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RELATED PHILOSOPHICAL CONCEPTS IN THE PHILOSOPHY OF *UTUISM*

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Abstract

This article provides a discussion on the Philosophy of *Utuism* and tries to relate the concepts with other philosophies. The main idea is to help in understanding in depth the interrelationships between the concepts which creates clear view and connections for better understanding of our theme of the study. The different philosophies discussed brings out the existing relationships and differences that outlays the actual meaning, existence and application of *Utuism*. **Key words:** *Utuism, Humanism, Ubuntu, Undugu and Ubinadamu*

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Utuism as a concept and in its meaning does not stand in exclusive isolation. Nevertheless, its unique character in humanness stands out. The other concepts in our concern that will be described in this chapter are also intertwined, not because of either getting their meaning from humanism or flowing from its intrinsic meaning, but also since they all deal with the human person as such. That is, they get their essence from and in man as will be seen. In this chapter therefore, we investigate other related concepts to *Utuism*. The first part will discuss the main concept of humanism as manifested in our topic *Utuism: African definition of humanism*. To bring this meaning into an objective paradigm, we shall engage Kenneth Kaunda's humanism and seek to understand if there is an essential difference between our concept *Utuism* and humanism. The second section will deal with South African or Nelson Mandela's concept of *Ubuntu*. In Tanzania, we get the concept of *Undugu*, a concept that carry and bear the same meaning of brotherhood in Bantu communities. This meaning will be treated in section three. From the Bantu speaking peoples we shall analyze, in the last section, the Kiswahili term *Ubinadamu* that seems to mean humanness.

1.1 Humanism and *Utuism*

In this section, we beg to borrow David Hume's assertion in *The Treatise on the Human Nature* that, "it is evident, that all the sciences have a relation, greater or less, to human nature: and that however wide any of them may seem to run from it, they still return back by one passage or another."¹ Hume further argued that even Mathematics, Natural Philosophy, and Natural Religion, are in a way the science of man. They are assessed and analyzed by men, *vis-à-vis* by their powers and faculties. All the developments, changes and improvements we make in these sciences are thoroughly acquainted with the extent and force of human understanding, and can explain the nature of the ideas we employ, and of the operations we perform in our reasoning. And these improvements are the more to be hoped for in natural religion, as it is not content with instructing us in the nature of superior powers, but carries its views farther, to their disposition towards us, and our duties towards them; and consequently we ourselves are not only the beings, that reason, but also one of the objects, concerning which we reason.² The question Hume asked on the centrality on man to the sciences of Mathematics, Natural Philosophy, and Natural Religion which have such a dependence on the knowledge of man, is vital. That is, what may be expected in the other sciences, whose connection with human nature is more close and intimate? Kwame Nkrumah

in his consciencism argued that the African personality is itself defined by the cluster of humanist principles which underlie the traditional African society. He further argued that: Philosophical consciencism is that philosophical standpoint which, taking its start from the present content of the African conscience, indicates the way in which progress is forged out of the conflict in that conscience.³

This is a call to embrace humanity in all its aspects within the deliberative awareness of our moral stance. Since the basis of humanism is the human nature itself, we can relate it to all those sciences, which more intimately concern human life, and may afterwards proceed at leisure to discover more fully those, which are the objects of our curiosity. There is no question of importance, whose decision is not comprised in the science of man; and there is none, which can be decided with any certainty, before we become acquainted with that science. In pretending, therefore, to explain the principles of human nature, we in effect propose a complete system of the sciences, built on a foundation almost entirely new, and the only one upon which they can stand with any security. With this background, we can venture into humanism proper which is the objective subject. The concept of humanism is to be explained using the sections and subsections that subsequently follow. The meanings of humanism are diversely given depending on which age of history one is in or disciplines one is following. Renaissance humanism is the term generally applied to the predominant social philosophy and intellectual and literary currents of the period from 1400 to 1650. This is only a historical orientation of humanism. The title “Renaissance Humanism” is applied to the philosophical and cultural movement that swept across Europe from the 14th through 16th centuries, effectively ending the Middle Ages and leading into the modern era. Pioneers of Renaissance Humanism were inspired by the discovery and spread of important classical texts from ancient Greece and Rome which offered a different vision of life and humanity than what had been common during previous centuries of Christian domination. The central focus of Renaissance Humanism was, quite simply, human beings. Humans were praised for their achievements – achievements attributed to human ingenuity and human effort rather than divine grace. Humans were regarded optimistically in terms of what they could do, not just in the arts and sciences, but even morally. Human concerns were given greater attention, leading people to spend more time on work that would benefit people in their daily lives rather than the other worldly interests of the Church.⁴

It has been argued that the return to favour of the pagan classics stimulated the philosophy of secularism, the appreciation of worldly pleasures, and above all, intensified the assertion of personal independence and individual expression. Perhaps the most we can assume is that the man of the Renaissance lived, as it were, between two worlds. The world of the medieval Christian matrix, in which the significance of every phenomenon was ultimately determined through uniform points of view, no longer existed for him. On the other hand, he had not yet found, in a system of scientific concepts and social principles, stability and security for his life. In other words, Renaissance man may indeed have found himself suspended between faith and reason. As the grip of medieval supernaturalism began to diminish, secular and human interests became more prominent.⁵ The facts of individual experience in the here and now became more interesting than the shadowy afterlife. Reliance upon faith and God weakened. *Fortuna* (chance) gradually replaced *Providence* as the universal frame of reference. The present world became an end in itself instead of simply preparation of a world to come. Indeed, as the age of Renaissance humanism

wore on, the distinction between this world (the City of Man) and the next (the City of God) tended to disappear.⁶ Beauty was believed to afford at least some glimpse of a transcendental existence. Human experience, man himself, tended to become the practical measure of all things. The ideal life was no longer a monastic escape from society, but a full participation in rich and varied human relationships.

Humanism has been classified under cultural, religious and secular dimensions. The three branches have something in common as far as humanism is concerned, man. As such, humanism involves any concern with humans (including human needs, human desires, and human experiences), first and foremost. This often means giving human beings a special place in the universe on account of their abilities and faculties. Humanism is less a philosophical system, a set of doctrines, or even a specific system of beliefs, than it is an attitude or perspective on life and humanity. This perspective in turn influences various philosophies and belief systems. Our interest is to connect humanism to *Utuism*. Using the Merriam-webster.com dictionary, we embrace that: Humanism is a system of values and beliefs based on the idea that people are basically good, and that problems can be solved using reason instead of religion. It is a doctrine, attitude, or way of life centered on human interests or values; especially a philosophy that usually rejects supernaturalism and stresses an individual's dignity and worth and capacity for self-realization through reason.⁷

As a critical and primary way of life, humanism as a metaphysical concept, an act, process or end product becomes a philosophy of the human web. Since humanism deals with the interconnectedness of the human persons, it fundamentally touches the sociality and communality of man. It is the active relationship that is tested by *Utuism*. This *Utuism* is thus that humanness employed to activeness towards the other human being. The underlying common characteristic of all concepts that describe, define, draw and permeate from humanism is the interaction with "the other".⁸ The phrase "the other" with the article "the" as a qualifier is a deliberate one to show that the "other" we are referring to is not something that its existence depends on an individual person. On the contrary, its existence precedes both time and essence than that of an individual person. But since this individual is in a way in "the other", its existence is an essential one in the human matrix. But to say that "the other" and "the individual person" are existence independent from the subsistent Being is to enter into a progressive contradiction. Both of them have an origin (as creative or prime cause) and destiny (as destined or final cause) that are the same. Thus religion simplifies the language of humanism, that is, no humanism devoid of God can truly be claimed to suffice.

It is this complexity that the society is understood, that is, the essentiality of each in all. As they interact, they bring about sociality. It is this vital element of the human social networks that people like Kenneth Kaunda, the first African President of independent Zambia, had as a motivation and power as they engage humanism. In itself, we can talk of the sociality of the human family. This is an aspect that is not limited to a geographical, racial, gender, or any accidental difference. Its power and mandate are found in the natural and inherent rights of humanity, making the social nature of humanity transcend all human limitations and prejudices. As a matter of fact, what surround humanism in most of the eras and from different humanists, either from the West, the East or in Africa, would erroneous be to connect humanism as purely secular or atheistic. In its inception we can agree that it was a reaction to the religious focus that the church had hinged its teaching on, alienating the human person as such. To liberate the human person from this alienation

the church had created would ideally be deemed secular and unreligious. But as understood from a more objective stance, humanism is both very religious and embrative. Can we talk of any religion devoid of humanity? This would be a contradiction of terms bearing in mind that religion is the experience of man to the deities. This understanding will be underlying the following narrowed down sections.

1.2 Kaunda's Humanism

Kenneth Kaunda's humanism is socialistic in nature.⁹ Though his teaching on this humanism as an African socialism was roughly tested by his rule under a single party suffocating the dissenting voices, in essence, the principles were ideal.¹⁰ As would be manifest in other world leaders historically who assumed power from liberation struggle to liberation leaders and postliberation leaders, we encounter them presenting very different personalities. That their leadership beliefs and principles pre-independence and post-independence conflicted, yet from the same personalities. Despite being the same persons, it seems that on one hand, the preindependence leaders had to use principles that united the people against the oppressor or colonizer. This, the leaders did very well with an activistic convincing voice and words that had the interest of the people in mind. On the other hand, the post-liberation struggle leader changed the goalposts. Initially, the enemy is outside the people they represented, but now the enemy is in the people they represent.¹¹ It is from this change of end value that the post-liberation leaders surrounded themselves with human shields, the soldiers, in contrast to being surrounded by the people they represent. This scenario has been inherited by the political leaders. One would embrace the meaning accorded humanism in Zambia, that is:

Humanism in Zambia is a statement of philosophical theory on the meaning of human existence. Man, concretely existing Man, is central. His use as a means to any end, however impressive, abrogates his humanity. Using man as a means makes him the object of exploitation, and the resulting alienation dehumanizes the exploiter as well as the exploited. Thus, Humanism in Zambia is a greater charter for the Common man. This common man is not a special class. He is a representative Man, sharing qualities with all other men. So the individual's worth must not be measured by such criteria as efficiency, success, merit or status. Such criteria cannot apply in a humanist context. They set men against and above each other. Humanism, however, seeks to free man from man, to allow him to find his truth as man in a community. In humanist terms, common man has nothing to do with rich or poor. He is inexplicably you, me and the other fellow. It is the commonness of humanity that humanism is getting at.¹² This aspect of man to man in the Zambian humanism connects and directs to socialism in Africa. To use the words of Julius Nyerere to support this connection, he said: Socialism means that no person uses his wealth to exploit others. Just as a father does not use his status to dominate and exploit his wife, children and other relatives, so in a nation the leaders or the fortunate people must not use their position or wealth to exploit others.¹³

Nyerere argued that no one, whether a father in a family or a leader or anybody, should ever be feared, but respected. In such a case, since two people or more should respect one another, if one of them ceases to respect the other, they should withdraw their respect for him or her. Accordingly: Socialism requires all the people to work. The fruits of the labour of the people who lead a socialist life are shared by all on the basis of equality. But everyone must work. It is a shame to be lazy,

and those who are lazy are despised by the rest of the community. This means that no man can expect help from his colleagues if he is not willing to help them. It is even true that if you work you will eat, but if you do not work you will not eat.¹⁴ This is a firm indication that no one was supposed to be a parasite in the entire society since this would have amounted to exploiting the other people, either in the family or in the community at large. Back to our earlier discussion before picking on the connection to socialism, one critically looking into the essence of Humanism in Zambia would be tempted to say that it is more than a mere statement of philosophical theory. Indeed, they are very much at the core of the Christian Gospel. He adds: Independence was not meant to be merely a changing of the guard. It was the liberation of man from foreign domination which institutionalized the inherited systems of social, administrative and economic structures.¹⁵

Kaunda's or Zambia's humanism¹⁶ was based on a combination of mid-20th century ideas of central planning/state control and what he considered basic African values: mutual aid, trust and loyalty to the community. Kaunda's own political philosophy, which he calls "humanism", a mix of egalitarian socialism and religious rhetoric, has been the Zambian state cult for two decades. But humanism has not kept the Zambian economy from the edge of ruin.¹⁷ Similar forms of African socialism were introduced *inter alia* in Ghana by Kwame Nkrumah ("Consciencism"), and in Tanzania by Julius Nyerere ("*Ujamaa*"), while in Zaire, President Mobutu Sese Seko, a much less "benevolent" ruler than Kaunda or Nyerere, was at a loss until he hit on the ideal ideology – "*Mobutuism*". To elaborate his ideology, Kaunda published several books: *Humanism in Zambia and a Guide to its Implementation, Parts 1, 2 and 3*.¹⁸ Other publications on Zambian Humanism are: *Fundamentals of Zambian Humanism*, by Timothy Kandeke; *Zambian Humanism, Religion and Social Morality*, by Cleve Dillion-Malone S. J., and *Zambian Humanism: Some Major Spiritual and Economic Challenges*, by Justin B. Zulu.¹⁹ The reason of grouping these African socialisms is connected to the power of their inception, that of uniting the people after an exploitive and dispersive colonialism. Considered: The socialism of a liberated territory is subject to a number of principles if independence is not to be alienated from the people. When socialism is true to its purpose, it seeks a connection with the egalitarian and humanistic past of the people before their social evolution was ravaged by colonialism; it seeks from the results of colonialism those elements ... which can be adapted to serve the interest of the people; it seeks to contain and prevent the spread of those anomalies and domineering interests created by the capitalist habit of colonialism; it reclaims the psychology of the people, erasing the 'colonial mentality' from it; and it resolutely defends the independence and security of the people.²⁰

Perhaps Kaunda's definition of a humanist would be termed as from an extremist position, or even prejudicial. He said: A Humanist is not a poor and exploited person but that who works relentlessly to rid this world of the evils of capitalism, imperialism, colonialism, neo-colonialism, fascism and racism, and exploitation of man by man on the other. Power to the working people from usurpers and exploiters, socialism is a just stage to humanism. Socialism is a means to end exploitation of man by man. All means of production to be in the hands of state control. One cannot be a humanist without being a socialist but one can be socialist without being a humanist.²¹ This position should not be exclusively taken. First, his direct experience with various exploitive systems of man against man fanned by colonialism and the existence of the cold war, money economies and class societies, create an antithesis in the Hegelian mode.²² Second, in the given so-called 'definition', he tackles

the universal treatment of exploitation of man by man on the other.²³ This second point can be demarcated into two: that is, the part of exploitation and the one of ‘man by man’. In the latter part, there exists a relation of action between man and the other man. Though Kaunda only presents the negative aspect of this relation in view of collecting it, he vitalizes the need of treating the other person as a human being. It is this last aspect that we are embracing when active as *Utuism*. Our main focus in these sections is to trace the core relationship and the underlying principles between humanism and *Utuism*. Since these two terms, as shall be seen, are more the same than they are different – or we can say they are intertwined – we can venture into this ardent relationship by tackling the question of their difference to provoke the affirmation of this positive connection.

1.3 Difference between *Utuism* and Humanism

We may conceptually differentiate our two key concepts, that is, *Utuism* and *Humanism*, only by their activity. By this we mean inasmuch as humanism is the humanness in the human person, *Utuism* is the activeness, the inner human power or motivation that provokes that humanness to self and the other. Perhaps this fact combines formally two disciplines, ontology dealing with the being of the human person, and ethics due to the fact that this being is acting deliberately. The connectedness of these terms in their activity makes one define the other in specific differentiation. Humanism carries in its material form, the human person as such, the subject of our philosophical inquiry. Thus, *Utuism* bears the differentiating characteristic in this human being, either positively active, passive and/or indifferent, or negatively active. The common denominator is the action. When the human person from within himself relates to another human person in a humane manner, expressing the positive human feelings even after passing the reasoned phase, then we say that his *Utu* is there and is active. When the same human person reacts in a destructive manner towards self or the other, we say his *Utu* is dead. But when the same person does not feel or react to the self or the other, then the situation of indifference is experienced which would deny reason being accrued or attributed to the same person. Ironically, we cannot rightly talk of a person minus the major specific difference, that is, with reason, emotions and feelings. With this argument proposition, we are aware that some critics would say that not to act, or to act negatively, an individual would be following some form of reaction, as a choice, or as a form of expressing ones emotions and feelings. But this line of argument would be depleting the normal material and formal human qualifications especially of a rational and active being even with regards to the human feelings and emotions.

1.4 Ubuntu and Utuism

The term *Ubuntu* itself captures the spirit of being human. It is about showing humanity to one another. From its inception, *Ubuntu* is an ancient African term meaning ‘humanity to others’. It also means ‘I am what I am because of who we all are’.²⁴ Perhaps we may borrow from a Zulu proverb to focus on the root or foundation of this nowadays used term. The proverb “*Umuntu ngumuntu ngamantu*” means “I am a person through other people. My humanity is tied to yours”.²⁵ Thus, “*Ubuntu*” (oo-buun-tu) is a shortened version of that Zulu proverb, “*Umuntu ngumuntu ngamantu*.”²⁶ The spiritual foundation of South African society through *Ubuntu* involves a belief in a universal bond of sharing and respect that connects all of humanity.²⁷ *Ubuntu* is a concept formally recognized by the 1996 South African Governmental

White Paper on Welfare as: This is the principle of caring for each other's well-being and a spirit of mutual support. Each individual's humanity is ideally expressed through his or her relationship with others and theirs in turn through recognition of the individual's humanity. *Ubuntu* means that people are people through other people. It also acknowledges both the rights and the responsibilities of every citizen in promoting individual and societal well-being."²⁸ *Ubuntu* also conveys the idea that a person cannot be complete if others do not enjoy full humanity. The spirit of *Ubuntu* resonates so strongly that if one group within society is denied its humanity, then no individual in that society can fully realize his or her own humanity. The urgency to change this injustice becomes paramount.

The same meaning can be discerned from Kinyarwanda and Kirundi (Rwanda and Burundi national languages respectively). To them, *Ubuntu* means, among other things, 'human generosity' as well as humanity. In Rwanda and Burundi society, it is common for people to exhort or appeal to others to "*gira Ubuntu*" meaning to "have consideration and be humane" towards others; thus it has the extended meanings of 'generosity, and 'free, given at no cost'. It also has the general meaning of "human's essence", which also includes the other meanings of the word, as it will be said of a person who shows neither mercy nor consideration to others that he is an animal (igikoko, inyamaswa). In Kitara, a dialect cluster spoken by the Nyankore, Nyoro, Tooro, and Kiga of Western Uganda, and also the Haya, Nyambo and others of Northern Tanzania, *obuntu* refers to the human characteristics of generosity, consideration and humanness towards others in the community. In Ganda, the language of Central Uganda, *obuntu bulamu* means being humane, showing kindness, and refers to the same characteristics. In Kiswahili, a language spoken throughout the coast of East Africa, entire Tanzania, Kenya, and in other parts within East Africa and some parts of the Democratic Republic of Congo, the word may refer to "*Utu*", which means active humanness. It is a concept that condemns acts and deeds that seem unfair even in the slightest. The Bantu speakers of East Africa are believed to have originated from the Congo basin and in pre-colonial times, "*Utu*" was the main philosophy governing them. It meant that everything that was done was for the benefit of the whole community. In Kikuyu, Kamba, Meru and Kisii languages spoken mainly in the Central, Eastern and Nyanza regions of Kenya, the "*Umundu*" stands for humanness, or the act of being humane to other human beings and to nature in general.²⁹

Stanlake J. W. T. Samkange asserts that 'To be human is to affirm one's humanity by recognizing the humanity of others and, on that basis, establish respectful human relations with them'. And 'the second maxim means that if and when one is faced with a decisive choice between wealth and the preservation of the life of another human being, then one should opt for the preservation of life'. The third 'maxim' as a 'principle deeply embedded in traditional African political philosophy' says 'that the king owed his status, including all the powers associated with it, to the will of the people under him'.³⁰ This was supported well by Desmond Tutu in 2008 when he emphasized: One of the sayings in our country is Ubuntu – the essence of being human. Ubuntu speaks particularly about the fact that you can't exist as a human being in isolation. It speaks about our interconnectedness. You can't be human all by yourself, and when you have this quality – Ubuntu – you are known for your generosity.³¹ We can put the spirit of *Ubuntu* – respect, human dignity, compassion, and community – to work in our daily lives through our interactions with others, from greeting others as we pass them in hallways or on the street, to ensuring that all segments of society are included in social welfare policies so that each person has the means to

lead a life of dignity. *Ubuntu* has the power to help us build an inclusive, respectful, and vibrant community, nation and world.³²

Unlike Western Humanism as asserted in Section One above, *Ubuntu* asserts that society, not a transcendent being, gives human beings their humanity. That is, every individual can only define self or be defined “if and only if” it is connected with the people. As a matter-of-fact, it would be absurd to talk of, or even imagine, a person devoid of the society. An example is when a Zuluspeaking person who when telling you to speak in Zulu would say, “*khuluma isintu*,” he linguistically means, “speak the language of people”. Or when someone behaves according to custom, a Sotho-speaking person would say, “*ke motho*,” which means “he/she is a human”. In each of these examples, humanity comes from conforming to or being part of the tribe.³³ In fact, *Ubuntu* induces an ideal of shared human subjectivity that promotes a community’s good through an unconditional recognition and appreciation of individual uniqueness and difference.³⁴ This is the truth taught to us in an old South African principle, *Ubuntu*, or ‘A person is a person through other persons.’ As Archbishop Desmond Tutu describes this perspective, *Ubuntu* ‘is not, “I think therefore I am.” It says rather: “I am a human because I belong. I participate. I share.”’ In essence, I am because you are.

Judge Colin Lamont expanded on the definition during his ruling on the hate speech trial of Julius Malema: *Ubuntu* is recognized as being an important source of law within the context of strained or broken relationships amongst individuals or communities and as an aid for providing remedies which contribute towards more mutually acceptable remedies for the parties in such cases. *Ubuntu* is a concept which: is to be contrasted with vengeance; dictates that a high value be placed on the life of a human being; is inextricably linked to the values of and which places a high premium on dignity, compassion, humaneness and respect for humanity of another; dictates a shift from confrontation to mediation and conciliation; dictates good attitudes and shared concern; favours the re-establishment of harmony in the relationship between parties and that such harmony should restore the dignity of the plaintiff without ruining the defendant; favors restorative rather than retributive justice; operates in a direction favoring reconciliation rather than estrangement of disputants; works towards sensitizing a disputant or a defendant in litigation to the hurtful impact of his actions to the other party and towards changing such conduct rather than merely punishing the disputant; promotes mutual understanding rather than punishment; favours face-to-face encounters of disputants with a view to facilitating differences being resolved rather than conflict and victory for the most powerful; favours civility and civilized dialogue premised on mutual tolerance.³⁵

Desmond Tutu offers a definition in his 1999 book: A person with *Ubuntu* is open and available to others, affirming of others, does not feel threatened that others are able and good, based from a proper self-assurance that comes from knowing that he or she belongs in a greater whole and is diminished when others are humiliated or diminished, when others are tortured or oppressed.³⁶ Among the most structured effectiveness of *Ubuntu* is seen in Mogobe B. Ramose’s work *African Philosophy through Ubuntu*, specifically Part Two of the book.³⁷ In this part, he opens the lenses of *Ubuntu* through philosophy, religion, medicine, law, politics, and ecology. Other sections are Bantu *Biko* and Bantucracy, and Globalisation. In this section, Mogobe mastery connects *Ubuntu* with ontology and epistemology in the fact that *Ubuntu* enshrines its definition

in the be-ing itself. We cannot rightfully refute this claim of Mogobe that *Ubuntu* enshrines its definition in the being itself in that man as a being who is our subject matter in the investigation is not outside the Being *qua* Being. That is, 'Being' as it is, that which acts according to the mode of its being and non-act according to this nature of the very 'Being' would be a contradiction of the very 'Being'. This assertion also lies under the line of Alexis Kagame, whose *Bantu Philosophy* has been rightly criticized for being too Aristotelian in his categories.³⁸ This is an influence from Aristotle which does not demean his argument if it is logical.

Any moment we are dealing with the human characteristics or mode of being, we do not engage African or Western parochial mentality or conceptual world. We engage both the universal and objective world. The question of justification of human actions is not based on who or where but on the universal and objective paradigm. Man (in this instance we mean all gender inclusive) must follow his rational dictates that is free from prejudice. This can be confirmed, to borrow from Mogobe B. Ramose, when he argues that: Provided humanity does not sink into ultimate irrationality of self-annihilation through an unwinnable nuclear war, human reproductive power shall in the distance future of evolution march inexorably towards the defeat of the myth that the human race is not and cannot be one.³⁹ Ramose continues his assertion that: Women, the African, the Amerindian and the Australian, all have a common cause. It is to affirm and assert their humanity through a vindication of their rationality. This struggle for reason is fundamentally a moral struggle as well. This is so because it questions the arbitrariness with which this segment of humanity has for centuries been denied and deprived of their right to reason. On the basis of this denial and deprivation, inhumane injustice continues to be meted out of them. The unbearable cross of endless and infinite humiliation and impoverishment is the price that this segment of humanity continues to pay as a result of the arbitrary denial and deprivation of their right to reason.⁴⁰

This is an affirmation that the human person must be looked and treated in a universal and objective understanding, devoid of limitations of parochial definitions. Thus, *Ubuntu* is the healing remedy of human relationships under the principle of humanness to each other. When this humanness is activated to reach the other person positively, this is *Utuism*. This connection of *Ubuntu* with Being *qua* Being, unravels an activity of the "being-ness" of the human person. This is what our project seeks to call *Utuism* as an activity of this very being, the human being.⁴¹

It is in this line that man embraces his own morality by making or creating normative guidelines. It is this that Alexis Kagame in his Rwanda-Bantu philosophy brings to his argument the idea or can rightfully be facts; moral acts. A moral act is thus judged or qualified as "good" or "bad" according to whether it conforms or not to an already prescribed law (prohibition). These prohibitions or laws, some of which might have been determined and profoundly refined as a result of social experience, are all directed toward the well-being of man and all move under the ultimate decision of *Immana*, the powerful God.⁴² But one may argue correctly that reaching to the other person is brotherly or sisterly in relation. This is what in Kiswahili language is called *Undugu*, but is it *Utuism*?

1.5 Undugu and Utuism

The term *Undugu* is another very close Kiswahili term meaning brotherhood or sisterhood of men and women to the intrinsic human web. It gains or draws its meaning on the African concept of

Utu (active humanity). Its intended proposition is that as a human race, we cannot address the problems of the world without addressing issues, attitudes and behaviors that are a departure from humanity. The realities of negativity continue making us to be part of the problem and hold us back from becoming part of the solution. Within this context, understanding *Undugu* and its contribution to the philosophy of *Utuism*, will be an opportunity to share our visions concerning the challenging issue of redefining and improving the way men and women perceive and value each other. Our learning more about the challenges in combating forced marriages, gender based violence, and the scourge of HIV and AIDS, the same theme will keep reappearing. This means that it is through updating our notions of gender, in learning to grow responsibility as men and women, in seeking and protecting humanity, in forgiveness, that recovery becomes possible. In other words, our humanity will be provoked to a level of active and positive consciousness which unites us to each other. With this in mind, we realize that on the one hand, a new global consciousness is beginning to emerge, a feeling for one another that surpasses race, creed or gender; a knowing that we are in truth brother and sister. This arising feeling is calling for a different response and responsibility about creating a global community in which the values of respect, care and dignity due to each life, regardless of gender, are integral to the fabric of every community. On the other hand, there is a huge cry of desperation in nations around the world as we search for new solutions to escalating poverty, disease, war, terrorism, and environmental degradation.⁴³

The relationship between *Undugu* and *Utu* can only be said to be in a cause-effects relationship. Specifically, *Utuism* provokes and causes the *Undugu*. But what do these Swahili terms mean? The Swahili terms of *Utu* and *Undugu* refer to humanity in relation to the brotherhood and sisterhood of men and women. Within the African heritage there is a natural, profound humanity (known as *Utu* or *Ubuntu*), a strongly shared value, a natural sense of personal responsibility to one's life, to one's family, to one's community. *Utu* and *Undugu* challenge us to reach for a higher level of humanity where we can come to understand that as human beings, we are all brothers and sisters, and that our humanity is of the same order: when anyone suffers degradation, the humanity of all is hurt.⁴⁴ A primary argument that entreats these two terms, or rather concepts, is that, we cannot justly connect any social human definition without encroaching on the need of acting according to the mode of being. Aristotle's definition of man as a rational animal included 'man as a social animal'. This means that this sociality of man relates to a phrase used by Okot p'Bitek referring to sociality of self.⁴⁵ Okot connects the "I" and the "Self" to the "others" or the "Society".⁴⁶

1.6 'Ubinadamu' and *Utuism*

This section also embraces two concepts that deal with that which flows from the intrinsic nature of the human being, unless otherwise. In Chapter 15, Part I, of Baron d'Holbach's⁴⁷ work, a two volume *System of Nature*, the virtue of a person seeing himself as interacting with others, both for his own happiness and the betterment of the community is demonstrated. In 1770, Baron wrote: A person perceives that it is other people who are most necessary to the welfare of man: that to induce others to join in his interests, he ought to make him find real advantages in recording his projects: but to procure real advantages to the beings of the human species, is to have virtue; the reasonable man, therefore, is obliged to feel that it is in his interest to be virtuous. Virtue is only

the art of rendering himself happy, by the happiness of others. The virtuous man is the man who communicates happiness to those beings who are capable of rendering his own condition happy; who are necessary to his conservation; who have the ability to procure him a happy existence.⁴⁸ Despite D'Holbach's treatment on man, he is to be studied with a lot of reservation in that he professed atheism. To him and his friends, the mind is identified with the brain, there is no "soul" without a living body, the world is governed by strict deterministic laws, free will is an illusion,⁴⁹ there are no final causes, and whatever happens, takes place because it inexorably must. Most notoriously, the work explicitly denies the existence of God, arguing that belief in a higher being is the product of fear, lack of understanding, and anthropomorphism.⁵⁰ Nevertheless, he touches on the nature of the human being that can be developed or used in our distinguished terms.

Ubinadamu is a Swahili term which would directly be translated to mean humanity as such. This is another complex term carrying the unique element that characterizes man from other beings. It is a distinguishing term in itself. The term "*binadamu*" literally mean a human being. Thus, the prefix "*U*" ahead of the term "*binadamu*" means it is its qualifier. It is the state of being that emanates from the inside of very human being. As a matter of fact, this term *Ubinadamu*, and that of *Utu*, are almost twins in meaning, only that the latter is an activity that demonstrates the former. That is, that one acts as prompted by his humanness making his humanity be experienced. We would therefore infer that *Utuism* is the vehicle on transit that carries humanness (the one referred to by the South African region people as *Ubuntu*) to other human beings. Since it is an active process, it culminates '*Ubinadamu*' (humanity) of the very human being.

1.7 Bantu Philosophy and *Utuism* Placide Tempels

In presenting the Bantu ontology, Placide Tempels tackled four important aspects intertwined to each other that will connect to our subject *Utuism*. These can be summed up as: first, the general notion of Being. The fundamental notion under which being is conceived lies within the category of forces. Since whenever we venture into the nature of reality of Being *qua* Being we are in the area of metaphysics, these forces cover the entire reality of the universe and outside the visible universe. But a distinction of the Western concept of Being *qua* Being from that of the Africans should be seen. That of the Western means "the reality that is", "anything that exists" or "what is". To the Africans, the "Being" and the "Force" are equal, that is, "Force" is more than the necessary attribute of beings, it is the nature of being, force is being, being is force. It is this "force" as a reality that makes all beings to have a relationship as such. This reality of these particular beings⁵¹ is transcendental. Thus, to the Africans, as opposed to the Westerners, the inner power of the "Beings" which they call "Force" is not distinct from the nature of Being as an attribute.⁵² This actually relates to our affirmation that is *Utuism* where every human being should enhance the inner force which is his own being towards the other human beings.

The second aspect is that all force can be strengthened or weakened. Since we are concerned with the human person as such, we narrow down to man as the force to himself and horizontally to his kind, and in relation to higher and lower forces. We would talk positively in the Western understanding that man as such develops in a holistic way. By this we mean bodily, intellectually cum psychologically, in will and the like. But on the African conception, we engage a growth in strength or weakness. By this we are guided by their understanding that force is being and vice versa. Thus to say that a man's force is increasing, *vis-à-vis* being reinforced, it is equivalent to

saying that his nature has been made stronger, increased, made greater. To say it has been weakened is to say the contrary of this. According to Tempels, this is like in the Christian world saying, “I’m graced”.⁵³ The interaction of forces, or what would mean one being influencing another, is the third aspect. As said above, to the Africans, forces are interactive in an effective manner. By this we mean that one force, especially the higher ones, affect *vis-à-vis* influence the lower one. Note the lower ones can also influence the higher ones. Another influence or affection is in the same (equal as in nature) level. For our concern, this horizontal affection and influence fit in *Utuism*.⁵⁴

As mentioned above, the forces in the African conception are hierarchical in vital power. In this hierarchical order, God, who is taken to be both the Creator of all and from whom all reality get their existence, is the highest. God has not only the power of giving the existence, but since He is the source of Force, he increases or demeans the force in other forces. This force is like the so-called vital force, life. From the spiritual force we come down the ladder to man who is above all other created forces.⁵⁵ It is this rank that basically, using our wordings, that moves man to relate to other men. If this relation is negative, then it is destructive and against his nature, and if positive, then, it is constructive *vis-à-vis Utuism*. Placide’s Bantu philosophy was initiated in his work, *la philosophie Bantoue*, in 1945 (written in Flemish, French), and translated and produced in English in 1959. This title of Bantu philosophy was later on used by Alexis Kagame.

According to Tempels, the people of Sub-Saharan Africa (almost all who are speakers of Bantu languages; the use of the term “Bantu” as an ethnic label is now largely discredited) have a distinctive philosophy, and attempts to describe the underpinnings of that philosophy. In his 7-chaptered English translation, the main theme is the vital force, which though introduced in the first chapter, is analysed in the subsequent chapters. To him, the agents of this vital force are God or divinities, man and the society.⁵⁶ He argued that the African philosophical categories can be identified through the categories inherent in language. Tempels argues that there are three possible views of the relationship between being and force.

Being as distinct from force, that is, beings may have force or may not. Force as part of being, that is, being is more than force, but dependent upon it. Being is Force, that is, the two are one and the same.⁵⁷ He argues that members of Bantu-speaking cultures hold the last view of force. Specifically: “Force” is not for the Bantu a necessary, irreducible attribute of being: no, the notion of ‘force’ takes for them the place of the notion ‘being’ in our philosophy. Just as we have, so they are transcendental, elemental, simple concept: with them ‘force’ and with us ‘being’.⁵⁸ As a result of this fundamental difference in categories, Tempels argues that the African life is structured around understanding and defining Force, which contrasts sharply with the Western enterprise of understanding and defining Being. Bantu Philosophy has been criticized, primarily on the ground that conclusions are gross generalizations which seek to characterize the thought of an entire continent, which, it is argued, is fundamentally impossible to do in any meaningful way.

Alexis Kagame and Bantu Philosophy

Kagame presents Rwandese philosophy of ‘Be-ing’ using Aristotle’s *Categoriae* and the *De Interpretatione*.⁵⁹ This provokes the question of whether he intends to claim the conceptual similarities between the philosophies of Being of Bantu-speaking peoples and that of Aristotle’s categories of Being, or intended to demonstrate their differences. Using the Aristotelian categories,

Kagame tells of the formal logic and criteriology of the Bantu, of their ontology, ideas of God, life, internal and external senses, intellectual faculties, cosmology and concepts of right and wrong. But the question to ask is: how does Kagame conceive the distinction between the Bantu ethnology and Bantu philosophy? According to Liboire Kagabo,⁶⁰ Kagame devotes to a number of pages of *La philosophie Bantu Rwandaise de l'tre*.⁶¹ According to Kagame, argues Kagabo, philosophy “is the science which deals with beings from the special angle of their most profound causes, which, that is, tries to reach the ultimate principles of being.”⁶² Ethnology, on the other hand, deals with historical factors that are subject to the laws of social evolution.⁶³ Kagame further argues that “the nature of the beings remains what it is; their ultimate explanation is inevitably immutable”.⁶⁴ In doing this he identified four categories of being according to the Bantu-speaking society, that is, flowing from the *Ntu*, which is Being. These categories are: *Mu-ntu* which stands for Being with intelligence, *Ki-ntu* for Being without intelligence, *Ha-ntu* for the Being of Space and Time, and lastly, *Ku-untu* for the modality of Being. These four categories of Being, that is, *Mu-*, *Ki-*, *Ha-*, *Ku-*, and those of Aristotle, are presented by Kagame as equal.⁶⁵

We sum up both Tempels and Kagame guided by the issue of the motivating power of the African peoples (specifically the Bantu-speaking lot). To Tempels, What has been called magic, animism, ancestor worship, or dynamism – in short, all the customs of the Bantu – depend upon a single principle, knowledge of Inmost Nature of beings, that is to say, upon their ontological principle. Unfortunately, he sees these terms as blind pointers to a cosmological core-truth, thus misleading without leading to the very truth.⁶⁶ Nevertheless, the primary metaphysical category in the thought of the Bantu society is “Force”, which makes the reality dynamic and at the same time received by the intellectual being in a dynamic active way. To embrace Bantu Philosophy in relation to *Utuism*, we borrow the concept of the dynamic active force. To use Tempels’ words, “the vital force is the invisible reality of everything that exists, but is supreme in man. And man can reinforce his vital force by means of the forces of other beings of creation.”⁶⁷ Tempels used the French terms *la force vitale* with an intention of demonstrating a certain property which underlies all things. That is why he argued that force is the very essence of being. Masolo argues that Tempels equates force and being.⁶⁸ This dynamic force in the intellectual being can only be active in relation to another intellectual being since both are conscious of their “relating-ness” of their being.

2.0 CONCLUSION

As has been demonstrated by the protagonists of the Bantu philosophy, every individual being as an important element in the web of “Beings”, should demonstrate an awareness of his connection to the other human beings and by natural fairness to other beings in the created order. The human person ought to do this in consciousness and express an active positive embracement with other humans, the human individual realizes his own reality as a force in the matrix of the entire reality that is active. This consciousness provokes the realization and appreciation of the Supreme Being through which all other created beings get their being. It is from this understanding that man acts in a way that should befit his very nature. We realize *Utuism* becomes the active realization of the interconnection between an individual to the other human individuals. This was in a great way supported by Kaunda when he said: Exploitation of man by man means self-interest as a driving

principle. Before we do anything whether as individuals or as a party, or any other group at all, what we are about to do will further our personal interests to the detriment of those of our fellow.⁶⁹

Kaunda's argument that man's development continues inwardly, a refining of consciousness so that he rids himself of selfishness and lives by love, is the platform of our investigation. The state exists for man, though man needs the state only until he moves from the present state of imperfection of his body and soul, or his physical and spiritual being, to one of perfection and therefore moves further to a clearer understanding of God. Thus, man needs the state because he is still unable to comprehend the true meaning of the teaching 'love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with ... as thyself'.⁷⁰ Before this goal is reached, man needs a structure of authority to create a framework of order and justice for him. It is worth noting that according to the very Christian teaching by which Christians positively follow their founder, Jesus Christ, the second Christian law relate man to his neighbour with the same intensity of love as to self.⁷¹ This man as the centre of investigation makes Humanism seek to discover the truth – the truth about what man is, what he is able to be but is not; what he is able to do but is not doing, so that in the end he can be what he should be, living to the limit of God-given qualities, a true servant of his creator. Man's discovery of his true potential is useless unless followed by action to realize it. We have seen that basically man abhors violence.⁷²

One would be tempted to ask: what was the reason for this chapter and its relevance to this ambitious project? The response would be that, since whatever we are presenting by the term *Utuism* first and foremost flows from the linguistic usage, relatedness to other closely 'nearmeaning' is essential.

In any linguistic analysis, the term may be a metaphor, a connector or qualifier, material or formal. In this last quality, if the term is both material and formal, then, it can be said to be essential. This happens to be the case with *Utuism*. We do not want to alienate man from his faculty of the will, but the chapter connects man to the same. In relating to other human beings, man must moderate himself to the mean as such. This upholds the argument that moderation in emotions, reactions, counter-reactions and passions, self-control, and calm deliberation are good in many respects and constitute part of the inner worth of the human person. Despite this inner worth or inner beauty or goodness, there must be the qualification of the relational actions towards the other human beings and to the self as such. Thus, the inner goodwill directs this mode of acting, and is not good because of what it effects or accomplishes, or because of its adequacy to achieve some proposed end; it is good only because of its willing, that is, it is good of itself. As Immanuel Kant in his argument on Categorical Imperative would put it, goodwill is prerequisite to morality. To advance his proposition he said in his work, *Critique of Pure Reason*, that "nothing in the world – indeed nothing even beyond the world – can possibly be conceived which could be called good without qualification, except a goodwill".⁷³

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- ⁴¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 49-195.
- ⁴² D. A. Masolo, *African Philosophy in search of Identity* (Nairobi: Eastern African Educational Publishers, 1995), pp. 92–93.
- ⁴³ Mary Noble, UK and Iet Veenland, Netherlands. *Humanity and Gender: Utu na Undugu, A Gathering of Vision in a Time of Change*. Cf. www.templatenetwork.org ⁴⁴ Mary Noble, UK and Iet Veenland, Netherlands. *Loc. cit.*
- ⁴⁵ Okot p’Bitek, “Sociality of Self”. *African Philosophy* ed. by Emmanuel Eze (Malden, Massachusetts: Blackwell Publishers Inc., 1998), pp. 73–74.
- ⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 74.
- ⁴⁷ Baron d’Holbach was a French-German author, philosopher, encyclopaedist and a prominent figure in the French Enlightenment. The quoted work was originally published under the name of Jean-Baptiste de Mirabaud, a deceased member of the French Academy of Science. D’Holbach wrote and published this book – possibly with the assistance of Diderot but with the support of Jacques-André Naigeon – anonymously in 1770, describing the universe in terms of the principles of philosophical materialism.
- ⁴⁸ Paul Henri Thierry Baron D’Holbach, *The System of Nature*, Vol. 1 Paperback – January 10, 2007. ⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, Vol. 1, Chap XI “Of the System of Man's free agency”: “In despite of the gratuitous ideas which man has formed to himself on his pretended free-agency; in defiance of the illusions of this suppose intimate sense, which, contrary to his experience, persuades him that he is master of his will, all his institutions are really founded upon necessity: on this, as on a variety of other occasions, practice throws aside speculation.” This if taken would demean the experiential understanding of the human being as such.
- ⁵⁰ Virgil V. Topazio, “Diderot's Supposed Contribution to D’Holbach's Works”, in *Publications of the Modern Language Association of America*, LXIX, 1, 1954, pp. 173–188.
- ⁵¹ The Africans conceive of a plurality of beings. Despite this plurality, these beings affect each other though not in the same capacity. Some beings like God, spiritual beings and human beings have more power than others, in that order. Note that to the Africans, things like water, wind, earthquakes, lightening, thunders and the like are all forces, some as communicators between the higher forms of beings to the lower ones.
- ⁵² Placide Tempels, “Bantu Ontology”. *African Philosophy* ed. by Emmanuel Eze (Malden, Massachusetts: Blackwell Publishers Inc., 1998), pp. 430–432. ⁵³ Tempels, *op. cit.*, p. 432.
- ⁵⁴ *Ibid.*
- ⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 433-434.

- ⁵⁶ See the critical analysis given by Stephen O. Okafor, “Bantu philosophy: Placide Tempels revisited” in *Journal of Religion in Africa*, XIII, Fasc. 2, Leicester, UK: Brill, 1982, pp. 80–100.
- ⁵⁷ http://www.karibu-stenger.net/de/articles/african_philosophy2.shtml ⁵⁸ Ibid.
- ⁵⁹ Mogobe B. Ramose, “Alexis Kagame on the Bantu Philosophy of Be-ing, Aristotle’s *Categoriae*, and *De Interpretatione*” in *Re-ethnicizing the Minds?: Cultural Revival in Contemporary Thought* edited by Thorsten Botz-Bornstein, Jürgen Hengelbrock. Netherlands: Rodopi B. V., 2006, pp. 53-61.
- ⁶⁰ Kwasi Wiredu (Ed.), *A Companion to African philosophy* (Wiley-Blackwell, 2005), p. 234.
- ⁶¹ Alexis Kagame, *La philosophie bantu-rwandaise de l’être*, ARSC., Classe des Sc. mor et pol. N. S., XII, 1, (Bruxelles, ARSC., 1956). ⁶² Ibid., 1976a:17 ⁶³ Ibid.
- ⁶⁴ Ibid.
- ⁶⁵ Alexis Kagame, *loc. cit.*, (1956), pp. 120–124.
- ⁶⁶ Stephen O. Okafor, *loc. cit.*, p. 33.
- ⁶⁷ D. A. Masolo, *Africa in search of an Identity* (Nairobi: East African Educational Publishers, 1995), p. 48.
- ⁶⁸ Ibid., pp. 48-49.
- ⁶⁹ Kenneth D. Kaunda, *Humanism in Zambia and a Guide to its Implementation Part II*. Some sections are from pages 13-16.
- ⁷⁰ *The New African Bible* (Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 2012), Matthew 22:37.
- ⁷¹ Ibid., Matthew 22: 39. ⁷² Kaunda, *loc. cit.*
- ⁷³ Arthur J. Minton and Thomas A. Shipka (Ed.), “Immanuel Kant’s Critique of Pure Reason”. In *Philosophy: Paradox and Discovery* (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1982), p. 271.