

**PERCEPTION, INTUITION AND KNOWLEDGE OF THE EXTERNAL
WORLD : SCIENTICIZING AFRICAN PHILOSOPHY**

MADUABUCHI DUKOR

I

The aim of this inquiry is not to re-echo the disputation between perennialism and constructivism over the epistemology of mysticism. It is rather to argue that African philosophy provides a good example of perennialism or epistemological mysticism. The perennialists like William James, Evelyn Underhill, Joseph Morechal, William Johnston, James Pratt, Mircea Eliade and W.T. Stace maintain that mystical experiences represent an immediate direct contact with an absolute principle. According to this school of thought,

"The core experience which is 'pure consciousness event' is the same but when it is made explicit it appears to be divergent, since it is interpreted according to the language and belief of traditions'¹.

On the other hand, the constructivists paradigm would argue that 'all experiences, whether religious, artistic, or mystical, are in fact shaped and mediated by the terms, categories, beliefs and language'². This seems to have an antecedent in Immanuel Kant who says that there is no direct, unmediated knowledge of the reality - all knowledge and human experiences are structured by human categories and forms of sensibilities.

In between these and similar claims, we shall examine the status of African epistemological conceptions of perception, intuition and the external world that P. The two concepts represent different focal whiffs in epistemology. While intuition, as a method of knowing, is popular among rationalists and

mystics, the concept of perception represents the philosophy of the empirical school. The aim of this paper is to examine the epistemological content and validity of these concepts and as the multi-cultural aspects of epistemology. We shall therefore argue that both concepts have played separate and complementary roles in philosophy and science of cultures. Precisely, it is an examination of the unique and separate roles of Perception and Intuition in knowledge that P and as well as argument for their complementary roles in Western and African Philosophies.

The questions, what is Perception and what is Intuition?, are methodologically imperative. Perception is defined as the apprehension of the world through the sense, or the general exercise of it, or particular cases of its exercise, and also what is perceived.³ On the other hand, intuition is a direct apprehension of truth, which is not the direct result of reasoning or sense-perception. It has been viewed as 'a direct relation between the mind and some object analogous to what common sense thinks is the relation between us and something we see unambiguously in a clear light'.⁴

In science, Psychokinesis, clairvoyance, crystal gazing, dream prophecy, telepathy and revelation, the process of perception is argued to be always a constant matrix. Therefore, perception arguably takes many forms and meaning.⁵ The point at issue is, is it cognitive or epistemological? The cognitive areas where perception takes place have philosophical and scientific problems concerning relations to sensory experience on the one hand, and to intellectual notions like belief, judgement, and inference on the other. While the former is the epistemological problem in science and empiricism, the latter is the scientific problem in the Para-Psychology, Metaphysics, Clairvoyance, African medicine and witchcraft. Similarly, notions like belief, judgement and inference are dominant themes in African epistemology. That is why the empiricist (scientists) and the idealists (rationalists) are trying to discover what constitute the external world, P.

The point at issue is that perception has hindered the certainty of knowledge that P. Very often our Perception tells us lies - what we conclude

that perception tells us is not always the case. For instance according to B. Russel the penny viewed from one side looks elliptical and the candle seen out of focus looks double. It means that we are often under illusion and that what we directly perceive or are aware of (often called sense data) sometimes or always differ from what is out there in the external world. It means that we perceive objects by interpreting or inferring from these sense-data. The problem of Perception or scepticism about it becomes more complex when it is admitted that we even perceive when we dream or hallucinate. However, our grave concern is a scientific one which demands a more serious concern about perception through the senses the supramental and supranatural. If we conduct our epistemological enquiry from 'pure experience' it is going to be difficult to get beyond it. The African hold firmly the belief in the conceptual space and time or the idea of three dimensional space being interposed on this earth. This seems to clear hurdles in confining perception to pure physical experience. Similarly, Sri Aurobindo in his account of Physical Transformation has this to say -

'Since the beginning of civilization, man has developed the levels of mind and life, developing his mental faculties such as the sciences, and, the life energy faculties such as the arts'.⁵

This statement is an eloquent testimony of psychisation, spiritualisation, supramentalisation and psychical process in perception, intuition and the knowledge that P. Although this has been highly disputed by the apostle of objectivity and physical sciences, the modus operandi and target of the exponents of the three dimensional world has been to show that the two worlds overlap and that the supramental is the reference point of reality as an African case study will show.

II

Lockean and African epistemologies have interesting parallels and divergences. John Locke's epistemology tries to solve the problem of Perception with his doctrine of primary and secondary qualities. The primary qualities

are those qualities inseparable from the body, for instance, solidity, extension, figure, motion or rest and number while the secondary qualities are colour, sound, smell and so on. He says that secondary qualities are only in the percipient. It means therefore that without the eye there would be no colours, without the ear, no sounds and so on. The African would however posit the spiritual and the physical qualities whereby the spiritual perception is the gift of the seers and the wisemen who see beyond the physical. However this notion of perception lack the scientific sophistication of Locke's. Berkeley objected to Lockean Dualism by pointing out that the primary and secondary qualities are the percipient. However, Lockean Dualism dominated practical physical until the rise of quantum theory. It proved successful as a source of many important discoveries e.g. the theory that the physical world consist only of matter in motion was the basis of the accepted theories of sound, heat, light and electricity. It seems therefore that while the African and Locke were dualistic, Berkeley is monistic as far as the problem of perception is concerned.

Empiricism is the doctrine that all our knowledge (excluding logic and mathematics) is derived from experience. Locke sustained this doctrine against Plato, Descartes and the scholastics who believe in innate ideas or principles. He says,

'Let us then suppose the mind to be, as we say, white paper, void of all characters, without only idea; how come it be furnished? Whence comes it by that vast store, which the busy and boundless fancy of man has painted on it with an almost endless variety? Whence has it all the materials of reason and knowledge? To this I answer in the one word, from experience in that all knowledge is founded and from that it ultimately derives itself'.⁶

According to Locke, our ideas are derived from two sources (a) sensation; and (b) perception of the operation of our mind, which may be called internal sense, and since we can only think by means of ideas, and all ideas come from experience, it is evident that none of our knowledge can antedate experience. This empiricist tradition recognises the existence of the external world in terms of the world of experience.

Kant would argue for this position and of course, he held the view that no mystic experience or metaphysical insight can have any justification since man is not equipped with higher faculties of knowledge. But William James is of the view that

mystical experience should be accepted as authoritative for an individual, although not for the observer, even if the mystical experience does suggest other modes of knowledge and truth. It should be so because mystical experience, like ordinary perception, involves 'face to face presentation of what seems immediately to exist' and provides evidence no less than that given by the senses'.⁷

Empiricism and idealism have problem of showing how we can have knowledge of other things than oneself and the operation of our own mind. According to Locke 'Knowledge is the perception of the agreement or disagreement of two ideas.'⁸ And

From this it would seem to follow immediately that we cannot know of the existence of other people, or of the physical world, for these, if they exist, are not merely ideas in any mind. Each one of us, accordingly, must so far knowledge is concerned, be shut up in himself, cut off from all contact with the outer world'.⁹

At another point he postulated three kinds of knowledge of real existence. He said that our knowledge is intuitive, our knowledge is demonstrative, and our knowledge of things present to sense is sensitive.¹⁰ The African would treat objects of intuitive knowledge, demonstrative knowledge and sensitive knowledge as real. Locke assumes that certain mental occurrences, called sensations, have causes outside themselves and that these causes resemble the sensations which are their effects. But the fact that sensations have causes and still more the belief that they resemble their cause, could be maintained on grounds wholly independent of experience. This argument, of course, presupposes an external world. This is consistent with the principle of empiricism. David Hume got rid of it by dropping the assumption that sensations have external causes. But his maxim, 'no idea without an antecedent impression' which he inherited from Locke, is only plausible so long as we think of impressions as having outside causes.

III

While the African would hold on the idea of causation, Hume would object to it. For David Hume, there are two kinds of perceptions - impressions and ideas. Impressions are those perceptions that have more force and violence. While ideas are faint images in thinking and reasoning. Ideas at least, when simple are like impressions, but fainter. 'Every simple idea has a simple impressions, which resembles it: and every simple impression, correspond to any idea.'¹² Our simple ideas in their first appearance, he said, are derived from simple impressions, which are correspondent to them and which they exactly represent. Complex ideas, on the other hand, need not resemble impressions. We can imagine a winged horse without having ever seen one, but the constituents of this complex idea are all derived from experience. For example, a man born blind has no ideas of colour. Among ideas those that retain a considerable degree of vivacity of the original impressions belong to memory and others to imagination. Yet Humean ideas presuppose external world or world of independent objects. Simple impressions and those that belong to memory are signals of independent world. But that of imagination is only solipsistic.

Sri Aurobindo argues that it is nonsense to speak that what is unknown by the mind is unknowable and that mystic experience remains ineffable -

'Reality is such that it is not exhausted by more objective externalities which our mind and senses can grasp. There are different orders of reality of which the objectivity and physical is only one poise. There are other poises of the reality, which are given to our subjective experience. Just because this realm of spiritual reality is beyond the grasp of normal experience, it should not be regarded as illusive imagination'.¹³

But David Hume would argue that there is no impression of self and therefore no idea of self. He says, 'For my part, when I enter most intimately into what I call myself, I always stumble on some particular perception or other, hatred, pain or pleasure. I never catch myself at anytime without a perception, and never can observe anything but the perception.'¹⁴

This raises a problem with knowledge of the self. Hume can be interpreted to mean that there are glimpses of the knowledge of the external world but not knowledge of the self. But Russell argues that no man perceives his own brain, yet, in an important sense, he has an 'idea' of it. He is also concerned with uncertain, or probable knowledge like knowledge as to the future and as to unobserved portion of the past and present not including direct observation, logic and, mathematics. For him there are seven kinds of philosophical relations - resemblance, identity, relations of time and space, proportion in quantity or number, degrees in any quantity, contrariety and causation. Those that depend only on the ideas are resemblance, contrariety, degrees in quality and proportions in quantity or number while those that can be changed without any change of idea are spatio-temporal and causal relations. The first kind of relations give certain knowledge about the external world while our knowledge concerning other is only probable. Algebra and Arithmetic in sciences give certain knowledge about the external world. Geometry is not so certain because we cannot be sure of the truth of its axioms. Perhaps it belongs to another category of truth. Sri Aurobindo draws a distinction between true truth of things and practical truth of things. He contends that the former kind of knowledge is knowledge by identity which is different from sense knowledge and ratiocination. The knowledge of identity is the highest mystic experience which is attained at the supramental consciousness.¹⁵

The business of philosophical enterprises borders much on formalization of thoughts as is the case with and similar to things like perception and its congruence with reality. Hume and Russell's idea may not be truer than that of the African, no matter how spiritually densed it may be. Resemblance, identity, relation of time and space, proportion in quantity or number, degrees in quantity or number, degrees in quantity, contrariety and causation are amenable to and inferable from African philosophy. But these categories are enmeshed in the substratum of Polymonotheism and Theistic Panpsychism. Similarly, Professor Sogolo has argued that -

'every culture operates its even perception of objects and its own conception of reality. There exist in each a divide between the world of

common sense, that is, between the reality based on our direct perception and experience through the human senses and the 'reality', beyond that which is based on our systematic construction of what is based on our systematic construction of what we perceive'¹⁶

once the dualism is accepted, it is tempting to believe that only direct perception truly reflects reality on the assumption that variations be not in human sensual perception of objects but in their interpretation. This, according to Sogolo, leads to the view that reality is a universal notion but culture independent as well as that it is culture bound in terms of interpretation, that is, that every culture has its own explanatory model of its perspective experience.

In identity and spatio-temporal relations the mind goes beyond what is immediately present to the senses. Spatiotemporal relations can be perceived and can form parts of impressions. Causation alone enables us to infer something or occurrence. Implicit here is the knowledge of the external world through causation. But Hume believes not in such thing as an impression of causal relation. According to him,

We have no other notion of cause and effect, but that to certain objects, which have been always conjoined together ... We cannot penetrate into the reason of the conjunction'.¹⁷

But in Cartesian philosophy as well as that of the scholastics, the connection of cause and effect tend to have no room for the existence of the external world since everything we perceive is only at the level of impression unlike the African philosophy whose cause and effect relationship tend to underpin the external world and the real or physical world.

To be precise, Theistic panpsychism underpin the external world and the real or physical world. It is on the same theoretical form that in the Hermetic, the ancient Egyptian sought to know the reality through intuitive and mystical means. According to Mimansakas and Vedantins,

'knowledge is intrinsically valid. It is 'self-revelation', whether it is sense-knowledge or intellection, intuition, or revelation, each has a

claim to knowledge.¹⁸

In African (Ghana) causal theory, the following proverbs provide evidence in the belief in an effective cause. The Akan saying on cause and effect goes like this : Biribi ankoka mpopao, enye krade' meaning if nothing touches the dry palm branch, it does not make a noise'.¹⁹ Again, 'Birebire amna, amone mama' or if Birebire had not come there would have been no calamity or if the initiating event had not occurred the consequence would not have resulted'.²⁰ The African had reasons for every occurrence in terms of 'how' and 'why'.

IV

George Berkeley and the African are transcendental idealists but while Berkeley denies matter the African affirms it. George Berkeley argues that the reality of sensible things consist in being perceived and that we do not perceive material things but only colours, sounds and so on, and that these are 'mental' or in the mind and that what-ever is immediately perceived is an idea and that any idea exist out of the mind.

'it if were held that thought and perception consist of a relation between subject and object, it would be possible to identify the mind with the subject and to maintain that there is nothing 'in' the mind, but only objects 'before' it.²¹

One can argue that Berkeley's theory of perception does not actually establish the existence of external world. His subsequent denial of matter is equally unAfrican and substantiates this interpretation. But his concept of ideas could mean to represent the external world in similar manner for which the spiritual realm of the African could represent the world the P. Sri Aurobindo holds that -

'There are different orders of reality of which the objective and physical is only one order. It is convincing because it is given to our senses. We seem to remain unconvinced about the subjective and supra physical because mind has no direct access to it except through fragmentary signs and data and inference which can be erroneous. The subjective events

are as real as any other physical events.'²²

Berkeley does not tell us what he means by perception. He rejects the theory that perception is a relation between a subject and a percept. However, according to Russell, one difference between perceived and unperceived events is that the former, but not the later, can be remembered. Recollection is one of the effects, which are peculiar to the phenomena that we naturally call mental. These effects are connected with habit. A burnt child fears the fires, a burnt poker does not. In physicalist language, we can say that an occurrence is 'perceived' if it has effect of certain kinds: Habit and memory when described in physicalist terms are not wholly absent in dead matter. The difference, in this respect, between living and dead matter, is only one of degree. Therefore to say that event is 'perceived' is to say that it has effect of certain kinds, and there is no reason, either logical or empirical, for supposing that all events have effects of these kinds. For the African, the reality of sensible things does not consist only in being perceived. Since every object has a spiritual essence, it exists both in the spiritual realm and physical realm. Sri Aurobindo would support this view arguing that just as scientific inquiry passes beyond that of the physical senses and enters the domain of the infinite and infinitesimal about which the senses can say nothing and test nothing. So also spiritual search passes beyond the domain of scientific or rational inquiry and it is impossible by the aids of the ordinary positive reason to test the data of spiritual experience and decide whether those things exist or not or what is their law and nature'.²³

According to Bertrand Russell the theory of knowledge would require that we start our inquiry about perception from whatever knowledge is the ground for our belief in science. Percepts are propositions or event we know without inference or what can be called dated particular events. Then the question, can we, from our own percepts, infer any other event? There are four possible positions according to Russell, of which the first three are forms of idealism. Firstly, any event is logically capable of standing alone and therefore a group of events affords demonstrative proof of the existence of other events. If we confine inference to deduction, then the known world is

confined to those events (in our own biography) that we perceive. Secondly, the view ordinarily understood as solipsism allows some inference from my percepts and those in my biography. Thirdly, there is the view that it is possible to make inferences to other events analogous to those in our own experience, and that, therefore we have a right to believe that these are, for instance, colours seen by other people but not by ourselves, toothaches felt by other people and so on. And lastly, there is the view of the common sense and traditional physics, according to which there are, in addition to my own experience and other people's also events which no one experience, for example, the furniture of my bedroom when I am asleep and it is pitch dark. The African whether an Igbo, Yorba, Akan or Zulu has a wholistic view of an object or the universe in the sense that everything has spiritual and physical component. This is the African amalgam of idealism and empiricism.

According to Russell, Perception involves the sense and is the basis for beliefs, and that illusion does occur. He says that a single account does not hold for different modes of perception such as seeing, hearing, etc. Do we perceive physical objects or infer their existence or do we treat them as logical constructions (phenomenalism)? The African is not 'scientific enough' to be bothered by this and similar questions. The clarification of issues raised in this question in African way would be in defense of African science. However,

'There is a prima-facie conflict between Russell's empiricist task of grounding all knowledge claims in sense-data and his realist view of the independently existing physical world of chairs, tables, trees etc. and the scientific world of atoms, molecules and so on ... It is to resolve this dilemma of empiricism and realism and to bridge the gap between perception and physical objects that Russell introduces constructionism'.²⁴

In African metaphysics and epistemology there is no conflict because of the pansychic dimensions of objects and matter in general.

From our study there are unconscious and subliminal perceptions. Locke, Hume and Berkeley talked about the features of the object we perceive. It is argued that these features like colour, shape, nature, etc. have causal

properties. If the object we perceive plays a causal role, does it cause our having an experience or our perceiving the object? And does this role enter the analysis of what we mean by saying we perceive the object, so that to say we perceive something is to say, among other things, that it causes us to do something? Or is it merely that our perceptions of it, or our accompanying experiences, are always in fact caused partly by it.

There are theories, apart from causal ones that try to explain perception and its object. The representative theories say either that what we perceive is not the object but something else (sense data) representing it. Realist theories say that whatever it is that is perceived exists independently of being perceived. Naive realism is the view attributed to the plain man that we not only perceive ordinary objects but perceive them as they are, by a direct relation without sense data interpretation.

In African metaphysics and epistemology spirits are philosophical categories. Locke, Berkeley, Ayer and Ryle may not agree with this African point of view. African seers generally agree that -

- (1) Another world, three-dimensional space is interposed on this world;
- (2) Man and lower animals have a physical body and a spirit as well;
- (3) when we die our spirits separate and go to a hill or forest in the neighborhood; (4) the other three-dimensional world is as firm to those living there as our three-dimensional world is to us. Superior spirits can materialise and even kill human beings in our world; (5) There are flaws or cracks in the layer between the physical beings in our world'.²⁵

These African philosophical theories go to show that we can legitimately make inference from our sense data and this is best explained by the representative theory that what we perceive is not the object but something else (sense data) representing it. However, and again in African way, the problem of inference can be solved with the theory that -

'pragmatic inter subjectivity, veridical objectivity and overall coherence are important criteria for warrant of mystic belief'. Coherence is argued for because 'no contradiction could be true and some warrant accrues to the logical entailment of well-founded beliefs'.²⁶

But for William James, the mystic experiences are only subjective feelings and hence lack veridicality except that the mystics are the authority of their own experience. It is important to examine key terms in perception.

Perceptual means things as they appear to the perceiver. Perceptual consciousness is the total conscious experience of the perceiver qua perceiver. Perceptual objects are whatever it is one perceives, be it sense-data, physical objects, or whatever, considered as having just those characteristics they are perceived as having. The perceptible field is the total of a person's perceptual objects at a given moment, not necessarily distinguished as separate objects. Percept is similar to perceptual object. It sometimes refers to sense-data or content or perceptual consciousness. The African distinguish that which is perceived by the senses (phenomena) and the 'thing-in-itself, the inner nature or force of the thing, (noumena) ²⁷. As a realist, he believes in percepts and perceptual consciousness in relation to objects. As an idealist and transcendentalist, he believes in the external world of noumena.

V

Intuition is an immediate, non-discursive, non-symbolic penetration into the nature of the object. What we are said to intuit may be objects not accessible to the senses like numbers, universals, god or truths. Intuition is free from environmental influence. Intuition of truths may take the form of knowledge which we cannot account for, simply because we are unconscious of the reasons which led to it. We have this kind of intuition in African metaphysics, epistemology and ethics.

People do know things by intuition, and the word 'intuition' is explicitly used to rule out the possibility of a rationale. Intuitions may come more easily in some circumstances than in others; there may in some cases be causally necessary conditions for them. The idea of intuition is captured in D.H. Lawrence's story, *The Rocking-horse Winner*, where the boy in the story consistently got the winner of a horse race right simply by riding a rocking-horse. In such a case we are likely to say 'It is clear that he knows although

heaven knows how'.²⁸

The remark 'heaven knows how' may suggest that we do think that the person has some kind of rationale for his beliefs about what that rationale is.

Are people who knows things by intuition sure of what they know? The Africans may have the right to be sure, but only because they are sure about the things that they claim to know, and not for any other reason. It may be that African people who know things do in some sense have the right to be sure and this might therefore be a necessary condition of knowledge. But this not sufficient. African people may have the right to be sure of something if they believe it on the best authority, yet what they think they know may turn out to be false and is not for that reason knowledge.

On the other hand, one pivotal belief in African philosophy is the belief in innate ideas. Therefore African philosophy takes side with rationalism instead of empiricism. Because of African belief in innate ideas there is a lot of emphasis on intuitive knowledge. According to H.K. Minkus, it is a common knowledge that Europeans think in syllogisms, the Bantu think in what the European traditions calls *sorties*. Many misunderstandings would be avoided if only one did not expect Bantu or Akan or Igbo discourses to follow the rigid syllogistic forms. This is because *sortes* is a rigorous and logical reasoning also. The Fanti philosophy believes in innate ideas. Thus there is a saying according to Munkus 'Obu nnkyers abofra Nyame (no one teaches a child about GOD). Among the Africans generally a child does not acquire knowledge of GOD from experience or teaching. He is born with that knowledge. The Fanti also believes that certain individuals are born with certain abilities, abilities which are not acquired from, though, developed through experience.

It is on this basis that some herbalists are said to possess their knowledge of the use of herbs not from experience but innately. Some of the special abilities are also supposed to be acquired through extra-sensory perception. Akomfor (seers), Eninsifo (healers) and Abayifo (witches) are widely believed to possess the faculty of extra-sensory perception. The Igbo

call seers and healers 'Nwadibia' and witches 'Amuosu' and they are all believed to have extrasensory perception.. As necessary conditions of knowledge, the notion of having the right to be sure is on firmer ground than that of the justified true belief. Plato and Aristotle think of such awareness - the direct intuition of an object - as the paradigm of knowledge. The content of any such awareness could be expressed only in terms of what the subject knows about the object and what relevant facts he knows.

VI

Russel distinguishes first between 'knowledge that' and 'knowledge of' and within the latter he distinguished between knowledge by acquaintance and knowledge by description. What is known by acquaintance is supposed to be direct, immediate, certain and incorrigible, and according to Russel all other knowledge, which is not knowledge by acquaintance do not include physical object, and can be known by description. In African epistemology and metaphysics the 'knowledge that' has to do with the knowledge of the external world and the 'knowledge of' has do with direct perception of objects and things of the physical.

Plato believed that there is nothing worthy to be called knowledge that is derived from the senses, and that the only real knowledge has to do with concepts for instance ' $2+2=4$ ' is genuine knowledge and not a statement 'snow is white'. On the contrary *Theaetetus*, observes 'it seems to me that one who knows something is perceiving the thing that he knows, and, so far as I can see at present, knowledge is nothing but perception'.²⁹ However African thoughts are found in Protagoras, Heraclitus and some other ancient Greek philosophers. Protagoras says that 'man is the measure of all things'³⁰ meaning that any given thing is to me such as it appears to me, and is to you such as it appears to you. The African Igbo or Akan would agree with this. Critically speaking, it is urged that Protagoras ought equally to have 'admitted pigs and baboons are measurers of all things, since they also are percipients. Questions are raised as to the validity of perception in dreams and in madness. The Igbo believe that a mad perceives what is revealed to him in the external

world but would disagree with Heraclitus that everything is in a flux. Critics say that this has awkward consequences for instance we cannot as a result say this is white for if it was white when we began speaking it would have ceased to be white before we end our sentences. This means we cannot be right in saying we are seeing a thing for seeing is perpetually changing into not seeing.

On Protagorean position that man is the measure of all things i.e. that each man is the measure of all things, we need to distinguish between percepts and inferences. Each man is confined to his own percepts; what he knows of the percepts of others he knows by inference from his own percepts in hearing and reading. The percepts of dreamers and madmen, as percepts, are just as good as those of others; the only objection to them is that, as their context is unusual they are apt to give rise to fallacious inferences. Russell argues that inferences are personal and private. What I am to believe I must believe; because of some reason that appeals to me. The Protagorean position, rightly interpreted does not involve the view that I never make mistakes, but only that the existence of my mistakes must appear to me if any inference that I happen to draw is just as good as any other, than that intellectual anarchy that Plato deduces from Protagoras does in fact follow. On this point, therefore, which is an independent one, Plato seems to be in the right. But the empiricist could say that perceptions are the test of correctness of inference in empirical material.

Plato argues against the identification of knowledge with perception by pointing out that some of our knowledge is not connected with any sense-organ. We can know, for instance, that sounds and colours are unlike, though no organ of sense can perceive both, there is no special organ for 'existence and non-existence, likeness and unlikeness, sameness and differences, and also unity and number is general.'³¹ It means that we cannot know things through the senses, since through the senses alone we cannot know that things exist. Therefore knowledge consist in reflection, not in impressions, and perception is not knowledge; because it has no part in apprehending truth. However, for the Igbo people of Africa, knowledge consists in both reflection and perception.

Russell says a percept is not knowledge, but merely something that happens and that belongs equally to the world of physics and to the world of psychology. On likeness and unlikeness, he says that two shades of colour, both of which come in seeing, are similar or dissimilar as the case may be. It is something, which one should not accept as a 'percept', but as a judgement of perception. For him perception is a relation between a percipient and an object.

'I see a table' here means that 'I' and 'Table' are logical constructions. The percept is just an occurrence, and neither true nor false. The percept as filled out words, is a judgement, and capable of truth or falsehood'³².

Therefore the proposition 'knowledge is perception' must be interpreted as meaning 'knowledge is judgement of perception.

Here Russell is explicitly committed to the realist view that physical objects exist independently of our perception and the representational one that physical objects are caused by our sense data. Yet as an empiricist, Russell admitted that he could not prove that physical objects exist independent of perception.³³ Sajahan Miah has identified some problems connected with Russell's idea of logical constructions, sense-data and sensibilia, which I believe are problems that can easily be shoved aside for utility reasons by the analytical framework of Theistic Panpsychism. He argues that since verification of the external world consists in the occurrence of sense data and the empirical verification includes the possibility of actual perception, there would be a problem since in actual construction, Russell has included unsensed sensibilia and the constructed object is bound to remain unverifiable. Also Russell is guilty of a 'speculative leap' in his assertion of the existence of the sensibilia because sense-data are all that we are directly acquainted with in any perceptual experience. There is again the problem of the inferred sense-data of other people. Inferring other people's sense-data assumes that there are other people's bodies 'But from strict logical and epistemological point of view, Russell is no more justified in inferring other people's sense-data than in inferring other people's bodies.'³⁴ Critics observed that if other people's sense-data have to be inferred via other people's minds then why worry

about having to infer physical objects? The physical object is not empirically verifiable, no neither is other mind. Therefore he has no more right logically to infer other minds than he has to infer physical objects.³⁵ With his notions of construction and sensibilia, Russell anticipated a reconstruction of African epistemology and metaphysics for scientific reasons. His notions are at best forms of idealism amenable to African 'idealist pragmatism'.

In Igbo thought, 'knowledge as judgements of perception' is an exercise in three-dimensional spaces. There are three-dimensional spaces, all of which are priorities, and none of, which can be considered the only means by which we perceive things. In African philosophy, the number of conceivable logically possible worlds is infinite.

NOTES

1. Venkatalakshmi M. 'Epistemology of Mysticism,' *Indian Philosophical Quarterly* / Vol. XXIII No.3 and 4 July and October 1996 p.439
2. *Ibid.* p. 440
3. Lacey A.R., *A Dictionary of Philosophy* (Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1976) p.155
4. *Ibid.*p.101
5. Sri Aurobindo quoted by V. Ananda Reddy, 'The Process of Physical Transformation' in *Indian Philosophical Quarterly* Vol. XVIII No.2, April 1991, p.317.
6. John Locke quoted by Bertrand Russel, *A History of Western Philosophy* (A Touchstone Book, New York, 1972) p.616
7. William James quoted by M. Venkatalakshmi *Op. Cit.* pp.439 and 440
8. *Ibid* p.611
9. Russell *Ibid.*
10. Locke quoted by Russell *Ibid* p.612
11. Russell *Ibid* p. 612
12. *Ibid* p.660
13. M. Venkatalakshmi *Ibid* p.444
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Department of Philosophy,
University of Poona,
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