

**INQUIRY INTO THE DEFINING CONDITIONS OF KNOWLEDGE
CLAIM: AN EXERCISE FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF INTEGRATIVE
EPISTEMOLOGY¹**

By

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1. Introduction

The search for the proper characterization of the nature of knowledge has remained an endemic problem in the field of epistemology. This search for the constitutive elements of knowledge is a product of the attempt to negate the skeptic's denial of objective knowledge. In his dialogue, *Theatetus*, Plato defines knowledge as a justified true belief. This definition of knowledge is generally referred to in epistemology as "the traditional or standard account of knowledge" and has been at the centre of all epistemological works. However, in 1963 Edmund L. Gettier called the attention of the epistemological world to the inadequacy of the traditional account of knowledge through a set of thought experiments. The aim of Gettier's essay "Is Justified True Belief Knowledge?" is to demonstrate the insufficiency of the conditions of knowledge provided by the traditional account. This implies that Gettier's essay is not a rejection of the three conditions; rather it is a call for the search of a fourth condition. Consequently, all post Gettier epistemological works have been directed towards the search for the fourth condition of knowledge. Against this background, this paper seeks to examine the conditions under which knowledge claims can be duly regarded as proper knowledge. To achieve this aim, the paper attempts a clarification of the concept, 'knowledge'. It also unravels the inadequacy of the traditional conception of knowledge as 'justified true belief' on the basis of one of Gettier's thought experiments. Furthermore, the paper examines (with the aid of thought experiments); three notable attempts by Post-Gettier philosophers to supply the fourth condition of knowledge. And finally, the paper extrapolates on the basis of the inadequacies of the theories examined and the insights from integrativism, the idea of knowledge as

"integratively justified true belief"

2. What is Knowledge?

The above question seems to be asking for a "one sentence" definition. It assumes that what knowledge is can be given in the form of one-word answer. But obviously, it is not the case that we can give an answer to the question in a brief phrase. An attempt to derive a satisfactory explanation of the nature and meaning of knowledge is a very rigorous and difficult task to embark on. In fact, it is a task far more difficult than that encountered in finding an explanation for some physical phenomena. The more we try to ascertain a definition of knowledge that will satisfy all shades of interests, the more complicated it becomes. Like many concepts in philosophy, knowledge is so fundamental and general that it includes itself in its own scope (Pears, 2). In his book, *The Nature of Knowledge*, P.C Jones explains the peculiar problem that confronts concepts of this nature. According to him: "an explanation of knowledge must be in terms of something more fundamental than knowledge and that obviously is something unknown (21). What Jones seems to be saying here is that to define knowledge, certain fundamental concepts must be involved, and these concepts themselves are problematic and subjects of speculation.

The usage of the word "knowledge" has diverse content; that is, it is one of the elastic terms that can be stretched to mean anything we choose. For instance, we do not mean the same thing by the phrase "to know something". The meaning of this depends greatly on the perspective through which it is conceived. Let us consider some usage of the word "know".

i. Knowing how: This has to do with the ability to engage in a certain activity. Usually, it is a learned ability like "to know how to swim or drive a car, to know how to behave myself" (Ayer 8). It involves having the technical know-how to do many things that people do not. It also includes knowing how to do something without having learnt it. This is referred to as knowing by instinct or being programmed genetically to act in specific way. For instance, lambs know how to walk immediately after birth.

ii. Knowing by acquaintance: This is based on direct non-propositional awareness of something. It involves the perceptual features received by the senses during its contact with physical objects. For instance, knowing in the sense of being familiar with, a person or a place; of knowing something in the sense of having had experience of it... of knowing in the sense of being able to recognize or distinguish, as when we claim to know an honest man when we see one or to know butter from margarine. (Ayer, 8). Some philosophers have sometimes referred to this as "knowledge by acquaintance". Some are of the opinion that this

is simply acquaintance, not knowledge. Knowledge, they argue goes beyond mere sensual perception of physical objects. It entails having before one's mind some statements that are either true or false. Although, there could be no knowledge without acquaintance, but still acquaintance is not knowledge, it only provides the materials for knowledge.

iii. Knowing that: This is propositional knowledge which involves knowing that something is the case. That is, knowing that some situations or state of affairs actually occur or exist. You do not have knowledge until you are in a position to claim that something is the case. Knowledge is simply propositional; it involves some knowledge of truth. Simply put, it is the sense, or senses, in which to have knowledge is to know that something or another is the case. (Ayer, 8)

3. The Gettier Problem and the Traditional Account of Knowledge

The traditional account of knowledge otherwise known as the tripartite account is an attempt in response to the skeptical challenge on the possibility of knowledge. Because there are three parts to this definition it is called tripartite definition or the tripartite account (Dancy, 23). It was an account aimed at presenting a defense for the possibility of objective knowledge through the identification of the elements that constitute knowledge (Ojong & Ibrahim, 126). It holds that there are three main conditions of knowledge. These conditions were suggested in one of Plato's dialogues, Theatetus by defining knowledge as a justified true belief. This definition has been generally accepted as the standard account of knowledge for hundreds of years before Gettier. The central message of the traditional account of knowledge is that propositional knowledge has three necessary and sufficient conditions. That is, it can only be said that Mr. X knows a proposition P if and only if:

1. P is true
2. Mr. X believes
3. Mr. X is justified in believing that P is true.

In the above argument, the first two conditions mean that to know a proposition, we must believe it, and it also must be true. That is, knowledge requires true belief. Certainly, we cannot know a proposition unless we believe it, and we obviously cannot know it if it is not true. We cannot know that rectangles are round because rectangles are not round. We just can't know what is not so. And if we know that rectangles are not round, then we must believe that rectangles are not round.

The traditional account of knowledge holds that even though true belief is necessary for knowledge; it alone is grossly insufficient for knowledge. Propositional knowledge requires more than true belief because we obviously can have true belief and still not have knowledge. For instance, if Mr. X for no good reason believes that, right at this

moment, Mr. President and his wife are at Obudu Cattle Ranch. In addition, suppose Mr. X is right - they really are at the Ranch. Mr. X thus have a true belief. But does he then know that they (Mr. President & wife) are right in the Ranch? Not at all!

In the traditional account of knowledge, if Mr. X have no reason for believing that they are there, Mr. X can't know that they are. Mr. X's true belief about their presence would be no better than a lucky guess, and guesses can't be knowledge. Consequently, knowledge seems to require, not only that our beliefs be true, but that we have good reasons for or be justified in believing them to be true. Thus, according to the traditional account, knowledge is justified true belief.

Although, the above account of knowledge seems very plausible, Gettier's counter example weakens it. In 1963, Edmund L. Gettier in his influential essay "Is Justified True Belief Knowledge?" presents two simple thought experiments to suggest that there was a problem with the traditional account. Gettier's thought experiments seem to show that the traditional account was inadequate by proving that someone could have a justified true belief that was not knowledge, thus, showing that the three conditions mentioned earlier were not jointly sufficient for knowledge. Here, we shall consider one of Gettier's thought experiments called "Gettier's Job Seekers". According to Gettier:

Suppose that Smith and Jones have applied for a certain job. And suppose that Smith has strong evidence for the following conjunctive proposition:(d) Jones is the man who will get the job, and Jones has ten coins in his pocket. Smith's evidence for (d) might be that the President of the company assured him that Jones would in the end be selected, and that he, Smith, had counted the coins in Jones pocket ten minutes ago. Proposition (d) entails: (e) the man who will get the job has ten coins in his pocket. Let us suppose that Smith sees the entailment from (d) to (e), and accepts (e) on the grounds of (d), for which he has strong evidence. In this case, Smith is clearly justified in believing that (e) is true. (121).

Gettier brings his thought experiment to the crucial point (that crumbles the traditional account) when he implores us to suppose further that:

Unknown to Smith, he himself, not Jones, will get the job. And, also, unknown to Smith, he himself has ten coins in his pocket. Proposition (e) is then true, though

proposition (d), from which Smith inferred (e), is false. (121-122).

Gettier then draws the conclusion that;

In our examples, then, all of the following are true: (i)(e) is true, (ii) Smith believes that (e) is true, and (iii) Smith is justified in believing that (e) is true. But it is equally clear that Smith does not know that (e) is true; for (e) is true in virtue of the number of coins in Smith's pocket, while Smith does not know how many coins are in Smith's pocket, and bases his belief in (e) on a count of the coins in Jones's pocket, whom he falsely believes to be the man who will get the job (122-123).

In the traditional account, if someone has a justified true belief (as in the case of Mr. X concerning the where-about of Mr. President and his wife), then he should have knowledge. But in Gettier's thought experiment above, Smith has a justified true belief yet clearly does not have knowledge. This is simply because his knowledge of (e) seems to be a mere coincidence. In other words, Smith arrives at a true proposition on the basis of facts that are not relevant to the truth of the proposition. He reaches the truth, but his route is somehow illegitimate (Schick & Vaughn, 430).

It is important to point out at this juncture that, although Gettier was the first philosopher to diagnose the inadequacy of the traditional account of knowledge, there were certain other cases which had puzzled earlier philosophers and could also have been used to show that the traditional definition requires modification (Chisholm 93). These cases are similar in principle with those of Gettier and one of such cases was presented by Bertrand Russell in 1948 as follows:

There is the man who looks at a clock which is going, though he thinks it is, and who happens to look at it the moment when it is right; this man acquires a true belief as to the time of day, but cannot be said to have knowledge. (155)

In the above scenario, if we assume, in this case, that the true propositions in question are also justified, then this case is counter to the traditional definition of knowledge.

The lesson Gettier and Russell want us to derive from these thought experiments is that knowledge claim cannot be based on the ground of coincidence or guess work and that what we know, how we know it and why we think we

know it must never be mistaken. Ozumba outlines the lessons in Gettier and other similar analysis of the traditional account of knowledge as follows:

1. We can be mistaken about what we think we know
2. The most reliable source of information can deceive us
3. We may end up true in what we believe but not truly and procedurally in order, in our claim to have that knowledge.
4. Our knowledge or grounds for knowledge may be based on mere coincidence.
5. Our claim to knowledge must be clear, certain and based on the proper preconditions. (55)

4. The Search for the Fourth Condition of Knowledge

As we have seen from the foregoing discussion, the traditional account of knowledge as justified-true-belief was called to question by Gettier's diagnosis. And with this diagnosis of the defect in the tripartite analysis of knowledge, Gettier opened a new chapter in the history of epistemology. This defect noted by Gettier has since become known, appropriately as, "the Gettier problem". It is also called, "the problem of the fourth condition, "since it leads one to ask, "Is there some suitable fourth condition which may be added to the three that are set forth in the traditional definition of knowledge?" (Chisholm, 91).

In response to Gettier's call for the fourth condition to supplement the three elements initially suggested by the traditional account, most philosophers have proposed various theories about the correct answer to the question "what is knowledge?" Here, we shall review three of the more noteworthy theories and assess (with the aid of thought experiments) whether any offers a better answer to the question.

The Defeasibility Theory

What exactly is the problem that the Gettier's diagnosis brings to focus? One sure response to this question is this: someone has a justified-true-belief, but then lurking in the background is another piece of evidence that the person doesn't possess; that under-cuts the justification for that belief (and prevents knowledge) (Schick & Vaughn, 433). For instance, in our case of Mr. X knowing the where-about of Mr. President and wife, we might say that Mr. X has a justified true belief that Mr. President and wife are presently at the ranch, but another piece of evidence – the true proposition that the President and wife left the Ranch unannounced due to security reasons last night – undermines his justification (and disallows his knowledge). In other words, the problem in such cases is that Mr. X's justification is defeated by evidence that he does not possess. That is, Mr. X's justification is defeasible (capable of

being made void).

In effect, if the above diagnosis is correct, it means that the solution to the Gettier problem is to formulate a new account of knowledge that accommodates this notion of defeasibility. In this new account, we would include the traditional three conditions and add a fourth in respect of defeasibility. In this sense, we would say that knowledge requires justified true belief-but also that any future discovery of additional evidence should not defeat the knowledge justification. Thus, to have knowledge, our justification must be indefeasible. With this conclusion, it seems we have arrived at the solution to the Gettier problem, and this is the defeasibility theory: The doctrine that knowledge is undefeated justified true belief. (Schick & Vaughn, 433). So, according to the defeasibility theory, knowledge has four necessary and sufficient conditions. It holds that X knows a proposition P if and only if:

1. P is true
2. X believes that P is true
3. X is justified in believing that P is true
4. The justification for believing that P is true is not capable of being defeated by future evidence.

On its face value, the defeasibility theory appears to have sealed the search for the fourth condition of knowledge. But, several thought experiments have pointed out the inadequacy therein. One of such thought experiments is presented by Lehrer and Paxson as follows:

Suppose I see a man walk into the library and remove a book from the library by concealing it beneath his coat. Since I am sure the man is Tom Grabit, whom I have often seen before when he attended my classes, I report that I know that Tom Grabit has removed the book. However, suppose further that Mrs. Grabit, the mother of Tom, has averred that on the day in question Tom was not in the library, indeed, was thousands of miles away, and that Tom's identical twin brother, John Grabit was in the library. Imagine, moreover, that I am entirely ignorant of the fact that Mrs. Grabit has said these things. The statement that she has said these things would defeat any justification I have for believing that Tom Grabit removed the book. Thus, I could not be said to (know) that Tom Grabit removed the book. The preceding might be acceptable until we finish the story by adding that Mrs. Grabit is a compulsive and pathological liar, that John Grabit is a fiction of her demented mind, and that Tom Grabit took

the book as I believed. Once this is added, it should be apparent that I did know that Tom Grabit removed the book. (225-237).

From the above thought experiment, it is deducible that the claim of the defeasibility theory is unfounded. The observer in the thought experiment could not be said to have known that Tom Grabit stole the book. The reason is that there is one piece of evidence (Mrs. Grabit's statement) that had the observer known about it would have destroyed his original justification. But, in the light of the additional information that Mrs. Grabit is a demented liar, it becomes obvious that the observer does know that Tom Grabit stole the book. Here, then, is an instance of defeated justified true belief that counts as knowledge.

The Causal Theory

This theory holds that knowledge is suitably caused true belief. The expression "suitably caused" simply means produced by the state of affairs that makes the belief true. The argument here is that you know there is a book before you because the book itself, through your perception of it, causes you to believe that there is a book before you. An invigilator knows that a student is cheating in the exams because the act causes her to behave in an unusual way, and her behaviour causes the invigilator to believe that the student is cheating. In the case of Gettier's job seekers thought experiment, the true belief is " (e) the man who will get the job has ten coins in his pocket". What makes this belief true is the fact that Smith will get the job and he has ten coins in his pocket. But what caused Smith to believe (e) is that he has strong evidence for Jones' getting the job and having ten coins in his pocket. There seems to be no proper connection between Smith's true belief and the state of affairs that made the belief true. What is missing here, according to the causal theory, is some kind of link between belief and truth. Thus, a causal link is the condition we need to add to belief and truth. It is therefore argued that for X to know P, P should cause X's belief that P.

It is important to note at this juncture that the causal theory is a clear departure from the traditional account because the justification condition is being replaced here with a causal requirement. Knowing something according to the causal theory is not a matter of internal or subjective form of justification. It is rather a case of external objects causing belief in us. This dependence on external factors in the process of knowing is why the causal theory is sometimes referred to as an externalist account to knowledge. This stands against the traditional

account which is simply an internalist account because what changes true belief into knowledge here depends on something that is part of the knower's mental composition. But is 'suitably caused true belief' really sufficient for knowledge? That is, are there no situations in which suitably caused true belief does not amount to knowledge? To answer this question, we need to consider a thought experiment called Goldman's Fake Barns. In his paper, "Discrimination and Perception" Goldman narrates a story thus:

Henry is driving in the countryside with his son. For the boy's edification Henry identifies various objects on the landscape as they come into view. "That's a cow," says Henry. "That's a tractor," "That's a silo," "That's a barn," etc. Henry has no doubt about the identity of these objects; in particular, he has no doubt that the last-mentioned object is a barn, which indeed it is. Each of the identified objects has features characteristic of its type. Moreover, each object is fully in view, Henry has excellent eyesight, and he has enough time to look at them reasonably carefully, since there is little traffic. (357).

In order to call attention to the inherent inadequacy in any causal explanation of our knowledge, Goldman writes further that;

Given this information, would we say that Henry knows that the object is a barn? Most of us would have little hesitation in saying this. Contrast our inclination here with the inclination we would have if we were given some additional information. Suppose that, unknown to Henry, the district he has just entered is full of papier-mâché facsimiles of barns. These facsimiles look from the road exactly like barns, but are really just facades, without back walls or interiors, quite incapable of being used as barns. Having just entered the district, Henry has not encountered any facsimiles; the object he sees is a genuine barn. But if the object on that site were a facsimile, Henry would mistake it for a barn. Given this

new information, we would be strongly inclined to withdraw the claim that Henry knows the object is a barn. Henry's belief that the object is a barn is caused by the presence of the barn; indeed, the causal process is a perceptual one. Nonetheless, we are not prepared to say, in the second version that Henry knows. (358-360).

From Goldman's Fake Barns, it becomes clear that a suitably caused true belief is not a guaranteed stand point to claim knowledge. As in the case of Henry, he seems to have a suitably caused belief but he obviously does not have knowledge.

The Reliability Theory

The reliability theory holds that knowledge is reliably produced true belief. This is another case of an externalist account of knowledge. Like the causal theory, what turns true belief into knowledge is the reliability of the process of producing belief. And since the process is not internal, no internal factor like the justification condition pointed out in the traditional account is required. Knowing according to this theory is a matter of registering truth, like the thermometer registering the temperature of a room (Schick & Vaughn, 437-438). In relating the reliability theory to Gettier's case of job seekers, a reliabilist could say that Smith arrived at the true belief (that the man who will get the job has ten coins in his pocket) by unreliable means. The process was unreliable because it yielded true belief by pure accident. It was simply a case of luck that Smith himself happened to have ten coins in his pocket. If not for this accident, Smith belief would have been false. Thus, according to the reliabilist theory, Smith does not know, and for him to know, the process of knowing must be reliable. But is reliably produced belief knowledge? To answer this question Keith Lehrer presents a thought experiment as follows:

Suppose a person, whom we shall name Mr. Truetemp, undergoes brain surgery by an experimental surgeon who invents a small device capable of generating thoughts. The device, call it a tempucomp, is implanted in Truetemp's head so that the very tip of the device, no longer than the head of a pin, sits unnoticed on his scalp and acts as a sensor to

transmit information about the temperature of the computational system in his brain. This device, in turn, sends a message to his brain causing him to think of the temperature recorded by the external sensor. Assume that the tempucomp is very reliable, and so his thoughts are correct temperature thoughts. All told, this is a reliable belief-forming process. Now imagine, finally, that he has no idea that the tempucomp has been inserted in his brain, is only slightly puzzled about why he thinks so obsessively about temperature, but never checks a thermometer to determine whether these thoughts about the temperature are correct. He accepts them unreflectively, another effect of the tempucomp. Thus, he thinks and accepts that the temperature is 104 degrees. Does he know that it is? Surely not, he has no idea whether he or his thoughts about the temperature are reliable. What he accepts, that the temperature is 104 degrees, is correct, but he does not know that his thought is correct. (163-164).

From the above thought experiment, it is difficult to see how Truetemp can be said to know that the temperature is 104 degrees if he has no idea that his reliable belief-forming process even exists. He is in possession of correct information, but he has no idea if that information is correct. In response to this, the reliabilist would say having evidence regarding whether the information is correct is irrelevant. But this position looks absurd because knowing seems to require that we have some adequate indication that the information is correct. Without such indication, our claim becomes a mere coincidence or a lucky guess. But as we have pointed out earlier, a lucky guess cannot be knowledge.

5. A Conception of Knowledge from the Perspective of Integrativism

The attempt here is to work out a definition of knowledge that will serve as a comprehensive standard at achieving a qualitative and quantitative understanding of our knowledge claim. This, we hope, will enrich our understanding of the world to the benefit of humanity. It is important to point out at this juncture that, this current attempt towards a definition of knowledge is situated within the philosophy of integrative

humanism. That is, it is an epistemic exercise from the perspective of integrativism.

Integrative Humanism is a new philosophical current of thought which aims at presenting an integrative perspective in the understanding of man and his environment. This new philosophical current of thought is the brain child of Professor Godfrey O. Ozumba. In his book "Philosophy and Method of Integrative Humanism" (2010), Ozumba presents a detailed methodological and systematic outline of integrative reflection with a universal appeal. In this book, he outlined the tenets, methodology and applicability of integrativism. By integrativism, we mean "harnessing, processing through engrafting of the different components of knowledge" in order to achieve a clear insight into our knowledge claims (Philosophy and Method... 41). In this sense, philosophers are seen as engineers of ideas. Integrativism therefore, is a philosophical process that enhances co-operative efforts in arriving at a clear understanding of any discourse for the benefit of man. Thus, an integrativist is a bridge-builder, an inclusivist and ultimately a mediator. In line with this description, Ozumba delineates the mediatory role of integrative humanism as follows:

Our method is... concerned with resolving conflict, enlarging the frontiers of knowledge, for comparative and integrative studies. It will also help us in fathoming the reason for disagreements and divergencies of opinions, seeking of missing links and in identifying meeting points of ideas and facts (Philosophy and Method... 37).

The above articulates the central focus of integrativism as a system that provides the theoretical base and framework for the position of this paper. Suffice it to say, however, that Ozumba, with the articulation of integrativism as a system of doing philosophy, has provided a solid platform for the breakthrough of new and insightful ideas within and outside philosophical circles. An immediate offshoot of this is the articulation of Integrative Epistemology (IE) by Okeke Jonathan in his article "Current Trends in Epistemology". We now briefly consider the subject matter of integrative epistemology.

6. The Message of Integrative Epistemology

In his article "Current Trends in Epistemology" Okeke traces the

epistemological controversy over the definition of knowledge from the traditional “justified true belief” (JTB) account of knowledge, to its demolition by Gettier's counter examples to contemporary efforts towards repairing the JTB account of knowledge. On the basis of this, he articulates some current trends in epistemology to include: the Internalist and Externalist Divide, Mentalism, Genetic Epistemology, Virtue Epistemology, Evolutionary Epistemology and Integrative Epistemology the latter being the most current. In as much as our concern in this paper is to present a definition of knowledge within the ambience of integrativism, it is excusable to limit our discussion here to integrative epistemology.

Integrative Epistemology (IE) is an epistemic theory which emphasizes the impossibility of the creation of a single theory that satisfies all shades of epistemic interests and the necessity to work out a compromise among competing theories as they all have meaningful insights into the subject-matter. According to Okeke:

...philosophers of varied orientations dutifully reject one another's theories in search of a consensus theory that would answer all the epistemic questions. Integrative epistemology recognizes the impossibility of such a universal theory (Living Issues... 40).

From the above, a critic may point out that if Integrative Epistemology recognizes the impossibility of a universal theory, and claims to provide a framework for compromise between competing theories, then, it amounts to a self contradiction. The responses to this criticism will be presented in the course of our discussion in this paper. Okeke in his article went further to articulate the thesis of Integrative Epistemology as follows:

(i) that sources of knowledge are multilayered and so are the theories of their justification; (ii) that there are three types of knowledge; knowledge about the world, about the self and about the other; (iii) that these three types of knowledge represent what we call epistemic parallelism; (iv) that epistemically parallel theories cannot have similar justifications; (v) that epistemological theories are to be restricted in application to the type of knowledge they seek; (vi) that all viable theories are those that interpret accurately the framework of a given type of

knowledge and finally, (vii) that all viable theories form a holism and serve the goal of appropriately describing reality, while individually, variously describing a given sphere of reality (40).

From the above lengthy quotation, it is deducible that knowledge is a boundless entity with individual(s) assessing it from their subjective position of advantage. As such, our justification of knowledge is dependent on our angle of accessibility. This, therefore, is a pointer to the fact that each theory is viable within its position of advantage and limited within its position of disadvantage. Consequently, no theory is to be rejected in it's entirety for not fully accounting for the boundlessness of knowledge as it contains an important element which others do not have. So, within the integrative spirit, these various theories can be brought together by:

drawing useful rational, reasonable, believable, consistent, coherent philosophical insights from all areas that will enhance the knowledge of our world and man as a continuing eternal entity. (Philosophy and Method... 44).

From the above, it is evident that integrative epistemology sees various theories as a continuum of understanding reality. That is, each theory provides the missing link between one aspect of reality to the other in the attempt to gain a synoptic picture of reality. In this sense, knowledge becomes a collective or integrative effort to understand ourselves in relation to our world. In line with this reasoning, the IJTB account of knowledge as presented in this paper recognizes and encourages individual ingenuity and collective necessity in any epistemic process; as the unit(s) strengthens the whole while the whole serves as a protective belt to the unit(s). This inter-dependence of ideas underscores an integrative necessity in the process of knowledge acquisition. The integrative necessity among theories is pointed out by Okeke when he observes that:

All viable theories form a holism and serve the goal of appropriately describing reality, while individually, variously describing a given sphere of reality. This means therefore that no viable theory is to be rejected for not

fully accounting for all sheds of reality (40).

The above re-echoes Lakatos' idea of proliferation of theories in science. By this view, according to Ojong, Lakatos does not imply the rejection of theories. Rather, his method of science allows for the incubation of ailing theories in the hope that the intent be resuscitated by creative content increase. (72-73). It is Lakatos' view that:

An assessment of the relative merits of competing theories should be delayed until proponents of the theories have had time to explore modifications in their theories which might make them better able to cope with anomalies (Newton-Smith, 79).

From this standpoint Lakatos concludes that:

The history of science has been and should be a history of competing research programmes (or, if you wish, paradigms) but it has not been and must not become a succession of periods of normal science: the sooner competition starts, the better for progress. (Lakatos and Musgrave, 155).

In line with this Lakatosian model, integrative Humanism, integrative Epistemology and the IJTB account of knowledge allow the proliferation of theories which constitutes multi-dimensional approach in our understanding of reality. In this way, an integrative effort will be sustained in striving towards the growth and advancement of humanity. Hence, the more theories there are, the more we are able to unravel the endless secrets of reality.

It is important to point out at this juncture that Ozumba's Integrative Humanism or Integrativism provides the platform for Okeke's articulation of Integrative Epistemology while the two (integrative humanism and integrative epistemology) jointly provide the theoretical framework for the present epistemic exercise. That is, the conception of knowledge as an integratively justified true belief.

7. Knowledge as Integratively Justified True Belief (IJTB)

Having gone through some of the major attempts to fortify the

standard account of knowledge (JTB) and the consequent unsatisfactory nature of these attempts, it becomes imperative for this paper to articulate a new horizon for understanding the complex nature of knowledge. It is important to stress the point that all the attempts considered in this paper and those that were not mentioned have significant contributions to our understanding of knowledge. Hence, they have provided the necessary impetus and raw materials needed to carry out this present attempt. That is, they serve as the springboard of our position. However, these attempts are limited in scope, in that, knowledge, within their understanding is limited to an aspect of the multi-facetedness of its characterization. These accounts close the possibility of having alternative and complementary insights into the corpus of knowledge. Consequently, they create tensions, exclusiveness and conflicts in the epistemic fora. This is occasioned by the one-sidedness inherent in their approach.

Contrary to these exclusive accounts of knowledge, the present attempt seeks to build bridges among the various accounts of knowledge on the proper characterization of knowledge. Hence, knowledge is an “integratively justified true belief”. This definition of knowledge requires that whenever a knowledge claim is made, we are expected to examine such claim by criss-crossing the insights provided by epistemic theories available and necessary to the discourse at hand. This becomes necessary in as much as the sources of knowledge are multi-layered, interwoven and intertwined. That is to say, any knowledge claim should be subjected to the rigorous test of available epistemic theories for inputs. For instance, in our earlier example of Mr. X's claim to know the where-about of Mr. President and wife, to ascertain the epistemic status of this claim (in line with our conception of knowledge as an “integratively justified true belief”). We are required to employ the useful insights of the available theories that could shed more light on the claim. Firstly, from the perspective of the defeasibility criterion we ask; Are there no other pieces of information that Mr. X does not possess which may under-cut his justification? Secondly, from the causal theory criterion, we ask; is Mr. X's claim suitably caused? Thirdly, from the reliability theory criterion we ask; is Mr. X's claim reliably derived? And so on. If at the end of this criss-crossing epistemic exercise, we are able to provide an outcome that satisfies the sceptical scrutiny of the available theories as at that time, then, knowledge has been integratively justified. As such, knowledge is an integratively justified true belief. By this process, “knowledge” and “truth” are seen as progressive and momentary, they are temporal and eternal. It means therefore that through our definition “we are making efforts to scoop all many manifestations of truth and

knowledge in their “fecundities and potentialities” (Philosophy and Method... 44).

One of the richness of our present conception of knowledge is the fact that, it provides room for the relevance of all opinions in the articulation of what can be referred to as knowledge. Thus, knowledge becomes a collective product as each theory has in one way or the other something to contribute to the fruitification of knowledge. It is not a one-sided justification, rather, it is a comprehensive, complementary and all-encompassing justificatory criterion of knowledge. Furthermore, our conception of knowledge gives room for the inclusion of further insights that may be generated in the future, within the scheme of epistemic justification. To this effect, Ozumba writes that;

Our method permits a hundred flowers to bloom but it is concerned with the application of integrativism in seeking out the best philosophical meaning for a position, or reconciliation for a seeming position... it is philosophy without dogmas, no sacred cows and no underdogs... it is also about versatility which provides the intellectual base for possible criss-crossing of ideas to get the desired result. (Philosophy and Method... 50).

It is the position of this paper therefore, that knowledge is an ever flowing river which requires constant and continuous cognitive attempt. Knowledge is useful only when applicable in solving puzzles of life, and since these puzzles are unending, our attempt to solve them must necessarily be continuous if we are not to lose touch with life itself. Therefore, the continuous search for knowledge is for us (integrativists) a virtue which must be sustained and maintained by continuous articulation of theories for the sake of humanity. Ozumba corroborates this submission when he writes that

We are to continue the proliferation of theories which constitutes multi-dimensional approach to issues of knowledge; the integrativist method is to be applied in effective, richer, truer, more comprehensive and more coherent epistemic horizon without necessarily

laying claim to absolute but humanistic truth as part of the repertoire of absolute truth (Philosophy and Method...50).

From the above, it is deducible that Ozumba, here, delineates the proper applicability of integrativism. By so doing, he envisages the utilization of this method of reflection in other spheres of human endeavour. In line with this thinking, a follow-up to this paper will appear on the next edition of this journal entitled “Intellectual Arrogance and Integrative Epistemology: A case for symbiotic- Specialism as a Philosophy of Relation in Industrial and Academic Circles”.

8. Conclusion

It is obvious from the foregoing that the search for the proper characterization of the nature of knowledge is not an easy nut to crack. It is a quest that has generated various opinions and counter-opinions within the epistemological parlance to the extent that no suggestion is free from misgivings. From its inception in the Platonic attempt, to Gettier's turning point and to the contemporary times, the epistemological world has been thrown into speculation as to what properly constitutes our claim to knowledge. As we have seen in this paper, the problem is reasonably resolved as our conception of knowledge provides an all-encompassing approach in our continuous search for knowledge. As such, knowledge as an “integratively justified true belief” is a superior conception in that it recognizes the relevance of all epistemic stakeholders in our claim to knowledge. Finally, in response to the criticism that integrative epistemology runs into a contradiction. This paper holds that the claim of integrative epistemology does not generate any self-reference denial because it only creates room for a liberal approach in treating various theories on a specific subject matter. By implication therefore, the integratively justified true belief account of knowledge as presented in this paper is not a single theory of justification as the JTB, defeasibility, causal criterion or reliability criterion. Rather, it is a collection – a set whose members make up the problem solving theories in their togetherness. Therefore, the IJTB is more like a binding wire to group of theories than a lone theory.

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