

# **El Nino Induced Drought and its Negative Effects in Zimbabwe: Assessed through the Indigenous Knowledge System of *Hunhu/Ubuntu***

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## **Abstract**

This paper seeks to assess El Nino- induced drought from the perspective of the indigenous knowledge system of *hunhu/ubuntu* philosophy and ethic. The research uses two methods: the philosophical (content) analysis and applied ethical theories. Thus, through the philosophical analysis method, the researcher admits and acknowledges that the problems confronting the Southern African countries are many, ranging from drought, war, hunger, corruption and many others and these problems create confusion, suffering and frustration. In such situations, fundamental questions need to be pursued for deeper knowledge and solutions and this pursuit of fundamental questions constitutes the stock-in-trade of philosophy. Thus, fundamental questions are raised on the nature and character of El Nino- induced drought from the perspective of *hunhu/ubuntu* philosophy in order to discover deeper knowledge and ultimate solutions thereto. The argument is that the basic premises governing the African people's world-view and existence have to be taken into account on the issue of El Nino- induced drought. The African world-view is deemed absolutely necessary in order to infuse the academic field with *hunhu's/ubuntu's* rational interpretation of El Nino- induced drought. The ethical theory of *hunhu/ubuntu* will help Zimbabweans to reason more clearly about principles of action and unravel the logical knots in their unpacking of the ethical problem of El Nino- induced drought. *Hunhu/Ubuntu* is the proper and correct tool picked to probe the issue since it is a home-grown philosophy that may guide Zimbabweans and enable them to deal with the problem of El Nino- induced drought in a humane manner by drawing on the humanistic values they have inherited throughout their history. The application of *hunhu/ubuntu* addresses the questions of epistemic justice and the need to expand the analytical framework beyond Western orthodoxy that has often and always been the analytic framework within which to engage with problems in Africa and post-colonial societies in general.

**Key Words:** character, El Nino, *hunhu/ubuntu* nature and philosophy

## **Introduction**

That El Nino- induced drought exists and is wreaking havoc in Zimbabwe and other Southern African countries is an undeniable reality. The issue calls for deeper analysis in order to determine its true nature and character since we cannot deal with something we know nothing about. Thus, deeper analysis of concepts is a primary factor because no matter how active we are; how much effort we make, our knowledge creates our world and if there is no deeper knowledge of concepts, no amount of action will make any difference. We may only recreate

modified versions of the same uses and applications again and again; applications that are an external reflection of our emptiness and selfishness. We are responsible for what we reason, because it is at this level that we exercise choice. What we do comes from what we reason and, thus, we cannot separate ourselves from our knowledge by giving autonomy to behaviour. Without deeper knowledge of El Nino, all our efforts are reduced to mere futility or nothingness since the ultimate solution thereto may be essentially contained/realized in the true nature of the same. What is El Nino- induced drought? And how does it exist? Is El Nino natural or man-made (artificial)? These questions are meta-scientific and/or philosophical and thus relevant and important. They assist the researcher to determine the true nature and character of El Nino and its remedies. The indigenous knowledge of *hunhu/ubuntu* has been found and chosen as the proper and correct prism through which to examine the phenomenon and its remedies. The paper argues that the available pieces of information lying unsystematised on El Nino must be rationally assessed through *hunhu/ubuntu*. The information needs *hunhu/ubuntu* in order to be transformed into knowledge that speaks to and represents the Africa mind-heart set or thought pattern. El Nino needs to be harmonized within the *hunhu/ubuntu* system which is defined as a corpus of logically coordinated moral concepts. The basic premises governing the African people's world-view and existence have to be taken into account and must be deemed absolutely necessary in order to infuse the academic field with *hunhu's/ubuntu's* rational interpretation of El Nino. *Hunhu/Ubuntu* must be reasonably applied in the moral debate on El Nino in Zimbabwe and the application must take into account the values of *hunhu/ubuntu* and thus apply the principles of moral/outright condemnation, human dignity, personhood, equality, love, humanness and hard work (human development) at the core of the life of Zimbabweans.

## **Theoretical Framework**

In order to attain the main objectives of this research, analysis of the theoretical frameworks is necessary and needed. This research relied on two methods: philosophical analysis and applied ethics. Philosophical or content analysis is often used by philosophers and involves breaking down philosophical issues in order to bring clarity, consistence and coherence. However, Gyekye (1997: vii) acknowledges that the problems confronting the Africans are many and range from war, hunger, violence, corruption, nation building and many others; these problems create wonder, confusion and frustration. In such situations, fundamental questions and inquiries need to be pursued for clarification. Gyekye (1997: viii) confirmed that the pursuit of fundamental questions constitutes the stock-in-trade of philosophy. For Gyekye (1997), philosophical activity helps in the clarification of issues, and thus, helping to understand them more fully. Philosophers grapple, at the conceptual level, with the problems and issues of their times, providing conceptual and critical responses to and interpretations of the experiences of those times: this fact immediately embeds philosophy in human affairs. El Nino is one of the problems the world is facing and this study employs philosophical analysis as a tool to clarify the issue of El Nino.

Applied ethics is a philosophical examination, from a moral point of view, of particular issues in private and public life which are matters of judgement. It is, thus, the attempt to use

philosophical methods to identify the morally correct course of action in various fields of everyday life. Ethical theories help us to think more clearly about principles of action and unravel the logical knots in our reasoning about ethical problems. Social problems provoke more philosophical reflection and debate than personal problems because of their far-reaching consequences and the conflicts they involve. When people are affected by a practice, many points of views toward that practice are elicited. The resulting disputes should then be settled by rational discussion. Applied ethics is the effort to resolve conflicts or problems rationally, when our automatic responses and implicit rules of action collide with contrary responses and rules. When conflict arises, it becomes necessary for us to provide reasons for them, and thus to engage in philosophical discussion. The purpose of such discussion is to refine our conceptual equipment for supporting or rejecting disputed courses of action so that the course we choose can be rationally justified. There is great need to make an application of the ethics of *hunhu/ubuntu* to the problem of El Nino that is seriously affecting Zimbabweans. Being a difficult and controversial moral issue Zimbabwean society is facing, El Nino has to be assessed from an ethical point of view.

### **Understanding El Nino**

The researcher's argument is that practical knowledge of the subject matter or what we are dealing with is necessary. It is not only dangerous but inhuman to deal with that we know not about. It is an act against our human fundamental need to know or be wise. Thus, the pieces of information on El Nino available must be properly assessed, analysed and synthesized and thus be transformed into an edifice of knowledge. The difficult questions are: What is El Nino? Is El Nino what people sensually believe it to be? Is El Nino natural or artificial, (man-made)? These questions are pertinent since they drive the researcher to search and look deeper into the true nature of the problem under analysis. My argument is that people are ignorant of what El Nino really is since they consider it a natural phenomenon. El Nino is not natural but artificial (man-made) and if the researcher is correct, then the available efforts to confront it are founded on ignorance and may lead to total destruction of nature itself. However, for clarity and consistence on the issue of El Nino, the researcher utilizes and/or relies on common sense understanding, the philosophies of Heraclitus, Plato and Aristotle.

### **El Nino and Common Sense**

This section focuses on common sense knowledge of El Nino. The researcher relies on information available in the media and internet. What is El Nino? The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) answers:

During normal conditions in the Pacific Ocean, trade winds blow west along the equator, taking warm water from South America towards Asia. To replace that warm water, cold water rises from the depths — a process called upwelling. El Niño and La Niña are two opposing climate patterns that break these normal conditions. Scientists call these phenomena the El Niño-Southern Oscillation (ENSO) cycle. El Niño and La Niña can both have global impacts on weather,

wildfires, ecosystems, and economies. Episodes of El Niño and La Niña typically last nine to 12 months, but can sometimes last for years.

The quote is a clear and distinct answer on what El Nino and La Nina are. The contrast made between El Nino/La Nina and the normal conditions in the Pacific Ocean is relevant and important. Upwelling is the natural and normal process or climate condition and El Nino and La Nina are two extreme opposed powers/forces that break the Pacific Ocean's normal conditions (upwelling). This connotes that El Nino and La Nina are not normal and/or natural climate forces but abnormal and/or artificial. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration further reports that:

El Niño brings high temperatures and below-average rainfall to Southern Africa from November to April, significantly affecting agriculture and leading to water scarcity, food shortages, and disease outbreaks. A record mid-season dry spell of over 30 days has affected vast parts of the region including, Angola, Botswana, DRC, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, Zambia and Zimbabwe. These areas have received the lowest rainfall for the late January/February timeframe in at least 40 years.

The report is current and new and it clearly states that El Nino is extremely negative and destructive. Zimbabwe and other Southern African countries are currently experiencing its atrocious effects. Thus, El Nino is an extreme negative power/energy with extreme negative impacts/effects. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration reports:

During the October-November-December (OND) season, erratic rainfall alternated between below and above-average patterns in the region. Northern parts experienced above-average rainfall, while excessive rains in October hindered planting in central and eastern regions. However, most southern and central areas faced below-average rainfall and delayed rains, leading to poor crop growth. Moreover, below-average harvests are anticipated. Well below average vegetation was noted in key livestock-dependent regions like southern Angola, Namibia, Botswana, southern Zambia, and western Zimbabwe, with reports of livestock deaths. The situation is likely to worsen with the ongoing dryness and projected below normal rainfall. El Niño will likely increase humanitarian needs in central and southern regions affected by 2023 climate shocks, where poor households have already depleted food reserves. Livelihood opportunities for affected communities will also decrease, impacting around 70 per cent of people relying on rain-fed agriculture for food, income, and employment.

However, the quote is a summary of the extreme negative effects of El Nino in Zimbabwe and other Southern African countries which are suffering drought, floods, cholera and cyclones. However, before the researcher finally decides on El Nino's artificiality, there need to make a

quick historical philosophical survey of El Nino and thus engage Heraclitus, Plato and Aristotle.

### **Philosophical and Historical Survey of El Nino**

This section is a philosophical historical investigation on the nature and character of El Nino. The researcher needs to further demonstrate that El Nino is artificial and Heraclitus will assist on this issue.

### **Heraclitus and Nature**

Heraclitus is the father of the natural sciences and his ideas are used to show that El Nino is not natural. Heraclitus is known for his famous statement: "You cannot step twice in the same river." This is because the waters you stepped in could have gone! Like the flowing waters, nature is constantly changing and nothing is static. Change is what defines nature/world. Thus, Heraclitus (546-500 BC) is known as the philosopher of change, and this concept deeply occupied his mind (cited in Bailie, 1995: 241). Heraclitus gives this study a true experience of nature/change as he defines it as force, power or energy that naturally exists. For Heraclitus, as a force or power, change is not experienced directly but indirectly through motion/movement. Thus, change is the inner subtle power/energy/force in all things. This power is not either/or but exhibits both positive and negative and/or constructive and destructive traits.

Heraclitus' argument is that all things come into being through opposition, and are in flux (Stumpf, 1993: 13). A correct understanding and interpretation of Heraclitus' thought is that in opposition there is antagonism and war which cause flux/change. Change is this opposition (the coexistence of positive and negative), and it is this opposition that creates great wild force/energy/power. Thus, change is a great and subtle force/energy/power that makes and unmakes all things. Change is not only negative as the generality of the people of Zimbabwe often think/believe, it also has positive traits. All things come into existence through change and the change, power, energy or force is generated from conflict or opposition which naturally resides in nature or all things. Heraclitus, therefore, wants to convince his contemporaries and, seemingly, the generation to come that there is no being without power or violence; there is an element of change in all things. In other words, all things need change for them to exist, and change for them is an expression of the life process (May, 1972: 100).

Heraclitus argues for the coexistence of both the positive and negative aspects of change, and these contraries or opposites make things change. Thus, change as an ability or power has a tendency towards both construction and destruction. Both the positive and the negative aspects of change are two sides of the same coin and, hence, cannot be separated. For example, the hand that beats is the same hand that does embrace and the mouth that utters curse and hate is the same mouth that utters blessings and peace. The coexistence of both the positive and the negative aspects of change is what constitutes nature. Heraclitus teaches that the desire for peace, which means the end of change, is false and empty; it is an exercise in futility since nature and human nature is characteristically defined by the coexistence of both negative and

positive aspects of change; construction and destruction. On human nature, UK essays (2017) give us a clue when they opine that everything we do is in our nature as human beings. Love is in our nature, hate is in our nature. War is in our nature, peace is in our nature. Thus, nature is the co-existence of both the positive and the negative aspects of change. UK essays (2017) further argue that humans are not essentially good or bad, but rather both. This probably makes change an amoral and neutral concept.

For Heraclitus, change is not a haphazard movement but a product of universal reason (*logos*) (Stumpf, 1993: 14). Hence, for him, it is reason that controls change. Thus, even at the level of experience, reason can be identified as that which controls nature/change. For Heraclitus, it is change of the most lawless and random kind that is the most likely to conform to the mysterious ordering principle he terms the *logos*. What it means is that reason can create better order from the most disorderly chaos, while best order comes from the worst disorder, and disorder is naturally and necessarily available since nature is negative, destructive and disorderly. The order we see in nature is because there is *logos* or reason in nature. Heraclitus contends thus: “What is in concert and from what differs comes the most beautiful harmony” (Melchert, 1991: 15).

Thus, nature orders itself. This means that from the worst disorder or destruction comes out order/construction! So, the process of change is not a haphazard movement but a process which is the product of universal reason (*logos*) (Stumpf, 1993: 14). Heraclitus understands order in nature as mysterious and the question is why? The answer is that the order is mysterious because it is divine and without human reason or cause and hence cannot be comprehended. Change has its own reason, and, following Heraclitus, Bailie (1995: 241) calls this *logos*, the ‘logic of change’. This logic of change, for Heraclitus, makes it possible for change to both create and destroy. There is reason (*logos*) in change which is responsible for all order, balance and continuity. Heraclitus (cited in Melchert 1991:17) thus argues that change is necessary for it produces not chaos but the opposite. In fact, the divine world order (*logos*) is the guarantee that the balance of the forces is maintained. In change, there is order and continuity, so there is nothing to be afraid of since reason balances or controls the positive and negative effects of change (May 1972: 167). There is reason in change responsible for the order in nature; hence change is necessary because without it reason has nothing to work on. And Aristotle (cited in Stumpf, 1993) says that ‘nature does nothing in vain’; there is always a reason for anything.

The application is that El Nino is not natural because it lacks the normal and natural balance/order which is proper and original character of a force/power. El Nino is only negative with nothing positive to limit/balance it. Thus, El Nino is an artificial pandemic that destroys without control or limit. However, let us consult Plato and Aristotle on the origins of artificial pandemics.

### **Plato and Aristotle on El Nino**

Plato and Aristotle are two Greek, classical thinkers and/or geniuses commonly identified with their extraordinary completeness (Stumpf, 1993: 43). The two are not ordinary but

extraordinary thinkers and so powerful is their comprehensive treatment of speculative knowledge that their theoretical philosophies became the most influential strands in the history of Western technical thought. It is, thus, not by mere coincidence/chance that the researcher mentions them together. The two give solid foundation to Western speculative philosophy/life since it is in the classical period that speculative/theoretical philosophy has its proper foundation. Therefore, it is rational to argue that it is within the imaginative/speculative/theoretical framework that El Nino and La Nina have their origins. Plato imagined that corruption (virus) in the human soul shows that it must consist of the three distinct parts: rational, spirited and desire (Bk. 4:434-441c). Thus, Plato imagined that it is corruption residing in the human nature that separates power into two worlds: super positive/construction (the ultimate desire to know) and super negative/destruction (the ultimate desire to be known). And the spirit (desire) is what keeps the two super powers in balance/equilibrium. Applying this to La Nina and El Nino, La Nina is the super positive and it brings unlimited rains, floods and El Nino is the super negative and it gives us unlimited drought. This is Plato imagining/dreaming and thus La Nina and El Nino are not real but two ideal/artificial super powers; an imitation of the real natural process, upwelling.

Thus, El Nino and La Nina have their origins in the science laboratory (Western technology) and hence we must be morally aware of the cunning and shrewdness of the West. De-Maria, in her article: "Does African Corruption Exist" alerts us to the existence of these Western artificial pandemics in Africa when she wrote that, "the West's construction of African corruption is shallow, oblivious to cultural variance and ultimately designed to serve western economic and geo-political interests under the guise of weeding out something deliberately portrayed as universally negative" (2007: 2). El Nino and La Nina are Western invented corruption (pandemics) in Africa and are to serve Western and Eastern selfish intentions. The West and East are pretending to help Zimbabwe and other Southern African countries to weed out El Nino and its effects, but this is utter deception. Eventually, there will be no more normal and natural weather conditions or patterns (upwelling) but Western inventions, El Nino and La Nina.

However, the degree of difference between Plato and Aristotle is still a matter of careful interpretation. Aristotle oriented his thought to the dynamic realm of becoming, whereas Plato's thought was fixed more upon the static realm of timeless being (Stumpf, 1993: 43). Both thinkers firmly based their philosophies on speculative/theoretical thinking. Aristotle deals with the subject on pandemics/corruption initially in his Book One: "On Generation and Corruption" and in his social and political philosophy. In his Book 1 Part 1 and 2 Aristotle defined corruption as passing-away (death). But the definition defies our common sense knowledge about corruption as given by Heraclitus that corruption is both positive and negative. Aristotle (Bk.I.314a) wrote: "Our next task is to study coming-to-be and passing-away." With Aristotle, positive and negative poles of power are separated and given independent absolute existence. Aristotle imaginatively declared them two separate entities or things and this is technically subtle and dangerous, tantamount to witchcraft (*vuroyi*) and or divination (*vun'anga*). These classical ideas were later intellectually and legally modified and perfected by modern thinkers: Descartes, Spinoza and Leibniz (cf. Stumpf, 1993). The

application is that with Aristotle, El Nino and La Nina become two independent and absolute separate powers that destroy without limit.

### **Nature and Character of *Hunhu/Ubuntu***

This section briefly exposes the nature of *hunhu/ubuntu* before its application to El Nino. *Hunhu/Ubuntu* is the African philosophy of life and if a person lacks *hunhu/ubuntu*, he/she will not interact well with others. Without *hunhu/ubuntu*, love, there are no human relations! A person with *hunhu/ubuntu* is a person who has a heart, manifesting through togetherness, equality, hard-work and respect for oneself and others. Tutu (1999:34-35) argued that, “the philosophy of ubuntu optimizes human respect and dignity that is fundamental in being able to transcend ethnic divisions by working together and respecting others”. Thus, *hunhu/ubuntu* is the love for community, togetherness; the bond that connects and knits humanity together. The community or the bond is not only physical but essentially metaphysical/ontological. In other words, *hunhu/ubuntu* is the heart, love and goodness we ought to have and share with others. The concept of others does not exclusively refer to humans but to reality in its totality: God, humanity and the world/nature. There is no artificiality or the spirit of individualism in *hunhu/Ubuntu*, but originality and humanness.

*Hunhu/Ubuntu* is defined and characterized in many and various ways. The most recent characterization of the concept of *hunhu/ubuntu* was given by Mugumbate *et al* (2020). They understood it as:

A collection of values and practices that people of Africa or of African origin view as making people authentic human beings. While the nuances of these values and practices vary across different ethnic groups, they all point to one thing – an authentic individual human being is part of a larger and more significant relational, communal, societal, environmental and spiritual world.

Generally, the point contained and/or implied in all definitions of *hunhu/ubuntu* is that it speaks of and encompasses the solidarity, unity and interdependence of humans and the acceptance of one’s responsibility to their fellow humans and the world around them. It is a philosophy that essentially supports collectivism over individualism. Thus, the African philosophy of *hunhu/ubuntu* is separate and distinct from the Western philosophy of individualism. *Hunhu/Ubuntu* is not ideal and/or spiritual, but real and metaphysical/ontological. And thus the distinction of *hunhu/ubuntu* from Western philosophy must be clear and distinct.

Mangena (2015 and 2016) outlines the distinction between Western philosophy and *hunhu/ubuntu* philosophy. Mangena’s objective is to show that while Western philosophy is person-centric and is summarized by Descartes’ famous dictum, *Cogito ergo sum* (I think therefore I exists), *hunhu/ubuntu* philosophy is commune-centric, summarized by Pobee’s famous dictum: *Cognatus ergo sum* (I am related by blood, therefore I exist (Mangena, 2016). African philosophy is commune-centric and is summarized in the philosophical dictum “I am because we are and since we are, therefore I am”. Senghor (1964: 72-73) argued that “it is in

the light of the strong relationship between the individual and community that the African approach to self-consciousness originates and therefore should be understood as thus.” He further demonstrated that, “unlike the ‘I think therefore I exist’ of Descartes, the African is drawn to self-consciousness by the presence in community.” The researcher understands Senghor’s argument to mean that it is within the context of being together (community) that the African people’s self-consciousness (epistemology) originates. Therefore, for Senghor:

In contrast to classic European, the Negro-African does not draw a line between himself and the object, he does not hold it at a distance, nor does he merely look at it and analyse it. After holding it at a distance, after scanning it without analysing it, he takes it vibrant in his hands, carefully not to kill or fix it. He touches it, feels it, smells it ... Thus the Negro-African sympathises, abandons his personality to become identified with the Other, dies to be reborn in the Other. He does not assimilate; he is assimilated. He lives a common life with the other; he lives in a symbiosis (1964: 72-73).

Senghor explains the African intuitive reasoning and for this reason Africans firmly hold to the dictum that “I am because we are, and since we are, therefore I am”. The intuitive reasoning is capable of an understanding that goes beyond appearances, of taking in total reality and this is *hunhu/ubuntu*. The African cannot imagine the other as different from him/her in nature/essence. He/she endows the other with a sensibility, a love, a human soul. *Hunhu/ubuntu* is perfect unity of all assimilated and integrated things and thus it is practical and moral. Thus, *hunhu/ubuntu* demands and commands humanity to be good and loving. It is the moral principle that unites and interconnects since relationality, interdependence, friendliness, communality and personhood/humanness are all morally, value-laden key concepts in that philosophy. For this reason, Tutu (1999: 34) writes:

When we want to give high praise to someone we say, ‘*Yu, u nobuntu*’; which means he/she has ubuntu.” Then he/she is generous, hospitable, friendly, caring and compassionate. He/she shares what he/she is and has. It is to say that my humanity is inextricably bound up in yours. We belong in a bundle of life.

Thus, *hunhu/ubuntu* is a distinctive ethic and can contribute significantly to the issue of El Nino- induced drought. Tutu (1999: 34) further added:

It (Ubuntu) speaks about wholeness, it speaks about compassion. A person with ubuntu is welcoming, hospitable, warm and generous, willing to share. Such people are open and available to others, willing to be vulnerable, affirming of others, do not feel threatened that others are able and good, for they have a proper self-assurance that comes from knowing that they belong in a greater whole. They know that they are diminished when others are humiliated, diminished when others are oppressed, diminished when others are treated as if they were less than who they are. The quality of Ubuntu gives people resilience,

enabling them to survive and emerge still human despite all efforts to dehumanize them.

*Hunhu/Ubuntu* is thus substantially rich and fecund and morally attractive. It efficaciously incorporates values of human justice, righteousness, hard-work, care, empathy for others and respect. According to Eze, the core of *hunhu/ubuntu* can best be summarized as follows:

A person is a person through other people strikes an affirmation of one's humanity through recognition of an "other" in his or her uniqueness and difference. It is a demand for a creative inter-subjective formation in which the "other" becomes a mirror (but only a mirror) for my subjectivity. This idealism suggests to us that humanity is not embedded in my person solely as an individual; my humanity is co-substantively bestowed upon the other and me. Humanity is a quality we owe to each other. We create each other and need to sustain this otherness creation. And if we belong to each other, we participate in our creations: we are because you are, and since you are, definitely I am. The "I am" is not a rigid subject, but a dynamic self-constitution dependent on this otherness creation of relation and distance (2008: 387).

*Hunhu/Ubuntu* is inclusive of all humanity and what they have and do. It is the moral instrument through which humanity does everything and without it there is nothing and nothing happens. Mertz (2011: 536-537), in his article "Ubuntu as a moral theory and human rights in South Africa", gives a moral-theoretical interpretation of *hunhu/ubuntu* which is 'A person is a person through other persons'. He writes:

When Nguni speakers state '*Umntu ngumuntu ngabantu*', ... they are not merely making an empirical claim that our survival or well-being are causally dependent on others, ... They are rather in the first instance tersely capturing a normative account of what we ought to most value in life. Personhood, selfhood and humanness ... are value laden concepts. That is, one can be more or less of a person, self or human being, where the more one is, the better. One's ultimate goal in life should be to become a (complete) person, a (true) self or a (genuine) human being.

Thus, the dictum 'a person is a person through other persons' is a moral demand to develop personhood, a moral prescription to achieve and attain *hunhu/ubuntu*, to exhibit humanness towards others and nature. Shutte (2001: 30) sums up the basics of the ethic: "Our deepest moral obligation is to become more fully human. And this means entering more and more deeply into community with others. So although the goal is personal fulfilment, selfishness is excluded." In *hunhu/ubuntu*, emphasis is on human and not technical development. Menkiti writes:

This brings us to the second point of contrast between the two views of man, namely, the *processual* nature of being in the African thought ... the fact that

persons become persons only after a process of incorporation. Without incorporation into this or that community, individuals are considered to be mere dangles to whom the description 'person' does not fully apply. For personhood is something which has to be achieved, and is not given simply because one is born of human seed (1984: 172).

Given that there are two moral views of man: African and Western. The African moral view of man is practically gradual and processual. The human person must pass through a moral process of incorporation or integration. The process essentially includes moral excellence and plenitude at maturation. And this implies that personhood is something that must be achieved and acquired and not simply given. Menkiti further elaborates:

Thus, it is not enough to have before us the biological organism ... We must also conceive of this organism as going through a long process of social ritual transformation until it attains the full complement of excellences seen as truly definitive of man. And during this long process of attainment, the community plays a vital role as catalyst and as prescriber of norms (1984: 172).

Thus, physicality or technical appearance is not adequate to constitute the human person. Physicality is naturally given and not acquired or achieved. Human person is an achievement which is acquired by going through a gradually long process of moral reformation until one attains moral virtues, truly definitive of man/woman. Despite the fact that personhood is something at which individuals could fail, at which they could be competent or ineffective, better or worse (Menkiti, 1984: 173), personhood is a victory which must be won. "The path to that victory lies in the part of our lived morality having to do with reciprocal relationships ..." (Menkiti, 2018: 166). We are all equal in the personhood struggle despite variations in social status and human error. And despite failure and error, community, as an ethical goal, is the reality always to be sought.

Forster (2007: 245), in line with Biko, comparatively believed more in the moral efficacy of *hunhu/ubuntu* in building and establishing human relationships than in Western ethical theories, and he said:

We believe that in the long run the special contributions to the world by Africa will be in the field of human relationships. The great powers of the world may have done wonders in giving the world an industrial and military look, but the great gift still has to come from Africa – giving the world a more human face.

Mugumbate and Nyaguru (2013: 99) agreed with Biko when they argued that: "Ubuntu brings to the world what Western civilization failed to bring. It brings the human face to every aspect of life." *Hunhu/Ubuntu* is different from the Western moral theories, in nature and understanding of human problems, El Nino-induced drought included. From an ethno-philosophical view point, De Craemer encourages and remarks that:

Man/woman is created for the other, that man/woman came to realization, to real being man/woman, in encounter with the other. Man/woman, in order to be really man/woman, has to change, has to take the other into him/her, and has to give him/herself to the other. Only then does man/woman become truly man/woman (1977: 34).

Although De Craemer did not use the concept of *hunhu/ubuntu* it is, however, directly implied in the quotation. *Hunhu/Ubuntu* is the realization that we are created for each other; the self-giving and abandonment of oneself to the other. In *hunhu/ubuntu*, we become true human beings or persons in love of each other. Therefore, in *hunhu/ubuntu*, there is complete human intimate love (practical and real), unity and solidarity. For this reason, according to Biko ( ), Mugumbate and Nyaguru ( ), human relationships grounded in selfless love, harmony, friendliness and community are the great good and the human face Africa offers to the world. Thus, Zimbabwe and other Southern African countries, tormented and bedeviled by El Nino and La Nina, need *hunhu/ubuntu*'s moral light as the vital part of Africa's contribution to help the suffering countries.

### **Application of *Hunhu/Ubuntu* to El Nino**

An El Nino-curbed milieu is a better environment in which to live; hence the moral demand to fight El Nino in Zimbabwe today. Thus, the focus of this section is on how to manage El Nino in Zimbabwe through the indigenous knowledge system of *hunhu/ubuntu*. The researcher's argument is that El Nino must be evaluated through the use of *hunhu's/ubuntu's* concepts of metaphysics, epistemology and human development. There are three types of knowledge: common sense, intellectual/speculative/theoretical and practical/moral. The first two levels/stages or sources of knowledge: common sense and intellectual are subjective and limited, and hence do not give us complete or full knowledge. Practical/moral knowledge of the good is the highest form of knowledge, indeed, wisdom and the heart is the source and faculty through which the metaphysical/ontological knowledge of all reality is obtained. What it entails is that we cannot appeal to the powers of senses and the mind for the true nature and character of El Nino since they are subjective and limited. The heart is thus the only faculty we must rely on in order to arrive at the ontological awareness of El Nino. From the above analysis, we obtain that *hunhu/ubuntu* is the heart/community.

According to Mangena (2015 and 2016), what defines *hunhu/ubuntu* philosophy is the community of faculties in the heart and not the individual faculty of sense and/or mind. The metaphysical question is: What makes a community a community? Is it the sense, mind or the heart? The mind alone is what constitutes the Western community and hence the philosophy of individualism or selfishness. Because of selfishness, the mind is disqualified as a weak tool to deal with El Nino. For the Shona people of Zimbabwe, *munhu mwoyo* (a human being is the heart) and they also say: *Munhu asina mwoyo chitunha, haasi munhu* meaning to say that a human being without heart is a corpse; he/she is not a human being. They also confirm their existence (being) by touching or beating their hearts and say: *Ndini* (I am) and hence the dictum: "I am because we are!" Thus, in *hunhu/ubuntu*, the heart is the

metaphysical/ontological definition of a human being. The Shona also say: *Zivai nomwoyo* (know through the heart) and this is *hunhu/ubuntu* epistemology. For *hunhu/ubuntu*, the heart is the conduit that love builds, while heartlessness is the conduit of hate that destroys. Love is the principle and ground for all *hunhu/ubuntu* values, attributes and properties. Without love there is no generosity, respect, sincerity, harmony and unity, but mere deception and pretence.

Zimbabweans must accept *hunhu/ubuntu* as real, durable and eternal and hence the proper moral framework to understand and deal with El Nino. And thus Zimbabweans must take *hunhu/ubuntu* as their practical moral duty that which eternally commands and guides them without fail in their understanding and dealings with El Nino. Like Heraclitus, *hunhu/ubuntu* views El Nino as an artificially- invented pandemic and thus it essentially belongs to the workings of witchcraft (technology). Faced with mysterious droughts, which are extremely negative and destructive, the Shona say; “*Pane muroyi wakanika dehwe remunhu paruware*” meaning that there a witch who is drying a human skin on the rock. And the remedy or healing to such human- induced droughts/evils is to expose them. And the exposition is not speculative but moral or ontological; third degree or level of awareness (absolute/outright condemnation). *Hunhu/Ubuntu* is philosophical, practical and moral and, therefore, it outrightly condemns induced droughts and there is no space for induced droughts in *hunhu/ubuntu*. Epistemologically, *hunhu/ubuntu* is intuitive and immediate and thus it has deeper and penetrating knowledge of all reality, induced droughts included. It knows that such droughts/evils are caused by the evil people like witches and diviners; who use extreme powers of destruction and construction and the only remedy is to morally expose and condemn them. Once known and exposed at the level of the heart, the evil one loses his/her grip or control of his/her powers. Thus, ignorance is very expensive! Zimbabweans suffer El Nino because of their ignorance, indeed lack of *hunhu/ubuntu*. *Hunhu/Ubuntu* is the moral knowledge/authority that weakens and/or annihilates the evil powers of the Western technology. The call and mandate is that Zimbabweans must morally know and expose the Western evils through *hunhu/ubuntu*.

The West must be taught *hunhu/ubuntu* and hence morally encouraged to be human, loving and good towards reality in its totality: God, humanity and nature. The West must respect nature and stop exploiting and manipulating it for selfish reasons. The natural processes in nature must be restored and maintained. The natural process of upwelling must be restored and El Nino and La Nina must be completely destroyed. The West know upwelling and this is what they say:

Normally, strong trade winds blow westward across the tropical Pacific, the region of the Pacific Ocean located between the Tropic of Cancer and the Tropic of Capricorn. These winds push warm surface water toward the western Pacific, where it borders Asia and Australia. Due to the warm trade winds, the sea surface is normally about 0.5 meter (1.5 feet) higher and 7.2° C (12.96° F) warmer in Indonesia than Ecuador. The westward movement of warmer waters causes cooler waters to rise up toward the surface on the coasts of Ecuador, Peru, and Chile. This process is known as upwelling. Upwelling elevates cold,

nutrient-rich water to the euphotic zone, the upper layer of the ocean. Nutrients in the cold water include nitrates and phosphates. Tiny organisms called phytoplankton use them for photosynthesis, the process that creates chemical energy from sunlight.

The quotes notes clearly that the West know the natural process, upwelling. The difficult questions are: What is wrong with these people? Why are they offended by the natural and normal order and love/good in nature and humanity respectively? Why do they enjoy seeing nature and humanity suffer and die? The West should know that by inventing El Nino and La Nina, they have successfully acquired and achieved for themselves an evil status. The West must have *hunhu/ubuntu* and so put upwelling back to its natural and normal place. They must be human and loving enough and be ashamed of their artificial sciences (technology) which has invented such evils we find in Zimbabwe and other Southern African countries.

If whites are human beings then they must ontologically and epistemologically accept reform and thereby live by the moral principles of *hunhu/ubuntu*, love and good. They must embark on human development and hence grow in *hunhu/ubuntu*, humanness and not technology. In terms of technology, the West has proved that it has great power and capacity, and has done wonders in giving the world an industrial and military look, but it must admit and accept that the greater gift and contribution necessarily comes from African. *Hunhu/Ubuntu* gives the world a more human face in every aspect of life (Forster, 2007: 245). Thus, the West must embrace *hunhu/ubuntu* and develop in the essential dimension of human relationships and love. The West must relate to Africa and the world at large in a more human, loving way. *Hunhu/Ubuntu* is different from the Western moral theories in the nature and understanding of human problems. The West is mind/self-centred and individualistic and the reason why they have invented El Nino is because of selfishness. *Hunhu/Ubuntu* emphasizes human intimate relationships of love; it means humanness, human soul and the essence of being human (Tutu, 1999: 43).

*Hunhu/Ubuntu* brings back normalcy to Zimbabwe and other Southern African counties tormented by the evils brought by El Nino- induced drought. Zimbabweans must know that through *hunhu/ubuntu*, they can annihilate El Nino- induced drought. Digging and sinking more boreholes and construction of more dams are good and recommended reactions and measures that can possibly alleviate El Nino but these measures can confuse, distort and stress humanity and nature. Sinking boreholes is not a completely safe measure since the water underground can possibly get finished while building dams is again a subtle and dangerous method because the earth may fail to hold/contain the water pressure. And so through these measures, we may risk further catastrophes like landslides and/or earthquakes. These measures are limited and can disturb and destroy the natural processes. They are artificial and hence short-lived and concentrate on the part and not the whole of the problem; hence subjectively individualistic and selfish. The measures assist the West to achieve their selfish ends! Not all Zimbabweans can afford to sink boreholes and Zimbabwe cannot afford to build dams for all citizens. And the water from boreholes and dams cannot adequately cater for all Zimbabweans. Only those with the capacity to pay and stay close to the dam benefit from the water. The less

unfortunate members remain exposed to the atrocious effects of El Nino. Therefore, what is natural and normal must be respected and maintained; upwelling. Through *hunhu/ubuntu*, Zimbabweans must respect and take care of nature, within the context/knowledge that nature orders itself and does not need human assistance, as Heraclitus taught us.

### **Concluding Remarks**

The paper was a philosophical discussion on the issue of El Nino and its negative effects in Zimbabwe. The researcher used common sense and rationality to demonstrate that El Nino was an existential threat and is real. Through the philosophy of Heraclitus, the researcher argued that El Nino was not natural but artificial and thus an invention of the West. Thus, El Nino was declared technologically artificial because it lacked the positive-negative balance constitutive of all natural forces/processes. El Nino was found extremely super negative; Plato and Aristotle were identified as the originators and founders of this speculative/theoretical school. Thus, El Nino had its origins in the artificial science laboratory. *Hunhu/Ubuntu* was identified and picked as the better remedy/answer to El Nino- induced drought since it equipped Zimbabweans with wisdom and the moral authority that enabled them to know, expose and condemn Western technology. Once exposed, Western technology would lose its power/force. Ignorance was discovered as the secret or vehicle through which Western technology thrives. Therefore, it was a moral mandate for Zimbabweans to know and expose Western technology. The Shona say that: “*N’anga kana muroyi ikangozivikananwa chete, simba ravo rinobva rapera.*” This means that once known, the evil one loses his/her power. It was discovered that by taking directives from the evil one, that is, sinking more boreholes and constructing more dams, Zimbabweans were helping the enemy to attain his/her selfish ends. And the egoistic end was to distort and annihilate the normal and natural process of upwelling; to make nature fake and artificial.

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