

CULTURE AND RELIGION IN AFRICAN KNOWLEDGE PRODUCTION

Fabidun Francis Kayode

Department of Philosophy

St. Albert the Great Major Seminary, Idowu-Offonran,

Abeokuta, Ogun State, Nigeria

francisfabidun@gmail.com

Abstract

The intrinsic interconnectedness among religion, culture and knowledge production subsists in the fact that religion and culture are contexts through which individuals attain and interpret knowledge that shape their understanding of reality and their place in it. This paper examined the peculiar sense in which religion and culture are institutional contexts and guardians of knowledge production in Africa. Cultural experience along with religious beliefs and practices are frameworks in African endeavour to understand, interpret and transmit knowledge of basic aspects of reality both at the individual and community levels. Using the methods of critical analysis and hermeneutic, the paper argued that religion and culture are valid epistemological as well as metaphysical and ethical frameworks and contexts of knowledge production in Africa. It is evident from the study that culture and religion also have pragmatic imports of knowledge adaptation, preservation and transmission in African epistemic enterprise. It is therefore, recommended that studies in African knowledge production should pay concerted attention to prioritise interrogating different aspects of African culture and religion.

Keywords: Culture, Epistemology, Knowledge Production, Ontology, Religion

Introduction

Arguably, almost every sphere of human experience is an avenue of knowledge. This suggests that knowledge enterprises are not always formal settings as knowing occurs in every situation that presents such opportunity. The argument in this paper is that both cultural and religious experiences are important avenues of epistemic activities. This is evident in the conceptual analysis of the notions of culture and religion. There is a conscious effort to present a conceptual clarification of culture as a concept of interest to different fields of study. While this paper does not claim an exhaustive discussion on issues bothering on defining religion; nonetheless, it pays deeper attention to the concept of religion with a view to exposing the depth of meanings that the concept evokes for different scholars. It also devotes a section to explain the nature of African Traditional Religion as a unique experience of a people with peculiar historical background. Furthermore, the paper explains how knowledge is produced within both contexts and identifies the unique forms of epistemic products of each as a subsystem and system respective. It also shows how culture and religion are interconnected contexts of knowledge production, meaning that knowledge is part of a cultural experience.

Culture

The Latin word for culture is *cultura* which is a derivative of the verb *colo* (infinitive *colere*), meaning “to tend,” “to cultivate,” and “to till.” Culture is the perceptible end of series of activities that define the identity of a people who share common background and experience. Kluckhohn defines culture as patterned ways of thinking, feeling and reacting, acquired and transmitted mainly by symbols, constituting the distinctive achievements of human groups, including their embodiments in artifacts. He also adds that the essential core of culture consists of traditional (i.e. historically derived and selected) ideas and especially their attached values.ⁱ This reveals that culture is an all-encompassing outlook of a people. Those who participate in a culture are somehow configured into the worldview of the group. This is evident in definition of culture as a shared mental software, “the collective programming of the mind that distinguishes the members of one group or category of people from another.”ⁱⁱ Within each culture there comes into being characteristic purposes not necessarily shared by other types of society. This shows that culture defines the identity of a people.

Taylor sees culture as that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, customs or any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society. This exposes a kind of procedural nature that underlines culture. At the end of such process comes the identifiable series of activities that define the identity of a people. This is evident in Kluckhohn’s definition of culture as that which consists in patterned ways of thinking, feeling and reacting, acquired and transmitted mainly by symbols, constituting the distinctive achievements of human groups, including their embodiments in artifacts; the core of culture consists of traditional (i.e. historically derived and selected) ideas and especially their attached values.ⁱⁱⁱ This considers culture as an all-encompassing outlook of a people. Those who participate in a culture are somehow configured into the worldview of the group, and people who share in this outlook tend to perceive reality in that light. This shared outlook is what Ruth Benedict pointed out in her postulation that a culture, like an individual, is a consistent pattern of thought and action.^{iv} Every culture has characteristic purposes that are unique to it and such characteristics are not necessarily shared by other types of society. Culture serves to distinguish a people from others, it is passed on from generation to generation through the process of socialization. It will be apt to safely state that there can be no culture without a society.

It can also be said that culture is uniquely human and shared with other people in a society and is to be understood as the way of life of a people. For Bello, culture is “the totality of the way of life evolved by a people in their attempts to meet the challenge of living in their environment, which gives order and meaning to their social, political, economic, aesthetic and religious norms thus distinguishing a people from their neighbours.”^v Otite and Ogoinwo define culture as the complex whole of man’s acquisitions of knowledge, morals, beliefs, art, custom, technology etc. which are shared and transmitted from generation to generation.^{vi} This shows that culture is the sum total of a people’s identity. Culture is a viable clue to knowing a people’s identity. Culture is therefore everything that is socially learned and shared by members of a society.

The definition by Otite and Ogoinwo offers an inkling that there is a definite connection between culture and knowledge. This is succinctly explained in Edward Tylor's claim that culture amounts to 'that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, customs, and any other capabilities and habits acquired... as a member of society.'^{vii} From this submission therefore, it is evident that knowledge is part of culture. From the normative account of culture as that which aims at the transformation of man's crude nature into refined state, it could easily be posited that culture performs functions which are similar to knowledge. The process of knowledge culminates in refinement not just of individuals but the society as a whole. The quality of knowledge acquired by members of a social group is a determinant of its outlook, since it has the ability to transform a culture through its adaptation as a cultural experience. Godwin Akper maintains that:

Every culture is distinct, with its own history and dynamics. Because of this it can only be evaluated in its own terms hence the term cultural relativity. In its dynamic yet distinct form, culture functions as a mechanism of adaptation to a particular environment be it social or physical. It is because of this adaptation that a people and their culture can survive in a particular environment.^{viii}

The transformative ability is basically due to the fact that culture is not a personal element and thus transcends an individual and existence. In other words, culture usually refers to a society or a group of societies. It is a group that preserves the material (tangible) and non-material (nontangible) aspects of culture.

RELIGION

As a concept, religion usually invokes an idea of belief in a supernatural Being popularly referred to as God or other extraterrestrial beings. However, defining the notion of religion is a problematic for scholars who are interested in either the concept or associating notions. The implication of this is that religion cannot be easily defined. It would have been a plausible view that issues around defining religion would have been resolved, as it were, when considered from its etymology. This is because, it is almost a unanimous view among scholars that tracing the root word of a concept is crucial in its definition and understanding. Nonetheless, this is not as easy as portrayed in the case of the concept of religion.

There are three different views on the etymology of the concept of religion. The first group traced the concept to the Latin words *religare* and *religio* which means "to tie or bind". This connotes that religion binds humanity and the divine together, and binds humans into a community that is bound with the divine. A second view claims that religion is from two Latin words – *re* and *lig-* meaning to "join" or "connect". The combination of these words show that religion means "to join again" or "to reconnect." This view based its claim on humanity's purported need to reconnect its original unity with the divine, or reconnect the human world and the sacred world. Those who proposed a third view hold that the word religion stems from the Latin word *relegare* meaning "to tread carefully" and it indicates "respect and care for both

the natural and supernatural worlds”. This perspective holds that a key concern of religion is to provide guidance on how humans ought to live. What is common to the three perspective is the idea that religion pertains to believing in a divine being or supreme Being, identifies as Divine Being or Spiritual Being. Thus, the idea of ‘God’ as the Supreme or Absolute Being in relation to the mysterious aspects of man’s experience manifests a religious belief. This is why the practice of religion obliges the unity of men, as it is an important aspect of society.^{ix}

The three perspectives offer insights into why the concept of religion belongs to the class of words that do not have a univocal definition. Consequently, religion is continuously considered from different perspectives. Such perspectives may be philosophical, sociological, psychological or theological. Evidently, religion constitutes a matter of interest for a wide range of individuals and fields of study. Patrick J. Casey captures this succinctly in his claim that the definition of the concept “religion” cuts across disciplinary lines, among them: anthropology, history, philosophy, psychology, religious studies, sociology, and most recently, cognitive science. Consequent on the number of fields taking part in the conversation, it behooves scholars to take a balanced, multidisciplinary approach to the definition of religion.^x Furthermore, this perspectival consideration of religion could also be the resultant of culture, that is the focus of a research or that which caught the fancy of the researcher. Scholars tend to define religion in accordance with their particular interest in religion and “a scholar's definition of religion tends to reveal their theoretical commitments.”^{xi}

Furthermore, Casey made a distinction between monothetic definitions and polythetic definitions. According to him, monothetic definitions of religion analyze an aspect or a group of features each of which is considered vital, and taken together, jointly sufficient for calling something a religion. On the other hand, polythetic definitions, do not view any particular feature as being necessary for calling something a religion. Rather, they view a combination of some set of features as being jointly sufficient for calling something a religion.

He thereafter identified two sub-divisions within the monothetic definitions as substantive and functional definitions. Substantive definitions attempt to pick out the properties, attributes, or features that are characteristic of religion. They delineate religion through a distinctive content or substance. While functional definitions delineate religion through the distinctive work it performs.^{xiii} Definitions in the last category are concerned about the functions religion performs for society and the individual, and how it operates in terms of its place in the social/psychological system. An example in the case of the former is Max Weber who considered religion as a belief in a supernatural power that is unable to be scientifically explained. Émile Durkheim’s sociological definition of religion as a system of beliefs and practices that functions as a cohesive force to bind individuals together into a societal unit is an example of functional definitions of religion. There are other forms of definitional consideration of religion which this paper cannot accommodate for the want of space. Pertinent to take cognizance of also is that this paper focuses on a qualified type of religion, namely African Traditional Religion.

African Traditional Religion

African Traditional Religion refers to the original religious activities of Africans before the advent of the Abrahamic faiths in Africa. Awolalu and Dopamu posit that:

When we speak of African traditional religion, we mean the indigenous religion of the Africans. It is the religion that has been handed down from generation to generation by the forebears of the present generation of Africans. It is not a fossil religion (a thing of the past) but a religion that Africans today have made theirs by living it and practising it. This is a religion that has no written literature yet it is “written” everywhere for those who care to see and read. It is largely written in the people’s myths and folktales, in their songs and dances, in their liturgies and shrines and in their proverbs and pithy sayings. It is a religion whose historical founder is neither known nor worshipped. It is a religion that has no zeal for membership drive, yet it offers persistent fascination for Africans, young or old.^{xiii}

Africa Traditional Religion is a complex and distinctive set of indigenous religious beliefs and practices found in various ethnic groups in Africa. Despite the diversity in cultural practices due to different ethnic groups in Africa, their religious beliefs and practices share basic characteristics in common. This is what Mbiti expressed in his claim that although the religious expressions in Africa are multiple, the philosophy underlying religious life is singular.^{xiv}

Fundamental to Africans is the belief in the Supreme Deity who is considered the creator of the universe, and believed to dwell in the skies. He exercises control over the universe and as such the universe’s continuance depends on him. This Supreme Deity is seen as ‘the Father of not only humanity in general (individuals) but also of the religions and cultures of all peoples in the world’.^{xv} Africans also express belief in lesser deity or divinities who are believed to have emanated from the Supreme-Being and considered to be over-seers of different aspects of the universe. They also believe in the existence of some invisible beings whose abode could either be in the spiritual or physical realm depending on the nature of their domain of their responsibility. They are brought into being for a definite purpose which is to serve the will of God in the theocratic government of the World.^{xvi} They serve as ministers or overseers of difference aspects of the universe and awaken in humans a consciousness to responsible attitude toward nature. Such attitude is expressed in deep sense of morality.

Megasa opines that traditional Religion is based on morality. Morality originates with God and flows into the ancestors. God is the ‘Giver of Life, the Power’ behind everything. The way of human life (tradition) originates from God. Tradition contains the moral code and prescriptions for an ethical life.^{xvii} Moral behaviour maintains and enhances life force, but disobedience and disloyal behaviour towards the tradition passed on by the ancestors will weaken life force and cooperate existence of the society. The whole purpose of African life is to ensure the capacity of this life force. A close relationship with God, the ancestors and other humans will ensure life force.^{xviii} African Traditional Religion, according to Magesa, is based

on maintaining the balance between the two spheres of the universe (the visible and invisible world). The maintenance of this balance and harmony is humanity's greatest ethical obligation and determines the quality of life. Humans live through the connectedness with the life force which God, the Supreme Being, provides.^{xix}

As a key feature of culture, people practise religion within a cultural setting. Religious ceremonies, rites and ritual are done within a cultural background. Every religious practice, value or norm is depend on particular cultural background of a people. In the same way, every religious ceremony practised among the people of a community is traceable to their inherited cultural practices. Historical records reveal that religion has always been considered as an important source of knowledge in different cultures. Indeed, many people resort to religion to make sense of the world at the instance of certain events; they seek to derive meaning by making recourse to the supernatural.

Very fundamental to the concern of knowledge production is the provision of answers to puzzles around human existence. It is evident that religion has always played a significant role aiding man to arrive at meaning about certain human experiences. Furthermore, religion offers explanations for fundament issues such as; questions about man's origin, his existence and explanation of the natural world. As Gulinck opines, it seems that religions can offer us a huge amount of knowledge. And that exactly, can explain their attraction. The scope of the knowledge they offer seems to be quite encompassing at first sight.^{xx} Religious knowledge may even offer purpose to our lives. Some people, particularly Africans believe that religions can offer answers to almost everything, that religions are the one and only "knowledge map" you should possess.

African Knowledge

Despite its viability, African knowledge has only recently received recognition as an enterprise in the academic circle. Sequel to the structure that Western imperialism and colonialism bequeathed to Africa during and after their exploits in Africa, epistemic activities in Africa have been predominately western in orientation. Western imperialism and colonialism are premised on the bias ideology couched in the mind-set that Africans do not have a distinguished identity equivalent to that of Europeans. Such a conclusion underscored as an assumption in the formation of educational system and in setting paradigms for what is authentically epistemic, since the imperialist system suppressed or out rightly deny native thought system in the constitution of social systems in their colonies. However, a trend became quite popular at independence to salvage African heritage and values. This move was a commitment to reconstruct experiential knowledge of African heritage into a body of critical and rational corpus.

African knowledge, in simple terms, is the body of epistemic activities that is indigenous to Africans. It is also referred to as African indigenous knowledge or African indigenous epistemology. Maurial defines Indigenous knowledge as "the peoples' cognitive and wise legacy as a result of their interaction with nature in a common territory." For De La Torre, indigenous knowledge is the established defined knowledge of indigenous nations, their worldviews, and the customs and traditions that direct them. In each instance, it is the system

of knowledge processes and practices done in African categories and concepts.^{xxi} According to Jimoh, this system covers epistemic investigation, understanding, assimilation, and attribution on African conception of reality that is distinctively African and philosophical. It is about how Africans make meaning of their knowledge claim concerning reality. Such knowledge claims are basically connected to, and often, situated within the African conception of reality and informed by the African worldview. African Knowledge, therefore, is the indigenous knowledge in Africa that goes back to the history of humankind in the continent. It has been contrasted with global dominant western knowledge systems produced in research and academic institutions.

African knowledge is a conscious, self-directed tradition of research based on knowledge sourced from the deposit of wisdom in African traditions for the purpose of addressing problems and issues of African reality. This is very much in line with Hountondji's Africa-based tradition of knowledge. It is a body of knowledge from an African-based experience of reality. This is what Owusu-Ansah and Mji describe as an experiential knowledge based on African worldview. This worldview includes wholeness, community and harmony which are deeply embedded in cultural values.^{xxii}

While it is a consideration of knowledge activities from a cultural perspective, African knowledge is not an attempt to relativise epistemic activities lest we end up priding ethnocentrism, relativism, isolationism and self-refutation. The relativists claim that standards of truth, rationality, and ethical right and wrong vary greatly between cultures and historical epochs and that there are no universal criteria for adjudicating between them, has been accused of inconsistency by philosophers of different eras.^{xxiii} Conscious of this, the attempt here is rather a form of reconstructive complementarity of epistemics, with an emphasis that African mode of knowing is potent enough to contribute to the universal body of knowledge.

To achieve this, it is important that such activity is conducted in a way that it is not caught in the web of ethno-philosophy which consists of Africans describing or reconstructing ancient African worldview and collective assumptions of their communities. Instead, it needs to portray an outlook that clearly shows African consciousness of their own philosophy, not relying on Western analysts observing them from without to be responsible for giving a systematic explanation of their wisdom.^{xxiv} This is important for thorough appreciation of an endeavour in knowledge production in Africa.

African Knowledge Production

African knowledge production pertains to the web of how Africans make meaning out of reality employing the tool of rationality as inhabitants of a geographical area that is unique to them in every regard. Tanyanyiwa and Chikwanha argue that before the advent of Western methods of scientific inquiry African knowledge and methods have successfully guided its peoples in all spheres of functioning, including the spiritual, social, educational, agricultural, political and economic.^{xxv} In African parlance, knowledge production encompasses the creative, innovative and discovery initiatives geared towards adaptation and survival in the African world. The initiatives also include the identification, articulation and utilization of the

modes of production of materials which are essential to transcend the satisfaction of biological their needs.

Different African communities find diverse means of production and variant means of subsistence in their natural environment. Africans sourced productive initiatives are from various aspects of their initiation schools, indigenous games, agricultural systems, dances and songs, storytelling, proverbs, et cetera.^{xxvi} Owoahene-Acheampong and Gordon further add that:

indeed, the sources of knowledge production in African Studies are multidisciplinary and transdisciplinary; they include archaeology, agronomy, anthropology, history, the arts, languages, philosophy, religion, science, technology, engineering, mathematics, music, sociology, geography, literature (written and oral), biology, agriculture etc. Equally important are factors that define the construction of African knowledge such as wisdom, the ancestors, traditional healers, land use systems, traditional leadership and governance, funeral ceremonies, proverbs, experiences and observations, supernaturalism, calendar, concept and use of time, witchcraft theories and practices and so on.^{xxvii}

These are avenues for understanding and interpreting the daily experiences of African world. They are indigenous institutions of knowledge production, as well as modes of conservation and sharing of knowledge among Africans in all spheres of industry like farming, fishing, economy, political and social institutions such as; legal-political system, system of security, system of healthcare and system of education.

Characteristically, African indigenous knowledge is premised on African communal conception of reality. Epistemic activities are embarked upon in this spirit communal harmony between the individual and the community. The epistemic agent is not the Sophist Gorgias or Descartes' solipsistic individual who depends solely on self-convinced conclusions while disparaging everything eternal to his own mind. In African setting, an individual (ditto an epistemic agent) receives his identity from that of the society from whose life he shares. What he knows is a participation in the commonwealth or heritage of the community. This is because an individual becomes human only in the midst of others and seeks both personal and collective harmony as the basic task in the process of becoming a true person. This consciousness guides epistemic endeavours in African; an epistemic agent is part of the whole and what he knows is part of the community epistemic common-wealth. For instance, a child grows in this approach, learning the social values and norms in company of his peers.

In addition to being collective and social, African knowledge production is practical in orientation and in solving experiential issues. It employs pragmatic measures in dealing with issues of daily living. Over time, these solutions build up to a body of knowledge in the various spheres of the society, and form a tradition among the people. African knowledge, and its method of acquisition, has a practical, collective and social or interpersonal slant.^{xxviii}

As a traditional mode of acquiring knowledge, African Indigenous Knowledge is transmitted orally, and passed on from generation to generation through verbal medium since

the context of community living and activities. This does not suggest that it is totally common placed, as having a certain degree of wisdom is inevitable for anyone to unravel the depth of mystery entrenched in the narrative or metaphorical language such as; folktales, folklores, proverbs, citations, incantations, etc. These are avenue through which indigenous knowledge are transmitted from one generation to the next.

The process of passing on the indigenous knowledge to later generations is also a process of evaluation, refinement and adaption. In utilizing what is inherited from previous generation, every era finds an adaption that is suitable to their age without altering the core elements of such values. This serves as a critic to the notion that unscientific African indigenous knowledge an unscientific accumulation of native wisdom, lacking in sophistication, logicity, coherence, and technicality. If these qualities are absent in any human endeavour, hardly would anyone find any value or attraction in it. The fact that African indigenous knowledge has these qualities accounts for its veracity in this age of highly sophisticated and technological advancement. Therefore, it continues to get relevance and acceptance in the contemporary African societies.

Culture, Religion and African Knowledge Production

Appropriately, the discourse here is premised on an undeniable fact that religion and culture are intrinsically linked in African thoughts. According to Michael Ndemanu, “religion is inextricably linked to culture, especially in the African context, any attempt at studying African peoples and cultures that does not involve a meticulous examination of traditional African religions would be incomplete... African culture is of paramount importance because it is strongly intertwined with traditional religion”^{xxxix} Culture and religion offer complementary insights and understanding of each other. It is really impossible to see an African display his religion to the exclusion of his culture, neither can he talk about his culture without reference to his religion. It is, therefore reasonable and valid to say that in Africa, religion and culture are part of each other. This is evident in Ayeni and Aborisade’s submission that “the everyday life of the African people, their conduct, their norms and values, occupations, marriage, religion and belief, and general well-being were all subject to culture.”^{xxx} So, religion is an intrinsic part of culture.

In the same way, knowledge is part of a people’s culture. This is clearly so from Kelvin’s definition of culture as “a complex whole that includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society.”^{xxxi} So, like religion, knowledge is a part of culture. This connection is the basis for the indispensable role of religion and culture in African Knowledge Production.

African culture and religion are vital in the acquisition, utilization and transmission of knowledge in African indigenous thought. The various forms of knowledge production, be in it in the textile, agriculture, health and so on, are imbedded in religious and cultural practices. An instance where the connection between culture and religion and African indigenous knowledge come to play is agricultural festivals. Yam festivals are common phenomenon in African societies. This festival is an occasion of appreciation to the god of fertility for rewarding industrious farmers’ meticulous adherence to the religious principles and cultural

practices of the community. The festival is a cultural recognition of how activities of the divine and human intelligence cumulate in a bountiful harvest. Hence, libation is offered to the gods in appreciation, while seeking for more blessings in the subsequent farming season.

Furthermore, the relation between culture, religion and African knowledge production is succinctly captured by Falola's explanation that humans are drawn to the divine in the pursuit for solution to the existential reality, and this religious experience results into being part of the people's way of life.

The belief in the reality and power of a Supreme Being to influence human affairs has, in the course of societal development, informed the coordination of social practices around the metaphysical. Thus, in the process of social interaction between Africans themselves and their environment, experiences have been conceived through metaphysical prisms that have evolved into the cultural way of life over time. Hence, the observation of African indigenous knowledge systems would reveal a deep-seated connection with religious beliefs and practices expressed in a plethora of knowledge-creating activities—in philosophy, anthropology, psychology, medicine, agriculture, education, arts and crafts, music and literature.^{xxxii}

Religion helps people to find answers to fundamental issues of life such as origin of life, essence of human existence in the universe, the meaning of death among others. Attempting the rigour of such puzzles have cumulated into a body of knowledge that have informed the perception of life among the people. It is this perception of reality that cumulate into a people's culture and the formation of their identity. A people's identity is shaped and expressed in different social practices that aid their attempts at finding solutions to the challenges that confront them within their locality and different levels of interaction with reality. This means that social practices form the basis of knowledge production. This is explicit in social constructionists' claim that knowledge is the product of a people's peculiar social practices and institutions, or of the interactions and negotiations among significant social groups. This is why social constructionists highlight that our culture has a particular way of influencing us. Cultures shapes the ways we see and feel things, and gives us a quite definite view of the world.^{xxxiii}

Religious rituals is another action the expresses the relation of culture, religion and knowledge production. Knowledge is embedded in community practices, institutions; relationships and rituals; it refers to what indigenous people know and do, and what they have known and done for generations - practices that evolved through trial and error and proved flexible enough to cope with change.^{xxxiv} Ritual is the performance of ceremonial acts prescribed by tradition or by spiritual decree. It is a way of defining or describing humans. It is a specific, observable mode of behaviour exhibited by all known societies. It is evident that rituals, as a way of defining or describing humans, are not just religious expression or religious acts, they are also medium of explanation of a people's identity. In African societies, rituals help to transfer cultural heritage and identity. In the course of performing religious rituals, people also learn different aspects of their cultural heritage as they are been passed on through oral traditions such as chants and songs. It is evident from this that religion is an important

means of preserving cultural heritage, and it provides guiding principles that help to shape African knowledge production.

Moreover, stories, dances, songs, and ceremonies are important sources and modes of expression of knowledge in indigenous cultures. These are forms of cultural practices that help to perpetuate the epistemic tradition of a people. Indigenous knowledge is commonly transmitted orally through storytelling, ceremonies, rituals and other cultural practices. These are avenues for transmitting valuable information about different aspects of indigenous knowledge such as, medicine, history, agriculture and social structures. Cultural narratives and religious beliefs provide the basis or foundation for interpreting epistemic experiences. They also help to preserve and transmit such from generation to generation. Like religion, culture shapes how epistemic values are preserved in a community and keeps indigenous knowledge alive and resonant within the community thereby providing a fertile ground for indigenous knowledge to bloom.

In Yoruba traditional scheme for instance, culture and religion are pivotal in expressing epistemic categories in every aspect or event of life. It is impossible to separate culture, religion and knowledge scheme because they find expression in each other. As Kanu et al opine, “any effort to separate culture and religion among the Yoruba will surely be ineffective”. This is also true of most people. Religion always influence the philosophy, behaviour and language of a people. Philosophy and religion have almost been intertwined in one way or another, and vast majority of philosophers have had *some* kind of religious beliefs, oftentimes central to their philosophy. Whether or not they have made the link explicit.^{xxxv}

Conclusion

Manifestly, it is almost impossible to separate culture and religion from indigenous knowledge as they are all interconnected, each infusing significant elements to the other. Religion and culture are basic constituents of knowledge acquisition in every society, since almost what constitute body of knowledge come to us through our culture and religion. From the foregoing, it is manifest that there is a connection between culture, religion and knowledge production. This synergy is very key to our discussion because culture and religion are viable contexts of knowledge production. As people live and interact with each other sharing common experience, they also share knowledge and enable younger ones to learn both theoretical and practical knowledge which have aided their survival as a people. In essence, knowledge production is a natural product of human interactions, and it is informal by nature. This shows that informal settings are viable avenues for knowledge production which offer unique forms of knowledge relevant for understanding of people and their adaption to their existential position. It suffices to state therefore that culture and religion contribute to understanding different aspects of human existence, and help to acquire, share and transfer knowledge within the same experience.

References

- i Clyde Kluckhohn, "The Study of Culture" in *The Policy Sciences*, Daniel Lerner and Harold Lasswell, eds., (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1951), p. 86.
- ii Geert Hofstede, G. J. Hofstede and M. Minkov, *Cultures and Organizations: Software of the Mind*, (New York: McGraw-Hill Education, 2010), p. 6.
- iii Clyde Kluckhohn, "The Study of Culture".
- iv Ruth Benedict, *Patterns of Culture*, (Boston: Mariner Books, Houghton Mifflin Company, 2005), p. 46.
- v S. Bello, *Culture and Decision Making in Nigeria*, (Lagos: National Council for Arts and Culture, 1991), p.189.
- vi Onugi Otite and William Ogionwo, *An Introduction to Sociological Studies*, (Ibadan: Heinemann Educational Books, 1979), p. 12.
- vii Edward Tylor, *Primitive Culture*, (London: John Murray, 1871), p. 1.
- viii Godwin Akper et al., *Sociology of Religions Developer*, (Noun National Open University of Nigeria), <https://nou.edu.ng/coursewarecontent/CTH352.pdf>. Accessed 07/08/2022
- ix Ademola Lawal, "Philosophy and Religious Fundamentalism", *Agora: A Journal of Philosophical and Theological Studies*, [vol. 2] (November, 2021), pp. 237-238.
- x Patrick Casey, "Religion, Definition of", in *The Encyclopedia of Philosophy of Religion*, C. Taliaferro and S. Goetz eds., (New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons, Ltd, 2021), <https://doi.org/10.1002/9781119009924.eopr0330>.
- xi Patrick Casey, "Religion, Definition of".
- xii Patrick Casey, Religion.
- xiii J. Omoşade Awolalu and P. Adelumo Dopamu, *West African Traditional Religion*, (Ibadan, Onibonoje Press, 1979), p.26.
- xiv John Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy*, 2nd ed., (Oxford: Heinemann Educational Publishers, 1990), p. 1.
- xv Yusufu Turaki, *Christianity and African Gods: A Method in Theology*, (Potchefstroom: Potchefstroomse Universiteit vir Christelike Hoër Onderwys, 1999), p. 29.
- xvi Rotimi Williams Omotoye, "The Study of African Traditional Religion and its Challenges in Contemporary Times" in *Ilorin Journal of Religious Studies*, (IJOURELS) Vol.1 No.2, 2011, p.21-40.
- xvii Laurenti Magesa, *African religion: The Moral Traditions of Abundant Life*, (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 2002), p.35.
- xviii Ibid, p.52.
- xix Ibid, p.75.
- xx An Gulinck, "Knowledge and Religion", 2022, <https://www.tok2022.net/knowledge-and-religion.html>. 23/05/2022.
- xxi Francis Fabidun and Cyril-Mary Olatunji, "Epistemic Deference and African Indigenous Knowledge Production", in *Regional Journal of Information and Knowledge Management*, (vol. 6 no. 2), pp. 72-82.
- xxii Francis Owusu-Ansah and Gubela Mji, "African indigenous knowledge and research" in *African Journal of Disability* (vol.2 no. 1, 2013), https://www.researchgate.net/publication/279238024_African_indigenous_knowledge_and_research. <http://dx.doi.org/10.4102/ajod.v2i1.30>
- xxiii Mary Baghramian, "Relativism: Philosophical Aspects" in *International Encyclopedia of the Social & Behavioral Sciences*, Pages 13012-13018, 2001. <https://doi.org/10.1016/B0-08-043076-7/01019-6>. 20/09/2023.

-
- ^{xxiv} Paulin J. Hountondji, “Knowledge of Africa, Knowledge by Africans: Two Perspectives on African Studies,” in *RCCS Annual Review* [Online], 1 | 2009, <http://journals.openedition.org/rccsar/174> ; DOI:<https://doi.org/10.4000/rccsar.174>. 28/09/2023.
- ^{xxv} Vincent Tanyanyiwa and Michael Chikwanha, “The Role of Indigenous Knowledge Systems in the Management of Forest Resources in Mugabe Area, Masvingo, Zimbabwe” in *Journal of Sustainable Development in Africa*, (vol. 13, no. 3, 2011) pp. 132-149.
- ^{xxvi} Hassan Kaya and Yonah Seleti, “African Indigenous Knowledge Systems and Relevance of Higher Education in South Africa” in *The International Education Journal: Comparative Perspectives*, (vol. 12, no. 1, 2013), pp. 30 - 44. iSSN 1443-1475 www.iejcomparative.org
- ^{xxvii} Stephen Owoahene-Acheampong and Jacob U. Gordon, “African Studies: Knowledge Production and Beyond” in *Journal of African Studies*, (vol. 3, no. 1, 2015), pp. 93-119.
- ^{xxviii} Francis Owusu-Ansah and Gubela Mji, “African indigenous knowledge and research”.
- ^{xxix} Michael T. Ndemanu, “Traditional African Religions and Their Influences on the Worldviews of Bangwa People of Cameroon: Expanding the Cultural Horizons of Study Abroad Students and Professionals” in *Frontiers: The Interdisciplinary Journal of Study Abroad*, [vol. XXX, Issue 1], (January 2018), pp. 70-84.
- ^{xxx} Amidu Owolabi Ayeni and Adeshina Gbenga Aborisade, “African Indigenous Knowledge Systems and the World”, in *The Palgrave Handbook of Africa and the Changing Global Order*, S. O. Oloruntoaba and T. Falola (eds.), https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-77481-3_8, pp 155 -173. p. 162.
- ^{xxxi} Avruch Kevin, *Culture and Conflict Resolution*, Washington, DC: US Institute of Peace Press, 1998, p. 6.
- ^{xxxii} Toyin Falola, “African Traditional Religion and Indigenous Knowledge System” In: Aderibigbe, I.S., Falola, T. (eds) *The Palgrave Handbook of African Traditional Religion*. Palgrave Macmillan, Cham, 2022, p. 515. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-89500-6_39.
- ^{xxxiii} Michael Crotty, *The Foundations of Social Research*, (New Delhi: SAGE Publications), p. 58.
- ^{xxxiv} Amidu Ayeni and Adeshina Aborisade, African Indigenous Knowledge Systems and the World”.
- ^{xxxv} Beau Branson, *Introduction to Philosophy: Philosophy of Religion*, Pressbook, 2022, <https://press.rebus.community/intro-to-phil-of-religion/chapter/the-intertwining-of-philosophy-and-religion-in-the-western-tradition-2/>, 10/06/2024.