unravel what constitutes one's identity, values, purpose and place in the world. So, the idea of the self presupposes a persons' understanding and perception of who they are in terms of their thoughts, feelings, actions and unique attributes. Today, our constant interaction with digital platforms increasingly shapes our perception and interaction with others leading to what this paper sees as the " illusion of the self". Against this backdrop, the paper critically exposes the illusion of the self in the digital age. It argues that this illusion arises as we curate and present ourselves online, often selectively highlighting certain aspects of our identities and masking others. This creates a fragmented self that disconnects between the digital self and the real self which ultimately results in the blurring of boundaries between reality and virtuality. In addition, the paper shows that the constant feedback loop of likes, comments, and shares can further reinforce this illusion, leading individuals to prioritize online validation and external perceptions over their authentic selves. In order to avoid this fragmented self, the paper advocates for the cultivation of the culture of self-reflection and critical thinking in the consumption of online platforms in order to maintain a healthy sense of self-authenticity.

Keywords: Critical Thinking, Digital Age, Digital Self, Fragmented Self, Self, Self-reflection.

Introduction

The “problem of the self” explores the complexities of what constitute the self; encompassing questions of continuity, discontinuity, and the nature of consciousness over time. It delves into whether the self is a unified entity or a collection of experiences and processes. Philosophically, it grapples with issues like whether the self is an illusion, a product of habits and desires, or a fundamental aspect of existence. For this reason, philosophers have argued that the development of authentic self is the central lifelong project for each of us. In view of this, Thoreau asked “If I am not I, who will be? “(126). In the same vein, Kierkegaard declared: “From becoming an individual no one, no one at all, is excluded, except he who excludes himself by becoming a crowd.” (121) This means that the search for meaning is the search for expression of one’s real self. So, what does it mean to be a “self”? “Are we born with a self, or is it developed?” Is it one thing, or many? In fact, “how much of me is me?”, Is the self-something that we can know and understand? What actually constitute the self? Is the self reduceable to our physical existence, a collection of memories, habits, and desires or is there something more fundamental that transcends these aspects? How do we differentiate between ourselves and others? These questions form the central concerns of the problem of the self in philosophy.

However, the digitalization in today's world is redefining our understanding of the self as it has been significantly impacted by the rise of technology, particularly the internet and social media. In this sense, "new forms of self-presentation, interaction and cognitive augmentation are now possible thanks to social media platforms, neurotechnology and artificial intelligence" (Senthil et al, 1). The direct result of this is the emergence of a "digital self," which is an online identity distinct from or intertwined with one's real-world self. The digital self is shaped by online activities, social media profiles, the data trails of online interactions as well as AI-powered tools that enables the individual users to create and manipulate digital representations of themselves in newly profound ways. This paper therefore critically exposes the illusiveness of the self in the digital age highlighting the debilitating impact of digital platforms on our conceptualization of the self and possible ways of mitigating this challenge. In a bid to achieve its objectives the paper clarifies the idea of the self through the purview of some perspectives on the nature of the self. It highlights the meaning and characteristics of digital age and also outlines some digital platforms.

The Nature of the Self

Etymologically, the word "self" is derived from the Dutch Zelf and German Selbe which express an emphatic sense of "I" myself. In this sense, the self refers to ego, subject, I, me as opposed to the object or the totality of objects; may be distinguished from "not me". According to the Dictionary of Philosophy the self is "the quality of uniqueness and persistence through changes, by virtue of which a person may call himself I and leading to the distinction among selves, as implied in each word as myself, yourself, himself. It refers to the uniqueness of anything, as in 'itself' (288)

The self is an individual person as the object of his or her reflective consciousness. This reference is necessarily subjective. Thus, the self is a reference by a subject to the same subject. The self is therefore distinguishable from "others". It is a person's sense of identity, distinct from others, encompassing their thoughts, feelings, actions and overall perception of who they are. The self is also seen as the source of consciousness; the agent responsible for an individual's thoughts and actions or the substantial nature of a person which endures and unifies consciousness over time.

Philosophical Perspectives on the Nature of the Self

The first major perspective on the nature of the self is the Socratic-Platonic idea that the immortal soul is synonymous to the self. In his analysis of human nature, Plato sees man as a dualistic being composed of the body and the soul. On the one hand, the body is a material substance that is nothing but a temporal vessel for the soul in its earthly sojourn. On the other hand, the soul is the essence of the self, immortal, pre-exists the body and ultimately seeks truth and knowledge. In Plato's Phaedo, as quoted by John Chaffee, Socrates elaborates this dualistic description of man as follows:

> when the soul and the body are united, then nature orders the soul to rule and govern, and the body to obey and serve… the soul is in the very likeness of the divine, and immortal, and intellectual, and uniform, and indissoluble, and unchangeable; and that the body is in the very likeness of the human, and mortal, and unintellectual, and multiform, and indissoluble and changeable. (93-94).

This quote underscores the superiority of the soul over the body and establishes same as the essential element of the human person. For this reason, Plato equates the soul with the

self as the essential nature of man as it is seen as "the seat of human consciousness". (Ishaya, 122). To drive home this point, he describes the soul as being composed of three parts namely:

i. Rational (Logistikon): This represents our divine essence that enables us to think deeply, make wise choices and achieve a true understanding of eternal truths.
ii. Spirited (Thymoeides): This represents honor, ambition, and emotions. Its major task is to support reason.
iii. Appetitive (Epithymetikon): This represents our basic biological needs such as hunger, bodily needs and sexual desires.

From the above classification of the soul, Plato points out that there exists a dynamic relationship among the three parts such that they sometimes work in concert or in bitter conflict. Plato believes that when conflicts occur it is the responsibility of our reason to sort things out and exert control, re-establishing a harmonious relationship between the three elements of ourselves. For this reason, Plato attributes the rational part of the soul with the true self since it is the coordinating element of our being. However, the major problem with of this conception of the self lies in its impracticality in explaining the physical world, and its neglect of the body's influence on the identity of the self and behaviour.

The second major philosophical perspective on the nature of the self is the Cartesian notion of the self as a thinking thing. This is derived from Rene Descartes famous self-reflective assertion "I think, therefore I am" (cogito, ergo sum). The "I" which is the self is a thinking, immaterial substance (mind/soul) distinct from the body, whose essence is consciousness. In his radical mind-body dualism, Descartes sees the self as fundamentally a non-physical "thinking thing" that knows its own existence with certainty, even while doubting the external world and its own physical form, creating a subjective inner-focused self. In his Meditations on First Philosophy, as quoted by Chaffee, Descartes outlines the notion of the self as a thinking thing as follows:

> Although, I certainly do possess a body with which I am very closely conjoined; nevertheless, because, on the one hand, I have a clear and distinct idea of myself, in as far as I am only a thinking and unextended thing, and as, on the other hand, I possess a distinct idea of body, in as far as it is only an extended and unthinking thing, if it is certain that I, [that is, my mind, by which I am what I am], is entirely and truly distinct from my body and may exist without it. (Chaffee 106).

In the above quote, Descartes famously asserts the primacy of consciousness in defining the core of the self. In a nutshell, to be conscious of the self; is to be aware of the self. However, critics have pointed out that the problem with this Cartesian notion of the self is based on how the immaterial self, interacts with the physical body and the external world leading to issues like solipsism, that is, the claim that only the self is certain to exist.

The third major philosophical perspective of the nature of the self is the Lockean notion of the self as continuous consciousness and memory built through experience. According to Locke, it is always in relation to our present sensations and perceptions that everyone is to himself that which he calls self. In his words, as quoted by Chaffee:

> For as far as any intelligent being can repeat the idea of any past action with the same consciousness, it has of it as first, and with the same consciousness it has of any present action; so far as it is the same personal self. For it is by the consciousness it has of its present thoughts and actions, that it is self to itself now. (112).

In Locke's view, conscious awareness and memory of previous experiences are the keys to understanding the self. In other words, you have a coherent concept of yourself as a distinct self because you are aware of yourself when you are thinking, feeling, and willing. Also, you have a memory of times when you were aware of yourself in the past; in other situations. Thus, for Locke, the self consists in the sameness of a rational being. Consciousness always accompanies thinking and as far as one extends his consciousness backwards to any past action or thought, so far reaches the identification of the self. (Nnoruka 25) This according to Locke is because "it is the same self now as it was then; and it is by the same self with this present one that reflects on it, that the action was done". (449) However, the problem with the Lockean notion of the self is the fact that there are many moments when we are not consciously aware of our self, that is, when we are simply unreflectively existing e.g. being in a state of dreaming. Furthermore, there are many past experiences that we have forgotten or have faulty recollections of. Thus, during these lapses, when we are not aware of our self nor remember being aware of our self, we cannot be sure if we were the same person, the same substance, the same soul.

It is important to note at this juncture that due to the constraint of space the paper only review the above philosophical perspectives as representatives of several views on the nature of the self. However, philosophers like William James, Thomas Aquinas, David Hume, Immanuel Kant, Gilbert Ryle have offered different perspectives on the nature of the self, ranging from the empirical self, the self as a unified entity or a psychological continuity, the self as a bundle or collection of different perceptions, the self as a constructed entity, to the self as how we behave. In essence, the nature of the self is an obscure complex and multifaceted topic that continues to be explored and debated across various theoretical frameworks in philosophy and other related disciplines. This debate becomes more complicated and problematic as the sense of the self is continually being influence by the virtuality of existence in this digital age. Virtuality of existence as used here refers to the quality of existing in a non-physical, computer-generated realm. It is a simulated interaction devoid of real-world experience that exists in effect rather than in physical reality. It describes a mode of being where an entity functions, has impact or is experienced without possessing a material form, bridging the gap between imagination, digital simulation and actual reality.

What is Digital Age?

The expression "Digital Age" describes the current period marked by the extensive utilization and incorporation of digital technologies in human affairs. The digital age, also known as the information age or the computer age refers to the current era characterized by the rapid advancement and integration of digital technologies, impacting various aspects of human society and economy. According to Bartling, the digital age is shaped by the interaction of digitization, connectivity, mobility and miniaturization. www.teamnext.de. For this reason, it is defined by the ability to easily and rapidly transmit and access information, as well as the increasing importance of data and digital communication. This is made possible through various digital platforms such as face book, Instagram, Twitter, You Tube, Tik Tok, Ebay, Shopify and so on.

Characteristics of Digital Age

1. **Widespread Use of Digital Technology:** Computers, Smartphones, and other digital devices are common place.
2. **Easy Access to Information:** The internet provides a vast amount of information at our finger tips.
3. **Rapid Information Sharing:** Digital technologies facilitate instant communication and information exchange.
4. **Digital Transformation:** Many aspects of life and business are being transformed by digital technologies.
5. **Economic Impact:** The digital Age has created new industries and business models.
6. **Social Impact:** Digital Technologies have reshaped social interactions and communication.

What are Digital Platforms?

Digital platforms are online systems that facilitate interactions and transactions between users. It refers to a web-based structural software package that speed and eases the communication and transactions between and among users. They can be classified as follows:

1. **Social Media Platforms:**
   a. **Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, LinkedIn, Tik Tok**
      These platforms connect individuals and organizations, enabling communication, sharing of information, and building communities.
   b. **You Tube**
      This is a platform for video sharing, content creation, and entertainment.

2. **E-commerce Platforms**
   a. **Amazon, eBay, Etsy**
      These platforms facilitate online shopping, connecting buyers with sellers.
   b. **Shopify**
      This is a platform that helps businesses create and manage their online stores.

3. **Cloud Computing Platforms**
   a. **Google Cloud, AWS (Amazon Web Services), Microsoft Azure**
      These platforms provide on-demand access to computing resources, storage, and other services.
   b. **Digital Ocean**
      This is a cloud hosting platform that provides virtual machines and other infrastructure services.

4. **Communication and Collaboration Tools**
   a. **Zoom, Google Meet**
      These are video conferencing platforms for remote meetings and collaborations.
   b. **Slack, Microsoft Teams**
      These are messaging and collaboration platforms for teams and organizations
   c. **Google Workspace, Microsoft 365**
      These are suites of online productivity tools including email, document editing, and project management.

5. **Digital Marketing Platforms**
   a. **Google Ads, Facebook Ads**
      These are platforms for online advertising, allowing businesses to reach targeted audiences.
   b. **Buffer, Spout Social**
      These are social media management platforms for scheduling posts, managing engagements, and analyzing performance.
   c. **Marketing CloudFx**
      This is a platform that centralizes digital marketing features, including search engine rankings, email campaigns, and lead tracking.

The Digital Age and It's Influence on the Self

In the digital age, our sense of self is increasingly shaped by our online personas and experiences, leading to the phenomenon of the "illusiveness of the self." This refers to the idea that our sense of self is not a fixed, continuous entity but rather a fragmented and evolving construct, shaped by our interactions with digital technologies and the online world. This is due to the multiplicity of digital personas we create and the ways in which technology influences our perception of self, others, and reality. This illusiveness arises as we curate and present ourselves online, often selectively highlighting certain aspects of our identities and masking others. In this way, we unconsciously bifurcate ourselves into two, namely: the real self (the masked self) and the digital self (the numerous identities created and visible online). The constant feedback loop of likes, comments, and shares constantly reinforce and strengthen this illusiveness of the self, leading individuals to prioritize online validation and external perceptions over their authentic selves. The profound impacts of the digital age on our sense of self includes but not limited to the followings:

1. **Multiple Personas and the Fragmented Self**
   The digital world allows us to create and maintain multiple online personas or identities; each tailored to different platforms and audiences. This leads to dishonesty in personality as we hide behind our digital mask to present to the world what we are not but want the world to see us as. This fragmentation of the self can blur the lines between our real-world identity and our digital self, potentially leading to a situation of being "disconnected" from our authentic self. In other words, the digital realm leads us to bifurcate the "I" (our inner self) from the "Me" (our public self) which leads to a dissociation between our online self and our authentic self. This is because our online selves may not always align with our offline personas which consequently leads to a disoriented self. In effect, our online selves become curated representations, often prioritizing certain aspects of ourselves while downplaying others.

2. **The Illusion of Being in Control**
   We exert considerable control over how we present ourselves online, which can create a sense of illusionary power and influence. This control can extend to our relationships, as we selectively share information and experiences with others, potentially leading to misunderstandings or misinterpretations. This gives us an illusory sense of being in charge of our affairs which unfortunately is controlled by public expectations in the race to attract increase in streaming and viewership. The digital world can also magnify

the feeling of being judged or observed, leading to a heightened sense of self-consciousness and anxiety.

3. **The Pursuit of Validation or Narcissistic Tendencies**
   The digital age has fostered a culture of instant gratification and validation through likes, comments, and shares. This can lead individuals to prioritize online engagement over genuine connections and real-world experiences. The fear of being overlooked or unappreciated in the digital space creates digital panic of the self as individuals strive to meet the expectations of others and gain external validation. This leads to the individual becoming fixated on their online image and external validation. According to Ibrahim and Umeh, the social media in the digital age "presents a distorted picture of reality, which eventually erodes the sense of judgement of its users as they are blindfolded by the pursuit of public validation that the social media offers". (3) In other words, the digital age is deeply characterized by a sense of self-worth that is dependent not on self-conviction but a deep slumber into public validation and gratification.

4. **Evolving "Digital Self"**
   The digital age is fostering a new form of self, a "digitalized self," distinct from the traditional sense of self. This "Digitalized Self" is shaped by our interactions with technology, our online identities, and the evolving digital environment. The evolving digital self is the online persona and identity that people build, shape and share through internet tools, social media and digital devices that in no time make one lose the sense of the real self as constant updates of the projection of the self creates a frenzy of distorted personalities that the individual involved loses the sense of whom the real person is. This tendency grows as technology changes, blending our real-world lives with virtual spaces.

5. **Suspension of Concreate Social Relationships**
   The digital world can make it more difficult to form genuine connections and build meaningful relationships. Our online personas may differ significantly from our real-world selves, leading to a sense of disconnect or disappointment in personal interactions. The constant availability of online communication can also make it harder to be present in the moment and appreciate the richness of real-world experiences. In view of this, Creely et al argue that social engagement, such as relationships and interactions, so essential to personhood, has been devalued and focused on self-awareness and a curated self-expression. (1) Thus, the constant online consumption and engagement of social media contents serenades people's sense of commitment to the extent that they become bankrupt of concrete social relationships.

Conclusion

From the foregoing, it is clear that the digital age has profound impacts on our sense of self as we are gradually but steadily transiting from traditional sense of self to a digitalized self. This has resulted into a multiple sense of self and a fragmented identity to the extent that we unfortunately place more importance on our public self at the expense of our true self. It has also led to the illusion of being in control which gives us a fleeting impression of power and influence that ends in a heightened self-consciousness and anxiety as well as the pursuit of validation and narcissistic tendencies. More importantly, our personal relationships have been

severely affected as the electronic devices distract us from living in the moment. Real relationships require real conversation, real face to face engagement and real emotion. When we text, e-mail, voice note, Facebook, and the like, we lose a vital piece of our concreate relationship: the emotional connection. In view of these challenges, it is clear that there is need for us to cultivate and internalize the culture of self-reflection and critical thinking about our engagement with digital platforms. Self-reflection on the hand is the process of thinking deeply about one's own thoughts, feelings, behaviours and motivations. It involves taking a step back to question with the aim of understanding why you act, think, and feel the way you do which ultimately leads to personal growth, self-awareness and purposeful decision making. Critical thinking on the other hand refers to the utilization of a variety of thinking tools or techniques, such as the formulation of logical arguments, detection of logical validity and fallacies, analysis of concepts, and exposure of hidden assumptions in a reflective process. The combination of these two principles empower us to evaluate our online identities and understand the impacts of online presence on our sense of self. By so doing, we are better equipped and prepared to navigate the digital world more consciously, reflectively and responsibly thereby maintaining a healthy sense of self authenticity. With this, we are placed on a vantage point to develop a mindful approach to digital consumption and prioritize real-world connections and experience. This re-echoes the Socratic dictum that "the unexamined life is not worth living" So, as we engage in the usage of various digital platforms, we need to be aware and conscious of the dangers of possible transformational effect on our sense of self from a unified traditional sense of self to a fragmented digitalized self. This empowers us to question and evaluate the state of the sense of self we are in within a moment. This serves as a checkmating mechanism to take control of developing and maintaining our sense of self and who we are without leaving it to a non-conscious illusive determining power of the digital platforms in today's world. In a nutshell, a self-questioning self; is an authentic self.

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REPRESENTATIONALISM AND THE VIABILITY OF EMPIRICAL KNOWLEDGE

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Abstract

The sceptical implication of the Representational theory of perception undermines the possibility of having adequate empirical knowledge of the external world. In view of the significance of empirical knowledge for the viability of scientific explanations and our understanding of the nature of reality, it is important to develop a coherent account of the nature and viability of empirical knowledge that is consistent with modern scientific explanations. The sceptical implications of the representational theory detract from its adequacy as a plausible account of empirical knowledge. To present a desirable and coherent account of empirical knowledge that avoids the sceptical implications of representationalism, this paper examines the neo-representational argument for the practical account of perception. While rejecting this practical account, the paper argues to defend an alternative representational but non-practical account of perceptual experience which implies a pragmatic justification of empirical knowledge. The paper argues further that this alternative account of perception is consistent with the nature of empirical knowledge and the basic scientific understanding of the nature of reality.

Keywords: Empirical Knowledge, Neo-representationalism, Representationalism, , Perception, Scepticism,

Introduction

The position of human beings in relation to the universe can be understood from two different perspectives. On one hand, human beings are, along with other things, objects within the universe, that is, a part of external reality. From this perspective, a human being is in the same category as plants, buildings, and other elements, natural or artefactual, which make up the universe. On another hand, human beings are subjects who have the ability to put the universe (which includes human beings themselves) in perspective, with a view to understanding this reality and what may be regarded as its ultimate constituents. In this regard, humans are significantly distinct from many objects in reality, especially inanimate objects.

The attempt to understand the nature of reality and its constituents, suggests the question of means. This implies that any attempt to understand reality, and its constituents, raises a fundamental question about the source(s) of our access, as human beings, to information about that universe and its constituents. Thus, the question about the ultimate constituent of the universe raises questions about the sources of our knowledge of the universe and how this universe is presented to the human subject. These questions about the ultimate constituent of the universe, our source of knowledge of this universe, and how the universe and its constituent is presented to us, among other things, are fundamental questions in the tradition of British Empiricism; a tradition represented classically with the philosophies of John Locke, George Berkeley and David Hume.

The aim of this paper is to examine the views held by these philosophers, especially Locke's representational account of perception and its sceptical implication for empirical knowledge. The paper argues that Locke's representationalism engenders some serious sceptical implications about empirical knowledge and that attempts by the traditional British empiricists, and other traditional representationalist are not adequate to address this problem. In view of the importance of empirical knowledge for the viability of scientific explanations, it is important that the sceptical implications are mediated. This paper attempts to present such mediation by arguing that the requirements placed on empirical knowledge by the traditional Empiricists are too strong. The paper therefore proposes that this requirement be reviewed in a way that presupposes an appropriate relation between the object of knowledge (the external world), the standard for assessing empirical knowledge, and the tool or source of knowledge (human senses).

The British Empiricist Tradition

For the empiricists (Locke, Berkeley and Hume), at perception, the direct objects of our knowledge of the universe are ideas which are gotten through the senses. But do these ideas present to us the exact nature of the things that ultimately constitute the primary material of the universe? For Locke, ideas are not the ultimate constituents of the universe. However, the senses, which are the tools available to us, can only reveal ideas to us through sensation. It follows that the material of which the universe is ultimately made cannot be revealed to us by the senses. There appears to be no doubt that the ideas revealed by the senses do not ultimately make up the reality of the structure of the universe. The joint perception of these various ideas at various times seems to suggest that there is an underlying substance in which the ideas subsist. Thus, even though we are incapable of directly apprehending the material substance which ultimately constitutes the universe, we are sure of its existence. We are therefore aware of the existence of this substance even though we do not know what it is. Since it is difficult to imagine that the perceived ideas could be without something on which they subsist, we imagine that there are primary substances which support the ideas that are presented to the senses. While these primary substances are responsible for the ideas which are presented to the senses at perception, the substances themselves are not accessible to the human senses. Our window to the external world is simply the ideas that represent them to our sense. (John Locke 54)

The inaccessibility of the supposed material substance of the universe to the senses has implications for empirical knowledge. It implies that what the senses are capable of revealing to us are ideas which allegedly represent reality, not the basic reality itself. One sceptical implication of this is that the existence of material substances becomes suspect. If we cannot apprehend them, we may not be justified in claiming that they exist, or that they are fabrics that make up the universe, or even that the ideas that allegedly represent them are anything like

them. (Nelson Goodman; Michael Dummett) It is difficult to prove that the ideas that are revealed to the senses actually represent the supposed material objects since there are no means available to compare these ideas with the unperceivable underlying substance. This objection to Locke's Indirect Realism is summarized in Harold Brown's note that the standard objection to indirect realism is the introduction of a third entity that allegedly stands between a perceiver and the external world. It is impossible to determine whether these alleged representations are true representations of physical reality because we are cut off from any direct perceptual access to that world (341).

George Berkeley's idealism is an objection to Locke's representationalism. Berkeley insists that the Lockean representational account of perception puts us in a difficult position with regards to our knowledge of the universe. Such wanderings lead us into a "forlorn scepticism" (136). The scepticism suggests that the existence of objects in the external world is suspect because there is no way we can argue that material objects exist without a mind perceiving them. Thus, Berkeley developed his idealism to combat the scepticism inherent in Locke's representationalism. The essence of any existing object is in its being perceived. Berkeley's suggested escape from this sceptical implication is that the ideas perceived by the senses are ideas of external objects subsisting in the mind of a universal spirit. Ideas can only represent ideas, nothing more. If this is true, then the external material world can only be made of ideas. Thus, even though we perceive ideas, the supposed material objects which they represent are simply ideas in the mind of that universal spirit (Berkeley 152–53).

By introducing the idea of the universal spirit in the explanation of the subsistence of ideas of material objects, Berkeley strips physical objects, not only of their primacy as the ultimate constituents of the universe, but also of any causal powers that such objects are supposed to possess. Given Berkeley's position, "the true cause of any phenomenon is a spirit, and most often it is the same spirit, namely, God" (Lisa Downing). Such an account is hardly compatible with the scientific understanding of the universe based on observation of the relations between perceivable objects in the universe. Thus, a different kind of scepticism is engendered where empirical knowledge has nothing to do with physical objects and the interactions between these objects.

David Hume's empiricism defends a representationalist account of perception similar to Locke. Hume maintains that our knowledge of the external world depends on the senses (David Hume 324). He believed that the ideas received at perception are copies of sensory impressions and these ideas represent the external world, even though the human mind can only directly access its own perceptions, not the external world itself. However, Hume notes that empirical knowledge is based on cause-and-effect relation, and that cause-and-effect relation is based on experience, which in turn depends on a supposed relation between causes and their alleged effects. This supposed relation between cause and effect, for Hume, is unfounded and cannot be justified perceptually through the senses, or demonstratively though relations of ideas (David Hume 327). Following from this, whatever the senses reveal to us is not sufficient to give us knowledge of the ultimate constituents of the universe. Thus, Hume, Locke and Berkeley present accounts of empirical knowledge which lead to sceptical conclusions concerning scientific explanations and our knowledge of the external world around us and the alleged entities that constitute that world. This has grave implications for scientific explanations.

The Empirical Foundations of Science

Scientific explanations basically consist of showing that events are instances of well-supported regularities. Such explanations may be either of two kinds; probabilistic or deductive. As such, all scientific statements are reducible to probabilistic or logical deductions from observation sentences. Scientific investigations, according to this conception, start with the formulation of hypotheses which are confirmed or falsified through empirical evidence (Carl G. Hempel; Richard M. Hare; Russell Keat and John Urry 175).

As epistemic agents or subjects, trying to understand and explain the world around us, human beings have relied so much on science and scientific explanations to achieve this goal. Observation plays an important role in scientific explanations. Whether as premises of some probabilistic or deductive models of reasoning or as a tool for confirming or falsifying theories, observations and observation sentences are integral foundations of scientific explanations. The variations among the different conceptions of scientific explanation depend on the view of each conception about how observation performs its role. Thus, while recognizing that there are variations in how the link between observation and theoretical conclusion may be interpreted, Peter Kosso maintains that "all scientific knowledge must be based on observation. It must have empirical foundations" (9). A similar view is proposed by Clifford Hooker in his discussion of the basic tenets of empiricism where he notes that sensory experience is the foundation for all knowledge about the world and all claims to knowledge about the world must be justified in terms of sensory evidence (60).

Given this all-important role of observation to scientific explanations, it is clearer how the views of Locke, Berkeley and Hume entail scepticism about the viability of scientific explanations. Observation sentences form an essential part of any scientific explanation. These observation sentences are based on our mode of awareness of the universe as mediated by the senses. If, as implied by Locke's representationalism, and the other traditional British Empiricists, the senses do not give us genuine knowledge of the materials of which the external world is constituted, then observation sentences and, by implication, scientific explanations are not reliable in our understanding of this external world.

In the face of the importance, and success, of scientific explanations in the relation of human beings to the universe as a whole, an attempt to defend the viability of scientific explanations is a worthy enterprise. It is therefore expedient to mediate the sceptical challenges to empirical knowledge implicit in the views of the empiricists discussed above. This problem may be viewed from two different planes; conceptual and methodological. On the conceptual plane, the problem may be viewed as a problem with the concept of knowledge implied by these empiricists. Given this understanding of the sceptical challenge, a proper way to go is a conceptual analysis of the concept of knowing. Such an approach will probably suggest that the concept of 'knowing' presupposed in the traditional empiricist position is unacceptable. This is not the approach that will be adopted in the current paper. On the methodological plane, the problem may be viewed as a problem of the requirements for knowledge that is presupposed in assessing our knowledge of the universe and its ultimate constituents. This is the perspective from which the current paper is set to address the sceptical challenge to the viability of empirical knowledge.

Representationalism and Knowledge Requirement

The question, then, is about the things required to have knowledge of the universe. In other words, what are the requirements for knowledge of the universe? This question can be broken into three other questions. First, what is our tool for apprehending the universe and its

constituents? Second, what is our mode of apprehending that universe with those tools? Third, what standards are available for assessing the reliability of our claims to knowledge of the universe?

The first question is concerned about the sources available to discover the universe around us. Traditionally, the available sources of knowledge are divided into two – reason and sense experience. Which of these two is relevant in our apprehension of the universe? Since we are concerned with empirical knowledge, the answer is fairly obvious; our pathway to knowledge of the external world is, primarily, through the senses. The primacy of the role of the senses in our apprehension of the universe is affirmed by many philosophers, though there are variations in the degree to which philosophers are ready to allow reason influence the materials presented by the senses. For philosophers like Immanuel Kant, the role of reason in the attainment of knowledge is to work on the materials presented to the senses. As such, whatever cognitive capabilities the mind may be supposed to have, as far as the subject is knowledge of the external world, sense experience provides the original data which stimulates the mind. It is this stimulation of the mind that brings the activities of understanding to life, where the human subject begins to compare, connect, or separate these sensory data into a cognition of objects (Kant 138).

The second question concerns the mode through which our senses reveal the external world to us. This is the proper domain of the problem of perception; the problem of what exactly is the status of the materials presented to the senses. For Direct Realists, the external world is directly apprehended by the senses. The objects of perception are therefore the physical objects existing independently of our perception of them, and are directly perceived by the senses as they are (Laurence Bonjour). For Indirect Realists such as Locke, Physical objects exist but are not directly perceived by the senses. What the senses perceive are ideas which only represent the physical objects. The physical objects themselves are beyond what can be perceived by the senses. For Berkeley, the senses perceive only ideas which are copies of no other things than ideas. Nothing can exist independently of a perceiving mind. What we erroneously take to be physical objects are simply a fleeting sensation of ideas. From whatever theoretical standpoint one views the problem of perception, there seems to be a difficulty of presenting an accurate account of what the external world looks like.

If the external world is inaccessible to our senses which are our only means of apprehending this external world, then scientific knowledge is suspect. This is because as noted by Barnett Savery, “Scientific knowledge consists of empirical propositions that have been verified (or are verifiable)” (Barnett Savery 44) Our means of verifying these propositions are through the information we get from the senses about the external world. But if, as the problem of perception suggests, we do not have direct access to this external world, then one may begin to doubt the evidence obtained through the senses. This problem plays out clearly in the possibility of perceptual errors. This is usually one of the major grounds for the rejection of direct realism. As a good number of philosophers have argued, if we perceive the external world directly, then, it should be impossible for errors to occur in our perception of that external world. Thus, the possibility of perceptual errors suggests that we do not apprehend the external world directly (Carlo Raineri; Takuya Niikawa). This is one of the challenges that representationalism sets out to address.

In Empiricism and the Philosophy of Mind, Wilfrid Sellars argues that perceptual experiences are not simply raw sensations. Rather they are representational states that purport to present the external world as being in a particular way. Thus, for him, perception is conceptual because it has a propositional content which represents objects as having certain

properties (Wilfrid Sellars). A similar, though non-conceptual, view is defended by Fred Dretske who argues that perceptual states are information-carrying relations between the perceiving subject and the object perceived. These perceptual states are representational states that carry information about the environment. For example, perceiving a red apple involves a representational state that carries the information that there is a red apple here. Given such representational accounts of perception, perceptual errors are explained away as some sort of mismatch between perceptual content and the real nature of the external object being perceived. Dretske, for instance, notes that, in illusions, experiences represent the world, but they do so inaccurately. Similarly, in hallucinations, experiences still have representational content even though they are not caused by the appropriate objects (Knowledge and the Flow of Information 194–95).

While these modern representationalists are able to explain the possibility of perceptual errors within the representationalist framework, their positions raise a number of other concerns. Chief among these concerns is the fact that the very possibility of perceptual errors remains a veritable challenge for representationalism. This is because, given that epistemologists have persistently tried to explain the justification of knowledge claims in terms of truth, and given that the possibility of perceptual errors make this kind of justification difficult for empirical knowledge, it is difficult to account for empirical knowledge within the representationalist framework, as long as certainty or truth remains the goal of knowledge. In other words, as long as representationalism retains truth or objectivity as an essential goal of knowledge, the possibility of perceptual errors creates a consistency in the representationalist account of perception and the goal of truth or certainty in empirical knowledge.

Alison Springle and Alessandra Buccella identify this nagging challenge facing representationalism. Thus, they argue that the presupposition of orthodox representationalism - that perception is about objectivity and veridicality, is not acceptable and it is inconsistent with contemporary scientific accounts of perception. This, for them, is because objectivity and subjectivity are not absolute. They come in degrees and they come together. Besides, the degree of objectivity or veridicality that may be deduced from a perceptual experience depends on the perceiver's capacity to act in ways that are sensitive to the nature of the things that they are directed at (Springle and Buccella 5–7). The implication of this is that orthodox or traditional representationalist accounts do not present an adequate account of what can serve as plausible evidence for the justification of empirical knowledge claims. Thus, the sceptical challenge that representationalism tries to address remains. This is why Springle and Beccella reject what they call the orthodox representationalist account, proposing instead what I call a neo-representationalist account of perception. This new account retains the tenets of representationalism while proposing a review of the role of perception in our cognition of the empirical world.

The foregoing discussion of the nature of representationalism leads to a third question which concerns the goal of empirical knowledge. Since it is not all beliefs arising from perception that may be taken as presenting an adequate data for scientific or empirical knowledge, it is important to examine the question of what constitutes the actual goal of empirical knowledge. This is important in order to determine how well perceptual data can help in the attainment of this goal. This can also help to scrutinise our perceptual states to distinguish perceptual contents that may count as evidence for knowledge and those that may not. Within the traditional epistemic context, the goal of cognition is attainment of truth. And the standards for attaining this are usually set as a form of logical requirements for scientific reasoning. For instance, when Hume argued that all knowledge claims are either of two types (relation of ideas

and matters of fact), he set a certain standard for acceptable knowledge claims. This standard influenced the conception of scientific claims as conclusions of either inductive or probabilistic modes of explaining events in the universe, or conclusions of deductive explanations (Hempel 55) In other words, scientific knowledge consists of a body of inferred conclusions from a logical relation of beliefs and principles. Essential parts of what makes up the belief that are being related are our perceptual beliefs. The proper role for reason in the acquisition of empirical knowledge, therefore, is to guide our inferences from our perceptual beliefs to empirical knowledge.

The problem arising for empirical and scientific knowledge comes to the fore in the famous Humean problem, the problem of induction. Whatever means we adopt in arriving at the conclusions of our empirical inference or observation sentences, there seems to be a gap in any attempt to justify such conclusions. Simply put, Hume says neither relation of ideas nor matters of fact can give us adequate knowledge of the external world. In other words, empirical knowledge is not logically justifiable, whether deductively or inductively. Since these are the two traditional canons for assessing the rationality of our claims, it suggests that empirical propositions and, consequently, empirical knowledge is not justifiable. Bas C. Van Fraassen, in his discussion of the attempts to address the problem of induction, clearly explains this problem by noting that "the contention that these rules lead science to the truth cannot be demonstrated a priori. Nor can that contention be derived by Induction. Thus, he concludes that the empiricist theory of science has run itself into the ground (254).

Perception and the goal of cognition

The forgoing discussion suggests that the question of the requirement of scientific knowledge is divisible into the three questions of sources, modes and goal of empirical cognition. The question of the source is less problematic than the other two. Our senses are the windows through which we perceive the external world. Reason comes in to aid the relation of the raw data which is taken in through the senses in order to arrive at conclusions which present our understanding of reality. The second question, as noted above, takes us to the ubiquitous problem of perception. What exactly do the senses present at any point of perception of the external world? Is it the objects as they exist directly, or representations of them? Many theories of perception have answers to the two questions above. For Direct Realists, what really exists in the universe is identical with what is presented to the senses at any moment of perception, and these are the physical objects. For representationalists, what really exist are physical objects which are not presented to the senses. What is presented to the senses are sense data or impressions representing the physical objects. Thus, the representationalists insist that perceptual states provide us with intentional content that represent external reality. Thus, what is presented at perception is a content which is distinct from the real objects in reality.

The question about the goal of cognition as far as empirical knowledge is concerned is important for, at least, two reasons. First, that the human mind has certain awareness at any moment of perception is fairly obvious. During perception, there seems to be no doubt that the mind has awareness and that this awareness is connected to "things" in reality. Controversies only begin when attempts are made to interpret the act of perception and how it contributes to our knowledge of things in the external world. This is why Savery argues that perceptual data have exactly the characteristics that they are apprehended as having, and there are no errors about the data that make up the perceptual content. It is when we start interpreting and analysing these data in relation to external reality that we begin to identify errors. For instance, if the content of my perceptual experience is red apple, whether the experience is hallucinatory or veridical, there are no mistakes that I have a red apple as the content of my perceptual

experience. It is when I move from that content to make claims about whether that content aligns with external reality that it becomes an issue whether that perceptual content is an error or not (Savery).

A second importance of this question is that addressing it is important to providing a successful ground for explaining and defending the viability of empirical knowledge. As Springle and Buccella already argue, as long as the analysis of perception focuses on veridicality or absolute objectivity as the goal of empirical cognition, representationalism will remain inadequate because the goal of perception does not necessarily require veridicality (Springle and Buccella 14). To address this challenge, they argue that the goal of perception, rather than veridicality, is to position an epistemic agent "to produce an appropriate action with respect to some target." This is to say that the goal of perception is not to attain truth about external objects. The proper aim of perception is practical. Consequently, conceptualizing and ontologizing the environment are not primary goals of perception. In other words, the goal of empirical knowledge is to help to interact with reality, or to respond properly to reality. The goal is not necessarily to develop truths about reality (Springle and Buccella 12). Thus, the goal of veridicality, which has been the target of traditional representationalists, is one of its primary setbacks. Given the focus on the practical goal of responding to the external world, rather than describing it, representationalism regains its foothold. This is because, as long as perceptual data aids a proper response to the external world, perception has played its role adequately. Whether the perceptual content is appropriately stimulated by reality or not becomes a secondary issue. This suggests that if representationalists adopt practical success, rather than veridicality, as the goal of empirical knowledge, then the representationalist account of perception is adequate.

The pragmatic significance of perception

While the neo-representationalist account of Springle and Buccella rescues representationalism from its sceptical implications, it does so at a very serious cost. This account downplays a lot of the significance of perceptual content and seems to presuppose that the primary basis for any perceptual experience is that it leads to practical interaction with objects in the external world. This, rules out a lot of important features of perception. For instance, it ignores the fact that many of our perceptual experiences are spontaneous (Baror and He; Koenig and He; Dimitris Apostolopoulos). For instance, imagine that you are sitting quietly in the garden without any particular goal in mind. You do not have an intention to perform any visual task or visually apprehend any particular object. However, in that state, your perceptual system is not idle. It wonders from one object to another – from the green leaves on the orange tree, to the even blades of the grass on the lawn, to the dog running by in the street, etc. According to Baror and He, without being triggered by any specific instruction, your visual system begins to explore and interpret the environment. If perception were necessarily targeted at practical interaction with the external world, such 'idle' perception would be impossible. Aside from the spontaneity of perception, neo-representationalism also ignores the fact that some of our perceptual experiences do not end up with any practical action other than prompting certain intentional content in the epistemic subject which may not lead to reacting or responding to that aspect of reality (Henke; Beck).

The foregoing arguments show that perception is sufficient to stimulate action, but it is not necessary that perception always stimulates action in this manner. In other words, perception can be successful without necessarily involving any practical action, even though the perceptual content arising from that perception is potentially useful for driving practical

action. As Beck notes, since perception is stimulus-dependent, it can be maintained without leading to action. One can have a perceptual experience without necessarily having a desire to belief or a decision to act. This is so because action requires more mental states such as cognition and volition which are not always present during a perceptual experience. Perception can be successful even if no action follows simply because that perceptual experience provides some information about some aspects of the external world, and this information creates a perceptual content which is purportedly true of, or describes, the relevant aspect of reality. The reason that perception has succeeded, even though no action has been stimulated, is because the perceptual content has provided information that aids the cognition of empirical reality within the environment, but this cognition does not necessarily lead to action. Thus, the perception has aided the available data that helps to lay a foundation for empirical knowledge. If a claim to empirical knowledge rests on such a successful perceptual experience, it is safe to say that that piece of empirical knowledge is justified by the perceptual content derived from the perceptual experience.

From the foregoing, it follows that what determines the success of a perceptual experience is actually that it helps to recognise external reality. Thus, assessing any perceptual experience in terms of the traditional demand for logical justification of empirical knowledge, following the induction versus deduction divide is implausible. It is this traditional demand for logical deducibility that has undermined the epistemic value of perception in the traditional debate on the viability of empirical knowledge. What is more appropriate is a pragmatic justification based on the effectiveness of the approach in the attainment of empirical knowledge. The Direct Realist, the Indirect Realist or the Phenomenalist all agree that there is an awareness at that moment when it appears that there is a glass of water on the table in front of me. The obviousness of this fact is sufficient to ground empirical knowledge, though the grounding it provides for this kind of knowledge can only be partial

The partial grounding of empirical knowledge adopted here has been difficult to defend in traditional epistemology because of the traditional standards that have been set for knowledge. But this traditional standard is unwarranted. The requirement that empirical knowledge can only be justified deductively (which is unattainable) or inductively (which is unreliable) is unwarranted. The external world itself, which is the subject matter of empirical or scientific explanations, is so divergent that no rule will suffice to provide indubitable justification for these explanations as demanded by the traditional standard. Thus, Fraassen argues that the divergence in nature makes it impossible to arrive at truth either through Bacon's and Newton's convictions or Pierce's optimism. As such "no rule, not even any self-correcting procedure, must lead to the truth in the long run (257)

The implication of this is that it is unlikely to find any rule that will provide that kind of indubitable justification required by traditional standards. But the good news is that there is no need to search for such a rule. If the real nature of the external world is not directly presentable to the windows through which we perceive them, science, with its reliance on empirical knowledge, which is but only a method for understanding that external reality, should not be expected to import some regularity into the external world which may actually be absent in it. If science is an appropriate method for explaining the nature of external reality, then it should present that reality as it apprehends it. In other words, an appropriate method of explaining empirical reality should align with the kind of access that the perceiving subject has to that external reality. The call for indubitability in the justification of empirical knowledge is therefore unwarranted. Such a requirement is insatiable given the current capabilities of the knowing subject. But this should not lead to sceptical conclusions. This is not a problem arising

from our method of understanding the universe; it is a problem that arises from the kind of access we have to the external world itself.

Conclusion

Given that our source and mode of knowledge of empirical reality cannot give us indubitable knowledge of that reality, does this necessarily imply scepticism with regards to empirical and scientific knowledge? I answer in the negative. As long as our standard for assessing the success of scientific explanations aligns with the empirical knowledge that is derived from our perception of the external world, these scientific explanations are justified. What we have then is a pragmatic, not a logical justification of scientific explanations. Scientific explanations are justified to the extent that they are successful in aiding our understanding of the external world. The evidence presented to our senses at perception is sufficient to ground empirical knowledge and scientific explanations even when veridicality or certitude is not attainable.

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BEYOND NOMENCLATURE: A PHILOSOPHICAL CRITIQUE OF YORUBA NAMING PRACTICES AS MARKERS OF IDENTITY

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Abstract

This study examines the theoretical status of Yorùbá naming practices in relation to personal identity, contesting the assumption that names function as primary constituents rather than markers of individual selfhood in Yorùbá culture. Through philosophical analysis of three primary naming categories namely orúkọ àmútọ̀runwá (natural names), orúkọ àbísọ (given names), and orúkọ to ba isele jo (circumstantial names), this research demonstrates that while these practices encode rich cultural wisdom, they operate as socially recognised markers of identity rather than as exhaustive criteria for personhood. The analysis identifies two principal philosophical problems: the predeterministic character of naming conventions and the structural exclusion of individual agency from identity formation. Drawing on Yorùbá metaphysical concepts of ara (body), emi (spirit), and ori (metaphysical head), alongside recognition theory and African philosophical frameworks, this study argues for a dialectical model that integrates social relations with self-determination. The framework proposed here is distinguished from existing communitarian accounts such as Bewaji's (2022) conception of personhood. The point of digression is in its explicit attention to the temporal negotiation of identity through ongoing dialectical interaction. The study situates its claims within established scholarship on Yorùbá philosophical traditions and acknowledges the epistemological limits of generalising from proverbs and naming data alone.

Keywords: Cultural Identity, Naming Practices, Ori, Personal Identity, Recognition Theory, Yorùbá Philosophy,

Introduction

The relationship between names and personal identity has long been a topical issue amongst philosophers, anthropologists, and cultural theorists. In many African societies, naming practices serve not merely as systems of identification but as complex mechanisms for constructing, negotiating, and maintaining personal and social identity (Gyekye 2013; Wiredu 2004). Among the Yorùbá people of southwestern Nigeria and diaspora Communities worldwide, naming traditions embody sophisticated philosophical assumptions about personhood, destiny, and social belonging that warrant serious academic examination.

In recent times, studies in African philosophy have increasingly challenged Western-centric approaches to identity theory, arguing for more culturally grounded frameworks that reflect indigenous ontologies and epistemologies (Oyeshile 2020; Bewaji 2022). In response to this, several scholars have engaged the philosophical dimensions of naming in African contexts. This includes but not limited to Agyekum (2021) on Akan personal names, Ogunwale and Bamigbade (2019) on Yorùbá naming dynamics, and Gbádégẹ̀sin (2004) on Yorùbá

conceptions of destiny. This study contributes to that body of work by subjecting Yorùbá naming practices to a focused philosophical critique of their adequacy as foundations for personal identity, rather than simply documenting their cultural significance.

Principally, this study argues that Yorùbá naming practices function as markers of identity. That is, they are socially recognised signs that locate a person within a web of relationships, expectations, and cultural memory. However, naming practices in themselves do not constitute the criteria for personal identity as some African thinkers seem to suppose. Personal identity, in the philosophical sense, concerns what makes a person the same person over time and what grounds attributions of moral responsibility, continuity of experience, and self-determination. As such, this study admits that naming practices are windows into important background conditions for understanding a person but they are not equivalent to the person's identity itself. This distinction is the central argumentative thread of the present study.

The study is structured into three: First, the study identifies the Yorùbá naming practices in its capacity to construct and maintain marks of identity for an individual. Second, the study evaluates the adequacy of Yorùbá naming practices in determining personal identity in philosophical terms. Third, the study proposes an alternative framework which better accounts for identity formation within Yorùbá cultural contexts while preserving both cultural wisdom and individual agency.

The central argument advanced here is that while Yorùbá naming practices reflect profound cultural knowledge about human nature and social relationships, they prove theoretically inadequate as foundations for personal identity due to their predeterministic character and limited recognition of individual self-determination. This study proposes instead a dialectical framework that integrates the social dimensions emphasized in Yorùbá culture with recognition of individual agency in identity construction.

Personal Identity Theory: Contemporary Debates

Contemporary philosophical discussions of personal identity have largely centred on two primary theories: psychological continuity and bodily continuity (Parfit 2016; Olson 2019). The psychological approach, traces its extraction to Locke (1689) and grounds identity in the continuity of consciousness, memory, and mental states. Parfit's influential work (2016) refined this approach, arguing that personal identity consists in psychological connectedness and continuity over time. However, critics like Olson (2019) have highlighted problems with memory-based accounts, particularly regarding the circularity of personal identity and memory.

On the other hand, bodily continuity theories locate identity in the persistence of the biological organism (Snowdon 2014). This approach avoids some problems of psychological theories but faces difficulties in accounting for the significance of mental life in personal identity. Recent developments have seen the emergence of hybrid approaches that attempt to integrate both psychological and bodily dimensions (Shoemaker 2016). It should be noted that not all contemporary Western philosophical literature operates within purely individualistic frameworks: recognition theory (Honneth 2012; Taylor 1994), narrative identity theory (Schechtman 2014), and social constructionist accounts represent significant traditions within Western philosophy that explicitly understand identity as relationally and socially constituted. The critique of individualism advanced in this study therefore targets a dominant strand within Western identity theory rather than Western philosophy as a whole.

Recognition Theory and Social Identity

Recognition theory, it should be acknowledged, is itself a Western philosophical tradition, developed through the work of Hegel, Taylor, and Honneth. This does not invalidate its relevance to Yorùbá contexts; rather, it invites critical and comparative engagement. Taylor's influential essay, The Politics of Recognition (1994) argues that identity is fundamentally shaped by recognition from others, challenging purely individualistic approaches. Honneth's (2012) tripartite model of recognition encompassing love, rights, and solidarity provides a sophisticated framework for understanding how social relationships constitute personal identity. The dialectical framework proposed in this study draws selectively on recognition theory while incorporating Yorùbá metaphysical resources, in the spirit of intercultural philosophy rather than straightforward importation of a Western model.

Recent developments in recognition theory have paid increasing attention to cultural diversity and the ways different societies structure recognition relationships (Fraser and Honneth 2003; Kompridis 2007). This scholarship suggests that understanding identity formation requires attention to specific cultural contexts and practices rather than universal models. This study adopts this methodological orientation.

African Philosophical Approaches to Identity

African philosophical literature has increasingly challenged Western individualistic assumptions about personal identity, arguing for more communitarian and relational approaches (Gyekye 2013; Menkiti 2004; Wiredu 2004). Menkiti's influential essay: Person and Community in African Traditional Thought (2004) argues that in African contexts, personhood is achieved rather than given, emerging through social participation and recognition. Gyekye (2013) has refined communitarian approaches, arguing for a moderate communitarianism that recognises both social constitution and individual agency.

Bewaji (2022) examines Yorùbá conceptions of personhood, arguing that the tripartite understanding of human beings namely the ara (body), emi (spirit/soul), and ori (metaphysical head) provides a distinctive framework for understanding identity that differs significantly from Western dualistic approaches. The dialectical framework proposed in the present study builds on Bewaji's account while extending it in a specific direction. While Bewaji's conception of personhood emphasises the metaphysical structure of the person as constituted within community, the framework advanced here foregrounds the temporal negotiation between social recognition and individual self-determination as the ongoing process through which personal identity develops. The distinction is not merely terminological; it has practical implications for how we evaluate naming practices as identity-conferring mechanisms.

Within the Yorùbá conception of the person, ara (the body), emi (the life-force) and ori are the constitutive elements, but they do not contribute equally to individuality. Ara is the tangible vehicle of earthly existence, while emi, as the animating breath that Olódùmarè confers on the moulded body, marks the difference between the living and the lifeless. Yet emi is not peculiar to persons, since Yorùbá thought also speaks of the emi of a dog or a hen (Onipede 2024). It therefore cannot individuate. As such, the role of individuation falls to ori, which the tradition articulates in two registers. First is ori ode (the outer head) which is the visible, physical head by which a person is bodily identified and socially recognised. Ori inu (the inner head) is the unseen "inner person," the bearer of personality and destiny (Ademuleya 2007; Balogun 2007).

In the creation narrative, the person, already fashioned by Òrìṣànlá (Obatala) and animated by Olódùmarè, proceeds to Àjàlá, the moulder of heads, to choose an ori before crossing into Ilé-Ayé (the world) (Balogun 2007; Onipede 2024). What is chosen at Ajala’s

yard is ori inu (destiny or inner head). The process of birth clears a person's memory of this choice but the ori inu is said to remember the content of the chosen destiny and it subsequently direct man in his life's pursuit (Ademuleya 2007). This is why the Yorùbás say: Ayanmo ko gbo'gun, ori l'elejo (Destiny does not require charms, the (inner) head is a perfect judge.) Ori inu thus carries the person across the threshold between pre-existence and earthly life, while ori ode is the physical and earthly entity of that passage.

The philosophical significance of this duality for the identity question lies in the gap it opens between who a person appears to be and who a person is. Because the bearer forgets the content of the choice, the self is partly opaque to itself, and only Òrúnmìlà, Elérìí-ìpín (the witness of destiny), can disclose what the ori inu contains (Balogun 2007). Identity is therefore not dependent on ori ode. This is also why Yorùbás place ethical weight on the inner head with the saying that ori inu rẹ̀ lo ba tòde ẹ̀ jẹ́ (inner head that destroy outer head) judging that it is the inner person, understood here as character, that spoils the outer one (Onipede 2024).

The distinction likewise tempers a fatalistic reading of ori. Since the ori inu is a locus of choice and not merely an allotment, and since ebo (sacrifice), igbiyanju (effort) and iwa (character) can shape how its potential is actualised, identity is a dynamic interplay of pre-existent potential and lived agency (Balogun 2007; Ekanola 2006; Gbádégẹ̀sìn 2004). Two implications follow from these: Any account of personal identity that attends only to what ori ode makes publicly available (a body, a name, a social role) addresses one dimension of the person and misses the dimension in which selfhood is constituted. And this insight is internal to Yorùbá metaphysics. It is not an imposition of alien categories, which is what licenses the dialectical argument that follows.

Naming Practices and Cultural Identity: A Review of Existing Scholarship

Anthropological and sociolinguistic research on naming practices has revealed their complexity as cultural phenomena. Recent studies have examined how naming practices function in identity construction across diverse cultural contexts (Aldrin 2020; Bramwell 2021). Specific attention to African naming practices has grown significantly. Agyekum's (2021) comprehensive study of Akan naming practices reveals sophisticated philosophical assumptions about personhood and destiny. Research on Yorùbá naming by scholars like Ogunwale and Bamigbade (2019) has documented both traditional practices and contemporary changes driven by globalisation and religious conversion. Fálọ́lá (2006) has examined Yorùbá identity and power politics in ways that contextualise naming within broader socio-historical dynamics.

This study builds on rather than dismisses this existing body of scholarship. The claim is not that naming practices have lacked philosophical attention altogether, but that their adequacy as foundations for personal identity as distinct from their significance as cultural markers has not been the primary analytical focus of prior literature. The present study addresses that specific question.

The study draws on a range of Yorùbá names, proverbs, and naming conventions as philosophical data. These data are selected as illustrative rather than exhaustive, and they constitute empirical generalisations whose representativeness is necessarily limited. The Yorùbá-speaking world is internally diverse, and naming practices vary across regions, religious communities (Christian, Muslim, and adherents of traditional religion), and historical periods. The generalisations offered here are offered with this caution in mind.

Theoretical Framework: Identity as Dialectical Recognition

This study proposes a dialectical framework for understanding personal identity that integrates insights from recognition theory with African philosophical perspectives on personhood, drawing in particular on the Yorùbá concept of ori as philosophically reinterpreted by Ekanola (2006) and Gbádégẹ̀sin (2004). The framework understands identity as emerging through the dialectical interaction between social recognition and individual self-determination, and it explicitly distinguishes itself from purely social-constructionist or purely individualistic accounts.

The framework rests on three foundational principles. First, the principle of Social Constitution which holds that personal identity emerges through social relationships and cannot be understood independently of community membership. This principle aligns with both recognition theory and African communitarian thought, acknowledging that identity formation occurs within specific cultural contexts and through ongoing social interaction. Second, the principle of Individual Agency which insists that while socially constituted, personal identity also requires individual participation and self-determination. Persons are not merely passive recipients of social assignments but active participants in their own identity construction. Third, the principle of Temporal Development which holds that personal identity develops over time through ongoing dialectical interaction between social recognition and individual agency. Neither social assignment nor individual choice alone determines identity; rather, identity emerges through their continuing interaction across the lifespan.

The distinctive contribution of this framework is the emphasis on temporality and negotiation. Bewaji's (2022) account of personhood provides an important structural analysis of the Yorùbá person as constituted through ara, emi, and ori, but it does not foreground the question of how the ongoing exercise of individual agency modifies, resists, or transforms the identity conferred by social practices like naming. The present framework proposes that this ongoing negotiation is what distinguishes personal identity from social role assignment.

Yorùbá Naming Practices

Orúkọ Àmútọ̀runwá (Natural Names)

Natural names in Yorùbá culture are conferred based on the natural circumstances that surrounds the birth of a person, such as being born with the umbilical cord around the neck (Àìná), or being part of multiple births (Táíwò for the first-born twin, Kẹ́hìndé for the second). These names are believed to reflect natural events that occurred during birth and supposedly, they can influence the child's character and destiny throughout life. From a philosophical perspective, this naming category embodies several assumptions that require critical scrutiny.

First, it assumes a necessary causal connection between birth circumstances and personality traits, an assumption that lacks empirical support and logical justification. As Hume (1739) demonstrated in his analysis of causation, we cannot legitimately infer necessary connections from observed sequential events. Second, natural names exemplify what may be termed 'identity predeterminism': the assumption that core aspects of personal identity are fixed at birth and remain unchangeable throughout life. This view conflicts with substantial evidence for personality development and change, as well as with basic principles of human agency and moral responsibility. Third, this naming practice structurally excludes the individual from participation in their own identity construction. The person bearing a natural name has no choice in the matter and is expected to conform to predetermined expectations based on birth circumstances beyond their control.

Consider the case of Ìgè-àdùbí, a breeched foetus whose delivery is very tedious because the baby attempted being delivered through the legs. In his case, the child is culturally expected to exhibit stubborn behaviour through life. This expectation not only lacks logical justification but also potentially becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy that constrains individual development and removes moral responsibility from individual choice. It is important to note, however, that these are general cultural patterns rather than deterministic programmes; individual Yorùbá people resist, negotiate, and reinterpret such expectations in diverse ways. The philosophical critique advanced here targets the structural logic of predeterminism embedded in naming conventions, not a claim that all Yorùbá people experience their names as fate.

Orúkọ Àbísọ (Given Names)

Given names are conferred upon a child as reflections of the hopes, expectations, and aspirations of parents, family and community members. Yorùbá people believe that, "ile la n wo ka to somo l'oruko." So, given names reflect the socio-religious expectations of parents, family and community members of a newborn. Examples include Rẹ́míl̩ẹ́kún (console me with children), expressing parental hope for comfort after previous sorrows; or Babàtúndé (father has returned), indicating belief in ancestral reincarnation; Omobadewa (a child came with crown); Adebola (crown has met with wealth) and so on. It is important to note while scholars may class oruko oriki (praise names) as distinct naming category, this study holds the view that oruko oriki is best classed as part of given names. This is because they are names given to also express hope and expectations. For example: Ajoke (a child we all care for), Alani (one we survived to have), Ajiun (one we wake up to rejoice over or pride about) and so on.

In another vein, given names often reflect the specific cultural and historical circumstances of naming rather than enduring aspects of personal identity. Names expressing hope for wealth like Ọládùnjoyè (wealth is preferred to titles) or reflecting religious affiliations such as Ògúngbèmí (the god of iron benefits me) reflect the socio-religious affiliation that the child is born into. Even though individuals may develop their own values and beliefs over time thereby deviating from the standard they were born into, yet this does not rule out the fact that oruko abiso are given to express hope and trust in the person that a child would become. Nevertheless, this situates identity determination outside the jurisdiction of the human person because the hope and expectations that birth his name are not his but that of others.

The practice of àkọsẹ̀jayé (consultation of Ifa Oracle for a new born child usually on the third day of life before naming to reveal the predestined path, purpose and destiny on earth) adds another layer of complexity. While this practice demonstrates sophisticated cultural attention to individual destiny, it operates within a framework that locates authority for identity determination outside the individual. The assumption that a child's essential characteristics can be discovered through divination engages seriously with ori as pre-existent potential, but it risks foreclosing the active, post-natal dimension of ori that Ekanola (2006) emphasises.

Orúkọ to ba isele jo **(Circumstantial Names)**

Orúkọ to ba isele jo (circumstantial names) derive from specific events or conditions surrounding the birth or early life of a child, such as Abíọjà (born in the market) or Babarínsá (father saw and fled, indicating the death of the father at birth). This category also includes appellations and nicknames developed based on observed characteristics or behaviours of a person. Circumstantial names present perhaps the clearest case of identity construction based on factors external to individual choice and control. A child born during a war (Abógundé-

arrived with war) has no responsibility for the timing of their birth, yet this circumstance supposedly shapes their identity throughout life.

Appellations based on observed behavior such as Ẹkùn (tiger) used for a fierce person represent a more complex case, as they reflect actual characteristics rather than arbitrary circumstances. However, even here, the practice of fixing identity based on particular behaviours observed at specific times fails to account for the human capacity for growth and change. The rejection of negative appellations by some individuals actually supports the argument that adequate theories of personal identity must include individual agency. When people resist names or appellations that conflict with their self-understanding, they demonstrate that the external assignment of identity markers is insufficient.

A Philosophical Critique of Names as Reflection of Personal Identity in Yoruba Naming Practice

The most fundamental problem with Yorùbá naming practices as foundational constituent for personal identity is their predeterministic character. Certain Yoruba proverbs suggest an inclusion of identity in the naming culture but this study questions the efficacy of such import. For example, oruko omo lo n ro omo (A child's name foretells the child); oruko omo iniijanu omo (A child's name is a bridle for him); ile la n wo ka to so omo l'oruko (we examine the background of a child before giving them a name) and many others. These proverbs reflect the disposition of the Yoruba people towards the influence of names or naming for the identity of a person.

Meanwhile, all the three naming categories assume that core aspects of personal identity are determined by factors external to individual choice: birth circumstances, parental expectations, or environmental conditions. Pre-determinism conflicts with basic principles of moral responsibility and human agency as represented even in Yoruba tradition. For instance, the Yoruba proverbs that owo eni la fi n tun iwa ara eni se (a person is responsible for positively adjusting his/her behavior) or enu eni la fi n ko meeje (each person must use her mouth to reject what he does not want) or oju awo l'awo fi n gbobe (literally means a plate receives soup with its core; meaning you are responsible for receiving whatever good things you want) amongst others signify that the Yoruba people believe in the role of personal agency in relation to growth, change, and self-transformation. A pre-deterministic naming ideology will fault this fundamental aspect of moral life.

Contemporary philosophical discussions have increasingly recognised the importance of individual agency in identity formation (Marya and Appiah 2022; Schechtman 2014). Narrative theories of identity, in particular, emphasise the active role individuals play in constructing coherent life stories that constitute their identities over time. This insight is consistent with the non-fatalistic reading of ori advanced by Ekanola (2006) and Gbádégẹ̀sin (2004): if ori incorporates the choices a person makes, then a philosophical account of Yorùbá identity must make space for those choices as constitutive, not merely as modifications of a pre-given identity.

Also observed in relation to the inadequacy of the Yorùbá naming practices in identity determination is that it consistently locates authority for identity construction outside the individual. Oruko amutorunwa are names assigned based on specific birth conditions; oruko abiso reflects parental and community expectations; and orúkọ to ba isele jo derive from circumstances or events surrounding the birth of the individual. This external location of authority conflicts with contemporary understanding of personal autonomy and self-determination. Recent work in feminist philosophy and critical race Stheory has highlighted

the problematic nature of identity assignments imposed by external authorities, particularly when these assignments limit individual possibilities for self-development (Alcoff 2018; Mills 2017). The concern here is not with cultural particularity as such, but with structural arrangements that systematically foreclose individual participation in identity formation.

Furthermore, Yorùbá naming practices generally assume that identities assigned at birth or early childhood remain stable throughout life. This static conception fails to account for substantial evidence of personality development, value change, and identity transformation across the lifespan. Contemporary psychological research demonstrates significant capacity for personality change throughout adulthood (Roberts and Mroczek 2008). Sociological research documents how individuals actively negotiate and reconstruct their identities in response to changing life circumstances (Giddens 1991; Beck and Beck-Gernsheim 2002). The static conception embedded in naming practices not only conflicts with empirical evidence but also potentially inhibits healthy identity development by creating rigid expectations that individuals may struggle to transcend.

It is important to acknowledge the risk of overgeneralisation. Yorùbá naming conventions are not monolithic, and considerable variation exists across communities, time periods, and religious affiliations. The critique advanced here is directed at the structural logic of predeterminism as it appears in the philosophical analysis of naming categories, not at the empirical claim that every Yorùbá person experiences their name as a determining force. The epistemological status of claims about Yorùbá naming practices is that of philosophical analysis of available naming data; empirical investigation of how individual Yorùbá people actually experience and negotiate their names remain a necessary complement to the theoretical argument offered here.

Assessing Western Identity Theories in the Context of Yorùbá Naming Practices

Bodily identity theory, which grounds identity in the continuity of physical organisms, proves inadequate for understanding Yorùbá conceptions of personhood. The tripartite Yorùbá understanding of human beings as ara, emi, and ori explicitly recognises non-physical dimensions of personhood that cannot be reduced to bodily continuity. Moreover, Yorùbá cultural practices often emphasise the limitations of physical appearance in revealing true identity, as reflected in proverbs like inú jìn, má gbára lẹ́nìkan (the real being is concealed; do not trust anybody based on appearance). This cultural wisdom supports the philosophical critique that bodily identity theories fail to capture essential aspects of personal identity.

While psychological identity theory's emphasis on consciousness and memory aligns more closely with Yorùbá recognition of mental and spiritual dimensions of personhood, it remains inadequate for Yorùbá contexts due to its individualistic assumptions. Yorùbá understanding of personhood is fundamentally relational, emphasising connections to ancestors, community members, and spiritual forces. The individualistic framework of psychological identity theory cannot adequately capture these relational dimensions that are central to Yorùbá conceptions of personhood. Furthermore, the emphasis on individual memory and consciousness conflicts with Yorùbá recognition of ancestral influence and spiritual dimensions of identity that transcend individual experience.

The inadequacy of both Western frameworks demonstrates the need for alternative approaches that can accommodate both social constitution and individual agency while respecting cultural specificity. This need aligns with broader critiques of Western philosophical assumptions that have emerged from postcolonial, feminist, and critical race theory scholarship (Spivak 2016; Lugones 2010).

A Dialectical Framework for Yorùbá Identity

The dialectical framework proposed here builds on recognition theory's insights about socially constituted identity while incorporating Yorùbá philosophical resources; particularly the non-fatalistic reading of ori and addressing the problems identified in traditional naming practices. This framework understands personal identity as emerging through the ongoing dialectical interaction between social recognition and individual self-determination.

Drawing on Taylor's (1994) insights about the dialogical nature of human identity, this framework recognises that individuals develop self-understanding through interaction with others. However, unlike purely social constructionist approaches, it maintains that individuals play active roles in shaping their own identities through reflection, choice, and action. The concept of ori is understood not as predetermined fate but as individual potential that requires active realisation through personal choice and social engagement-an interpretation consistent with Ekanola's (2006) naturalistic reading and with Gbádégẹ̀sìn's (2004) account of destiny in Yorùbá thought.

The framework differs from Bewaji's (2022) conception of personhood in a specific respect. Bewaji's account is primarily structural: it analyses what a person is, in terms of the metaphysical constitution of ara, emi, and ori within a communal context. The dialectical framework proposed here is primarily processual: it analyses how personal identity develops over time through the negotiation between socially assigned markers and individually exercised agency. This distinction corresponds to the difference between a theory of personhood and a theory of personal identity in the philosophical sense. Both are necessary; the present study contributes the latter as a complement to existing accounts of the former.

In practical terms, this framework suggests reinterpreting traditional Yorùbá naming practices rather than replacing them. Rather than viewing names as determining identity, they could be understood as initial social recognitions that individuals have the responsibility and freedom to interpret, develop, or modify throughout their lives. This approach is supported by existing Yorùbá proverbs that recognise individual agency, such as bí onígbá bá ṣe pe igbá rẹ̀ la ń bá a pèé (the way you regard your personal things is the way people will regard them for you). This proverb suggests that individual self-regard influences social recognition, supporting a dialectical rather than purely deterministic understanding of identity formation.

Several objections might be raised against this framework. First, critics might argue that it imposes Western individualistic values on African cultural contexts. In response, the framework explicitly incorporates Yorùbá metaphysical concepts and the non-fatalistic reading of ori that is already present within the tradition. The goal is not to replace Yorùbá approaches with Western alternatives but to develop more adequate frameworks that respect both cultural wisdom and individual agency. Second, critics might argue that individual agency is already implicit in traditional practices, making explicit recognition unnecessary. However, the analysis above demonstrates that traditional naming practices structurally exclude individual participation in identity construction, suggesting that explicit recognition of agency represents a genuine theoretical advancement. Third, the framework proposed here involves empirical generalisations about Yorùbá naming that require verification beyond the philosophical register. Future research combining philosophical analysis with ethnographic and sociolinguistic data would strengthen the empirical basis of the argument.

Conclusion

This analysis has demonstrated that while Yorùbá naming practices embody sophisticated cultural wisdom about human nature and social relationships, they function as

markers of identity rather than as exhaustive criteria for personal identity in the philosophical sense. The three primary naming categories: orúkọ àmútọ̀runwá, orúkọ àbísọ and orúkọ to ba isele jo all locate identity construction outside individual control and participation, embodying a form of pre-determinism that is philosophically problematic.

The dialectical framework proposed here offers an alternative approach that preserves the social dimensions emphasised in Yorùbá culture while creating space for individual agency and self-determination. This framework is distinguished from existing accounts particularly Bewaji's (2022) conception of personhood by its processual and temporal orientation: it analyses how personal identity develops through the ongoing negotiation between social recognition and individual agency, drawing on the non-fatalistic interpretation of ori advanced by Ekanola (2006) and Gbádégẹ̀sin (2004). The framework also acknowledges the epistemological limits of generalising from selected proverbs and naming conventions, and it invites empirical and philosophical scrutiny from scholars working with different methodological frameworks.

The study's contributions to scholarly literature include firstly, a philosophical analysis of Yorùbá naming practices that distinguishes between naming as a marker of identity and naming as a criterion for personal identity; secondly, a processual dialectical framework that complements existing structural accounts of Yorùbá personhood; thirdly, a critical engagement with the concept of ori that emphasises its non-fatalistic dimensions as resources for a more adequate identity theory; and finally a methodological reflection on the epistemological status of philosophical claims about Yorùbá naming practices. The dialectical approach suggested here honours the wisdom embedded in Yorùbá naming traditions as captured in the proverb orúkọ tí a bá sọ ọmọ ní ń mọ́ ọmọ lára (the name given to a child sticks to the child) while also recognising that persons are more than the names they are given.

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A CRITICAL APPRAISAL OF JOHN LOCKE'S REPRESENTATIVE THEORY OF PERCEPTION

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Abstract

The paper examined Locke's theory of idea with particular reference to perception. It argued that the position of Locke on 'ideas' as what is given in perception is contrary to common sense experience. The argument of Locke that one has no direct access to the external world or physical objects is untenable. It was on this premise that the paper established the possibility of attaining objective knowledge of the external world: that what is given in perception are nothing but physical objects. The paper examined the meaning of meaning, abstract ideas, classifying, and double use of idea. It was the belief of this paper that Locke's representative theory seemed to make the real world directly unknowable via perception. The paper argued further that Locke's theory took appearance for reality, that is, taking ideas as the only knowable reality, which, of course, they are not. The critical and analytical methods were employed in the course of writing this paper. The paper concluded that the objects of our perception are nothing but physical objects and not ideas.

Introduction

What empiricists have in common is their rejection of innate ideas and their insistence that all knowledge derives from sense-perception and is circumscribed by sense-perception. Locke, for instance, maintains that at birth the human mind is a blank slate, a tabula rasa (Omoregbe, 2000, p. 85). Locke rejects innate ideas and argues that if there were innate ideas, children and even idiots would know them. Again, he argues that if moral principles were innate, as the advocates of innate ideas say, all men would have the same moral principles, but this is not the case (Omoregbe, 2000, p. 85).

However, the central problem of epistemology can be expressed in the form of the following questions: how does an external reality influence the perception of human species? What are the steps in that influence? How can the influence be conceptualized? Hence, the major focus of this paper is to critically examine and x-ray Locke's theory of idea, otherwise known as the causal theory of perception, to determine whether it is in tandem with common sense or otherwise. The paper also aims at unveiling the major presuppositions underlying the assumptions of Locke on the theory, and whether it is plausible to accept the fact that what is given in sense-perception is nothing but ideas. The major problem, as developed by Lawrence BonJour (as cited in Bennett, 1971, pp. 1–3), concerning perception is twofold: first, the problem of the given, and second, the problem of justification. Is it a physical object that is given to us in perception, or that we are aware of, or is it ideas? How do we justify our knowledge claim? How do we know that an ordinary belief is capable of being elevated to the

level of justified belief? As we had earlier mentioned, justification is one of the conditions of knowledge in the traditional account of knowledge. Even without satisfying the fourth condition of knowledge demanded by the post-Gettier analysis of knowledge, the problem of justification of knowledge is still a nagging one (Owolabi, 2000, p. 69). Philosophers throughout history have given so much attention to the problem that it has been said that epistemology is more a theory of justification than a theory of knowledge.

The Nature of Knowledge

The attempt at defining knowledge is as old as mankind. The desire to define knowledge can be seen in Plato's dialogue, Theaetetus (Griffiths, 1977, p. 10). It is from this dialogue that the traditional account of knowledge as 'justified true belief' emanates. The concept of knowledge has generated a lot of controversies among epistemologists. Epistemology developed from the challenges posed by the sophists, such as Gorgias, Hippias, Thrasymachus and a host of others. These people doubted the possibility of attaining objective knowledge and engaged themselves in skepticism. Their refutation of knowledge raised dust among notable epistemologists, such as Plato, A. J. Ayer, Chisholm and others. Plato and others argue that the attainability of knowledge is possible, contrary to the position of the sophists. Their position was equally refuted by Edmund Gettier, who said that 'justified true belief', as championed by Plato, is not enough to make up knowledge, and that there is need for a fourth condition.

Down the ages in the history of philosophy, several attempts have been made to explain what the nature of knowledge is. In trying to solve the problem of how something can be known, several reactions against the position maintained by the sophists, as earlier said, were raised to prove that knowledge of the external world can be attained as it is, and that knowledge is apparent in nature. This led to the advancement of the two schools of thought in epistemology: rationalism and empiricism. The former holds that knowledge is attainable through reasoning, while the latter holds that knowledge is attainable through the senses (Alston, 1993, p. 10). The traditional task of epistemology has been to attain certain knowledge. But the concept of certainty is controversial and trivial, such that one wonders whether there is any statement that bears the mark of certainty. The question of the justification of knowledge, therefore, becomes so controversial because of the various skeptical reactions of philosophers to the ideal of knowledge. The later theories, after the era of Plato and his contemporaries, who worked on the traditional account of knowledge, such as foundationalism, coherentism, contextualism and naïve realism, were all to no avail in proffering a solution to the problem of knowledge, because of the perceived privileged access given to some atomic statements as either foundations or self-evident beliefs (Rysiew, 2007).

What is it to know something? This question is obviously a central one for the theory of knowledge, since, until it is answered, it is impossible to rule out erroneous theories based on misconceptions of what it is to know something. Locke defines knowledge as the perception of the agreement or disagreement of two ideas. There are, according to Locke, three degrees of knowledge, namely: sensitive knowledge, which is the knowledge of a particular thing as it exists; demonstrative knowledge, which is scientific knowledge acquired through experiment and demonstration; and the highest and most certain, intuitive knowledge, which is acquired by direct intuition, without any intermediary (Omoregbe, 2000, p. 87). In the view of Plato, in his dialogue Meno, he holds the view that all knowledge is a matter of being acquainted with something through experience of it in this or some previous existence; when we experience something now, we are reminded of what we previously knew but have forgotten. Knowledge, to Plato, is mere recollection; we know everything implicitly but have to be reminded of it for

that knowledge to become explicit (Omoregbe, 1998, p. 20). Something cannot be knowledge if it lacks truth. Knowledge can be construed as a state of mind only if one is able to produce the right answer. Knowledge is different from belief, in the sense that knowledge is infallible, indubitable and incorrigible; and, in marking it off from belief, we may do so either on the grounds that a person is not in a proper position to know, or that what he claims to know is false and therefore cannot constitute knowledge (Griffith, 1967, p. 10).

Meaning and Understanding

Some people may utter words and mean nothing by them, or hear words and understand nothing by them. Communication involves not just uttering and hearing, but also meaning and understanding. What is it to attach a meaning to an utterance, to have a meaning, or for a system of such types to constitute a language? According to Locke:

> Men had by nature his organs so fashioned, as to befit to frame articulate sounds, which we call words. But this was not enough to produce language; for parrots... make articulate sounds distinct enough, which yet by no means are capable of language. Besides articulate sounds, therefore, it was further necessary that he should be able to use these sounds as signs of internal conceptions; and to make them stand as marks for the ideas within his own mind, whereby they might be made known to others, and the thoughts of man's minds be conveyed from one to another (Locke, 1964, Bk. III, pp. 1–2).

To attach meaning to an utterance, then, is to make it "stand as a mark" for one or more "internal conception" or "ideas" in one's own mind, and language's main task is to transfer ideas from one mind to another. This is the translation view of language: wishing to share with you something in my mind, I translate it into the public medium of articulate sounds; you hear the objective, interpersonal noises that I make, and re-translate them back into something in your mind; and so communication is complete. Thus, Locke explicitly says that:

> Man, though he has great variety of thoughts, and such from which others as well as himself might receive profit and delight; yet they are all within his own breast, invisible and hidden from others, nor can of themselves be made to appear. The comfort and advantage of society not being to be had without communication of thought, it was necessary that man should find out some external sensible signs, whereof those ideas, which his thoughts are made up of, might be made known to others ... thus we may conceive how words, which were by nature so well adapted to that purpose, came to be made use of by men as the signs of their ideas (Locke, 1964, p. 2).

This surely has truth in it. We do have private thoughts which we communicate through language, and when communication succeeds, when you and I attach the same meaning to my words, it is reasonable to say that I, through my words, transmit my thought to you.

The Concept of Classifying

How does one recognize distinct particular things as being of the same kind, and thus know to apply a single classifying word to each of them? Locke sought to answer this, apparently, by describing a rule or technique or general method for classifying, a method which requires that each shall be associated with a kind of idea. This "theory of classifying" of Locke's is not often separated as sharply as it should be from his theory of word-meaning (Doney, 1956, pp. 407–408). Before expanding the theory, we shall argue that it must fail because it attempts the impossible. The argument can be stated briefly.

A comprehensive rule or technique for doing D must be stable as instructions to a novice, that is, instructions which someone who cannot yet do D could in principle follow and thereby be enabled to do D. But a novice at classification, someone who does not yet know how to assign any particulars to a kind, cannot follow any rules or instructions. The instructions must take the form: "classify x in such and such a way if and only if Fx"; and the novice can follow them only if he already knows how to determine whether Fx. But if he can establish some truth, no matter what, about x, then he is not a novice of the kind we want, for he can already do so without the aid of the proffered rule. A rule for classifying as such, then, could be followed only by someone who did not need it; any such rule must be competence-presupposing (Doney, 1956, p. 408).

Abstract Ideas

The ideas in Locke's theories of meaning and classification were supposed to be 'abstract'. According to Locke:

> The mind having got an idea which it thinks it may have use of either in contemplation or discourse, the first thing it does is to abstract it, and then get a name to it; and so, lay it up in its storehouse, the memory, as containing the essence of a sort of things, of which that name is always to be the mark (Locke, 1963, Bk. III, ch. xxxii, sec. 7).

So, we have to abstract an idea in order to make it usable. The process is essentially one of neglecting, omitting, setting aside:

> The mind makes the particular ideas received from particular objects to become general; which is done by considering them as they are in the mind ... separate from all other existences, and the circumstances of real existence, as time, place, or any other concomitant ideas. This is called ABSTRACTION, whereby ideas taken from particular beings become general representations of all of the same kind (Locke, 1963, Bk. III, ch. xi, sec. 9).

Abstraction, though, involves somehow stripping an idea not just of the 'circumstance' in which it originally came into one's mind, but also of some of its internal detail.

The Double Use of 'Idea'

Locke's thought is dominated by his attempt to use 'idea' univocally as a key term in his accounts of perception and of meaning, or, in short-hand, his use of 'idea' to cover both sense-data and concepts. Passages already quoted show this use at work, but not sharply enough. According to Locke, 'to ask, at what time a man has first any ideas, is to ask, when he begins to perceive; having ideas, and perception, being the same thing' (Locke, 1963, pp. 1–9). If the two passages seem to conflict violently, recall that Descartes, by whom Locke was much influenced, was prepared to use 'think' to cover mental goings-on of any sort at all. Taken together, these two passages have the effect of stretching 'think' in one direction and 'perceive' in the other; and Locke's willingness to make these stretches is fundamental to his thought.

His double use of 'idea', then, is not a mere terminological nuisance: it embodies his substantive mistake, shared with Berkeley and Hume and others in the empiricist tradition, of assimilating the sensory far too closely to the intellectual.

According to Locke, one makes sense of a word by associating it with a kind of idea, and ideas are also the items one has in ordinary perception; and so, he can drastically over-simplify meaning by taking it to say merely that one cannot have ideas one way without first having them in another. This is a doctrine so complex that no one has yet stated it adequately,

and it appears to Locke to have the same logical form as the simple untruth: 'One cannot see a play without first reading it.' Any kind of idea must have entered my mind in the first place, which is just to say that it must have entered from the outside, that is, have first been had in sensory encounters with things. Locke states: “If it shall be demanded then, when a man begins to have any ideas, I think the true answer is, when he first has any sensation. For, since there appear not to be any ideas in the mind before the senses have conveyed any in, I conceive that ideas in the understanding are coeval with sensations” (Locke, 1963, pp. 1–23).

The Nature of Perception

In philosophy, perception is defined as the complex method of obtaining information about the world, specifically through our senses, and apprehending this information as beliefs. The main philosophical problem with this notion of perception is that we should not accept our perceptions as being reliable, since (1) it is possible for us to misperceive objects in the world, (2) our senses are susceptible to illusions (e.g., hallucinations) and (3) it is unclear how much epistemological value perceptions have, or how much belief, if any, should be noted in that which we perceive.

Several answers to these problems have been proposed, including the common-sense theory, the representative theory of perception, sense datum theory, and phenomenalism. The common sense or direct realist theory maintains that the world is as it is perceived, which assumes that there is a world with objects that exist independently of human perceptions. Direct realism not only denies that our experiences are subjective, but also denies that our perceptions are reduced to mere sense-data (BonJour, 2001). However, to Descartes, perception is the ability of the mind to get clear and distinct ideas, with emphasis placed on the mind. He emphasises the reflective ability of the mind to grasp objects, while the empiricists emphasise sensation (Descartes, as cited in Locke, 1952, sec. II, vii, pp. 131–138, 324). Perception is the basis for justifying perceptual knowledge.

The historically most central epistemological issue concerning perception, to which this paper is almost entirely devoted, is whether and how beliefs about physical objects and about the physical world generally can be justified or warranted on the basis of sensory or perceptual experience, where it is internalist justification, roughly, having a reason to think that the belief in question is true, that is mainly in question. This issue, commonly referred to as “the problem of the external world”, divides into two closely related sub-issues, which correspond to the first two main sections. The first of these issues has to do with the nature of sensory experience and its relation to the physical world. It is typically formulated as the question of what the immediate objects of awareness in sensory experience are, or, in variant but essentially equivalent terminology, of what is given in such experience (BonJour, 2001). The most historically standard, though not currently the most popular, answer to this question has been that it is sense data, understood as private, non-physical entities that actually have the experienced sensory qualities, that are the immediate objects of awareness or that are given. The second issue has to do with the way in which beliefs about the physical world are justified on the basis of sensory experience. If it is concluded that physical objects are not themselves given, the main answer to this question is representationalism, the view that the immediate objects of experience represent or depict physical objects in a way that allows one to infer justifiably from such experience to the existence of the corresponding “external objects” (BonJour, 2001).

Stages of Perception

1. Sensation Stage

At the level of sensation, the human mind is passive. For instance, if the ear hears a big sound, it will accommodate it without being able to control it. That is, the ear is passive at this stage. The organs that work at this stage are:

Optical (eyes): colour, shape, images, etc.
Gustatory (mouth/tongue): taste.
Aural (ears): sound.
Tactile (touch): feeling, temperature, solidity, etc.
Olfactory (nose): odour, smell.

2. Reflection Stage

This is the second stage. It is the stage of judgment-making. At this level of perception, the mind is active: by sensing the raw data presented by the external object, the mind will now think. The thinking involves analysing, interpreting, coordinating, and making judgment. All these, analysing, interpreting, and coordinating, are called reflection. At this stage, the mind associates ideas, e.g., hearing, tasting, etc. The mind also attaches meaning to what the senses receive; such activities as willing, hoping, believing, thinking and knowing manifest themselves at this stage (Dretske, 2000).

Moreover, in a nutshell, perception is the process by which we become aware of changes, or an opinion that we have as a result of realizing or noticing something, especially which is perhaps not obvious to other people. Within the framework of epistemology, perception, in reference to the senses, has to do with the relationship between the external world of material things and our idea or knowledge about them (Owolabi, 2000, p. 71).

A. R. Lacey defines perception as 'the human faculty of apprehending the world especially through the senses' (Lacey, 1990, p. 1). To this end, numerous problems are associated with perception. The problem of causation, for instance, has given room for the formation of varying opinions and thought in empiricism, such as causal realism, phenomenalism, metaphysical realism and even cognitive realism. This could also be said of the problem of memory, induction, cognitive opacity, cognitive dynamics, communication, valuation, aesthetic value and many others. The existence of all these problems is consequent to the intractability of the problem of perception. These problems would cease to be philosophical problems if there were a solution to the problem of perception (Owolabi, 2000).

The Representative Theory of Perception

Before discussing indirect realism, reference has to be made to direct realism. Indirect realism, as championed by Locke, is a reaction against direct realism, which opines that one can have direct access to the external world in terms of perception, without any intervening medium, and that what is given in perception is nothing but tangible physical objects. This is contrary to indirect realism, which posits that we only have access to ideas of physical objects and not the objects themselves. Indirect realism posits that we do not have direct cognitive contact with the physical world.

Direct realism, as championed by G. E. Moore, is also known as 'naive realism'. That is the notion that we perceive things exactly the way they are. This means that the factors of illusion, delusion and misinterpretation do not really affect the way things are. For the naive realist, appearance is equal to reality (Pryor, n.d.). But from the foregoing, direct realists seem to be primitive in nature; they have not paused for a moment to think or reflect deeply about the problem of perception. They have failed to take into consideration some difficult situations

in the process of perception. To this end, as a result of problems such as illusion, depression (mental), double imagery and hallucination, which bewildered direct realism, indirect realism came up to rescue it.

To begin construing Locke's theory of idea, otherwise known as representative theory, efforts have to be geared towards examining briefly the nature of realism. Realism comes from the German compound words 'real' and 'politik'. 'Real' means something that is realistic, practical or actual, and 'politik' means politics (Owolabi, 2000). Realism is commonly defined as a concern for fact or reality and the rejection of impractical and visionary ideas. However, the term realism is used, with varying meanings, in several of the liberal arts, particularly painting, literature and philosophy. It is also used in international relations. In philosophy, realism is the view that there is an external world that exists independently of our perception of it. Whether we exist or not, the external world continues to exist.

In line with the above intellectual position, both direct and indirect realism believe that the external world exists independently of our existence. It is in light of this that indirect realism, as championed by John Locke, holds that when we perceive, we perceive something, and this is basic. He believes that in perceiving physical objects, they make an imprint on our minds, leaving their images there as ideas. This means that we do not have direct knowledge of the physical objects, but their knowledge is acquired through an inferential or causal means (Omoregbe, 2000, p. 85). It is causal because the ideas cannot exist in space and time; they are caused by something, which is the physical object. Locke affirms that ideas are the immediate objects of human knowledge. This means that we have no direct knowledge of things themselves, but only of our ideas about them. How are ideas of things formed in our mind? Locke explains that when we perceive things, they impress themselves on our minds and leave their images there as copies. These images are the representatives of things in our minds, and these are our ideas of things (Omoregbe, 2000, pp. 85–86).

On the Notion of Substance

When we perceive things, what we actually perceive in them are qualities (e.g., colour, height, size and hardness) which impress themselves on our minds, leaving their copies there. But we know that these qualities cannot exist on their own. They inhere in something, a 'substratum' which supports them and from which they come. This substratum is known by Locke as substance. We can never know it directly. We can only know the qualities that come out of it and which impress themselves on our mind. The implication of this doctrine of Locke's is that we can never know things as they are in themselves. We can only know our ideas about them. However, Locke said he was only describing material substance (Omoregbe, 2000, p. 86). The question remains: how can an empiricist like Locke, who believes in the principle of empiricism, that is, that experience is the bedrock of knowledge, be talking about a spiritual thing like substance? Despite this, Locke failed to define his notion of substance. This particular act led to the collapse of his theory. Locke also distinguished between primary and secondary qualities: primary qualities are the qualities of solidity, extension, motion, rest, etc., while secondary qualities are simply the powers in things to produce simple ideas, such as taste, colour, sound, smell, etc. How did Locke arrive at all these? Locke believes that we cannot know the primary qualities because they represent the objects. How did he know that they represent objects?

More importantly, the concept of Locke's idea cannot be thoroughly explained without making recourse to Berkeley, who laid much emphasis on the notion of idea as esse est percipi, that is, to be is to be perceived. Locke, as an empiricist, of course, rejects innate ideas and says

that all knowledge comes from sense-perception. For him, whatever we perceive is an idea in the mind. All objects of sense-perception are ideas in the mind. They exist only in so far as they are perceived. Berkeley erroneously equates the act of sense-perception with idea. For him, sense-perception is an idea. Berkeley agrees with Locke that the objects of our knowledge are ideas, not material things themselves. But what are ideas? Here they differ. Locke says they are separate from things but represent them in our minds. Berkeley, however, says that they are not separate from things. They are things (Omoregbe, 2000, p. 88).

The Problem with Locke's Representative Theory of Perception

1. The Veil of Perception: Though Locke did not talk about this concept himself, it was a coinage of Jonathan Bennett, who extensively worked on indirect realism in Locke. Nevertheless, in the actual world where human beings live, there has not been the experience of the existence of any veil shielding a percipient from perceiving the external world. This conception is antithetical to human experience. The representative realists, based on this, make the real world directly unknowable via perception. All we can know are our mental images or representations.
2. Another argument against Locke's theory is our ability to distinguish between memory and imagination. Indirect realists conceive of both of these as producers of images. But we take some of these images to be memory images and others to be mere products of the imagination. What criterion do we use to tell them apart?
3. The theory of Locke leads to the fallacy of transcendence, that is, metaphysical transcendentalism. That is, perceiving what is not within the reach of the senses. We only perceive ideas, as claimed by Locke. Ideas are not spatio-temporal; in other words, they do not exist in space and time.
4. This particular problem is in the form of a question: how did Locke know that these ideas actually represent their objects in our minds?
5. How did Locke arrive at the distinguishing characteristics of the qualities, into primary and secondary? What parameter did he use?
6. Locke propounded the concept of substance. Substance, to us, is an immaterial entity which does not occupy space and time and remains indefinable. This discovery of Locke's is contrary to the principle of empiricism, of which Locke is one of the exponents, which says that 'all knowledge comes from sense-perception and is circumscribed by sense-perception, and that experience is the bedrock of knowledge'. Going by this, the notion of substance (material substance) in Locke works contrary to this principle. It is on the basis of this that Locke was described as an inconsistent empiricist who could not push empiricism to a logical conclusion, as was done by David Hume. Though empiricism is not immune from skepticism, despite the effort of Hume.
7. Locke faced difficulty in his distinction between complex and simple ideas. The reduction of complex ideas (space, number, substance) to collections of simples has a fundamental flaw.
8. If what we can perceive are our own ideas, then Locke is faced with the problem of the ideational theory of meaning.
9. Regarding his distinction between primary and secondary qualities, Locke faced a lot of problems. Berkeley agreed with him that secondary qualities are what we can perceive in the object but disagreed on where they reside. Berkeley said that secondary qualities reside in the mind of the percipient and not in the object. Also, how did Locke know that the primary qualities resemble the object?

10. Locke and other empiricists said that there are no innate ideas and that it is experience that makes an imprint. How did they arrive at that? They have been criticized by some scholars, such as the idealists like Immanuel Kant.
11. Locke assumed that the real is actual, that the test of truth is experience, and that the mind, accordingly, is simply a surface on which experience writes. However, he arbitrarily assumed that the mind is an illuminated surface and then discovered that the surface is unmarked prior to experience. The basic question was not whether there are innate truths, but what sort of thing the mind must be to know, as we all know that it does know, universal truths. Hence, Locke fails to distinguish the psychological thesis from the justificatory thesis.
12. Causal relations, according to Locke, can only obtain among perceptions and not among perceptions and objects that are not perceptions. From this, it follows that the identity and continued existence of the object and the self are a fiction of the mind. These, obviously, are incompatible with the possibility of a knowledge of a system of objects and persons standing in various relations to one another, that is, Nature.
13. Locke's critique of innate ideas confused a psychological question with an epistemological question. He was asking for the causes of our innate ideas, instead of asking for the test of their truth.

Conclusion

So far, the whole problem of perception is the problem of the empiricists. We have seen, from the foregoing analysis, that the problem of knowledge started from the time of the sophists, who brought challenges to epistemology and which, of course, attracted reactions from scholars on how we can attain objective knowledge. Despite the efforts of Locke to rescue direct realism, his own theory equally has some pitfalls. For example, it is contrary to what we know as human beings that our objects of perception are not tangible, concrete things but ideas, and that ideas are what is given in perception. Ideas, according to this paper, cannot furnish us with real knowledge of physical objects, since they cannot exist in space and time. Locke's theory of idea is faulty because it takes appearance for reality; saying that ideas are the only knowable reality is untenable and unjustifiable. To this end, the paper posits that the theory of idea of John Locke is contrary to common sense, and that physical objects can be directly perceived as they are, without any intervening medium serving as an obstruction to our perceiving them.

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DIGITAL EDITING AND BROADCAST PRODUCTION: AN EXAMINATION OF BROADCAST PRODUCTION PROCESSES

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Abstract

Editing plays a vital role in modern media communication, especially broadcast production, by enhancing the creation, manipulation and distribution of audio-visual content across various platforms. This work examined the broadcast production processes involved in improving the quality, clarity and effectiveness of media messages. It explored how digital tools enable media professionals to edit video, audio and graphics effectively to result in more engaging and professional content that engenders audience appeal. It highlights the impact of broadcast digital editing in information dissemination through radio, television and online platforms. It discusses the societal, industrial, professional and academic importance of digital editing, skill development and media convergence. The work also addresses key challenges such as intellectual property, quality control, technological complexity in the editing process. It concludes that digital editing has transformed the media industry by making content creation faster, more accessible and more interactive, while also introducing new challenges that require continuous adaptation and regulation.

Keywords: Audio Editing, Broadcast Production, Broadcast Regulation, Digital Editing, Skill Development, Video Editing.

Introduction

Editing has undergone profound transformations in broadcast production over the past few decades, driven by rapid advancements in technology, the proliferation of digital media platforms, and evolving audience expectations. It is a process of modifying, organizing, enhancing and arranging digital contents (www.ziprecruiter.com). What was once a linear, hardware-intensive, and time-consuming process has now become a highly flexible, software-driven, and creative discipline. Today, digital editing forms the backbone of modern media industry, including television, film, online streaming, advertising, and journalism (Marton & Mariategui, 2015; Bock et al., 2023).

At the core of this transformation is the shift from analog to digital systems. Analog broadcasting relied heavily on physical tapes, manual switching, and linear workflows, which limited flexibility and creative experimentation. In contrast, digital technologies have introduced non-linear editing systems (NLEs), high-definition (HD) and ultra-high-definition (UHD) formats, real-time rendering, and seamless integration with visual effects (VFX), sound design, and graphics (Grant et al (2010), Marton & Mariategui 2015). These developments have not only improved efficiency but have also expanded the creative possibilities available to producers, editors and directors.

According to Bock et al (2015), "Digital editing is now a central component of content creation, allowing professionals to manipulate video and audio with precision and speed". Meanwhile, broadcast production has evolved into a complex, multi-platform operation that involves content creation, packaging, transmission and distribution across traditional television and digital platforms such as streaming services and social media.

This discussion explores digital editing and broadcast production in depth, examining their historical evolution, technological foundations, workflows, tools, challenges, and future trends. The aim is to provide a comprehensive understanding suitable for postgraduate-level study, emphasizing both theoretical perspectives and practical applications.

Evolution of Digital Editing in Broadcast Production

The history of editing and broadcast production is rooted in analog systems. Early television production relied on linear editing, where footage was recorded on magnetic tapes and edited sequentially. Editors had to physically cut and splice tapes or use tape-to-tape editing systems, which were time-consuming and prone to quality degradation.

The transition to digital editing began in the late 20th century with the introduction of computer-based systems. Non-linear editing (NLE) revolutionized the process by allowing editors to access any part of a video clip instantly without altering the original footage. This shift enabled greater flexibility, experimentation and efficiency.

Simultaneously, broadcast production evolved from analog transmission to digital broadcasting. Digital broadcasting improved signal quality, enabled multi-channel transmission and allowed the integration of data services such as subtitles, interactive content, and electronic program guides.

The emergence of the internet further accelerated this evolution. Today, broadcast production is no longer limited to traditional television; it encompasses webcasting, live streaming, and on-demand content delivery.

Broadcast Production: Concept and Structure

Broadcast production refers to the creation and dissemination of audio-visual content for mass audiences. It includes several stages which are Pre-production/Planning stage, Production/Shooting/Recording stage and Post Production/Assembly stage.

(A) Pre-Production/Planning Stage

This stage also incorporates the following:

i. **Concept development:** This is where the idea of the programme is created and shaped. It involves deciding what the programme is about, identifying the target audience e.g. [youths, adults and children], choosing the format [news, talk show, documentary, and drama etc, and defining the purpose [to inform, educate, entertain, or persuade].

ii. **Scriptwriting:** It is closely related to concept development and collation in pre-production. After developing the idea of a program, relevant materials and information are gathered through collation. Scripting then organizes these ideas and materials into a structured format, including dialogue, actions, and technical instructions, to guide the production process. Scripting is important because it ensures the programme is well organized and structured, it helps avoid mistakes during recording or live broadcast, it guides presenters, producers, and camera crew, saves time and reduces confusion during production. Broadcast Scripts could come in the following forms:
   (a) **Full script:** In this type of script, everything is written word-for-word. It is common in drama, news, commercials and documentary, political programmes and similar productions where every single word and picture element are precisely controlled.
   (b) **Outline script or Rundown:** Here only key points are written. It is used in talk shows, live programmes, interviews, commercials, programme station breaks and other programmes that require a good deal of ad-libbing. It is a free style speaking and saying things without strictly following the script.

In script writing, storyboarding is important. This is the process of drawing or visually outlining each scene of how a programme will look before production begins. A story board is usually made up of frames [boxes], and each frame represents a shot or scene. It is a series of simple sketches or drawing containing sufficient information that could be used in a documentary, advertisement and other programmes. It provides the producer and director the opportunity to think in pictures. It contains camera angles [close-up, long shot, etc.], camera or character movement, short descriptions of what is happening and audio notes [dialogue, music, sound effects].

Story boarding helps to visualize how the programme will look before filming, guide the camera crew and director, ensures proper scene arrangement and continuity, and reduces mistakes and saves time during production.

(B) Production Stage

This is the second phase of the production process. It is the phase in which the event is recorded. Both audio and video are recorded here. It involves the following:

i. **Camera operation:** This refers to the handling and control of camera during the actual recording of a programme. It involves capturing visuals in a way that effectively communicates the story or message to the audience. During production the camera operator is responsible for positioning the camera correctly, selecting the right angles, and ensuring that shots are clear and well-composed. This includes decision about framing, focus, lighting, adjustment, and camera movement. Good camera operation involves different types of shots such as Wide shots to show the environment, Medium shots for conversation and Close -up shots to capture emotions

   Camera movement is also important here as techniques like panning left and right, tilting up and down and zooming help to make the visual more engaging and dynamic. Overall, effective camera operation enhances the quality of the broadcast by producing clear, stable, and visually appealing footage that supports storytelling.

ii. **Lighting setup:** This refers to the arrangement and control of lighting equipment to properly illuminate subjects during recording. It is very important because lighting affects the visibility, mood, and overall quality of the video. In broadcast production, proper lighting ensures that the subject is clearly seen and that the image appears professional. Poor lighting can make a video look dull, too dark or overly bright. One

of the most common lighting techniques used is the three-point lighting system, which includes:

(a) **Key light:** This is the main source of light that focuses on the subject. It is the brightest and most important light.
(b) **Fill Light:** This is used to reduce shadows created by the key light, making the subject look more natural.
(c) **Back Light or Hair Light:** This is placed behind the subject to separate them from the background and add depth.

Lighting set up also involves adjusting brightness [intensity], color temperature, direction and angle of light. Proper lighting helps to improve picture clarity, enhance mood and atmosphere, highlight important details and make the production more professional.

i. **Sound recording:** This refers to the process of capturing clear and high-quality audio during the production stage. It is a very important aspect of broadcast production because poor sound can ruin even a good video, as the audio must synchronize with the video. During production, microphones are used to record dialogue, background sound, and other audio elements. The type of microphone used depends on the situation. For example, Lapel [lavalier] microphones are clipped to a speaker's clothing, Boom microphones are held above the subject often used in film and television, while Handheld microphones are commonly used for interviews.

   The sound operator must ensure that the audio is clear, audible, and free from noise or distortion. This involves adjusting volume levels, reducing background noise, positioning microphones properly, and monitoring sounds using head phones. Good sound recording also considers the environment. Recording in a quiet location and avoiding echoes or unwanted noise is very important.

ii. **Live direction:** This refers to the real time coordination and control of all production activities during a live broadcast. It is carried out by a director, who ensures that everything runs smoothly as the programme is being recorded or transmitted. In live production such as news, sports, or live events, there is no opportunity for editing before the audience sees the content. Therefore, the director must make quick and accurate decisions on what is shown at every moment.

The director communicates with the production crew (camera operators, sound engineers, and technical staff) through headsets, giving instructions such as which camera to use, when to cue presenters or guests and when to insert graphics, videos, or commercials. Live direction also involves switching between multiple camera angles to keep the programme engaging and dynamic. The director must maintain timing, coordination, and the overall flow of the broadcast, because everything happens instantly. Live directions require concentration, teamwork, and technical skills to avoid mistakes.

Post-production Stage

Post production is the last stage of the production process. Here, all recorded materials are assembled and editing process generated. Here too the script is written and narration done. In some cases, however, the scripting and narration are done at the production stage, but with the correct sequence. Before this is done, the editing process must be strictly followed and thoroughly accomplished.

Editing: Editing is one of the most crucial aspects of the post-production unit of broadcast production. It is a process of selecting, arranging, and modifying recorded audio and video materials after production to create a final, polished programme. In post-production, editors work with the footage that has been recorded and organize it into a meaningful sequence that tells a clear and engaging story. Editing involves several key activities such as cutting and trimming unwanted parts of the footage, arranging clips in the correct order, adding transitions such as cut, fade and dissolve between scenes, inserting sound effects and background music, synchronizing audio with video, and adding graphics, titles, and subtitles.

Modern editing is mostly non-linear, meaning editors can easily make changes without affecting the original footage. This makes the process faster, more flexible, and more creative. It results in the following:

a. **Visual effects:** Visual effects refer to the digital manipulation or enhancement of video footage after recording to create images or scenes that are difficult, impossible, or too expensive to capture during actual production. Visual effects can include adding computer-generated imagery [CGI] such as explosions, weather effects, or virtual environments, green screen [chroma key] editing, where backgrounds are replaced with digital scenes, motion graphics, such as animated titles, logos, and on-screen information, compositing, which is combining multiple video layers into one final image, special transitions and enhancements to make scenes more visually appealing

   In modern broadcast production, visual effects are widely used in movies, music videos, news, graphics, advertisement, and even live television broadcasts to improve audience engagement. They also help correct or enhance footage by fixing visual errors, improving realism, and creating a professional finish.

b. **Sound design:** Another aspect of the editing process is sound design. This is a creative process of developing, selecting, enhancing, and combining all audio elements in a production to support the visuals and improve story telling. In post-production, sound design goes beyond simple recording. It involves building the entire audio experience of a programme so that it feels natural, emotional and engaging for the audience. Sound design includes:
   i. **Dialogue editing:** Cleaning and improving spoken words for clarity and consistency
   ii. **Background Ambience:** Adding background sounds e.g., city, nature and sounds. To make scenes feel real.
   iii. **Sound effects:** Adding realistic or creative sounds like footsteps, doors, traffic, or explosions.
   iv. **Music Integration:** Adding background music to create mood and emotion.
   v. **Audio Enhancement:** Removing noise, balancing, volume and improving sound quality.

Sound designers work closely with video editors to ensure that audio matches the visuals perfectly. For example, footsteps must synchronize with movement, and emotional scenes must be supported with appropriate music. Good design is important because it influences how the audience feels and how believable content appears. Even with high-quality visuals, poor sound can reduce the overall impact of a production.

Final output formatting: This is the last stage of post-production where the completed edited content is prepared and converted into a suitable format for broadcasting or distribution across different platforms. After editing, sound design, and visual effects have been completed, the

final media file must be properly exported so that it can be played on television, streaming platforms, or social media without losing quality. This process involves:

i. **Rendering the project**: Converting all edited video, audio, effects, graphics, into a single playable file.
ii. **Choosing output format:** Selecting appropriate file types such as MP4, MOV, AVI, depending on the platform.
iii. **Setting resolution and quality:** Exporting in HD,4k, or other required formats based on broadcast standards.

A properly formatted final output ensures that the production is delivered in a professional, compatible, and high-quality manner to the audience.

Transmission and Distribution – These involves the following:

Signal encoding: This is the process of converting audio and visual content into digital format that can be efficiently transmitted through broadcast channels such as television, radio and internet. This process involves converting signals into digital data. Here, video and audio are transformed into binary data [0s and 1s]; compression, which means reducing the size of the data using codes such as MPEG and H.264 so it can be transmitted faster without consuming too much bandwidth; maintaining quality, which means ensuring that even after compression, the audio and video remain clear and watchable, and compatibility: encoding the signal in formats that different devices such as television, smartphones and computers can decode and play.

Signal encoding is very important because it makes it possible to send high-quality content over limited bandwidth channels such as satellite, cable, or internet streaming. Without proper encoding, transmission would be slow, inefficient, and may result in poor -quality output for viewers. In broadcast production, after the final output has been prepared, the content cannot be sent as it is. It must first be encoded into a form that transmission systems can understand and deliver to audiences.

Broadcasting via terrestrial, satellite, or cable systems: Terrestrial broadcasting involves transmitting signals through the air using land-based transmitters and antennas. In this system, broadcast stations send signal from transmission towers, and viewers receive from using antennas connected to their television or radios receivers. It covers a specific geographical area and is commonly used for free-air television and radio. Moreover, signal quality may be affected by distance, buildings or weather.

i. Satellite Broadcasting: Satellite broadcasting uses communication satellite in space to transmit signals over very long distances. The broadcast signal is sent from a ground station to a satellite, which then sends it back down to receivers in different locations. It covers a wide geographical area and provides high-quality audio and video. It is commonly used for direct-to-home television services.

ii. Cable broadcasting: Cable broadcasting delivers content through physical cables directly to subscribers' homes. Instead of signals travelling through air, they are transmitted through wired connections. It provides stable and high-quality signal and is less affected by weather or interference. It also offers multiple channels and subscription-based services.

These systems are important because they ensure that content produced and edited reach the target audience efficiently, whether locally or globally.

Online streaming and digital distribution: This refers to the delivery of audio and video content over the internet to audiences using digital services such as smartphones, laptops, and smart television sets. In modern broadcast production, content is no longer limited to traditional television and radio. With the growth of internet technology, media can now be shared globally through streaming platforms and digital channels. Online streaming allows users to watch or listen to content in real time without downloading the entire file. Examples include live streaming of events, news or watching videos on demand. While digital distribution on the other hand, involves making content available online for access, downloads or streaming through various platforms such as websites, mobile apps, and social media. Online streaming and digital distribution have greatly transformed the media industry by making content more accessible, flexible and interactive for audiences.

Digital Editing Processes and Integration

Digital editing involves a sequence of processes that are interconnected and organized into a work flow to ensure efficient and high-quality production. Rather than working in isolation, each stage flows into the next, forming a structured system from raw footage to final output. It incorporates the following stages:

1. **Ingesting and Organizing Media**
   This is the first and one of the most important steps in the digital editing process. It involves transferring recorded materials into editing system and arranging them properly for easy access during editing.
   a. **Ingesting** here, refers to the process of transferring video, audio, and image files from recording devices such as cameras, memory cards or extern al drives into a computer or editing software. This can be done by connecting the camera or storage device to the computer, copying files into the system, and importing them directly into the editing software. During this stage, files are checked to ensure they are complete and not corrupted and back-up copies may be created to prevent data loss.
   b. **Organizing Media** means arranging the files in a structured and logical way. This involves creating folders for videos, audio, images, and graphics; renaming files: giving clear and meaningful names (e.g. “interview clip1”); sorting clips based on scenes, dates, or categories, and adding label or tags for quick identification. Ingesting and organizing media play a key role in the editing workflow because, it creates a smooth starting point for editing, it reduces time wasted searching for files, it improves efficiency and productivity and it minimizes errors during editing.

2. **Reviewing and selecting footage**
   This is the stage in digital editing where the editor carefully watches all the recorded materials and chooses the best clips to use in the final production. After organizing the media, the editor does not immediately start editing. Instead, he goes through all the footage to understand the content and identify the most useful and high-quality shots. Reviewing and selecting footage is very important because it ensures that only high-quality content is used; it saves time during editing; it helps to build a clear and effective story line, and reduces errors and unnecessary work.

3. **Cutting and Sequencing:**
   These are key processes in digital editing where the editor shapes the raw footage into a clear, meaningful and engaging story.
   a. **Cutting** refers to removing unwanted or unnecessary parts of video and audio clips. During this process the editor eliminates mistakes, pauses, or irrelevant scenes, shortens long clips to keep the content concise, and selects only the most important and useful parts. For example, in an interview, the editor may cut out repeated words, noise and moments of silence. The goal of cutting is to make the content clear, focused, and interesting.
   b. **Sequencing** means arranging of clips. It involves arranging the selected clips in a logical and meaningful order on the timeline. During sequencing the editor places clips in the correct order to communicate properly, ensures smooth flow from one scene to another, and builds a clear story line or message. For example, in a news report, clips are arranged to follow the sequence of events as they happened. The goal of sequencing is to create smooth flow and proper storytelling structure.

4. **Adding Transition and visual elements:**
   This is an important stage in digital editing where the editor enhances the connection between scenes and improves the overall visual quality of the production. After cutting and sequencing the video may look too plain or may have abrupt changes between clips. This is where transitions and visual elements are applied to make content smooth, engaging, and professional. Transitions are effects used to move smoothly from one clip or scene to another. Common types include:
   i. **Cut:** An outright discontinuation of a recording. It is an instantaneous or sharp change from one picture to another.
   ii. **Fade in:** This is when a picture appears on screen from black. It marks the beginning of a programme. It is a gradual appearance of a programme for viewership.
   iii. **Fade out:** This is the gradual disappearance of a scene from focus. This is when a programme that was on screen gradually disappears from focus. It marks the end of a programme.
   iv. **Dissolve:** This is when one clip gradually overlaps into another. It is a situation in which a picture appears on screen and gradually disappears simultaneously. It is a gradual change from one picture to another.
   v. **Wipe:** It is a situation in which one scene replaces another into a sliding motion. It could be a corner wipe or otherwise.
   vi. Transitions help to avoid sudden or harsh changes between scenes, show passage of time or change location and improve the flow of the video.

Challenges in Digital Editing

Technological Complexity

Rapid technological changes require continuous learning. The core issue is that tools, software, and workflows evolve quickly. What a media professional learns today can become outdated and obsolete in a short time. This creates a constant need for learning, adaptation and upgrading skills. First, software and tools are always being updated. Editing platforms like Adobe Premiere Pro, cut pro, and DaVinci resolve frequently, release features, interfaces, and workflows. While these updates improve efficiency and creativity, they also mean editors must keep relearning how to use the tools efficiently.

Second, new technologies are constantly introduced. Innovations like Artificial Intelligence [AI], Virtual Reality [VR], and cloud-based editing systems are changing how content is produced and delivered. For example, AI can now automate tasks like color correction or sound clean up. While helpful, it requires professionals to understand how to integrate these tools into their work flow, which can be overwhelming for those not trained in them.

Another key issue is the cost of continuous learning. Professionals often need to attend training, take online courses, or spend time practicing new tools. This can be expensive and time-consuming, especially in environments where resources are limited.

Data Management

Large file sizes demand efficient storage and backup solutions. Modern production formats like HD [high-definition], 4K and even 8K generate extremely large files. A single minute of high-quality 4K video can take several gigabytes of storage. When one considers that a full production may involve hours of raw footage, multiple tasks, graphics, audio tracks, and final exports, the total data quickly becomes massive. As a result, efficient storage becomes essential. Another critical aspect is back up and data security. Losing media files can be disastrous. When one loses an entire project after weeks of shooting and editing, it can mean financial loss, missed deadlines, and damaged reputation. That is why professionals follow strict backup strategies such as using cloud backups in addition to physical drives, and regularly updating and verifying backups. All these come with cost implications. High-capacity storage devices, backup systems, and clod subscriptions can be expensive, especially for small production teams or students.

Quality Control

Maintaining consistent quality across platforms can be difficult. Quality control in digital editing and broadcast production is about making sure that content looks, sounds, and feel consistent and professional, no matter where it is viewed. The challenge comes in when the same content has to work across multiple platforms, each with different technical requirements.

First, different platforms have different resolution and format standards. For example, television broadcasts may require HD or specific frame rates, while social media platforms prefer vertical or square formats and may compress video heavily. A video that looks perfect on television screen might lose clarity or appear cropped when uploaded to platforms like Instagram or TikTok. This makes it difficult to maintain uniform visual quality.

Second, there is the issue of compression and file optimization. Many online platforms automatically compress videos to reduce file size. This can affect sharpness, color accuracy, and sound quality. Even if the original edited version is high-quality, the final uploaded version may look different, which affects consistency.

Finally, maintaining consistency requires extra time and effort. Editors often need to create multiple versions of the same content for television, YouTube and social media.

Intellectual Property Issues

Digital content is vulnerable to piracy and unauthorized distribution. Intellectual property [IP] issues are serious challenges in digital editing and broadcast production, especially because digital content is highly vulnerable to unauthorized distribution. One major reason is the ease of copying and sharing digital files. Once a video is produced or released,

whether on television or online, it can be quickly downloaded, duplicated, and redistributed without permission. Platforms like YouTube or Telegram make it very easy for users to share content widely, sometimes without considering copyright laws.

Another issue is the lack of control after distribution. Once content is uploaded online, the original creator often loses control over how it is used. People may repost the content without credit, edit or remix without permission, or use it for commercial purposes without paying the creator. This leads to loss revenue, especially for filmmakers, broadcasters, and content creators who depend on exclusive right to earn income.

Piracy also affects content value and originality. If a movie, documentary, or programme is leaked before or shortly after release, audiences may access it for free instead of through official channels. This reduces viewership, advertising revenue, and overall profitability. In addition, digital editing itself can contribute to the problem. Advanced tools make it easy to manipulate and ruse existing content, sometimes blurring line between fair use and infringement. For example, someone can take clips, music, or graphics from another production and include them in their own work without proper licensing. To manage these risks, producers often use protective measures such as:

i. **Watermarking their content.** This is the process of placing visible or invisible marks, logo, text or symbol on digital media content such as videos, images, audio or document to show ownership and protect it from unauthorized use. Watermarking is used to identify the original creator or organisation responsible for the content. For example, television stations usually place their statin logo at the corner of the screen during broadcasts. Photographers and video creators may also add their names or band logos to their work.
ii. **Digital Rights Management [DRM] systems.** These are technologies used to protect digital media content from unauthorized access, copying, sharing, or distribution. It helps media organisations, film makers, musicians and broadcasters to control how their content is used after is released online or distributed digitally.
iii. **Registering copyrights**. This is a legal process of officially protecting original creative works such as videos, films, music, scripts, photographs, graphics and broadcast content from unauthorized use or theft. Copyright registration gives the creator or the owner legal rights over how the content is used, reproduced, distributed or shared.
iv. **Monitoring online platforms for unauthorized uploads, Audio Editing and Synchronization:** This is the process of improving sound quality and ensuring that audio matches perfectly with the visuals in a video production. After video clips have been arranged, the audio must be refined to be clear, balanced and properly aligned with the screen event. Audio editing involves adjusting and enhancing all sound elements in the production. This includes:
    a. Cleaning dialogue which removes background noise, echo, or distortion,
    b. Adjusting volume levels to ensure voices, music, and sound effects are balanced
    c. Adding sound effects such as footsteps, door sounds, or environmental noise, and
    d. Inserting background sound to create mood and emotion.

    Synchronization means matching audio with the corresponding visuals. For example a person's speech must match their lip movement, while actions like clapping or footsteps must align with the sound. Editors achieve this by adjusting the timing of the audio clips, aligning waveforms with video actions, and using tools in editing

software for precise syncing. Proper synchronization makes the production look natural and realistic.

v. **Convergence of Media Platforms:** This is the integration of different forms of media such as television, radio, newspapers, websites and social media into a single media environment where content can be created, edited, distributed and consumed across multiple platforms simultaneously. Traditionally, each medium operated independently. Television content was viewed only on a television set, radio programmes were heard only on radio receivers, and newspapers existed only in print form. However, the development of media technology, internet connectivity, smart phones and multi-media software has merged these separate media systems into one interconnected digital space. This process is known as media convergence. In digital editing, convergence allows media professionals to produce one piece of content and distribute it through different channels at the same time. For example, a television interview can be edited digitally and then broadcast on television, uploaded to YouTube, shared on Instagram, discussed on X, and streamed on website simultaneously. This has transformed the nature of media production and audience consumption. Convergence of media platforms is a major development in digital editing and broadcast production that has transformed how media content is produced, distributed, and consumed. It has increased accessibility, speed, audience participation and multi-media storytelling, while also creating challenges related to misinformation, professional pressure, media ethics and industry competition. Therefore, media convergence remains both an opportunity and a challenge in the modern digital communication environment.

Conclusion

Digital Editing has fundamentally transformed broadcast production by reshaping the process through which audio-visual content is created, refined and disseminated. The transition from analog to digital has significantly enhanced production efficiency, technical precision, creative flexibility and audience engagement. This evolution has also fostered greater integration of production workflow, enabling broadcasters to respond more effectively to the demands of an increasingly digital media environment.

Nevertheless, the effective adoption of digital editing technologies is constrained by challenges such as the high cost of sophisticated equipment and software, inadequate technological infrastructure, irregular power supply, cyber security concerns and the continuous need for professional training. These challenges underscore the importance of sustained investment in technological innovation and human capacity development in the broadcast industry.

Ultimately, the future of broadcast production depends on the ability of media organisations and practitioners to adapt to emerging technologies while maintaining professional standards, ethical responsibility and technical excellence. As digital technologies continue to evolve, digital editing will remain a critical driver of innovation, competitiveness and quality in contemporary broadcast production.

Recommendations

Based on the analysis of digital editing and broadcast production, the following recommendations are proposed:

a) Continuous Skill Development
Media professionals should engage in continuous training to keep pace with rapidly evolving technologies, including new editing software, production tools, and digital platforms.

b) Investment in Modern Equipment and Infrastructure
Broadcast organizations and production houses should invest in up-to-date digital tools, high-performance systems, and reliable storage solutions to improve efficiency and output quality.

c) Adoption of Cloud-Based Workflows
Organizations should integrate cloud technologies to facilitate remote collaboration, enhance scalability, and ensure secure data management.

d) Strengthening Data Management Practices
Proper archiving, backup systems, and data organization strategies should be implemented to handle large volumes of digital content effectively.

e) Enhancing Creative and Storytelling Skills
Editors and producers should focus not only on technical proficiency but also on storytelling techniques to create compelling and engaging content.

f) Embracing Multi-Platform Production Strategies
Content creators should design productions that are adaptable across various platforms, including television, mobile devices, and social media, to reach wider audiences.

g) Implementation of Quality Control Measures
Strict quality assurance processes should be maintained to ensure consistency in audio-visual standards across all distribution channels.

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VOL. 22, NO. 2, 2026