

Social Cognitivism, Quasi-Realism And Igbo Aesthetics

Adeolu Oluwaseyi OYEKAN, PhD

Abstract

*Quasi-realism, a version of expressivism, suggests that aesthetic and ethical judgements do not express propositions but emotional attitudes and they are autonomous. However, it has become circumspect among scholars that any version of quasi-realism can adequately explain aesthetic autonomy. This research agrees and goes beyond the suspicion of Hopkins to argue that autonomy invites solipsism. This study then examines the aesthetic attitude of an African culture, to see if Hopkin's mistrust and the solipsist consequence persist. This work chronicles that, for the Igbos, aboriginal to South-East Nigeria, the idea of autonomy does not arise in aesthetic verdicts. And as a consequence, solipsism is not apparent. This is because among the Igbos, there is an intrinsic connection between art and community which informs their perception of beauty, character, and individuality. Using the Igbo aesthetic-moral concept of *mma* to corroborate its position, this research reveals how Igbo Aesthetics is steeped in 'Social Cognitivism'.*

Keywords: autonomy, quasi-realism, Igbo, aesthetics, social cognitivism.

Introduction

Our perceptions of the world could differ radically as a result of social ideology and upbringing. Yet, what happens when our judgments about the world, its people and actions conflict? Ought we to dialogue, inquiring for who is wrong or right according to consensus? Is the position of the one autonomous and unyielding even when the contrary position is popular and more convincing? Is there an objective norm or paragon that is true at all times and in all places to be employed in these instances? These questions are very crucial not only for social ordering but in moral and aesthetic deliberations too. This is true if we recall that as moral agents, humans always face alternatives, which instigates them to deliberate and make choice(s) for which they are directly or indirectly responsible (Stumpf, 1979). It is from this background that the present work proposes to argue that the mainstream and dominant Western-styled aesthetics differs from the African perspective. This is not because Africans are inferior in reason or outlook. It should be

stressed from the outset that “the mind of the African is not structurally different from that of the Westerner... The truth is that both are similarly marked by the same basic features of the human species. The difference lies in the ways the two societies conceive of reality and explain objects and events. This is so because they live different forms of life” (Sogolo, 1993:74). In a related effort, Uzodinma T. Nwala (2010:107) reveals that “critical thought is simply a rational activity on its own as pure thought, or in relation to action as praxis.” This claim makes the idea of possessing a critical and rational faculty extendable to Africans too. Hence in this work, the focus is on quasi-realism, and its impact on aesthetic judgements in mainstream and dominant Western thoughts on Aesthetics vis-à-vis an African Aesthetic.

In five sections which include this introduction, and employing the method of analysis and hermeneutical interpretation, this study uncovers an African (specifically, the *Igbo*) criterion for aesthetic judgment, which we term ‘social cognitivism’. This highlights the ‘truth value’ of the community in aesthetic verdicts among the *Igbos*. This may be inconceivable for the Western mind, trained to invoke the principle of autonomy as a demarcation criterion between aesthetic propositions and non-aesthetic propositions. In the second part of this study, the affinity between autonomy and quasi-realism in Western-styled aesthetics is assessed. This part of the essay also raises dust as to whether or not a quasi-realistic stance can ever be entertained in Aesthetics. After a critical appraisal, we conclude that a quasi-realistic position is not only unrealistic but could invoke solipsism and its attendant problem of the existence of other minds. In the third fragment, the question of an African Aesthetics is revisited and defended. This part also reveals that the African paradigm for aesthetic judgment is shown to be radically different from that of the West. In the fourth part, the concept of ‘*mma*’ is employed to justify the claims in the previous section. The role *Igbo* Aesthetics plays in shaping character and personality is presented as unique and avoids the grouses presented in quasi-realism, as exposed by Richard Hopkins (2001). The fifth rift concludes this research.

The Question of Quasi-Realism in Aesthetic Autonomy

This section has two aims. The first presents an account of the role of autonomy in Aesthetic judgment in Western-styled Aesthetics. The second, very briefly assesses the object of autonomy in quasi-realistic aesthetic judgments. It agrees with the submission of Richard Hopkins (2001) who draws his autonomous characterization from Immanuel Kant, that in Western Aesthetics, quasi-realism is not able to explain an aesthetic-autonomous stance. What then is

autonomy? What does it mean to be autonomous in matters of art? Perhaps it would be best to commence this discourse in this manner.

Bernard Cayne highlights that autonomy “means the subjection of the human will to its own laws independent of God” (Cayne, 1992:65). Implied here is that the human will has some laws. In a related manner, Patrick Hanks notes that the word autonomy is “the doctrine that the individual human will contains its own principles and laws” (Hanks, 1976:137). If one takes autonomy as Cayne and Hanks inform, there is no doubt that solipsism enters the fray, since each individual has its distinct principles about life. However, solipsism is the outlook that “only the self can be known to exist” (Cayne, 1992:944). This clarification of concepts at this stage is pertinent because most of the Western literatures on autonomy take for granted the solipsistic implication deducible. Let us begin with Immanuel Kant because there is hardly any discourse on the principle of autonomy in aesthetic judgements that takes no cue from Immanuel Kant. This is striking if we notice that in his own words, Kant avers:

[The judger] clearly perceives that the approval of others affords no valid proof, available for the estimate of beauty. He recognizes that others, perchance, may see and observe for him, and that, what many have seen in one and the same way may, for the purpose of a theoretical, and therefore logical judgment, serve as an adequate ground of proof for him, albeit he believes he saw otherwise, but that what has pleased others can never serve him as the ground of an aesthetic judgment. The judgment of others, where unfavourable to ours, may, no doubt, rightly make us suspicious in respect of our own, but convincing us that it is wrong it never can (Kant, 1952: Part 1).

The above is evocative of quasi-realism, at least as interpreted by (Hopkins, 2001). It has become commonplace for discussion as to why some statements or stances would admit autonomy when others do not billet it. This is because for ordinary judgements, one may need to have a change of mind in the face of the judgment of the overwhelming majority. However, as Kant avers in the foregoing excerpt, “what has pleased others can never serve him as the ground for an aesthetic judgement” (Kant, 1952 Part 1).

Being a non-cognitivist version of expressivism, quasi-realism has been subject of controversy regarding its ability to pass as a paragon for aesthetic judgments. What then is quasi-realism? While chronicling the essence of quasi-realism, its prime proponent Simon Blackstone (1993) in an interview with Darlei Dall’ Agnol reveals:

I tried to give an account of what are we doing when we use language in that way. But that would be both an explanation of what we are

doing and also a justification. It wouldn't give any motive, any account of the content, of the reasons, of the motivations, of the error theory. So, that was the program. I called it 'quasi-realism' because it starts from an emotivist, a fundamental expressionist, account of the fundamental elements of what we are doing when we moralize. And that is a particular activity, a particular thing you do, which is basically to express attitudes, to put pressure on plans, intentions, conducts. It's something practical. But we talk as if there were a truth in that talk, that's why the quasi (Dall' Agnol, 2002:102).

In the words of Teemu Toppinen, Quasi-realism is "the view that we must explain our thought and talk concerning normative matters – which involve many features that motivate realist views – in terms that do not presuppose the existence of normative properties, facts, and such" (Toppinen, 2014: 17). It appears indicative therefore that a quasi-realist who wishes to do justice to common sense must also countenance the existence of normative beliefs it seems (Divers & Miller, 1995; Timmons, 1999; Dreier, 2004). So far, we have been able to concern ourselves with the main ideas in autonomy and quasi-realism. The rest of this section chronicles their convergence and/or divergence in practical judgements.

In this regard, Christopher Doyle has been chronicled to aver that:

For ordinary judgements it is often the case that it may be justifiable to change one's mind given that others agree in holding an opposing view. In the case of judgements of beauty this is never the case; these are autonomous. Robert Hopkins has discussed the following (familiar) explanation: Judgements of beauty are not genuine assertions at all; rather they are expressions of some response or experience. Since to acknowledge the disagreement of others is not to respond to objects as they do, this acknowledgement needn't (nor could it) render it appropriate to change one's aesthetic judgement (Dowling, 2006:100).

Hopkins seems to be in doubt if any version of quasi-realism can explain aesthetic autonomy. His argument is very convincing, simple and straightforward. Hopkins believes the following two 'fault allocating' arguments - (A) as applicable in the case of non-aesthetic judgements, (B) as applicable in aesthetic cases – to be formally on a par. Each justifies, according to Hopkins, contra the quasi-realist, a change of mind given the fault considerations. In other words, the moment a judger reassesses the subject-matter as a result of a contrary consensus, the quasi-realist talks of autonomy founders. Let us consider his arguments tersely.

Hopkins relies heavily on the position of Crispin Wright (1992), that

in standard cases empirical talk is subject to cognitive command: “When disagreement arises it will be *a priori* that one side must lack warrant: that either my opponent or I will be at fault. One can then deploy fault considerations to find out which is and which is not the case” (Hopkins, 2001: 170). The fault consideration may be formulated thus:

Since my opponents outnumber me in general, and they are equally competent in matters of this sort; all have tried to access the facts in the same way - it is more likely that I am at cognitive fault than that they are (Hopkins, 2001:170).

As a result, Hopkins (2001:170) puts that: “Hence, I ought to reject my view and accept theirs.” In constructing a conceivable quasi-realism about the aesthetic, Hopkins offers something analogous to cognitive command such that when conflict occurs one party will be at fault (Dowling, 2006:101). It is important to consider the argument employed by Hopkins, albeit tersely to see why he doubts the possibility of any form of quasi-realism as a basis for aesthetic judgment.

Argument A:

- (1a) I and my opponents disagree over whether p
- (2) One of us is at fault
- (3) They outnumber me, in general I and they are equally competent in matters of this sort, and we’ve all tried to access the facts in the same way.

So

- (4) It is likely that I am at fault.

So

- (5a) $p/\neg p$ [i.e. whichever claim the opponents make]

Argument B:

- (1b) I and my opponents disagree over whether O is beautiful
- (2) One of us is at fault
- (3) They outnumber me, in general I and they are equally competent in matters of this sort, and we’ve all tried to access the facts in the same way.

So

- (4) It is likely that I am at fault.

So

- (5b) O is beautiful/ It is not the case that O is beautiful [i.e. whichever claim the opponents make]

Hopkins holds that the quasi-realist must accept - given (A) - that an argument of this form can justify, in the aesthetic context, someone in the move from (1)-(4). In so doing one will become (as was hoped) more cautious and willing to try the matter by experiencing the disputed object anew. Under the quasi-realist's commitment to expressivism, one should be protected from the pressure to move from (4) to (5) if one lacks the appropriate response to the object in question. However, Hopkins objects that it is not clear why this should be so (Dowling, 2006:102-4). Argument (B), in reflecting the form of (A), *does* commit the judger to a change of mind in the aesthetic case. We would expect the quasi-realist to be committed to the view that expressive claims *can* play a role in cogent arguments, so we should expect the conclusion to follow. In light of this commitment Hopkins does not believe the quasi-realist can have anything to say to explain or to save autonomy (Dowling, 2006:102-4).

It is not untrue that for Hopkins, the instances of (A) and (B) clearly reveal that contra Kant (1952), even the pressure and judgment of others in aesthetic matters could still implore one to revise an earlier stance or even have a change of mind. This is true if we recall Kant's recommendation that "...what has pleased others can never serve him as the ground for an aesthetic judgement" (Kant, 1952:Part 1). The argument provided by Hopkins against the viability of any form of quasi-realism in aesthetic only holds in the Western aesthetic tradition.

It is imperative to hint at this juncture that there are variants of quasi-realism and expressivism that struggle to cope with the incursion of autonomy in aesthetic verdicts. Teemu Toppinen for instance calls his variant, the 'higher-order state view'. In his words: "This is the view that normative sentences express, not beliefs (as the cognitivist says), not just desire-like states (as the *pure* expressivist says), and not pairs or sets of desire-like states and beliefs (as the *ecumenical* expressivist says), but rather the higher-order states of having one's beliefs and desire-like states related in certain ways. On this view, to make a normative judgment is to be in a state of having a certain *kind* of set of beliefs and desires – that is: in a state of being in a certain kind of belief/desire state (thus the name 'higher-order state view'). Or, as we might also say, it is to be in a state in which a certain kind of relation holds between one's beliefs and desire-likes states." (Toppin, 2014:2).

It is not an exaggeration that his characterization of expressivism is complicated and ambiguous. But he makes effort to expose the versions of expressivism in passing. One point must be made plain in the perception provided by Toppin (2014). This is the emphasis made by the apologetics to the cause of expressivism and quasi-realism that their aesthetic judgements resonate one or more of: 'desire-like states'; 'pairs of sets of desire-like

states and beliefs'; 'emotional states'. All stances employ autonomy and the implication of this reasoning is the charge of solipsism. For if autonomy is the basis for moral and practical judgements, the foremost consequence is A (could be a subject or perceiver) would not know about the existence of B (object of perception) of whom s/he judges in aesthetic parlance. The philosophical problem regarding the knowledge of the existence of other minds and things in existence is reinvigorated. It is this solipsistic implication of autonomy that implores this research to go further than the objections of Richard Hopkins in revealing why quasi-realism lacks basis in aesthetic autonomy. If the "laws or principles governing the will" [(Cayne, 1992:65); (Hanks, 1976:137)] of every individual differ, what happens when two opposing views or aesthetic judgments clash? What is the paradigm for correctness? Is it the case that the position of the mob supersedes that of the singular entity? The consequence is that we may not even be able to pass judgements over what passes muster as an art work. This is exactly where for us, expressivism and its quasi-realistic stance founder.

The next section uncovers an African aesthetic attitude that overcomes the problems implied in expressivism, in its quasi-realistic version. It reveals the role the community play in adjudging a work of art in relation to individuality.

The Question of an African Aesthetics

The question of whether or not there is an African Aesthetics needs to be settled first before exposing the 'social cognitivism' in *Igbo* aesthetic attitude. In the opening words in one of his classics, Innocent Onyewuenyi announces: "... that African aesthetic standards are different from the 'accepted' standards of uniqueness and individuality; that African works of art are created as an answer to a problem and serve some practical end" (Onyewuenyi, 1984:237). For him, the question of an African aesthetics is racially and nationally loaded; an attempt to narrow the discipline of aesthetics in order to satisfy some racial or national whims. He defends the possibility of an African aesthetic on the grounds that "the general principle or standards of values of aesthetics, which is a branch of philosophy are bound up intimately with a people's shift and constitution, and are a factor in their life history, subject to the conditions of race, culture and civilization" (Onyewuenyi, 1984:239). As a consequence, traditional African aesthetics falls in line with other disciplines in the body of African view of reality. Hence, for Innocent Onyewuenyi (1984:243):

Works of art are expressions of ritual and religion, as clues to the temperament of the tribe and society, as language in a culture without writing, must do all these in service to the community whose ritual

and religion they express, whose temperament they reveal, the being of whose ancestors they participate in. Hence, African art is functional, community-oriented, depersonalized, contextualized and embedded.

By functional and community-oriented, Onyewuenyi means that African arts are designed to serve practical, meaningful purpose and that beauty or appearance is secondary. The needs of the community determine the artistes' production. The art is never "art for art's sake" (Onyewuenyi, 1984:244). The writer is responsible to society. This assertion has been corroborated by Nkiru Nzegwu who concurs that for the Africans, art is intrinsically interwoven with other aspects of life. It is community focused. In her own words: "... the critical question in creativity is no longer what constitutes a work of art, but what is the relationship between creative objects and social life in a given society" (Nzegwu, 2004:415).

The foregoing has come to be termed by Robert Eldridge as 'art as a social practice'. He articulates that: "In beginning to try to be articulate about what in various works of art distinctly moves us, it is important to remember that making and responding to works of art, in many media, are *social* practices (Eldridge, 2003:5). It is the case that the kind of art done by the Africans, as exposed in the preceding paragraphs is a form of social practice. This is true precisely because "it is inconceivable that these practices are the invention of any distinct individual. Any intention on the part of an individual to make art would be empty, were there no already going practices of artistic production and response. If there are no shared criteria for artistic success, then the word *art* cannot be used objectively, as a descriptive term (Eldridge, 2003:5).

The above excerpt is not vindictive of Innocent Onyewuenyi's assertion that African aesthetics is depersonalized. An individualistic perception of art is inconceivable for the African. If I have only myself to go on, then "whatever is going to seem right to me [to call art] is right. And that only means that here we can't talk about 'right.'" (Wittgenstein, 1958:92). Does this claim from Wittgenstein not imply the quandary in quasi-realistic autonomy and its solipsistic tendency of which we noted in the preceding section? It is however pertinent to note that just like any civilization, Africa is not left behind in the field of art. According to Robert Stecker (2010:1): "The historical facts are complex. The existence of art—not the concept but items that might plausibly be thought to fall under the concept, such as paintings—date well back into human prehistory. By the time ancient civilizations flourished in Mesopotamia, Egypt, Greece, India, China, and elsewhere art—painting, sculpture, poetry, music, architecture—existed abundantly and individual

works were created that are as wonderful as any that have subsequently come to exist.”

Now, that the question of African aesthetics has been settled and to be substantiated with the perception of the *Igbos* on the subject, it is high time these peoples were presented.

***Mma* and the Idea of ‘Social Cognitivism’ in *Igbo* Aesthetics**

Here the connection between the *Igbo* word *mma* and its relation to ‘Social Cognitivism’ in *Igbo* Aesthetics will be our focus. We commence with an exposition of the inner kernel of the former, as an antecedent to the comprehension of the latter. Afterwards, we shall reveal how the problems in quasi-realism are overcome. But first, some comments on the *Igbos*.

While there are several traditions and renditions regarding the origin of the *Igbo* people, this research takes as axiomatic, the position of Emmanuel Edeh (1985:8-9) who reveals that “the *Igbos* are a people principally located in southeastern Nigeria, West Africa. They also extend to parts of the Midwestern and Delta regions of Nigeria. The *Igbo*land covers Imo, Anambra and the eastern part of Bendel state. It lies between latitude 5 to 6 degrees north, and longitude 6.1 to 8.5 degrees east.

Emmanuel Edeh’s revision of his 1985 edition must take cognizance that Bendel State no longer is. In the place, there are Edo and Delta states, yet none of these diminishes his geography of the *Igbos*. The idea of art is not alien to these peoples. This is true even if we must be cautious that their art may not be like what is in the Western sphere. This is why Godwin Sogolo’s claim had been earlier cited, as it informs that “the mind of the African is not structurally different from that of the Westerner... The truth is that both are similarly marked by the same basic features of the human species. The difference lies in the ways the two societies conceive of reality and explain objects and events. This is so because they live different forms of life” (Sogolo, 1993:74). We must therefore add at this juncture that the *Igbo* form of life is radically different from what obtains in the West. Concerning this, Nwala (2010:115) harps that, “*Igbo* traditional world-view no doubt, was religiously-based but dynamic and pragmatic. The cosmological system is spirit-regarding.”

For us to understand the concept of *mma*, some analytic and hermeneutical exertions are pertinent. The word ‘*mma*’, is an adjective in *Igbo* parlance which signifies ‘good’. In other words, for the *Igbos*, what is good is typified by ‘*mma*’. But in other instances, it could connote *beauty*. The adjective may sometimes be articulated as ‘*oma*’. Thus, when an *Igbo*

says: '*oma nwa*', two meanings may be hermeneutically discerned. In the first sense, it could mean *good child*, *nwa*, being *child*. In the second sense, it could signify *beautiful child*. In each of these cases, contexts matter. The context, it must be hinted, is not a creation of the individual. Hence, when Innocent Onyewuenyi (1984:243) posits that, "African art is functional, community-oriented, depersonalized, contextualized and embedded", he is not being fallacious. Although, the cited instance is a matter of linguistic, the aesthetic turn of it would be grasped more readily when we employ *mma* in aesthetic phrasing. Perhaps to make plain our point, another hermeneutic instance suffices.

The *Igbo* word for the Higher God/Supreme Being is *Chukwu*. It is derived from two root words: *Chi* (roughly equivalent of *spirit* in Western semantics) and *Ukwu* (an adjective that means *great*). Hence, the Higher God/Supreme Being in *Igbo* is etymologically and hermeneutically translatable as Great Spirit. But even the contemporary *Igbo* would substitute God for it. Perhaps as a consequence of the widespread accentuated but erroneous belief that traditional Africans are spiritually demonic. Further, when an *Igbo* says *Chidimma*, a common name, usually of girls among the *Igbos*, two meanings may be hermeneutically deduced. *Chidimma* is actually a sentence translatable as *God is good*. This is usually the consensual connotation of the name among the *Igbos*. However, no one bothers about the other meaning, closely attached: *God is beauty/beautiful*. Even the *Igbos* of the 21st century does not bother with this and the reason is not far-fetched – no one has seen *Chukwu*. The whole gamut of the hermeneutical exercise is to reveal that *mma* is contextualized affair. The next task is to locate how the concept is used in aesthetic parlance. Given that the present study is concerned with the idea of *mma*, it would be shown that the line between the moral (*mma – good*) and the aesthetic (*mma – beauty*) is blurry. But for the sake of clarity, we commence the aesthetic analysis of *mma* as beauty.

In the words of Nkiru Nzegwu: "Public discourse on female beauty inevitably established a linkage between the beautiful and certain cultural imperatives. One example of a saying that captures this kernel of aesthetic truth is *Enenebe eje olu*, literally, it means: "Looking admiringly (at the object of attention) prevents one from going to work" (Nzegwu, 2004:418). Nzegwu, on this showing uses the *Igbo* culture as a cue in revealing the linkage between the beautiful and the cultural.

The above is a testimony to the fact that in an African culture, every art work must have its social significance. Even in the discourse on *mma*, beauty, there are fables and songs, used primarily as instructional tools, as the foregoing excerpt captures. One finds that, among the *Igbos*, the socially

approved notion of beauty has a *moral* basis. In this connection, Nzegwu (2004:419) amplifies:

When beauty is seen as lacking constructive social consequences, there is tension between the idea of 'beauty as wondrous' and 'beauty as socially incapacitating'. This tension highlights Igbo ambivalence with respect to the idea of morally unmediated beauty. Because greater social premium is placed on *idi uchu* (industry), *olu* (work), and *ezigbo omume* (good character), beauty is valued only if it embodies positive behavioral traits and transcends the potentially distracting elements that may impede social utility and function.

Consequently, for her,

In the Igbo conceptual scheme, the idea of beauty is intricately intertwined with morality, since societal well-being and progress set the standard for the good life. As a result of this moral basis, individuals routinely stress the importance of inner beauty (character) over outer epidermal beauty. They insist too that one needs not be physically beautiful to be included in the category of attractive people. One with a pleasant personality and good character is beautiful (Nzegwu, 2004:419).

A point must be noticed in this characterization of beauty which is alien to Western mind: morality is the sole decider of beauty, but perception and cognition too. This "...underwrites the idea that epidermal beauty requires morality for completeness, and it conceptualizes *mma* (beauty) as vital glue for societal cohesion ((Ibid.).

From the excursion into the aesthetic-moral usage of the concept, *mma*, it is the case that what passes gamut in Western aesthetics would qualify as *olusi* (defect) in Igbo aesthetic-moral framework. We now turn to the idea of social cognitivism, the phraseology employed by this study to expose the dearth of autonomy and solipsism, the *Achilles Heels*, in quasi-realism.

According to Teemu Toppinen (2014:1) Cognitivism foregrounds that "the meaning of a sentence...is to be explained with reference to how this sentence claims the world to be – with reference to its truth conditions." In the case of the *Igbos*, the truth condition is the society, the social. This is exactly how the idea of 'Social Cognitivism' enters the fray. Hence, from the social cognitivist view, for the world to be in a certain way, or to represent the world as being a certain way, it is to have a belief that shares its truth-conditions with a proposition. Put otherwise, the truth conditions of aesthetic judgements, in Igbo culture are socially based, hence social cognitivism.

On the above showing, the acceptable praxis, among the *Igbos*, for the

beautiful derives from the community but not the individual. Contra the West, the *Igbos* lay more stringent conditions for what would qualify as beautiful. Quasi realism and any of its strands, with their attendant flaws do not fit in *Igbo* Social Cognitivism. It is the case that their aesthetic judgment is definitely not autonomous. For, as we had argued hitherto, it is the truth conditions laid down by the social that prevails in aesthetic judgments. Hence, to revisit the dilemma presented by Robert Hopkins (2001) when disagreements arise, it will be *a priori* that one side must lack warrant; that either my opponent or I will be at fault. One can then deploy fault considerations to find out which is and which is not the case. The fault consideration may be formulated thus:

Since my opponents outnumber me; in general, and they are equally competent in matters of this sort; all have tried to access the facts in the same way - it is more likely that I am at cognitive fault than that they are.

The above fault consideration is what clearly obtains in *Igbo* Social Cognitivism. To amplify, when there is disagreement over the proposition: ‘*Chidimma* is beautiful’, uttered by an *Igbo*, Social Cognitivism would seek the truth conditions of this ‘aesthetic injunction’ among the tribe, the social but not the autonomous. In cases of aesthetic verdicts among the *Igbos*, the social is very crucial. The individual is left with no choice but to either abandon her view or revise it, contra quasi-realism. *Chidimma*’s aesthetic verdict will always lack autonomy and does not succumb to solipsism, which would be her lot if she had been steeped in quasi-realism.

Conclusion

It is the case that the way two cultures conceive of reality differs. When autonomy has gained prominence in one, it has never been taken serious in the other. In this connection, the other overcomes the problem of solipsism which is reminiscent in the aesthetic outlook of the one. Through the analysis of *mma*, this study submits that the *Igbo* unique paradigm of aesthetic judgment is community-focused. All propositions of the individual, when they conflict the community’s, the latter prevails, hence social cognitivism.

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