

INTERROGATING THE 'IRRATIONALITY OF THE RATIONAL' & CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE IN ZIMBABWE: THE CALL FOR EDUCATION FOR HUNHU / UBUNTU

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ABSTRACT

This paper bemoans the current scourge of child- sexual abuse as well as the recent disturbing phenomenon of female rapists bedevilling the nation. It is particularly disconcerting when it is reported that there are over 2000 child rape cases reported each year in Zimbabwe. The author considers this as a serious problem which needs urgent attention. However, the author claims that, this scourge is concomitant with man's broad search for 'happiness'. Thus, this insatiable search for happiness has regrettably created a dilemma or paradox for 21st century man in Zimbabwe. This paradox hinges on man's incessant and insatiable thirst for rational goods (happiness) through irrational means. Essentially, this has culminated in what this study refers to as the 'paradox of the rational' or the paradox of the 'irrationality of the rational'. To interrogate this problematic malady, the author posits the following theses: (a) Zimbabwe is systematically sliding towards the 'irrationality of the rational', (c) consequently, there is need to revisit and 'renegotiate' the dominant perception regarding the rationality of man, and lastly; (c) it is not jails and stiffer penalties (not even 'fencing') on the offenders that can contain this scourge but probably a 'cultural rationality' emanating from chivanhu and hunhu. To this end, the author posits education for hunhu / ubuntu as having the potential to address this problem. In this paper, 'man' shall refer collectively, to both male and female.

KEY TERMS: irrationality, cultural rationality, education for hunhu, chivanhu

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INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

Crime and its possible causes and explanations can be interrogated from various perspectives notably; economic, religious, political and psycho - social. However, notwithstanding these causes and explanations of crime, we argue; the bottom line is that; crime can be interrogated from the premise of man's search for happiness, either in the short - term or in the long - term. Accordingly it is posited that; the search and quest for happiness by the twenty first century man in general and in Zimbabwe, in particular, has constituted a dilemma or a paradox for man. The paradox centres on man's incessant search for rational goods, thus happiness, through irrational means. This has resulted in what this paper is referring to as the 'paradox of the rational' or the 'irrationality of the rational'. In Zimbabwe, this paradox is evident, among other crimes, in the increasing despicable and horrible incidents of 'crimes of passion' or 'invasions of childrens' innocences' perpetrated by the so - called rational, not only on human beings but even on non - human beings. This paper is therefore, premised on interrogating and articulating this paradox.

To that end, the paper examines, the concepts; rationality, Platonic education and education for *hunhu* and lastly; cultural rationality. The author examines the concept 'rationality' because it is considered critical in firstly; distinguishing non human - beings from human - beings, in other words, persons and people from animals. Secondly, such an examination is considered as the basis

for evaluating the type of judgments and decisions man makes in his pursuit of happiness. The paper also examines Platonic education and education for *hunhu*. The paper examines Platonic education, because we think that his argument that education should produce a ‘good man’ is vital to this paper. However, the author concedes that; if the good man is to have relevance, then his relevance should speak to a specific context. In that regard, the author considers education for *hunhu*, as having the potential to produce a good man with *hunhu* who can be considered appropriate and acceptable within the Zimbabwe. In light of the problem under discussion, the author puts it that; on the basis of such an education anchored on *hunhu*, such a person is capable of making culturally rational judgments and decisions in his in pursuit of his happiness, which are culturally rational. Thus, this paper posits cultural rationality anchored on education for *hunhu*, as an intervention strategy in addressing the current scourge of the ‘irrationality of the rational’ in Zimbabwe. To that end the paper posits the following theses, that: (a) there is need to probably revisit and ‘renegotiate’ the dominant perception regarding rationality as the distinctive quality separating human beings from other non – human beings, (b) while it is maintained that rationality is a ‘given’ to all ‘human – beings, not all of them necessarily act rationally, thus; while all people can think, not all of them can think rationally, (c) while all human – beings are people(*vanhu*), not all people are persons (*vanhu kwavo*) (d) Zimbabwe is systematically sliding towards the ‘irrationality of the rational’ and lastly (e) it is not jails and stiffer penalties (not even ‘

fencing’) on the offenders that can contain the scourge of the ‘irrationality of the irrational’ but probably ‘cultural rationality’ anchored on education for *hunhu*.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In interrogating and articulating the problems associated with the ‘irrationality of the rational’ specifically child - sexual abuse in Zimbabwe, the paper adopts the qualitative methodology. In particular, it adopts discourse as well as documentary analyses to interrogate our problem. Documentary analysis is suitable for this problem:

As it involves the study of documents either to understand their substantive content or to illuminate deeper meanings which may be revealed by their style and coverage (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003, p. 35).

Discourse analysis, on the other hand, is also considered suitable for this discussion as:

It examines the construction of texts and verbal accounts to explore systems of social meaning. It examines ways in which ‘versions of the world, of society, events and inner psychological worlds are

produced in discourse' (Richie & Lewis, 2003, p. 35).

In light of the scarcity of relevant documented literature on the problem, this discussion shall depend on a few related texts and newspapers.

THE PROBLEM

Cases of 'child-predators', 'child-sodomizers', 'child-molesters', 'child-rapists', 'child innocence invaders' and paedophiliacs the world-over and in Zimbabwe in particular have reached alarming and unacceptable proportions. Hardly does one read a daily without a story about a child who has been abused in one way or another. The most horrifying of all the reported and unreported cases of abuse to children are sexual ones. The following are just but a tip of the ice-berg;

Herald (Friday, 19 January, 2007) - "Unknown man rapes girl (3)"; The Herald (Tuesday, 7, November, 2007) - "Businessman rapes daughter (15) at gunpoint"; The Herald (Tuesday, 31 October, 2007) - "Man accused of bestiality given a community - service sentence"; The Sunday Mail (October 28-November 4 2007)- "Man sodomizes boy in broad daylight"; The Herald (Monday, 22 January, 2007) - "Rape trial date set for a

Chitungwiza man who rapes his half-brother's 11 month old baby" ; The Herald (Thursday, 9, August 2007) - "a forty- seven year old Chinhoi man has been arrested for allegedly raping three six – year – old girls playing near their homestead on Inyape Farm"; H – Metro, Tuesday, 12 October, 2010 - "Brother impregnates sister"; The Daily News, Thursday 2, 2012 – "Chinese men involved in sex scandal involving minors in Zambia" ; Daily News, Saturday 2, November, 2013 – "Child Rape Horror: Over 2000 child rape cases reported each year" and "Woman commits suicide after hubby rapes sister(13) – The Herald, Monday 11, November, 2013.

Indeed, the above cases are only a tip of an ice – berg. These cases point to a serious problem in our society. Particularly that, there are over 2000 cases of child – sexual abuse a year in Zimbabwe *Daily News, Saturday 2, November, 2013 – "Child Rape Horror: Over 2000 child rape cases reported each year"*, only demonstrates the enormity of the problem. Consequently, people cannot wish this problem away but must confront it head on.

The gravity of the problem was also fittingly captured by the President of Zimbabwe, Cde. Mugabe, in his address to the Chiefs Conference at Victoria Falls Primary School where he bemoaned moral decadence in the country. He expressed further deep concern

regarding the problem of child sexual abuse in the country when he said,

ubuntu bethu is violated when the father of a little girl ravishes that little girl, rapes that little girl. What would have happened? It's my concern, ... (The Chronicle, 2007).

Indeed, what would have happened is and should be the concern not only of this paper but also of all 'normal' or rational people. It should be everyone's concern especially given the fact that there is an average of about six (6) rape cases being reported everyday in the country (Zimbabwe), notwithstanding those which go unreported (Daily News, 2013). What we must bear in mind is that these are the 'reported cases', what of others which go unreported. If we are to consider the unreported cases in the above statistics, then it means we have way above 2000 cases of child rape cases annually in Zimbabwe. What these statistics translate to is that, about six innocent children are molested on a daily basis in Zimbabwe. We argue, even one child molested, is one too many to be cause for great concern to society. The issue is not so much with numbers whether too small or too much, but rather with the crime. If these statistics is anything to go by, then indeed, we have a serious problem, which demands urgent attention. Similarly, in Zambia for instance, policemen at the Zambia Police Service's Victim Support Unit Trust, said the rape of minors has increased from 1676 cases in 2009 to 2028 in 2010 (The Daily News, 2012).

However, interestingly and equally inopportune, it needs to be cautioned that it is no longer a problem about or from men exclusively. This is premised on the recent revelations that; women, probably feeling rather 'left out' in the irrationality of the rational 'madness', have recently become 'rapists' of men as well, a development which can probably be construed as 'revenge' against men (Newsday, 2011). In other words, women or females have taken it upon themselves to be included, like men, in the 'irrationality of the rational' 'madness', by also 'raping' men.

What makes this scourge particularly horrendous and disturbing is that it is being committed by adult human beings on other human beings, but more importantly, it is being committed by the so-called rational human beings on other beings who are also considered rational. However, in other similar cases, these so-called rational human beings have even gone a step further to commit their deplorable crimes on non-human beings or animals (the so-called irrational beings) ("Man accused of bestiality given a community-service sentence", Sunday Mail, 2007).

What is also this problem more interesting is that; there are no reported cases of the so – called irrational animals forcing themselves on rational human beings or even on fellow irrational beings of a different species? Additionally, even under extreme circumstances, there are no reported cases of adult animals forcing themselves on their young ones even of the same species. Thus, essentially there are no reported cases, of the irrational sexually

abusing the rational, let alone the irrational sexually abusing the irrational. We therefore think; this constitutes a real problem for Zimbabwe, which calls for urgent attention.

What is also further disconcerting about the above problem in Zimbabwe and elsewhere, is type of rational beings perpetrating these heinous crimes. Thus, we hereby note that; the ‘once’ rational custodians of our tradition, culture and values, notably, the elders of our society (both men and women), teachers (both males and females), law enforcement agents and ministers of religion (Newsday, 2011; Herald, 2013), seem to have either taken a back seat or are at the forefront in promoting this menace. In Zambia, for instance, perpetrators include Zambian teachers, farmers, traditional medicine men and even policemen themselves (The Daily News, 2012). Indeed and regrettably so, these custodians of law and traditions, seem to be at the forefront, engaging in the most contemptible, ‘unthinkable’ and irrational, as some of them ‘see lovely women not only in girl-children, or girl-infants but even in animals. Further, some men see lovely ‘women’ in fellow men and vice – versa. Ironically, there seems to be no known or reported cases of animals or non-human beings manifesting any of these despicable behaviours of sexually forcing themselves on human beings, or on other animals of a different species or let alone on immature animals even of the same species, even under extreme conditions.

The preceding cases are only a tip of the ice-berg. What is critical about these and similar crimes are that all seem premised on man's search for happiness of one form or another. However, they seem to corroborate the thesis of the paper pertaining to the irrationality of the rational, as these heinous and irrational acts are perpetrated by none other than the so-called rational beings in their search for happiness. In view of this, what then can be said regarding the rationality thesis and the corresponding 'rationality of the irrational' argument and vice-versa. Further, of the two species, which one then should have the claim to rationality, human beings and non – human beings? Consequently, it is this basis that the popular rationality thesis is being put to serious test. Additionally and of great importance to this discussion, how can this phenomenon be explained and possibly be contained?

The element of rationality alluded to above, is critical to our interrogation of sexual abuse in particular, and general criminality in the Zimbabwe and elsewhere. Rationality or irrationality is crucial to this discussion because, it is considered as the defining feature which makes human – beings, stand in clear contra-distinction to the so-called non – human beings or animals (Sachs, 2002). The general perception being that, man (humanity) is rational while non – human beings on the other hand, are irrational. Thus, in light of the above incidences of child sexual abuse, what is being put to question is the rationality / irrationality perceptions which distinguish human beings from non –human beings. Questions which beg answers in view of

the preceding observations are; (a) do such actions by the so-called rational beings demonstrate rationality? (b) Of the two species, which one is rational and which one is irrational?

HUMAN NATURE, RATIONALITY, AND THE QUEST FOR HAPPINESS –A RECONSIDERATION

This paper is premised on the conventional and popular views that, firstly; humanity is rational by nature (Sachs, 2002). Secondly, humanity's survival in general, is characterized consciously or unconsciously, by the insatiable quest and search for the 'universal good' or eudaimonia or happiness (Sachs, 2002 ; Plato, 1965). This view was also aptly corroborated by Thinley (1998), in his keynote speech delivered to UNDP Regional Millennium Meeting for Asia and the Pacific who asserted that;

Happiness is the ultimate desire of every human being. All else is a means to this end. It should logically follow then that all individual and collective efforts should be devoted to this common goal.

The preceding submission was also further substantiated by Aristotle who also argued that the highest good to which man may aspire is happiness. In other words, happiness can be considered to be the ultimate goal of all human endeavours, collectively and individually. However, what distinguishes human - beings as rational beings from

other non – human beings is especially, in the manner of searching for the universal good or happiness. Whilst non – human beings’ search for happiness can be viewed as being largely ‘determined’; human – beings’ search is not as such, as they are believed to have a free will (Finnis, 1998). Thus, human beings’ search for the same is said to be determined by rationality. It can also be suggested that human – beings have the capability through rationality or reasoning of not only living according to nature, but more so and very importantly, controlling nature. Thus, in their hunt for the universal good, it is assumed, human - beings will adopt rational means or rationality to achieve happiness precisely because it is / should be in their nature to do so.

By rationality according to *The Shorter Oxford English Dictionary* is meant, “...the quality of possessing reason or the power of being able to exercise one’s reason”. *Collins English Dictionary* also defines rationality, as “using reason in thinking out a problem or the possession or utilization of logic or reason”. Further, *Chamber’s Twentieth Century Dictionary* defines rationality as “the quality of being rational; the possession of or exercise of reason”. From the above definitions, it is evident that reason or ‘ratiocination’ should be at the centre of rationality, whereby rationality, in this paper refers to the use of reason or the process of ratiocination to achieve certain ends. Thus, rationality shall refer to the recognition and acceptance of reason as one’s only source of knowledge, one’s only judge of values and one’s only guide to action. It means one’s total

commitment through reasoning or ratiocination, to a state of full, conscious awareness, to the maintenance of a full mental focus in all issues, in all choices, in all of one's waking hours.

It can be deduced from the preceding that reasoning or ratiocination is a defining feature of rationality. *The Shorter Oxford English Dictionary* adds an important dimension to the preceding examination of rationality by defining reason as "that intellectual power or faculty, usually characteristic of mankind, which ordinarily is employed to adopt thought and action". This definition is particularly significant as it speaks well to the distinction between mankind and non – mankind or non – human beings. Reason is a term that refers to the capacity human beings have to make sense of things, to establish and verify facts, and to change or justify practices, institutions and beliefs. The concept of reason is sometimes referred to as rationality and sometimes as discursive reason, in opposition to intuitive reason. Reason, "reasoning" or ratiocination is associated with conscious thinking, cognition, and intellect. Reason, is thus the means by which rational beings understand themselves to think about cause and effect, truth and falsehood, and what is good or bad.

Thus, while all other non – human beings are for instance, intuitively and unconditionally driven by the impulse to preserve their own lives in search of happiness and by the impulse of proliferation, human - beings on the other hand, have the power to master or control even these impulses. Human - beings can control both their

sexual desires and their will to live. As has been mentioned above it is these characteristics amongst others which seem to categorically set human - beings in contra – distinction from other mammals or non – human beings. Frankfurt (1986) expands further on this distinction when he notes that;

There are three possible sorts of beings: (1) animal-like or automaton-like creatures that have only first-order desires; (2) wanton creatures that may have second-order desires but no second order-volitions; and (3) persons who have second order-volition which attribute to them a will.

Frankfurt's categorization of beings is interesting as he seems to be speaking to this paper. If we relate his observations to our discussion it means there are three types of human beings, notably; animal – like or automaton - like, wantons and lastly persons who have second – order volitions. However, what distinguishes other beings from persons is their inability to make 'second – order volitions which attribute to them a will'. The phrase 'second order-volition which attribute to them a will', in this categorization is significant. What this means is that; while(1) and (2) above have desires, they lack the will to control their desires on the basis that they do not think about what they desire, but they simply desire it and then go on to *desire* it. Persons, on the other hand have desires, but before they act on their desires, they think about what they desire, before they decide to *desire* it. In other words, they do not simply desire and act

on their desire, rather and very crucially, they reflect or rationalise or reason about their particular desires. In this process of thinking about the desires, they are seeking the rationality, reasonableness or justification of their desire.

Thus, the ability to critically think and reason about desires or to have second – order desires or the ability to reason about their desires is characteristic of or is reserved for human - beings. However, we think this capability is reserved not for human beings per se, but persons. This observation is critical as it speaks to two important distinctions between human beings and persons notably that; while all human beings can think not all human beings can think well, reason or rationalise well. Secondly, while all persons can reason, not all of them can reason well or appropriately. Lastly, while all human beings are people, not all people are persons. Thus, the ability to reason well is reserved for real persons, who in this paper are referred to as *vanhu chaivo*.

In this paper, we consider people as human – beings who have second – order desires and thus can think, rationalise and reason about their desires. On this basis, these are merely people. Persons, on the other hand are considered as operating at a higher plane than mere people. Persons like people think critically about, or reason and rationalize their desires. However unlike mere people, persons consider the appropriateness of what they desire within a broader framework, which is not entirely individualist. In other words, persons (*vanhu chaivo*) make decisions pertaining to their happiness

which are rational but, essentially culturally appropriate. If the above analysis is cogent we therefore posit that; indeed Zimbabwe has many people (*vanhu*) but not all them are persons (*vanhu kwavo*). In view of the problem under discussion, we further put it that; Zimbabwe, has both ‘animal – like human beings’ and ‘wanton like human beings’ (*mhuka dzavanhu*) as well as persons (*vanhu kwavo*) who can reason or have capacity to make second – order desires.

Thus, what characterises *mhuka dzevanhu*, within the present discussion, are people who are incapable of making culturally appropriate and rational decisions and judgments in pursuit of their happiness. *Vanhu kwavo* (persons), on the other hand, are those among the majority of people who are capable of making culturally rational and appropriate decisions in search of their happiness. However, what seems interesting and at the same time disturbing, in view of the problem under discussion, is the observation that; Zimbabweans seem to be moving towards becoming *mhuka dzevanhu*, yet *mhuka chaidzo* are ironically ‘behaving’ like *vanhu chaivo*. This is notwithstanding the fact that; animals are considered irrational. By irrational pertaining to animals refers to their supposed inability to think (*kusafunga*). Similarly, by irrationality as it relates to mere human beings, is taken to refer to their inability to think or reason well. However, what we are therefore arguing is that; is it not better not to think than to think wrongly or inappropriately. If one’s ability to think leads one to the ‘invasion of children’s’ ‘innocences’, we hazard to say; it is proper not to think at all. Essentially we are

suggesting that; if man's rationality is leading him to do the irrational, then we argue; is not proper and desirable that man becomes irrational. By irrationality in this paper, as it relates to animals, is meant their inability to think and reason or the fact that they operate on instinct. This is premised on the submission that; no cases of rape between animal themselves or of people having been raped by animals have been reported. Against, this backdrop, one naturally asks; of the two species; human beings and animals, which one is rational? This therefore is the basis of the irrationality of the rational thesis of this paper. On the basis of this thesis, the author posits that; human beings are systematically becoming irrational; hence the urgent need to contain this slide into irrationality, not by jails but by an appropriate education. The author thinks this appropriate education, which is hereby referred to as education for *hunhu*, will develop proper human beings or persons(*vanhu kwavo*), who are capable of making culturally rational and appropriate decisions and judgments in their pursuit of happiness.

It needs however, to be further mentioned that discourse on the rationality or what this paper refers to, 'thinking well, or reasoning well' especially in the context of man's search for happiness, is controversial and problematical. It is highly contentious because the term is subjective. Thus, it is very difficult to judge one's actions as either rational or irrational, precisely because everyone can rationalize one's actions or everyone has his / her own rationalization. It is along the same logic, why human actions can

justifiably be conceived as either rational or irrational but the same cannot be said of said of actions or behaviours of animals, precisely because the latter have the potential to rationalize or ratiocinate while the latter cannot. Additionally, it is precisely because every human being can rationalize and every situation has its unique rationalization, which makes discourse on the rationality or irrationality of human highly problematic.

However, in spite of the observations, within the context of the present discussion, the rationality or irrationality of human – beings should be conceptualized within the context of the people’s culture, worldview and philosophy of life. Within the present writing therefore, one’s rationality or otherwise is to be evaluated within the context of ‘*chivanhu*’ and ‘*hunhu*’ as the proposed guiding philosophy of life informing the Shona peoples’s search for the ultimate good or happiness. In other words, it is being argued that one’s search for happiness must be conducted, understood and appreciated within the context of *chivanhu*’ and ‘*hunhu*’, if that search is to be viewed as rational. In other words, this paper is positing cultural rationality as opposed to rationality *per se*. The author concedes cultural rationality, to be a type of rationality or reasoning which is anchored on and defined by a particular people’s philosophy of life (Luthuli,1982). Thus, in this regard, what would constitute as a rational action is an action which resonates with the particular people’s philosophy of life.

THE PARADOX OF THE RATIONAL AND THE IRRATIONALITY OF THE RATIONAL – CONTEXTUALIZING MAN’S SEARCH FOR HAPPINESS

In further interrogating the place of happiness in the lives of man, the author draws insights from the *Symbosium*. The author examines happiness from the perspective of two paradoxes, namely; Plato’s paradox of the rational and secondly, what this paper has considered as the paradox of the irrationality of the rational. In the *Symbosium*, Plato was trying to advance a theory of motivation for human action and he explains how human beings try to achieve the chief good which is happiness. Man’s search for the chief good or happiness has resulted in what Plato referred to as the paradox of the rational or the paradox of irrationality (Vlastos, 1971). The central phenomenon of the paradox being that, ‘human beings look irrational while they rationally pursue the good’.

The paradox arises from the fact that it is impossible to pursue and attain happiness directly. Happiness is of the nature that it cannot be attained or conceptualized in its totality. In striving for happiness, people seem to strive for other things which they regard as good. What is recognized as good in the kinds of pursuits that Plato has in mind include; art, political reform, science and the raising of children. Nowadays, it must be admitted, the list of the kinds of pursuits which are regarded as good and thus bringing about happiness is inexhaustible. However, chief among these seem to be money, precisely because money has been viewed as the ‘mother’ of or the key to all happiness. Once such a pursuit becomes central to

one's life, and is embraced as good, one responds rationally to this goodness by hanging on to it. When one embraces something as good, Plato suggests, one in a certain sense loses sight of one's own happiness. For instance, when we are committed to the good of our children or the search for money, this pursuit literally 'takes over' our lives and starts to dictate and direct them. It is not assessed in the light of whether it really makes us happy; we do not back off when we realize that we are constantly exhausted and worried; we hold on to it as something good. That is, the fact that one cannot pursue happiness directly means that one shall be 'sold' to the pursuit of other things. Thus, the pursuit of happiness actually *consists* in the pursuit of other things.

It is in this context, that man's search for happiness is indeed paradoxical precisely because of its elusive and rather baffling nature. It is so because in searching for happiness one has to search for other things even to the extent of enduring suffering, pain and sacrifice to attain them, in the short term and then happiness in the long term. It needs also to be further reiterated that, the search for happiness culminating in the paradox of the rational is premised on the fact that man is rational. Thus, even though the search for happiness seems irrational, people in their search are ideally supposed to use rational means to attain happiness.

Plato's paradox of rationality, fits quite well into what this paper terms, the paradox of the irrationality of the rational. Whilst in the *Symposium*, human – beings' search for happiness is paradoxical in

that, in searching for happiness people have to rationally search for other things, the paradox of the 21st century man is even worse and more saddening. It is worsened by the fact that, in people's search for happiness, people are not only searching for other things, but are doing so, through irrational means. Thus, the issue which is of concern to the present paper is not the irrationality of the search for happiness *per se*, because that can be appreciated as being intrinsic to the search for happiness. Rather, what is of great concern to us is the irrational manner, today's people adopt in their search for happiness. Thus, the above cases above which are only a tip of the ice – berg, typify and are symptomatic of the irrational means which today's people especially in Zimbabwe, have resorted to in order attain happiness. Specifically; we posit the invasion of children 'innocences' as exemplifying the irrationality of the rational. Accordingly, in light of this, man's view of happiness and more importantly his rationality is being called into question. It is being called into question precisely because the manner in which today's man is searching for happiness seems to be compromising as well as undermining the dominant and traditional perception of man as a rational being. The manner in which 21st century man is sold out to attaining happiness regrettably corroborates the paradox of the rational or the irrationality of the rational. Specifically, the manner in which today's man searches for money in the hope of getting happiness is indeed and should be great cause of concern. In view of this, this paper is therefore calling for an urgent need firstly; of a redefinition of man's humanity as well as happiness and, secondly;

for intervention strategies to contain the possible and inevitable degeneration of society into the 'irrationality of the rational'.

CHIVANHU, HUNHU AS THE BASIS OF SHONA CULTURAL RATIONALITY

Hunhu / ubuntu has of late become a topical issue in most academic discourses both within and beyond our borders. *Unhu/hunhu* which ordinarily means good manners and behaviour in both Shona and the Ndebele languages (Gelfand, 1973), is the equivalent of *ubuntu* in Ndebele. However, in this paper, the term *hunhu* shall be used throughout the discussion. It is also significant to point out that; the positions arrived in this paper have significance even for the Ndebele as well. We think most discourses on *hunhu* have made a serious academic error in conceptualization by consciously or otherwise, ignoring the fundamental connection between *chivanhu* and *hunhu*. This can be attributed to a fine line which obtains between the two. As a result, the two terms have unfortunately and oftentimes, been considered as identical, in both conception and usage. In spite of this we think the two are distinguishable. Accordingly, we argue; one cannot meaningfully interrogate, conceptualise and appreciate *hunhu* outside the context of *chivanhu*. We consider *chivanhu* to be the womb from which *hunhu* germinates, sprouts and is nurtured. *Chivanhu* is the root while *hunhu* are either the trunk or branches of the tree. The notions of *chivanhu* and *hunhu* define us the Shona as black Africans of Zimbabwe into what and who there are. We take *chivanhu*, to define

and influence the manner we interrogate and interpret reality and phenomena in and around us. *Hunhu* though considered as identical with *chivanhu*, is actually anchored on *chivanhu*. We take *chivanhu* to refer to a worldview of the black Africans of Zimbabwe. It can also be considered as the philosophy of life of the black Africans of Zimbabwe. *Hunhu* becomes the unique and peculiar manner, black Zimbabweans interrogate their reality. Most discourses on *hunhu* have tended to confine it to being strictly, a moral sensibility. *Hunhu* can be considered beyond the moral domain, as it like *chivanhu* permeates every aspect and domain of black peoples' lives. *Hunhu* therefore refers to the people's sensibilities of and about their world, be they; moral, economic, religious, political, social and otherwise. Essentially, we take *hunhu* to refer to *tsika dzakanaka nemagariro evanhu vatema*. *Tsika dzakanaka* entails a lot beyond the scope of this paper. This is because *tsika dzakanaka*, apart from being numerous, differ from one ethnic group to the other, and even within the same ethnic group or community, variations are also possible. Against this admission, it is a futile exercise to consider providing an exhaustive list of *tsika dzakanaka*.

However, for our purposes it is vital to point out that; *tsika dzakanaka* and thus *hunhu* was premised on on "respect for the norms and traditions of the family, community and society". Broodryk (2002: 56) expands on the 'norms and traditions of the family and community by conceding that *ubuntu* was:

Based on the primary values of intense humanness, caring, sharing, respect, compassion and associated values, ensuring a happy and qualitative human community life in the spirit of family.

The author considers Mugumbate & Nyanguru (2013) views on *hunhu/ubuntu* as relevant to this discussion. They conceded that:

Various words have been used to describe the presence of ubuntu. Some of these are sympathy, compassion, benevolence, solidarity, hospitality, generosity, sharing, openness, affirming, available, kindness, caring, harmony, interdependence, obedience, collectivity and consensus. Ubuntu is opposite to vengeance, opposite to confrontation, opposite to retribution and that ubuntu values life, dignity, compassion, humaneness harmony and reconciliation (Mugumbate & Nyanguru, 2013: 84)

The above views are critical in our articulation of *hunhu*. They should be considered as the values and sensibilities which were firstly anchored on and secondly; projected and promoted *hunhu* among the people. We think it is proper to admit that the main premise of *hunhu* was the promotion of humaneness and life of both the individual and the family and the community. The South African

Nobel Laureate Archbishop Desmond Tutu captures this view aptly when admits that:

Hunhu/ubuntu is the essence of being human. It speaks of the fact that my humanity is caught up and is inextricably bound up in yours. I am because I belong. It speaks about wholeness, it speaks about compassion.

In this paper, *hunhu* shall refer to the mental and physical dispositions of an individual characterized by humility, kindness, courtesy, warmth, empathy, understanding, love, humaneness, respectfulness, responsibility, friendliness and consideration which manifests itself in the manner one talks, walks, behaves, dresses, interacts with relatives and non-relatives alike (Makuvaza, 2013, 1996a & b; Chigwedere, 1995).

Turning to the discussion, the above as constitutes both mental and physical competencies and sensibilities which are predominantly a result of thinking and reasoning well. *Hunhu* has potential to influence how and why we think what we think. Thus, we are saying; *hunhu* should be the basis of people's search for happiness, if that search is to be considered culturally rational and acceptable. In other words, people's search for happiness in Zimbabwe, should be evaluated against the above competencies and values. Essentially, we are arguing that; *hunhu* should be considered as the benchmark, against which any search for happiness in should be evaluated

against. Thus, one wonders, whether or not, molesting innocent children or even adults for that matter, in one's quest for happiness, can constitute a rational act by a rational human being? The fundamental rhetorical question which should inform any rational act by a so – called rational being in Zimbabwe should be: *zvandiri kuita zvine hunhu here* (is what I am doing justifiable?) or *vandiri kuitira zvinhu zvakadai vanoti zvine hunhu here?* (will those affected by actions consider them as just?). If the answer is in the affirmative, then one can proceed, if negative; then a culturally rational being would stop. Man's search for happiness in Zimbabwe should be anchored on *chivanhu* and *hunhu* if that search is to be considered as culturally justifiable and rational.

TOWARDS CONTAINING THE IRRATIONALITY OF THE RATIONAL –NOT MORE JAILS BUT MORE EDUCATION

Several measures have been taken by society to contain the irrationality of the rational in their search for happiness. For instance, in showing society's disdain of this menace, offenders have been jailed and stiffer penalties instituted. However, in light of the persistence of this scourge in our society, we think these measures have been to no avail. Thus, some members of Zimbabwean society, in an attempt to protect their daughters against possible molestation and 'invasion' have resorted to traditional means of 'fencing' off their daughters (H – Metro, Tuesday, 12 October, 2010). 'Fencing off' in this context refers to traditional practices and measures taken

by certain individual members of society to protect their 'properties' in general against thieves. For instance, in the present context some parents would use *rukwa* to protect their innocent daughters against being victims of sexual abuse especially by men. '*Rukwa*' in Shona culture is a form of '*mushonga*', '*muti*' or medicine. Thus, in the event that a man abuses or rapes a girl who has been 'fenced off' or treated with this '*rukwa*', the rapist may befall various forms of serious sicknesses which in most cases result in death if he does own up. It needs to be submitted that even this practice of 'fencing' has not been very effective as a deterrent as still cases of child and women sexual abuse continue to be reported. Because jailing offenders or 'fencing off' have not yielded the intended results, probably it is worthwhile considering other interventions.

Whilst the irrationality of the search for happiness can be conceptualized as a given per se, it becomes an issue, as in the Zimbabwean context, when it takes on irrational means of attaining it. Accordingly, in an attempt to contribute towards national efforts at curbing the irrationality of the rational in its search for happiness, this paper is arguing for a type of education notably, education for *hunhu*. It is surmised that; this particular type of education has the potential to 'awaken' us, the Zimbabweans (so-called rational beings), from this degeneration into irrationality, and hopefully back into rationality. We are arguing for this type of education, because we think this type of search for happiness is not only irrational, but is also not consistent with *tsika dzechivanhu* and *tsika dzine hunhu*.

By education for *hunhu* is meant an education which has as its point of departure the world – view of the Shona people of Zimbabwe which is characterized by *chivanhu* as described above, and which seeks to articulate and promote *hunhu kwaho* (good behaviour).

It is in search for other possible measures to address this paradox, that this paper locates education for *hunhu* at the centre of the intervention process. Education for *hunhu* is being considered as a possible intervening strategy because it is being contented that it has the potential of possibly attaining long – term results in this regard. It is being suggested that the current strategies are being viewed as short – term measures yet what is required are long – term solutions to this menace. Current strategies are being considered as short – term, because imprisoning the offenders does not quite instil the required rationality in the offenders but simply fear of imprisonment. As a consequence, either offender will continue committing the offence while finding other means of avoiding being caught or alternatively, they will simply become daring as seems to be the case.

In fact, there is debate as to whether or not imprisonment is the best method of possibly developing a crime – free society. Others argue that incarceration has only the short – term effect of temporarily removing criminals from society and also deterring would – be offenders by instilling in them a fear for possible imprisonment. Thus, imprisonment provides a minimal solution to the problem as it only creates fear of imprisonment. What is required in people is not

so much fear of imprisonment but rather people should see the reason or rationality of not committing crime. In other words, people should not commit crime for fear of imprisonment for regrettably some have become so daring as not to be scared by imprisonment, but rather and very importantly because it is irrational to do so. In other words, people should, in the long – term, be in a position to see reason or rationality and not prison before they commit crime. Fearing imprisonment and not reason regrettably reduces people to the irrational.

What societies in general and Zimbabwean society in particular need are not citizens who fear imprisonment but rather citizens with a culture or propensity of not committing crime especially child - sexually related ones or any other sexually related crimes or even any crime for that matter. It is in this regard that it is being suggested that education is strategically positioned to potentially make people see reason in their actions and behaviours. In other words, education has a long – term potential of creating a society that is rational, a crucial ingredient in possibly containing the rampage of the irrationality of the rational in society. It needs however, to be submitted that it should not be any education for indeed there is some education going on, but it should be a particular type of education namely education for *hunhu*. The point of departure in elaborating this position shall be on Plato's educational philosophy and education for *hunhu* and *chivanhu*.

PLATO, EDUCATION FOR *HUNHU* AND THE IRRATIONALITY OF THE RATIONAL – A CALL FOR CULTURAL RATIONALITY

This section is informed by the thesis that; any education deemed relevant and meaningful to any society must firstly, be informed by the people's philosophy of life (Luthuli, 1982; Makuvaza, 1996a). Secondly, and equally important, such an education must seek to articulate and address the particular people's historical and concrete existential circumstances and conditions. Simply put, education should try to identify and address people's existential problems and aspirations.

Zimbabwe in particular and many other nations seem to have a problem of the extreme irrationality of the rational. Accordingly, it is being argued that education in Zimbabwe, alongside other interventions should be at the forefront in trying to address the problem of the irrationality of the rational. Thus, education in Zimbabwe should enable and empower, particularly learners, to realize that whilst the search for happiness is irrational *per se*, its ultimate search should not involve irrational means. It is in this regard that views on education from Socratic philosophers like Plato and Aristotle need consideration.

For instance, Plato argued that; the aim of education should be the development of reason (Scolnicov, 1988; Schofield, 1983). Aristotle a student of Plato goes further to add that; the aim of education should be the production of a good man. A good man is viewed as

one who can use reason to achieve his ends. If these views are considered together it can thus be argued that education should aim at producing a good and reasonable person. It needs to be pointed out that, the concepts of goodness and reasonableness are not only contentious but are also relative. Thus, within Zimbabwe, one would extend the preceding by adding that, education should in addition to producing a good and reasonable person, should produce a person who has *hunhu / ubuntu* (Makuvaza, 1996a). It is being surmised that given the present problem under discussion, such a person should be one *anoteta* (one who is scared of) irrational means of attaining happiness. It should be noted that; he does so not so much because he / she is afraid of imprisonment *if* caught, but rather and very importantly, because *anoona kuti izvi hazvina hunhu* (it is not acceptable in our culture). This is precisely because, we believe; *pachivanhu* (Shona culture) bestiality (*makunakuna*), incest, homosexuality and child molestation, *zvisionekwi*, *zvinonyadzisa* (its unheard of, its taboo) and *zvinhu zvisina hunhu*. Such a person can thus be best realizable through the introduction of an education rooted in and informed by *chivanhu* as a philosophy informing the education.

It is therefore being contented that, education for *hunhu* should be viewed as central in efforts to contain the extreme cases of the irrationality of the rational because it is being suggested that, it has the potential of appealing not so much to reason and rationality *per se*, but more importantly to the soul or conscience of the people. In

other words, it appeals to the humaneness of the individual. Thus, precisely because the irrationality of the rational is in most cases currently being perpetrated by the so – called most ‘sophisticated’ and most rational members of our society, what is being argued for, is that rationality alone seems to be inadequate to contain the said problem. Rather, rationality should be complemented with *hunhu*. Thus, this paper is arguing for ratiocination or rationalization which is grounded in *chivanhu* and informed by *hunhu*. Additionally, man’s search for happiness should be defined within the parameters of *chivanhu* and *hunhu* if such a search is not going to lead into the irrationality of the rational. It is in this regard that this paper is arguing for situating education informed by *hunhu* at the centre of efforts to contain the irrationality of the rational in Zimbabwe.

CONCLUSION

The preceding discussion has serious implications for humanity in general and Zimbabwean humaneness in particular. It calls for a reconsideration of rationality as the distinctive feature between humans and non – humans precisely because the distinction between the rational and the irrational seems to be systematically becoming too academic and technical. It has been argued that while all people are human beings, not all of them are rational human beings *per se*. Thus, while ‘human-beingness’ can be a given, the same seems currently not to be the case for rationality. It has been further contented that, in order to check the inevitable and systematic

degeneration of the rational into irrationality, it is being suggested that deliberate consideration should be placed on revisiting our culture and values from a reconstructionalist perspective rooted in and informed by *chivanhu*. Accordingly, education informed by the same, and not more jails and stiffer penalties, should be considered to play a pivotal role in efforts to contain the degeneration of the rational into irrationality in their quest for happiness. Additionally and very importantly, people's ratiocinations and rationalizations about happiness and the subsequent search for happiness requires revisiting and further, should be informed by *chivanhu* and *hunhu* if their search is not to lead them into the current irrationality of the rational.

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