

HUMAN NATURE/IDENTITY: CONSTANT OR CHANGING IN UBUNTU WORLDVIEW CONCEPT AND BEYOND UBUNTU.

This paper is about the understanding of human nature and identity in the African context called Ubuntu. In the Introduction I explain the meaning of Ubuntu worldview. Following this I present the notion of Nature, and Human Nature, as can be culled from the mythologies of origin of the Bantu people of Eastern Africa. Kenya has been particularly chosen because 'the philosopher must begin her reflections with her own life experience'. My experience is Kenyan. The fourth attempts to identify commonalities and divergences between the African, Ubuntu understanding of human nature and those of classic and contemporary realism in Philosophical Anthropology in the belief that "a 'philosophy of man' is something altogether distinct from an expression of merely personal standpoint or value system".¹ Hence Seneca's saying: "The truth is no one's property"². I conclude by highlighting the need for common ground regarding the essentials of human nature for any possible moral discourse within the whole idea of the common good, human dignity, and the respect of human rights.

For the framework of the paper I follow two Ganda sayings. The first one says: *No culture is so poor that it cannot teach anything positive to other cultures. Put in KiGanda: Omuggo oguli ewa mulirwano, tegutta musota guli mu nju yo*³, literally translated as: "A stick in your neighbor's house can never kill a snake in your house". The second saying encourages openness and says: 'no culture is so perfect that it cannot learn from other cultures' "Amagezi muliro, bwe guzikira ewuwo ogunona ewa munno, literally translated as: "Wisdom is like fire, when it is extinguished in your home, you get it from the neighbor"⁴.

¹ Voegelin, Eric. *The In-Between of Human Life, Conversations with Eric Voegelin*. Edited and with introduction by R. Eric O'Connor, Montreal: Thomas More Institute, 1980. p.100.

² Hadot, Pierre. *The Veil of Isis: A History of the Idea of Nature*, Harvard University Press, 2006, p. 172.

³ KiGanda is a language of the Bantu cluster of languages in Uganda.

⁴ Cf. Kanyandago, J.M., *Law and Public Morality in Africa: Legal, philosophical and Cultural Issues*. Cf. <http://>