Ubuntu/Botho as Ecophilosophy and Ecosophy

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ABSTRACT Environmental problems facing humanity in the 21st century require a reexamination of the beliefs and values that produced them in the first place. In this paper the researcher discusses some of the key environmental challenges facing the southern African region. The researcher point out that, if responses to local environmental problems and the global ecological crisis are to be meaningful (make possible a more sustainable future), then it will require a collective effort on the part of society and at the same time connect to individual's values or the values of particular groups. The Norwegian philosopher Arne Naess argued that there can be agreement on environmental principles across cultures, regions and nations and that these principles can be supported by a range of ecophilosophies that are aligned to agreed principles. Naess referred to philosophies that support deep ecology principles as ecophilosophies or ecosophies. Informed by Naess's views, in this paper the researcher argues that *ubuntu/botho* is an ecosophy that is aligned with the principles of the deep ecology movement (DEM). Moreover, that *ubuntu* can serve as the ecophilosophy/ecosophy that informs policies and practices responsive to the pressing environmental problems facing the southern African region.

INTRODUCTION

Environmental problems have reached unparalleled levels globally to the point where we now refer to the problems collectively as a global environmental (socio-ecological) crisis. Steffen et al. (2007) have gone as far as to suggest that we are witnessing the transition from a holocene age to an anthropocene age. By anthropocene age, they refer to a period in which human actions are overwhelming the great forces of nature. De Beer et al.(2014: 2-3) identify the following as pressing environmental problems facing global society generally and southern Africa more specifically: loss of biodiversity, hazardous waste, climate change, ozone depletion, risks associated with nuclear technology, pesticides, overpopulation, urbanization, depletion of natural resources, human health and disease, desertification, deforestation, pollution and poverty. These problems transcend national boundaries but their effects are felt locally – their effects impact on the livelihoods of local communities. Furthermore, although these problems concern the erosion of the planet's biophysical base, they always have interacting social, economic and political dimensions. For example, responses to an oil spill should not only be about cleaning the water and organisms such as penguins (as important as this might be) but in understanding the underlying economic activity which has produced the oil spill and the eco-nomic system that the activity forms part of (integrated world capitalism). Moreover, there is a political dimension concerning those who have the power to decide on matters affecting the lives of people and the well-being of the planet – it also involves government policies, environmental regulations and the nature of citizenry. The latter relates to whether citizens are able to critically engage with, and take actions in respect of environmental problems such as oil spills. There is also a social dimension of how people live together – in this instance, what are the living conditions of all workers in the oil industry, including those on oil tankers, etc.

Climate change is one of the most pressing environmental problems facing humanity in the 21st century. It is a complex and contested problem that is difficult to solve. Moreover, its causes might originate in a particular region but its effects felt elsewhere. Although the southern African region contributes minimally to the volume of anthropogenic gases produced globally, it is predicted to be one of the regions that will be hardest hit by climate change. For example, it is estimated that 35 percent of sub-Saharan Africa's agricultural capacity may be lost as a result of climate changes (in some countries yields from rain-fed agriculture could be reduced by up to 50 percent by 2020). Many of these countries already experience malnutrition, with 25 percent or more of children under five years moderately or severely underweight. The wild foods which

many households rely on for safety nets are expected to shift their habitats. In a study conducted in sub-Saharan Africa, of the 5000 plant species studied, 81-97percent will be affected by shifting habitats, and between 25-42 percent of the species' habitats are expected to be lost altogether (Africa Geographic 2007: 74-78; Lotz-Sisitka and Le Grange 2010). The implications of these changes are particularly severe for communities that use these plants for food or for medicines. Deterioration of pastures will also impact on livestock which in turn impacts on the food security and livelihood security of owners. Not only is food security an issue, but human health risks will increase as malarial areas expand to highland areas that are currently malaria-free. The incidence and prevalence of malaria is expected to grow rapidly, with the co-infection of malaria and HIV being particularly worrying. Increase in flooding in areas where sanitary infrastructure is inadequate is projected to lead to a rise in the frequency of epidemics and enteric diseases such as cholera, typhoid and dysentery (Africa Geographic 2007: 76-77; Lotz-Sisitka and Le Grange 2010).

Moreover, it is projected that by 2020 between 75 and 250 million Africans are likely to be exposed to increased water stress due to climate change. To put this into perspective, the population of the 14 Southern African Development Community (SADC) countries today is 295 million people. De Beer et al. (2014: 18) point out that the combined population of Botswana, Lesotho, Namibia, Swaziland and South Africa, which was 50.13 million in 2001 is projected to increase 77.2 million by the year 2020. When coupled with burgeoning population growth and the resultant demand for an unpredictable, scarce resource such as water, the picture is even bleaker. Climate change brings not only less rain in many parts of Africa, but also higher temperatures. Research in southern Africa shows that a 2 degees Celsius temperature increase can reduce precipitation by 10 percent, and that this effectively translates into a further reduction in water availability, which in turn will impact on hydroelectric power stations disrupting energy supplies and affecting industry and domestic needs (Africa Geographic 2007: 74-78). With relatively modest temperature rises the sea level could rise by one metre which would have enormous impacts on the great cities of Africa – Cape Town. Durban, Lagos and Cairo are amongst those that will be severely affected (Africa Geographic 2007: 81). A UN report indicated that some 30 percent of Africa's coastal infrastructure is at risk from rising seas (UNEP 2006). Added to this is the expected 'large scale ecosystem switches' where, for example, savannah will change to grassland, forest to savannah, shrubland to grassland, with little predictions as to how species will survive these changes (Africa Geographic 2007: 82-84; Lotz-Sisitka and Le Grange 2010).

While each of these issues is a concern in itself, it is the links between water scarcity, increased temperature and health risk, loss of food security and loss of biodiversity that are of most concern as they highlight the connection between climate, disease, food security, livelihood security and other stressors. Climate change issues cannot therefore simply be 'disaggregated' and treated separately in a context of multiple and interrelated stressors, and a holistic response is required from all sectors of society to meet its challenges. It is an irony that the continent that has contributed the least to global warming is the one most likely to have to contend with its harshest outcomes.

Environmental problems have generated several responses over the years like the writing of papers and books; the production of films and documentaries; intergovernmental conventions; the drafting of protocols, Treaties, Agreements, policies and laws. In southern Africa we have also witnessed local responses to the effects of climate change, for example, such as the indigenous the migrants in the Sebakwe region in Zimbabwe. Indigenous migrants have settled in the Sebakwe area of Zimbabwe as a consequence of the government's resettlement programme. The land was formally occupied by white settlers who practiced commercial farming, and in some instances, game-farming. The indigenous migrants did not have access to implements required for commercial farming and were also challenged by the effects of climate change such as variable rainfall patterns, increased instances of droughts and floods.But, through their agency and the use of local knowledge the indigenous migrants have been able to respond to the challenges by successfully growing crops that are resilient to changing climatic conditions. As Shava et al. (2009: 225) write:

"In the cultivation of traditional crops the prior knowledge and seed resources that community members brought with them was mo-

bilised to build local community capacity to withstand environmental change. This local knowledge was therefore revived and sustained within the local communities. For example, Mrs Mberengwa [and indigenous migrant] recalled how in the past back in her original home area Gutu when there were drought conditions they would grow traditional drought resistant cereal crops like rukweza (finger millet,Eluisine coracana),mapfunde (sorghum, Sorghum bicolor) and mhunga (pearl millet, Pennisetum americanum) …. The cereals had early maturing varieties that had a short growing season as well as late maturing varieties that had long growing seasons."

Responses to environmental problems globally and locally are encouraging and commendable. However, the state of the environment continues to deteriorate – the global ecological crisis is deepening and the environmental challenges in southern Africa are escalating (see De Beer et al. 2014 for a detailed discussion). The upshot of this is a planet on the brink of ecological disaster. I aver that a deepening environmental crisis again brings to the fore the perennial existential question of *how we should live*. This question requires deeper exploration into what contemporary society values, including the origins of such values and what (new) values we might wish to promote. It is in this context that I wish to explore the potential of an African value, *ubuntu* (familiar to those in southern Africa) as an ecophilosophy and ecosophy. In this exploration the researcher divides the rest of my paper into the following sections: ecophilosophy and ecosophy; what is *ubuntu*; *ubuntu* as ecophilosophy and ecosophy; some parting thoughts.

Ecophilosophy and Ecosophy

In recent decades modern philosophy has been critiqued for its dualistic thought, which formed the basis of the separation of humans from nature. As part of this critique we witnessed the emergence of philosophies that emphasize ecocentric values – philosophies called ecophilosophies. Drengson (1999) argues that just as the aim of traditional philosophy is sophia (wisdom), the aim of ecophilosophy is ecosophy or ecological wisdom. He goes on to point out that ecophilosophy's purpose is to explore a diversity of human-nature interrelationships so as to foster "deeper and more harmonious relationships between place, self, community and the natural world" (Drengson 1999). Arne Naess (1994: 124) defined ecosophy as follows:*"By an ecosophy I mean a philosophy of ecological harmony or equilibrium. A philosophy as a kind of sofia (or) wisdom, is openly normative, it contains both norms, rules, postulates, value priority announcements and hypotheses concerning the state of affairs in our universe. Wisdom is policy wisdom, prescription, not only scientific description and prediction. The details of an ecosophy will show many variations due to significant differences concerning not only the 'facts' of pollution, resources, population, etc. but also value priorities."*

It is also Arne Naess, the Norwegian philosopher and mountaineer, who is regarded as a chief protagonist of the deep ecology movement (DEM). As a consequence of his mountaineering expeditions across the world he was able to observe political and social action in diverse cultures. A key observation that he made was that there are broadly two forms of environmentalism, one he called the "long-range deep ecology movement" and the other the "shallow ecology movement" (Drengson 1999). The two are not necessarily mutually exclusive, but "deep" and "shallow" refer to the level of questioning of our values in debates on environmental issues or in responses to environmental problems and risks. For a detailed discussion on the distinction between the shallow and deep ecological movements see Drengson et al.(2011: 103). The deep-ecological movement is focused on a platform of principles as defined below:

1. All living things have intrinsic value.
2. The diversity and richness of life has intrinsic value.
3. Except to satisfy vital human needs, humankind does not have a right to reduce this diversity and richness.
4. It would be better for human beings if there were fewer of them, and much better for other creatures.
5. Today the extent and nature of human interference in various ecosystems is not sustainable, and lack of sustainability is rising.
6. Decisive improvement requires considerable change: social, economic, technological and ideological.
7. An ideological change would essentially entail seeking a better quality of life rather than a raised standard of living.

8. Those who accept the aforementioned points are responsible for trying to contribute directly or indirectly to the realization of the necessary changes. (Naess with Haukeland 2002: 108-109).

It is important, however, to understand that "deep ecology" is a movement not an ecophilosophy. It is a movement whose principles develop from the bottom up and is therefore a grassroots movement. As a movement DEM is not delinked from ecophilosophy/ecosophy, though. To appreciate this it is useful to understand four discourses that Naess identifies: ultimate premises (Level I); platform principles movement (Level II); policies (Level III); and practical actions (Level IV) (for a detailed discussion see Drengson 1997; Drengson 1999; Drengson et al. 2011). Drengson (1997: 110-111, 1999) argues that it is at the level of platform principles that we are able to get consensus or agreement across cultures. These principles serve as a basis for the articulation of policies (national or transnational) which in turn serve as the basis for practical actions on the part of governments and civil societies. But deeper questioning of principles that society has agreed on or deeper questioning of environmental concerns enable us to articulate our own ecosophy – the level of ultimate norms and premises. Our own ecosophy could be grounded in several major worldviews or religions, be it Pantheism, Christianity or Islam. In Arne Naess's case his ecosophy was informed by Norwegian *friluftsliv* (a movement to experience living in the outdoors), Gandhian nonviolence, Mahayana Buddhism and Spinozan pantheism (Drengson 1997: 110, 1999). So, although there is an agreement on principles as in the case of those represented in DEM (Level II), the ultimate premises/ecosophy (Level I) can differ.

This above understanding of the relationship between ecosophy and platform principles serve as the context for exploring *ubuntu*'s potential as an ecosophy – an ecosophy that could underpin the DEM platform principles and make possible a deep questioning of environmental challenges facing the southern African region as discussed above. Moreover, Drengson (1999) argues that if we are to move away from an industrial development model (which has produced environmental problems and risks) of society we might find its inspiration in studying the ecosophies of aboriginal and indigenous people. It

is against this background that the researcher now turns to a discussion on *ubuntu*, before exploring its potential as an ecosophy.

What is *Ubuntu*?

Ubuntu/*Botho*[1] is a concept that is derived from proverbial expressions (aphorisms) found in several languages in Africa South of the Sahara. However, it is not only a linguistic concept but a normative connotation embodying how we ought to relate to the other – what our moral obligation is towards the other (both human and non-human). *Ubuntu* comprises one of the core elements of a human being. In some traditions the African word for human being is *umuntu,* who is constituted by the following: *umzimba* (body, form, flesh); *umoya* (breath, air, life); *umphefumela* (shadow, spirit, soul); *amandla* (vitality, strength, energy); *inhliziyo* (heart, centre of emotions); *umqondo* (head, brain, intellect), *ulwimi* (language, speaking) and *ubuntu* (humanness) (Le Roux 2000: 43). The humanness referred to here, finds expression in a communal context rather than the individualism prevalent in many Western societies (Venter 2004: 151). Battle (1996: 99) explains the concept *ubuntu* as originating from the Xhosa[2] expression: *Umuntu ngumuntu ngabanye Bantu.*" Not an easily translatable Xhosa concept, generally, this proverbial expression means that each individual's humanity is ideally expressed in relationship with others and in turn individuality is truly expressed."

Metz and Gaie (2010) argue that there are two ways in which morality in Africa south of the Sahara (as embodied in *ubuntu*) is distinct from Western approaches to morality. Firstly they argue that sub-Saharan morality is essentially relational in the sense that the only way to develop one's humanness is to relate to others in a positive way. In other words, one becomes a person solely through other persons – "one cannot realize one's true self in opposition to others or even in isolation from them" (p. 275). They point out that *ubuntu* means that our deepest moral obligation is to become more fully human and to achieve this requires one to enter more deeply into community with others. One therefore cannot become more fully human or realize one's true self by exploiting, deceiving or acting in unjust ways towards others. Metz and Gaie (p. 275) argue that the second way in which

African morality differs from an Aristotelian or other Western moral philosophy is that it defines positive relationship with others in strictly communal terms. They write:

"One is not to positively relate to others fundamentally by giving them what they deserve, respecting individual human rights grounded on consent, participating in a political sphere or maximizing the general welfare, common themes in Western moral philosophy. Instead the proper way to relate to others, for one large part of sub-Saharan thinking, is to seek out community or to live in harmony with them."

Following from the above is that moral obligation concerns: doing things for the good of others; to think of oneself as bound up with others; and to value family (in a broad sense of the term) for its own sake and not for its efficacy.

When reference is made to the other by Metz and Gaie (2010) then they are evidently referring to the human other – that relatedness means connectedness with other human beings. In other words, *ubuntu* means becoming more fully human through deeper relationships with other human beings. It is because of this understanding that Enslin and Hortsthemke (2004: 25) have argued that *ubuntu* is by definition speciesist and therefore cannot contribute positively towards addressing environmental problems. Through a categorical lens of environmental theory we would say that *ubuntu* is anthropocentric. However, the researcher wishes to argue that this is not the case and that *ubuntu* has very strong ecocentric leanings and can serve as an ecosophy that underpins DEM platform principles. The researcher now turns to this discussion.

Ubuntu/Botho as Ecosophy

In environmental theory a distinction is made between philosophies that hold the view that nature only has instrumental value (that nature exists only for the benefit of human beings) and philosophies that hold that all of nature has intrinsic value (nature has value independent of its benefits to human beings). The two positions have respectively become known as anthropocentrism and ecocentrism. If one were to accept Enslin and Horsthemke's (2004:25) position that *ubuntu* is by definition speciesist, then the upshot is that it cannot function as a philosophy that supports DEM platform principles

– *ubuntu* is, in other words, anthropocentric. However, the distinction between anthropocentrism and ecocentrism is too crude. There are, rather, anthropocentrisms and ecocentrisms and also positions in between that collectively are referred to as intermediate axiology (for detail see Vincent 1998; Le Grange 2013a).

Anthropocentric responses of caring, loving and showing compassion to other human beings are not inconsistent with supporting DEM principles. To relate positively to other human beings does mean that one views humans superior to other organisms/beings. Drengson (1999) points out that "anthropocentrism is objectionable when it emphasizes "humans first!" regardless of the consequences to other being." It is also important to distinguish between humanness (*ubuntu*) and humanism (the Enlightenment idea of what it means to be human) and education based on such an understanding. Heidegger (in Le Grange 2013b) points out that humanism's response to the question of what it means to be human focuses on the essence or nature of the human being and not on the being of this being (the existence of the human being in the world). The problem with focusing on what it is to be human (the essence of a human being) is that it opens up possibilities for defining 'human' in particular ways that declare others as less human or non-human. The holocaust, Apartheid, genocides in Bosnia, Rwanda and Cambodia forcefully remind us of the effects of humanism. Levinas (1990) goes as far as to argue that the crisis of humanism began with the inhuman events of recent history: *"The 1914 War, the Russian Revolution refuting itself in Stalinism, fascism. Hitlerism, the 1939-45 War, atomic bombings, genocide and uninterrupted war … a science that calculates the real without thinking it, a liberal politics and administration that suppresses neither exploitation nor war … socialism that gets entangled in bureaucracy"* (p.279).

And so Levinas concludes that humanism must be denounced because it is not human. The crisis of humanism that Levinas refers to also extends to atrocities that humans have committed against nature. In other words, the global socio-ecological crisis is part of the crisis of humanism. *Ubuntu* should therefore not been confused with humanism and is in fact antithetical to it. As Ramose (2009: 308-309) writes: "*Humanness* suggests both a condition of being

and the state of becoming, of openness or cease-
less unfolding. It is thus opposed to any "-ism',
including humanism, for this tends to suggest a
condition of finality, a closedness or a kind of
absolute either incapable of, or resistant to,
any further movement."

In short, whereas humanism (because it is anthropocentric) is inconsistent with DEM principles, *ubuntu* (humanness) which overcomes the anthropocentric-ecocentric divide is consistent with supporting DEM principles.

Furthermore, *ubuntu* should be understood in relation to *ukama*. In the Shona[3] language there is a broader concept than *ubuntu*, *ukama* which means relatedness – relatedness to the entire cosmos. Murove (2009) argues that *ubuntu* (humanness) is the concrete form of *ukama* (relatedness) in the sense that 'human interrelationship within society is a microcosm of the relationality within the universe' (p. 316). The meaning of *ukama* extends to ties with all people, not only with present generations but also with past and future generations. Gelfand (1973) also notes that the concept of 'brotherhood' (humanhood) and inseparable oneness with the ancestors are brought about through ritual practices of the Shona religion. He points out that *ukama* is an articulation of anamnestic solidarity because a person "owes his (sic) personality and character to his *mudzimu* (ancestor)" (Gelfand 1981:8). The immortality of values through anamnesis is neatly captured by Bujo (2001: 34-35):

"African ethics are articulated in the frame-
work of anamnesis, which involves remember-
ing one's ancestors. A narrative community, fel-
lowship here on earth renews the existence of
the community of the ancestors. This establish-
ing (poeisis) in turn implies the praxis which
efficiently continues the remembrance of the
ancestors and gives dynamism to the earthly
fellowship. Consequently, ethical behaviour in
the Black African context always involves re-
establishing the presence of one's ancestors;
for one who takes the anamnesis seriously is
challenged to confront the ethical rules drawn
by the ancestors, in order to actualise anew the
'protological foundational act' which first
called the clan (sic) fellowship into life."

The above premise is important to an ecosophy because anamnesis concerns the oneness of past, present and future generations which the researchers shall elaborate upon later in the paper. Murove (2009: 319) notes that through anamnesis, "human actions are sensitised to all dimensions of existence – past, present and future" and that "the connecting thread in all three dimensions of existence is the moral values that have been inherited, treasured and passed on to future generations". In short, the concept *ukama* embodies an inseparable oneness between past, present and future generations. But *ukama* also means humanity's relatedness to the natural (biophysical) world, which is advanced through totemic ancestorhood. Junod (1939: 112), who conducted ethnological studies of baPedi aptly notes:

"Totemism shows well one characteristic of
the Bantu mind: the strong tendency to give a
human soul to animals, to plants, to nature as
such, a tendency which is at the very root of the
most beautiful blossoms of poetry, a feeling that
there is a community of substance between var-
ious forms of life."

It is against this backdrop that Murove's (2009: 317) assertion that, '*ukama* provides the ethical anchorage for human social, spiritual and ecological togetherness', might be understood. Consistent with this understanding, LenkaBula (2008: 378) argues that the Sesotho aphorism *motho ke motho ka batho ba bang* literally translates as "no person is complete in him/herself; s/he is fully human in as far as s/he remains a part of the web of life, including creation and the earth." In other words, human life is embedded in and related to ecological life.

From the above discussion it is evident that there are two distinct claims about *ukama* (*ubuntu* and *botho*) as an ecophilosophy/ecosophy. The first is that beliefs about ancestors entail a sense in which past, present and future generations are all part of the moral community. The second is that the fundamental relatedness of beings encapsulated by *ukama* includes a sense of relatedness with other natural entities, not just persons. The first claim is promising for an ecophilosophy/ecosophy because environmental destruction (especially climate change) can potentially cause harm to many generations in the future. Relatedness to future generations as expressed in the notion of *ukama/ubuntu* can contribute to an ongoing discourse in environmental philosophy about our moral obligations to future generations. The second claim that *ukama* means relatedness to all natural entities is promising for an ecosophy because relatedness to the entire natural world concerns caring

for all of nature because it has intrinsic value – that nature needs to be cared for in the now/present. Such an ecophilosophy/ecosophy is consistent with the DEM platform principles. Given that the platform principles are part of a movement (deep ecology movement), that is dynamic, they can (and have been) be amended to meet changing challenges presented to a contemporary world.

Moreover, understanding *ubuntu* as a concrete expression of *ukama* also problematises the categories of anthropocentrism and ecocentrism (and those in between) which have come to characterise debates in environmental ethics/philosophy and on those who wish to impose such categories on African values such as *ubuntu*. Nurturing the self or caring for other human beings is not antagonistic towards caring for non-human nature (the more-than-human-world) – *ubuntu* cannot simply be reduced to a category of anthropocentric or ecocentric.

CONCLUSION

Environmental problems have reached unprecedented levels in the 21st century to the extent that Planet Earth is on the brink of ecological disaster. This paper mentions some of the major environmental problems facing contemporary global society and in particular discusses environmental challenges faced by the southern African region. Responses to these issues require a radical rethinking and reexamining of the beliefs and values that have created the problems, as well as the principles, policies and practices shaped by such values. The current state of the planet raises a key question: *how should we live so as to ensure a sustainable future*? The question does not only need an individual response but a collective effort of local communities, nation-states and the entire global community. Importantly, responses to the global ecological crisis cannot be based on modes of thinking that created the problems in the first instance and would therefore require responses that are counter to such thinking.

The Norwegian philosopher, Arne Naess observed that there are both shallow and deep responses to environmental crises. He argued that if humanity's response is to be meaningful, that is, if a sustainable future for the planet is to be made possible, then our response needs to be a deep one – one that recognizes the intrinsic value of all organisms/beings. He makes the that point that it is possible for humans to agree on principles that would make possible a sustainable future and that these principles can inform policies and practices at both a global and local level. However, Naess makes a vital point that the philosophies which support such principles can differ from one individual or culture to the next. Moreover, that when philosophies are deeply embodied by individuals and embedded in communities, and are aligned with platform principles shared by society more broadly, then fundamental change is more likely to occur.

Against this background the researcher has argued that *ubuntu/botho* has great promise as an ecophilosophy/ ecosophy. It is a philosophy that resides among many of southern African people and has been taken up in several policies (including educational ones) in a country such as South Africa. The researcher has argued that an anthropocentric reading of *ubuntu* is flawed and that by definition it means relatedness to (or embeddedness in) the web of life. Moreover, that *ubuntu* is consistent with the platform principles described by the deep ecology movement (DEM) and can serve as the framework for all policies and practices aimed at responding to the pressing environmental problems facing the southern African region.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Two key recommendations could be derived from the matters raised in this paper. The first is that policy makers within and across nation states should take seriously the importance of deep-seated values that people have, be they cultural, religious, moral. Moreover, that these values (even if they are seemingly disparate) should be aligned to common principles defined in the interest of the environment. The discussion above showed that disparate values can support common principles such as the DEM platform principles. The second recommendation is that traditional values such as *ubuntu* should be harnessed and combined with other values to support common principles aimed at addressing a deepening global socio-ecological crisis. Values will always differ from one community to the next, but common principles can be defined as long as these can be linked to a range of values held by different groups. Such com-

mon (platform principles) promise to serve the interests of all species inhabiting the planet.

NOTES

4   In this article I shall use the term ubuntu which derives from the aphorism '*Umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu*' found in the Nguni languages of Zulu, Xhosa or Ndebele. However, I wish to point out that a similar concept exists in Sotho-Tswana languages derived from the proverbial expression, '*Motho ke motho ka batho babang'*.

5   The Xhosa people are Bantu language speakers living in the south-east of South Africa. The main tribes of the Xhosa are: Mpondo; Mpondomise; Bonvana; Xesibe ; and Thembu. isiXhosa is one of the official languages of South Africa.

6   Shona is the collective name for several groups of people in the east of Zimbabwe and southern Mozambique. The Shona speaking people are categorised into five main ethnic groups: Zezuru; Manyika; Karanga and Kalanga; Korekore; and Ndau. There are substantial numbers in South Africa and Botswana.

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