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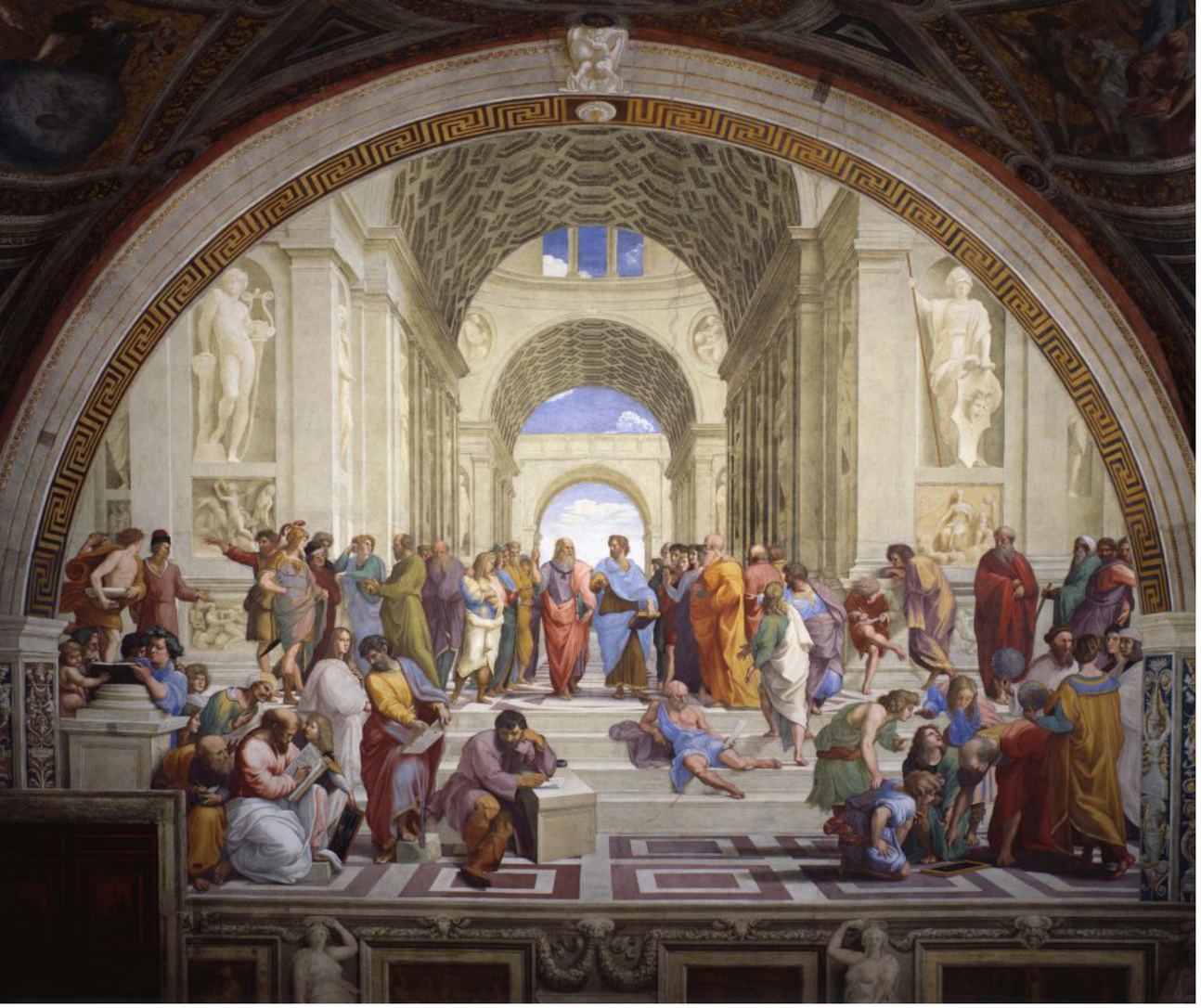

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Critique of the Philosophic Ideal State: Lessons for Underperforming Leaders

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Abstract

This study examines the elements of a good and desirable society from the perspectives of Plato, Aristotle and Hobbes. The paper observes that the challenging conditions in which most countries currently find themselves are similar to what obtained during Plato's era. Plato considers the Aristocratic state governed by well-educated individuals as the best form of government. For Aristotle, an institutionally mixed regime is the best form of administration. For Hobbes, a sovereign head with absolute power should administer the state. In the current era generally, and in African states in particular, most governments appear incapable of successfully managing and administering their territories. Therefore, this paper will consider the kinds of political systems that can become models of good governance for socio-politically and economically challenged countries.

Keywords: good political society, absolute monarch, philosopher king, mixed regime.

Introduction

The objectives of this study are to examine the features of the philosophic ideal state as propounded by Plato, Aristotle and Hobbes; the commonalities and divergences in their views regarding the constitutive elements of a good political society; and their applications for improved systems of governance in the contemporary era. Plato considers the foundation of the ideal state as resting on a well-defined division of labour. Aristocracy, for him, is the best and most just form of government for being a state governed by the best individuals. This kind of state can only be realised by powerful men who possess philosophic capacities and capabilities, or who are willing to subject themselves to the acquisition of true philosophic knowledge. True happiness for him, can only be attained by connecting with the world of ideas.

The objectives of the city-state, according to Aristotle, are to promote the good life, just relationships, and equitable distribution of goods and services. For him, an institutionally mixed regime is the best form of government for combining the best elements of the laws that different regimes practice. An example of such polity for Aristotle is the combination of democratic and oligarchic rules. This kind of regime, among other functions, offers financial assistance to both the rich and the poor to pursue either personal interests or projects and services that benefit the state in general. This practice, for him, will lead to the elimination of discontent, factionalism, disagreements and conflicts that result from claims of injustice as found in unmixed regimes.

The best form of administration, according to Hobbes, resides in the absolute monarch who possesses unrestricted powers. He considers human natural condition as violent, intrinsically aggressive, chaotic, filled with fear, and constantly competing for honour, glory and dignity. The limitation of resources leads to struggle and contestations among the citizens. He asserts that human beings are happy when they are in better social, political and economic conditions than others; and these contestations often lead to envy, hatred and war. He concludes that if human beings continue to live in such state of nature, then all lives would be solitary, nasty, brutish and short. Based on these observations, Hobbes submits that peaceful coexistence among human beings can only be guaranteed when they consent to a social contract in a commonwealth ruled by a sovereign head.

One of the salient features that emanate from this study, which holds far-reaching implications for contemporary systems of governance is the type of leadership that a country has. This largely determines the extent of successes and failures that the state will achieve. While the liberal democratic system seems to be largely preferred and practiced in many parts of the world, this has failed to adequately tackle the challenges that individual states confront. Autocratic regimes on the other hand, also fail to rule with justice and fairness. Most of the problems that many states grapple with can be attributed to the inability of leaders to adequately fulfil their mandates. Most countries in the current era are witnessing incompetent leadership, rampant lawlessness, social, economic and political instability, among other challenges. The extent of lawlessness that obtains in these countries is disconcerting. Many disgruntled individuals and groups engage in violent protests over issues such as racial discrimination, unemployment, poverty, corruption and inadequate provision of basic services. It is imperative that a satisfactory system of governance is conceived and successfully implemented to the satisfaction of all stakeholders.

Desirable Ends of the Ideal State

The foundation of the state for Plato, lies on a well-defined division of labour [Lull & Mico, 2011:8]. For Aristotle, the state exists for the promotion of just relationships, the good life, and equitable distribution of goods and services [Gordley 2015:201]. Hobbes [1968:186] considers the human natural condition, otherwise known as the state of nature, as innately aggressive, troublesome, chaotic, violent, and filled with fear. He illustrates this belief with the hypothetical image of people's natural condition prior to the advent of a formal state, as one of continuous fear, antagonism, and exposure to misery, aggression and death. He notes that with the limitation of resources, power struggle results when two people want the same thing. Hobbes [Wolfenden 2010:1] submits that the quarrelsome nature of human beings makes it impossible for them to peacefully coexist in the absence of a greater authority. He notes diffidence, competition and glory as the three main causes of quarrels; and he considers the main objectives of human beings to be safety, gain and reputation. For him, happiness resides in their ability to be better off in comparison with others. As a result, he concludes that these contestations among human beings lead to hatred, envy and ultimately war.

Hobbes [Lloyd 2013:4] asserts that because of the conflicting nature of human beings, the natural inclination for self-preservation, happiness and felicity, on the one hand, and the need for interdependence, on the other, it is rational for human beings to seek cooperation with each other. Therefore, Hobbes [1968: 223-224] proposes his Leviathan – the Ideal State, claiming that for human beings to live in peace and harmony without the need to rely on individual strengths as a means of protection, they must agree to a social contract in a commonwealth ruled by a sovereign head.

The establishment of the *Leviathan* through a covenant, for Hobbes [Wolfenden, 2010:1] is voluntary, necessary and rational, because it is the only means of avoiding the lawlessness that characterises the state of nature, the troublesome characteristics of human nature, the probability of human beings flouting the laws of nature, and to ensure security and peace for everyone. He claims that even an oppressive government is better than living under the threat of war. This study notes that while there may be merit in the claim that an oppressive government may be better than living under the threat of war, an oppressive government can also lead to unrest among the citizens and eventually war, as reflected in the recent destructive developments in various parts of the world. For instance, the regime of Muammar Gaddafi, the former Libyan leader '*was characterised by bad governance and corruption… Gaddafi reinforced his authoritarian rule by granting economic privileges…, to various tribes or by threatening punishment*' [NATO-Harvard Project 2013:12].

In the case of Sudan, its former leader, Omar al-Bshir, while in office pursued a brutal war against South Sudan for over twenty years. During this period, he ordered the ethnic cleansing of non-Arabs in the Darfur region, and he also embezzled about 9 billion US Dollars from his country's resources [CAJ News & Ebrahim 2019:2-3]. He pursued a slanted policy and projects that favoured the northern part of the country to the detriment and dissatisfaction of the southern region [Tawil 2011:1]. He almost destroyed the diversity of the country through his discriminatory practices, and attempted to impose the hegemony of the minority northern population over the other parts of the country [El Tom 2009:1]. Although the country was divided into two separate entities as a result of the war, this was not sufficient to resolve the conflicts that were prevalent for over 50 years. Instead, the regions continue to be confronted by lawlessness, conflicts and poverty [Verhoeven 2012:1-2]. This study, however, supports the use of force by governments to restore peace and order in cases where peaceful resolution mechanisms fail to avert lawlessness and violence.

Hobbes agrees with those who contend that members of a state are to a greater extent not happy under a powerful sovereign. However, he contends that it is not possible for human beings to be totally happy. He asserts that unhappiness can lead to civil war, while the absence of a powerful sovereign and the pursuit of war exacerbate the level of suffering that accompanies such chaos. He believes that community members will live in consensus once they become part of the commonwealth since the accompanying contract is binding. He considers the rights of the sovereign to be the same irrespective of how he came to power; and his powers can neither be usurped, nor transferred to someone else without his consent. Hobbes posits that the sovereign may neither relinquish his power nor be accused by his subjects of abusing his power. Moreover, his subjects

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cannot reprimand him since he is the judge of doctrines and of what is necessary for peace. According to Hobbes, the sovereign is the ultimate judge and he is above the law; since he acts on behalf of his subjects, his actions are effectively the actions of the members of his state; and he cannot harm his subjects since no one can inflict injury on oneself. He considers the best form of government as residing in the most powerful monarch who possesses unlimited rights, unrestricted powers and indefinite tenure, because human beings are fundamentally flawed and in order to avert the resurgence of the state of nature. He prefers the monarchical form of government to other forms of governance such as aristocracy and democracy, as more superior because it accords the sovereign head maximum power with no constraints. He considers democracies governed by representatives and aristocracies ruled by a part of the population as weaker than a monarchy for their inability to guarantee a substantial level of peace and security [Wolfenden 2010:1-2].

This study agrees with Hobbes that democracies do not guarantee maximum peace, order and cooperation from the population. Many citizens tend to abuse the rights and privileges that democratic regulations provide, since the consequences of engaging in illegalities are not tough enough to serve as a deterrent. However, this study disagrees with the idea of according the sovereign head unlimited powers because that would be excessive. Rather, it is suggested that a competent sovereign head who rules his state with justice and fairness, and who successfully provides for the needs of all members of the state should be allowed to continue administering the state until he is no longer able to perform his duties satisfactorily. This suggestion is made on the basis that there is no point in replacing a good leader when he is still effectively discharging his duties. Furthermore, it is recommended that leaders vacate their office between the age of 65 and 68 years; the leaders must put proper succession plans in place to ensure that worthy successors are prepared to take over the reins of power when the incumbents vacate their positions.

This study considers the level of faith that Hobbes places on the sovereign head as excessive and capable of causing more harm than good for the state. His consideration of the sovereign as a perfect leader who is not capable of doing wrong, runs contrary to what obtains in reality, because there is no leader who has ruled his state to the ultimate satisfaction of his subjects. It is further noted that the conferment of excessive power on one ruler without the oversight of constituted authorities can lead to dangerous developments if the ruler is unethical. Although this study agrees with Hobbes that that no normal human being would

consciously inflict harm upon himself, this does not mean that he is not capable of inflicting harm on others for selfish reasons.

The best form of rule for Aristotle is an institutionally mixed regime which tends to be more stable than unmixed regime where claims about injustice result in conflicts, factionalism and revolutions. The polity, for him, can be a combination of individual laws that democracies and oligarchies typically practice. For instance, while democracies tend to make financial assistance available to poor citizens to take part in political life, oligarchies on the other hand tend to do the same for richer citizens [Nitsch 2009:12, 18].

This study recommends that countries experiencing rampant lawlessness and instability, such as South Africa, Nigeria, Sudan, Zimbabwe, and Libya should opt for the Aristotelian form of rule which adopts aspects of the monarchical system, if the sovereign heads were just, fair and possessed sufficient wisdom. It is noted that the extent of lawlessness which obtains in these democracies is disconcerting. In the case of South Africa, many disgruntled individuals and groups, according to Nembambula [2015:47] engage in violent protests over issues such as corruption and inadequate provision of basic services. In the process they often engage in the destruction of public goods, property and private businesses. It is observed in the Nigerian case that there are groups such as the violent Boko Haram which attempt to islamise a section of the northern region [Arendas 2016:40]. This study notes that democratic principles often fail to firmly quash civil agitations that could otherwise be expressed through peaceful means. These are cases where the monarch could employ drastic measures, including the use of force to quell such dissents and to serve as a deterrent.

Wolfenden [2010:1-2] considers Hobbes' arguments to be mostly valid, though consisting of a number of deficiencies. He finds Hobbes' theoretical explanation for the formation of government not feasible. For instance, while Hobbes posits that all governments be formed on the basis of covenants, Wolfenden contends that there are a number of cases where governments are imposed on unwilling population. Hobbes defends his position, claiming that all people acting rationally would prefer to associate with the commonwealth since the alternative in the form of a state of nature is not appealing. Wolfenden disagrees with Hobbes for placing excessive levels of faith in his absolute and benevolent sovereign; for making a number of implausible assumptions, including that the sovereign is prepared to work solely in the interests of his subjects without allowing his personal interest to cloud his judgements. He considers this tendency unlikely because most rulers do not always prioritise the interests of the people in their actions and decisions. Wolfenden notes a contradiction in Hobbes' claim that although the sovereign may be selfish, he is at the same time able to take into consideration the interests of his subjects because, according to Wolfenden, history reveals that,

> **"absolute power corrupts absolutely, that when leaders are allowed to act however they wish they more often than not take what they want at the expense of the state and their citizens. Hobbes reliance on a monarch who would somehow be able to ignore his personal desires for the good of the country makes his political regime seem much less practical."**
> [Wolfenden 2010:2]

This study submits that there is no single system of governance that can guarantee a well ordered society in which the needs and aspirations of all the members are fulfilled. It is observed that while the monarchical form of governance may be preferable for applying tough measures on those who flout the rules and values of society, it is better to subscribe to a system of rule that holds the absolute monarch accountable if he fails to be ethical, just and fair in administering the state. This would include elements of a mixed regime as Aristotle suggests. However, this study submits that the mixed regime must have the monarchical system as one part of it.

Features of a Good Political Society

A number of theorists, such as Allen, recognise Plato as the world's first systematic political philosopher. He considers Plato the West's first critical activist who wrote, among other things, to effect change in societies that were in ethical, social, economic and political turmoil [Allen 2010:4]. In the *Republic*, Plato (Lull & Mico 2011:9] considers the Aristocratic state to be the best and the most just type of government. He terms the other forms of government, such as oligarchy, democracy, timocracy and tyranny a degeneration of Aristocracy. He posits that rebellion is the only measure that can lead to the disintegration of a state, and therefore, can never be justified. He describes the characteristics of these forms of governments as follows:

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> **"Aristocracy is a state governed by the best. Timocracy is the government of the ambitious who believe themselves to be superior because they are good huntsmen, sportsmen, or soldiers and who are, in the end, men of action, who own properties and get rich in secret. Oligarchy represents the government of a small group of wealthy citizens who hold power. In democracy there are neither criteria, nor ideals of law and order, as truth itself is not believed in, only subjective personal appetites, depending on who governs the city. It is only the ideal form of government in appearance, where no one is in command, with no coercion, where equality is shared out equally. Tyranny is the degeneration of democracy and arises when freedom concludes in licentiousness and the people need a leader to settle internal conflicts produced by private desires and selfishness "**
> [Lull & Mico 2011:9]

Plato [Bruchmöller 2011:46] considers the realisation of the best state as depending on the possibility of finding powerful men who are able to acquire philosophic knowledge and ability, or who are prepared to be educated in true philosophy. He asserts that the only means to attain happiness on earth is by connecting with the realm of ideas with commitment.

Plato's social order (Republic) is structured around a meticulously planned division of labour, in which a person is given a social responsibility on the basis of his combined qualities of maturity and good education that links up with elements such as virtue and temperance. He structures the population into three parts with clearly differentiated intellectual and social objectives, namely: the magistrates, rulers and philosophers; the guardians; and the workers [Lull & Mico 2011:5-8]. He posits that the guardians will protect the city from lawlessness, internal and external aggression; and the workers who are the lowest class, such as farmers and artisans will provide the basic needs of society [Wright 2016:11-12]. The layer from which leaders of the state will be chosen consists of magistrates, who are both rulers and philosopher kings. He posits that the only solution to the problems of any state and the human race is that its rulers must be the best. In other words, they should be philosophers devoted to the contemplation of knowledge and the search for goodness. He believes that the idea of the Good is something that only philosophers are familiar with [Lull & Mico 2011:5]. Plato recommends that the ruling class receive the kind of education that enables them to govern impartially and with disinterest. While he concedes that education alone may not be a sufficient means of producing the required kind of rulers, he adds that rulers must pursue the kind of lifestyle that enables them to always consider the interests of their citizens. He made this provision as a result of what obtained in his era, where the oligarchs disbursed favours and political powers to wealthy individuals [Beever 2013:41].

This study notes that the manner in which political offices and privileges were disbursed in Plato's era is similar to what obtains currently in many parts of the world, including Africa, where powers and favours are distributed through favouritism

and nepotism. Plato's era witnessed immense anarchy, violence, instability, internal and external negative influences, which led to the loss of the state's social, ethical and cultural values [Wright 2016:11]. The solution that Plato advances in regards to moral laxities and inadequate governance systems is to

> **"regulate the lifestyle of the rulers so that such conflicts of interest cannot arise. It is as radical as we might now expect. He stipulates that the guardians are to hold no private property and are to have no families…; the rule is not that guardians are prohibited from procreating. It is that they are not entitled to have spouses or to act as parents. Instead, they are to copulate during state-run mating festivals and their children are to be raised by a state-run organisation in ignorance of their biological parents. Moreover, as Plato holds that physical and moral traits are hereditary, he maintains that the state must adopt a programme of eugenics."** [Beever 2013:41-42]

This study contends that Plato must have thought that eugenics would enable society to produce well-ordered human beings by ensuring that people with undesirable traits are not allowed to have children since they might produce like-minded children who would constitute hindrances to the process of realising a well ordered and ethical society. It is possible that eugenics might be a good way of improving society. However, this study argues that it could also become a means of brainwashing people from childhood to act and behave in a certain manner. It is noted here that a society that sincerely aims at becoming ethical and just may use such a process to its advantage, by teaching and directing people from infancy to knowledge of the good life, to how to live a life that secures happiness, love, respect, peace and tolerance for everyone. A society, on the other hand, whose main objective is to cause chaos and illegalities can use such a programme to create a more unstable world.

For Plato, leaders must possess the character of Philosopher Kings. He does not mean that philosophers must be given political power. Neither does he mean that political power should be given to a select group of people such as the Aristocracy, nor that power should be given to selfish people whose main goal is the acquisition of pleasure and wealth. Rather, he means that political power should be given to those whose main focus in life is the discovery of truth because disinterested rulers are more likely to be incorruptible. He believes that philosophers who are more concerned with contemplating the world, who do not really seek political power, but who are prepared to actively participate in political affairs and governance out of a sense of duty, are more likely to rule disinterestedly. While he posits that the state must be governed on the basis of justice, he considers philosophers to be the only people who are able to discover what justice entails since their focus lies on the form of the good [Beever 2013:41-43]. The potential to realise the ideal state for Plato and Socrates [Bruchmöller 2011:54], depends on the ability of philosophers to rule the state. In this regard, they outline the characteristics of the true philosopher as one who ought to love all wisdom, who loves to learn and pursue all parts of knowledge whole heartedly. The realm of truth or wisdom, according to Plato and Socrates,

> **"is a structured whole with a considerable number of different parts, each of which the lover of wisdom has to investigate. Therefore, he needs intellectual capacity…, which is indispensable for philosophy must be directed toward the right things within the ontological structured whole…; it is pointless to know everything if one is unable to perceive how everything hangs together and incapable of organising the manifold objects of knowledge on a higher ontological order."** [Bruchmöller 2011:54]

The contemplative ideal for Plato, is the kind of life that is mostly associated with the natural character of the philosopher; this is the kind of life that brings the greatest happiness to the philosopher. He asserts that the happiness, or the dominant factor in the happiness of the philosopher is philosophical contemplation. His contemplative ideal relates to those who possess philosophical character, who possess good memories, who are critical thinkers, broadminded, naturally curious, persistent, and tend to engage in abstract thinking. Accordingly, he expects the philosopher to organise his life in a manner that prioritises philosophical contemplation. In order to attain such a philosophical ideal, he expects the philosopher to devote marginal time to non-intellectual and bodily matters. Socrates agrees with Plato's characterisation of the philosopher as he posits in the *Phaedo*, that philosophers must seek wisdom above other things; and wisdom will be derived from philosophical contemplation. The philosopher who seeks the contemplative ideal, according to Plato [McKeen 2010:198], should engage only in partial community and political activities, especially in communities that he is very familiar with. Rather, he should prefer a state (Polis) or community in which he can have unlimited space to engage in philosophical contemplation to the highest level permissible by nature. The individuals who possess natural philosophic characteristics in the ideal state, according to Plato, '*will be identified, nurtured, and groomed through a long programme of education and training. At the end of this long road, these developed philosophers will serve in key roles governing the state*.' [McKeen, 2010: 198]

This study finds it questionable that Plato expects natural philosophers to abstain from political activities, while he expects those in the city who have inherent philosophical potentials to participate in state affairs once they have been sufficiently trained. One wonders what use it is for the natural philosophers to only engage in philosophical contemplation when they could use their good knowledge to improve the conditions in their countries. This study recommends that natural philosophers be actively engaged in the administration of the state, so that their knowledge can be fully utilised for the development of their society.

Popper [Wright 2016:10] contends that Plato's ideal state is extreme, petty, immoral, the kind of life that obtains in a totalitarian regime, and a crass promotion of a Spartan-like regimentation of social life. He condemns Plato's ideal state for lacking diversity; for limiting freedom of expression; for encouraging repression; for proposing that members of the state should only engage in the occupation for which they are best suited; for making no distinction between what is public and private; and for permitting neither poverty nor wealth because he considers both as leading to vice. His views on women and children are considered by the average liberal to be alarming, for arguing through Socrates that

> **"the traditional form of the family should be done away with. Men should have women and children in common, such that no man knows who his children are or has excessive love for one woman in particular. Even mothers are not allowed to know who their children are. Their children are taken from them at birth, and they are given other children to suckle as long as they have milk. Plato's breeding principles sound ominously like the Nazi idea, and Spartan practice, of killing weak and deformed infants."** [Wright 2016:12]

Popper criticises Plato's *Republic* as responsible for many of the totalitarian movements that caused upheavals in the world. He termed the *Republic* disastrous, for projecting the idea that a political society whose justice hinges on the virtues of its leaders can be developed. He insists that such claim fails to recognise what is obvious to contemporary humans that power corrupts. Therefore, he concludes that it is misleading to have excessive faith that powerful individuals will be virtuous [Beever 2013:39].

There are other theorists however, according to Wright (2016:10), who note elements of democracy in Plato's proposals, such as in the egalitarianism that surrounds some aspects of his programme of education. Although Beever [2013:43] admits that Plato was wrong about many claims, he considers him neither wrong nor naïve about the corruptive nature of power, because this motivated his contributions to his system of politics. While Beever concedes from the foregoing that Popper's criticism of the *Republic* is questionable since Plato was aware of the corruptive nature of power, he contends that Plato's responses to many issues are difficult to accept and unacceptably authoritarian in contemporary terms. Beever criticises Plato, claiming that his ideas on

> **"Censorship, the abolition (for the guardians) of private property, of the family, eugenics, and the (admittedly purportedly meritocratic) authoritarian rule of the Philosopher Kings is too much for even the most utopian modern thinker to stomach […]. In fact, not only is Plato's position authoritarian, it is recognisably totalitarian, as Popper sensed (though not for his reasons). This is because running through the whole of the *Republic* is the idea that the individual is merely a means to the community's ends."** [Beever 2013:43]

Many scholars assume different positions on Plato's comments on gender equality. For instance, while Rickman refers to Plato's proposals for equal opportunities and education as emancipation, Annas does not consider Plato to be the first feminist. Rather, he finds his arguments unacceptable to a feminist, and his proposals on gender and communal ownership irrelevant to contemporary debate. For Caccia, Plato's proposals appear dogmatic, while he fails to explicate the potential implications of his communal proposals. However, he notes that it was Plato's realisation that he was not able to clarify the consequences of communal ownership that led him to conclude that his rule was sufficient rather than great [Caccia 2012:19-20].

Lull and Mico consider the manner in which Plato allocates duties and responsibilities in his *Republic* to be most appropriate and fair, since everyone is allocated a function based on individual abilities, strengths and weaknesses. They are further supported with relevant training. However, these theorists note a contradiction between Plato's respect for ideas that are pronounced in a caste system, namely, that all children should acquire knowledge from the earliest possible age, and his idea of justice that partly implies that everyone should do what their nature allows them to do best. This implies the potential in everyone to seek any position in the community. Plato clarifies his position, claiming that indeed everyone is free to seek any position, not on the basis of caste endogamy or hereditary wealth, but on the basis of their skills, innate aptitudes and good qualities [Lull & Mico 2011:8-10].

Wright considers Plato's worldviews irreconcilable with what obtains in contemporary liberal democratic societies where human beings are not ranked on the basis of their value to society or their intrinsic value; where rigid hierarchical structures or ideas that promote a caste system are deemphasised; while instead, dynamism, freedom and chaos are often the case. Wright contends that modern society neither considers the world a harmony nor really cares about analogies between society and nature. He claims that although order is preferred, it is not seen as a core value; driven and ambitious people are admired much more than those who do things in moderation or who seek internal peace. Moreover, contemporary cultures do not promote good values on a large scale. Rather, they appear in general, to censure the kinds of behaviours that impede the pursuit of happiness by others. Plato would have considered such contemporary systems anarchical, decadent and unjust [Wright 2016:10-11].

Plato's treatise in the *Republic* is largely rejected by modern political philosophers for its regulatory structure of individuals in the state. However, it is the basis of modern political philosophy, in view of the consensus between Plato and modern political philosophers that the concern of justice relates to the relationship between all members of society. This reflects in Plato's claim that each person counts equally, and that justice relates to taking into consideration the interests of all citizens. Beever considers Plato's assertion contradictory for on the one hand, accepting slavery, while on the other hand, he rejects slaves as citizens of a city state. The implication here for Beever, is that this equality does not apply to slaves; Plato does not consider all humans as equals in the modern sense going by his consideration of Philosopher Kings as better suited to rule. Nonetheless, justice for Plato, is distributive because it takes into account the interests of the entire community and by extension of those he considers as persons [Beever 2013:45].

It has been noted in this study that various philosophers, such as Popper and Wright find Plato's ideal state unrealistic. However, a number of theorists, such as Lull and Mico find elements of good democratic practice in Plato's treatise. While most of Plato's proposals are difficult to attain, this study concedes that the contemporary era needs such a radical reform if it is serious about curtailing the excessive unethical conduct and bad governance that pervades African societies in particular, and the world at large. These include, ineffective and unethical leadership [Ogbogbo 2011:1]; erosion of values, cultures and traditions; and poverty, illiteracy, unemployment and drug abuse [The Saylor Foundation 2012:1-2].

Plato makes a far-reaching proposal that children be disengaged from their parents and brought up by philosopher kings. This study believes that this would be a good way of indoctrinating children in the right way if it were feasible. If children are inculcated with strong moral foundations at a young age, the tendency is for them to grow up knowing what is right and what is wrong, and doing the right thing most of the time, if not always. It is argued here that it will be easier to

realise the ideal state if contemporary societies can be restructured into small manageable societies, because it will make it easier for politicians and bureaucrats to pay detailed attention to their subjects and make more progress.

Plato realised that some of his more radical proposals may not be favourably considered. However, he would have appreciated their institutionalisation in order to curtail the decadent conditions prevalent in many societies [Wright 2016:11-12). Given this realisation, the question that this study poses is how can Plato's ideal state become functional in the current world order? This study submits that the best the philosopher king can do in the contemporary era is to choose workable aspects of Plato's theory. While there are divergencies in the views of Plato, Aristotle and Hobbes concerning the features of a good society, they all agree on the need for the state to maintain peace, order, happiness and justice. Most contemporary systems of governance seem incapable of implementing policies and processes that guarantee happiness and satisfaction for the citizens. For instance, '*post-independence leadership styles in Africa have hitherto remained… incompetent in both public and private organisations*' [Kuada 2010:15].

This study finds it inconceivable and ironic that despite the magnitude of talents and intellectuals that abound in many African states, who are versed in ethics and good governance, most African states continue to be governed by unethical, greedy and incompetent individuals who are not fit for purpose. Furthermore, the idea of democracy as the rule of the majority is problematic as it contributes largely to the election of wrong individuals to positions of authority. In this instance, the majority tends to be biased towards the election of mediocres whom they can identify with, while they view the educated individuals with disdain and inferiority complex. The irony in this scenario is that while many African intellectuals and qualified candidates are abhorred in Africa, the West, in particular, North America consistently attracts the best brains from Africa for their developmental agenda. The sorry state of African politics and governance will remain the norm until Africans at large begin to change their negative mindsets towards the educated and qualified candidates. It is imperative that a satisfactory system of governance is conceived and successfully implemented to the satisfaction of all stakeholders. This demands that the right kind of leaders in terms of education, experience and moral disposition are appointed. The onus lies on such leaders to be cognisant of their values, capacities and capabilities; and values must be institutionalised in all structures of society.

Conclusion

This study set out to examine elements of the philosophic ideal state from the perspectives of Plato, Aristotle and Hobbes; and the lessons that current societies can learn with the view to improving their systems of governance for the benefit of the citizens. They all believe in the central role that the state plays or should play in bringing about stability, peace and development. However, they do not agree on a common means of realising that. Hobbes considers the best form of government as that ruled by a sovereign monarch with unlimited powers. He contends that the troublesome pattern of human existence makes it impossible for people to live together in harmony. He, therefore, concludes that if human beings do not refrain from living in this state of nature by submitting to an absolute authority through a social contract, all lives would be nasty, brutish and short. Hobbes is criticised for placing unlimited powers in one ruler. The excessive level of faith and trust that he places in the sovereign head has the potential to create discontent and chaos in the state. This study notes that it is risky to confer so much power on one individual without the control of oversight bodies in case the leader becomes unethical or despotic. In contrast to Hobbes, Aristotle submits that a mixed regime is the best form of government for being more stable, unlike unmixed regimes where factionalism, conflicts and revolution often result from claims of injustice.

Plato believes that the best state is one, which is governed by wise leaders. He subscribes to a radical reform by philosophers of everything that goes wrong in the state, including the people and their characters in order to create a constitutional and ethical state. A number of modern theorists such as Popper criticise Plato's conception of the just state as petty, immoral and totalitarian for encouraging repression and suppressing freedom of *expression*; for not promoting diversity; for not making a distinction between public and private property; and for not promoting either wealth or poverty since he considered both of them as resulting in vice. Plato's ideal state is further considered unrealistic as his reform process consists of complicated programmes that are not achievable. Plato is cognisant of the challenges inherent in his proposals. However, he would have preferred their implementation in order to minimise the extent of unethical conduct in society.

This study submits that although the proposals of the philosophers examined in this study may be complicated and unrealistic in a number of cases, a radical overhaul of the system of governance in the world in general, and in Africa in particular, is imperative. The magnitude of immorality in the world is overwhelming. This projects a bleak future and requires the intervention of renewed ethical consciousness in order to avert future negative complications. The study recognises that it is difficult to find a single system of governance that guarantees a well ordered society, in which all the citizens are accorded the justice and fairness they deserve. However, the desirable society must be one that adopts the good and applicable elements of Plato's, Aristotle's and Hobbes' ideal state. This inclusive approach to good governance will be suitable for countries that are prone to racism, lawlessness, conflicts, intermittent strikes and civil disobedience or unrest.

In that regard, this study proposes a kind of state governed by the most qualified and ethical individuals, who are critical thinkers, visionaries and lovers of knowledge. The leaders must give priority attention to the provision of basic services for all the citizens, to just and equitable distribution of public goods by ensuring that the less privileged members of society are provided with social benefits, while the rich and powerful are given a conducive climate to contribute the development of the country. The leaders must be given the authority, subject to regulatory oversight, to exercise unrestricted powers where necessary in order to provide peace and stability.

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Levy Mwanawasa Stadium, Ndola, Zambia.
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An Examination of the Environmental Impact of Illegal Mining Activities on Land in the Copperbelt Province of Zambia

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Abstract

In the contemporary world, mining operations often contribute to water, land and air pollution. In the Copperbelt Province of Zambia, illegal mining practices have often led to deforestation, soil degradation and vast land damage or ruin due to the digging of huge pits, trenches, tunnels and ditches by illegal miners. Such practices continue to have a huge negative impact on the environment and the lives of the local people, most of whom depend on land for farming. Illegal mining remains a threat to the environment, biodiversity and the wellbeing of the people. The centrality of this theme can be attributed to the various environmental problems that continue to occur due to illegal mining practices, to the extent of affecting not only the environment but also biodiversity and the wellbeing of the people. This paper examines the environmental impacts of illegal mining activities on land in the Copperbelt Province of Zambia based on three key questions: what are the impacts of illegal mining practices on land in the Copperbelt province? How has the Zambian government been responding to the situation? How can the notion of environmental justice and Christian ecotheology be used to respond to the crisis? Based on such key questions, this study seeks to assess the impact of illegal mining practices on land, discuss the response of the government and the society to the issue and propose a possible way forward.

Keywords: environmental, justice, unlicensed, illegal, Copperbelt, ecotheology, mining, land

Introduction

We live in an era of ecological crisis, where human actions continue to harm the environment, pollute the atmosphere and destabilise nonhuman species. Such human disturbances do not only degrade and cause the environment to deteriorate, but they also cause the extinction and annihilation of vast numbers of species. In 2004, the United Nations' High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change identified environmental degradation as one of the major threats to world peace and security. Similarly, the Paris Agreement adopted in 2015 at the Paris Climate Conference is an attempt by most countries in the world to respond to the threat of global warming with the aim of limiting or mitigating the increasing temperatures to below 2 degrees Celsius. This was the first globally and legally binding deal on climate change to be adopted by 195 countries. Such global efforts show that environmental and atmospheric pollution continue to threaten the natural environment and atmosphere, leading to threats such as global warming. Seriously polluted and degraded environments have become unfavourable to all forms of life and have contributed to the degeneration of the quality of the natural environment and volatility in ecosystems.

Academic, scientific and media literature and reports expose several issues relating to environmental degradation and pollution which reaffirms the worsening ecological crisis the earth is undergoing. Nature continues to suffer exploitation and degradation through human activity. One wonders why all the voices stressing the need to care for the environment, atmosphere and biodiversity continue to fall on deaf ears. What are we doing wrong? Why are people not heeding the calls being made by governments, religious organisations, environmental activists and movements and various groups on the need to care and nurture the earth? Is there still hope of saving and liberating the earth from human domination and oppression? Such questions ought to be pondered by everyone because they concern the real and daunting problem confronting humanity as a whole today.

There is a need for more effort to protect and safeguard the environment well. Environmental degradation through land, air and water pollution, the destruction of ecosystems, and the extinction of wildlife continue to be a core problem today. The mining sector is one of the major causes of environmental degradation and pollution globally. Under the mining sector, the pervasive problem of environmental degradation caused by illegal mining operations is one of the main issues facing many African countries. Zambia is one of the major producers of copper, cobalt and gemstones, including precious metals such as silver and gold. The mining sector makes a substantial contribution to the country's economy. The mining sector in Zambia is governed primarily by the Mines and Minerals Development Act of 2015 (amended in 2016) promulgated through the Ministry of Mines and Minerals Development. Although most mining companies follow the Act and other related mining and environmental regulations, there have been illegal and unregulated mining operations in the Copperbelt province.

Illegal Mining Operations in the Copperbelt Province

Illegal mining activities are contrary to the laws of Zambia regulating the mining industry since they involve the unlawful mining of mineral deposits, precious stones and quarrying of stones in prohibited areas. The history of illegal mining in the Copperbelt province of Zambia is closely linked to the historical development of the mining industry itself and some of the mining regulations concerning mineral and land rights. Although the issue of illegal mining had been to a greater extent unknown to the public until 2000, it has become a daunting subject in recent years due to the escalation of cases and incidents related to it.

What is Illegal Mining?

Illegal mining activities have become a major issue in Zambia given the problems that arise from such unlawful operations. Illegal mining can be defined as the unregulated, unlicensed and informal ways of mining on unofficially explored areas and prohibited sites such as old mine dumps and pits. For Kambani [2003:143], illegal mining involves the unauthorised mining of mineral deposits, precious stones and the now escalating 'illegal quarrying of stone aggregates, flat stones, gravel and building sand used in home construction.' Although in recent years larger companies have been implicated in the illegal mining scheme, most illegal miners are small-scale. Illegal miners in the Copperbelt engage in the mining of minerals such as copper, gold and gemstones and often rely almost entirely on human labour using rudimentary technology and tools such as shovels, picks, trowels, hoes, spades, flat big stones and wheelbarrows.

In the Copperbelt province, illegal miners are commonly referred to as "Jerabos" (jail boys). However, the term "Jerabo" is sometimes used by locals to refer to both unlicensed small-scale miners and copper thieves and gangs or notorious illegal copper dealers on established mines such as Konkola Copper Mines' (KCM) Nchanga Mine on the Copperbelt, a practice which is different from unlicensed mining operations. According to Kabanda [2012], in June 2017 Max Maona, Head of Security at Konkola Copper Mines (KCM) in Chingola affirmed that "Illegal mining is pure theft of copper" and that "the illegal miners have increased in numbers and have become violent and are using weapons". The Zambian law requires that all miners, whether foreign investors or Zambian citizens, obtain mining licences from the government. Regarding legality in mining, the Mine and Minerals Development Act of 2015 prohibits individuals and companies from engaging in mining, mining exploration and mineral processing without a proper licence. The affirmed is stated in Section 12(1) of the Mines and Minerals Development Act of 2015 which strictly forbids anyone from carrying "on mining operations, mineral processing operations or gold panning except under the authority of a mining right, mineral processing licence or gold panning certificate granted under this Act" [Parliament of Zambia 2015]. Illegal miners do not only divert from the legal framework in their mining operations, but they also ignore the environmental impacts of their mining activities.

Historical Overview of Illegal Mining in the Copperbelt Pre-2000

In the Zambian territory, mining activities can be traced from the Iron Age period when iron smelting was practiced. By 1700, traditional small-scale mining activities focused on surface outcrop mineral deposits which the indigenous people "would melt and mould the copper into ingots used as a medium of exchange and other metal products" such as ornaments, tools and weapons [Sikamo 2016:491]. The mining and land rights belonged to local traditional rulers who, through village Indunas, regulated the mining processes and mineral trade with outsiders. Although local rulers were custodians of mining operations in the villages and regulated mineral rights, the indigenous people had access to minerals.

From 1889 onwards, there was extensive mineral exploration of the region by Western companies and professional individuals. For example, increased exploration activities by foreigners led to the founding of more mining sites such as Hippo mine (discovered by Jacob Elliott) in 1903 in Kafue, whose large-scale mining operations were opened in 1911 [McIntyre 2016:431]. By this time, although local chiefs still controlled land rights which included mining, the British South African Company (BSAC) had obtained some mining rights by signing treaties which gave the company exclusive mineral rights over most of the Zambian region. The actual development of mining legislation and the issue of illegal mining came with the enactment of the 1912 Mining Ordinance under Mining Proclamation, No. 1 which was to regulate the mining industry in the Zambian region. According to Ndulo [1986:8], the 1912 Mining Ordinance granted "the BSAC with a mechanism for regulating the mining rights granted by the company". The statute also granted that anyone who acquired a mining license at a minimal fee was free to mine in any area of the region except in specific areas designated to the BSAC's mines. For the first time, this meant that individuals and companies who engaged in mining activities in the region without obtaining a legal licence would be considered illegal miners, although such activities were not strictly monitored. Thus, by 1923 there were already a number of informal mining operations without licences regardless of the need to acquire mining licenses.

From 1924 onwards, there was a massive boom in the mining industry which was mainly controlled by South African and American companies. The use of advanced machinery in smelting and metal extraction facilities in commercialised mines which was inspired by the need to maximise profits led to the production of large quantities of copper and other minerals. Thus, "by 1964, Zambia was a major player in the world copper industry, contributing over 12% of global output" [Sikamo 2016:492]. Despite the increased production of copper in pre-1964, much of the revenue and royalties were diverted to the BSAC as the owner and custodian of the mineral rights. After Zambian independence in 1964, the question of mineral rights between mine owners and the government was explored and led to the promulgation of the Mines and Minerals Act of 1969. Based on the Act, the government was granted control over the mining industry by acquiring the mineral rights, the right to control the issuing of mining licences and opening of new mining operations [Hast 1990:737].

By 1970, there was an emphasis on the 'accession system' which demanded that ownership of minerals in a specific area correspond to ownership of the surface land. Although there is no evidence of the presence of commercial illegal mining operations in the 1960s and 1970s, the informal small-scale mining operations continued both in the old mining sites and other unexplored areas. Most of them worked in groups and relied on their own resources such as hand tools and other equipment in their illegal mining operations. The period after 1970 saw the government's attempts to nationalise the mining industry which escalated illegal mining operations when the mining industry began dwindling under the nationalisation scheme. Due to the heavy reliance of the country's economy on the mining industry especially after the nationalisation of mines between 1969 and 1996, the mining industry suffered undercapitalisation with obsolete machinery and without much investment in upgrade, among other challenges. Thus, while the mining sector under the nationalisation scheme was struggling, "employment was falling, imports were declining, and foreign debt was on the increase" [Limpitlaw 2011:737]. The affirmed factors led to an increase in illegal mining activities on the Copperbelt province, especially because most of the former ZCCM workers who had been retrenched had to find alternative means for survival. In Zambia post-1996, the re-privatisation of mines became a goal, though illegal mining continued to escalate.

Illegal Mining in Copperbelt Post-2000

Although I have demonstrated the presence of illegal mining activities in Zambia before 2000, these activities were by and large unreported due to the lack of strict monitoring of such cases by the authorities. Further, the public lacked awareness of the issue since most illegal mining cases were ignored and not publicly reported. Thus by 2000, there were already several flourishing informal mining activities on the Copperbelt. From 1997 onwards, several changes in the mining sector were followed by a severe reduction in permanent jobs on the mines. According to Mususa [2010:202], it was a response to this "severe contraction of the permanent labour force on the Copperbelt' that 'women and children entered the informal sector in large numbers, seeking to subsidize men's declining involvement in the formal sector".

The initiative of the government to privatise the mining sector did not help curb the decrease in employment in the formal mining sector; consequently, informal mining activities remained prominent. Most people began to engage in unlicensed mining operations in groups. According to Mususa [2010:202], on 28th July 2000, Saluseki, in an article of the Post Newspaper, reported that 12 people had been arrested over illegal mining on the Copperbelt. The same article reported that Patrick Bowa, Director of the Inter-trade Institute, had written a letter of complaint to Silas Ngangula the then Inspector General of Po-

lice indicating that the arrest was unfair since illegal mining activities were the only alternative for making a livelihood. In his letter, Patrick Chilufya Bowa stressed the need to bring "bonafide small scale miners, illegal miners and retrenched miners into the main stream small scale mining commercial activity in line with Zambia's status as a mining nation" [Mususa 2010:202].

Bowa's plea underlies the idea that small scale miners be granted artisanal mining licenses to recognise their mining operations which was expressed by various individuals after the retrenchment of many ZCCM mine workers. Since 2000, there have been many cases of illegal mining activities that have been reported on the unregulated mining of mineral, precious stones and stone quarrying on unused mine pits, mine dump sites and other related places. In a research concluded in 2003, Kambani [2003:143] found that "the majority of illegal miners are involved in gemstone mining and is very mobile and will migrate quickly to a reported new find". In March 2009, another case of illegal mining was reported in the Times of Zambia Newspaper where an illegal miner was shot dead and twelve others were wounded [Times of Zambia, 2009]. Similarly, in June 2009 the Mining Review Africa [2009] also reported that "at least eight Zambian illegal miners have been killed in the collapse of the disused Nkana West mine dump in the northern Copperbelt province". Such cases reaffirm the fact that unlicensed mining operations by small-scale miners on the Copperbelt have become a daunting issue.

Illegal mining operations continue to be carried out within the established mining premises, on mine dumps such as the 'Black Mountain' in Kitwe, deserted mine sites left behind by closed formal mining operations, and other unauthorised places where the mining of minerals and stone quarrying is done. The issue of illegal mining has continued to be embedded in the economic system based on the struggle for livelihood and the lack of alternative means to raise income. According to Mikula [2013:12], when Mr Dickson Nkonde, an illegal miner in Chingola, Copperbelt, was found on an illegal mining site, he expressed the seriousness of the issue: "this is nothing; we dig longer tunnels than this. We dig even one-kilometre tunnels and many others branching out…sometimes we can be 1500 or 2000. We are many, but others are hiding". Regarding the reasons behind his illegal mining activities, Mr Nkonde explained: "We are unemployed, and we are suffering, that's why we engage in illegal mining. Even if I fear for my life, I have no choice because my family will starve, and the landlord will evict me" [Mikula 2013:12].

Nkonde's sentiments reaffirm the gravity of the problem of illegal mining and the economic reasons behind the activity. Foreign nationals have also been implicated in the illegal mining scheme in the Copperbelt. For example, according to Blanchard and Mfula [2017], on 3 June 2017 the police in Chingola town in the Copperbelt "detained 31 Chinese nationals for illegal mining". In some cases, small scale miners acquire mining licences and then surrender them to foreigners, a practice which has allowed foreigners to explore and process mineral deposits and illegally export them out of the country without payment to the government, following the law and other mining regulations. Most illegal miners sell their illegally mined copper ore and other mineral deposits to business syndicates who have illegal storage warehouses in towns such Chingola and Kitwe [Mikula 2013:13]. Some illegal warehouse owners have scales, mineral analysis equipment, processing machines and other tools which help them to process the illegally mined minerals and quarried stones. From such warehouses, the copper ore and other mineral deposits and precious stones are then exported.

Illegal Quarrying

Although the quarrying of sand, limestone, gravel and hard rock is another form of illegal mining in the Copperbelt province, academic and media literature on the issue indicates that such activities continue to be concentrated in Lusaka province. Quarrying for the purpose of building material exists in villages and on the outskirts of towns in the Copperbelt though at a low level. Due to high levels of poverty and unemployment, quarrying continues to be practiced in the Copperbelt where the finished products such as crushed stones are then sold or used by illegal miners themselves for the construction of houses and other buildings. As with the illegal mining of minerals, the most rudimentary form of hard rock quarrying by illegal operations involves the use of simple hand tools such as shovels, hoes, flat big stones, wheelbarrows and picks [Nyumbu 2013:115].

The environmental impact caused by illegal mining in the Copperbelt province results from illegal miners not following mining legislation, such as the Mines and Minerals Development Act of 2015 (amended in 2016); Mines and Minerals (Environmental) Regulations of 1997; the Environmental Management Act No. 12 of 2011; and the Mines Acquisition (Special Provisions) No. 2 Act. In the Copperbelt province, there has been an enormous environmental impact on the land caused by illegal mineral mining and sand, gravel and hard rock quarrying. These illegal mining activities are motivated by high levels of unemployment, poverty and the lack of education and awareness of the devastating impact these mining activities have on the environment. Nevertheless, it is beyond the scope of this paper to discuss whether such reasons can be used to justify illegal mining activities on the Copperbelt.

An aesthetic specimen of an elongated, spinel-twinned copper crystal spearpoint with attached, flattened copper crystals. The piece looks like a jet fighter and is from the less well-known Mufulira Mine of Zambia.

Impact of Illegal Mining of Minerals on Land

Illegal mining operations result in land, soil and vegetation disturbances including habitat loss. The most common forms of illegal mining of minerals with a serious negative impact on land concerns the digging of working pits, sluices and tunnels. In the process, topsoil is removed, and a variety of plant species are cleared for surface mining activities where large pits are dug [Chipatu 2011:15]. Sometimes, these tunnels are started far from an established mine for the purposes of mineral theft. In April 2013, two illegal miners from Chiwempala in Chingola died after the tunnel in which they were working collapsed following heavy rains. Regarding the incident, Mary Tembo, Copperbelt Police Commissioner, reported that "during the course of their work, it started raining. Unfortunately, water entered the tunnel in which the two illegal miners were, and the soil got wet and collapsed on them" [Lusaka Times 2013].

Similarly, in October 2014, an illegal miner died in Chingola while two others had to be "rescued by their colleagues after being trapped in a tunnel which collapsed on them" [Nkombo & Nkweto 2014]. These incidents demonstrate the seriousness of illegal mining with regard to

negative impact on land, many plant species and human life. For instance, Mikula [2013:12] quotes Dickson Nkonde, an illegal miner, who affirmed that "we dig even one-kilometre tunnels and many others branching out". This activity can sometime take days, weeks or even months. Because most illegal miners have little or no knowledge and training in mining, sometimes no mineral deposits are found after digging for a long time, although the immense damage on land and soil remains. The tunnels, pits and sluices are dug without any concern for the damage being made to the environment because they are "dug haphazardly and remain uncovered even after their operations" [Appiah 1998:210].

An analysis of the existing scholarly and media literature on illegal mining in the Copperbelt shows that not only is the soil waste dug out and left on the surface but also that the pits, tunnels or sluices are themselves left uncovered, the soil polluted and the land damaged. As Kambani [2003:144] asserts, "large volumes of waste piles are left after mining since no back-filling or land restoration is undertaken". Because no proper precautionary measures are undertaken, areas where illegal mining occurs are often cleared, rendering the land bare, thus promoting soil erosion, land degradation and deforestation. According to Mensah [2015:89], in some cases illegal miners clear huge patches of forest for rest and recreation after long work days. Furthermore, elemental mercury is used by illegal miners to mine minerals such as gold by mixing mercury with gold-containing materials to form a mercury-gold amalgam. This product is "then heated, vaporizing the mercury to obtain the gold", resulting in highly contaminated soils [United States Environmental Protection Agency 2018].

Generally, illegal mining operations prevent soil and plant rehabilitation. According to Lindahl [2014:7], there were more than 10 000 hectares in total that cover mineral wastes which are linked to historical mining operations in the Copperbelt by 2014. The Mines and Minerals (Environmental) Regulations of 1997 requires that formal mines rehabilitate the mined land upon mine closure, or the dump sites based on the Environmental Impact Assessment. Illegal mining activities, despite the unchanging socio-economic factors dictating it have continued to disturb the rehabilitation and decommissioning of waste mine dumps and closed mine sites. For example, waste is dumped and "large tracts of derelict land are created" [Chipatu 2011:15]. When illegal miners reclaim mineral deposits on old mining legacy sites, the process of rehabilitation is disturbed, the levelled ground is again dug up, and vegetation growth is delayed. Because the mine-waste dumps and old mines are already damaged and a risk to the environment, illegal mining operations on these sites increase the chances of soil erosion and could cause the land to suffer permanent damage.

According to the findings of the Mining, Minerals and Sustainable Development research project concluded in 2002, the waste generated by mining activities has the potential to reduce the land's productivity [Starke 2003:12]. In the Copperbelt, land productivity has been negatively affected, both agriculturally and endemically. Furthermore, the illegal mining of minerals on the Copperbelt continues to lead to the contamination of top soil due to the accumulation of metals such as copper in the soil. Particles of mineral deposits displaced or discarded together with soil waste by illegal miners contaminate large areas of land as they are carried away when it rains. Furthermore, Mensah [2015:89] contends that explosives sometimes used by illegal miners adversely affects the soil because "important soil organisms have been destroyed, stable soil aggregates disrupted, and eventually depriving the soil of organic matter". The dug soil which is ditched so often remains hostile to vegetation for many years due to the mixture of chemical, physical and biological elements.

Impact of Illegal Quarrying on Land

Like the illegal mining of minerals, quarrying also has a serious impact on the land. This is especially the case when more advanced techniques such as blasting with explosives, drilling and tyre burning to easily crack the rocks are used with enormous negative effects on the land concerned [Kambani 2003:144]. Such activities leave huge pits, trenches and ditches, which are then abandoned without any attempt at rehabilitation through refilling after the operations. In their empirical research, Muyunda and Yangsheng [2008:239] found that illegal quarrying leads to "landscape and land degradation, the destruction of roads and loss of value of the land", including "soil erosion due to change of the elevation of the land" in many parts of Zambia. Several large and unsightly pits and trenches through illegal quarrying have contributed to land degradation and reduced surface soil quality.

Moreover, vegetation growth is hampered and land damage through pits, gullies and trenches is caused. According to Eshiwani [2014:32], "quarrying has a lasting effect on the environment in that most of the quarries leave scars on the earth surface" since illegal miners are "unable to reclaim the land to make it productive again as it was before". Due to the lack of advanced equipment, illegal miners who are involved in quarrying never attempt to reclaim or refill the pits and trenches thereby leading to further degradation of the landscape. Because this form of illegal mining in the Copperbelt employs wasteful working practices, quarrying produces "enormous quantities of waste that can have deleterious impacts for decades" since no rehabilitation is done on the deteriorated land [Ming'ate 2016:2]. Stone crushers leave enormous heaps of soil and discarded stones after their operations.

Nchanga copper mine near Chingola.

Government's Response to the Ecological Crisis and Challenges

Constructive responses from the government regarding environmental degradation and pollution has primarily been through policy-making and implementation. The Zambian government continues to respond to the ecological crisis amid the ongoing environmental degradation and excess pollution especially in the Copperbelt province. For example, the formation of governmental bodies on the environment, the various environmental legislations, laws and other initiatives reaffirm the government's determination. However, there have been many challenges such as poor implementation of the laws and regulations, poor collaboration of the local communities with the government and economic issues which have negatively affected the government's efforts effectively to respond to environmental problems which continue to worsen.

Since 1990's, several agencies and forums have been created to advise the government on environmental issues and ensure that environmental legislation is implemented both at higher and lower levels. The establishment of the Environmental Council Zambia (ECZ) in 1992 as a coordinating, decision making and implementation body for all initiatives, programmes and projects that are geared towards the protection of the environment and atmosphere was a great success. When the ECZ was formed, one of its primary duties was to foresee the implementation of the Environmental Protection and Pollution Control Act of 1990. Before the Environmental Protection and Pollution Control Act (EPPCA) of 1990 was passed, individual industries and mines had to monitor pollution in their respective areas of operation. Regulations such as the Factories Act, the Town and Country Planning Act of 1980 and the Mines and Mineral Act merely guide respective organisations in the control and monitoring of pollution, which was highly ineffective [Osei-Hwedie 1996:67].

The enforcement of the Environmental Protection and Pollution Control Act of 1990 was therefore a breakthrough in the care and protection of the environment. The Act sought extensively to reduce environmental damage, especially in the Copperbelt province where pollution has been extreme. According to Osei-Hwedie [996:67], the Act provides for the "regulations for protection of the environment and control of pollution" and the need to establish structures that would spearhead the implementation of environmental legislation. The Act also highlights "offences and penalties of polluters outlined in sections dealing with water, air, noise or chemical pollution" [Osei-Hwedie 1996:67]. Further, the Act "sets environmental quality standards and makes the polluter responsible for meeting them" and "all effluents and emissions from mining operations are regulated through a system of permits, licenses and fines" [Chipatu 2011:26]. Other regulations concerning the environment such as the Mineral Environmental Regulations of 1997, the Mines and Minerals Environmental Regulations of 2008, the Environmental Impact Assessment Regulation (EIAR) of 1997 and the Environmental Management (Licencing Regulations 2013) have been enacted and amended by the government over the years. According to Lubinda [2009:8], in 2002 the ECZ affirmed that its mission is to:

> **"Regulate and coordinate environmental management, promote awareness, and ensure environmental protection through enforcement of regulations and the prevention and control of pollution in support of sustainable development – so as to provide for the health and welfare of persons, animals, plants and the environment of Zambia."**

As indicated, the Environmental Council Zambia (ECZ) which in 2011 was renamed the Zambia Environmental Management Agency (ZEMA) executes its mandate for control of atmospheric pollution and protection of the environment. It manages the implementation of projects that provide research on environmental issues such as the Zambia Environmental Information Network and the National Implementation Plans on Persistent Organic Pollutants project. Furthermore, according to the Zambian Convention on Biological Diversity [2018, among other core functions, ZEMA seeks to:

> **"(1) Draw up and enforce regulations related to water, air and noise pollution, pesticides and toxic substances, waste management and natural resources management; (2) advise the Government on the formulation of policies related to good management of natural resources and environment, and (3) advise on all matters relating to Environment conservation, protection and pollution control, including necessary policies, research investigations and training"**

ZEMA has a very broad and appealing environmental management mandate. To achieve its objectives, it has created partnerships with individuals, communities, national and global organisations with the aim of eradicating environmental problems and ensuring a safe and healthy environment for all. It also continues to act as a strong agency which advises the private sector and the government on issues relating to water, air and land pollution, environmental management and the conservation of biodiversity. Moreover, ZEMA ensures that environmental concerns are integrated in national planning schemes and that environmental concerns are publicised through the dissemination of information, awareness programs and promotion of research and general training [Zambia Environmental Management Agency 2011]. The creation of environmental agencies such as ZEMA has helped the government in its attempts to deal with various environmental problems including those resulting from illegal mining practices. Some of ZEMA's networks and collaborator-organisations which are spread throughout the country include the Impact Assessment Association of Zambia, Zambia Copperbelt Environment Project, and the Zambia National Climate Change Secretariat.

Furthermore, the government has responded to environmental degradation through the enactment of strict laws and regulations which are meant to promote and sensitise people of the need to safeguard a healthy and safe environment and atmosphere. For example, on 30 June 2009, the government launched a National Environment Policy through the Ministry of Tourism, Environment and Natural Resources "to provide a framework for the management of Zambia's environment and natural resources" and promote "sustainable economic development and protection of the environment by ensuring that all economic activities being conducted do not undermine the balance of the ecosystem" [Lusaka Times 2009].

The implementation of the policy resulted in several sustainable development projects and programmes concerning natural resources and environmental issues. Apart from environmental policies, the Environmental Management Act of 2011 upholds the centrality of a safe, clean and healthy environment. It contains general principles that are meant to regulate environmental management and reaffirm the citizens' duty to protect the environment. Section 4 of the Environmental Management Act of 2011 obliges any human activity on the environment to be subjected to environmental auditing and monitoring, and "the person responsible for any environmental degradation to restore the degraded environment, as far as practicable, to its condition immediately prior to the damage" [Zambia Environmental Management Agency 2011]. The government has also enacted strict laws in the mining sector which are partly meant to reduce the environmental problems caused by illegal mining practices. If one is found, one is liable to conviction and may be fined with an extensive penalty or be imprisoned for more than seven years [Zambia Environmental Management Agency 2011].

The strict legislation on environment shows that the government considers the need to protect nature, biodiversity and the atmosphere seriously. Illegal miners fail to comply with environmental legislation, since they engage in unlicensed mining activities without having undertaken any environmental impact assessment or considered the negative effect of their activities on land and soil. The government, through law enforcement agencies and the police, have, in recent years, fined or arrested several illegal miners. For example, in March 2018, Mines and Minerals Development Minister Richard Musukwa warned that "government will not tolerate any illegal miners in Zambia and that all mining operations must follow the correct procedure by owning licences" [Tumfweko 2018]. Apart from laws and legislations, the arrests and fining of illegal miners continue to help the government prevent the escalating negative environmental impacts of illegal mining.

ZAMBIA ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT AGENCY

Despite the compressive environmental legal system and governmental bodies such as ZEMA which are meant to protect the environment, there are challenges to the implementation of such polices and laws. Firstly, the problem concerning the lack of integrity and responsibility on the part of government officials responsible for implementing environmental policies has not been fully addressed. For example, the issues of corruption and nepotism have highly affected the adequate implementation and materialisation of environmental legislation [Chibuye 2015:152]. This shows that although the departments and agencies that have been created, together with environmental legislation, has highly helped the government to respond to the problems of pollution and environmental degradation, its ability to implement the regulations has been hampered.

Secondly, legislation often targets large corporate bodies and partnerships to the extent that small-scale firms such those belonging to illegal miners remain 'untouchable'. The small-scale sources of environmental degradation such as illegal mining are sometimes ignored by institutions that are meant to safeguard the environment. For example, the need for the environmental impact assessment as affirmed by the Mines and Minerals Act is often done in big corporate mining bodies rather than in small scale mining operations. Despite the few arrests that have been made so far, the local police do not strictly monitor or search for illegal mining operations in the Copperbelt. Thirdly, the lack of sufficient income has highly affected government bodies which are meant to protect the environment. The government continues to suffer from inadequate sources of income and other resources for conducting environmental impact assessments, setting up viable projects, workshops and programmes which would enable it to acquire substantial control of the environmental crisis [Murekezi 2004:46].

Finally, the efforts being made by the government have not received positive responses from the community at the local level in the Copperbelt province. Musonda [2016:16] bemoans that while there have been protests and other attempts on the part of the community to challenge certain companies and mines which cause pollution and environmental damage, there have been "*divisions in society which weakens the community's collective capacity to mobilise against pollution*". Among other factors, poverty and the fear of losing employment from the respective companies and mines that cause pollution and environmental degradation continue to perpetuate the lack of unity in most communities. In his interview with residents of Kankoyo Township in Mufulira regarding the community's mass-protest initiatives against companies and mines that cause pollution, one of Musonda's [2016:16] respondents replied: "*you can participate in the protests, but what happens when the company sees you? You get fired, and when you get fired, no salary, the children suffer…I wouldn't want to lose my job*". The presence of environmental legislation and governmental bodies which are meant to control pollution and environmental degradation has met several challenges such as corruption and the poor economy.

"you can participate in the protests, but what happens when the company sees you? You get fired, and when you get fired, no salary, the children suffer…I wouldn't want to lose my job" Musonda

Environmental Justice and Ecotheology

The negative impacts of illegal mining and other human activities which cause environmental degradation and pollution in the Copperbelt raise many questions. How can one employ an eco-theological perspective to respond to the ecological crisis being engineered by illegal mining in Zambia, especially in the Copperbelt province? How is the understanding of the earth as a unified community and household of God relevant to the ecological crisis? Can the idea of stewardship be used to reaffirm the need for humanity's care for the environment? Such questions concern vital themes within Christian ecology which espouse not only justice for the environment but also the need for humanity's respect of nature's intrinsic value and dignity. Generally, the ecological crisis can be partly tackled from the perspective of environmental justice and the notion of the earth as our common home which is rooted in eco-theology within the Christian tradition.

Call for Environmental Justice

Ecological or environmental justice highlights a significant link between the notion of justice and the ecosystems. While the term 'eco-justice' was coined in the early 1970s, the concept of environmental justice emerged in the early 1980s in the United States [Bell 2014:15]. Originally, the latter was linked to the Environmental Justice Movement which stressed the need for equal distribution of environmental burdens and benefits, and the impartial participation of all people in the environmental policy-making processes and implementation. Both 'ecological justice' and 'environmental justice' concepts continue to be used in religious and secular spheres. Human dominance over nature through illicit environmental practices has led to a litany of ecological problems.

Rather than being a relationship of equals, the relationship between nature and human beings is underlined by human exploitation and domination over nature. Thus, one ought to reaffirm a "*fair and caring treatment of natural systems and nonhuman creatures*" [Gibson 2012:21] since "*justice as a virtue needs to be an integral part of a conception of ecological justice in terms of responsibility for establishing und sustaining ecologically just institutions*" [Glotzbach 2011:19]. As such, the unjust treatment of nature can be considered intolerable, regardless of the economic aspect involved. Ecological justice entails not only being held responsible for the damage being done to the environment but also taking strenuous measures both theoretically through the enactment of environmental laws and policies, and practically, by ensuring that such regulations are applied both at the higher and lower level.

According to the First National People of Colour Environmental Leadership Summit held in October 1991, "environmental justice affirms the sacredness of Mother Earth, ecological unity and the interdependence of all species, and the right to be free from ecological destruction" and that "*governmental acts of environmental injustice [are] a violation of international law, the Universal Declaration on Human Rights, and the United Nations Convention on Genocide*" [Merchant 2005:174-178]. The affirmed principles of environmental justice critique the shallow environmentalism which does not strongly advocate a healthy ecology. The notion of justice presupposes just relationships since uneven patterns of domination are unjust. The environmental impact of illegal mining in the Copperbelt shows a disparity in the relationship between nature and human beings.

Brinkmann [2016:222] quotes Pope John Paul II who affirmed that world peace is threatened by many things including a lack of respect for nature and the "*plundering of natural resources*". The statement reiterates the need for respect of nature and its intrinsic worth which required addressing the environmental discrimination happening in the Copperbelt province. If both nature and people are important in themselves, then there might be a need to establish a code of 'ecological rights' similar to the codes of human rights [Rajotte 1992:103]. Although the issue of nature's intrinsic worth brings about the question of whether nonhuman creation has rights, if all animate and inanimate creatures have "*intrinsic value (irrespective of whether humans recognise that), humans as moral agents have a duty to protect them, regardless of whether rights language is applicable to such creatures*" [Conradie 2011:65]. The position that all creation has intrinsic value entails that environmental discrimination which continues to be apparent in the negligence and carelessness of illegal miners call for an urgent need to foster justice towards the environment.

There is a need for ecological sustainability whereby environmentally fitting and favourable living and working habits are developed

which enable nonhuman life to flourish and ecologically appropriate technology and means of using natural resources are utilised. Boff [1997:8] argues that as human beings, we treat nature unjustly, when we "*subjugate nature, press it into delivering its secrets, tie it to our service and make it our slave*". Because sometimes human beings perceive themselves as 'above' other created things, they reduce "other" created things into instruments of human progress and happiness. There is a need for environmental liberation and freedom from human oppression since "*the God who liberates and saves is the same God who created the universe, and these two divine ways of acting are intimately and inseparably connected*" [Laudato Si' 73]. One ought to confront the systems that exploit and oppress the natural world thereby causing undesirable environmental degradation and pollution.

The emphasis is not on the equal distribution or sharing of earth's resources but on ensuring that nature is granted the ecological dignity it deserves by not being abused, distorted or degraded. Furthermore, ecological justice requires recognising in "*other creatures and natural systems the claim to be respected and valued and taken into account in societal arrangements*" [Gibson 2004:34]. The need to care for the environment cannot be considered as 'doing a favour to the environment' since biblical exegesis shows that the earth and all it contains belongs to God who is the sole creator; and that human beings are part of God's creation. One ought to consider the fact that "*our Creator has given us the gift of creation: the air we breathe, the water that sustains life, the climate and environment we share-all of which God created and found 'very good*'" [Wenski 2012:498]. All earth's inhabitants are dependent on God's care and sustenance. The human response to the ecological crisis is a sign of respect for all of God's creation which has intrinsic ecological dignity independent of humanity.

Earth as Our Common Homeland

The ecological crisis in the Copperbelt requires actions and responses that are radical to the polluting, destructive and primitive human relationship with nature. Such a disjointed relationship is partly rooted in the dualistic and hierarchical dichotomy between humanity and the world; with human beings as subjects and nature as the object. This anthropocentric view which places human beings at the centre of other created things means that everything starts with humans, returns to them and is at their service. As Boff [1997:70] puts it, the main goal is the '*dominium terrae*', to conquer and dominate the earth. This is partly based on the flawed view that everything exists for human beings and that "*nothing has otherness and meaning apart from the human being*" [Boff 1997:70].

Human beings feel that they are outside and above nature. Such an erroneous view is captured by the statement of Protagoras of Abdera (c. 485-10 BCE) who affirmed that 'the human being is the measure of all things.' This relates to the attitude toward natural resources and the environment that "*nature does not have an intrinsic value; it is only valuable in so far as it can be utilised by humans for various purposes, for example for farming, mining and energy or recreation*" [Conradie 2011:20]. Such corrupt, biased and manipulative views call for human reconciliation with nature so as to enhance the common good of the planet earth as a whole. Challenging the dualism view of human beings and nature necessitate living by shalom which exhibits peaceable values such as integration, completeness and a unified earth whereby everything moves together in dynamic harmony. For Moules [2018], *shalom* proclaims creation's destiny, a renewed creation, and challenges injustice that causes deformity and destruction to the earth.

Moules's view purports the universal principle that all created things constitute an immense cosmos and planetary unified community which ought to coexist in harmony and solidarity due to the interdependence, interconnectedness, and the fact that all earth's creatures have the same origin and destiny. This echoes the message of Jesus who "*preached a gospel which was based on justice, sharing, caring, love, rendering services, solidarity and living in harmony with all God's creation*" [Gitau 2000:151]. Christ's message emphasised the values of God's kingdom which was based on the integrity and harmony of the entire cosmos. Since Christians draw their vision from Christ who is the centre of creation, "*the destruction of any part of Creation, especially the extinction of species, defaces the image of Christ which is etched in creation*" [Christiansen 1996:316].

Moreover, caring for the earth requires metaphorically perceiving the universe as God's body. The theological insight which perceives the earth as God's body calls for a radical healing of the environment in the Copperbelt. Such a view challenges the unjustified way in which human beings relate to the environment since "*God suffers when any part of the Earth suffers; God rejoices when any part of the universe experience ecstasy and fulfilment*" [Wright 1993:87]. Human beings share the same destiny with all earth's creatures, since the common good of the universe extends to both human and nonhuman, inanimate and animate things.

Understanding the common good and relatedness of the entire universe and all it contains reaffirms the need for solidarity and reunion of all members of the earth's community. The notion of the earth as a unified community which stresses the idea that we are all members of the same household of God underlines the fact that the survival of human beings is based on the existence of the thriving natural world. This element is strongly captured by *Laudato Si'* which calls for an inclusive dialogue on the shaping and caring of the earth: 'our common home'. In the encyclical, Pope Francis appeals to the world to resolve the universal ecological crisis which requires looking at our common future which we share with the whole of creation collectively and mutually. Pope Francis affirms that although 'human life is grounded in three fundamental and closely intertwined relationships: with God, with our neighbour and with the earth itself' it is pitiful that "*these three vital relationships have been broken, both outwardly and within us. This rupture is sin*" [Laudato Si' 66]. There is a need to repair the disrupted universal connectedness of human beings with the whole universe.

The motif of the earth as our common home which pictures creation as a vast public household and community of equals upholds the inclusiveness and oneness of all creation rooted in solidarity with single ultimate purpose. Creating an equal relationship between human beings and other species of the earth require that "*all types of stewardship, relationship, and carrying for the earth are part of our responsibility*" [Berry 1991:58]. Human stewardship of the earth is geared towards the creation of harmony not only between human beings and creation, but also between human beings and God who is the absolute Lord of the whole universe. Human stewardship should not be employed to mean humanity's separation from the rest of the natural world; that is, human beings are there to manage or control nature. Being a steward of the earth, which is God's body requires that one become a servant, thereby setting human beings as part of creation and participants in God's work of creating and recreating.

Understanding stewardship as the human participation in the divine creation and recreation helps us to care for the environment as our common home. This prevents one from continuing to exploit and damage the earth based on the justification that God has given human beings the authority to "*fill the earth and subdue it*" [Genesis 1:28 NRSV]. The theology of stewardship and shalom is against domination since it suggests an environmentally sensitive and harmonious relationship between human beings and the rest of creation. This reaffirms Pope Benedict XVI's teaching that the "*covenant between human beings and the environment should mirror the creative love of God*" [Schaefer 2013:33]. The covenantal aspect helps one to affirm real sustainability and unity of creation as a whole rooted in the values of stewardship and interconnectedness.

A genuine Christian ecology challenges the dualistic and anthropocentric view which places human beings as masters of nonhuman creatures. This view portrays human beings as being there to dominate and abuse the environment which might be considered as mere object, instrument and means to a human end. By recognising the intrinsic value and dignity of nature based on the idea that all created things are one community with a common goal and destiny, human beings can be more caring and loving of the environment. Humanity has the responsibility of protecting the environment for the sake of its intrinsic worth, connectedness with nature and for future generations.

Conclusion

The paper discussed the environmental impacts of illegal mining activities in the Copperbelt province of Zambia and attempted to offer a response to the crisis from an eco-theological perspective. By exploring illegal mining and its impacts on land in the Copperbelt, the paper demonstrated that it is a serious issue which requires urgent significant response from both government and society. Although there have been responses and attempts have been made by the government and society to curb the problem, such efforts continue to be inadequate. This inadequacy is confirmed by the worsening ecological crisis due to environmental damage and pollution being caused by illegal mining practices and many other forms of human exploitation and disruption of nature through mining, agriculture, energy and recreation. The final part of the paper established that a radical eco-theology challenges the dualistic, hierarchical and anthropocentric view which places human beings at the centre of all creation. The notion of environmental justice reaffirms nature's intrinsic value which ought to be respected, thereby challenging the biased view that human beings are above the rest of creation.

Moreover, since all human and nonhuman creation is part of the unified community housed by the earth our common home, this calls for the principles of shalom and stewardship which reaffirm the interconnectedness of all that exists. Biblical exegeses done from the perspective of modern Christian ecology upholds the oneness of all creation under the one God who is the absolute Lord of all creation. This calls for solidarity, love and care for all creation. This requires a radical rejection of the ill-conceived theology which puts human beings as masters of the universe and nature as an object merely to be abused and used in a manner as human beings see fit. The universe is one developing reality of which we are all part, in which we all carry out our missions and through which we all come into existence and perish. Human beings are truly connected with plants, animals, biodiversity, the cosmos, galaxies and all creation. The conception of interconnectedness and the integrity of all creation fight against humanity's dominance over "other" created things and thus bring liberation to nature.

Christianity, based on its ecological teachings, can be a rich and appealing instrument for imparting awareness of the need to care for the environment. Due to its insistence on the care for all creation, environmental justice and interconnectedness, the Church can be a true prophetic voice in the protection of the helpless environment. I maintain that people ought to realise the undeniable relationship between human wellbeing and that of the environment – the environment must be safeguarded and cared for, such that any abuse towards it ought to be eliminated. Instead of advocating human domination over nature, one ought to care for the environment as a good steward not only due to its intrinsic value but also because the earth is our common home – there is a profound connection between nature and human life.

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Animism in African Philosophy: A Psychosocial examination after Senghor, Bergson and Deleuze and Guattari

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Abstract

Using a new psychosocial approach and my own research data, this paper examines animist thought and praxis' contribution to past and present African philosophy. The Negritude African philosophy and aesthetics writing of Senghor, and the European continental philosophy of Bergson, Deleuze and Guattari are used throughout in an analysis of the words and practices of two animist traditional healers. Psychosocial methods challenge any straightforward focus on language and cognition. They are a compelling choice for examining topics that require getting close to participants' experiences and/or can produce moments of doubt in research, or when words may not be enough. This paper highlights African animist thought and praxis' potential for contributing to spheres of philosophical discourse beyond ethics, metaphysical essence or nature. It is valuable to explore it and not to labour under any prejudice or the fear of being derided due to a hegemony of Western philosophy and ideas

Keywords: african animism; african philosophy; Senghor; Bergson; Deleuze and Guattari

Expressive African masks, wood, grass, feathers, flowers, Seattle Art Museum, Seattle, Washington, USA

Introduction

Using a new psychosocial approach and my own research data, this paper examines animist thought and praxis' contribution to past and present African philosophy. The Negritude African philosophy and aesthetics writing of Le´opold Se´dar Senghor, and the European continental philosophy of Henri Bergson, Gilles Deleuze and Fe´lix Guattari are used throughout in an analysis of the words and practices of two animist traditional healers. Psychosocial studies is an emergent perspective that draws on a mix of disciplines including sociology, psychoanalysis and continental philosophy [Clarke and Hoggett 2009]. Its research methods challenges any straightforward focus on language and cognition. The research experience is mined in its full complexity, never halting in the exploration of either a subject's or researcher's subjectivity. For instance, researchers are required to pay attention to moments in research when there is a struggle to understand a shared sense of meaning or "*something unspoken, undigested or otherwise in excess of language seems to be present*." [Bereswill et al 2010: 239].

Whilst studying in 1930s France, the Senegalese poet, politician and philosopher Leopold Se´dar Senghor had made a profitable reading of the French philosopher Henri Bergson's life philosophy [Diagne 2011, 2019; Thiam 2014]. The works of the later and post-modern French philosopher Gilles Deleuze and his sometimes co-author the psychoanalyst Fe´lix Guattari are also greatly influenced by that of Bergson. The point of an indistinguishability of Senghorian, Bergsonian and Deleuzian thought is well encapsulated by Simone Bignall when she says:

> **"For Deleuze, as for Senghor's 'African', difference (when it is adequately conceived) is not objectified as a negative or oppositional facet of a representative and defining identity; but rather is a kind of creative force that one encounters in a shared movement of affective transition"** [Bignall, 2021: 249]

Senghor's African philosophy writing is largely based on his childhood time in Senegal and his relationship with his animist cattle-herder uncle, Tokor Waly. When describing these years of his childhood Senghor said "*My uncle Waly took care of my moral and religious education ... I was 100% animist' [in Thiam 2014: 60]. Mazrui writes, this phase of Senghor's life is celebrated in Senghor's writing and poetry as a 'Negro -Negritude' and 'Blackness' that is 'a salute to the wisdom of remaining close to nature*" [2009: 54]. Elsewhere, Senghor writes of the widely held African spirit of communalism as "*a religious, animist existentialism*" [Senghor and Halperin 1956: 27]. The Ghanaian philosopher Kwasi Wiredu is reluctant to automatically attribute animism to traditional African thought throughout Africa's numerous and diverse ethnic groups. However, where for instance he disputes an automatic attribution of animism in the case of his own Akan ethnic peoples, Wiredu agrees to the existence amongst them of, for example, beliefs in "*extra human force(s) in relation to the natural world and a belief that all of the orders of existence are 'subject to the universal reign of (cosmic) law*" [2003: 22].

Mazrui writes of an "*African religiosity debased as animism*" [2009: 395]. Whatever the disagreement over the religious and/or epistemological status of animism and its existence across African cultures, for my part, for instance, I agree with Vest when she says that much of African philosophy labours under the influence of "*European definitions of societal development and cultural sophistication defined in terms of the acquisition of Western technology and Christianity*" [2009: 19]. Further I agree with Vest that, as a result of this influence perverse debates often ensue within African philosophy. Without these debates researchers into African philosophy would not be burdened and a greater amount of first hand indigenous data would appear in papers because, for instance:

> **"the relative merits of scientific epistemologies and magico-religious epistemologies would not be guided by unspoken concerns about measuring up to Western definitions of development based on the acquisition of Western technology, nor would they be guided by Christian monotheistic devaluations of spiritist practices as primitive."** [Vest 2009: 8]

As Agada writes about the use by African or Africanist philosophers of data derived from indigenous ideas and practices, African philosophers have often "*made it their duty to oppose ethnophilosophy for supposedly lending support to the Eurocentric belief that Africans could not engage in high-level abstract thinking of the type demanded by philosophy.*" [2022: 26]. According to this paper and Senghor's thinking, much research and writing on traditional African philosophy must continue to focus on descriptions of ideas and practices that can be regarded as animist [Kagame 1956; Mbiti 1969; Anyanwu 1987; Wiredu 1996; Ramose 1999].

Background: Animism in African philosophy

The data in this paper is drawn from my PhD research into African culture and aesthetics. This took place during two three-week visits from my home in the United Kingdom to Cameroon. The first in October 2016 and the second in March and April of 2017. For this research I received a great amount of help and support from Dr Joachen Banindjel of the University of Yaounde´1. Dr Banindjel is an academic and clinical psychologist whose own research encompasses the topics of intercultural psychology and traditional African therapies. My research question had originally been 'What can traditional African art and aesthetic practices contribute to our understanding of healing and everyday modern culture in Cameroon?'. During both three week visits I interviewed a number of traditional healers in the mainly English speaking North-West and South-West provinces of the country. One interview used in this paper was conducted in French. For its translation I am grateful to Dr Ebede Ndi of The Conceptual Institute, San Francisco, U.S.A. My research method was a mix of sensory ethnography and photo-elicitation interviewing. These and similar methods have long been known to evoke memories, areas of knowledge and more [Pink 2007, 2015]. In character, my interviews were highly sociable with two or more other people present, for instance, myself, Dr Banindjel, a local intermediary and/or some of the healer's associates and/or family. The interviews sometimes spontaneously transformed into roving ones of for instance, the healer's compound. For all the interviews, ethical consent was sought and obtained for any recording, photography, filming and publication.

Traditional healers are often regarded by the local population as those members of their community most knowledgeable of traditional African culture generally (Hallen 2010). The complexity and breadth of healers' role in traditional life is perhaps best understood by how *nganga*, the *Ki-Kongo* word for 'expertise', translates as "*traditional priest, doctor, savant, expert*" [Thompson 1974: 2]. The use of traditional artefacts and music are often part-and-parcel of healers' practice [Thompson, 1974, 2011; Hallen and Sodipo 1986; Blier 1995, 2015; Vogel 1997; Bongmba 2009]. The philosophers Hallen and Sodipo [1986] worked with traditional healers in their research. Hallen and Sodipo experimented with the "*ordinary language*" approach to analytic philosophy [Austin, 1961] using an African language (in their case Yoruba) and examined how certain words are naturally used and their conceptual surround in everyday language. The choice of traditional healers was regarded by them as appropriate for demonstrating how both the form and content of philosophical thinking must be culturally relativized. According to Hallen, by this approach words are placed in their relevant "*fields of discourse*" [2010: 78]. In my research, not-withstanding the importance of language differences across cultures, the use of sensory ethnography and photo-elicitation interviewing rather than language alone encouraged the participants to utilise their own frame of reference, associations and memories. In addition, interviews that involve responses to objects and/or images allow "*the researcher to compare her or his subjective interpretation of the image with that of the research participant*" [Pink 2015: 88].

During both of my visits in 2016 and 2017 I met and interviewed Mr Singer (pseudonym). Mr Singer lived in the forest outskirts of a large city in part of the South-West Region province of Cameroon. The region is famous for scenic crater lakes and national and tropical forest reserves that boast the highest number of animal species so far found in Africa. Species include gorillas, monkeys, forest elephants, buffalo, antelope, and leopards. During the first visit Mr Singer had spoken about and modelled several masks to Dr Banindjel and I, one of which, with its nine horns revealed him to be a very high-ranking healer of the Bamileke tradition. During the second visit and interview I asked Mr Singer some questions related to what had come up about music and dancing during the first visit and interview. He explained:

"We are always proud when we sing because, for example, especially for us the Bamileke, when there is a funeral, we have killed a cow, there are goats, pigs, fritters, there are drinks, so you should be proud because you will eat whatever you see ." [Singer]

The notion of 'proud' that Mr Singer expressed was not stiff but evocative of all the magic that accompanies people happily gathering together to eat and sing. It was a joyous image of feasting and sociability. Similarly, during my first visit and interview with him he had shown a 'monkey' mask that is used along with a traditional dance that, as he put it, "There are many people, that is, well there are many people, but now I am the chief." The local intermediary interjected notably about this scene, and described Mr Singer in it as "the captain of the team". The

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notion of 'the team' in a context of people moving together in a ceremonial procession, simultaneously evokes the importance of both participation and community in traditional African art and life and recalls Senghor's view that all African art is "*created by everyone, for everyone*" [1956:18]. During the second visit and interview Mr Singer explained about singing and dancing in a ceremony saying:

"Um ... witchdoctor, when we say singing and dancing, it's in the field, for example, when we go out with juju in the field, I sing and I dance. And the people who are there to accompany me follow the rhythm of the song and we dance together following the same moves/steps. Well, I understand that maybe you wanted to know that the song we are singing means something or..." [Singer]

The thrust of the meaning of both the local intermediary and Mr Singer indicate how music can be understood as primarily an activity [Small, 1998]. Further that in Africa, this point is manifold and that "*by being embedded in the context of shared experiences, in a sense of community, healing through music and the arts can go beyond individualized 'therapy'*" [Hintjens and Ubaldo 2019: 281-282]. But his words "*I understand maybe you wanted to know*" were also a "*perhaps you would rather we talk about something else?*" question. This offer of re-direction contained an implicit othering of myself, the researcher. Mr Singer had perhaps imagined that I was only interested in the song as an entity and text. It seems likely that he perceived me as a Western researcher who was typically primarily interested in music as an object [Small, 1998] rather than as a participatory action and type of cooperation [Tracey, 1983]. Whereas, the song as an entity and text was undoubtedly not Mr Singer's primary meaning of it. There was a danger of the researcher missing something essential to traditional African aesthetics and of a failure to recognise what Akpang describes as "cultural particularities/inspirations or determined by traditional philosophies" [2013: 46].

Without a psychosocial studies process of research, in which the need for the researcher to both notice and take seriously moments of confusion and/or frustration in research [Froggett and Hollway 2010; Froggett et al 2014], researchers from a fully foreign or even partly foreign culture are in danger of missing a great deal in data. When a story is told, as Livia Polanyi puts it, the narrator takes responsibility for the meaning of the story and "*Stories are told to make a point, to transmit a message ... about the world the teller shares with other people*" [1985: 13]. However, when asked about a person's emotions when singing, Mr Singer seemed to doubt that I would discern much from what he chose to narrate and describe. The scenes he chose were communicative ones of "going out with juju in the field" where he and others would sing and dance in-step. In addition, he described how the singing might become a japing or taunting between different groups but that he was always alert to any signs of anger when, as he said, "*I will sing a song that will appease/calm you, a song to bring me down and bring peace.*"

Mr Singer is conscious of a Western academic interest in the song as a site of interpretation and that "means something" but because of my psychosocial research method that encourages free association, he firstly frames the topic of singing according to his own aesthetics and philosophical world-view. His world-view involves an Africanistic philosophical regard of communicative aesthetic practices that are thereby ethical. Mr Singer's regard of the scene of communal movement and sound recalls the South African philosopher Mogobe Ramose's translation of Ubuntu philosophy and explanation that "*a community is not a given. It is a construction out of relationality*" [Ramose and de Sousa Santos 2016].

Ramose's translation of Ubuntu stems from the philosophical point that 'movement', the creation of forms and modes of being, cannot be separated from the idea of relation [2002]. Here relationality does not imply 'order' but is an unfixed and musical conception of Ubuntu for African philosophical ideas. Ramose considers that the word '*Ubuntu*' is best approached as a hyphenated term. 'Ubu' is the idea of be-ing in general in an ontological sense, "*enfolded be-ing before it manifests itself in the concrete form or the existence of a particular entity*" [1999: 50]. 'Ubu' is always oriented towards unfoldment or '-ntu', a nodal point in the creation of forms and modes of being. The two, cannot be separated on an ontological level; they are in fact "*the indivisible one-ness and wholeness of ontology and epistemology*" [1999: 50]. Ramose's Ubuntu as philosophy recalls Deleuze and Guattari's also simultaneously united and restless wandering model of 'difference', that "*is demonic rather than divine ... Univocal being is at one and the same time nomadic distribution and crowned anarchy*" [Deleuze 2004: 47]. Ramose's thinking and emphasis of "*the processual nature of reality*" has an antecedent in the same 'vital force' metaphysics that inspired Senghor's African philosophy writing [Agada 2022: 203].

Mr Singer's interpretation of art and healing is an Africanistic psychosocial one that finds traces in Anyanwu's remark that, "*African art touches on realities which are lived or experienced. It is related to the African modes of life and it creates a world that is personally relevant and satisfying*" [1987: 246]. The consideration that traditional African art and practices are an 'in life', quotidian experience, that are both psychosocial epistemology and experienced as personally relevant and satisfying also appeared during my first visit and in an interview with a different 'high-ranking' healer, Mr Top (pseudonym). Mr Top lives in an immense forest part of the North-West Region province of Cameroon is the president of a regional association of over 300 healers. Speaking in a partly Pidgin English about his training by his father he explained, "*I started when you should do it the same as he was doing, I was about eight years old*". The words "do it the same as he was doing" are evidence that the practices and use of herbs that he learnt require a strict application and are sometimes magically nuanced by the inclusion of the family or social group. For instance, he went on to say:

"Or sometimes we call the family member, would make dinner with the family people, make the mess and they cook fine. To do it well they need to call the family member and make a celebration dinner and they would pray the medicine to go work. They would call the family together and they would sit together eat." [Singer]

This wider explanation of the scope of his praxis illustrates an African understanding of the value and use of the whole family group in processes of healing. Similarly, an understanding the importance of the communicative and caring dimension of sensorial life in acts of cooking and eating, plus likely singing.

A 'More Profound Sociality'

The philosophical import of the description of Mr Singer by the local intermediary as 'the captain of the team' and his and Mr Top's ontological concern for participation in aesthetic practices may also be induced from Mr Singer's regard of the artefacts used in his practice. During my first visit to Mr Singer, he exhibited some different animal masks and a leopard skin. About these artefacts used in his practice [see Figs.1 & 2]. He explained:

"... there are often other masks that have a pig's head ... this is gorilla, this is chimpanzee, there is monkey, well, each person [animal/life] has his meaning because, well, gorilla is stronger than monkey. So the person who wears gorilla (mask) means that he is stronger than the other." [Singer]

Fig. 1 Mr Singer shows a leopard skin he uses in healing practices. Photograph by Jim Parris, 10th October, 2016.

Fig. 2 Mr Singer models a gorilla mask that he uses in his healing practices. Photograph by Jim Parris, 10th October, 2016.

Mr Singer's conception that every animal/life ("person") has its own meaning and relative strength, conveys the idea that animals are important and their different spirit/character are what is valuable. The distinction between each spirit or character may well be a significant one, however, because as Deleuze's writes in his chapter *Bergson's conception of difference*, "*it is not to the presence of characters that we must pay attention, but to their tendency to develop themselves*" [1999: 45]. Thus, when Mr Singer considers, for example a leopard, pig, chimpanzee, monkey or gorilla, for Mr Singer, the different living characteristics of things creates an ontological plane of connection and possibilities. This idea that animals are important and their different spirit/character is what is valuable recalls Deleuze and Guattari's idea of rhizomatic connections that are lateral and not hierarchical. In the authors' book *A Thousand Plateaus* [1987] they introduce the idea of the "rhizome" as a foundational model of reality. Rhizomes in nature are characterized by a continual growth that has no formal centre and is non-hierarchical. In Deleuze and Guattari's work the living rhizome is both a model and set of qualities found everywhere in life and the universe. Similarly, in Deleuze's interpretation of Bergson, difference is not underwritten by specificity but by tendency. In contrast, through our initially available analytic cognitive regard of the world "*we substitute purely utilitarian modes of groupings for the articulations of the real*" [Deleuze 1999: 44]. Form and content are not ontologically distinct ideas and similarly the many is not subsumed under the idea of the singular, as in the traditional Western philosophical view.

Mr Singer is interested in processes of becoming that stem from meanings of connection such as family and community but not only limited along normal lines. His matching regard of different persons with his masks and artefacts of different animals is a semiotic mapping like Deleuze and Guattari's concept of 'territorialization'. For instance, Deleuze and Guattari provide an example of the interchange of sign and meaning between a wasp and an orchid [1987: 10]. The orchid in Deleuze and Guattari is not merely imitating the wasp but both things are engaged in a "*trans-species courtship dance*" whereby the orchid's pollen is necessarily transported to other orchids for pollination [Roffe and Stark 2015: 1]. This is an example of what Deleuze and Guattari call 'becoming' [1987]. Mr Singer's masks are somewhat grotesque and cartoon in style. As I photograph, the leopard skin is striking but manifestly no longer the complete living animal. I wonder at this and his obvious pride in them as tools. Mr Singer's artefacts are not attempts to imitate reality but are purposefully discontinuous from the real like Deleuze and Guatarri's "map" [1987]:

> **"The orchid does not reproduce the tracing of the wasp: it forms a map with the wasp ... What distinguishes the map from the tracing is that it is entirely oriented toward an experimentation in contact with the real. The map does not reproduce an unconscious closed in upon itself; it constructs the unconscious. It fosters connections between fields..."** [Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 12]

Although nominally interested in difference, 'connection' is primary in Deleuze and Guattari's Bergsonian thought. Deleuze considers that Western thought has committed us to modes of thought which produce a negative understanding of difference. These authors explain that all things are naturally in motion, 'becoming' and so inherently differential and something positive. For Bergson, "*There are no things, there are only actions*" [1911/2020: 194]. All difference is only a snapshot of the flow of time which is 'duration'. Starting from the essence of Bergsonian thought, Deleuze proceeds to an animist understanding of difference. For him, being exists in a single sense of everything and cannot be separated beyond style and manners. "*It is not a matter of being which is distributed according to the requirements of representation, but of all things being divided up within being in the univocity of simple presence (the One–All)*" [Deleuze 2004: 46]. This sharing within being is a profound sociality.

> **"Life differs from itself, so much so that we find ourselves before divergent lines of evolution and, on each line, before original procedures; but it is still only with itself that it differs, such that, on each line we will also find certain apparati, certain identical organ structures obtained by different means"** [Deleuze 1999: 51]

Boys In A Trance Laying On The Sand.
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These 'apparati', identical structures obtained by different means, resemble the correspondence Mr Singer considers between human characteristics and different animals' traits. But plants are also on this plane of environmental inclusivity. When interviewing a different 'high-ranking' healer, Mr Top (pseudonym), the interview had started inside and had been about both him in general and his knowledge of and traditional African artefacts, practices and experiences. However, when at one point he rose to take us all outside he immediately brought our attention to an array of plants growing within his compound. To my uninitiated eyes these were almost indistinguishable from each other but Mr Top's movements were those of a man excitedly joining a group of friends. He seemed to almost greet them, stopping at each one and making small indications that suggested a loving respect. At one moment he stopped to touch what may have been a Sensitive Plant (*Mimosa pudica*) and as the leaves retreated from his hand mimicked a voice saying, "leave me alone" whilst giving a little laugh. This otherwise childlike jape was however something more approaching a scientific observation on his part. It seemed like he regarded that the plant had a character and communicated its needs accordingly. After walking on with Mr Top, he suddenly stopped and gestured towards the vast tropical forest that stretched out below me. His action had both an air of theatricality and a purposeful comedic edge that produced a joy in me. For a brief moment, I saw the forest differently more colourful and alive. The sounds and voices emanating from it reached out to me. I was no longer looking at the scene of the forest from afar but instead was shrouded within its "*profound reality its surreality; less its sign than its meaning*" [Senghor 1956: 24]. Mr Top had 'magic-ked' me into an experience; perfect example; and grand metaphor; of connection.

As an outsider, I wonder whether I would have experienced the important ambiguity in Mr Singer's responses to my questions, without the presence of my Cameroonian colleague who is himself both familiar with the cultural practices of animist traditional healers and talking to them. Crucially, my research method had encouraged the emergence of the interviewee's own cultural view of the topic. Mr Singer is conscious of the occasional Western academic focus on the song as text but himself, firstly frames the song with a 'more profound' aesthetics. The communicative scenes he expressed, in response to a question about singing and analysed above, showed how the African idea of art is imperatively both a 'performative' and social one. This performative, social, 'in life' quality abolishes all separation between art and life. And exemplified how traditional art survives as an 'in life', quotidian experience. Mr Singer's evocative description of when he "goes out" in public ceremonies was an example of a highly complex performance involving moments of improvisation in response to the concrete world of his community.

The African 'team' and a concomitant religious feeling

The local intermediary's remark from my first interview about Mr Singer being "the captain of the team" should be interpreted in contradiction to the modern stress on the individual, with a stress rather on the word 'team' than 'captain'. The narrative described a captain figure involving union and a group singing and dancing in-step together. As Mr Singer puts it, "*And the people who are there to accompany me follow the rhythm of the song and we dance together following the same moves/steps.*" The narrative, scene of singing and dancing and idea of a team recall the South African musicologist Andrew Tracey's remark:

> **"The most fundamental aesthetic principle in Africa concerning music or anything else is that without participation there is no meaning. You can go so far as to consider African music as being a form of co-operation that happens also to produce sound."** [1983: 227]

The picture of this data also widens Christopher Small's view that music in Africa is its verb and 'musicking' [1998]. The image of a captain and team is generative of ideas of everyone being musical and able to participate in some way and highlights a fundamental social conception attached to aesthetic practices. This is the social aspect of African aesthetics, is undoubtedly what Senghor hoped meant to highlight when he said, "in the black African school ... any manifestation of art is collective, for everyone's benefit, and with everyone's participation" [Senghor 1956:28]. In another writing, and his usual poetic turn of phrase Senghor writes of 'the Sudan', to describe traditional life in a vast swathe of the continent. However, the lyrical image that Senghor provides sonnets exactly with Mr Singer's contributions over the meaning of singing and artistic practice:

> **"But in the Sudan, for example, the eight months of the dry season. During this time the people are entirely preoccupied with their relations with the Others: geniuses, ancestors, members of the family, tribe, or kingdom-even strangers. Celebrations follow celebrations and death itself is an occasion for festivity, for the best of celebrations."** [Senghor 1956: 27]

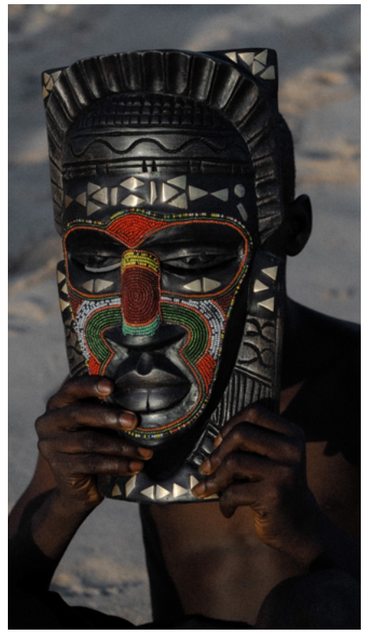
All this, according to Senghor, is the "natural" integration of art into social activities with concomitant "religious feelings" [1956: 26]. In order to better understand the foundation of Ubuntu philosophy, the 'value' of interrelatedness traditionally in Africa, one must return to ethnophilosophy and the topic of animism. To not do so, as Senghor understood long ago and Moya Deacon concurs, is to "*abandon the potential contribution that this trend lends to the entire discourse*" [2003: 111]. For instance, by this means, in order to dialogue between African and Bergsonian philosophy there is no need to choose one's weapons, here ontological, but rather to choose one's metaphysics. Senghor's religious vitalism and nominally Christian phrase 'a communion of souls' becomes important for a full understanding of the 'value' of interrelatedness traditionally in Africa and its philosophical links with Bergsonism.

In the works of Bergson [1963] and Deleuze and Guattari [1987], connections are made with the image of the natural mystic and sorcerers. The healers in my research are certainly examples of modern African natural mystics. In Bergson penultimate book, 'Two Sources of Morality and Religion', the mystic is considered by Bergson as engaged in a "more profoundly social" relationship to the world and with nature [1963: 199]. In outlining the conditions for this more profound sociality, Bergson's philosophy accords with the thinking of the healers in this paper.

In my research, animism understands the natural world as a relationality. This relationality is not simply an ecological co-dependency, it is an ontological context, that in Senghor's words "by which they are" [as cited in Diagne 2010]. However, the philosophical significance of this relationality is betrayed without returning to understand Senghor's foundational 'vital force' metaphysics in which, the whole world and everything, "*not only to men, but also to animals, vegetables, even minerals.* are *(my italics) By which they are.*" [ibid]. This point is finely captured in Senghor's powerful description of the transcendental potential of water:

> **"For what strikes ... is less the appearance of an object than its profound reality, its surreality; less its sign than its meaning. Water enchants him because it flows, fluid and blue, particularly because it washes, and even more because it purifies. Sign and meaning express the same ambivalent reality. However the stress is on meaning, which is the significance – no longer utilitarian, but moral, mystique of the real – a symbol."** [Senghor 1956: 24]

The same interchange of sign and meaning in nature is expressed by Mr Singer, and the other healers in my research. The healer's words and practices demonstrate a cultivated working of the conception of the world as a relationality and of 'a more profound sociality' that is no doubt implied in Senghor's notion of the 'mystique of the real'.



African face mask, Lekki, Nigeria.
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Conclusion

The view of Ubuntu discussed in this paper compliments Jonathan Chimakonam's writing on traditional Igbo philosophy of difference and its consequences for environmentalism. Chimakonam considers the traditional Igbo philosophical regard of the natural environment as founded on the notion of *eze o'nulo*. Chimakonam regards his *eze o'nulo* as an aspect of "*the underexplored African notion of 'relationship' found in many places in the sub-Saharan regional cultures*" [2019: 120]. *eze o'nulo* is an architecture of reality, a network of complementarity that results in a completeness. In accordance with the principle of *nmekoka*, all things are relatively different and by implication mutually inclusive. According to the author this sort of thinking is at a variance with Aristotelian and Russellian systems which render matter as a series of discrete isolations. Instead, it "recognizes the intermediate value, eschews absolutism/exclusivity and promotes relativism/inclusivity" [Chimakonam 2014: 8]. My examination of African animist thought and praxis highlights its potential for contributing to spheres of philosophical discourse beyond ethics, metaphysical essence or nature [Giddy 2019].

As Senghor's confessions and African philosophy writing suggest from long ago, the scope for dialogue between African animism, Bergsonian and by now Deleuzian philosophy is immense. It is valuable to explore their similarities and differences and not to labour under any prejudice towards animism or "the fear of being derided" due to a hegemony of Western philosophy and ideas [Agada 2022: 207]. Anyanwu's Africanistic description of religion, art and music as "some of the mechanisms for understanding and expressing the life forces of the invisible world" [1981: 271] recalls the experience of Mr Singer's communicative participatory art practice. This is an African 'more profound aesthetics' (Bergson) that readily accords in the everyday Deleuzian ideas of a transcendental signifier and pure virtual difference. That is to say, something that animates the whole system independently of intellect and culture, in brief, nature and the world. For all these philosophers "*... the logic of the Western culture (scientific culture) ruins vital experience*" [1981: 282]. The knowledge and practices of animist healers, such as in my research, remain important for African philosophical discourse and beyond.

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