THE CONCEPT OF 'UBUNTU' IN AFRICAN ENVIRONMENTAL ETHICS VIS-A-VIS THE PROBLEM OF CLIMATE CHANGE

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Synopsis

Climate change is a global environmental issue that threatens humanity and the concept of 'Ubuntu' which means 'humanness' would be useful in the conversation for climate change mitigation and adaptation. With the rising global temperature changes to climate, the paper reflects on some critical questions such as: how can African environmental ethics make an epistemic contribution to the conversation on climate change mitigation and adaptation strategies? I argue that the issue of climate change is a problem rooted in anthropocentric activities, individualistic values and capitalism can be minimized by integrating the ideologies of 'Ubuntu' as a cultural value in African environmental ethics into the dialogue on climate change adaptation approaches. Beyond the scientific, political and legal issues involved in the approaches, it is pertinent to consider divergent cultural ethical values in formulating policy for climate change adaptation. I recommend that the ideologies of Ubuntu should be integrated with other ethical principles aimed at providing a solid base for adapting to the problem of climate change.

Keywords: *African Environmental Ethics, Climate Change, Ubuntu*

1.0   Introduction

I argue that climate change as a problem rooted in anthropocentric activities, individualistic values and capitalism can be minimized by integrating the ideologies of 'Ubuntu' as a cultural value in African environmental ethics into the dialogue on climate change adaptation approaches. The complexity of the existing global environmental predicaments and the debates surrounding the questions of intrinsic value, obligation of humans to environment gave rise to various environmental ethical theories, namely:, radical ecology, ecofeminist ethics, animal-ethics, anthropocentric ethics, biocentric ethics, normative-ethics, ecocentric ethics etc. One of the principal characteristics linking these environmental ethical theories is their foundation in Western outlook and cultural experiences. Given that climate change is an anthropogenic problem beyond the Western perspectives; it is imperative to conceptualize African idea of 'Ubuntu' as a distinctive environmental ethical theory.

In this paper, I demonstrate how the ontological framework of the African conception of environment and the interconnectedness of human beings with nature construed in the concept of 'Ubuntu' will lessen the challenges of climate change. One cannot doubt the fact that the global environmental challenges are terrifying and they are a clear indication that the earth is gradually breaking down.. Guattari accentuates this concern:

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> The earth is undergoing a period of intense techno-scientific transformations. If no remedy is found, the ecological disequilibrium this has generated will ultimately threaten the continuation of life on the planet's surface. Alongside these upheavals, human modes of life, both individual and collective, are progressively deteriorating. It is the relationship between subjectivity and its exteriority—be it social, animal, vegetable or Cosmic—that is compromised in this way, in a sort of general movement of implosion and regressive infantilization. (Guattari, 2001:27)

The claim made by Guattari about the distressing transformation of the earth is more prevalent in the continent of Africa. It is paradoxical that Africa, while currently responsible for a negligible amount of total global greenhouse gas emissions, is under significant threat from climate change (UNEP, 2012:1). The climate change crisis is fear-provoking because the 5th Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Assessment Report, states that Africa is particularly vulnerable to climate change and changes in precipitation levels, likely increase in temperature extremes and rising sea levels will have a wide range of direct and indirect impacts on Africa.

With the rising global temperatures changes to climate, the paper reflects on some critical questions such as: how can African environmental ethics make an epistemic contribution to the conversation on climate change mitigation and adaptation strategies? What is the relevance of 'Ubuntu' in African environmental ethics in the crusade for climate change mitigation, disaster reduction and adaptation strategies in the world?   This paper attempts to answer these interrogatives by exploring the cultural values of 'Ubuntu' in African environmental ethics as one of the values for climate change mitigation approaches.

In doing my exploration, this paper shall examine some key concepts, African environment and African environmental ethics, and climate change so as to provide more clarity to the subject matter. I divide the paper into four sections. The first part of my paper describes the ontological framework of African environment as the groundwork for theorizing the concept of 'Ubuntu'. The second part discusses the problematique of climate change as an existential threat, specifically in three areas, namely: food security, human health and environmental sustainability. The third showcases how the ideologies of 'Ubuntu' and how those features can be integrated in the discourse on climate change mitigation. The fourth part gives an evaluation of the work and concludes the paper. The study adopts the philosophical tools of conceptual, comparative and critical analyses.

2.0   Environment, African Environment and Climate Change: Conceptual Analysis

Etymologically, the term environment is derived from a French world *'environia'*, which means to surround or enclose. The Oxford English Dictionary defines the term as the area surrounding a place or thing; the environs, surroundings, or physical context. A simple definition of an environment can be stated as a system encompassing all biotic and abiotic elements affecting human life. The biotic or living components comprise all flora and fauna, and abiotic components include water, sunlight, air, climate, etc

The term 'Africa Environment' is used to characterize the indigenous people living in the second biggest continent in the world; a continent bordered to west by Atlantic Ocean, situated south of Europe and bordered east by the Indian Ocean. Africa environment has an area coverage of 11, 617, 000 square miles with over 1 billion inhabitants. The environment of Africa is rich with biodiversity of animals and plants, and the continent is predominantly dominated by landforms, water body, vegetations and densely population.

Climate Change

The term *'climate change'* has become an issue of global concern that demands epistemic consideration. This is because the noticeable threats associated with it permeate through the social fabrics, cultural, and economic structure of the society. This is why the term has gained an entrance into the political sphere of different countries in the world where systemic and responsive approaches are deliberated. The most comprehensive definition on climate change was given in the Fourth Assessment Report of Inter-governmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) as 'the change in the state of the climate that can be identified (e.g., by using statistical tests) by changes in the mean and /or the variability of its properties, and that persists for an extended period typically decades or longer'.(IPCC, 2007). This implies that the change in climate occurs for a longer period of time and the change is measurable.

3.0   Ontological Framework of African Environment as the groundwork of 'Ubuntu'

The conception of African environment differs from the Western idea of environment. Unlike the Westerners that holds a dualistic account of reality of environment; African idea of reality is combined, united and harmonized of natural forces. The ontological conception of African environment is situated in its cosmological account. Traditional African thought sees nature as holistic and as an interconnected continuum of humans and natural objects which exist in harmony. Reality is a holistic community of mutually reinforcing natural life forces consisting of human communities (families, villages, nations, and humanity), spirits, gods, deities, stones, sand, mountains, rivers, plants, and animals (Polycarp, 2014:2).

In the Africanized world view, there is no gap between the self and the phenomenal world: 'One is simply an extension of the other. Dixon Vernon gives the ontological connection between the self and the phenomenal world as:

> there is a narrowing of perceived conceptual distance between the observer and the observed. The observed is perceived to be placed so close to the individual that it obscures what lies beyond it, and so that observer cannot escape responding to it. The individual also appears to view the 'field' as itself responding to him, i.e...Although it may be completely objective and inanimate to others, because it demands response it is accorded a kind of life of its own. (Dixon, 1976:.61)

Given this conception of self and its relationship to the phenomenal world, Dixon Vernon avers,

> African experience harmony with nature. Their aim is to maintain balance or harmony among the various aspects of the universe. Disequilibrum may result in troubles such as human illness, drought, or social disruption....According to this orientation, magic, voodoo, mysticism are not efforts to overcome a separation of man and nature, but rather the use of forces in nature to restore a more harmonious relationship between man and the universe. The universe is not static, inanimate or 'dead', it is a dynamic, animate, living and powerful universe. (Dixon, 1976:62-63)

Interpreting the above claim, it means that African conceives nature in connection with human beings in an inseparable connection because of the established harmony. Thus, there is no dichotomy between objects and subjects in African idea of environment. Leopold Senghor argues that for traditional Africans, "the whole of the universe appears as an infinitely small and at the same time an infinitely large, network of life forces which emanate from God and end in God, who is the source of life.(Senghor, 1995: 49). This explains why reality in African conception of environment is a holistic community of mutually reinforcing natural life forces consisting of human communities (families, villages, nations, and humanity), spirits, gods, deities, stones, sand, mountains, rivers, plants, and animals.

In African ontology of environment, everything in reality has a vital force or energy such that the harmonious interactions among them strengthen reality. There is no such thing as dead matter: every being, everything-be it only a grain of sand-radiates a life force, a sort of wave-particle; and sages, priests, kings, doctors, and ontist artists all use it to help bring the universe to its fulfilment.(Senghor, 1995:49).   Africans believe that environment, taken as land is a gift from God and anything that disrupts will the sacredness should be avoided.

Concept of 'Ubuntu' in African Environmental Ethics

The concept of *Ubuntu is central to African environmental ethical principles and standpoints.* Etymologically, *Ubuntu* originates from the Xhosa expression *umuntu ngumuntu ngabanye Bantu*, but the exact meaning has been controversial.(Lesley, 2012:67) Ubuntu interpreted as humanness is an African philosophical tool for engaging moral, political and societal issues. Mogobe Ramose gives an extensive explanation of the idea of Ubuntu construed as humanness in the light of being and becoming human. *H*e argues that the prefix *Ubu-*, evokes the general idea of enfolded be-ing, that is oriented towards *–ntu*, that is, towards unfoldment in the concrete manifestation of being (Ramose, 2005:36). This derivation indicates the dynamism of humanness.

Furthermore, Murove (2009: 316) claims that *Ubuntu* (humanness) is the concrete form of *ukama* (relatedness) in the sense that 'human interrelationship within society is a microcosm of the relationality within the universe'. This implies that the interconnectedness between people and between people and nature finds expression in *Ubuntu.* Towing in this line of thoughts, Ramose (2009: 41) avers: 'humanness suggests both a condition of being and the state of becoming, of openness or ceaseless unfolding. It is thus opposed to any, '-ism', including humanism, for this tends to suggest a condition of finality, a closedness or a kind of absolute either incapable of, or resistant to, any further movement'.

Humanness is tied to the web of interconnectedness between human beings and with an ever-changing and complex (biophysical) world. As Biesta (2006:9) puts it,'*ubuntu* involves the 'coming into presence' of the self in a changing social and biophysical world. The implication of this is that the affirmation of each person is tied to another person through Ubuntu. Metz (2011: 537) observes that, "one can be more or less of a person, self or human being, where the more one is, the better". As such, the ultimate goal in life should be to *become* a Person. That is "a (complete) person, a (true) self or a (genuine) human being".

As a normative principle, the mutuality in the interconnectedness of self with the social and natural lays the foundation for the ethics of care for others and nature. This does not make Ubuntu an ecocentric ethic, but ecosophy. Enslin and Horsthemke (2004:86) argue that 'Ubuntu' as an ecosophy would connect society, self, and nature together. By connecting the three ecologies together, the principle of 'Ubuntu' will help to maintain harmony in the world. Ramose shares his views:

> Humane relations are characterized by human equality, reciprocity and solidarity, reflecting the idea that "one human being is deemed to be the same thing, namely, a human being in relation to another human being" and by the principle of sharing the joys and sorrows of life, the goods of the earth and personal property. Thus, as Ramose summarizes his view, "[s]haring and caring for one another are basic tenets of African morality" (Ramose, 2005:102).

Ogungbemi theorizes the ethics of care and nature-relatedness in line with an understanding of environmental protection and conservation practices of traditional African values. In his view, "the ethics of nature- relatedness can be stated as an ethics that leads human beings to seek to co-exist peacefully with nature and treat it with some reasonable concern for its worth, survival and sustainability (Ogungbemi, 1997: 208-209). His argument also supports the claim of 'Ubuntu' that human and nature are mutually connected and the harmony between them is maintained through the ethics of care.

At the heart of Ubuntu as a normative theory is the idea of community that moderates the relationship between nature and humans. The concept of Ubuntu expresses the idea that the relationship between nature and human should be pivoted on solidarity, identity and respect. This is why (LenkaBula 2008: 378) argues that: 'no person is complete in him/herself; s/he is fully human in as far as s/he remains a part of the web of life, including creation and the earth". Human relations within the web of interconnectedness are imperative and should be built on cooperation in the cosmos. African environmental ethics

Godfrey Tangwa's theory of 'eco-bio-communitarianism', which he espoused in his paper: *Some African Reflections on Biomedical and Environmental ethics*, corroborates the communitarian nature of 'Ubuntu' ideologies in African traditional environment. The metaphysical conception of the inter-dependence and peaceful co-existence between earth, plants, animals and humans is grounded on communality. According to Tangwa, the differences which the African traditional worldview recognizes between these realities do not suppose that human beings have any mandate or special privilege to subdue, dominate, and exploit the rest of creation.

It is clear from the preceding that 'Ubuntu' as a concept in African environmental ethics is a necessary tool for interrogating various environmental and societal crises. I shall explore some problema of climate change before highlighting how the cultural values of Ubuntu can be employed in the discourse on mitigation.

4.0 Problems of Climate Change in Africa

Climate change is the foremost environmental debacle that poses existential threat to Africa. The problem of understanding climate change (or global warming) is one of the major challenges confronting African people, their governments and the African Union (AU) (1SS, 2010:1). The part will unearth the issue of climate change as existential and environmental threat in Africa specifically in three areas, namely food security, human health and environmental sustainability.

Climate Change as a Threat to Food Security

The increased temperatures and a greater possibility of excessive weather events resulting from climate change increases the threat of drought and magnifies the problem of flood, soil erosion, and water scarcity in Africa. The corollary of these problems is risk to agricultural yield, loss of livestock and acute food shortage. The looming danger of climate change to food security was declared by United Nations Development Program as:

> the progress in human development achieved over the last decade may be slowed down or even reversed by climate change, as new threats emerge to water and food security, agricultural production and access, and nutrition and public health. The impacts of climate change – sea-level rise, droughts, heat waves, floods and rainfall variation – could by 2080 push another 600 million people into malnutrition and increase the number of people facing water scarcity by 1.8 billion. (UNDP, 2008:1)

It is depressing to state that the declaration implies that the climate change problem in Africa might not be solved.. Climate change is affecting all four dimensions of food security in Africa, i.e. food availability, food accessibility, food utilization and food systems stability; it will also have an impact on food production and distribution channels, as well as changing purchasing power and market flows. Its impacts will be both short term, resulting from more frequent and more intense extreme weather events, and long term, caused by changing temperature and precipitation patterns (FAO, 2010). Constraints on water availability are a growing concern in Africa, and climate change will exacerbate this situation. Conflicts over water resources will have implications for both food production and people's access to food in conflict zones (Gleick, 1993:15).

Africa's food security situation is essentially worrisome. Mendelsohn et al (2009:16) observe that 'of the 36 countries worldwide currently identified as food insecure, 21 are in Africa. This claim raises some questions worth engaging: how will the people survive the imminent risk of climate change? What are the steps to be taken to ensure constant food supply? What can be done to lessen the negative impact of climate change on food security and maximize the happiness of the people? What are the ethical principles to be applied to find balance between food security and climate change?

One of the responses to these questions is made clear by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO). The organization stresses that 'changes in agricultural practices will be required to respond to these impacts including changes to crop species, new irrigation techniques, the use of different fertilizer inputs, seasonal changes and sowing dates' (FAO, 2007). One of the ethical values that can be applied to find balance between food securities could be harnessed from the ideologies of Ubuntu.

Climate Change as a Threat to Human Health

Climate change is the single principal health threat facing humanity. The continent of Africa is the most susceptible to this threat. In the view of World Health Organisation: 'while no one is safe from these risks, the people whose health is being harmed first and worst by the climate crisis are the people who contribute least to its causes, and who are least able to protect themselves and their families against it - people in low-income and disadvantaged countries and communities' (WHO, 2010). The continent of Africa appears helpless given the threatening effects of climate change. Most of the African countries are still struggling with economic instability, threat of insecurity, poor health architecture, bad leadership and underdevelopment. Presently, climate change has become the most dangerous threat to health in Africa.

Climate change as a threat to human health can be directly or indirectly. The direct threat affects the people almost immediately causing a series of diseases. Whilst climate defines the geographical distribution of infectious diseases, weather influences the timing and severity of epidemics. Diseases transmitted by mosquitoes, for example, are particularly sensitive to variations in climate. Warmth accelerates the biting rate of mosquitoes and speeds up the maturation process of the parasites they carry. Sub-Saharan Africa is already home to the most efficient mosquito species and to the most severe forms of malaria. Rising temperatures are likely to accelerate the life cycle of the malaria parasite and to spread malaria to new areas (Chan, 2007:14)

Indirectly, climate change is undermining many of the social determinants for good health, such as livelihoods, equality and access to health care and social support structures. These climate-sensitive health risks are disproportionately felt by the most vulnerable and disadvantaged, including women, children, ethnic minorities, poor communities, migrants or displaced persons, older populations, and those with underlying health conditions (WHO, 2010).

Climate change is an existential concern because it can affect human health by changing the severity, duration, or frequency of health problems and by creating unprecedented or unanticipated health problems or health threats in places or populations where they have not previously occurred. World health organization asserts that:

> that the indirect impacts of climate change on health are not the result of isolated extreme weather events, but of the gradual erosion of "natural, economic and social systems that sustain health, and which are already under stress in much of the developing world." Vector-borne diseases such as malaria, and infections associated with undernutrition, are likely to spread with climate change affecting those who lack access to affordable food, clean water, and who are already suffering from medical conditions (WHO, 2009)

5.0   Ideologies of 'Ubuntu' in Climate Change Adaptation Capacity Discourse

According to the IPCC, the term "adaptive capacity" represents "the ability of a (human) system to adjust to climate change (including climate variability and extremes) to moderate potential damages, to take advantage of opportunities, or to cope with the consequences." (IPCC, 2011:365). In Africa, the limited availability of comprehensive and implementable adaptation policies at the national level prevent government bodies from responding in a similar way, and therefore reduce their adaptive capacity. This is why new ideologies are imperative to the discourse on climate change adaptation capacity.

Meanwhile, the overwhelming majority of climate studies indicate that human activity is causing rapid changes to the climate, which will cause severe environmental damage. There is a strong scientific consensus on the issue. Studies published in peer-reviewed scientific journals show that 97 percent of climate scientists agree that climate warming is from human activities (ACT, 2009:46). At this point in earth's physical history, our impact on the environment is so substantial that scientists believe "pristine nature," or ecosystems untouched by human intervention, no longer exist (Bishop, 2017:88).

Climate change is a global environmental debacle that threatens humanity and the concept of 'Ubuntu' which means 'humanness' would be useful in the conversation for climate change mitigation and adaptation. This is because anthropocentric activities of human beings are one of the major causes of climate change. The irrational domination and exploitation of nature has been traced to the biblical injunction in Judeo-Christian, where human beings, created in the image of God and are instructed to "subdue" Earth and to "have dominion" over all other living creatures. This is also evident in the work of Aristotle, who claimed that "nature has made all things specifically for the sake of man" and that the value of non-human things in nature is merely instrumental. The conception of nature from an instrumental point of view has caused monumental environmental crises in the world. Klein made it clear that:

> "what the climate needs to avoid collapse is a contraction in humanity's use of resources; what our economic model demands to avoid collapse is unfettered expansion. Only one of these sets of rules can be changed, and it's not the laws of nature". The idea that capitalism and sustainable development will save us from extinction is a theory that must be set aside as it is precisely this notion that has set us on this apocalyptic path. A key reason why the modern individual is not taking climate change seriously enough to motivate the needed collective post-haste behavior is that such actions directly challenge the Western individualistic-capitalistic paradigm where humankind is seen as autonomous and separated from nature (Klein, 2014:61).

The ideology of 'Ubuntu' in African environmental ethics considers nature as an end in itself which should be respected for its own sake. In African ontological conception of environment, nature is considered sacred and exists in harmoniously with humans. In the account of 'Ubuntu', nature has intrinsic value which is rooted in the interconnectedness with human beings and as such deserves moral consideration and obligation of care. In the notion of family relation with nature, Ukpokolo Isaac (2017:199) upholds that "humanity is part of a community of nature and just as members of a community co-operate for the good of all, so should we co-operate with nature".

Ironically, the reality today is that human beings no longer cooperate with nature as member of the community. Anthropogenic chemical pollution poses one of the largest causes of environmental threats to humanity. It has been estimated that trillions of ton of chemically active material are discharged into the environment by mining, mineral processing, farming, construction and energy production (Cribb, 2021:83). No doubt, the benefits of synthetic chemicals to everyday life are undeniable but their deliberate and unintentional release into the wider environment is a direct consequence of economic development. In the view of HBN (2019:92)

> Between climate change and toxic chemicals, it could be easy to push toxic chemicals to the side as a someday problem and choose to tackle climate change first. But the truth is that the impacts of toxic chemicals are real and happening today and will only get worse in a warming world. These two issues are connected and influence each other's outcomes. Climate change can have a big impact on the world, but caring about toxic chemicals can reduce the negative consequences that climate change will have on chemicals, and consequently on us (HBN, 2019:92).

The communitarian ideology of 'Ubuntu' that is centered on the well-being of the community would not allow irrational exploitation of nature and the natural resources. Behrens Kelvin argues that African moral communities constitute entities such as ancestors, the living, future generations that form part of the web of life and virtue is achieved through maintaining harmonious relationships that prioritize neither the individual nor the community while respecting both. The communitarian principle will help to solve the problem of consumerism and exploitative attitude towards nature. This is because the teleological conception of the environment is an African metaphysics that considers that human beings should use natural resources to their benefits and should maintain harmony with nature in the cosmic web of relationship. This should be the ideal because nature deserves moral considerability. For Behrens Kelvin, what grants moral considerability is the web of interconnectedness and all entities are necessarily part of the web. This is the basis for mutual obligation. He avers that:

> that African environmental ethics would regard all living beings, some inanimate entities such as rivers, rocks, mountains, forests, ocean currents, winds, and even the atmosphere, as morally considerable because all entities have life-force, though in gradations, and they play systemically important roles in the flourishing of other aspects of nature. (Behrens, 2014:82)

In the African traditional worldview, maintaining harmony in the interconnectedness would help human beings by preventing natural disaster, sickness and ill-luck. On the contrary, disrupting harmony would result in negative consequences that are detrimental to human existence. Today, we are disrupting the harmony in nature through the burning of fossil fuels. The burning of fossil fuels is one of the primary causes of current climate change, altering the Earth's ecosystems and causing human and environmental health problems. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has found that emissions from fossil fuels are the dominant cause of global warming. I argue that we need to apply the principle of Ubuntu in order to balance harmony with nature . We cannot avoid the use of chemicals.

The ideology of Ubuntu is against the values of individualistic tendencies and capitalistic exploitation of nature. Global Warming which is caused by human activity is rooted in a social and economic system that has a parasitoid relationship to the Earth upon which we live. Capitalism as a system is highly exploitative of both people and the planet. It is driven by a desperate need for profit and accumulation. But, the question is: is capitalism the major cause of climate change? We cannot cast all the blame on capitalism. The emergence of capitalism is to achieve and adapt to a new level of productivity by new production models.

However, the individualistic behaviour in the capitalist system raises a lot of questions because of its destructive tendencies. Polychroniou (2018) pointed out that the accumulation of capital is everything. Capital does not care about the earth and its residents. In order to maximize profits, capitalism will not hesitate to creatively destroy the earth and constantly expropriate the natural environment, which is considered as a free gift to capital. I argue that capitalism is profit-driven and the desire to acquire more capital makes it dangerous to the well-being of the environment. Hence, capitalism needs to be better constrained by society, whether it is social norms or even government legislation. This can be achieved if the interconnectedness of nature in 'Ubuntu' ideologies is applied.

6.0   Evaluation and Conclusion

A careful analysis of the concept of Ubuntu in African environmental ethics shows that the idea is compatible with Western thinking. There is a shade of this concept in Aristotelian anthropocentric outlook and hierarchical view of environmentalism. Ubuntu as a concept claims that human beings should use nature's resources for their benefits. This aligns with the claims of Aristotle when he said: 'we may infer that after the birth of animals, plants exist for their sake, and that the other animals exist for the sake of man, the tame for use and food, the wild, if not all, at least the greater part of them for food, and for the provision of clothing and various instruments. (Aristotle, 2001:22).

Given that human beings should use nature in Ubuntu's beliefs, but the principle raises a lot of philosophical questions. What is the benchmark for using the natural resources? To what extent should human beings use nature for self-interest? Is there any sanction for taking more than we need? How can nature be used by humans without irrational exploitation? Who is the watchperson to monitor who takes less or more from nature? These questions suggest the view that 'Ubuntu' as a concept is self-contradictory. It is an anthropocentric African environmental theory that draws inspiration from Western anthropocentric thinking.

The concept of Ubuntu is compatible withe deep ecology, a movement initiated by Norwegian philosopher Arne Næss in 1972, with two central ideas. The first is that there must be a shift away from human-centered anthropocentrism to ecocentrism in which every living thing is seen as having inherent value regardless of its utility. Second, that humans are part of nature rather than superior and apart from it, and therefore must protect all life on Earth as they would protect their family or self. The ideologies of 'Ubuntu' shares some similarities with the deep ecology by calling for a reorientation of humanity's relationship with other living beings and systems, Ubuntu like deep ecology could have an enduring influence on the discourse on climate change adaptation.

Moreover, the idea of Ubuntu claims that human beings should use nature and maintain balance in the relationship. The question that comes to mind is: how can such human beings maintain the balance without the faculty of rationality? Again, this is why the principle of Ubuntu is linked with Western anthropocentric thinking. The maintaining of balance in the web of the relationship between humans and nature is done with expression of rationality.

Another objection against the ideology of Ubuntu is the belief in communitarianism. But, some scholars argued that communitarianism is not in the African bloodstream. It is difficult to identify communitarianism with the concept of personhood in an African cosmopolitan setting in a more analytic sense because the communitarian system is expressed in social relations between people within a community. The idea of Ubuntu in communitarianism can only be interpreted within a social and political sphere based on shared humanity (Nagel, 2013:177). This means that the principle of Ubuntu in African communitarianism is refuted because it focuses more on the ethical perspective of human existence while the idea of communitarianism is interpreted from socio-political outlooks.

Even though most African communities are portrayed as communitarian, owing to their communal way of life (Menkiti, 1984: 171), it is not factual that all of them are led by the ideologies of Ubuntu. The uncertainty of human formation in space and time is a function of the prevailing economic situation, social orientation, political attitudes, financial capacity and personal choices. This jettisons the idea of communitarianism in Africa. Most Africans are no longer communalists in the traditional sense (Oguejiofor 2007; Francis 2018). It is important to state that Ubuntu as a humanness concept is rooted in South Africa and some parts of Africa; it does not represent the entirety of all Africa countries. neither alien to other continents. There is an element of communitarian philosophy in the ancient and classical era of philosophy. Markate Daly (1994) states that: 'communal relationships form the fabric of human societies and community-centered philosophy goes back at least to ancient Greece'. However, the concept of Ubuntu existence based on humanness that connects some communities in Southern Africa is central in the discourse of African environmental ethics (Ramose, 1999;54).

Despite the objections raised, the concept of Ubuntu; the ideologies it portrays can help human beings in rethinking our attitude to nature, non-humans and reshaping our anthropocentric activities with caution. The dialogue on climate change adaptation demands that we have an empathic obligation towards nature. Humans should no longer be seen as separated from each other, non-humans, and nature. Rather, human existence is relationally rooted in ecological life (Le Grange 2015: 306). The ideologies of Ubuntu lay emphasis on having harmony with nature. (Klein 2014: 192) observes that ; these communities, e.g. indigenous Africans, live in close proximity to nature and have "strong reciprocal relationships with nature, drawing on local ecosystems on a small scale while caring for and regenerating the land so [that] it continues to provide for them and their descendants" (Klein 2014: 192).

As we approach climate catastrophe, what will be urgently needed is a global democratic plan for the economy to ensure that what resources are left are distributed properly and we can organize our society effectively and fairly when we might be dealing with the effects of climate change for generations to come. It is essential to accept a variety of cultural views that are different from Western perspectives. The ideologies of Ubuntu can provide distinctive viewpoints when categorizing climate change adaptation strategies. It is argued that Africa has inherent strengths that can be utilized for climate change adaptation, such as sustainable and sufficient livelihoods (Skidelsky, 2012: 6).

The quest to find adaptation strategies for climate change at this perilous time is all-inclusive. It is commendable that different countries are developing different approaches to the climate change problem. Beyond the scientific, political and legal issues involved in the approaches, it is pertinent to consider divergent cultural ethical values in formulating policy for climate change adaptation. In conclusion, I recommend that the ideologies of Ubuntu should be integrated with other ethical principles aimed at providing a solid base for adapting to the problem of climate change.

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