

## BETWEEN IFÁ'S COMPLEMENTARY LOGIC AND JAINA PERSPECTIVAL PLURALISM

<https://dx.doi.org/10.4314/ezumezu.v1i1.4>

**Submission: March 31, 2024**      **Accepted: May 29, 2024**

Emmanuel OFUASIA, csp  
Department of Philosophy,  
National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN), Nigeria.

&

Decoloniality Research Group,  
University of Pretoria, South Africa

Email: [efuasia@noun.edu.ng](mailto:efuasia@noun.edu.ng)

ORCID No: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-2028-6005>

### Abstract

In spite of the gap in emergence, geography and independence in the practices of the religious aspects of each of Ifá and Jainism, there are some unique philosophical components in the principles guiding the *modus operandi* of these two traditions that command intellectual attention. This investigation is pertinent following the recent need to emphasise aspects of humanity that exhibit common grounds and mutual understanding that inform how African and Eastern philosophies have contributed to world intellectual heritage. In this study, attention is given to the logic inherent in the principles of “binary complementarity” and “perspectival pluralism” in Ifá and Jainism respectively. Through the methods of hermeneutical and comparative analyses, this research argues that these unrelated traditions exhibit some similarities concerning how they are able to reconcile seemingly opposed realities without contradiction, thereby birthing a basis for complementary reflection with a pluralistic attitude. What this points out, in the end, is that rationality is indeed universal and not peculiar to a group.

**Keywords:** African Philosophy of Religion, Eastern Philosophy of Religion, logic, complementarity, Ifá, Intercultural Philosophy, Jainism

## Introduction

In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, humanity has reached an era in history where, for the sake of survival and mutual cohesion, it is now imperative to explore doctrines or ideas that emphasise their common grounds instead of those that indicate divergence. And religion, being of the variables that makes it nearly impossible to be able to actualise mutual cohesion through intolerance and fundamentalism, has also served as a basis upon which what unites humanity through times and ages may be found and be applied for its social relevance (HICK 2010). This has fostered a deluge of interest in the study of religious ideas that are calculated to indicate what can serve as a basis for tolerance and harmony that may end the conflicts and violence that have almost become the norm, especially in places like the Global South. This is perhaps one of the reasons there has been intellectual interchange between some scholars working within the African and Eastern traditions of religion. In other words, scholarly efforts in intercultural and comparative studies in less-taught philosophies of religion have become replete in recent times. On this note, the works of Jiechen Hu (2021), Naomi Thurston (2021), Pao-Shen Ho (2021), Rouyan Gu (2021), as well as Luis Cordeiro-Rodrigues and Jonathan Chimakonam (2021) are a few testaments to the new dialogue that is beginning to garner attention between African and Eastern philosophies of religion. The essence of this research is to *both* call attention to this gap for more participation and continue this new dialogue. I hope to attain these *two* objectives using the themes of binary complementarity and perspectival pluralism as they present themselves independently in Ifá and Jainism, respectively. An important philosophic output is that the tensions and concerns arising out of attempting to reconcile seemingly opposed variables, which is a perennial problem in mainstream Western philosophy, commands no place in Ifá and Jainism.

To achieve my goal, this research begins with a section on binary complementarity in Ifá. In this section, I distinguish Ifá from Ọ̀rúnmilà to deduce the philosophic components in the practices of Ifá as it pertains to binary complementarity. Relevant verses from the Ifá literary corpus are employed. As a way of illustrating how the doctrine of complementarity is not limited to practices in Ifá, the later parts of this section provide a brief account of how some contemporary African philosophers such as Innocent Asouzu (2007),

Chidozie Okoro (2011) and Sophie Oluwole (2015) have exposed this as the distinctive character of the traditional African pattern for thought, theory and practice. In the second section, I turn to the notion of perspectival pluralism as endorsed by Jainism. The section provides a brief account of the origins of Jainism in India with some illustrations concerning the epistemic ideas that are underpinned by its belief system. Some relevant Sanskrit texts that will assist with understanding Jaina perspectival pluralism are disclosed. In the third part, an attempt is made to disclose some of the places of semblances and radical departures in the religious and philosophic components of Ifá and Jainism as it pertains to the two principles of binary complementarity and perspectival pluralism. The last section concludes this intercultural exercise.

### **Complementary and Trivalent Logic in Ifá**

Before disclosing the idea of binary complementarity and its place in contemporary African philosophical scholarship, it is important to first provide some thoughts on the background and emergence of Ifá. Usually, the best way to begin a discourse in Ifá is to disassociate it from Ọ́rúnmìlà. This is pertinent, as correctly announced by Wande Abimbola (1976, 3), “the Yoruba God of wisdom is mostly called by either of the two names, Ifá and Ọ́rúnmìlà, both of which are the centre of controversy.” Abimbola also goes on to relay that it is crucial to overcome the misleading outlook that whereas Ọ́rúnmìlà refers to the deity who gave the divination system to humanity, Ifá refers mainly to this divination system that Ọ́rúnmìlà developed.

According to Abimbola, various scholars are guilty of this charge. To make his point lucid, he cites Emmanuel M. Lijadu (1923, 1), who calls Ifá “[t]he word of divination which issues from the mouth of Ọ́rúnmìlà.” Elsewhere, Daniel Epega (1931) and J.D. Clarke (1939) have also discussed that Ifá refers to the wisdom received from Ọ́rúnmìlà. In his own assessment, Abimbola gives a more comprehensive analysis by insisting that Ifá and Ọ́rúnmìlà both refer to the deity, whereas the Ifá is also used for the system of divination. Abimbola is however not the only scholar who maintains this perspective. William Bascom (1939, 250) too harps, “The word Ifá is used to mean both the system of divination and the deity who controls it; and this deity is known as Ọ́rúnmìlà.”

Insightful as the foregoing is, it is pertinent to indicate that “[i]n contemporary times, the word also encompasses the documented texts that contain the chapters which had hitherto been handed from one generation to the other via oral tradition” (OFUASIA n.d.n. 2021, 85). Until recently, this used to be a herculean task and open to only a privileged few as Abimbola (1976, 19-20) correctly notes that “nobody would be respected as a good Ifá priest unless he has learnt by heart at least sixteen *esè* in each of the two hundred and fifty-six *odù*.” Of the two hundred and fifty-six *odù*, it needs to be stated that there are sixteen major *Odù Ifá*, when the remaining two hundred and forty correspond to the minor *Odù Ifá*, popularly referred to as *Ọmọ Odù* (OFUASIA n.d.n. 2021). It is also important to state that each *Odù* has 16 verses (that is *esè*). In addition, each *esè* is portrayed as poetry intermittent with prose (OLUWOLE 1996, 3).

From the beginning of intellectual foray into the meaning and nature of Ifá, notable scholars such as Emmanuel M. Lijadu (1923), Daniel Epega (1931), William Bascom (1939), Wande Abimbola (1976), Ola Longe (1998), Omotade Adegbindin (2014), Sophie Oluwole (2015) and more recently Emmanuel Ofuasia (2019), have shown various means through which the ethnological and social anthropological understanding of Ifá (which used to be dominant) have evolved to capture the philosophical, computational and mathematical components in the corpus. Specifically, Ola Longe (1998) has argued for this mathematical and computational aspect. Maulana Karenga (1999), Sophie Oluwole (1996; 2014), Omotade Adegbindin (2014), and Emmanuel Ofuasia (2018; 2019; 2021) have unearthed the philosophic components in the system. Even more recently, Babahide Dasaolu n.d.n.. (2023) have established the Afro-inspired three-valued logic that undergirds Ifá divination. It is against the continued exploration of the philosophic components of Ifá that the present inquiry focuses on the place of binary complementarity in the thought system. What then is the principal character of binary complementarity and how does it express itself in the verses of the Ifá literary corpus? This is the core question that I now turn to for the remainder of this section.

The idea of binary complementarity is an outlook in the traditional African thought system, which seeks to provide a basis for seemingly opposed variables. This is because of the realisation

by these ancient Africans that most of the things encountered in life come not only as binaries but as opposites. Models of such binaries are matter/mind, light/darkness, good/bad, joy/sorrow, male/female, short/long etc. It is for this reason that John Dewey (1963, 17) insists:

Mankind likes to think of extreme opposites. It is given to formulating beliefs in terms of Either-Ors, between which it recognises no intermediate possibilities. When forced to recognise that the extremes cannot be acted upon, it is still inclined to hold that that are all right in theory but that when it comes to practical matters circumstances compel us to compromise.

In the Ifá, there are passages that indicate the need of making or providing an avenue for complementing these extremes rather than seeing them as contradictions. It is also on this basis that the idea of harmony in the Ifá literary corpus is based (OFUASIA & IBIYEMI 2024). Specifically, in one of the popular but major chapters of the Ifá literary corpus, Odù Òyèkú Méjì, an affair which rendered the resolution of two extreme positions for complementation is evident:

*A child is not tall enough to stretch his hand to reach the high shelf  
An adult's hand cannot enter the opening of a gourd  
The work an adult begs a child to do  
Let him not refuse to do.  
We all have to work to do for each other's good  
Ifá divination was performed for Òrúnmilà  
About whom his devotee made a complaint to Olódùmarè  
Olódùmarè then sent for Òrúnmilà  
To explain the reason why he did not support his devotee  
When Òrúnmilà got to the presence of Olódùmarè  
He explained that he had done all in his power for his devotee  
But that the destiny chosen by the devotee made his efforts fruitless  
It was then that the matter became quite clear to Olódùmarè  
And He was happy*

*That He did not pronounce his judgment on the evidence of only one of the two parties.*<sup>1</sup>

What the foregoing verse implies is the need to be cautious in epistemic judgments by looking at multiple perspectives beyond one before taking a final verdict. There is another important chapter in the Ifá literary corpus, Odù Òsá-Ogúnda where the emphasis on harmony and complementation may also be noticed:

*...All goodness became a grouping together in harmony  
The grouping together of strands of hair covered the head  
The grouping together of hairs on the chin became an object of attention  
The grouping together of trees became a forest  
The grouping together of the eruwa grasses became a savannah  
The grouping together of beehives holds up in the roof of the house  
And the grouping together of ants led to the covering of the earth  
...It is as a grouping together that we encounter the grassland  
It is as swarms that the locusts consume the farm  
It is in several colonies that we find the termites in their mounds  
...indeed all goodness took the form of a gathering together in harmony  
It is as swarms that the locusts consume the farm  
It is in several colonies that we find the termites in their mounds  
...indeed all goodness took the form of a gathering together in harmony<sup>2</sup>*

An exposition of the idea of harmony and complementation in the Ifá literary corpus has served as a basis upon which Oluwole bases her idea of complementary dualism as against oppositional dualism. Oluwole opines that whereas the former suits the traditional African thought system, the latter applies to the Western tradition with the logic of Aristotle informing method and praxis.

---

<sup>1</sup>This *esè Ifá* was recited to me by the Ifá priest, Semiu Akinbode Shokunbi during our interactive session at Oko-Oba, Agege, Lagos on August 13, 2023

<sup>2</sup>This *esè Ifá* was recited to me by the Ifá priest, Semiu Akinbode Shokunbi during our interactive session at Oko-Oba, Agege Lagos on August 13, 2023

The setback of Western philosophy, for Oluwole is the insistence that one aspect of reality is more fundamental or real than the other. Perhaps this is one of the telling reasons why Mohammend Akomolafe (2022) took seriously the exertion of comprehending the nature of complementary dualism in Oluwole vis-à-vis Innocent Asouzu. Oluwole, on her part, seems convinced that the concept of pitching one of the binary *against* the other is one of the telling reasons why such an outlook is inadequate for understanding African thought systems. Perhaps this is why it has been suggested that oppositional dualism “has its roots in Greek philosophy from which Western anthropology and sociology derive their conceptual stimuli” (ONWUEJEOGWU 1997, 74-75). It is this strand of dualism that has gained prominence in the mainstream tradition of philosophy. This kind of dualism is what had been termed as ‘Oppositional Dualism’ (OLUWOLE 2015, 132). The influence of this framework becomes ever stronger especially when gleaned from the orient of the law of excluded middle. It wields influence in the mainstream Western tradition where reflection in extreme opposites is dominant.

It seems to be the norm in mainstream Western-styled orientation to thinking in binaries as oppositional. Such an outlook has been endorsed by the law of excluded middle, which states that “[o]f two contradictory judgments, one is true, the other is false, and a middle value does not exist” (ALOZIE 2004, 58-59). In a related manner, Dismas Masolo (1994, 249) quips; “...A and -A cannot be both true of the same thing, at the same time, and under the same situation.” When applied to the nature of reality, this principle indicates it is not possible for both matter and idea to simultaneously dictate the basic explanation of reality (Oluwole 2015).

For Oluwole, there is another strand of dualism that upholds the notion that mind and matter are interdependent but not independent,. This, she christens ‘Binary Complementarity’ or ‘Complementary Dualism’ (see OLUWOLE 2015, 133). Another African scholar whose idea had come before Oluwole’s is that of Chidozie Okoro (2011, 125), who explains that “the African metaphysical system is integrative on the ground that its dualistic nature allows for a plurality of views...Traditional Africans also conceived phenomenon in a cosmological double of “spirit force” and a “material essence.” The consequence is that the seemingly

divergent aspects of reality, deep within, are actually interdependent and in tandem, contrary to the dominant outlook in the Western tradition that is both dialectical and oppositional. Oluwole argues that such does not surface in Yoruba conception of reality where the principle of Binary Complementarity is ubiquitous. Relying heavily on the reflections of Òrúnmìlà as laid out in the Ifá literary corpus, Oluwole remains convinced that all aspects of reality are connected and complement one another. She makes her point more clear when she reflects:

The intellectual snag is that it is possible to think of a ‘Head’ and a ‘Tail’ separately. It is also possible to cut a head from a tail just as one can talk of a hill without anything about the adjacent valley. It is also conceivable that a particular person may experience only “Ups” and no “Downs” through life. The argument however, is that these are not how things are in real life. (OLUWOLE 2015, 166)

It is through Ezumezu logic developed by Jonathan Chimakonam (2019) that one is able to appreciate the complementary character of the modus operandi of attaining truth-values in Ifá. Ezumezu is an Afro-inspired system of logic which thrives on “the principle of nmekeo or relationship and is grounded in a truth-glut-compliant system of three-valued logic” (CHIMAKONAM & OGBONNAYA 2021, 4-5). For Chimakonam (2019, 96):

Ezumezu as a prototype of African logic studies values, meanings and understanding of logical language. Nothing is treated without content. It is both an art and science that studies the logical relationship among realities expressed in terms of propositions and symbols. Ezumezu, therefore, is a logical framework that can be used to explain and analyse experiences in African world-view.

Compared to the dominant bivalent system of Western logic, Ezumezu is trivalent since it “consists of three values namely; truth (ezu), falsity (izu) and ezumezu with small letter ‘e’ (complemented). A system of logic is trivalent if it has three values.

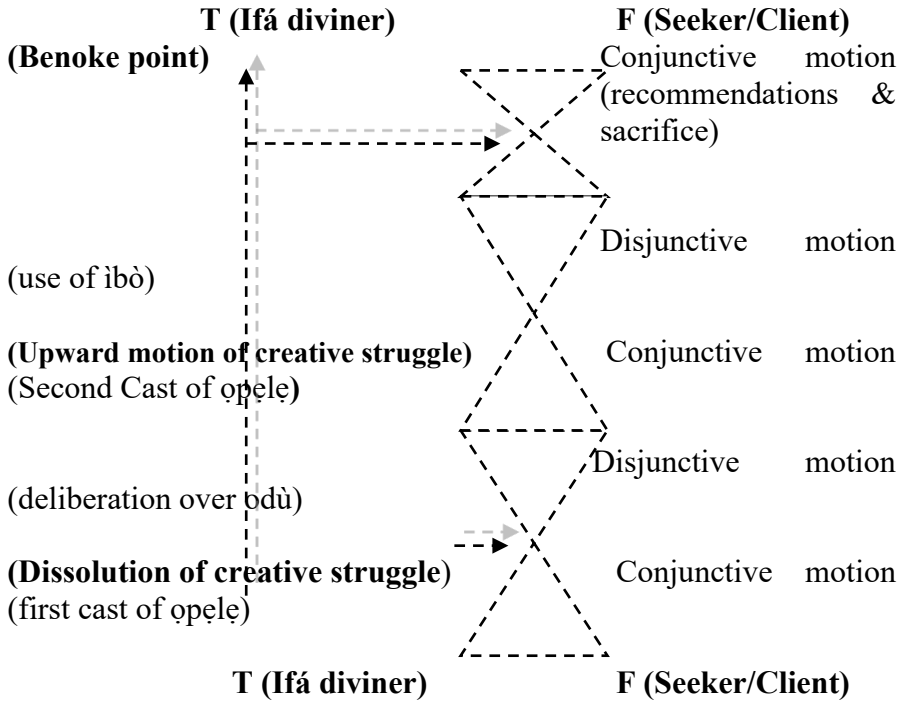


This is opposed to bivalence in which a system of logic boasts of two values namely: truth and falsity” (OFUASIA 2021, 48).

Elsewhere, it has been expatiated that “[i]n Ezumezu logic, for example, seemingly opposed variables are not read as contradictories but as subcontraries making it not only possible but necessary for variables to engage in a productive relationship” (CHIMAKONAM & OGBONNAYA 2021, 3). Whereas I do not boast to have provided the full details of Ezumezu logic, readers who wish to possess a comprehensive drift of the logic may refer to (CHIMAKONAM 2019; ;CHIMAKONAM & OGBONNAYA 2021; OFUASIA 2021). The present task is to use the logic as a prototype of three-valued logic to establish the complementary character in Ifá.

Verses of the Ifá literary corpus have been correctly stated by Oluwole (1996) to possess strings of thesis and anti-thesis in argumentative form. However, her 1996 study is immersed in classical logic and the laws of thought. Even when her 2015 book is clearly circumspect of the traditional laws of thought, she neither attempted to provide supplementary laws of thought nor argued for an alternative logic. In the diagrammatic illustration that follows, this study substitutes her thesis and anti-thesis for variables ‘T’ and ‘F’ respectively and then reveals how the complementary variable ‘C’ is affirmed via the creative struggle for meaning during Ifá divination. Creative struggle is a series of steps between two ontological variables where claims are made and defended in the light of new ideas up to a benoke point where the proposition and defense of such claims may no longer be sustained.

In the instance of Ifá divination, the ‘T’ depicts Ifá diviner who encounters the seeker or client who has come to seek the wisdom of Ọ̀rúnmìlà over a pressing matter, whereas the ‘F’ connotes the seeker. The enterprise of getting involved to engage each other underscores toward solving a problem or dilemma is underscored by the complementary value, ‘C.’ In this complementary value, one finds the creative struggle between the diviner and the client. The entire process of trying to find an answer to whatever life’s quandaries that brought the seeker to the diviner accounts for how complementarity presents itself in Ifá divination. This is represented in **Figure 1** below:



**Fig. 1 “Creative Struggle” in the third value in Ifá divination the diviner and seeker [culled from (OFUASIA 2023, 245)]**

From the foregoing, upward motion may be noticed, which indicates how the two ontological variables, diviner and seeker, come together to investigate an issue troubling the latter. As already discussed hitherto, the client communicates his/her perplexities, not to the diviner but to *Òrúnmilà* via objects of divination. The complementary value ensues at the first cast of the divining chain, which is called *opele*, (assuming this is the route for divination, familiar with this diviner). Afterward, there is a disjunctive motion that signifies how the two ontological variables deliberate over the manifesting *odù Ifá*. Assuming further insight or doubts are entertained, it is possible for the diviner to invoke another casting of the *opele*. As Ofuasia (2024) notes, the seeker does not usually tell his or her problem to the diviner, it is easier to see how the process is fair and original. When further doubts as to the appearing *odù Ifá* continue, the *ibò* is invited to assist with ‘yes’ or ‘no’ answers to

questions. So, for instance, the diviner may ask Ọ̀rúnmilà via ìbò: does the sacrifice prescribed in say a cited Ifá verse, suit the condition of the present seeker? This is a process of contextualising truth-values. Depending on the signature that appears, a series of such affirmation or negation questions are tendered to Ọ̀rúnmilà in order to be sure of the next course of action. It is important to add that the benoke point in the diagram indicates the place where both diviner and client/seeker have exhausted all possible options in the divination process and brought the affair to an end. The entire affair is an effort in meaning-making where two individuals converse and increase their knowledge of self and reality.

What has been done thus far is that the idea of binary complementarity, which informs the quest for harmony and an interconnected universe as explored by contemporary African scholars actually has its roots in the reflections of ancient African sages such as Ọ̀rúnmilà as the relevant excerpts from the Ifá literary corpus have indicated. At this juncture, it is now pertinent to turn to the Eastern aspect of this research to interrogate the place of perspectival pluralism in Jainism.

### **Complementarity and Trivalence in Jaina “Perspectival Pluralism”**

Before delving into the notion or idea of perspectival pluralism, it is helpful to first provide a very brief exposition of the main doctrines of Jainism. It is most likely that this will go a long way in helping us to have a very good background concerning the ideals that Jainism’s perspectival pluralism aims to tackle.

Jainism derives from the Sanskrit etymology *ji*, which means to overcome (Harrison 2022). Hence, it is not misplaced to see those who adhere to the belief system to see themselves as overcomers. Jainism is seen as a non-Brahmanical tradition in India since, just like Buddhism, it does not agree with the codifications of the Vedas. There are various ways scholars and practitioners have articulated Jainism. Scholars such as Peter Flugel (2012) take the outlook that Jainism’s origins are not clear. Basically, there is the general admission that Jainism is a religion that encourages its practitioners to seek help through their efforts. Jainism emerged in eastern India as far as the 7<sup>th</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> century BC. It was around this time that Jainism’s sacred texts were standardised (HARRISON 2022). The work of

Helmuth von Glasenapp (1925, 16) reveals that for nearly all Jains, there is the outlook that their faith is eternal and “consider Risbhahhanatha the founder of the present time-cycle, who lived for 8, 400, 000 purva years.”

From another angle, Mahavira is usually regarded as its founder even when it was admitted that “[m]any of Jainism’s core ideas such as the idea that consciousness is indestructible were, however, in circulation long before Mahavira’s lifetime” (HARRISON 2022, 56). Regardless of the obscurity of its humble beginnings, Jainism teaches the need to break the wheel of samsara (i.e. cycle of rebirth) and attain liberation by living a life of non-violence (i.e. ahimsa) extendable even to animals and plants. This is based on the understanding or belief among Jains that plants and animals possess individual souls inhabiting them (VON GLASENAPP 1925). Hence, it is not surprising that in some cases, Jains had to put on extra measures to not kill animals carelessly. The possession of a soul is tied to the belief in reincarnation among the Jains. They believe that unless one deals with karma in the present life and eliminates samsara (i.e. the frustrating cycle of birth, death and rebirth), one is bound to return to this existence of suffering. Before settling for the idea of perspectival pluralism and how it functions as a form of Jain epistemology, it is pertinent to add that Jainism possesses ‘three jewels’ and ‘five great vows’ (DUNDAS 2002).

The ‘three jewels’ correspond to what is popularly referred to as three guiding principles: right belief, right knowledge and right conduct (JAINI 1998). The five great vows are: non-violence, non-attachment, truthfulness, sexual restraint and avoidance of stealing (DUNDAS 2002). Jainism cautions her followers to desist from the idea of a god or deity that is coming to liberate humanity. Jainism does not have priests but some monks and nuns who are dedicated to living strict ascetic and disciplined lives (DUNDAS 2002). They are able to maintain their faith and lead these lives partly, due to the philosophical components that undergird the religion. It is at this juncture that Jainism’s perspectival pluralism enters the discursive fray.

The philosophical component of Jainism is laid on the understanding that “no entity possesses a unique essence that would allow it to be fully known through a single epistemic perspective...”

(HARRISON 2022, 57). This idea has been interpreted in other quarters as Jainism's theory of many-sidedness of reality. Jains are of the conviction that in the search or quest for truth to properly articulate human relations or the universe, it is pertinent to consider the exploration of multiple epistemic stances (HARRISON 2022).

Jainism's perspectival pluralism has been lauded as a commendable means through which Jains provide explanation through a variety of perspectives that allow for a fuller explanation for entities rather than focusing on a single epistemic stance. This has been better captured by Victoria Harrison (2022, 58), who shows that "[t]he ambitious theory of perspectival pluralism required Jains to provide an explanation of how we can use language to communicate successfully, given that what we say about entities does not usually reflect multiple epistemic perspectives." In a related manner, Marie-Helene Gorisse (2023), has concluded that the "doctrine of perspectives seems to be the Jaina reaction to philosophical and religious pluralism in classical India."

Generally speaking, however, it needs to be added that the standard term for these seven modes is Saptabhangivada, a system of argumentation developed by Jain sages in ancient India. The Saptabhangivada has been considered a seven-valued logic system that aims for pluralist and complementary reflections (BURCH 1964). As a result, in a bid to actively pursue the applicability of their belief in various epistemic perspectives, Jains offer seven modes of assertion or predicate for assessing propositions:

1. Asserting (arguably it is)
2. Denying (arguably it is not)
3. Assert-denying (arguably it is, arguably it is not)
4. Both asserting and denying (arguably it is non-assertable)
5. Both asserting and assert-denying (arguably it is, arguably it is non-assertable)
6. Both denying and assert-denying (arguably it is not, arguably it is non-assertable)
7. Asserting, denying and assert-denying (arguably it is, arguably it is not, arguably it is non-assertable) (see SCHANG 2010; HARRISON 2022).

It is due to the fact that three truth-values: true (t), false (f) and non-assertability (u) are discernable that some scholars, such as Fabian Schang (2010), have disclosed that Jaina logic is an ancient version of three-valued logic. In his words, “a short reflection is sufficient to see that each of these predications (or statements) is a combination of three basic statements, namely: assertion (truth-claim), denial (falsity-claim), and an unclear non-assertability” (SCHANG 2010, 59).

Nevertheless, Schang goes on to point out that a critical assessment of the seven predications or modes indicates that (1) is a clear affirmation. (2) is a clear negation, whereas (3) is an instance of successive affirmation and negation. In (4), what may be noticed is a simultaneous affirmation and negation. (5) reveals a complement of an affirmation and then a simultaneous affirmation and negation. (6) indicates a complement of negation and a simultaneous affirmation and negation. In the case of (7), a complement of three truth-values in the entire system: affirmation, negation and unassertability.

For Jains, it is desirable that any proposition or description of any object must be subjected to the highlighted seven modes only after an exercise in disambiguation has been undertaken (HARRISON 2022). The process of disambiguation is better understood using what Jains call parameters. These parameters are substance, time, place and state. The purpose of disambiguation via these parameters is sacrosanct since: “This is was in recognition of the fact that an assertion about an object might be true with respect to some set of parameters, a particular time and place, for instance and false with another respect to another set of parameters” (HARRISON 2022, 58). Perhaps in order to appreciate the point that is being made by Jains in relation to how perspectival pluralism functions, an illustration should suffice at this juncture.

Imagine the proposition: “Abuja is very hot.” As Jains encourage, the first thing to do is to disambiguate the proposition. Upon disambiguation, Jains would wish to enquire which place, time and circumstances warranted the proposition: “Abuja is very hot.” First, Abuja may be very hot for a first-time visitor who was not briefed on the required clothing. So, coming from a temperate country, for example, and exiting the Nnamdi Azikiwe International International Airport in FCT Abuja, this visitor may find Abuja

extremely hot. In another instance, Abuja is generally hotter in March and April. This assertion would be true irrespective of the experience of anyone within the context of this period. This is how the idea of disambiguation in Jaina perspectival pluralism works. It allows for the need to consider contexts as the basis for asserting or denying propositions (GANERI 2001; CLERBOUT et al 2009; HARRISON 2019).

With disambiguation applied to the proposition: “Abuja is very hot,” what may be found may then be: “In the months of March and April, Abuja is very hot.” With the context now established and the disambiguation process already attained, it is then pertinent to turn to the application of the disambiguated proposition to the “seven modes or predications.” If the disambiguated proposition: “In the months of March and April, Abuja is very hot,” according to Jaina perspectival pluralism is represented as  $p$  and is held to be true, then for each of the seven modes, the following may be noticeable in artificial language:

1.  $p = t$
2.  $p = f$
3.  $p = tf$
4.  $p = u$
5.  $p = tu$
6.  $p = fu$
7.  $p = tfu$

The foregoing representation subsists if it is added that “... the three basic statements assign either  $t$ ,  $f$ , or  $u$  to  $p$  and state that  $p$  is held to be either true, false or non-assertable” (Schang 2010, 59). This non-assertable, at this juncture corresponds to undetermined in other logic systems such as Ezemuzu logic where the third value is a complement as already described in the preceding section. The most important thing to note following the assessment of Jaina logic as it pertains to its pluralism is that it is a three-valued logic that looks at ways of complementing seemingly opposing variables in the quest or search for truth.

It is also important to add that in Jainism, all forms of disagreement are based on the failure to engage in the process of disambiguation and subjection to the seven modes. The tendency to

examine reality from a single perspective, according to Jaina, will not do, and this is the basis for disagreements and intolerance. In the end, Jains are said to maintain that “truth about reality could only be attained when many different perspectives are allowed to contribute to an understanding of the whole, and they took themselves to have provided a method by which such a comprehensive vision could be achieved” (HARRISON 2022, 59).

### **Disclosing the Pluralistic and Complementary Elements in Ifá and Jainism**

Upon a critical exploration of the ‘logics’ that undergird each of Ifá and Jainism independent religio-philosophical perspectives, it becomes clear that some semblances and departures may be noticeable.

In the first place, both Ifá and Jainism a that passing judgment or taking a position without due consideration of the contexts and parties involved births incomplete and biased outcomes. This is demonstrated in the complementary attitude demonstrated in an Ifá chapter by Olódùmarè, who refrained from passing judgment until all parties involved were consulted. In a related fashion, Jainism, through its perspectival pluralism demands the urgency that whatever will be held as the truth must go through some parameters as demonstrated in the logic underpinning their notion of perspectival pluralism.

Another important or crucial aspect that may be noticed between Ifá and Jainism is the fact that they are both girded by three-valued logic. They both maintain that seemingly opposing variables can be reconciled and that there is no problem simultaneously holding two seemingly contradictory positions. This is the core feature in the third value in Ifá which is symbolised by *C* and Jaina third value symbolised by *u*. The implication of this approach is that they are careful about when and how to allow the law of excluded middle to decide the truth-value of propositions. Recall that the law of excluded middle reads: in a particular instance, it is not possible for two contradictory judgements to be true. One is false and the other is true such that there is no middle value. The fact that they can transcend the limitations of this traditional law of thought is an indication that for the sake of complementarity and pluralism of opposites, the law of excluded middle will not be helpful.



Aside from the fact that these two systems of beliefs possess some semblances, it is important to also point to some dichotomies. In the first place, Ifá and Jainism are two independent religious practices with implications for logic in their operations. One was developed in traditional Africa, while the other is traced to ancient India. In spite of the fact that they have not had any cause or reason to encounter one another, it may be noticed that they share some semblances which attest to the universality of reason.

The ends for engaging in their pluralistic and complementary theses are also dissimilar. In the case of Ifá, there is the belief in a supreme being and gods whose guidance is needed most of the time in order to fulfil one's destiny during the earthly sojourn. More so, belief in reincarnation is upheld but not seen as a means of liberation from a world full of suffering. Jainism considers the existence and belief in god/gods to be obsolete in the goal towards liberation from the wheel of samsara. Perspectival pluralism and the logic that undergirds it are aimed at evolving a limited human consciousness to a state without limitations where one is able to acknowledge the many-sided aspects of reality. This is better captured in the words of Harrison (2022, 60), "Achieving this state is held by Jains to be the most important spiritual goal because it is tantamount to a state of perfection. A consciousness in a *kevalic* state is thought to be a consciousness with no limits." What this aims to unveil is that the motivation or end for the complementary and pluralistic perspectives in Ifá and Jainism are divergent.

Having considered the principal aspects of the logic that undergirds thought, theory and method in Ifá and Jainism, it is not out of place for a critic to question what purpose this serves in contemporary times – what does this comparison of logic in two unrelated non-Western cultures teach us? An interesting way to respond to this poser is to point out that it has been taken for granted that two-valued logic, with its implicit oppositional dualism, is the universal and absolute system. Various scholars and traditions of thought have established how binary logic betrays the expression of thoughts or ideas in cultures. For instance, Janus logic and Aymará logic have been argued to be a trivalent logic system (ECO 1995; ETIEYIBO 2023 ). Trivalent logic is not also alien to the West since Charles Sanders Peirce gave extensive consideration to it (see HAMMER 2013). What the present study has, therefore, done via

Ifá and Jainism is to add to the existing works on logic and emphasise the limitations of bivalent logic as a universal and absolute system.

### **Conclusion**

In this inquiry, an exercise in intercultural philosophy has been undertaken. Two unrelated religio-philosophical cultures in ancient Africa and India, Ifá and Jainism, have been examined to disclose that despite humanity's differences, some common grounds may still be noticed. This is true for how the notion of complementarity and pluralism functions in Ifá and Jainism. This inquiry has also been able to indicate that the logic, which undergirds thought in each of these traditions, is a three-valued logic that transcends the limitations established by two-valued logic, making it nearly impossible to accommodate opposing variables. Even as the goal or end of both religio-philosophical movements are divergent on a few grounds, one of the lessons that this research has been able to uncover is the undeniable fact that to see and appreciate how philosophic ideas in ancient Africa and the East have developed, it is helpful to engage these two traditions in mutually influential dialogues.

### **Declarations**

\*The author declares no conflict of interest or ethical issues for this work.

### **Relevant Literature**

1. ABIMBOLA, Wande. [Ifá: An Exposition of Ifá Literary Corpus], 1976. Oxford University Press: Ibadan. Paperback
2. ADEGBINDIN, Omotade. [Ifá in Yoruba Thought System], 2014. Carolina Academic Press: Durham. E-book.
3. AKOMOLAFE, Mohammed A. "Binary Complementarity in Sophie Oluwole's African Ontology: A Critical Appraisal." [The Nigerian Journal of Philosophy], pp47-66, 2022. Vol 28. Paperback.
4. ALOZIE, Princewill. [Philosophy of Physics], 2004. University of Calabar Press: Calabar. Paperback.

5. ASOUZU, Innocent. [Ibuanyidanda: New Complementary Ontology (Beyond World-Immanentism, Ethnocentric Reduction And Impositions)], 2007. Transaction: London. Web
6. BASCOM, William R. "Ifá Divination: Comments on the Paper by J.D. Clarke." [Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute], pp. 235-256. 1939. Vol XIX. E-book.
7. BURCH, George B. "Seven-valued Logic in Jain Philosophy." [International Philosophical Quarterly], pp68-93, 1963. Vol 4. No1. Web.
8. CHIMAKONAM, Jonathan O. [Ezumezu: A System of Logic for African Philosophy and Studies], 2019. Springer: Cham.
9. \_\_\_\_\_. and OGBONNAYA, Lucky U. [African Metaphysics, Epistemology and a New Logic: A Decolonial Approach to Philosophy], 2021. Springer: Cham. E-book.
10. \_\_\_\_\_. and CHIMAKONAM, Amara E. "Examining the Logical Argument of the Problem of Evil from an African Perspective." [Religious Studies], pp326-339, 2022. Vol 59. No2. Web.
11. CLARKE, J.D. "Ifá Divination." [The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland], pp235-256, 1993. Vol 69. No2. Web.
12. CLERBOUT, Nicolas, GORISSE, Marie-Helene and RAHMAN, Shahid. "Context-sensitivity in Jaina Philosophy: A Dialogical Study of Siddharsigani's *Commentary on the Handbook of Logic*." [Journal of Philosophy of Logic], pp633-662, 2009. Vol 40. No5. Web.
13. CORDEIRO-RODRIGUES, Luis. and CHIMAKONAM, Jonathan O. "African Philosophy of Religion from a Global Perspective: Deities, Ancestors, Relationality and the Problem of Evil." [Filosofia Theoretica: Journal of African Philosophy, Culture and Religions], pp1-7, 2021. Vol 11 No1. Web.
14. DASAOLU, Babajide O., OFUASIA, Emmanuel and OLADIPUPO, Sunday L. *Is Ifá Divination girded by Logic? A Case for Ezumezu Logic*. [International Journal of African Renaissance Studies - Multi-, Inter- and Transdisciplinarity], pp39-55, 2023. Vol. 18. No2. <https://doi.org/10.1080/18186874.2023.2230255>. Web
15. DEWEY, John. [Education and Experience], 1963. Collier Books: New York. Paperback.

16. DUNDAS, P. [The Jains], 2002. Routledge: New York. Web
17. ECO, Umberto. [The Search for the Perfect Language. J. Fentress Ed.], 1995. Blackwell: New York. Web.
18. EPEGA, Daniel O. [Iwe Ifá ati Itumo Ala], 1931. The Hope Rising Press: Lagos. Paperback.
19. ETIEYIBO, Edwin E. “Trivalent Logic, African Logic and African Metaphysics.” [Handbook of African Philosophy E. Imafidon, M. Tshivhase and B. Freter, Eds.], pp265-279, 2023. Springer: Cham. E-book.
20. FLUGEL, Peter. “Jainism.” [Encyclopaedia of Global Studies Vol. 3, H.K. Anheier and M. Juergensmbneyer, Eds.], pp920-935, 2012. SAGE: Thousand Oaks. Web.
21. GANERI, Jonardon. [Philosophy in Classic India: The Proper Work of Reason], 2001. Routledge: London. Web.
22. GU, Rouyan. “Comparing Concepts of God: Translating God in Chinese and Yoruba Religious Contexts.” [Filosofia Theoretica: Journal of African Philosophy, Culture and Religions] pp139-149, 2021. Vol 11. No1. Web.
23. GORISSE, Marie-Helene. “Jaina Philosophy.” [Stanford Encyclopaedia of Philosophy], 2023. Last accessed May 29, 2024. Web.
24. HAMMER, Eric. “Peirce’s Three-valued Logic.” [Supplement to Peirce’s Deductive Logic, Stanford Encyclopaedia of Philosophy], 2013. Last Accessed October 13, 2023. Web.
25. HARRISON, Victoria. [Eastern Philosophy of Religion], 2022. Cambridge University Press: Cambridge. E-book.
26. \_\_\_\_\_. [Eastern Philosophy: The Basics], 2019. Routledge: London. E-book.
27. HICK, John. “Religious Pluralism.” [A Companion to Philosophy of Religion, C. Taliaferro, P. Draper and P. L. Quinn, Eds.], pp710-717, 2010. Wiley-Blackwell: Malden, MA. E-book
28. HO, Pao-Shen. “Rethinking Monotheism: Some Comparisons between the Igala Religion and Christianity.” [Filosofia Theoretica: Journal of African Philosophy, Culture and Religions], pp151-158, 2021. Vol 11. No1. Web.
29. HU, Jiechen. “Divinities and Ancestors: A Preliminary Comparison between African and Confucian Cosmologies.” [Filosofia Theoretica: Journal of African Philosophy, Culture and Religions], pp187-196, 2021. Vol 11. No1. Web.

30. JAINI, Padmanabh S. [The Jaina Path of Purification], 1998. Motilal Banarsidass: Delhi. Web.
31. KARENGA, Maulana [Odù Ifá: The Ethical Teachings], 1999. University of Sankore Press: Los Angeles. Paperback.
32. LIJADU, Emmanuel M. [Ifá: Imole re ti ise Ipinle Isin ni Ile YORUBA], 1923. James: Exeter Paperback.
33. LONGE, Ola. [Ifa Divination and Computer Science], 1983. W. Giradet Press Co.: Ibadan. Paperback.
34. MASOLO, Dismar A. [African Philosophy in Search of Identity], 1994. Indiana University Press: Bloomington. Web.
35. OFUASIA, Emmanuel and IBIYEMI, Sheriff O. “An Inquiry into the “Maleness” of God in African Traditional Religions: The Igbo and Yorùbá.” [Journal of Africana Religions], pp86-103, 2024. Vol 12. No1. <https://doi.org/10.5325/jafireli.12.1.0086>. Web
36. OFUASIA, Emmanuel. “The Coherence of the Belief in the Existence of Evil in Traditional Yorùbá Theology: A Process-relational Analysis.” [Review of Ecumenical Studies], pp429-458, 2024. Vol 16. No1. DOI: 10.2478/ress-2023-0028. Web.
37. \_\_\_\_\_. [The Process-Relational Character of African Ontological Theories, Unpublished PhD Thesis], 2023. Lagos State University: Lagos. Paperback.
38. \_\_\_\_\_. “On the Distinction between Friedrich Hegel’s Dialectics and the Logic of Conversational Philosophy.” [Arumaruka: Journal of Conversational Thinking], pp46-62, 2021. Vol 1. No1. Web.
39. \_\_\_\_\_, OLADIPUPO, Samuel L. and AKOMOLAFE, Mohammed A. “Is it Possible to do Postmodern Philosophy Unbeknownst?": On Sophie Oluwole’s and Maulana Karenga’s “Deconstruction” of the Ifa Literary Corpus.” [Philosophy Africana], pp83-106, 2021. Vol 20. No2. Web.
40. \_\_\_\_\_. “Ifá Divination as an Exercise in Deconstructionism.” [South African Journal of Philosophy], pp330-345, 2019. Vol 38. No3. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1080/02580136.2019.1656961>. Web.
41. \_\_\_\_\_. “On the Postmodern Groundwork of Yorùbá Ethno-epistemology and Ifá Divination.” [LASU Journal of Philosophy], pp325-345, 2018. Vol 1. No2. Paperback.

42. OKORO, Chiedozie. "Problems of Metaphysical Philosophy." [African Nebula], pp113-138, 2011. Vol 3. Ebook.
43. OLUWOLE, Sophie B. "African Philosophy as Illustrated in the Ifá Literary Corpus." [Imodoye: Journal of African Philosophy], pp1-19, 1996. Vol 2. No2. Paperback.
44. \_\_\_\_\_. [Socrates and Ọrúnmilà: Two Patron Saints of Classical Philosophy], 2015. Ark Publishers: Lagos Paperback.
45. ONWUEJEOGWU, Angulu M. [An Igbo Civilization: Nri Kingdom & Hegemony], 1997. Ethiope: Benin City. Paperback.
46. SCHANG, Fabien. "A Plea for Epistemic Truth: Jaina Logic from a Many-valued Perspective." [Logic in Religious Discourse, A. Schumann Ed.], pp54-83, 2010. De Gruyter: Berlin. Ebook.
47. THURSTON, Naomi. "Relating to the Whole Community in Akan and East Asian Ancestral Traditions." [Filosofia Theoretica: Journal of African Philosophy, Culture and Religions], pp151-158, 2021. Vol 11. No1. Web.
48. VON GLASENAPP, Helmuth. [Jainism: An Indian Religion of Salvation], 1925. Motilal Banarsidass: Delhi. Paperback.