Reconciling Reason, Morals, and Faith: Socio-Moral and Religious Epistemologies as Complementary Pathways to Holistic Living

Remi Prospero Fonka, PhD

Department of Philosophy, Catholic University of Cameroon [CATUC] Bamenda

***Corresponding Author**

DOI: https://doi.org/10.47772/IJRISS.2026.101100138

Received: 03 November 2026; Accepted: 09 November 2026; Published: 21 November 2026

ABSTRACT

This paper cross-examines the apparent artificial dichotomy involving socio-moral and religious epistemologies trending contemporary discourses and debates; recommending complementary models enhancing holistic human development. It is amazing how Western modernity privileges rationalist-empiricist epistemology, while African indigenous knowledge systems largely illustrate knowledge to be essentially communal, testimonial, and moral. Overwhelmingly, socio-moral epistemology grounds knowledge in communal life, oral tradition, and ancestral wisdom; while religious epistemology reveals faith as rational and ethical modes of knowing, entrenched in revelation and conscience. The fundamental question is: "can socio-moral and religious epistemologies complement each other?" In attempting a response, this paper succinctly argues that faith and reason constitute epistemological leverage for reconciling these mutual pathways. Hence, in attempting to evade any antagonism, socio-moral and religious epistemologies are validated as complementary. Additionally, the qualitative hermeneutic analysis, complemented by a comparative approach, alongside some representations, exhibit both epistemologies as complementary; later justifying integral living's emergence, if communal moral values and transcendent faith mutually enlighten each other. Inevitably, this avails contemporary remedies for moral decadence, digital smart world alienation, socio-economic crisis, politico- cultural crisis, and faith crisis; proposing an educational and living platform that eventually integrates reason, morals, and faith. The significance of vindicating the complementarities of socio-moral and religious epistemologies become feasible through exploring the following key themes: essential conceptualization of varied epistemologies, understanding fundamental features of socio-moral epistemology, situating the scope of religious epistemology, and demonstrating complementary pathways of socio-moral and religious epistemologies impacting holistic living.

Keywords: Reconciling, Socio-Moral Epistemology, Religious Epistemology, Complementary, Holistic Living.

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

Fascinatingly, contemporary society in the 21st century is plagued by fragmented human lives. In the confines of educational institutions, instructions on how to be rational (thinking along Descartes' *Cogito ergo sum*) are dished out. Likewise, especially in village set-ups, people are taught to be moral, obey traditional institutions, and respect authority and elders; since morality is wrapped in community values and prescriptions. Additionally, churches, mosques, and worship places (including sacred sanctums of African Traditional Religion), establish directives on how to be faithful and imperatives to believe even without understanding.

Eventually, aforementioned fragmentations are historical, not personal as commonly conceived. Apparently, colonialism attributed a false hierarchy of reason, morals, and faith. First, reason from the Western perspective, regards itself as scientific and superior over morals; especially African traditional domains, perceived as primitive. Second, both reason and morals override faith; surprisingly, Western Christianity is ranked as superior to African Traditional Religion. However, post-colonial knowledgeable Africans challenge this predicament or "crisis of the African conscience;" observed as conditioning a people to live in two worlds. Consequently, Africans become intellectual hybrids, not having permanent homes or static cultural

values. Thus, in the context of global current socio-political, economic, moral, environmental, and religio-cultural crises, abovementioned fragmentation becomes pathological. Unfortunately, youths and future leaders are graded as super-rational, capable of coding, debating, and sustaining arguments on social media; yet, they are morally disoriented, dysfunctional, and spiritually/humanly empty. Equally, many are religiously zealous, yet void of reason, and morality without faith.

At this instance, existential dissonance is inevitable: knowing the truth but not what is good; being good without a reason; and believing but not living properly. The dominant Western epistemological tradition (Enlightenment to logical positivism overtones), display reason, morals, and faith to be in rivalry or mutually exclusive. Regrettably, there are claims of reason's universality and objectivity; morals as relative and cultural; and faith is branded as overridingly irrational and private. Subsequently, this mutual exclusion estimate that philosophy of science becomes unconnected to ethics, and ethics conversely distanced from theology. Accordingly, our problem statement creeps in here: can human beings live integrally or holistically if knowledge tools and processes are considered as contradictory? Is it feasible to match a socio-moral epistemology with Aristotelian logic and religious faith, without betrayal exhibitions?

Therefore, the fundamental issue addressed by this paper, is how socio-moral and religious epistemologies (mostly African intuition) could be formally articulated and interwoven with systematic philosophy. Hence, the main objective of this paper is to demonstrate that socio-moral and religious epistemologies are not alternative to rational epistemology; rather, they are complementary pathways capable of guaranteeing and constituting holistic living. Nevertheless, the specific objectives include: analyzing the nature and rational epistemology's limits in contemporary society, explicating socio-moral epistemology as valid in knowledge acquisition, illustrate that religious epistemology is a rational knowing mode, and to recommend an epistemic complementarities. This study's significance unavoidably connects to academic pedagogical, socio-political, and existential gains.

Furthermore, the methodology of research implored in this paper is the hermeneutic analysis, complemented by a comparative approach. It also utilizes qualitative and documentary sources from classical western sources, African philosophical sources; culminating in comparative and complementary methods, that are strictly not too confrontational. This enables the organization of the article into four parts: essential conceptualization of varied epistemologies, understanding fundamental theories of socio-moral epistemology, situating the scope of religious epistemology, and complementary pathways of social-moral and religious epistemologies impacting integral living. Finally, the conclusion's synthesis and rich bibliography, enhances further research.

Essential Conceptualization of Varied Epistemologies

This preliminary segment of our research recognizes Platonic epistemological initiations (Plato and Mbiti for African indigenous knowledge), rudiments of socio-moral epistemologies (communal, testimonial, and ethical), and the core of religious epistemology (revelation, faith, conscience, African traditional religion: Newman and Fonlon). Unavoidably, extreme valuable and distinctive approaches to ethics and humanity implications connect to empirical and conceptual frameworks capable of informing empirically informed ethico-religious epistemologies. Thus, while appealing to social moral epistemology's incorporation of moral-epistemic virtues/vices apropos institutions, attention shifts to ethics of believing and institutional roles that establish belief systems (religious epistemology).

Platonic Epistemological Initiations Versus Mbiti's Indigenous Knowledge

The relevance of Plato's allegory of the cave (prisoners, shadows, fire, sun, return), levels of knowledge (imagination, belief and objects, reason, and intellection: forms and the good), theory of forms and knowledge as recollection, and education as ascent (philosopher-king pulled out of the cave), expounds on universality. Accordingly, he thinks ignorance and dogmatism are explained here, highlighting the significance of critical thinking (Plato, *Republic*: Bk. VII, 514a-520a). Although this inspires liberation and regards education as freedom, it is elitist (exaggerating philosopher's capacity); his neglect of true knowledge not located in this world, leads to neglect of practical life. Comparatively, John S. Mbiti's epistemological principles: "I am because we are" (knowledge as communal), knowledge through senses, spiritual, and community (proverbs,

myths, rituals, ancestors as sources of knowledge), time as epistemological category (present, past, and immediate future), orality (knowledge transmission through folklores), practical and moral (knowing, implying how to live well in community not abstractive theory), to an extent guarantees holistic values (integration of reason, senses, spirit, community), inclusivity (communal participation of knowledge not elite few), and cultural rootedness (elders as epistemic authority). A synthetic critique of Plato's (Western realty) and Mbiti's (African reality), overvalue reason alone and overvalues community alone respectively; implicitly illustrating that both have caves for contemporary living.

First, Plato's caves are visualized in contemporary society via four dimensions: social media cave, political cave, educational cave, and consumerism cave. In the social media cave (Tiktok and Face book shadows for example), youths and some elders think shadows of likes, fake news and AI images as reality. Next, political caves (Anglophone socio-political crisis propaganda in Cameroon for example), highlights both sides demonstrating shadows and citizens trapped in fear and anxiety. Further, educational cave (possession of certificates without wisdom), remonstrates students memorizing lecture notes like Plato's prisoners, without internalizing them. Lastly, is the consumerism cave, noticeably the misconception of regarding values of good life by watching Nigerian movies and copying Western lifestyles.

Second, Mbiti's perspective suggestively highlights loss of communal epistemological and moral values through migration of youths to towns or cities, limited number of elders, dwindling wisdom, and clinging to artificial digital shadows. Therefore, the application of Mbiti's socio-moral and religious epistemologies parameters, are significant for liberation from modern caves. This is feasible through four dimensions: return to communal epistemology, integration of indigenous wisdom, imploration of African time and planning, and matching orality in digital age. In Mbiti's estimation, dependence on communal epistemology maybe valuable for attaining veritable knowledge via community dialogue (social groups and traditional councils). This connects to the integration of elders' wisdom (*Zamani* in Southern Africa) relevant to an extent for conflict resolution; linking African time planning and orality (Mbiti S. John, 1977: 78). Obviously, in a digital age, the force of indigenous languages (the likes of *Lamnso*' of Northwest Cameroon) in radio folktales, Tiktok, and contents creation in face book, quickly transmit knowledge.

Subsequently, Plato's and Mbiti's perspectives constitute a synthesized epistemology for contemporary society; demonstrating critical communitarian rationalism integrating socio-moral and religious epistemologies. On this note, both effortlessly establish character reformation; an erudition of Platonian Western Republic and African religions and philosophy. Thus, in concurrence, background epistemological conceptualization of Plato and Mbiti establish grounds for socio-moral and religious epistemologies' constitution of knowledge as agent of liberation. Although visualized as complementary pathways to holistic living, both epistemologies' object of study slightly vary from take-off points. In this context, while religious epistemology inquires "how an individual can rationally know and trust what is divine and transcendent," socio-moral epistemology concentrates on "how collectively, it is possible to know or justify that which is regarded as fair and just in societies." Nevertheless, these epistemologies overlap to an extent; for instance, communities implore religious authority to justify moral and social laws. However, a succinct distinction between the two lies in how they independently target the nature of truths and mechanisms applied in their justification.

Rudiments of Socio-Moral and Religious Epistemologies

In an important sense, socio-moral and religious epistemologies tackle distinct enquiries which inevitably become sharply allied. Strictly speaking, socio-moral epistemology explores the processes of knowing right from wrong, through other people's instrumentality; meanwhile religious epistemology seeks justification of religious beliefs and faith's rationality. Nevertheless, integrating both implies studying how religious communities operate as social systems for moral knowledge. It is evident that four core nexus of integration exist amongst others: testimony as shared foundation, communities as epistemic agents, dimensions of disagreement and moral deference, and isolated models of integration. First, Michael Hannon qualifies testimony as a shared foundation of both epistemologies. He rejects the idea of figuring out everything singly; evading the explication of religious epistemology apart from socio-moral epistemology, and later demonstrating their integration. Religious epistemology he thinks, borrowing from Alvin Platinga, illustrates

testimony (scripture, tradition, and religious authority) as foundational in belief; arguing they are properly warranted within communities. On the other hand, socio-moral epistemology in his estimation establishes the fact that this is the medium through which morals are learnt (from parents, teachers, and peers); similarly imploring moral testimony as a legitimate moral knowledge source (Hannon Michael, 2019: 44). Implicitly, the integration of both epistemologies illustrates that religious testimony is a subtype of moral testimony. Nevertheless, the ensuing key challenge is to ascertain when a religious community becomes a consistent moral knowledge satellite dish.

In another dimension, Lorraine Code and collaborators take the queue from Hannon's testimony integrating both epistemologies, slotting in the community as an epistemic agent. In his estimation, while socio-moral epistemology portray communities as possessing epistemic virtues/vices (trust and credibility) as hermeneutical resources, religious communities in their epistemology, avail substantial moral concepts (for example, love and communality: *Ubuntu*), constituting a mainstay language for interpreting moral experiences (Code Lorraine, 2010: 90). Notwithstanding, both could generate instances of epistemic injustice; if for example, those entertaining dissenting moral voices within religious circles are silenced, or those without nursing moral insights are dismissed on grounds of being heretics.

Equally, astounding revelations vis-à-vis both epistemologies erupt apropos variance and moral deference; flaunting traces of peer disagreement and moral deference. In this respect, integration is at its peak; encountering someone of equal intelligence yet who disagrees on grounds of moral views, opens-up to challenges of subordinating one's confidence. Linda Zagzebski in response recommends what religious moral epistemologies prescribe; that "individuals' religious traditions provide a reason to retain belief, not as blind faith, but as accumulated collective wisdom." More important in relation to moral deference, she unveils another perplexity, requesting if one should defer with a moral expert. However, concerning religious contexts, deference to a clergy or text is normal (Zagzebski Linda, 2022: 87). In agreement, we sanction Zagzebski's "epistemic authority" recommending socio-moral epistemology's inquisition and caution that epistemic deference not lead to abdication of individual moral reasoning.

Ultimately, two models of integration: consolidation and critical models concretize interconnectivity of socio-moral and religious epistemologies rudiments. First, Christine Swanton investigates the consolidation model, exemplifying religion as the primary social structure enabling moral knowledge. In the footsteps of MacIntyre, she classifies moral knowledge as requiring influential practices, narratives, and virtues; solely sustainable by religious communities, yet necessitating the critical model (Swanton Christine, 2021: 76). Therefore, despite religion's relevance, it must be acknowledged that it is just one among many of social-moral epistemic community. By implication, its moral claims require subjection to crosschecking against cross-community and public reasons linked to untold lived consequences. This position is flows from historically justified circumstances on how religious communities had to revise moral positions on usury, slavery, and gender discrimination by interacting with heterogeneous societies. Consequently, socio-moral epistemology drawing from aforementioned views, lends indispensable epistemic tools to religious epistemology; further detailing how religious moral knowledge quickly enjoys transmission and evaluation. Thus, religious epistemology is foundational to socio-moral epistemology in establishing super-durable epistemic communities.

Understanding Fundamental Theories of Socio-Moral Epistemology

At the outset and ensuing from preliminary considerations, it must be acknowledged that social epistemology of morality is intrinsically inseparable from religious epistemology. Its status focuses on social organizations of moral inquiry; given that moral awareness flows from external agents and others' claims. Subsequently, facilitating or restraining moral knowledge's progress depends on moral norms' regulation of social relationships. In connection, Alexander Miller describes and articulates moral and social epistemology as:

The study of knowledge and justified belief; the study involved in knowing, or being justified in believing moral propositions. Hence, social moral epistemology as a philosophical discipline studies the relevance of communities to knowledge; either descriptively or normatively executed. This includes moral semantics; studying 'how' and 'what' moral language means (Miller Alexander, 2003:268-269).

On this interpretation, Miller suggests that socio-moral epistemology's bonding with religious epistemology explores reality as undercutting the truth or reasonableness of attitudes and moral claims. Another curious fact is that the baggage of knowledge, truth, critical thinking, and culture encircling traditional epistemology must be drawn on board. In the same way and more emphatically, Geoffrey Sayre-McCord stresses that: "this branch of social epistemology, delves into social practices and institutions promoting or impeding the formation, preservation, and transmission of true beliefs (Sayre-McCord Geoffrey, 1996: 433). Notwithstanding the several features of socio-moral epistemology, this paper is limited to three: moral epistemic authorities, communality in social moral epistemology, and testimony as key elements constituting complementary pathways to religious epistemology.

Moral Epistemic Authorities

The African paradigm (Cameroon, Ghana, South Africa, and Nigeria) is most appealing at this stage. Outstandingly, socio-cultural institutions (*Ngwerong/Kwifon/Anlu*) play the role of moral epistemic authorities amongst others; with Mbiti's version of *Ubuntu* (I am because we are), and testimony, seen as valorising instruments to be prioritized. In context, moral epistemic authority as subset to socio-moral epistemology, explores the process of knowing what is morally tenable to social beings; not isolated individual or subjective schemes. Its status involves persons or institutions trusted as knowledgeable and truthful in moral issues. Hence, belief and justification of moral truths revolves around "knowledge authority" (an elder, teacher, and religious authority: priest, pastor, imam) not "power authority" (police or soldier) exerting physical force. Nevertheless, traditional moral epistemic authorities (for instance, Fon, Kwifon, elder, diviner in Northwest Cameroon and Southeast Nigeria), are not solely reliable for who they are; rather, it is their trustworthiness as sources of moral knowledge (sophisticate moral epistemology, not blind obedience) that matters. Accordingly, Linda Zagzebski compliments views on moral epistemic authority asserting that: "Authority is justified if believing what authority believes is more likely to lead an individual to truth, than merely personal reason" (Zagzebski Linda, 2012: 264). This does not overlook possibilities of arriving at knowledge of good or bad via intuition and reason. The ensuing typology of moral epistemic authorities, extracted from Mbiti, Fonka, and Oluwole, illustrate some African contexts:

[i] Fon/Ngwerong/Kwifon [Cameroon]: Authority from knowledge and testimony derived from ancestral connection and ritual power. [ii] Elder/Oluwole's sage [Nigeria}: Epistemic authority from lived experience, critical reflection, and memory of proverbs. [iii] Mother/family head [Cameroon/Ghana]: Authority from care and relational knowledge. [iv] Diviner/Priest [Ghana/South Africa]: Spiritual authority; knowing ancestors and the god's will (Mbiti S. John, Fonka P. Remi, and Oluwole Sophie).

Inevitably, reliance on moral epistemic authorities ought to encompass evaluator criteria. Equally, especially with indigenous knowledge, a methodology that combines analytic epistemology and African communitarian epistemology is necessary for checks and balances. This is a significant criterion for moral epistemic authority's legitimacy; leading to epistemic competence, moral integrity, autonomy respect, communal endorsement, and orientation towards the common good.

In connection to preceding viewpoints, first, epistemic competence recommends inquiry if the concerned authority is equipped with superior moral knowledge, critical reflection, and lived experience. Second, he/she must demonstrate characteristics of moral integrity; living what is taught and consistency in the footsteps of Socrates. Third, epistemic authority should not promote blind obedience; constantly inviting critical questioning (the example of Socrates as gadfly, and the Nso' sage who promotes positive debates. Fourth, communal endorsement is unavoidable (African case, not self-proclaimed authority), but one communally recognized. Lastly, moral epistemic authority is expected to orientate subjects towards the common good, moderate communalism, not private interest knowledge.

Communality in Socio-Moral Epistemology

It should immediately be recalled that this strictly connects to African socio-moral epistemology's uniqueness; incidentally containing spill-over of diverse epistemologies. Also, the spectrum of communality in this context is dressed in three elements: source of knowledge, verification parameters, and purpose of knowledge. First, concerning sources, it is through proverbs, taboos, and elders, that community derives moral knowledge.

Second, in several instances, communities verify moral knowledge by consensus. Third, it is commonly defined and held that moral knowledge is primarily purposeful for community's wellbeing; only incidentally for individual perfection.

Furthermore, an extension of dimensions of communality in socio-moral epistemology (communal source: genetic, community validation: justificatory, and community as end: teleological dimensions), are relevant. For instance in Nso' worldview, the genetic dimension highlighting community as source of knowledge, estimates that moral knowledge arises through communal proverbs, institutional laws, folktales, and taboos. In relation, Mbiti contends that it is common knowledge that "No one teaches knowledge about ethical morals, but community does" (Mbiti S. John, 1977: 90). For this reason, children likewise every other person, learn about moral time; when to speak or be silent, from community rhythms, not books. Consequently, how a Nso' child (by extension African children) know that stealing is wrong, is through folktales and shame in front of communities, not through Kantian reasoning for example. Kwame Gyekye concords, stating that moral beliefs and knowledge require "common sense" (shared rationality); connecting to Menkiti's viewpoint, that "personhood is a process conferred and validated by community (Gyekye Kwame, 1997: 56). This buttresses the Nso' stance that truth never emerges, except through consensus (*suiru wiri*), democratic voting. Finally, this concludes with the teleological dimension; emphasizing on community as an end. Therefore, seeking knowledge of the good is not meant for individual gains; a good human being is judged from perspectives of enabling communal good. This is fitting complementarities of Martin Buber's *I – Thou Relationship*, and African "We" moral knowledge guaranteeing community peace and harmony.

Testimony as Focal Point

It is amazing to note that communality in socio-moral epistemology is instantly succeeded by testimony; enclosed in community-based validation and beliefs crisscrossing religious epistemological apprehensions. Reliance on oral tradition transmitters, elders drawing from ancestors, represents a trust-built testimony intensifying communal- validation. Here, anchor is on immense religious and moral conviction of elders as agents connecting reality to deities and ancestors. Eventually, acknowledgement of truth, wisdom, and cosmic balance endure time preservation; with elders' testimony and witness flowing from experience, commands, trust, and belief in every respect. Mbiti confirms, qualifying African worldview as operating on a "continuum of past, present, and proximate future;" a trust that maintains a life chain believed to sustain or secure blessings for generations (Mbiti S. John, 1979: 27). Hence, intergenerational continuity entertains unconditional trust, obedience, and self-surrenders in every life domain. Consequently, ancestors as vital mediators or link between the ultimate being and the living are categorically trusted; most adherents of African Traditional Religion believe in them as translating human experiences into the spiritual world. Therefore, as repositories of history, moral compass, and customs, their closeness to ancestral realms, commands unconditional trust over and above abstract theories or rationalization.

In another dimension and more intensely, testimony in African socio-moral epistemology relies on its ontology. Anselm K. Jimoh highlights this ontological lineage of African epistemology as a people's ontology delineating distinctive worldviews, distinguishing them from others; informing unique modes of perception. Additionally, he accentuates that the theory is a continuum of being; asserting that African ontology implies the presence of spiritual components of nature determining human experience and perception (Jimoh K. Anselm, 2023:35). He further argues that:

African ontology does not fractionise reality into the rational, empirical, and mystical. Instead, it conceives reality as a unity and harmony of all that is. It provides a vision of totality in which every aspect or mode of being makes meaning in relation to other aspects or modes of knowledge. (Jimoh K. Anselm, 2018: 14)

Implicitly, just as humans, spiritual beings possess an awareness of nature assisting them to respond to perception. This interconnectedness between ontology and epistemology enables recognition, comprehension, and authentication of cognitive claims; facilitating complete surrender and blind trust that is not built on justification. In an important sense, community-based validation of testimony acts as knowledge claims vindicators; simultaneously ensuring knowledge's alignment to shared experiences and values (belief, truth, and justification). Interestingly, justification and validation in African worldviews (Nso' particularly), involves four aspects: proximity (*ngayen*), the person closest to the happening; announcer (*ngasui/nga'fihti*),

the informant who communicated the act or deed; self-manifestation (*vinjen*), uncompromising actor with childlike innocence; and witnessing (*bin nsa-ah*), in judicial cases especially regarding traditional councils, religious, and epistemological apprehensions.

Testimony as an African socio-moral epistemological valorisation instrument in some degree recognizes primary propositional sources or second-hand information in oral culture (other persons' spoken word). Inevitably, knowledge of persons' moral character (past or present), their honesty, and reliability or trustworthiness, are indispensable for evaluating obtained information. In concurrence, Kwasi Wiredu reiterates:

Knowledge of another person's moral character is obtained most reliably from observing (firsthand) his or her behaviour (*isesi*). In addition, in Yoruba discourse behaviour conventionally extends to 'what they say' and 'what they do,' which also pretty much corresponds to the standard Western notions of verbal and non-verbal behaviour (Wiredu Kwasi, 2006: 301).

Similarly, the Nso' concur with abovementioned breadths of testimony; prioritising attributes of hard evidence; the capacity of knowing a witness in first-hand manner (*ngaa njen wo mbiy*). Subsequently, individuals' verbal and non-verbal behaviour construe as first-hand evidence (*vinjen*) of their moral character (*lee*). Thus, since persons' moral character for the Nso' is not observable in the same magnitude as material objects, inference is involved; drawing from a plethora of observed individual actions (*lee wiri*) to generalizations about defined characters. Finally, epistemic certainty is validated through reliable information provided by persons vested with moral authority; established via the interplay of knowledge (*kiiy*) and belief (*biime*), constituting foundational features of religious epistemology.

In sum, socio-moral epistemology builds on three features: primary focus, core source of knowledge, and key evaluative dilemma. First, its primary spotlight strives to justify ethical values, norms, and social interactions; highlighting concepts of right and wrong, systematized justice, and collective testimony from the communal dimension. Second, its core source of knowledge anchors on human interactions, social structures, moral intuition, interpersonal trust, and cultural practices. Lastly, the core evaluative dilemma beseeching socio-moral epistemology concerns challenges navigating interpersonal power dynamics. For instance, this locates difficulties of epistemic injustice, peer disagreement, and collective prejudices or bias.

SITUATING THE SCOPE OF RELIGIOUS EPISTEMOLOGY

Although another measurement of epistemologies' edifice, religious epistemology is not so alienated from socio-moral epistemology. Generally, it poses questions such as: how do we or can we know anything about religion; is religious belief justified, rational, and warranted? Inevitably, this opens up to a plethora of perspectives: evidentialism, reformed epistemology, fideism, religious experience and perception, coherentism, and sceptical standpoints. In order keep this segment proximate to aforementioned facets of socio-moral epistemology, and fidelity to the theme of our paper, these enumerated perspectives are succinctly integrated under the following: transcending rational justification, African epistemologico- religious perspectives, and faith's radicalization and experimental social pressure.

Transcending Rational Justification

According to Kierkegaard, given that faith is unattainable through logic or evidence, awaiting proof thwarts true faith. He esteems that faith is a subjective commitment to believing in God, despite lack of empirical evidence. Similarly, myths in African epistemology, testimony, and witnessing in divination/witchcraft, demonstrate alike features; transcending rational justification. An unquestionable link ensues on axis proceeding from subjective-passionate commitment of faith in Kierkegaardian terms. The assent incorporates aspects beyond faith; reiterating the fact, that struggling to await proof prevents true faith according to Kierkegaard. He considers faith and reason as fundamentally entrenched from each other; provoking his rejection of views that one can rationally justify or synthesize religious truth. This distances the scholastic binding of faith and reason (*fides quaerens intellectum* of St. Augustine and St. Anselm/Aquinas; John Paul II's *fides et ratio*). He concludes that true faith is a personal attribute and subjective passion extracting

strength from a "qualitative leap;" requiring absurdity and unqualified commitment (Kierkegaard Soren, 1992: 135).

Aforementioned views bearing on religious epistemology, spotlight the fact that religious belief often entertains rationality, if only sufficient evidence lends sustenance. Nevertheless, isolated instances portray beliefs as unconditionally self-evident, incorrigible, and supported by associate beliefs. However, both Western and African natural theology exhibiting religious epistemology, severally provide cosmological, teleological, moral, and ontological evidence. This meets the defense of Alvin Platinga's reformed epistemology with its argument that:

Belief in God can be rational without arguments or evidence. Like belief in other minds or the external world, it can be properly basic; formed by reliable cognitive faculty [the *sensus divinitatis*] when functioning correctly in the right environment (Platinga Alvin, 1992: 414-415).

On this interpretation, rationality does not require proof; implying there is no discrimination against religious belief (the focal point of religious epistemology). Notwithstanding, belief of any sort at all is rationally acceptable only if there is sufficient evidence for it. Therefore, matching along this thought sanctions the fact that it is wicked, immoral, monstrous, and to an extent impolite to accommodate beliefs one lacks sufficient evidence for; this spills over into intricacies in socio-moral epistemology. Despite this stance, we return to pose critical objections regarding the conception "sufficient evidence." How much evidence is sufficient; and does an individual know he/she possesses sufficient evidence? The notion of evidence is as difficult as that of rationality; thus, one's belief in religious epistemology would not be termed "irrational," if justification for such is lacking on grounds of evidence insufficiency.

Implicitly, religious epistemology seemingly projects faith as independent of and constantly in conflict with reason. About such viewpoints, Kierkegaard insinuates that religious truth is accessed via a "leap of faith," instead of rational evaluation; insisting that reason cannot judge faith (Kierkegaard Soren, 1993: 79). In connection, this directs attention to religious experience and perception as core of religious epistemology; a position that commits William Alston to assert that:

Religious experience is analogous to sensory perception. If we trust sense perception without independent proof of its reliability, we can justifiably trust mystical perception as a source of knowledge, unless we have positive reason to doubt it (Alston William, 1994: 80).

Alston in the above lines, seemingly recount doxastic practices; justifying beliefs as construed around pragmatic fruits. In agreement with African epistemologies and liberation, emphasis is on communal, realistic, and lived justification. Thus, relating to socio-moral epistemology, knowledge enjoys validation of community sustenance capacity, moral life, and spiritual transformation. Although habitually inadequate to justify belief or disbelief, religious language fastening such an epistemology to socio-moral epistemology, surpasses factual knowledge; highlighting moral orientation apprehensions, myth, and existential commitment.

African Epistemologico-Religious Perspectives

Essentials of indigenous knowledge and faith in African philosophy and traditional religion trail alike trends of Kierkegaard's "leap of faith." The expression of these features underscores reliance on ancestral trusts via elders, power of rituals, and community-centred belief. Thus, African epistemologico-religious perspectives explore themes of community-based validation and beliefs; maintaining harmony and balance, lived-experience surpassing mental assent, and individual/communal knowledge basis.

Generally, African epistemologies to some extent, highlight the centrality of lived experiences which surpass mere mental assent, and extend beyond mere acquisition of beliefs; exceptionally isolating witnessing as its socio-moral epistemology's admission of knowledge via others' expressions. This is predominantly within communitarian contexts; accommodating remarkable and passively generating justified, and integrated broader perspectives for understanding reality as full of interconnectedness. Jennifer Lackey corroborates stating that:

[Fewer] consensus, however, are found when questions about the nature and extent of our dependence on the word of others arise. Is our justified reliance on testimony fundamentally basic, for instance, or ultimately reducible to perception, memory, and reason? Is trust, or some related interpersonal feature of our social interaction with one another, essential to the acquisition of beliefs that are testimonially justified? (Lackey Jennifer, 2011: 71)

This exemplifies how African belief systems influence people's worldview; a belief which the Nso' of Cameroon uphold; contending that nothing unpleasant occurs without hidden unexplainable mystical reasons. African philosophical worldviews and religio-cultural trust and surrender, relies on a "relational ontology." Ancestors (the living-dead) are revered and regarded as custodians of morality; commanding unreserved trust, believed to foster communal harmony, socio-moral, and spiritual guidance. In Ada Agada's estimation, individuals' deficiency on rational grounds or justification, and trust, turn to surrender their family's protection and welfare to ancestors; implicitly surrendering and aligning to wisdom, following proximity to the ultimate being (Agada Ada, 2022: 2). Hence, every cosmic balance and maintenance is built on belief, trust, and surrender of wills to ancestors and other spiritual beings. In another dimension, unconditional surrender and allegiance to ancestors as guardians of morality dominates. Almost instantly or immediately, Africans dread God's wrath; quickly yielding their wills to ancestors as intermediaries, seen as maintainers of social stability; eradicating acts that damage harmony, and enhance those rewarding good conduct.

Faith's Radicalization and Experimental Social Moral Pressure

Even though religious epistemology illustrates faith's knowing process, distortion is witnessed through pressure in some of its epistemic sense, with radicalization creeps-in. The dangers proclaimed contextually, connect to religious beliefs embracing of closed epistemologies; restricting questioning, doubt, and other sources. Overwhelmingly, people are coerced by group experiments with vindication of procedures to know what is morally right or wrong. This is determined by groups not evidence, and outline conformity and obedience conditions. Thus, connecting socio-moral epistemology here (process of ascertaining what is right), and religious epistemology (justifying how God is known to exist and his desires), attracting communal validation as sole measurement for values. Hence, radicalization resurfaces with the collapse of both reason and faith; insinuating that faith's stoppage of understanding seeks understanding. Therefore, radicalization becomes a failure for both religious and moral epistemology. Alvin Platinga's strength of religious epistemology knit to belief is relevant in context when he avers that:

Does the believer-in-God accept the existence of God by faith [knowledge]? Is belief in God contrary to reason, unreasonable, irrational? Must one have evidence to be rational or reasonable in believing in God? Suppose belief in God is not rational; does that matter? (Platinga Alvin, 2000: 42).

This stance inclines toward evidentialist theorists' propaganda; its strict application jeopardizes obedience to moral prescriptions established on the knowledge of others' belief or testimony; constituting basis of socio-moral epistemology. Platinga and associates may be interpreted as suggesting that radicalization (a digression from religious epistemology), is less reliant on faith; rather, it is faith that has lost epistemic virtues; eventually surrendering to closed social pressure. It is at this juncture that moderate communalism becomes an indispensable socio-moral epistemological tool connecting both epistemologies.

Furthermore, the way forward suggests a strong bonding to Mbiti's worldview that "faith knows through community, ancestors, lived experience, not just proposition: belief is belonging" (Mbiti S. John, 1977: 98). This attracts close attention to epistemic marks of radicalized faith that challenge religious epistemology. First, is the aspect of epistemic closure; involved with rejection of new information and other interpretations. Second, testimonial monopoly; trust in only one authority and rejection of others, violating diversity of testimony. Third, is the existence of moral deference to group; relying solely on what my group sanctions and social pressure is noticed here as replacing moral reasoning. Lastly, it is common to have loss of epistemic humility and cultivation of epistemic strategies. In this connection, claims of infallible knowledge of God's will is common; also, opponents are considered wrong and disqualified epistemically (blind to reality). Hence, this constitutes strictly an epistemological failure; illustrating faith's radicalism in religious epistemology, when it abandons epistemic virtues (humility, openness, communal verification). Consequently, this compromises even socio-moral epistemological values; yielding to totalizing social pressure.

Summarily, religious epistemology can fittingly be constructed on three fronts: its primary focus, core source of knowledge acquisition, and key evaluative dilemma. First, it focuses primarily on the justification, rationality, and warrant of transcendent beliefs; including for example exploring concepts of God's existence, divine revelation, and salvation. Second, its core source of knowledge acquisition is rooted on divine authority, sacred scripture, mystical experiences, faith, and some degree of innate sense of the divine. Third, religious epistemology's key evaluative dilemma involves challenges of balancing faith versus evidence; specifically concerning concepts of evidentialism versus reformed epistemology.

Complementary Pathways of Socio-Moral and Religious Epistemologies: Impact on Holistic Living

The bed-rock of this segment demonstrates the reconciliation of reason, morals, and faith. Exceptionally, focus is on four dimensions: the reconciling package (illustrating resolution of a false division), reason, morals, and faith corpus (capturing both religious and socio-moral epistemologies), complementary pathways (core of argument), and holistic living phase (the goal or telos of this research). Thus, we vehemently intend to dismiss the false dichotomy pitying reason against faith. That being the case, we propose a fundamental question: "can socio-moral and religious epistemology complement each other? This research from aforementioned viewpoints and subsequent ones contends that both epistemologies are complementary, not contradicting each other; constitution levelling platforms for holistic living. Inevitably, it is at this juncture that the hermeneutical analysis, analytic method and comparative approach complement, attempts clarification of three confused concepts: reason, morals, and faith. Here, the language game that illustrates reason, morals, and faith as confronting each other can be reconciles thus: "reason is not against faith; morals arises from God, losing it, you forfeit morals; and socio-moral epistemology anchors on religious epistemology. The importance of the complementarities of both epistemologies is envisioned via the exploration of the following: complementary paths anchored and established on testimonial dependence, implications of communal epistemic agency, differing grounds, integration of consolidation and critical modes, and religious epistemology as foundational to socio-moral epistemology.

Complementary Pathways: Anchored on Testimony

It is momentous to evoke that both epistemologies entertain features of truth and belief; inquiring whether "the good" is naturally obtained or drawn from moral cognitivism. Implicitly and on mutual grounds, "the good in relation to evil" host religious as well as collective moral knowledge claims concerning truth and belief. Testimony is largely a justified common source for both religious and socio-moral epistemologies. Overwhelmingly, divine testimony (religious epistemology) and human-inspired testimony (socio-moral epistemology), are intertwined. In both, we derive knowledge about God (religious epistemology), and good (religious and socio-moral epistemology); respectively relying on others' trust (elders, scripture, and community for example). Equally, religious and socio-moral epistemologies by mutually anchoring on testimony, propose "epistemic complementarities," that enhance holistic living, education, and peace building. Hence, both enable the specific objectives of analyzing the nature and limits of rationalizing in epistemology, particularly in the African context. For instance, socio-moral epistemology is explicated as a valid way of knowledge acquisition; rooted in societal dealings and traditions. Additionally, it explicates religious epistemology as a rational knowing mode that taps from religious (Catholic for example) intellectual traditio, and African traditional religion.

However, in spite of qualifying testimony as anchoring both epistemologies, Zagzebski in the meantime insists that religious epistemology depends on socio-moral epistemology. In her estimation, we need moral virtues of trust and humility in order to accommodate or incubate religious knowledge (Zagzebski Linda, 2012: 217-232). Thus, the complementarities of both epistemologies resonate via virtue and authority; indicative of the fact that testimony connects religious and moral knowing. To Alvin Platinga, this argument entertains the fact that "if moral knowledge exists objectively, it provides warrant for theistic belief (Platinga Alvin, 2006: 47-72). Therefore, both religious and socio-moral epistemologies co-warrant each other; constituting fertile grounds for holistic living. Conclusively, since the moral order pints to religious sources, this justifies their complementarities.

In another dimension, existentialist conjunction tightly established on faith's radicalism and experimental social pressure, is inseparable from divine and human-inspired testimony. This ascertains trust on mentors or

iconic figures' authority; a psychological description termed "expert power." Despite its incredible inspiration, it requires diligent balance that evades blind obedience and drawbacks. Kierkegaard and African faith-grounding components incorporate aspects of divine and human-inspired testimony; illustrating a healthy relationship between mentors and mentee, accelerating progress from wisdom, errors, and trial which offer communal-validated feedback rather than rationalization. However, admitting possibilities of "blindly idealizing iconic figures," demand elimination; creating circumstances so lacking in critical thinking. More important, Kierkegaard notes that such faith intimacy commanding unflinching trust and testimony does not imply cheapening faith; it accommodates creativity for deepening and inviting unconditional or unwavering response:

It does matter very much if by means of pretty-minded calculations someone wants to offer faith to the highest bidder; it matters so much that he never comes to faith. Even if the contemporary generation had not left anything behind except these words, 'we have believed that in such and such a year God appeared in the humble form of a servant, lived and taught among us, and then died;' this is more enough. (Kierkegaard Soren, 1992: 266)

The above position highlighted by Kierkegaard becomes foundational for future generations; building their faith on divine testimony and communal testimony of early arrivals (for Christianity), and elders' testimonial connecting everyone to ancestral traditions (African context). Faith in this instance, deals with unconditional surrender for Christians as suggested by Kierkegaard; in African Traditional Religion, becoming an indigenous adherence or belief that impacts character traits and behaviours.

Implications of Communal Epistemic Agency

African Traditional Religion hosts both epistemologies' communality feature indiscriminately. Nevertheless, the force of communal epistemic agency is robustly and more recurrent in socio-moral epistemology. Yet, both exhibit three common traits necessary for knowledge validation and integral living: source, verification, and purpose. First, concerning the aspect of source, community is source for both religious and socio-moral knowledge (ecclesiastical authority/laws, lay church leaders; proverbs, taboos, and elders). Second, apropos verification, it is the community that verifies religious as well as socio-moral epistemology through pastoral agents/meetings, congress/synods, and consensus. Lastly, the telos or goal (purpose) of knowledge acquisition in faith or socio-moral knowledge is for communal wellbeing; evading solely individual perfection and self-aggrandizement. Generally, this is what qualifies African religious and socio-moral epistemologies as unique. Similarly, and by extension, Alvin Goldman insinuates that religious belief, just as moral beliefs are socially formed; the community in his reckoning, constituting the epistemic source for both (Goldman Alvin, 2011: 1-15). This illustrates how both fields share social structures.

Simply, in African thought, not excluding Western viewpoints, religious knowledge (ancestors, spirits) are inseparable from socio-moral knowledge (taboos, right/wrong). Accordingly, both emerge from the same community source. In correlation, Mbiti interprets them as deeply entrenched complementarities; contending that it is a natural and unconstructed complementarities entity (Mbiti S. John, 1990: 12-27). In the same wavelength, Stephen C. Evans argues that moral epistemology needs religious epistemology in order to ground objectivity; while religious epistemology on the other hand needs moral epistemology to be credible (Evans C. Stephen, 2010: 283-298). Consequently, the same intellectual virtues (humility, love, open-mindedness) underlie both moral and religious knowing. Therefore, they are complementary practices of the same virtuous person.

Finally, a tripartite reconciliation model: reason's arbiter role, morals as bridge, and the place of faith's horizon becomes an imperative. First, as an arbiter, reason is not meant to substitute faith or morals; rather, it evaluates, tests their coherence, eliminates exaggerated supervision, and fanaticism tendencies. Second, as a bridge, morals connect reason and faith. For instance, Kant's categorical imperative and faith pronouncements (love your neighbour) implore reason, while both converge on highlighting the importance of human dignity. Lastly, as horizon, faith avails meaning, motivation, and ultimate grounding not possible to attain solely by reason. However, Anselm's dictum of "faith seeking understanding" (*fides quaerens intellectum*), insists on the importance of promoting reasonable faith. Thus, reconciliation of reason, morals, and faith does not imply fusing the three; each remains distinct but complementary epistemic practices.

Differing Grounds of Religious and Socio-Moral Epistemologies

Although both epistemologies rely on testimony and authority, intuition and experience, religious experience outrightly clarifies moral experience, practice, and verifies religious belief itself. Notwithstanding, the complementarities of both projecting an integrated person, not two compartments, raise issues of social moral pressure in relation to religious epistemology. In relation, James I. Kidd attributes religious radicalization as resulting from social moral vices which distort religious knowledge; demonstrating that moral epistemology regulates religious epistemology (Kidd I. James, 2016: 342-354). The distinction frequently made in Lamnso' (language of the Nso' in Northwest, Cameroon) between *kiy* (putative "knowledge"), and *biime* (putative "belief"); explicating similar evidential first hand status versus second hand knowing of information, are inseparable. Nevertheless, *kiy* is restricted to socio-moral epistemology, while *biime* shares both platforms but intensely linked to religious epistemology. Similarly, Barry Hallen projects virtual examples of the Yoruba of Nigeria: visual perception (scene or event as it is occurs) and sensory perception (directly experienced stuff limited in comparison to perception). According to him, that which is known (*imo*) as the Nso' *kiy* above, bonds to *igbagbo* (belief) that is quite lacking in depth of experience (Hallen Barry, 2004: 298). Remarkably, belief and knowing respectively characterizing religious and socio-moral epistemologies are split by mere perception and experiencing. Nevertheless, while socio-moral epistemology entertains both true/truth and know/knowledge, religious epistemology inclines more on true/truth even without propositional values of know/knowledge.

Furthermore, some extent of antagonism prolongs an unhealthy rift between religious and socio-moral epistemologies. This revolves around features of rationality, justificatory status, and knowledge status of religious beliefs and epistemology apropos socio-moral epistemology. For instance, even after discovering error in belief due to historical incoherency, formation of religious epistemological beliefs are established on authority of religious leaders. Yet, for socio-moral epistemology, such epistemological trusts are solely guaranteed by sense experience, communal testimony and validation. In Richard Feldman's reaction, there is little doubt that there are at least superficial similarities between religion, ethics and epistemology. For him: "one might say that ethics, [religion], is about appraisal of social behaviour and agents, while their epistemologies are about the appraisal of cognitive acts and agents" (Feldman Richard, 2024: 44-60). However, there is widely held view that behaviour subject to moral evaluation characterizing socio-moral epistemology is free and voluntary; while, beliefs enveloped in religious epistemology are not. This suggests important disarray between the outstanding epistemological fields. Despite isolated instances of disparities between religious and socio-moral epistemologies, Robert Audi highlights some extent of complementarities; describing both as dealing with an "integrated person, not two compartments." Vehemently, he aligns thought with other epistemologists that both epistemologists rely on testimony and authority, intuition and experience; religious experience clarifies moral experience, while moral practice verifies religious belief (Audi Robert, 2020: 3-28).

Integration And Consolidation of Critical Models

At this juncture, religious epistemology is interpreted as foundational to socio-moral epistemology or its wayfarer. Agreeably, Mbiti in connection highlights the fact that religious epistemology via beliefs establishes moral conducts that form the core of socio-moral epistemology. He further intimates that perspectives of religious epistemology, God as the ultimate reality is represented as guardian of both socio-moral epistemology and human morality (Mbiti John, 1977: 180). Highly esteemed in this context is the conglomeration of ethico-religious epistemological values. For instance, the naming ceremony of the Nso' in Cameroon culminates in a combination of religious and socio-moral epistemological significance. Specifically, the elements used in naming ceremonies bear the following significance: peace plant (*kikeng*: symbol of peace and unity); adorned/embellished calabash (*kitem*: royalty, wholeness, and integrity); and raffia bag containing cowries (*kibam wuna mbam se Nso'*: humanity's priceless values). Next to these items is the intrinsic epistemological significance of names commanding socio-moral connotations and conducts. For example: *Lukong* (warrior and protector of generations), *Shee* (safeguard of household), *Wirdzelii* (character determines or defines a person; truthful person matching speech and action), and *Soliiwir* (those who succeed or progress in life due to the impeccability of character) are religious epistemological values bearing in names, yet impacting socio-moral epistemology and moral conduct.

Consequently, the complementarities of socio-moral and religious epistemologies are here upon illustrated as integrated and consolidation models. Hence, integrating religious epistemology (knowledge acquisition, justification, and evaluation about the divine, faith, and revelation) with socio-moral epistemology (social structures, testimony, and interpersonal networking shaping moral knowledge and duties), vindicates possibilities of religious beliefs intersection with collective morality, communal trust, and justice issues. According to John Greco, the core thought demonstrates that religious knowledge is not purely individual or internal; not to be confused with private mystical experiences. Instead, he sees it as profoundly relying on social structures, prophetic authority, sacred scripture, and communal testimony, as expounded by socio-moral epistemology (Greco John, 2020: 4-20). Additionally, this viewpoint is endorsed by Bruno Niederbacher, who alongside contemporaries raises the question whether Platinga does justice to voluntary elements in the constitution of religious belief. As a response, his complementary account of John Henry Newman's "faith perspective," incubates a virtue epistemology version (Niederbacher Bruno, 2005: 19-42). This becomes a general epistemology which alongside aforementioned positions generates an account for several intuitions developing into inseparable epistemic values; thus, consolidating the bond of religious and socio-moral epistemology.

Outstandingly, this paper reconciles the two epistemologies by elaborating distinctions that melt apparent contradictions. This is done by revisiting differences between the two epistemologies and exploring logical analysis of the arguments. First, to once more distinguish religious from socio-moral epistemology, the basis is on the process of knowledge acquisition. While socio-moral epistemology highlights community's process of knowing what is right through proverbs, consensus, tradition, and lived experiences, religious epistemology demonstrates how believers know God via revelation, testimony, religious experience, and sacred scripture. Notwithstanding, they do compete for the same object; socio-moral epistemology responses on "how and what entails in living together," and religious epistemology on "how and what entails in relating to the transcendent. Second, differentiating "believing-that versus believing-in" is essential. For instance, to believe that God exists incorporates propositional components in need of reason; just as belief in God demands trust, commitment, but inversely needs faith. Nevertheless, it is important to note that reason justifies belief-that, while on the other hand, faith sustains belief-in; these are mutually significant. Third, we distinguish dimensions of justification versus proof apropos these epistemologies. Accordingly, not every rational belief requires mathematical proof. Implicitly, moral belief is vindicated by coherence, universality, and human flourishing; while religious belief is defensible by testimony, experience, and pragmatic fruits. Hence, faith should not be mistaken as irrational; simply, its rationality differs.

In another dimension, the analytic method compels an examination of seeming conflict and refutation, and establishment of a moral argument. To begin, the conflict thesis exhibits three factors: "reason as requiring evidence, faith as lacking evidence, and faith as irrational." Analytically, we refute the aspect of considering faith as lacking evidence; extending evidence to embrace scientific as well as moral or religious evidences. Equally, we must not ignore the fact that testimony involves evidence in law and religion as well. The moral argument connecting both epistemologies implies that: "absence of God means no objective morals; there are objective morals; and therefore, God exists," with knowledge of him significant in connecting religious and socio-moral epistemologies. Analytically, judging religious language with scientific rules is a categorical error; implying reconciliation demands respect of unique language games and maintaining rational accountability.

GENERAL CONCLUSION

In conclusion, a return to the initial fundamental research question: "can socio-moral and religious epistemology complement each other," becomes inevitable. This generates other general interrogations of the possibilities to know, entertain justifications for particular beliefs, and ascertain whether anything is morally right or wrong, just or unjust, virtuous or vicious, noble or base, and good or bad. Overridingly, daily religious or moral judgments linked to these concerns are construed depending on religious and socio-moral knowledge. However, how do we arrive at such knowledge and its justification; given that moral truths are simply perceived like a computer screen in front of us? Unmistakably, religious and socio-moral epistemologies as aforementioned, establish grounds for exploring challenges of knowledge acquisition and justification; signalling implications for holistic living.

Ultimately, preceding analysis allude to the fact that recent scholarship robustly discards any attempt at severing religious epistemology from socio-moral epistemology. A synthesis of affirmative complementarities builds on four justificatory factors matching their workability: common source, common virtue, common structure, and mutual warrant. First, in both religious and socio-moral epistemologies, the common vindicating source of knowledge is testimony; we learn both "God" and "good" from others' trust (elders, scripture, and community). Second, humility and trust as virtues are common to both epistemologies; the same character is needed to know morally and religiously. Third, religious as well as socio-moral epistemologies are logged in a common social structure. For instance in African worldviews, moral and religious knowledge both arise from community, not solely human reason. Lastly, there is mutual warrant for both epistemologies; moral grounds religious on one hand and religion vice-versa. Accordingly, this implies moral objectivity makes theism plausible, while theism on the other hand grounds moral objectivity.

Consequently, this paper through its articulation of reason, morals, and faith as core to religious and socio-moral epistemologies, does not intend presenting them as rival epistemologies; rather, they are complementary pathways to holistic living. Hence, while reason affords necessary critical clarity, logical coherence, and self-correction capacity on the one hand, morality endows with succinct normative orientation, enabling communal and individual good on the other. Therefore, it is vital paying attention to the fact that isolating any of the pathways leads to fragmentation of human life; implying entertaining reason void of morals accompaniment, risks hazards of instrumentalism. Nevertheless, morals excluding reason risks dogmatism; thus, faith without both risks departure from rational and social responsibility. Subsequently, their reconciliation generates integrated persons; capable of thinking critically, acting justly, and living purposefully.

Here, it becomes clear that proposing reconciliation is not a form of compromise that weakens every domain; conversely, this is an amalgamation designed to restore each to its appropriate function. Obviously, religious and socio-moral epistemologies' coupling eventually tender holistic frameworks for actual living, not merely knowledge acquisition. Consequently, the analytic method earlier announced alongside others, becomes relevant for identifying the viewpoint that seeming conflicts between reason, morals, and faith, are not factual but some sort of conceptual confusion. Aforementioned concepts clarification, justifications, and reconstruction of arguments illustrate that reason, socio-moral epistemology and religious (faith) epistemology are not rivals but complementary epistemologies. In this context, holistic living becomes a comprehension of continuous alignment of what is known, valued, and believed. Thus, any movement beyond seeming false dichotomy between reason and faith, pedagogies, and social practices, become inevitable for immediate future inquiry and practice enhancing character formation and community living.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

1. Alston William, "What is Justified Belief?" in *Epistemology Naturalized* (2nd Ed.), H. Kornblith (Ed.), MIT Press, Cambridge, 1994.
2. Audi Robert, *Moral Knowledge and Ethical Character*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1997.
3. Audi Robert, "Moral Epistemology and Religious Epistemology: Common Ground and Complementary Roles," in *Journal of Religious Ethics*, 48 (1), 3-28, DOI: 10.1111/12291, 2020.
4. Code Lorraine, "Statements of Fact: Whose? Where? When?" in *Moral Epistemology Naturalized*, R. Campbell & B. Hunter (eds.), University of Calgary Press, Calgary, 1982.
5. Code Lorraine et al., *Testimony, Advocacy, Ignorance: Thinking Ecologically*, Oxford Academic Books, Oxford, 2010.
6. Goldman Alvin, "Towards a Synthesis of Social and Religious Epistemology," in *Journal of Analytic Theology*, 2 (1), 1-15, 2011.
7. Evans C. Stephen, "Moral Arguments for Theism and their Epistemological Significance," *in Philosophia Christi,* 12 (2), 283-298; DOI: 10.5840/PC, 2010.
8. Eze C. Emmanuel (ed.), *African Philosophy: An Anthology*, Blackwell Publishers, New York, 1988.
9. Feldman Richard, "Religious and Ethical Epistemologies," in *Journal of Philosophical Thought*, 20 (12), 3324-4344, 44-60, 2024.
10. Feldman Richard, *Epistemology and Ethics*, Routledge Encyclopaedia of Philosophy, Routledge, 2024.
11. Greco John, "Social Religious Epistemology," in *Research Gate*, 21 (7), DOI: 10:1017197811088, August, 2020,

12. Gyekye Kwame, *Tradition and Modernity: Philosophical Reflections on African Experience*, Oaths Books Publication, Accra, 1997.
13. Gyekye Kwasi, *African Cultural Values: An Introduction*, Sankofa Publishing, Accra, 1996.
14. Hallen Barry, "Yoruba Moral Epistemology," in *A Companion to African Philosophy*, Kwasi Wiredu (ed.), Blackwell Publishing, Victoria, 2004.
15. Hannon Michael, *Epistemic Diversity*, Oxford Academic Books, Oxford, 2019.
16. Jimoh K. Anselm, "Knowledge and Testimony in African Communitarian Epistemology," in *Handbook of African Philosophy*, Springer Verlag, New York, 2023.
17. Kidd Ian James, "Epistemic Vices and Religious Unknowing," in *Theology and Science*, 14 (3), 342-354, 2016.
18. Kierkegaard Soren, "Despair is the Sickness Unto Death," in *The Sickness Unto Death*, Hong H. & Hong E. (eds. & trs.), Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1980.
19. Kierkegaard Soren, "Subjective Truth, Inwardness; Truth is Subject," in *Post Script, Part 2*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1993.
20. Lackey Jennifer, "Testimony: Acquiring Knowledge from Others," in *Social Epistemology Essential Readings*, Goldman I. Alvin & Whitcomb Dennis (eds.), Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2011.
21. LeFevre D. Perry, *The Prayers of Kierkegaard*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1963.
22. Mbiti S. John, *Introduction to African Religion*, Heinemann, Nairobi, 1975.
23. Mbiti S. John, "The Person in African Traditional Morality," in *Journal of Moral and Religious Studies in African*, 12 (31), 12-27, 1990.
24. Miller Alexander, *An Introduction to Metaethics*, Polity Press, Cambridge, 2003.
25. Niederbacher Bruno, "Moral and Religious Epistemology," in *Philosophy and Culture*, 32 (4): 19-22, 2005.
26. Platinga Alvin, "Religious Belief without Evidence," in *To Believe or Not to Believe: Readings in Philosophy of Religion*, E. D. Klemke (ed.), Harcourt Brace Jovanovich College Publishers, New York, 1992.
27. Platinga Alvin, "Religious Belief as Properly Basic," in *Philosophy of Religion: A Guide and Anthology*, Brian Davis (ed.), Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2000.
28. Platinga Alvin, "How to be an Anti-Realist," in *Proceedings and Addresses of the American Philosophical Association*, 80 (2), 2006.
29. Plato, *The Republic*, Book VII, 514a- 520a.
30. Sayre-McCord Geoffrey, "Coherentist Epistemology and Moral Theory," in *Moral Knowledge: New Readings in Moral Epistemology*, Walter Sinnott-Armstrong & Timmons Mark (eds.) Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1996.
31. Swanton Christine, *An Epistemology for Target Centred Virtue Ethics*, Oxford Academic Books, Oxford, 2021.
32. Wiredu Kwasi (ed.), *A Companion to African Philosophy*, Blackwell Publishing, Oxford, 2002.
33. Wyatt MacGaffey, "African Ideology and Belief: A Survey," in *African Studies Review*, Vol. 24, Issue 2-3, 07 September, 2016.
34. Zagzebski Linda, "The Power of Epistemic Authority," in *Quest Journals*, Vol. 12, Issue 24, ISSN 2468 – 6816, 2022.
35. Zagzebski Linda, "Epistemic Authority and the Testimony of Others," in *Episteme*, 9 (3), DOI: 10.1017.111879, 217-232, 2012.