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**The Positivist Demand and the Betrayed  
Tradition of Tacit Knowledge in an African Thought System**

**Fractures in Esan Epistemology**

**Abstract**

*The present paper identifies a certain crisis in the African condition represented in the betrayal of the tradition of tacit knowledge in Esan thought system, leaving behind fractures in the people's epistemology. Behind this situation is the positivist demand for verification and confirmation in the pursuit of a reliable epistemology. In navigating the condition of contemporary Esan thought system, the paper reveals that the tradition of tacit knowledge has been underplayed and rejected by the demands of modernity. Since the epistemology of a people influences the way they engage their reality, confront their problems and encounter their difficulties, and since the African condition rests on fractured epistemologies (as exemplified in Esan epistemic stances), the paper presents a picture of a tradition that is ruptured and in need of healing and the retrieval of its soul. This tradition is encapsulated in tacit knowledge and implicit ideals. It is only in the execution of the retrieval that we will be able to bring to the fore a reliable epistemological program that will treat the Esan condition, writ large, Africa and reveal the essence of the common good. The paper presents some instantiations of the betrayed tradition as expressed and employed in aspects of the people's lives such as health care and social relations. By this, the connection among epistemology, ontology, social order and morality becomes explicit.*

**Keywords**

African philosophy, Esan people, epistemology, tacit knowledge, African tradition

**Introduction**

The ideas and arguments developed in this paper stem from the consideration of the connection or overlap between epistemology and ontology.<sup>1</sup> For, as we confront [our] reality, engage [our] [life's] challenges, meet [our] [life's] predicaments and tackle our conditions as humans, certain cognitive stances are called in; certain epistemic strategies are brought to bear on issues and situations. And the epistemic or cognitive attitude we adopt plays a vital role in the result of this interaction. What is to be noted here however is that the epistemic attitude we adopt are the outcomes of how we interpret the world. They are upshots of our perception, and not necessarily how the world is. This

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It is my belief that our personal, social and other relational dispositions form the super-structure that finds its basis on epistemic and

ontological substructure. Yet every epistemological position has implication in an ontological commitment.

position finds natural expression in Werner Heisenberg claim that “[w]hat we observe is not Nature itself but Nature exposed to our method of questioning”.<sup>2</sup> And so, what follows is that the result or outcome of our engagement with our world (indeed our whole world itself) is necessarily a product of our method of investigation (our epistemology).

The present paper attempts to alert in us the reality of a certain crisis in contemporary Esan thought system, writ large, Africa – a crisis resounding in the fracturing of the peoples’ epistemic stances, and its reverberation in the condition of the people’s contemporary world. This crisis, to be sure, is rooted in the spirit of modernity exhibiting a betrayal of a certain aspect of Esan tradition and finds concrete manifestation in some rupture between man and his environment, and a tendency indicating the disposition of materialism and consumerism; an alienation of traditional cultures by the phenomenon of modernisation. In place of such traditional cultures, we have political barbarity, social discord, endemic violence and dislocation, combining with widespread dehumanisation.<sup>3</sup> This climate is so imposing that no amount of rhetoric about the ‘miracle’ of modern science and technology, or the ‘triumph’ of democracy, or the eulogy about progress, can hide the fact that the contemporary world is tyrannised by a specific fractured epistemology – a faulty outlook.<sup>4</sup> There is, therefore, a displacement of an outlook of most fundamental concern for humanistic rationality and a deep yearning for the noblest desire for human dignity and the common good. And, perhaps more problematic is the question of how we got to where we are, and in what direction we might turn for some remedy.

As to the question of how we got here, one dares to say that we were led by a profound dislocation of our epistemology, a fracturing of our knowledge structure; a rupture between our epistemology and ontology resounding in other disconnections in our structure of morality and social order. As to what direction we might turn for some remedy, it is a rediscovery of our betrayed tradition and employing same to enhance common good in the light of humanistic rationality.<sup>5</sup>

### **The Positivist Demand**

From its manifest perspective, the semantic history of the term *epistemology* presents the study of our right to the beliefs we hold. Epistemology is concerned with whether we have acted responsibly or not in arriving at the beliefs we have. Thus understood, epistemology focuses on justification.<sup>6</sup> Of course, the search for an adequate account for knowledge presents an important part of the larger problem of human understanding – the problem of appraising and justifying beliefs, together with the problem of comparing the merits of rival beliefs as well as concepts, points of view, theories and methods.<sup>7</sup> This has been an enduring preoccupation for many cultures and peoples for centuries. It has been a permanent feature of men’s speculative thought.<sup>8</sup> But the first main attempt in the history of Western philosophy to present a systematic resolution of this problem as far as the modern period is concerned yielded what is described in some quarters as the ‘Received View’ of knowledge and rationality. This view, along with the general semantic history of the term *knowledge* has been developed in a grand totalizing framework of reference represented in the works of Francis Bacon, René Descartes and Immanuel Kant. Others include Gottlob Frege, Ernst Mach and Bertrand Russell. Despite their detailed disagreement, these philosophers worked within the same general limi-

tations.<sup>9</sup> Their proposals for resolving the problem of human understanding or knowledge were developed in the same direction. They all believed that human knowledge should be governed by fixed principles and that the principles of rationality or knowledge are – and must be – historically invariant.

Thus, the need for an impartial forum and method for appraising and evaluating the merits of rival positions was understood as calling for a single, unchanging, uniquely authoritative system of ideas and beliefs.<sup>10</sup> The classic instance of such a universal and authoritative system was suggested in the new abstract networks of logic and geometry. In this consideration, ‘objectivity’ in the sense of impartiality became equated with objectivity with timeless truths, and the rational merits of a position were to be identified with its logical coherence or the validity of the axioms and the formal entailments of necessities of the claims on which the position depended.<sup>11</sup> This way, rationality was equated with logicity. These considerations were to develop to full maturity as a system in the hands of Bertrand Russell. They were, however, combined with the empiricist epistemology borrowed from Ernst Mach to produce, for the positivist, the touchstone for all rational beliefs, thoughts and actions. At the heart of the positivist orientation is the argument that the claims and conclusions of natural science and its theories constitute the paradigm of rational beliefs and model of genuine knowledge.

Running through the considerations that constitute the positivist program is that the idea of genuine knowledge always includes universality, permanence, neutrality, objectivity, clarity, truth, foundation, certainty, openness, intersubjectivity, detachment, coherence and logicity, all under the umbrella of reality. Incidentally, the preceding network of ideas is found in what is here referred to as epistemic tradition. The term ‘tradition’ is here understood as a timeless reality having the character of formless truth, enigmatic to define; some universal reality that has been in existence since the genesis of time. This has been referred to as primordial tradition, synonymous with a perennial philosophy which is eternal, universal and immutable.<sup>12</sup> Essentially, a tradition in this understanding is of supra-human origin, and is in no sense a product of human thought, although it is the birthright of humanity. Tradition, then, in its most pristine sense, is a primordial truth and as such takes on the

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Exact from: Marcelo Gleiser, *The Island of Knowledge: The Limit of Science and the Search for Meaning*, Basic Books, New York 2014, p. xiii.

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Harry Oldmeadow, »Introduction: Sign of the Times and the Light of Tradition«, in: Harry Oldmeadow (ed.), *The Betrayal of Tradition: Essays on the Spiritual Crisis of Modernity*, World Wisdom Inc., Indiana 2005, pp. xi–xvi, p. xi.

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Ibid., p. xii.

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The idea of a humanistic rationality emphasizes the enhancement of human dignity, solidarity and subsidiarity and natural laws as cognate ideals of common good. Any tradition that does not pursue this ideal is not qualified as a candidate for humanistic rationality.

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Jonathan Dancy, »Epistemology, problems of«, in: Ted Honderich (ed.), *The Oxford Companion to Philosophy*, Oxford University Press, New York 2004, p. 263–265, p. 263.

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Ibid.

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Ibid.

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This is strongly represented in Stephen Toulmin, *Human Understanding*, volume 1, Clarendon Press, Oxford 1972.

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Ibid.

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Ibid.

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H. Oldmeadow, »Introduction«, p. xii.

status of a first cause, a cosmic datum, a reality woven into the very fabric of the universe and ingrained in the human spirit.<sup>13</sup> Tradition also has a meaning indicating that which is transmitted (following from its Latin origin, *trader*). In this sense, the term cannot be equated with the formless, immutable Truth; it is, rather, that Truth as it finds formal expression in the myths, doctrines, rituals, symbols and all other manifestations of reality in given cultures – Esan traditional knowledge not excluded. As Lord Northbourne observed:

“Tradition in the rightful sense of the word is the chain that joins civilisation to ‘revelation’.”<sup>14</sup>

In opposition to traditions in all of its senses stands the world of modernity. For want of a better term, we might call this opposing dominant worldview of the post-medieval world ‘Modernism’ – a patron oracle of, and prefiguring the positivist agenda. The epistemological program of the positivists that created deep fractures in indigenous traditions of knowledge as in the worldview of the Esan people of southern Nigeria, employed as strategies for dealing with human conditions and reality, gave rise to the social, political and economic crises for present-day human societies. To be sure, the very first significant representation of the epistemology that betrayed the existing tradition of indigenous Esan discourse came with the positivist orientation. Positivism, along with phenomenism, pragmatism, and operationalism, belongs to the empiricist tendencies. For the positivist, an inquiry into the conditions of knowledge can be meaningfully pursued only as a methodological inquiry into the principles and methods for the construction and corroborations of scientific theories. Any inquiry that transcends this methodology exposes itself to the same sentence of extravagance and meaninglessness once passed on metaphysics. Thus, at the heart of the positivist conception of knowledge is the belief in the exclusive validity of natural science. To strengthen this belief and account for the structure of scientific knowledge by it, the positivist combined the logical techniques of Russell and Alfred North Whitehead’s *Principia Mathematica* with an empiricist epistemology borrowed from Ernst Mach. This was to result in the formal rigour and empirical basis of natural science that became the touchstone of knowledge and rationality.

### **The Tradition of Tacit Knowledge in Esan thought System**

In Esan traditional ontology, the world consists of two realms of existence – the visible and the invisible, independently real but intimately linked to form a whole.<sup>15</sup> The beings existing in these two realms in a union are lively and active in varying degrees because they are animated by an ontological principle or essence, referred to as force, which they possess. In Esan language, Force is referred to as *Orion* or *Etin* – the former referring to force; the latter referring to strength in their literal colouring. It is also known as *Ahu*, meaning ‘energy’ or ‘power’.<sup>16</sup>

In theorising about being in African tradition, some scholars use the words ‘force’ and ‘spirit’ interchangeably.<sup>17</sup> Two main reasons can be identified for this. Spirit, like force, is invisible; the spirit in an African (Esan) community has a higher degree of vital force than physical entities and is believed to be able, in some ways, to cause and influence the vitality or life force in physical, visible entities. Essentially speaking, the human person (*oria*) has an inner identity of this intangible reality and can through this relate with the environment, including human beings. It is in this setting that the Esan thought system considers

knowledge as living intercourse, a vital interrelationship. By this, it is taken that the activity of knowing is an outpouring of the self into the known. This, very importantly, carries moral and strong social implications. For, as it is in Esan culture, a human person cannot seriously be speaking, declare, for instance, unto another person that, “I do not know you.” This would indicate an estrangement, a social rejection of the ‘other’. It is in the light of the preceding that this paper identifies in Esan thought system the tradition of tacit knowledge.

Tacit knowledge is an intangible form of rational capacity. Opposed to tacit knowledge and employed as means of confronting realities in the contemporary world is the relationship between data, information and knowledge. Essentially speaking, data consists of raw facts while information is a collection of raw facts organised in such a way that they have additional value beyond the value of the facts themselves.<sup>18</sup> On the other hand, knowledge is the body of principles, assumptions, ideals and procedures used to select, organise and manipulate data to make them suitable for some specific task. Sometimes the positivist program presents what we could best describe as codified knowledge. Data are formalised representations of information, making it possible to process or communicate such information.<sup>19</sup> Of course, the concept of information is close to the concept of knowledge but also involves interpreting or making ideas explicit. Information comes in bits and pieces; knowledge does not.<sup>20</sup> Whereas information can be explicitly expressed either in paper or electronically, knowledge is personal and intrinsically related to individuals. Strictly speaking, therefore, tacit knowledge cannot be codified. To do so, as represented in the positivist program, results in a fractured epistemology. And so, tacit knowledge is implicit knowledge that we as individuals make use of to greater or lesser degrees of success. By implicit knowledge is understood that component which is not necessarily written anywhere, but we tacitly understand that using such knowledge is likely to lead to greater personal success.<sup>21</sup> Put differently, tacit knowledge is knowledge that usually is not openly expressed, and therefore is not accessible to the positivist principle of verificationism. Its nearest location is the area of ‘epistemology of intuition’ or ‘epistemology of thought experiment’. By the use of ‘tacit’ in the present sense, it is not to imply that this knowledge is inaccessible to conscious awareness, unspeakable, or unteachable, but that it is not thought differently to most of us. Of course, such knowledge can emerge and does

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Ibid.

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Lord Northbourne, *Religion in the Modern World*, J. M. Dent, London 1963, p. 34.

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Christopher E. Ukhun, »Metaphysical Authoritarianism and the Moral Agent in Esan Traditional Thought«, *Uma: Journal of Philosophy and Religious studies* 1 (2006) 1, pp. 145–146.

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Christopher Gbelokoto Okojie (ed.), *Esan dictionary*, Perfect Printers Limited, Lagos 2005, pp. 23, 24, 120.

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For instance, Jim I. Unah interchangeably uses ‘Force’ and ‘Spirit’. See: Jim I. Unah,

»The Nature of African Metaphysics«, in: Jim I. Unah, *Metaphysics, Phenomenology and African Philosophy*, FADEC Publishers, Lagos 2004, pp. 337–355.

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Peter Busch, *Tacit Knowledge in Organizational Learning*, IGI Publishing, London 2008, p. 3.

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Ibid.

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Ibid.

21

Ibid.

ultimately arise from accumulated experience, digested and internalised by the individual, as in the very elderly in the communities.

At a certain level of experience, when acquired, tacit knowledge could play the role of ‘paradigms’ as in Thomas Kuhn, ‘forms of life’ as in Peter Winch, ‘language game’ as in Ludwig Wittgenstein, ‘research program’ as in Imre Lakatos and ‘conceptual scheme’ as in Donald Davidson. At a point, they are regarded as ‘given.’ Little wonder some philosophers have referred to such knowledge rather mistakenly as ‘epistemic authoritarianism.’

### **Beyond the Positivist Conception of Reality**

It is interesting to note that the Esan traditional ontology and epistemology, as opposed to the positivist models, in presenting a holistic view of reality, finds great affinity with the post-positivist program of quantum mechanics – a higher expression of science’s perception of the world. Quantum mechanics forced itself upon the scene at the beginning of the twentieth century.<sup>22</sup> A ‘quantum’ is a quantity of something, a specific amount. ‘Mechanics’ is the study of motion. Therefore ‘quantum mechanics’ is the study of the motion of quantities. The quantum theory says that nature comes in bits and pieces (quanta), and quantum mechanics is the study of the phenomenon.<sup>23</sup> From the history of ideas, the first fundamental lesson from quantum physics is that a common-sense view of the world based on our sensorial perception of reality, what we often call the ‘classical’ worldview, is an approximation.<sup>24</sup> In the words of Marcelo Gleiser, reality is quantum mechanical through and through, from bottom to top, from small to large. Classical descriptions such as Newton’s laws of motion or Maxwell’s electromagnetism work because quantum effects are negligibly small for large systems. We are quantum beings just as electrons are, but our quantum essence is extremely subtle – so subtle, in fact, as to be irrelevant for the most part. The same with trees, cars, frogs, and amoebae, although as we get to smaller and smaller objects, the sharp distinction between the classical and the quantum becomes increasingly fuzzy. The lesson is clear: as we descend into the realm of the very small, we must embrace a reality quite distinct from our own.<sup>25</sup>

Of course, according to cognitive neuroscience, our perception of the world around us is synthesised within different regions of our brains. And so, Gleiser notes:

“What I call reality results from the integrated sum of countless stimuli collected through my five senses, brought from the outside into my head via my nervous system. Cognition, the awareness of being here now, is a fabrication of a vast set of chemicals flowing through multiple synaptic connections between my neurons. I am, and you are, a self-sustaining electrochemical network enacted across a web of biological cells. And yet, we are much more. I am me, and you are you, and we are different, even if made of the same stuff. Modern science has removed the age-old Cartesian dualism of matter and soul in favour of strict materialism: the theatre of the self happens in the brains, and the brain is an assembly of interacting neurons firing nonstop like lights on a Christmas tree.”<sup>26</sup>

Beyond the above, Gleiser raises the query as to how exactly this neuronal choreography engenders us with the sense of being.<sup>27</sup> This sense of being is locatable in the very heart of Esan thought system and continues to find active participation in various acts of life by any individual. The epistemic or cognitive attitude we adopt is indeterminate and indefinite. It is only in this understanding that we can establish a similarity with the fluffy and enigmatic world of quantum reality.

At this point, it would be useful to point out a couple of areas where the traditional Esan thought system (indicative of a sense of being and a sense of tacit knowledge in the epistemology of intuition) finds significant expression. Let us briefly look at the healthcare system with particular reference to the treat-

ment of minor ailments in traditional African medicine, taking malaria as a case study.<sup>28</sup> According to David Okpako, a professor of pharmacology and pharmacognosy, biomedical scientists often described traditional African medical practices (ARMP) as mystical, magical, irrational and superstitious. In his opinion, this is primarily because the esoteric beliefs and concepts that are called in as explanations for the occurrence of serious illnesses and its prevention and treatment have no apparent scientific rational equivalent in modern medicine. And this is a manifestation of the fractured worldview. In his analysis, Okpako tried to show that such beliefs and methods are rational and consistent with the assumptions that indigenous Africans hold about the causes of life-threatening illness. But such beliefs and methods are not called upon when indigenous Africans treat minor ailments with plant remedies. And this aspect of African medicine requiring no esoteric consultations, no divination, no incantation, is what the people practised most of the time. Modern medicine has something to learn also from traditional African use of herbal remedies. For example:

“... traditional herbal medicine is practised against the background of traditional African medicine’s basic principles, which are essentially different from those of modern medicine and explains why there are methodological differences in the use of African herbal remedies and the use of drugs in modern medicine. Therefore, it is erroneous to evaluate the use of plant remedies in traditional African medicine by positivist principles that have force in modern medicine, as modern medical practitioners tend to. A case in point is the common assertion by the latter that the validity of African medicine is questionable because the practitioners do not adhere to strict rules of dosage when using herbal remedies. In this regard, it can be argued that the use of herbal remedies in traditional African medicines should be evaluated only in the context of the core principles of the system. This argument also applies to the use of herbal remedies in the treatments of minor ailments.”<sup>29</sup>

What is to be noted is that, in traditional African medicine, the use of plant remedies to treat minor ailments is an entirely common-sense practice, similar to the use of non-prescription OTC drugs such as paracetamol to treat a self-diagnosed minor ailment in modern medicine. What is intriguing and remarkable is how pre-scientific societies came to know appropriate plant remedies to the treatment of the common ailments that trouble them most frequently.<sup>30</sup> Taking malaria as a minor ailment in Africa, Okpako presents as follows:

“Malaria, now a profile disease in Africa, is an example of a disease which indigenous Africans successfully treated as a minor ailment before the colonial period. Common symptoms of malaria are fever, aches and pains. Even though the people did not recognise the parasitic origin of malaria, they were familiar with its symptoms which they treated with commonly available herbal remedies that were, in all probability, efficacious. As matters have turned out, new research in biomedicine and malaria have revealed findings which, on the whole, validate the people’s traditional treatment of malaria.”<sup>31</sup>

22 Gary Zukav, *The Dancing Wu Li Master: An Overview of the New Physics*, Rider/Hutchinson of London, London 1979, p. 45.

23 Ibid.

24 M. Gleiser, *The Island of Knowledge*, p. 169.

25 Ibid.

26 Ibid., p. xv.

27 Ibid.

28 A robust discussion of this is found in David T. Okpako, *Science Interrogating Belief. Bridging the Old and New Traditions of Medicine in Africa*, Book Builders Editions Africa, Ibadan 2015.

29 Ibid., pp. 247–248.

30 Ibid., p. 248.

31 Ibid.

In support of the previous position, Okpako listed some scientific evidence: (i) The herbal remedy commonly used by indigenous people to treat fever, aches and pains, possesses anti-inflammatory properties, and (ii) inflammation mechanisms contribute significantly to malaria. This convergence, he says, of traditional African intuition and scientific evidence is expatiated upon in further research. For him, the fact that pre-science indigenous African societies could have arrived at the knowledge and use of plants possessing anti-inflammatory properties for the treatment of malaria is a remarkable indication of how Mother Nature reveals herself to those close to her.<sup>32</sup> Malaria was a minor ailment among indigenous African populations, and therefore amenable to successful treatment with anti-fever remedies. Two supporting explanations are provided by David Okpako: (i) the people's partial immunity to the disease,<sup>33</sup> and (ii) the people's herbal remedies possessed anti-inflammatory properties. As mentioned earlier, the knowledge here exhibited in traditions by indigenous Africans is intuitive. Another aspect of human life wherein the values of the tradition of tacit knowledge can be found among the Esan people is the point of social relations. One form of social affirmation or denial of the person can be found in the epistemology of the Esan people as it relates to knowing the 'other'. A combination of the social affirmation or denial of the person based on morality coupled with the epistemic attitude of the person based on the ontology of the person, gives an insight into the Esan dictum: *ai yole abha len oria* (which literally translates as, "We never say we do not know someone."). This dictum that captures the essence of knowledge as it relates to the other can be described as 'relationship in knowledge'. It is also knowledge intercourse underpinned by the ontological unity between the subject of knowledge and the object.

In indigenous Esan thought, to the question: *Uwe len mean?* (which translates as "Do you know me?"), coming from an adult person one is not acquainted with; one does not say outright, "I do not know you." Also, when someone you are not acquainted with or you have never met before now is being introduced to you with the question: "Do you know this person?" you do not also say outright, "I do not know him or her." The standard reply is: *ai yole abha len oria* (which translates as "We never say we do not know someone."). This conventional reply made by the Esan man or woman (as the subject of knowledge) is not to be taken as a metaphorical or polite way of him or her saying "I do not know you." In other words, when the Esan says "we never say we do not know the person", he or she is not saying "I do not know you, but I am saying it politely and respectfully so that you do not get offended by me.". The dictum, therefore, is a statement that ascribes cognitive and moral values, as well as recognition, regard, honour and respect. It is therefore not a metaphorical statement.

In sum, in Esan thought system, the reality is one or at least a union where there is an intimate relationship between epistemology, ontology and morality; just as there is the union of beings – the living, the dead and the unborn. There is a union in the hierarchy of beings – the Supreme Being, divinities, humans, spirits, and the cosmos. Evil, error and injustice, create the alteration in the scale of reality, and remedies are required to re-create a balance. Such remedies cut across epistemology, morality, social relations and ontology.

## Conclusion

The very swivel upon which the body of arguments in this paper turns is a vision consisting of some ideals. One is the conception of epistemology as



the study of our right to the beliefs we have. Another ideal is that the epistemology we possess, the framework of cognition we employ as we encounter our realities determine what we perceive and how we deal with our problems. And so, our world is given to us by our perceptions.

Furthermore, the paper identifies the fact that the present crisis in the African condition – the superstructure of social, political, economic, educational realities – rests on perceived fractured epistemologies that are not capable of appropriately engaging our world. And so, I see in the African predicament epitomised in the condition of the Esan thought system a certain betrayal of a knowledge tradition that is built on certain intuition, implicit or tacit knowledge – not amenable to measurements, statistical data, verification and calculation of the positivist. In particular, and as a climax, we see this betrayal developed and executed in what is today advanced as the digitalised humanities, which is the apex of the positivist agenda. A retrieval of humanistic rationality is required if we must enhance humanity and encourage common good along with its cognate ideals of human dignity, solidarity, subsidiarity and natural law. At the heart of this program is tacit, implicit or intuitive epistemology.

**Isaac Ehaleoye Ukpokolo**

**Pozitivistički zahtjev i izdaja tradicije  
skrivenog znanja u sustavu afričke misli**

**Prijelomi u esanskoj epistemologiji**

**Sažetak**

*Rad utvrđuje krizu afričkog stanja koje predstavlja izdaju tradicije skrivenog znanja u esanskom sustavu mišljenja, ostavljajući za sobom prijelome u epistemologiji esanaca. U pozadini situacije nalazi se pozitivistički zahtjev za verifikacijom i potvrđivanjem u potrazi za pouzdanom epistemologijom. Navigirajući trenutnim stanjem u esanskom sustavu mišljenja, rad otkriva da je tradicija skrivenog znanja izigrana i odbačena zahtjevima moderne. S obzirom na to da epistemologija ljudi utječe na to kako se nose sa zbiljom, suočavaju s problemima i nailaze na prepreke, i s obzirom na to da afričko stanje počiva na prelomljenim epistemologijama (dočarano esanskim epistemičkim pozicijama), rad predstavlja sliku tradicije koja je pukla, a koja treba zalječenje i povratak svoje duše. Ta je tradicija sadržana u skrivenom znanju i implicitnim idealima. Samo se provedbom povratka može u prednji plan iznijeti pouzdan epistemološki program koji će ispravno tretirati stanje Esana, a time i Afriku, otkrivajući bit zajedničkog dobra. Rad iznosi neke primjere izdane tradicije kako se izražava i pojavljuje aspektualno u životima ljudi, poput zdravstvene skrbi i društvenih odnosa. Time eksplicitna postaje veza između epistemologije, ontologije, društvenog poretka i moralnosti.*

**Ključne riječi**

afrička filozofija, narod Esana, epistemologija, skriveno znanje, afrička tradicija

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Ibid., p. 249.

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According to Okpako, traditional herbal treatment of malaria was successful in the partially immune African almost certainly because the immune system of the infested person was primed to clear the parasites once the inflammation was effectively treated of the wide variety of pathogenic microorganism

to which Africans in their hygienically basic environments were exposed, non can be said to have this attribute of inducing immunity to a greater degree than the *plasmodium falciparum* parasite. This was because without it as we know now, the infection caused by this parasite was fatal; Africans living in endemic areas were therefore specifically adapted to it in evolutionary time.

**Isaac Ehaleoye Ukpokolo**

**Positivistische Forderung und der Verrat an der Tradition  
des impliziten Wissens im System des afrikanischen Gedankens**

**Umbrüche in der Epistemologie des Esan**

**Zusammenfassung**

*Die Arbeit diagnostiziert eine Krise der afrikanischen Verhältnisse, die einen Verrat an der Tradition des impliziten Wissens im Esan-Denkensystem repräsentieren und Umbrüche in der Epistemologie der Esan-Ethnie hinterlassen. Im Hintergrund dieser Situation liegt die positivistische Forderung nach Verifikation und Bestätigung auf der Suche nach einer zuverlässigen Epistemologie. Indem sie im aktuellen Zustand des Esan-Denkensystems navigiert, entdeckt die Arbeit, die Tradition des impliziten Wissens sei ausmanövriert und durch die Anforderungen der Moderne zurückgewiesen worden. Mit Rücksicht darauf, dass die Epistemologie der Menschen ihren Umgang mit der Realität, ihre Auseinandersetzung mit Problemen und ihre Begegnungen mit Hindernissen beeinflusst, und da der afrikanische Zustand auf gebrochenen Epistemologien beruht (ausgemalt durch epistemische Esan-Positionen), stellt diese Arbeit das Bild einer gebrochenen Tradition dar, die eine Heilung und Rückkehr ihrer Seele braucht. Diese Tradition ist in implizitem Wissen und impliziten Idealen enthalten. Erst durch die Realisierung der Rückkehr ist es möglich, ein zuverlässiges epistemologisches Programm in den Vordergrund zu schieben, das den Zustand des Esan – und damit auch Afrika – richtig behandelt und das Wesen des Gemeinwohls offenbart. Die Arbeit bringt einige Beispiele der verratenen Tradition vor, wie sie in den Aspekten des Lebens von Menschen zum Ausdruck kommt und in Erscheinung tritt, wie zum Beispiel in der Gesundheitspflege und in sozialen Beziehungen. Explizit wird dadurch die Verbindung zwischen Epistemologie, Ontologie, Gesellschaftsordnung und Moralität.*

**Schlüsselwörter**

afrikanische Philosophie, Esaner, Epistemologie, implizites Wissen, afrikanische Tradition

**Isaac Ehaleoye Ukpokolo**

**Exigence positiviste et trahison de la tradition  
du savoir caché dans le système de pensée africain**

**Fracture dans l'épistémologie esanaise**

**Résumé**

*Ce travail interroge la crise de la condition africaine qui révèle une trahison de la tradition du savoir caché au sein du système de pensée chez le peuple Esan, laissant derrière elle des fractures dans l'épistémologie esanaise. En arrière-plan de la situation, à la recherche d'une épistémologie fiable, se trouve l'exigence positiviste de vérification et d'attestation. En sillonnant l'état actuel des choses du système de pensée esan, ce travail montre que la tradition du savoir caché a été dupée et rejetée à travers des exigences appartenant à l'époque moderne. Étant donné que l'épistémologie influence la manière dont les gens se rapportent à la réalité, se confrontent aux problèmes et surmontent les difficultés auxquelles ils font face, et au vu du fait que la condition africaine repose sur des épistémologies morcelées (démontrées par le biais des positions épistémiques esanaïses), ce travail présente l'image d'une tradition qui a été rompue et qui a besoin de se rétablir et de retrouver son âme. Cette tradition repose dans le savoir caché et dans les idéaux implicites. C'est uniquement par la mise en œuvre d'un retour qu'il sera possible de mettre au premier plan un programme épistémologique fiable qui traitera de la situation du peuple Esan de manière juste, et par là de l'Afrique, en découvrant l'essence du bien commun. Ce travail illustre, à travers des exemples de traditions trahies, la manière dont le côté aspectuel s'exprime et apparaît dans la vie des gens, tels les soins de santé et les relations sociales. Ainsi, le lien entre l'épistémologie, l'ontologie, l'ordre social et la moralité devient explicite.*

**Mots-clés**

philosophie africaine, peuple Esanien, épistémologie, savoir caché, tradition africaine