

*An Evaluation of Biotechnological Enhancement in the Light of an African Perspective of
Personhood: The Metaphysical Aspects of Botho and Human Nature*

by

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Declaration of Originality

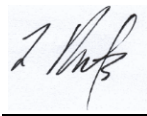
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Ethics Statement

I, Doreen Sesiro have obtained, for the research described in this work, the applicable research ethics approval.

Date of approval: 29 July 2021

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I, Doreen Sesiro, declare that I have observed the ethical standards required in terms of the University of Pretoria's Code of Ethics for Researchers and Policy Guidelines for Responsible Research.

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Abstract

Transhumanism is the view that human evolution should be actively enhanced by the human race through science and technology. Bio-technological enhancements are interventions designed to transform individual human capabilities to levels which surpass the current ones. However, the main objection is that transformations proposed by transhumanism would supposedly either result in a new species or otherwise degrade human nature, regardless of the degree to which they have been enhanced. Scholars who critique transhumanism, for example, Leon Kass, Jeremy Rifkin, Francis Fukuyama, and Bill McKibben insist that there are certain fundamental elements of personhood or humanity that should not be tampered with. This research evaluates biotechnological enhancement in the light of the *Botho* philosophy in general, but it focuses largely on the metaphysical aspects of *Botho*, particularly personhood and human nature. *Botho* is an indigenous philosophy prominent in Botswana that expresses the essence of being a person. A human person from the Setswana metaphysical point of view, namely *Botho*, includes the material and the immaterial aspects. After providing reasons to use *Botho* as a philosophical framework to evaluate transhumanism, the thesis explores both the radical and modest forms of enhancements in order to identify those that are consistent with the metaphysical aspect of the *Botho* perspective and those that are not. The study mainly applies the metaphysical aspect of the *Botho* perspective to the hypothetically enhanced human beings to show that transhumanism need not impair freewill, human nature, personhood, and personal identity. The study further shows where transhumanism and the metaphysical aspect of the *Botho* perspective converge and diverge. For example, in the case of freewill, some forms of biotechnological enhancement could in fact improve freewill, while other forms could limit it but not eliminate it. Another example is the case of mind uploads, where, from the metaphysical aspect of the *Botho* perspective, minds could still exist as persons or selves, even if not as humans, which

would be analogous to the way ancestors are often conceptualised. This thesis adds new knowledge to the literature in that it is the first systematic application of the metaphysical dimensions of *Botho*, and more generally Afro-communitarian worldviews, to transhumanism.

Keywords: African Metaphysics, Biotechnological Enhancement, *Botho*, Human Nature, Personal Identity, Personhood, Transhumanism

Contents

Acknowledgements.....	i
Declaration of Originality.....	ii
Ethics Statement.....	iii
Abstract.....	iv
Chapter 1: Introduction.....	1
1.1 Background.....	1
1.2 Research Problem.....	3
1.3 Methodology.....	5
1.4 Justification.....	7
1.5 Some Key Findings.....	13
1.6 Originality.....	15
1.7 Structure.....	17
Chapter 2: Transhumanism and Human Enhancement.....	21
2.1 Introduction.....	21
2.2 Definitions.....	22
2.2.1 Personhood.....	22
2.2.2 Transhumanism.....	25
2.2.3 Posthumanism.....	26
2.2.4 The Difference Between Transhumanism and Posthumanism.....	26
2.2.5 Biotechnological Enhancement.....	27
2.3 Enhancement Versus Medical Therapy.....	29
2.4 Means and Degrees of Enhancement.....	30
2.5 History and Philosophy of Transhumanism.....	31
2.6 Various Types of Enhancements.....	37
2.7 Gene Enhancement and Cybernetic Enhancement.....	38
2.8 The Good in Transhumanism.....	42
2.9 The Debate: Does Enhancement Enhance or Threaten Personhood?.....	44
2.10 Conclusion.....	47
Chapter 3: The Metaphysical Aspects of the <i>Botho</i> Perspective.....	49
3.1 Introduction.....	49
3.2 The Metaphysical Realities of <i>Botho</i>	52
3.3 How <i>Botho</i> Incorporates Determinism and Freewill.....	59

3.3.1 Determinism	60
3.3.2 Freewill in the <i>Botho</i> Perspective	64
3.3.3 Freewill in Morality	68
3.3.4 Process in Socialization	70
3.4 Destiny in Relation to Personhood in African and <i>Botho</i> Perspectives	72
3.4.1 Definitions of Terms	73
3.4.2 Setswana Understanding of Destiny	77
3.4.3 African Understandings of Destiny	80
3.4.4 Personhood According to the <i>Botho</i> Perspective	89
3.4.5 Personhood According to the Akan Perspective	90
3.5 The Material and Immaterial Aspects of the Human Being in the African and the <i>Botho</i> Perspectives	94
3.6 Advanced State After Death	100
3.7 Conclusion	103
Chapter 4: The Epistemological Aspect of <i>Botho</i>	105
4.1 Introduction	105
4.2 How Knowledge Is Aquired in the Western Tradition and the <i>Botho</i> Epistemology	106
4.3 What Justifies Beliefs About the World?	122
4.4 The Nature of Mind as the Ground of Knowledge	124
4.5 When Different Sources of Knowledge Provide Conflicting Evidence	125
4.6 Conclusion	126
Chapter 5: The Moral/Normative Aspect of <i>Botho</i>	127
5.1 Introduction	127
5.2 <i>Ubuntu/Botho</i> as a Moral Philosophy	128
5.3 The Three Facets of <i>Botho</i>	130
5.3.1 A Person Is a Person Because of Other People	130
5.3.2 A Person Is a Person With Other People	130
5.3.3 A Person Is a Person Through Other People	131
5.4 Persons, Community and <i>Botho/Ubuntu</i> as Expressed by African Philosophers	132
5.4.1 Five Ways of Identifying Personhood	132
5.4.2 The Individual's Prevalence in Personhood	133
5.4.3 Reconciling Irreconcilable Concepts in Personhood	134
5.5 Incorporation and Full Personhood	136
5.6 Moral Cause and Relationships	139

5.6.1 Morality in Politics	142
5.6.2 Freedom in Politics	143
5.6.3 Morality and Dignity	144
5.6.4 Non-human Things and Human Persons	149
5.7 Conclusion	150
Chapter 6: The Impact of Enhancements on Freewill	151
6.1 Introduction.....	151
6.2 Determinism and Freewill (Ontology).....	154
6.3 Freewill and Determinism in the <i>Botho</i> and Transhumanist Framework	155
6.4 Implications of Enhancement on Freewill	156
6.4.1 Improved Freewill Due to Enhancement	156
6.4.2 Unlimited Freewill Despite Enhancement	158
6.4.3 Limited Freewill Due to Radical Enhancement.....	163
6.5 Conclusion	169
Chapter 7: The Impact of Enhancements on the Material/Immaterial Aspects of the Human	
171	
7.1 Introduction.....	171
7.2 The Immaterial and Material Aspects of the Human Being	176
7.2.1 A Transhuman Materialistic Account of the Human Nature.....	177
7.2.2 Implications of Enhancements for the Material/Immaterial Aspects of the Human Being.....	181
7.3 The Epistemological Aspect of Human Nature	186
7.3.1 How Epistemology Fits in the Transhumanist Perspective	187
7.3.2 Implications of Knowledge in a Transhuman Context with Responses from the <i>Botho</i> Perspective	188
7.4 Human Nature According to Transhumanism and <i>Botho</i>	192
7.4.1 Human Versus Non-Human	193
7.4.2 Freewill, Materialism, Reason and Human Nature	194
7.4.3 Material, Immaterial Aspects and Human Nature	195
7.4.4 Body and Mind in the Mind Upload Kind of Enhancement.....	196
7.5 Conclusion	198
Chapter 8: The Impact of Enhancements on Personhood and Personal Identity.....	200
8.1 Introduction.....	200
8.2 Personhood According to the <i>Botho</i> Perspective and Transhuman Perspective.....	203
8.2.1 Metaphysical Aspect of Personhood: Immateriality	204

8.2.2 African Relational Metaphysics	205
8.2.3 Physical/Material Aspect of Personhood	207
8.3 Implications of Enhancement for Personhood	208
8.4 Personal Identity	215
8.4.1 <i>Botho</i> 's Approach to Personal Identity	216
8.4.2 Personal Identity According to Transhumanism	218
8.4.3 Implications of Enhancements for Personal Identity	219
8.5 Conclusion	226
Chapter 9: Implications of Enhancement for Morality with Summary and Conclusions	228
Bibliography	235

Chapter 1: Introduction

The chapter begins with the background of the research (1.1), followed by the statement of the problem under investigation (1.2) and the methodology (1.3). Motivation for working with the methodology (1.4) comes after. Next are some key findings (1.5), statement of originality (1.6) and a summary of how the chapters will be arranged (1.7).

1.1 Background

The first great conceptual cluster analysed in this doctoral research is biotechnological enhancement. Biotechnological enhancements are interventions designed to improve the human person's form or function beyond the norm and beyond medical therapy. This means that biotechnological enhancements are used to improve performance, appearance, or capability in addition to what is remedial or normal. Bio-technological enhancement could be said to lead to a certain level of a transhuman, whether slightly or radically. These enhancements raise metaphysical questions, particularly about how they might affect freewill, the immaterial aspect of personhood that is relating, and material aspects of human nature, knowledge capability, and personal identity.

The second conceptual cluster addressed in this research is indicated by the term *Ubuntu*, more specifically *Botho*. Whereas *Ubuntu* applies generally to African context (despite being a southern African term), *Botho* specifically applies to the Setswana context in which the researcher is based. I start with discussion on *Ubuntu* and narrow it to *Botho*.

According to (Ramose 1999), *Ubuntu* is the root of indigenous African philosophy. It is the designation of humanness in the Nguni group of languages (Zulu/Ndebele/Swati/Xhosa) of Southern Africa. Tutu (1997) reveals that Bantu is the plural form of the word *umuntu*, which

identifies a similar linguistic bond among a large array of African ethnic groups. Since the *Ubuntu* concept itself belongs to all Bantu people of sub-Saharan Africa, who speak various multiple languages, it is labelled in various ways in accordance with the language of the relevant ethnic group.¹ For example, in Shona it is “*unhu*”, in Tsonga “*bunhu*”, in Tshivenda “*vhutu*”, “*utu*” among the Swahili speakers of East Africa, and “*umundu*” among the Kikuyu people of Kenya.

Ubuntu as a worldview is common amongst all or at least most indigenous African societies (Dolamo 2013:2); nonetheless, some communities do not belong to the Bantu linguistic group, and as such they use different terms for the concept that is nonetheless frequently encountered in them. In scholarly literature, the commonly preferred term is “*Ubuntu*”, although the words *Ubuntu* and *Botho* are sometimes used interchangeably (Steyn 2012:124). Some writers transcribe *Ubuntu/Botho* in the titles of their work (Mapadimeng 2007; Metz and Gaie 2010).

This study is particularly informed by the philosophy of *Botho*. *Botho* is the Setswana version or expression of the concept *Ubuntu*. Batswana who occupy some parts of South Africa, Botswana, Zimbabwe and Namibia, are part of the larger *Bantu* group who belong to the

¹ Afro-communitarianism, however, which is the philosophy encoded in the word *Ubuntu*, permeates almost all the cultures of the Bantu people. Nevertheless, the Bantu people do not hold a monopoly of the concept of Afro-communitarianism. Most of the rest of sub-Saharan black Africans subscribe to a similar Afro-communitarian worldview even though they are not Bantu.

Sotho-Tswana language group. The word “Tswana” is a root, which, when prefixed with */Bo-*, means the country, and when prefixed with */Ba-*, means the people of Botswana; */Mo-* produces the singular for the latter; */Se-* gives the word for their language or culture. *Motho* is the Setswana equivalent of the English word “person”, and so *Botho* can in the same way be translated to mean personhood. *Botho* is usually used in thesis to designate a philosophical system about how Batswana see and understand the world, personhood, and life in general. Their beliefs, values and behaviour stem from *Botho* (Amanze 2002:125).

The word “personhood” is used in different ways in philosophical literature. It connotes metaphysical, epistemological and moral or social ideas. Yvonne Mokgoro (1998:16) similarly explains that *Ubuntu* “in its most fundamental sense represents personhood, humanity, humanness and morality”. For example, the Setswana saying; *motho ke motho ka batho ba bangwe* (a person is a person because of, with, and through other people), means that various features of being a human person, whether metaphysical, epistemological, or ethical, are perceived in terms of a person’s relationship with the community. According to Joseph Gaie (2007:31), personhood from the Setswana metaphysical point of view, namely *Botho*, includes material and immaterial aspects. Gaie (2007:29) further points out that “a human person has the capacity for reflective perception, abstraction, and inference. Moreover, a human person is that which is born of communication, which is a product of culture”. In addition to the material and immaterial aspects, Gaie indicates that a human person can be understood morally and epistemologically (2007:33).

1.2 Research Problem

The thesis evaluates biotechnological enhancements drawing largely from Setswana metaphysics of personhood. Thus, the larger scope of the study is a metaphysical examination

of transhumanism within the context of the metaphysical perspective of *Botho*; the thesis mainly investigates whether the metaphysical aspect of personhood is consistent with certain enhancements.

The research explores different types of biotechnological enhancements, particularly gene enhancement and cybernetic enhancement, in large part to establish those that are consistent with the metaphysical aspect of *Botho* and those that are not. In addition, the thesis addresses some epistemological and ethical issues, for example the implications of biotechnological enhancements on knowledge acquisition and morality. Thus, even though the primary conclusions drawn are metaphysical, the thesis considers some of their implications for morality at the end, specifically in the concluding chapter.

The thesis does not evaluate features of biological enhancement insofar as they are geared towards achieving transhumanist grand aspirations, such as achieving posthumanism. Thus, it does not aim to evaluate transhumanism on the whole or address cases that could advance a comprehensive transhumanism agenda, but instead evaluates only hypothetical instances of transhumanism to consider whether they in themselves match the characteristics of *Botho*, mostly its metaphysical perspective.

According to the metaphysical aspect of the *Botho* perspective, whereas a human being is a composite of a material body and an immaterial force, a person is essentially immaterial in relation. My overarching research question, about whether certain enhancements are consistent with *Botho* philosophy, are subdivided into five major sub-questions as outlined below:

- Would certain transhuman changes to the material body affect the human person's ability to judge and choose and hence the capacity for freewill?
- Would certain transhuman changes to the material body affect the material and immaterial aspects (in relation) of human nature?
- Would certain transhuman changes to the material body affect the ability to know?
- Would certain transhuman changes to the material body affect personhood?
- Would an individual enhanced in certain ways remain the same person?
- Would changes to human nature, personhood, or personal identity be unethical?

1.3 Methodology

The main methodology of this study is applied philosophy. Applied philosophy studies issues of practical concern. Philosophy is applied insofar as it is a general perspective relevant to understanding specific important questions of everyday life (Lippert-Rasmussen et al 2017:4-5). Applying philosophy is “a matter of, say, approaching a particular question through meticulous conceptual analysis, making explicit how one’s conclusions follow from one’s premises, and so forth” (Lippert-Rasmussen et al 2017:4).

Metaphysics is a branch of philosophy that concerns itself with the nature of reality (Hawley 2017:166). Katherine Hawley explains that metaphysics is applied beyond and within philosophy (2017:167). She explains that metaphysics is applied within philosophy to questions and topics which are philosophical yet do not normally feature in a standard metaphysics textbook (2017:167). Hawley further explains that metaphysical issues which lend themselves to application beyond philosophy are often (though not always) issues to do with categorising, classifying, and organising the world (2017:165). This study explores the understanding of mainly the metaphysical aspect of *Botho* in extant literary works, applying widely held metaphysical views to topics in transhumanism that have not been addressed by

indigenous African people. For example, relationality, freewill, and immateriality are aspects of the *Botho* perspective that could find wide acceptance by the Batswana or Africans more generally. I draw on them to understand which enhancements would be consistent with being a human, being free, being a person, and being a particular person. At the end the thesis refers to the metaphysical conclusions drawn and consider some of their implications for morality.

This study is not an instance of ethnophilosophy. Ethnophilosophy is one of the trends in African philosophy. It is broadly defined by Ada Agada as “the intellectual perspective that promotes the world views of traditional African societies as philosophically valuable and viable” (2022: xviii), but is often understood more narrowly as the ascription of certain philosophical beliefs to Africans as such. Agada explains that there are two types of ethnophilosophy: descriptive type and the academic type. Agada further explains that whereas academic type is embraced by many African scholars, the charges of collectivism and non-criticality are largely directed at descriptive ethnophilosophy, with the academic sort being merely a more rigorous version of the descriptive (2002: xviii-xix). In contrast to any sort of ethnophilosophy, this study does not simply recount views of a larger group. Thus, it does not suppose that certain views are universal or essential amongst Africans, nor does it suppose that all Africans hold views collectively. Rather, it shows that certain views are widespread or salient amongst the Batswana, and, moreover, it then applies them to debates about transhumanism. The point of the thesis is not to represent what Africans have all thought about a topic, but instead to draw on certain philosophical, and particularly metaphysical, views frequently associated with *Botho* in order to appraise enhancements, an applied project that differs from ethnophilosophy.

Recall that from the previous section (section 1.1) *Botho* means personhood, or the essence of being human, in several different senses. This study draws on the *Botho* philosophy generally. For example, chapters 3, 4 and 5 of this study discuss the major fields of the *Botho* philosophy. These are the fields of metaphysics, epistemology and morality respectively. However, this thesis focuses *largely* on the metaphysical aspect of *Botho*. Thus, even though the study draws mainly on the ontology of *Botho* (being a person and being a human being), it does consider other aspects of *Botho* like epistemology and morality. The last chapter reflects on the metaphysical conclusions drawn on the previous chapters and their implications on morality.

I use principally literature to establish the fundamental characteristics of the *Ubuntu/Botho* perspective. I use information in the form of books, journal articles and web pages that cover subject-matters from fields such as philosophy, cultural studies, theology, and indigenous knowledge.

Furthermore, I also draw broadly on my own knowledge of Setswana culture and proverbs. Setswana proverbs that demonstrate the aspect of *Botho* are gleaned not just from the literature, but also from oral tradition and common knowledge. The Setswana proverbs are translated into English, giving both their literal and figurative meanings.

1.4 Justification

This section discusses aspects of *Botho* as used in the research, which the reader should embrace. It justifies why the notions of *Botho* need to be embraced by the reader. The notions of *Botho* are classifiable into metaphysical, epistemological, and ethical aspects. The metaphysical aspects of *Botho* explore the fundamental nature of the reality of personhood,

while the epistemological aspects of *Botho* explore indigenous knowledge systems which made meaning to Batswana in the past. The ethical aspects on the one hand, explore morality.

The thesis utilises indigenous knowledge, namely the *Botho* worldview, to make a contribution to the debate about whether transhumanism is appropriate or not. If it is appropriate the kinds and/or degrees of transhumanism that might be appropriate, particularly in respect to humanness, personhood and personal identity. Whilst the data collection and analysis procedures of this research are scientific in a broad sense, and the *Botho* analytical tool is largely empirical, there are some important unscientific beliefs and insights in the *Botho* analytical tool that are employed. As it is common with studies based on indigenous knowledge, there are likely to be aspects of the theoretical framework that the reader may find problematic. In particular, elements of religion, which readers might not subscribe to. The section below addresses the epistemic and pragmatic reasons for embracing the *Botho* perspective in the evaluation of transhumanism.

Pragmatic Reasons for Embracing *Botho*

Ademola Kazeem Fayemi (2018:54) has noted that the African voice on the transhumanist debate has tended to communicate taboo. Therefore, this is a rare, positive contribution into the concept of transhumanism from an African perspective, let alone using the *Botho* framework. According to Kwame Gyekye (1987:25), knowledge and living standards are determined by the cultural background, time and space in which people live. This means that philosophical concepts are influenced by culture and they come from the experiences, worldview and perceptions of an individual or a society. Therefore, the means through which Batswana derive their knowledge vary from those of other worldviews.

Botho is how most of Batswana see and understand the world, personhood, and life in general. The beliefs of Batswana, their values, and behaviour emanate from *Botho*. As an example of holding the perspective of immateriality which is relating it is common amongst most Batswana that the immaterial aspect of the human person does not die when his or her body dies, however, it will continue to interact with, intervene in or interfere with human life. According to Christopher Anyanwu (1981: 82), if beliefs in God and ancestors have any meaning, value and justification, they must have arisen from human experience and must be products of culture. Anyanwu defines culture as a human response to experience, beliefs and ideas which enable human beings to live meaningful lives. He states that reality refers to objects of experience and thought. Anyanwu (1981: 83) goes further to argue that African beliefs and knowledge about reality are the products of human experience, and the theories of such beliefs and knowledge must be the product of logical reflection. Whilst the reader might not embrace this belief, s/he will see that its argument fits well in the Batswana's engagement with the debate of transhumanism. The reader will be able to appreciate this approach to the debate of human enhancement as a way of interpreting and participating in Batswana culture.

Philip Higgs (2011:9) reiterates Anyanwu's arguments by arguing, "African community-based research and teaching should take cognisance of indigenous knowledge system and values present in the community." Taking cognisance of African values and cultures, including their epistemological and metaphysical views will promote the values entrenched in African indigenous knowledge systems. This recognition does not have to emanate from sympathy towards African concepts, but, in the case of this research, will proceed from a demonstration of the efficacy of *Botho* in affecting the debate on biotechnological human enhancement. The *Botho* venture into this debate will gradually or suddenly help other

African and non-African philosophers from different contexts to prepare or improve their responses to the debate.

African philosophy will not be exploited to its proper potential if African philosophers, by default, debate from the perspectives of non-Africans. Neither must African philosophy stand aloof from worldwide debates, lest it denies the world an authentically African input towards philosophy. Charles Verharen et. al. in the same vein highlight the importance of the African approach in African philosophy as they state that “to be both ethical and sustainable, African development must be guided by African principles” (2014:9). *Botho* is an African worldview that could contribute to contemporary conceptions of development.

Since time immemorial, Batswana have developed knowledge. The indigenous knowledge of Batswana deserves a place in global debates that contribute to the knowledge space globally. In this regard, the researcher holds that some aspects of the *Botho* interpretations include knowledge or “justified true beliefs” (Sober 2009:152-153). However, this research does not advocate for non-Batswana to believe in Batswana’s religious concepts such as, ancestral spirits, or that Batswana should hold steadfastly to such beliefs. Instead, this knowledge and experience of Batswana is beneficial to the reader from the standpoint of the fundamental or at least relatively unquestioned principles and norms undergirding them.

Anthropological proof exists for instances where non-empirical knowledge claims, such as religion and cultural norms, for example, have been good for humanity (Dolamo 2013:3). For these reasons, this study holds that the *Botho/Ubuntu* version of personhood must be preserved, broadcast, maintained by its adherents, and understood by outsiders. However, this is not a proposal for the *Botho* worldview to have a universal monopoly on what personhood

is. Rather, since we live in a global village, any worldview on personhood will probably be strengthened through integrating it with some elements of personhood from other worldviews. Instead of the supremacy of one knowledge system over another, a combination of knowledge systems is probably the best option.

According to Chilisa and Preece (2005:81), these kinds of research “[advance] the development of indigenous literacies and knowledge systems in such a way that they find a place in global science and technology.” The history of Africa before colonialism still remains under-researched. Unlike the traditions of the West, Setswana tradition and philosophy have remained unwritten, and hence *Botho* is a ground breaking research that will add to this limited body of knowledge. In this era, when scholarship attempts to expand and diversify knowledge worldwide, the researcher believes that an application of the Setswana concept of *Botho* to the debate of transhumanism will be an important contribution in the global discussion of personhood. The research will contribute a new concept in the field of philosophy, namely, the embracing of certain biotechnological enhancements in the light of traditional African philosophical thought, particularly the *Botho* perspective of Batswana.

Furthermore, the advantage of this research is the perspectives that come from the first-hand experiences of the researcher, who originates from the culture and worldview that she is writing about. Richard Bell (2002: xi) argues that:

to engage the African reality requires that we see multiple aspects of that reality through the eyes of the Africans themselves – its philosophers, historians, writers, and artists – those who provide us with a critical perspective on the lived experiences of Africans.

Like any other discourse, *Botho* has challenges and loopholes. While the researcher recognises that the *Botho* worldview is not critical of certain scientifically untested beliefs in African thought such as spirituality, life after death and the indispensability of community, she believes that it is good for African people to know about these concepts; it is also informative for scholarship.

Epistemic Reasons for Embracing *Botho*

The researcher holds the same views as Gyekye, arguing that the beliefs and insights mentioned have worked well for the African individual and his or her community in terms of the quality of personhood (Gyekye 1996). This is because the African view of personhood has generally produced predictable and manageable persons and thereby prevented (and probably delayed) the disintegration of humanity within its context. For example, while the ideal African person from tradition rarely stands out in prosperity, s/he rarely stands out in abnormality such as in the production of orphans, serial rapists, violent robbers, single-parent families, and others. This is because *Ubuntu/Botho* “discourages people from seeking their own good without regard for, or to the detriment of others and the community” (Mnyaka & Motlhabi 2009: 71-72).

Knowledge and superstition are common in both Western and African thought. As Kwasi Wiredu (1980:41) observes, the Western beliefs in abstract entities is no better than the traditional African beliefs in ancestor spirits. Just like some African beliefs, scientific experiences are a matter of belief because they are based on probabilities. Kwame Anthony Appiah (1998:117) similarly observes that indigenous knowledge could be “understood as constituting a body of theory whose fundamental aim, like that of Western science, were explanation, prediction and control of the phenomena of everyday life.” As these African

indigenous concepts shed light on how Africans perceive personhood, they will hopefully shed more light on why non-Africans perceive personhood the way they do. In this sense, the world can benefit from reflecting more on how they perceive personhood as compared or contrasted with each other. This is particularly relevant in a time where humanity's perception of personhood can determine how far human beings venture into transhumanism, and where transhumanism can be safe, beneficial, risky, or dangerous for human existence.

The researcher is cognisant of the possible limitations that exist in *Botho*, like the immaterial aspect of personhood. However, as already mentioned from the previous section, there are some aspects of *Botho* like individuality, freewill and rationality that can be justified to many enquirers. The mentioned aspects of *Botho* will be efficiently applicable to the debates on transhumanism and personhood. The researcher finds the *Botho* concept to be justified in the sense that globally, enthusiasm for the concepts of freewill, rights and dignity, which are fundamental to *Botho*, has grown. Further, Thaddeus Metz (2007) argues that there are behaviours that are accepted as immoral by both the Western people and adherents of *Ubuntu/Botho*, like murder, theft, rape, deception and others. Metz has observed, the *Botho/Ubuntu* framework calls for the promotion of harmony, reduction of discord and development of community (2007: 340-341). The *Botho* worldview is likely to find a wide appeal not only among Batswana but across many cultures.

1.5 Some Key Findings

This research has revealed that many biotechnological enhancements are consistent with the metaphysical aspects of the *Botho* perspective in regard to freewill, immaterial which is relating and material aspects of human nature, knowledge capability, personhood and personal identity. Regarding freewill, it has been shown that what evolution does to the

human brain is not different from what cognitive enhancement would do to the human brain. If the former does not lead to loss of freewill, there are no logical reasons why the latter would lead to loss of freewill. Further, some enhancement may lead to changes in behaviour; however, many changes in behaviour would not have an impact on an individual's freewill, but rather, on his or her morality. Furthermore, if human beings are rational, the implication is that they will make free choices in accordance with their desires, self-interests and rational decisions which are determined but free. Lastly, there are some cases where freewill could be reduced, for example, in moral enhancement. If evil is removed from a range of options, freewill would be reduced but not completely eradicated. There are also cases where freewill is increased; for example, cognitive enhancement would increase the level of reasoning and ultimately an individual's options or choices. Additionally, there are cases where an enhanced person loses his or her freewill completely; this is where a human being would change into an automaton.

This research has also shown that moderate biotechnological enhancement need not affect either the material or immaterial aspects of a human being. Most Batswana would grant humanity to transhuman individuals with elements like, the human body. However, radical enhancement could substantially affect both the material and immaterial features. The case of mind uploading is a good example. This is where the whole human body is discarded, a process that could lead to the death of the body, which would result in the separation of the material body and the immaterial aspect which is relating In relation to epistemology, metaphysical intuition in transhumanism applies to the views of most Batswana in the case of the living dead. Therefore, knowledge in the *Botho* perspective influences knowledge acquisition in a transhuman context.

Lastly, the study demonstrates that both transhumanism and the *Botho* perspective distinguish the essence of a person from the body in such a way that a non-human can be a person and a human can be a non-person. Therefore, a radically “enhanced” individual would often still be a person instead of some other kind of being. Yet, there are places where the *Botho* perspective and transhumanism diverge. For example, for transhumanism, a being with consciousness but without immateriality and relationality would be a person and would remain the same person throughout, whereas, for *Botho*, it would not be a person. In another scenario, for *Botho*, a being with immateriality and relationality but without consciousness could be a person and would remain the same person through time whereas according to transhumanism, that would not be a person.

1.6 Originality

The research considers enhancements in the light of metaphysical distinctions of freewill, human nature, personhood and personal identity, which have not been thoroughly explored in previous works on *Botho/Ubuntu*. A majority of the works focus merely on *Botho*’s moral aspects. In contrast, to the extent that this thesis draws some moral conclusions in the concluding chapter (which is not its primary aim), it additionally provides metaphysical evidence for them unlike other discussions. This is particularly true in respect to the handful of published works addressing transhumanism from an African perspective. The first being Cornel Du Toit (2005), in an article titled, “Implications of a Technoscientific Culture on Personhood in Africa and in the West.” Du Toit argues that if the African communitarian mindset is restored, it can bring about the establishment of original conceptualisations of normative personhood. The second article is by Ademola Kazeem Fayemi (2018), titled, “Personhood in a Transhumanist Context: An African Perspective”. Fayemi, deals with transhumanism and normative personhood in the Yoruba, Nigerian, African context. Cornelious

Ewuoso and Ademola Kazeem Fayemi (2021), in their essay “Transhumanism and African Humanism: How to Pursue the Transhumanist Vision Without Jeopardising Humanity”, address moral contentions against transhumanism from the framework of *Ubuntu* normative personhood. They argue that *Ubuntu*–driven transhumanism can be beneficial to the society, and potential harm can be reduced. Lastly is the recent work by Amara Esther Ani Chimakonam (2021), titled “Transhumanism in Africa: A Conversation with Ademola Fayemi on his Afrofuturistic Account of Personhood”, Chimakonam holds that the type of normative personhood acquired through technology is not consistent with Menkiti’s account of normative personhood. The present research differs from the above mentioned works in that, while they discuss merely the ethical considerations, this one does so in the light of thorough metaphysical reflection and, moreover, it principally addresses the metaphysical aspects of being a person and of human nature.

Broadly, the research contributes an African voice to metaphysical issues of enhancement. This is the embracing of biotechnological enhancement by traditional African philosophical thought. More specifically, this research contributes a Setswana view of personhood, which to a large extent has not been researched on.

In particular, the *Botho/Ubuntu* compatibilist approach to freewill on issues of transhumanism has not been done in an African context before. Regarding knowledge, many scholars have carried out research in the area of African knowledge but there are no studies on how transhumanism might bear on this aspect. Furthermore, transhumanism in the context of *Botho* metaphysics pertaining to humanness has not been done in an African context before. Finally, this research covers personal identity in the context of enhanced persons. Studies that have dealt with the idea of personal identity have not sufficiently considered

relationality as one of the necessary and sufficient conditions for personal identity. These limitations make the current research relevant. The study contributes a Setswana view of personhood, which to a large extent is under researched.

1.7 Structure

The chapters in this research are arranged in the following order:

Chapter One: Introduction

Chapter 1 introduces the present research by elucidating what the research seeks to investigate, the approach that the researcher employs in carrying out the research and interpreting its outcomes. The chapter begins with the background followed by the problem under investigation then the theoretical approach. This is followed by the justification of the study, some key findings and the originality statement.

Chapter Two: Transhumanism and Human Enhancement

The second chapter introduces the transhumanism movement and the related philosophical issues. Genetic enhancement and cybernetic enhancement among others are discussed. Enhancement is contrasted with medical therapy. The means and degrees of enhancement are discussed. The history of transhumanism is discussed. The debates in transhumanism are also discussed.

Chapter Three: The Metaphysical Aspects of the *Botho* Perspective

The third chapter explores the metaphysical aspects of the *Botho* worldview. The study shows that the *Botho* perspective incorporates both determinism and freewill. Whereas genes, the society and even the environment have a role to play in an individual's becoming a person,

the individual is also free, responsible and mandated to construct an ideal personhood. The study shows that African communitarianism, does not overrule individuality, whether normatively or metaphysically. In regard to destiny, the study shows it is commonly held among many Batswana that destiny understood as a purpose can be realised, and that human beings can choose whether or not to fulfil it. The material and immaterial aspects of human nature is also discussed to illustrate that, according to the metaphysical aspect of the *Botho* perspective, whereas human nature is constituted by material and immaterial (in relation) aspects, personhood is constituted by immateriality which is relating.

Chapter Four: The Epistemological Aspects of *Botho*

Chapter four explores the epistemological aspects of *Botho*. The chapter engages with the nature, the concept of knowledge, and the limits of human knowledge. It compares and contrasts Western and African epistemology. The study shows that whereas knowledge relies mainly on experience and reason in the Western tradition, in African epistemology knowledge is based on testimony, mysticism and science. Whereas the Western tradition divides accounts of knowledge into rationalism and empiricism, and limits its justification to these two sources, African epistemology fuses these two scientific sources, and also embraces mysticism and testimony. Therefore, in African epistemology science, mysticism and testimony could be used for epistemic justification.

Chapter Five: The Ethical Aspect of *Botho*

Chapter five discusses the ethical aspect of *Botho*. The study illustrates that *Botho* is morality itself, it consists of the way a human person ought to behave and be treated. In this chapter I discuss the three facets of *Botho* demonstrating how *Botho* is applied. Next I discuss persons, community as expressed by African philosophers, followed by incorporation and full

personhood and lastly moral cause and relationships. I also show that *Botho* is virtue. In later sections of this chapter, I show how *Botho* permeates economic, social and political life of the Batswana.

Chapter Six: The Impact of Enhancements on Freewill and Destiny

Chapter six investigates the impact of biotechnological enhancement on freewill and destiny in light of the metaphysical aspects of *Botho*. It shows that freewill can be affected by the material brain, but that freewill does not need to be lost, and that it could be enhanced, if the brain is enhanced. It also discusses instances where enhancements could limit freewill.

Chapter Seven: The impact of Enhancements on The Material/Immaterial Aspect of the Human

The seventh chapter investigates the impact of biotechnological enhancement on the immaterial and material aspects of human nature and knowledge capability in light of the metaphysical aspects of *Botho*. It shows that radical changes to the body may substantially affect material and immaterial features and ultimately lead to loss of humanity or human nature. In relation to knowledge capability, the study shows that metaphysical intuition and community in the *Botho* epistemology, applies to transhumanism. Furthermore, it shows that some forms of transhumanism could improve both scientific and mystical knowledge and discusses instances where knowledge acquisition could be limited by enhancements.

Chapter Eight: The Impact of Enhancements on Personhood and Personal Identity

Chapter eight investigates the impact of biotechnological enhancement on the personhood and personal identity in light of the metaphysical aspects of *Botho*. It shows that according to views held by many Batswana persons are essentially immaterial, and they exist essentially in

relation to other persons. Unlike in transhumanism, personhood in the *Botho* perspective is not based entirely on consciousness. However, consciousness could suggest the presence of the immaterial in relations which are believed to house consciousness. That means that mind uploads could continue to exist as persons, but not as human beings. In relation to personal identity, the chapter illustrates that, according to *Botho*, immateriality and relationality are necessary and sufficient for a person's continued existence. This means that even if an enhanced individual may not remember that s/he is the same person, s/he would be the same person as long as other human persons relate with him/her as the same person, and as long as s/he retains the same immaterial nature.

Chapter 9: Implications of Enhancement on Morality With Summary and Conclusions

Chapter nine recapitulates the research thesis. It also briefly and tentatively discusses some moral issues that arise from enhancements and addresses them from the normative aspect of the *Botho* perspective.

Chapter 2: Transhumanism and Human Enhancement

2.1 Introduction

The previous chapter, chapter one, introduced the present research by elucidating what the research seeks to investigate, namely, what impact biotechnological enhancement has on personhood and human nature basing on the views of most Africans including Batswana.

This chapter will explore the concept and movement of transhumanism or human enhancement, which is primarily a technological phenomenon. First, the chapter defines some of the important terms namely, “personhood”, “transhumanism”, “posthumanism”, and “biotechnological enhancement”. The chapter also explores the history and philosophy of transhumanism, which includes the movement’s origins and rationale. It, then, explores literature on various enhancements in greater detail. This chapter will focus largely on gene enhancement and cybernetic enhancement, although it is not restricted to these two. The chapter discusses the *prima facie* good in biotechnological enhancements, which is primarily an extended comment on the expansion of the research’s hypothesis. Lastly, the chapter discusses differing reactions to biotechnological enhancement, namely, the critics and advocates of transhumanism. The criticism focuses on the *prima facie* problems with transhumanism. The proponents of transhumanism respond to some of the criticism. The chapter shows how these arguments bear on transhumanism in light of the metaphysical aspect of the *Botho* perspective. For example, whereas modest biotechnological enhancements would be consistent with human nature, extreme degrees, or kinds of transhumanism, would be inconsistent with human nature.

The metaphysical realities in the *Botho* perspective are explored in chapter three while the epistemological and ethical aspects of *Botho* are explored in chapters four and five subsequently. The review in this chapter prepares the ground for chapters six, seven and

eight. These three chapters present and analyse enhancements, and the degrees of their application, that are consistent with the metaphysical aspect of *Botho*.

The sections of the chapter are ordered as follows:

The chapter begins with the descriptions of key terms in (2.2), followed by a contrast between enhancement and medical therapy in (2.3). The next discussion is on the means and degrees of enhancement in (2.4). The history and philosophy of transhumanism follows in (2.5). Section (2.6) discusses the various types of enhancements. 2.7 discusses gene and cybernetic enhancements followed by the good in transhumanism in (2.8) and the section on debates on enhancement in (2.9) is followed by the conclusion in (2.10).

2.2 Definitions

To guard against ambiguities, this section defines some important terms employed in the chapter, namely, “personhood”, “transhumanism”, “posthumanism”, and “biotechnological enhancement”, drawing on widely used definitions, while also presenting some of the researcher’s own. The definitions I provide in this chapter are a rough sketch. In later chapters I present thorough analyses of these terms.

2.2.1 Personhood

Personhood is the quality, condition, or status of being a person. According to the Western tradition, a person, in terms of metaphysics, is a being that has certain capabilities or attributes such as rationality, ability to use language, self-consciousness and self-awareness. However, chapter 3 illustrates that the metaphysical aspect of personhood is understood differently in the *Botho* perspective.

Materialists or physicalists believe that a person is essentially a physical being, with no metaphysically distinct soul or mind. They believe that the mind is just another way of referring to the brain. Dualists, however, believe that persons are more than just the physical, with the involvement of a metaphysically distinct mind or soul. According to this view, a person inhabits a physical body, possesses a physical body, or possesses an apparently physical body. On this view, one could interpret physical personhood as just the way a person has a continuing presence in this world through the physical body. Dualists believe that there are mental properties that are not reducible to physical properties. They believe that a person is a mind that is not simply the brain; it is a non-physical substance or property. Others go further and believe that apart from the physical body and the non-physical mind, there is a further immaterial soul or spirit. The mind and soul are essential to metaphysical personhood.

There is no consensus on the exact degree or range of ability that would set a person apart from an animal, or as more or as less of a person than the other in such categories. This is arguably one of the first realities that has given support to the transhumanism movement, namely, that a human person is likely to remain a person even after certain moderations and alterations.

The Metaphysical Aspect of Personhood

This thesis examines, among other aspects, the metaphysical aspect of personhood.

Personhood is the status of being a person. Metaphysics asks what a person is in general, as distinct from, say, an animal. As it will be clear in chapter 3, among most Africans including Batswana the metaphysical aspect is the view that a person possesses an immaterial (and relational) aspect that survives body death.

Metaphysics also asks the question of what makes a particular person distinct from other persons, which Anglo-American philosophers usually call “personal identity”. Personal identity is the unique identity of the person through time, that is to say, the necessary and sufficient conditions under which a person at one time and a person at another time can be said to be the same person, persisting through time. Basically, identity may be defined as the quality of being the same through change and it denotes individuality and personhood.

The relationship between personhood and personal identity, is that the essential nature of the person is what would persist in personal identity. This study covers the metaphysical distinction of personhood, which, as will be observed in the next chapter, is not discussed in most of the works that discuss the communitarian aspect of *Botho*; they instead focus only on *Botho*'s moral aspects.

Traditionally, scholars have accused each other of misinterpreting the extent to which African communitarianism overrules individuality, whether normatively or metaphysically. Most proponents of African communitarianism downplay the personhood of individual persons, which, in one way or another, impacts directly on the issues of freewill. Some critics thought that African communitarianism is essentially problematic, and should be rejected. They hold the view that the current discourse on the relational dimension of a person disallows the appreciation of a person in his or her individual uniqueness, which is the basis for personal dignity. Kwame Gyekye (1992:307) proposes a moderate communitarianism, which is developed by a number of African authors such as Mogobe Ramose (1999), Augustine Shutte (2001), Joseph Gaie (2007), Thaddeus Metz (2011), and others.

Recall that this study draws on the *Botho* philosophy generally. However, the primary conclusions this study want to draw are metaphysical, which will be discussed in detail in the next chapter, i.e., chapter 3. Gaie (2007:31) explains that *Botho* means “a human being” as a metaphysical entity, and “a (real) person” at a moral level. According to Gaie the essential metaphysical elements of personhood include material and immaterial aspects, and a person can also be described epistemologically and morally. This means that a person must fundamentally have the ability to possess and process knowledge. When explaining the moral aspect of personhood, Gaie states that a person is a being that is rational and “captures the moral concept of *Botho*” (2007:33). The essential elements of personhood, therefore, help us to understand what a person should and should not do (*ibid*). The metaphysical aspect of personhood is crucial in affirming universal values such as freewill.

2.2.2 Transhumanism

According to Nick Bostrom (2005c: 202-203), transhumanism is an outgrowth of secular humanism and the enlightenment, which:

holds that current human nature is improvable through the use of applied science and other rational methods. These may make it possible to increase human health-span, extend our intellectual and physical capacities, and give us increased control over our own mental states and moods.

Simon Young (2006:15) describes transhumanism as “the belief in overcoming human limitations through reason, science, and technology”. Therefore, according to these definitions, transhumanism is a product of science; it advocates the use of science and technology to raise a perfectly healthy human being’s capabilities or appearances beyond normal human levels.

The difference between transhumanism and medical intervention is that transhumanism advocates for the use of “genetic enhancements of normal traits, as opposed to genetic treatments for disease” (Buchanan et al 2009:96). Medical interventions are meant to prevent or cure (or otherwise ameliorate) conditions viewed as diseases or impairments while transhumanism is the intervention that improves a condition viewed as a normal function or feature of members of our species (Buchanan et al 2009:110). For example, improving a characteristic that normal human beings ordinarily have, like intelligence.

2.2.3 Posthumanism

Posthumanism is more radical than transhumanism, because it advocates for the improvement of the human species from its current state to a state so radically advanced in physical, cognitive, and emotional capacities, that it would no longer be fit to call them human. The standards of such a species would be far superior to those of current human standards (Bostrom 2003:5). Nicholas Agar (2004:17) defines a posthuman as an entity whose basic capacities so radically exceed those of unaugmented humans as to be best thought of as a new kind of being. This study acknowledges that a posthuman would often be a person instead of some other kind of being. It is this resultant posthuman status which has led social science researchers and philosophers to raise questions relating to humanness, personhood, communality, morality and other related topics. Nonetheless, social scientists and ethicists can question on moral grounds even the slightest degree of human enhancement, so transhumanism raises moral questions.

2.2.4 The Difference Between Transhumanism and Posthumanism

The difference between posthumanism and transhumanism is that, whilst posthumanism is as radical as described in the preceding paragraph, transhumanism is in the initial “transitional

stage” (Bostrom 2008:107). In this intermediary state, the transhuman would acquire “one or more,” but definitely not all, “posthuman capacities [...] through the use of the GNR (Genetic, Nano and Robotic) technologies” (*ibid*). Examples of GNR are gene enhancement and cybernetic enhancement. These examples would be discussed further below. Although the transhuman possesses certain superhuman capacities, s/he generally remains within the parameters that are currently perceived as human (Cf. Kurzweil 2001:7). Richard Wilson (2017:7), along the same lines, argues that “[in the case of transhumanism], there is no necessary connection with the end results of enhancement technologies leading to a new species”. For example, Ademola Kazeem Fayemi (2018) proposes a modest, restrained or bridled form of transhumanism. Similarly, Amanda Sebastienne Grant (2019:5) argues that “while transhumanism seeks to transcend humanness, it does not seek to create something altogether unhuman”. This thesis argues that whereas a transhuman could be a human being, a posthuman could not. However, a posthuman could be a person even if not a human being. It further argues that enhancement could create an automaton, or something that is neither human nor a person.

2.2.5 Biotechnological Enhancement

Biotechnological enhancement means the technological interventions used to improve the capabilities of the human being, to levels beyond what is possible for the current human race. In view of the theoretical framework of this study, it is important to highlight that the verb “enhance” does not primarily refer to creation of a new thing but means to work on what is already extant. According to Allen Buchanan (2011:5), enhancement is “an intervention – a human action of any kind – that improves some capacity (or characteristic) that normal human beings ordinarily have”. To enhance, is mostly to amplify or improve on existing qualities, traits, or objects. However, some of the new traits or characteristics could be added

to the human being besides advancing the already extant ones (*ibid*). Nicholas Agar (2004) suggests that enhancers may not be limited to stereotypically human traits. For example, it is possible for future humans to have the ability to detect ultraviolet light and have the olfactory powers of dogs. Agar further argues that “we might one day give our children powers not found anywhere in nature, such as, radiotelepathy, viz., the capacity to send and receive information as radio waves”. The movement of biotechnological human enhancement specifically seeks to improve human performance beyond what is required to sustain human health (Miller & Wilsson 2006:14).

Bjorn Hofmann (2017:1) explains that human enhancement can be “any kind of genetic, biomedical or pharmaceutical intervention aimed at improving human dispositions, capacities, or well-being”. It must not be confused with medical therapy or treatment of ailments or disability. For example, prosthesis is an artificial replacement of a part of the body, such as a tooth, a facial bone, the palate, or a joint. Prosthesis may be removable, as in the case of most prosthetic legs or a prosthetic breast used after mastectomy. Prosthesis could be used as a medical therapy to serve the needs of amputees. It could also be used as an enhancement procedure to endow an individual with robotic limbs so that s/he could have strength beyond those which they naturally possess. The South African athlete, Oscar Pistorius, is a good example of an individual with prosthetic legs that are used for medical therapy. The intervention was medical rather than transhumanistic because it corrected a disability he was born with. However, if the scientists desired, they could have both corrected his disability as well as given his legs a capacity for super-human speed. They restricted themselves to the former. One possibility is upgrading cognitive abilities, through neural prosthetic devices. This form of enhancement could produce super intelligence in an individual. Another possibility is introducing specific genes into the body cells or

deactivating certain genes in an individual so that they cease to produce their effects. These forms of enhancement could produce super intelligence, enhance emotional functioning, and contribute to long life and desirable behaviour in individuals. Another possibility is replacing biological systems with mechanical systems. The human mind could also be downloaded into a robotic body. The last two forms of enhancement could produce considerable life extension and super intelligence.

2.3 Enhancement Versus Medical Therapy

Enhancements are interventions normally meant to improve the good of which human beings are capable, but not to treat/prevent disease. An example of enhancement is whereby a human mind is uploaded into another substrate to archive super-intelligence and immortality.

Biblical stories of Jesus walking through walls and closed doors after rising from death are also examples of enhancement. It is necessary to elucidate the distinction between treatment/prevention and enhancement because most analyses of transhumanism regard this distinction as valid. This distinction can also be useful when making moral judgements of transhuman concepts.

While medical care starts with ill health and seeks restoration to normal health, human enhancement starts with normal health and seeks an advanced capacity beyond the normal. Moreover, while enhancement has its roots within the medical profession, several enhancement practices are now developing in settings that are disconnected from the medical world (Bateman, Gayon, Allouche, Goffette and Marzano 2015:2). Transhumanism advocates for the role, not only of biomedical enhancement, but also of other emerging technologies. Laura Cabrera (2015:2) similarly argues that human enhancement interventions are not and should not be confined to medical practice. Military applications and

entertainment are examples of other fields where human enhancement interventions are used. One example of military enhancement is cybernetics, which will be discussed later.

2.4 Means and Degrees of Enhancement

The foundations of the notion of enhancement can be recognised in the discoveries of the depths of possibilities for the human body and mind borne from resilience, diligence, and repetition in physical and mental exercises as well as in bodily and mental responses to medical treatment. The basic human improvement could range from improving mood, physical appearance, speed and strength, to advancing intelligence and mathematical computing abilities. These are achievable to a smaller extent, by a natural human lifestyle, and to an advanced degree, by biotechnology. Thus, among modern attempts with observable results of improvement to the human being, are exercising, sticking to a healthy diet, taking vitamins and mineral supplements as well as resting. In the modern movement of human enhancement, we would be able, if or when we want, to augment the capacities of our bodies and brains either to advance the existing human species or to create an entirely new one. The success of these efforts, even if short-lived, would inevitably provide motivation for transhumanistic efforts. However, these endeavours with temporary or fleeting effects such as exercise, a good diet, taking nutritional supplements are in themselves, not enhancements. This is primarily because they do not change the person but temporarily returns him/her to a normal human. Within a short time, the person would be seen to have returned to the usual human limitations, the failure of which would mean there is abuse or over dosage, and soon there would be threats to personal health and life.

Newton Lee (2019) controversially adds that at the minimal level of biomedical intervention, people do engage in transhumanism. He asks, “(H)ave you ever taken vitamins, antibiotics,

vaccinations, or (for women) birth control pills? We are all transhumanists to varying degrees (2019:3)”. This view is erroneous because these interventions are an attempt to prevent or cure certain illnesses or directly solve a medical incongruity or conundrum. Thus, they are therapeutic or medical rather than transhuman. For example, whereas genetic technologies for the treatment of inheritable genetic disorders are medical, attempting to alter or “improve” genetic structure in a healthy individual is transhuman.

Further into technological methods, there are more degrees to which enhancement can be applied, with the radical ones being the most controversial. McNamee and Edwards (2006:514) differentiate between moderate and radical enhancements. They argue that the former has “[...] no necessary aspiration to shed human nature or human genetic constitution, but seek just to augment it with technology where possible and where desired by the person”. The study recognises the transhuman state and posthuman state where the researcher holds that a transhuman could remain a human being and posthuman could be a non-human person.

2.5 History and Philosophy of Transhumanism

The desire to transform human nature is ancient. It can be argued that the foundations of transhumanism are as old as humanity itself, if we presume that the current human race is what we inherited from the beginning of life. Therefore, transhumanism considers traditional methods of overcoming natural human limitations. Some transhumanist endeavours include language, education and medicine. The fight for survival and the pursuit of happiness are a few testimonies of humanity’s dissatisfaction with its nature.

The desire of humans for perfection is also reflected in religious texts. In the Biblical account of Genesis, Eve is lured by a serpent to eat from the “Tree of Knowledge”, to acquire Godlike

omniscience. In the same book, the Nephilim are human-God hybrid beings with a large and powerful physique superior to all humans on earth. The Bible is full of existential stories and superheroes. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego were thrown in the fire, but they walked around freely in the fire, completely unharmed (Daniel 3:1–30). Samson was so strong that he tore a lion apart with his bare hands (Judges 14:5–6). In the New Testament, Jesus was the first transhuman with an immortal resurrected body, one that could pass through solid walls but could enjoy eating fish (Luke 24:41–43). In Matthew 17:20, Jesus told his disciples that, if they have faith as small as a mustard seed, nothing would be impossible for them; they could move a mountain with a mere spoken command.

Despite the fact that transhumanism considers non-scientific methods in principle able to enhance human capabilities, the enlightenment era, which elevated human beings to the centre of scientific, secular world view, is considered to be the epitome of the transhumanism quest to enhance existing capacities. The role of science and technology is paramount to the possibility of the future development and improvement of humanity. Transhumanists relate transhumanism to evolution, and view the process as something in which human beings ought to be actively involved, rather than leaving it to natural selection. They believe that human beings should try to overcome their biological limits, increase their intelligence, extend their lives, and enhance their mood as well as other capabilities. Human aspiration to improvement and the transcendence of normal human capacities are documented in the writings of rationalists like Emmanuel Kant, Thomas Hobbes, John Locke, and Marquis De Condorcet (Bostrom 2005a). Rationalism is a philosophical movement which advocates for a focus on empirical science and critical reason. Bostrom argues that even in the medieval period, rationalists such as Giovanni Pico Della proclaimed that “man does not have a ready-made form and is responsible for shaping himself ” (Bostrom 2005a:2). He explains that Pico Della

argues that excellence for human beings is not something bestowed but something that must be pursued. Thus, a human being has an inherent freewill and flexibility which are foundational to transhumanistic inclinations.

The quest to improve humanity through science was further speculated upon by writers. During the 1920s, John Burdon Sanderson Haldane and John Desmond Bernal advocated many views that would become standard features of contemporary trans-humanism. These included the belief in the ongoing progressive evolution of the human species; the advocacy of genetic engineering (then known as “eugenics”); the replacement of religion by science as the arbiter of truth and; the expansion of human cognitive capacity by technological intervention (Tirosh-Samuels and Mossman 2005). Haldane (1924) published an essay entitled “Daedalus of Science and the Future” in which he discusses the possibility of altering people’s genes to achieve great benefits. Bernal (1929) in his volume, *The World, the Flesh, and the Devil*, speculated on subjects such as “space colonisation and bionic implants as well as mental improvements arising from advanced social science and psychology” (Bostrom 2005a:5).

The eugenics movement was prevalent during the early twentieth century, and according to Bostrom (2005a:6), “eugenics refers to the desire to purify humanity of undesirable genes”. The movement was taken to greater extremes by the Nazi regime. The targets of such eugenics interventions, such as forced sterilisations, were, among others, “the mentally disable, the deaf, the blind, the epileptic, the physically deformed, orphans, and the homeless”. This ambitious program for the betterment of humanity, however, suffered deep setbacks because of the Nazis’ pernicious use of eugenics and the horrors of World War II.

The transhumanist impulse received a certain boost during the 1940s. In England, cybernetics was developed by mathematicians and pioneering computer scientists who illustrated how cognition is possible without a subject (Tirosh-Samuelsan and Mossman 2005:29). The term “transhumanism” was coined in 1957 by Julian Huxley (1957). In 1957, as nations were recovering from the devastations of World War II, Huxley advocated for the necessity of transhumanism to improve the human condition (Lee 2019:4). He argues that:

The human species can, if it wishes, transcend itself - not just sporadically, an individual here in one way, an individual there in another way, but in its entirety, as humanity. We need a name for this new belief. Perhaps transhumanism will serve: man remaining man, but transcending himself, by realizing new possibilities of and for his human nature (Huxley 1957:76).

From the late 1960s, Fereidoun M. Esfandiary, a futurist who changed his name to FM-2030, signifying the date at which he hoped to achieve his centennial birthday, began to conceive of “transhumans as persons who behave in a manner conducive to a posthuman future” (Tirosh-Samuelsan 2011:22). FM-2030 believed that the problem facing humanity was mortality. He hoped for his own resuscitation; his body has been cryogenically preserved since his death in 2000, thirty years before his hoped-for 100th birthday. At that time, various organizations began to advocate for “life extension, cryonics, and space colonization and further developments of neuroscience and nanotechnology” (Tirosh-Samuelsan and Mossman 2005:30). Due to technological limitations before the industrial revolution, transhumanism remained for centuries a philosophical ambition far from scientific implementation and practice (Bahji 2018:87).

Most developments in the transhumanism movement occurred from the 1980s onwards, as a result of scientific and technological breakthroughs. One of the influential thinkers from this period was the engineer, Eric Drexler who published his volume *Engines of Creation* in 1986. Nonetheless, he acknowledged and explored the necessity of safeguarding against the risks posed by molecular nanotechnology. In 1988, Hans Moravec, an artificial intelligence specialist, published a book titled *Mind Children* which contributed to the field of robotics. This thesis interrogates super intelligence through cybernetic enhancement among others.

In the late 1990's, a group of transhumanist activists authored the "Transhumanist Declaration," stating various ethical positions related to the use of, and planning for technological advances (Tirosch-Samuelsan and Mossman 2005:32). In 1998, the World Transhumanist Association (WTA) was founded by the philosophers Nick Bostrom and David Pearce. The WTA is a non-profit membership organisation which advocates for the use of technology to expand human capacities. The transhumanist FAQ was developed collaborated by transhumanists since the 1990's. It is a document jointly created by exponents of transhumanism with expertise in different fields. Bostrom (2003:54) describes it as "an attempt to develop a broadly based consensus articulation of the basics of responsible transhumanism ... that could serve both as a guide to those new to the field and a reference work for more seasoned participants". Other organisations also played a role in the transhumanist movement such as, the Extropy Institute (a networking ideas exchange devoted for developing strategies for the future) founded by Max More and Tom Morrow in 1988, the Foresight Institute, the Immortality Institute, the Institute for Ethics and Emerging Technologies, and the Singularity Institute for Artificial Intelligence (Tirosch-Samuelsan and Mossman 2005: 32 and Bateman and Gayon 2015: 28). These institutions contributed to the dissemination of transhumanist ideas.

Another transhumanist is the sociologist and bioethicist, James Hughes, who published the work titled *Citizen Cyborg: Why Democratic Societies Must Respond to the Redesigned Human of the Future* in 2004. Hughes supports democratic transhumanism and argues that enhancement technologies should be made freely available to all, through the observance of the principles of democracy.

Another exponent of transhumanism is the futurist engineering director at Google and computer scientist, Ray Kurzweil who has published in the field of radical enhancement. He invented the speech recognition technology which enables blind persons to utilise computers. Kurzweil's works are *The Age of Intelligent Machines* (1990), *The Age of Spiritual Machines* (2000) and *The Singularity is Near* (2005). His concept of singularity envisions a future where human thinking gradually merges with technology to a point where people would still be human but go beyond their biological origins (2005). Kurzweil advocated for non-biological platforms for conscience and intelligence. He believed non-biological intelligence would match the range and subtlety of human intelligence. However, his means of creating super-intelligence, and thus the possibility of the singularity, depends on technology that is currently not yet available. Kurzweil generalises singularity to the evolution of species and of technology in general on rigorous grounds. Kurzweil has predicted that computers would achieve humanlike intelligence by 2029 and achieve singularity in 2045. This thesis addresses the concept of super-intelligence under cybernetic enhancement.

Another exponent of transhumanism is the gerontologist, Aubrey de Grey whose field of study is concerned with the causes and processes of aging. He focuses on the possibility of achieving radical life extension and treating the aging process as a curable disease. His work titled *Ending Aging* was published in 2007. He is the leading advocate for radical life

extension; he asserts that technologies would inevitably develop to the point where humans could halt the aging process. Life extension enhancements are one of the enhancements that this thesis addresses under gene enhancement and cybernetic enhancement.

2.6 Various Types of Enhancements

There are various categories and examples of enhancement; some are already in operation while others are not yet legal. Paul Miller and James Wilsdon (2006) discuss names, functions and examples of certain forms of human enhancement. The first category they discuss is psychopharmacology. Pharmacological agents are used to alter the brain's state or mood. Other pharmacological agents are used to alter bodily forms and functions. Bob Doede (2009) gives examples of psycho-pharmaceutical; cognitive enhancers such as Modafinil or Adderall, personality enhancers such as Prozac or Ritalin, physico-pharmaceutical weight loss and sport enhancers such as fenfluramine-phentermine (Fen-Phen), or anabolic steroids, and sexual enhancers like Viagra or Cialis.

Various pharmaceuticals increase physical capacities, for example, to run harder for longer, to develop muscle mass at greatly increased rates (Doede 2009:45). Likewise, there is cosmetic surgery, which is used to enhance physical and facial appearance for aesthetic reasons through surgical and medical techniques. Examples of these, include breast enhancement and facial contouring, sometimes crudely referred to as "plastic surgery". As previously mentioned, even though this thesis largely focuses on gene and cybernetic enhancement it is not restricted to the two. Gene enhancement is another category of enhancement where the genetic traits for an embryo could be selected. Pre-implantation genetic diagnosis is used to establish which desired traits for the embryo are inadequate, after which they could be manipulated. Similarly, gene enhancement is used to alter the genetic

makeup of selected cells in the body. The purpose of this enhancement is to upgrade the individual beyond what would be acquired through his or her genes as well as to manipulate genes to acquire specific personal attributes which individuals would never have inherited from their parents. Somatic enhancement is a type of gene enhancement. Cybernetics is yet another category of biotechnological enhancement intended to alter mental or physical functions by embedding electronic systems within the body. Gene enhancement and cybernetic enhancement will be discussed in detail in the next section. Lastly, there are nanotechnologies, which are similar to cybernetics but use far higher levels of miniaturisation. Nano technologies will be discussed under cybernetic enhancement.

2.7 Gene Enhancement and Cybernetic Enhancement

i) Gene Enhancement

According to, Buchanan et al (2009:347), a gene is a “mechanism of inheritance” and human genes are located within chromosomes, which are made up of strands of DNA (deoxyribonucleic acid) and various proteins. The human genome is the total of genes and genetic information inherited by a human being. A modification of the genome through technologies could be done either through the insertion of specific genes into somatic cells or germline cells and gene surgery, in which abnormal or undesirable genes are “switched off”. That is, deactivated so that they no longer produce their distinctive effects (Buchanan et. al. 2009:6). The insertion of genes into germline cells, or the modification of the germline in general, would result in the passing on of such changes to its progeny. Modifications to somatic cells are not passed on to the subsequent offspring, and, so, affect only the actual organism upon which the intervention was performed. The former refers to the enhancement of the stem-line whereas the latter, concerning those born with enhancements, refers to germline modifications.

There is a distinction between genetic therapy and genetic enhancement. Genetic therapy is using interventions to diagnose, treat or prevent diseases, while genetic enhancements is using interventions to enhance or alter human traits by replacing “normal” genes with superior ones. According to Nick Bostrom (2003:8), “intelligence, extroversion, conscientiousness, physical appearances, involve genetic predispositions,” thus, technology could be used to improve consciousness, physical appearance, intelligence and extroversion. The undertakings within human enhancement include the manipulation of a genotype of cells such as, the recreation of vital organs (reared from stem cells) combined with switching off genes responsible for the aging process. John Harris (2007:52) asserts that if this enhancement succeeds, it will contribute to long life, a human being will be able to live for 300 years or more.

This thesis explores the impact of gene enhancement on personhood and personal identity, as far as the concept of *Botho* is concerned. For example, does attempting to modify the human genome violates human freewill? Would it affect his or her human nature? Would s/he remain the same person? Would the changes affect how individuals acquire knowledge? These questions will be addressed in chapters 6, 7 and 8.

ii) **Cybernetic Enhancement**

The term “cyborg” was originally coined by the research space scientist Manfred Clynes. It is a combination of the terms “cybernetic” and “organism” used to describe a hybrid being who is partly human and partly machine (Hava Tirosh-Samuels 2012:713). A cyborg begins as an un-enhanced human and is subsequently altered through cybernetic implants or other artificial enhancements. As per the *Botho* theoretical framework of this study, it could either remain human or become non-human depending on the degree to which it has been enhanced.

Cyborgs have populated the science fiction imagination since the 1920s, but in the 1980s they became a staple of cult films such as *Terminator* (1984), where the cyborg figure is an emotionless invincible hybrid of human and machine. Haraway's feminist rendering of the cyborg signified the breaking of boundaries between nature and culture, organic and inorganic, human and animal, and a new understanding of human embodiment (*ibid*). Cybernetic enhancement is where a part or some parts of a human being's anatomy are substituted for, or inserted with a mechanical replacement.

Ray Kurzweil (2005:138) speculates about transcendence by means of technology; he envisions a scenario where it would be possible to recreate a human life in a computer by uploading a human brain into a human-like structure. The human-like structure would have human feelings and be immensely intelligent. While the "body" structure could die, the mind would continue to live on the Web in the posthuman future. This enhancement is not only meant to achieve immortality but also to heighten intelligence. Would a silicon body or a computer/machine with a bundle of information qualify as a human being according to the *Botho* perspective? This question and many others concerning the impact of this technology on human nature as well as personhood and personal identity will be addressed in the next chapters.

Kurzweil's *Human Body Version 2.0* (2003), proposes a radical upgrading of the digestive system where nutrients could be delivered through nanobots. Nanobots are hypothetical, very small (nanoscale) self-propelled machines, especially those that have some degree of autonomy and could reproduce. The process of upgrading the digestive system would separate the act of eating food for pleasure and taste from eating it for supporting life's processes. Nanobots could also be utilised for functions of elimination, enabling food to be

eaten only for pleasure and digested in the manner in which it would not be absorbed by the body. Is it *Botho* to define an individual who undergoes this type of enhancement as a human being? Does this form of enhancement substantially affect the material and immaterial aspect?

Another undertaking within human enhancement is nano-medicine. This is where nano-robots (nanobots) could be introduced into the human organism as devices that monitor and repair damaged cells and tissues, hence reversing cellular degeneration. Successful enhancement would contribute to long life (O'Mathuna 2009:128-157). This thesis aims to find out whether an individual who goes through this type of enhancement stops being a person, remains the same person or becomes a different person or only partly him/herself.

According to Doede (2009), in the very near future we are promised many human enhancement technologies, such as respirocetes. Respirocetes are hypothetical, microscopic, artificial red blood cells that are intended to emulate the function of their organic counterparts, in order to supplement or replace the function of much of the human body's normal respiratory system. For instance, these nano-machines would carry oxygen and carbon dioxide molecules through the body. Doede (2009:46) further argues that each could store and transfer 236 times the amount of oxygen of natural red blood cells and would enable an individual whose red blood cells were replaced by respirocetes to sprint at the level of an Olympic sprinter for 15 minutes without taking a second breath. The following questions then emerge from this argument: does the enhanced person remain the same person? Do the changes render the individual a non-human being, according to *Botho*? Would this cybernetic change affect the human being's ability to judge and choose? These questions will be addressed in chapters 6, 7 and 8.

2.8 The Good in Transhumanism

As noted in the preceding sections, current human limitations make it difficult for humans to enjoy life and sometimes they eradicate life altogether. Transhumanism aims to apply enhancements on humans to expand their lifespan, cognition and emotional functioning. These terms are described below as well as how transhumanism finds relevance in responding to them.

1. Human lifespan: the length of time for which a human being functions.

Transhumanism advocates for longer lives and transhumanists believe that technology would inevitably eliminate aging as a cause of death and instead turn death into the result of an accidental or voluntary physical intervention. Aubrey De Grey (2008:50) argues that aging is a disease that needs to be cured as a first step towards a feasible life extension. De Grey in Agar (2010:87) suggests one thousand years as the average life expectancy that could be achieved by relevant technologies. Bostrom (2003:31) argues that “saving lives [is] ethically important”. De Grey in Agar (2010:86), however, views the prospect of achieving immortality as unrealistic because of the environmental factors and societal dangers with which the individual faces on a daily basis. When the life span is extended people may enjoy a longer life (if they are healthy); scientists could discover and invent more; scholars could write more and artists could compose more. Therefore, people living longer could make more contributions to the world. Moreover, business markets could also benefit from the reality that people live longer. Expanding the lifespan through gene enhancement and cybernetics enhancement will be investigated through the lens of the *Botho* perspective.

2. Cognition: cognition is intellectual capacities such as memory, deductive and analogical reasoning, attention as well as special faculties like the ability to appreciate music, humour, eroticism, narration, spirituality, mathematics, and others (Bostrom 2008:107). It is the mental action or process of acquiring knowledge and understanding through thought, experience, and the senses. Enhanced cognition would improve the human being to “perform cognitive functions such as thinking, calculating, remembering, evaluation and forecasting (e.g., weather),” (Rousia and Renko 2020:1). Transhumanists aim to create super intelligence and one way of creating this is through neural prosthetic devices capable of elevating intelligence to the highest possible level through purely biological or chemical means. A human being would be free to choose his or her own desired level of intelligence. Enhancing people would enable them to solve problems, to act rationally, and to adapt to new situations. This is one of the possible enhancements that this thesis addresses under cybernetic enhancement.

3. Human emotional functioning: awareness, expression, and regulation of emotions. According to transhumanists, enhanced human functioning would improve “the capacity to enjoy life and to respond with appropriate affect to life situations and other people,” (Bostrom 2008:108). Aldous Huxley’s dystopic novel, *Brave New World* (1932) examines a futuristic society, called the World State that revolves around science and efficiency. In this society, emotions and individuality are conditioned in children at a young age, and there are no lasting relationships because “everyone belongs to everyone else” (a common World State dictum). The novel anticipates huge scientific advancements that would make a dystopian society. Citizens are kept

peaceful and happy because of a constant consumption of a soothing, happiness-producing drug called Soma. *Brave New World* is a reasonable guess as to where the world might go in future. Enhanced emotions would reduce negative emotions in one's life and even eliminate bad memories. However, the mentioned drugs, enhancements and society are fictional.

Another way of enhancing human emotion besides the use of drugs is through genetic enhancement. Emotional intelligence is mainly inherited. Similar temperaments within a family may be attributable to shared genetics. According to Nick Bostrom (2005b), genetic enhancement could be used to determine a human being's predisposition to levels of happiness or general well-being. Through gene enhancement, a human being could be endowed with emotional intelligence. Bostrom (2008:108) states that human beings whose emotions have been genetically enhanced would have "the capacity to enjoy life and to respond with appropriate affect to life situations and other people". Emotionally enhanced people will be able to identify, use, understand, and manage emotions in an effective and positive way. Emotionally enhanced people will communicate better, reduce their anxiety and stress, defuse conflicts, improve relationships, empathise with others, and effectively overcome life's challenges. This is one of the possible enhancements that this thesis focuses on.

2.9 The Debate: Does Enhancement Threaten Personhood?

Enhancement is vulnerable to controversy due to the alleged potential posed by the transhumanist movement either pre-meditatively or inadvertently to harm personhood of various kinds, in various ways. Biotechnological enhancements raise metaphysical questions. For example, one of these is how enhancement might affect personhood in the area of human

essence; that is, in the area of distinguishing a human being from non-human entities such as animals. Another related metaphysical question that arises is how enhancement might affect personal identity, which includes a differentiation between human persons. Potential metaphysical changes raise moral questions about which enhancements are permissible.

For example, Francis Fukuyama (2002:101-102) relies on the notion of human nature to argue in favour of therapy but against enhancement. Fukuyama finds transhumanism to debilitate on human nature. He posits that a human being possesses “natural desires, purposes, traits and behaviours [that] fit together into a human whole,” (2002:12). Fukuyama describes human nature as “the sum of the behaviour and characteristics that are typical of the human species, arising from genetic rather than environmental factors... [where typical refers to species-typical behaviour]” (2002:130). He argues that enhancing “any one of our key characteristics inevitably means modifying a complex, interlinked package of traits, and we will never be able to anticipate the ultimate outcome” (2002:42). This thesis seeks to find what impact gene enhancement and cybernetic enhancement have on human nature and personhood as far as the concept of *Botho* is concerned.

Another critic of human enhancement, Leon Kass (2002:17-18) argues that enhancements inherently violate humans’ natural origins and attachments. He and Fukuyama (2002) argue that the use of biotechnological enhancements could erode personhood. This thesis seeks to find out whether the changes brought by gene enhancement and cybernetic enhancement have any metaphysical effect. For example, would enhancement substantially affect the material and immaterial aspect of being human?

Another critic of enhancements is Jürgen Habermas who in his work, *The Future of Human Nature* (2003) addresses the implications of genetic enhancement upon identity. He claims that certain enhancements affect the human spirit. Habermas gives a scenario of the possible enhancement of children by their parents and argues that enhanced children would have less autonomy. He states that parents would have a wide variety of options for enhancing their children. For example, they would choose according to their own preferences which may not become the preferences of the children when they are older. Habermas concedes that children today have to live with choices made by their parents, in relation to education for example. However, he suggests that, even in this case, there is disapproval of parents who have their children educated in a way that is so narrow or dogmatic that it could limit their later choices (*ibid*). Like Fukuyama (2002), and Kass (2002), Habermas (2003) sees a threat to human nature in the emergent biotechnological possibilities. This thesis seeks to find the implications of genetic enhancement on the concepts of freewill and identity.

Another opponent of transhumanism is Michael Sandel, who, in his book *The Case Against Perfection* (2007:62) demands that enhancement be rejected. Sandel's argument is that life should be appreciated as a gift. He argues that this involves the realisation that our talents and powers are not wholly our own doing, nor even fully ours, despite the efforts (Sandel 2007:62). He goes on to say that not everything in the world is open to any use we may desire (Sandel 2007:62). Further, those who would enhance themselves would fail to appreciate the given. This thesis responds to this objection through the lens of the *Botho* perspective.

Nick Bostrom (2005c:212) is one of the scholars who argues in favour of transhumanism. He contends that enhancement is not a risk to humanity and that the current human beings could be described as posthumans by their predecessors because of some differences in knowledge,

abilities and behaviour. On one hand, some scholars argue that biotechnological enhancement may enhance the human capacities. On the other hand, some scholars argue that biotechnological enhancement may change human capacities which are essential for humanity, therefore, rendering a human being non-human. Recall that this thesis largely addresses these arguments from the metaphysical aspect of the *Botho* perspective. The focus is on making metaphysical claims, which are then used to discuss some of their moral implications briefly in the concluding chapter.

Chapters 6, 7 and 8 will discuss the impact of human enhancement on being human and personhood in light of the metaphysical aspects of *Botho*. This means that it will analyse whether these enhancements pose any metaphysical threats to human nature and personhood. For instance, could these enhancements radically alter the essence of a human being in relation to freewill, material, and immaterial aspects, and knowledge acquisition?

2.10 Conclusion

This chapter has contextualised the aspect of transhumanism historically, the key players who have exerted an influence on its aims, and enhancement in general. Transhumanism was defined with reference to its aims and fundamental values. In order to define the term “enhancement” effectively, a distinction was made between the treatment and enhancement. As opposed to therapy, which seeks to prevent or cure disease, enhancement is the alteration of normal, personal and physical characteristics, and abilities beyond the normal. The various types of enhancement technologies through which transhumanism hopes to achieve its aims were also discussed. Amongst human capacities to be enhanced, are the extension of the lifespan, intellectual capacity, body functionality, and human cognition. The chapter also discussed the good side of transhumanism. Furthermore, critics and advocates for

transhumanism were presented, with a range of reasons why humans might want to avoid enhancing themselves and counter-reasons why transhumanism could be a harmless and beneficial undertaking. Transhumanists like Nick Bostrom celebrate a coming “posthuman” age, claiming that new technologies would allow humans to liberate themselves, and their descendants. Bioconservatives like Leon Kass, Michael Sandel, and Francis Fukuyama, on the other hand, reject these proposals on the ground that the transhumanist vision poses a threat to human nature. These scholars draw moral conclusions from certain metaphysical claims. This work bears on these debates in so far as they invoke metaphysical claims. In the last chapter the thesis will consider some implications of these metaphysical claims for morality. The next chapter is on the metaphysical realities in the *Botho* Perspective.

Chapter 3: The Metaphysical Aspects of the *Botho* Perspective

3.1 Introduction

Metaphysics deals with the nature of reality, what a thing essentially is and what sorts of things they are fundamentally. Therefore, personhood in the *Botho* context is used ontologically to indicate what a “human being” and a “person” is as distinct from other entities like, an animal. Whereas humanness is the essence of being a “human being”, personhood is the essence of being a “person”. Recall from chapter 2 that metaphysical personhood is also used to indicate what a particular person essentially is, as distinct from other persons. The question of personal identity is essentially tied to the question of what a particular person is as numerically different from others (as opposed to what a human being is).

Many African scholars have uncovered the importance of the notion that a person’s humanity is fused with another’s, as far as personhood is concerned. For example, Desmond Tutu (1997:39) states, “*Ubuntu* means humanity, and is related both to *umuntu* - which is the category of intelligent human force that includes spirits, the living dead, and the living - and to *ntu*, which is God’s being as meta-dynamic (active rather than metaphysical)”. Tutu further states that the term includes references to wholeness (oneness) or the state of being whole in nature. This concept is often translated in the English language as Afro-communitarianism.

This communitarian worldview, usually prescribes categorising individuals into fuzzy labels ranging from non-human to impressively human.² Between these extremes, people could be

² These are not official designations according to any society since social labels are quite informal and ill-defined.

deemed as animal, thing, almost human, half-human, human, extraordinarily human, to name just a few. This categorisation matters for this study, which seeks to answer the questions: How would a *Botho* society view an individual who has been bio-technically enhanced? Would they deem him/her as extraordinarily human, transhuman, posthuman, non-human, or would they simply view him/her as human? “Biotechnical enhancement” and these foregoing terms were discussed in chapter two, which, together with the current chapter, interact to form this research’s theoretical framework. The next chapter, viz., Chapter 4, covers the epistemological aspect of the *Botho* perspective.

The present chapter, however, explores the metaphysical aspects of the *Botho* worldview. The *Botho* perspective established in this chapter is a fundamental part of the theoretical framework that is used to analyse the humanness and personhood of individuals that have undergone some biotechnological enhancement. The theory determines which biotechnological enhancements are consistent with being human and being a person as far as the metaphysical aspect of *Botho* is concerned. Thus, this chapter partly establishes the theoretical framework of the thesis, which falls largely under applied metaphysics in respect of the nature of a human being.

This chapter engages the elements of ontology and anthropology under the metaphysical aspect of *Botho*. The ontological and anthropological elements of *Botho* cover a broad spectrum of features pertaining to the nature of the human being. Such features include freewill and determinism, process in personhood formation, immaterial soul and spirit aspects of personhood. Other issues that are discussed in this chapter concerning human persons include the views about the cosmos, the community, the concept of God and the relationship between human persons and God.

A few African scholars address the issue of freewill in African context. These philosophers include Kwame Gyekye (1987), Kwasi Wiredu (1980) and Segun Gbadegesin (1991) who present the Akan (Ghana) and the Yoruba (Nigeria) people's understanding of destiny respectively. Their studies tackled the metaphysical questions of freedom and determinism (predestination) from the perspective of the traditional African (Yoruba and Akan) thought. While Wiredu and Gbadegesin hold that the African understanding of destiny speaks to soft determinism, since individuals can appeal or manipulate mystical powers to change their destiny, Gyekye holds that human beings are only free as regards actions that are beyond destiny. Another scholar who addresses the issue of freewill in the African context is Grivas Muchineripi Kayange (2021), in a chapter entitled "Determinism and Indeterminism: Freedom of Actions". The chapter explores issues relative to freedom of actions, determinism and indeterminism in the African context through the study of language. It explains that language use in the African thought reveals a version of soft determinism. However, the current work's approach differs from the mentioned scholars in that it discusses freewill in the context of transhumanism.

This work's interpretation of the metaphysical orientation of the *Botho* perspective is that it incorporates determinism and freedom. For example, a human person is genetically and socially determined, but s/he possesses some degree of freewill in human morality and responsibility. By his or her freewill, the human person has the capacity to develop his or her normative personhood. In regard to destiny, it is commonly held amongst many Batswana that the human person is free to realise his or her destiny, and s/he is free to choose whether to fulfill destiny as a purpose or not. This study provides new knowledge to the literature on

African philosophy, by using the *Botho* perspective to show that freewill is compatible with destiny.

This thesis highlights an often neglected fact about Afro-communitarianism, that *Botho* is not only social or moral, but it is to a great extent metaphysical. Moreover, the study shows that the communitarian orientation of the *Botho* perspective incorporates both determinism and freewill. *Botho* is therefore, not detrimental to freewill. The chapter also addresses the material and immaterial aspects of human nature and metaphysical personhood in the *Botho* perspective.

The major sections of the chapter are ordered as follows: first it discusses the metaphysical realities of *Botho* in section (3.2); followed by a discussion on how *Botho* incorporates determinism and freewill in section (3.3). Next it discusses the concept of destiny in relation to personhood in African and *Botho* perspectives in section (3.4), thereafter ,the immaterial and material aspects of a person in section (3.5), followed by the advanced state after bodily death in section (3.6) and lastly the concluding section (3.7).

3.2 The Metaphysical Realities of *Botho*

Everything in the universe is alive and composed of either material or immaterial forces. John Mbiti (1969:39) explains that over the whole of Africa, creation is the most widely acknowledged work of God. Tempels (1959:58) holds that “created beings preserve a bond and an intimate ontological relationship comparable with a causal relationship which binds creatures and Creator”. Thus, whilst dependent on God for their appearance and continued existence, these components of the universe are related to each other. Tempels further argues that there are human forces, animal forces, plant forces, mineral forces, all of which are

created by God. Further to that, although beings have relational nature, they exist both as individual selves, and as a part of a larger whole.

Recall that, at a metaphysical level, *Botho* explores the fundamental nature of the reality of humanness and personhood. Thus, the metaphysical aspect of *Botho* is that which separates human beings and persons from other animal species. It is often assumed that a “human being” and a “person” mean the same thing, and sometimes philosophers do use the words interchangeably. This usage is illustrated by Gyekye (1987) and Appiah (2004). However, it is critical to distinguish between these terms. Whereas humanness is the essence of being a human being, personhood is the essence of being a person. Thus, according to my interpretation, the *Botho* perspective indicates that there are beings in reality called a “human being” and a “person” with different ontological statuses.

Recall that, according to the metaphysical aspect of the *Botho* perspective, human nature (as I use the phrase in this thesis) includes the material and the immaterial aspects. Therefore, a human being is understood to include the material body. The human body is a distinct feature; the absence of it in a being would disqualify it from being human. Further, a human being includes the immaterial aspect, which is characteristically rational and relating. Therefore, the ability to reason is also a quality that normally separates human beings from any other animal species.

Recall that persons are essentially immaterial, and they exist essentially in relation to other persons. The immaterial aspect is potentially separable from the material aspect, and singularly definitive for personhood. Thus, the only aspect that differentiates human beings and persons is the material aspect, which is necessary for being human; persons may or may

not have bodies, while human beings always have bodies. For example, ancestors could be referred to as persons, although they are no longer human beings, because they are immateriality in relation. Further, the human person normally possesses the mind which is immaterial. The mind and the immateriality are inseparable but functionally different at least in that, for *Botho*, one cannot have a mind without life force because the immaterial force contains it. Thus, the mind is identical to a certain configuration of life force, so that if there is no mind, then there is no life force of a certain kind. It is therefore assumed that, during a mind upload, life force is uploaded together with the mental aspects into a computer, where, arguably, the person would continue to exist, but not as a human being.

Whereas in Western tradition, a metaphysical person, is a being that has certain capabilities or attributes such as rationality and self-consciousness (Locke 1690:318), the Setswana metaphysical point of view defines personhood broadly in terms of a life force and relationality. Gaie (2007) has observed that normally rationality is an aspect that separates human beings from animals. Thus, rationality is often (but not necessarily) one quality of personhood. The mental aspects, which enable mental abilities and relationality, cannot exist without immateriality which constitute personhood for *Botho*. In contrast to persons, animals do not have mental aspects. Therefore, reasoning is solely a person attribute. Some animals, such as primates, may possess rationality, but their rational capacity is at a more rudimentary level compared to that of persons. Animals lack the right sort of immateriality, therefore, so that, even if a person may relate with a dog as a person, the dog will not relate with person(s) as a person. It is not possible for persons to lack or lose mental aspects altogether, because mental aspects cannot exist without immaterial aspect which is essential for being a person. However, persons may have mental defect resulting in low mental abilities because their brain is damaged due to an accident or illness, or has been damaged since birth. For example,

Alzheimer patients are persons with a mental defect. Further, some persons may lack the cognitive capacities, and, thus, the moral reasoning to fulfil specific societal roles and functions. For example, children and immoral persons are not complete or good persons. A person with mental defect is a person because personhood according to the *Botho* perspective is not narrowly defined by mental aspects but it is defined by the immaterial aspects which includes the mental aspect. Similarly, unconscious human persons could still be persons, if they are immateriality in relation.

Most African scholars note that ontology is essentially spiritual. Placide Tempels (1969:35) notes that the Bantu notion of being is force, and explains that without the element of force, being cannot be conceived. He further expounds that force cannot be conceived as separate from other forces. He explicates that whereas in the Western philosophy a substance is separable from that of being, in African philosophy force is the nature of being. He argues that:

In the category of visible beings, the Bantu distinguishes that which is perceived by the senses and the “thing in itself”. By the “thing in itself” they indicate its individual inner nature, or, more precisely, the force of the thing (1959:36).

Similarly, Mogobe Ramose (2002) observes that being is one and the same indivisible reality. He uses the concept of *Ubuntu* to describe the concept of being. He explains that *ubu-* and *-ntu* are two aspects of one reality.

Ubuntu is actually two words in one. It consists of the prefix */ubu-/* and the stem */-ntu/*. */Ubu-/* evokes the idea of being in general. It is enfolded being before it manifested itself in the concrete form, or mode of existence of a particular entity. */Ubu-/* as enfolded being is always unfoldment, that is, incessant continual concrete

manifestation through particular forms and models of being. In this sense, /ubu-/ is always oriented towards /-ntu/. At the ontological level, there is no stick and literal separation and division between /ubu-/ and /-ntu/. /Ubu-/ and /-ntu/ are not two radical separate and irreconcilably opposed realities (2002:41).

Ramose (2002) further explains that *Ubuntu* carries with it ontological and epistemological connotations.

Accordingly, ubu-ntu is the fundamental, ontological and epistemological category in the African thought of the Bantu speaking people. It is the indivisible one-ness and wholeness of ontology and epistemology. /Ubu-/ as the generalised understanding of being, may be said to be distinctly ontological whereas /-ntu/ as the nodal point at which being assumes concrete form or a mode of being, in the process of continual unfoldment, may be said to be the distinctly epistemological (2002:41).

Thus, whereas /ubu-/ is the ontological aspect of a being, /-ntu/ is the epistemological aspect of the same being.

Chukwudum Okolo (2003:251) notes a significant difference between African metaphysics from that of Aristotle. He explains that for Aristotle “substance” exists in and by themselves, separated from others, while the idea of force in African metaphysics is not something discrete, but a series of interactions and interconnections. Thus, whereas Aristotle explains a human being in terms of an intrinsic “essence”, in African metaphysics personhood is explained in terms of how human persons relate.

This idea is reiterated by Tempels (1959:103), who argues that man “knows himself as a vital force, even now, influencing and being influenced by others”. This idea is similar to the *Botho* metaphysical aspect of personhood, which describes personhood as an immateriality in relation. In explaining the kind of relationship a person is involved with, Tempels (1959: 100) argues that “the living “*muntu*” is in relation of being to being, with God, with his clan brethren, with his family and with his descendants. He is in a similar ontological relationship with his patrimony, his land, with all that it contains or produces, with all that grows and lives on it”.

Mbiti agrees with Tempels on the main idea that being is a life force sustaining everything, thus, everything is connected one way or the other. Regarding human relationships, Mbiti explains that human persons are related on the basis of kinship. He states that “the kinship system also extends vertically to include the departed and those yet to be born” (1969:105). Mbiti sees family, as referring to the other family which has been, the family that exists now and the family that will come.

The personhood of children and immoral people is recognised amongst most Africans including Batswana in the sense that they are immaterial and relational. Thus, an individual is metaphysically a person even if s/he is not complete or a good person. This standpoint is like Gyekye’s, who holds that personhood has nothing to do with age.

A human person is a person whatever his age or social status. A person may reach its full realisation in community, but it is not acquired or yet to be achieved as one goes along in society. What a person acquires are status, habits, and personality or character traits; he, *qua* person thus becomes

the subject of acquisition, and being thus prior to the acquisition process, he cannot be defined by what he acquires. One is a person because of what he is, not because of what he has acquired (Gyekye 1992:303).

Gyekye's assertion above was interpreting Menkiti's (1984) interpretation of personhood and suggests that Menkiti's position is flawed because it negates the personhood of children. Chapter 5, section 5.5 titled "Incorporation and Full Personhood" illustrates that an acquisition of personhood that Menkiti refers to is not metaphysical but normative. That is, Menkiti's account of personhood is not metaphysical in what constitutes the self, but it is normative because its main claim is that, to become a real or complete person, and to be recognised as having exhibited good character, one must act accordingly for the sake of the community.

The personhood of the dead is recognised amongst most Africans including Batswana for the reason that they are immaterial and relational. It is important and common amongst most Africans, including Batswana that the immaterial aspect of human nature survives bodily death and exists in the unseen world as the living dead, where they interact actively with members of their families in this world. In explaining the concept of *badimo* or the living dead among Batswana, Fedelis Nkomazana (2002:52) holds that Batswana believed that the Supreme God lives far above and he could not be approached directly. This led to the recognition of intermediaries called *badimo* or the living dead. The living dead are believed to be present in the lives of the living. They are believed to be concerned with the wellbeing of their descendents. Mbiti (1969) asserts that the living dead impose their wills and prescriptions on their descendents as they have powers to display wrath when they are disobeyed.

McVeigh (1974:29) argues that the survival of the living dead depends on the memory of the living, such that when the living forget them, they would no longer exist. Thus, if the living people forget the living-dead, the living dead become non-existent. Menkiti (1984) reiterates this view when explaining the so-called retirement of the living dead after five generations. Menkiti observes that when human persons exit the community, they cease to be persons. After their names have been forgotten, they “lapse into non-personal existence” (1984:174). He further explains that this is a communitarian understanding of existence, because society no longer knows or can name this individual, the individual (ancestral spirit) ceases from being a person and becomes an “it” (*ibid.*). He goes on to say that, from henceforth, it would not make any difference whether the entity is supposedly dead or alive. Menkiti’s approach differs with the relational account of personhood held by most Batswana. Most Batswana hold that relationality is essential to a person in the sense that such a being naturally relates versus relationality as dependency on that to which one relates. For example a living person is relational not because when those they can relate to are not there the person ceases to exist but rather, because they will relate when those they can relate to are around—I am an aunt only when there is a child of my sibling but it does not mean when there is no niece/nephew I do not exist. Even if I do not have a nephew I am in relationship to other people and things and this is my nature. This thesis advances a relational account of personhood in the later chapters, which suggests that the living dead remain persons because they are essentially relating.

3.3 How *Botho* Incorporates Determinism and Freewill

The *Botho* perspective entails both freewill and determinism. Determinism means that all events, including human actions, are ultimately determined by causes regarded as external to the will. Freewill, on the other hand, means the state of being free or at liberty rather than

being in confinement. This means that one is responsible for one's actions. The saying that a human person has freewill, means that s/he is acting according to his or her own will. It is commonly held among many Batswana that an individual is not a passive puppet. As much as an individual is defined by the community, s/he is free in a sense that s/he contributes to the same community that defines him/her. In this way, an individual is not only defined by his or her community, but s/he becomes part of how s/he is defined, and how other human persons are defined.

Conversely, a person can freely choose to behave differently from the way s/he is defined by the community. However, being defined by the community does not necessarily strip the individual of his or her freewill. Determinism of personhood by society, in this scenario, is not absolute. In accordance with this research, the *Botho* perspective holds that determinism and identity do not erase freewill. As for self-definition, a person might define him/herself in a certain way, only for the community to attempt to restrict him or her or erode his or her freewill. The *Botho* perspective holds that the individual is still free at the metaphysical level, even if not social, because s/he can always choose to either agree or rebel.

3.3.1 Determinism

Although personhood is not entirely dependent on how society defines the individual, a person is, to a large extent, caused or determined by others. This cause is physical and social, but it is additionally exerted by invisible agents.

Physical Cause: The first sub-theme of determinism in the *Botho* perspective is physical cause. We are born in a specific place, pre-determined by our parents, the environment and the circumstances we did not choose. If it were not for my parents, I would not exist in the

physical form. One is forced to acknowledge that one is physically determined by the condition of genes handed down to him or her by his or her great grand-parents. In Setswana, there is a saying that says, *ha/fa ele botlha e tswa moding* which literally translates to, a fruit is sour because of the roots of its tree (Mogapi 1985:82). This phrase has the same meaning with the English phrases “an apple doesn’t fall far from its tree” and “a chip of the old block”, meaning that children take after their parents. A child is a result of his or her parents’ physiology and genetics. For example, when one goes to hospital, information about illness history in the family is requested. This is meant to establish if the child could have inherited a certain illness. Therefore, concerning physical causes, the human person is not absolutely free, to a certain extent. Often, a child resembles his or her parents physically and character-wise. Children are moulded by their parents, so in Setswana when a child misbehaves or behaves well, Batswana would usually ask “whose child is this”? Sometimes they would remark, “we would have been surprised if it were not so-and-so’s child”.

Social Cause: The second sub-theme of determinism is social cause. Sometimes a human person’s freewill and decision-making abilities are restricted because of social causes. S/he will behave in a certain way compulsively or voluntarily because of social and familial influences. When we refer to such an individual’s personal decisions, we must appreciate that they are partly determined by society, and that they are not entirely autonomous. A person is also caused through socialisation in the family, and in the society at large. In proposing that community interests take priority over those of the individual, John Mbiti (1975) explains that personhood is determined by the community, and not solely by birth qualities such as rationality and will. He argues that:

In traditional life, the individual does not count and cannot exist except corporately.

He owes his existence to the other people, including past generations and

contemporaries. He is simply a part of a whole. The community must therefore make, create, or produce the individual; for the individual depends on the corporate group (1975:108).

Desmond Tutu (2004) also argues along the same lines and states that:

None of us comes into the world fully formed. We would not know how to think, or walk, or speak, or behave as human beings, unless we learned it from other human beings. We need other human beings in order to be human. I am because other people are. The “self-made” man or woman is really an impossibility (2004:25).

A human person is born into a family, tribe, and community. S/he learns from other human persons what it means to be a human person. The same idea is captured by Hopkins (2005:82-83) when he says:

the notion of selves contains several interacting factors. First, each human being within culture is dependent on other people for her or his life and death, sustenance and joy, as well as survival and liberation. A human being by definition is already constituted by more than the individual. From the simple assertion of parents, naturally giving birth and life to an individual, to the necessary reality requiring an extended family, clan, or community to fulfil an individual’s well-being and growth.

The word “family” here does not just refer to the nuclear family but the extended family, the clan and the tribe at large. Furthermore, the family does not only refer to the living but includes the departed (the living-dead) who are believed to be active participants in the community (Dube et al 2016). The socialisation process is therefore life-long. For example, when a person leaves their home country to visit another country, s/he is not merely viewed

as an individual since s/he always carries their familial, communal and national identity around. One is therefore, expected to behave in a way that would not taint the name of those s/he represents. Therefore, it is arguable that in this scenario a human person's choices are influenced by their society, as a product of such a society. In Hopkins' words, "who I am as a singular individual embodies the specificity of historical precedents, societal procedures, and psychological makeup" (2005:98). Of course, a society from another country can have a certain amount of contribution to one's choices, for example, the western social influences as learned from the media (Hollywood and the music industry).

Invisible Agents: In the Setswana traditional worldview, ancestors are the invisible spirits committed to the everyday lives of the people. They have a direct interest in the welfare of the people but are sometimes the cause of both good and bad (Dube et al. 2016:3). A person survives by relating well or shrewdly with ancestors. The well-being or downfall of an individual is not entirely up to him/her, but is a function of his or her relationship with ancestors (*ibid*) or the machinations of evil spirits. Gomang Ntloedibe-Kuswane reiterates this idea when she argues that when an individual person is sick:

The 'real' cause will usually be sought in the context of the horizontal relations of the individual with the community physically surrounding him or in the context of his vertical relations with the *Badimo* (1999:5).

The evil effects, from evil spirits are one of the reasons a person may desire enhancement, whether to receive supernatural abilities, to be restored, to protect oneself, or to have the ability to revenge. An example that applies to this list is the practice of consulting Tswana traditional doctors to make one invisible to witches. It is believed that such people become enhanced, which illustrates that they perceive natural personhood to be vulnerable and

inadequate. However, the best example of an enhanced person whom everyone considers unassailable is the ancestor.

3.3.2 Freewill in the *Botho* Perspective

This section starts by defining important terms of the argument, namely; freewill, determinism, hard determinism and soft determinism. Even though this study is situated in the African context, it traces the debate back to the West, where it has its roots, so as to ascertain how different Western philosophers treated the debate. My discussion of personhood and freewill would be incomplete without fully engaging with prominent philosophers. New arguments are constantly brought to bear on old views. The Western philosophers' debate serves as a forerunner to the African understanding of personhood and freewill. Whereas on one hand I draw on Western views to contrast them with *Botho*, on the other hand I use these views to spell out the *Botho* perspective.

Freewill: Freewill, broadly understood, is "... the absence of impediments to action that are contained in the nature and intrinsic quality of the agent" (Harrison-Barbet 1990:327). An individual with freewill has adequate control over his or her actions to be liable for criticism, punishment, praise, and rewards. The lack of freewill would mean that human persons are merely victims of their circumstances, that is, they are passive and not responsible for their actions. It would suggest that human persons should not be held morally responsible for their actions.

Determinism: Determinism is "the view that every event or state of affairs is brought about by antecedent events or states of affairs in accordance with universal, causal laws that govern the world" (Audi 1999:228). According to determinism, all events, including human actions,

are caused. Determinism argues that human choices, desires and actions are the necessary results of previous events. In contrast, indeterminism is of the view that some events, including human actions, are uncaused.

Hard Determinism: Hard determinism contends that the human person lacks freewill because all events, including human actions are determined by causal laws. This notion rules out freewill and responsibility. According to hard determinism, the human person is not free because determinism is incompatible with freewill, and because all actions are determined.

Soft Determinism: Soft Determinism is where freewill and determinism are regarded as not mutually exclusive but compatible. According to this concept, the human person is determined, but is still free. Soft determinism is also called “compatibilism”. Thomas Hobbes, for instance, holds that human actions are determined and motivated by the instinct of self-preservation. This concept means that the human being is both determined and free. Hobbes in Trigg (1988:58) contends that “a dog that is not tied up can get what it wants ...” This means that as long as the dog is unconstrained, it will naturally decide and act in accordance with the instinct to preserve itself, regardless of whether it is facing a significant threat or acts at leisure. Hobbes further argues that freewill is merely a lack of external constraint, so a human person acts freely when there is no constraint to his actions and that freewill and responsibility are compatible with causal determination.

Libertarianism: Libertarianism expostulates that people have free choices because some of their actions are not completely determined by preceding causes (Stumpf and Abel 2002:282). This theory states that human actions are free and that their actions are not coerced or constrained by anything. Libertarianism does include indeterminism, for it is the

view that deliberations, actions and choices are a product of freewill because they are not causally determined. Since freewill and determinism are mutually exclusive, according to this standpoint, libertarianism is also a form of “incompatibilism”.

This research’s argument and theoretical framework posits that freewill and determinism are mutually compatible. For non-enhanced persons, nothing in the brain’s programmed mechanical processes suggests that they lack the capacity to choose and act freely. Mental states of non-enhanced persons influence actions through physical causes in the brain, but the individual is still plausibly considered free. This is the same process even for biotechnologically enhanced persons, which means that enhanced individuals can remain free under the *Botho* worldview.

For a compatibilist there is no problem when an action is both free and determined. In explaining this viewpoint, Samuel Stumpf and Donald Abel (2002:282) argue that free choices and the causal determination of human actions are not mutually exclusive but are compatible. Hence, scholars in this field are called “compatibilists”. The compatibilists hold that all human actions are always caused, and the extent to which an action is free or determined depends on the kind of cause it has. They contend that actions that proximately result from our inner psychological causes are free, whereas actions that are directly compelled by external forces are not free (Stumpf and Abel 2002:282). For instance, actions caused by my desires or aversions are free, but I am not free when someone physically forces or threatens me to do something. This means that not all actions are free, but all actions are determined, for actions to be free, they must be determined in a particular way.

Those who subscribe to what is called “hard determinism” hold that freewill is an illusion, and the human person has no ultimate responsibility for their actions because they are all caused.

Jurgen Habermas (2008:152) discusses a hard determinist approach to freedom and causation as follows:

...awareness of freedom that agents attribute to themselves rests on self-deception.

The experience of making one’s own decisions represents, as it were, a superfluous wheel that does no work. Hence freedom of the will understood as “mental causation” is an illusion that conceals an exclusively causal chain of neutral states linked by natural laws.

Similarly, Burrhus Frederic Skinner (1953) proclaims that freewill is a mentalistic illusion. He says that “[...] a person’s behaviour is controlled by his genetic and environmental histories rather than by the person himself as an initiating, creative agent (1953:189).” For Skinner, human behaviour is determined by past and present events in the external world and by genetic endowment, which, for him, means that humans lack freewill. Skinner holds that if humans only give up the illusion of human freedom, they can create a happier life by conditioning everyone’s behaviour in appropriate ways. According to hard determinism, all events including human actions are determined by causal laws, and for this reason, the human person lacks freewill.

The reason for defining the two concepts of freewill and determinism is to subsequently apply the *Botho* compatibilist approach to freewill issues within the debate of transhumanism. The aim is to show that the *Botho* perspective is a form of soft determinism. Since both the

Botho perspective and transhumanism are compatible with soft-determinism, enhanced human persons can be free.

The concept of *Botho* acknowledges individual freewill as a fundamental part of personhood, and simultaneously upholds determinism. The human person is able to make free choices in accordance with his or her desires, self-interests and a sense of obligation. Many Batswana hold the view that it is possible, by the use of one's reasoning, to overcome some of the limits that the world imposes on people when they are born. Batswana have a saying; *e e mashi ga e itsale*, (Mogapi 1985:82) which literally translates to: "a cow which produces good milk does not give birth to its kind". The meaning of this proverb is that a good person would not necessarily bear good children. Thus, children will not always inherit good moral character from their parents, but they are free to develop their personhood. While the English people are right to say that an apple does not fall far from the tree, this thesis's interpretation of the *Botho* perspective is that the apple will sooner or later be separated from the tree, or at least can be. According to the Setswana worldview, children are to be praised for developing good moral character (or blamed for not doing so) because it is assumed that they are free and responsible.

3.3.3 Freewill in Morality

Being good or bad largely depends on the self (by the use of one's reasoning), their relationship with other people, and their use of the environment. As far as freewill in morality is concerned, there is a certain level of freewill whereby a human person chooses what s/he becomes. For example, a person can freely choose to violate communal ethical codes, and by so doing relegating him/herself to a lower status. S/he is largely responsible for the demotion

because s/he consciously decided to be in that position.³ Every human person is defined or labelled by the community. However, an individual has a certain level of responsibility for shaping how the community defines him/her.⁴ For example, when a person commits theft or adultery, s/he is making a free choice from which society can give him/her derisive labels. Batswana would usually use nouns like *legodu*, *seaka*, *sethubetsi*, which almost denote an individual as a non-human entity, because human nouns usually start with the prefix “*mo*” (Matumo 1993: xi). When the society defines a human person, they are not the only ones responsible for that definition, but s/he is also responsible for how the society defines him or her because of his or her behaviour. Since the human person has freewill insofar as she is rational, they make behavioural decisions based on the expected consequences of an action before engaging in it. When somebody is defined by the society as bad/good, it is often deserved because an individual has consciously put him/herself in that position. When we say that a person has *Botho*, for instance, we make that claim after judging that particular person’s freely chosen behaviour when they relate with other people.

It is common among many Batswana to allow an individual’s contribution to his or her own becoming through the Setswana saying *moremogolo go betlwa wa taola, wa motho o a ipetla* (Moloto and Molao 1975:99). This literally means that the main bone of the divining set is

³ Of course there are circumstances where an individual’s personhood is partly formed (or deformed) by social and physical factors, meaning that the person was not always/entirely free in the formation of his or her personhood. Where physical and social factors have influenced the individual’s personhood negatively, the occurrence is best understood as an anomaly, such as an accident that caused mental illness.

⁴ Incidentally, s/he is also responsible for the shaping of other human persons.

carved by someone, but the main bone of the human person shapes itself. According to the Setswana worldview, every human person is an architect of his or her own destiny. The society has a role to play in an individual becoming a real person. However, the individual is also free and responsible. A similar proverb, *phatlaphatla e a iphatlalaletsa, kgobokgobo e a ikgobokanyetsa* (Mogapi 1985:89), means that every individual is responsible for his or her own successes and failures. When people who have been generous to someone abandon him/her, the person is often encouraged to stand for himself or herself through the saying, *e a re go tlogelwa tsatsing se ikise moriting* (Mogapi 1985:82). This literally means that when a person is left in the sun, s/he should take him/herself to the shade. According to these proverbs, what a human person acquires or becomes is largely because of his or her personal choices.

3.3.4 Process in Socialization

According to the views held by many Africans, including Batswana an individual is required to learn the prescribed norms and social rules. However, human persons become what they are because of what the community gave them, as well as by individual efforts directed positively towards the community. By the use of his or her reasoning an individual has the capacity to become an ideal or complete person. Thus s/he is free to develop his or her personhood.

For example, children are in a journey towards adulthood, and the society plays a role in developing their social status. However, children are considered to be morally responsible beings. That is, they are expected to exercise their moral capacity, which implies freewill and responsibility. Punitive and disciplinary laws are applied on their behaviour. Traditionally, the Botswana society expected all members of the community to “parent” every child they

interacted with, which included the right to whip them on their back, either for punishment or discipline.⁵

Still, even outside of the transitory stage of childhood, every human person is always in the process of becoming. The difference is that the children's process of becoming is more radical than that of adults. Process in personhood suggests individual freewill. Thus, it suggests allowance for personal improvement. Succeeding or failing at personhood is dependent on an individual. In this journey or process, an individual is free and responsible to become a full person. For this reason, the current study holds that freewill is identifiable in a range of stages of development. Potentiality and process exist throughout the life of a human being.

Along the same line, Metz's discussion of *Botho* places upon the human person the responsibility to develop virtue (Metz 2011). To be a person is to heed "the call to develop one's (moral) personhood, [and] to acquire *Ubuntu*, to exhibit humanness" (Metz 2011:537). Although Metz's statement means that personhood can change for the better, it also correctly presumes that an individual's personhood is not fixed, that it can change anytime and even change for the worst. A human person takes responsibility for this process. There is a Setswana proverb that talks about the unpredictability of personhood, viz., *motho ga a itsewe e se naga* (you cannot fully know a human person; Mogapi 1985:83). The proverb means that you may think you know someone to be a good person, but they will surprise you by misbehaving, or you may think you know someone to be a bad person, only for him or her to surprise you by his or her goodness.

⁵ This culture has weakened considerably in the present era.

Therefore, a person can change through his or her taking responsibility to protect, nurture and direct his or her personhood. Regardless of the causes of the change in this process, if the person emerges undesirable to society, the African society will not leniently overlook their weaknesses and consider them as merely human. Thus, for an individual who is to be regarded as more fully human, this weakness is a challenge to work on becoming a better person (Shutte 2001:30). Motsamai Molefe (2017:58) identifies this personal quest as self-realisation, although the standards for perfection emanate from the community.

Another Setswana saying that says, *ga se motho* (he or she is not a person) is used pragmatically. It reflects the meagreness of a person in terms of quality and not essence. The concept can be likened to the act of drinking water, farmers in the cattle post would drink river water as opposed to people in Gaborone who would drink bottled water. River water is poorer than bottled water in qualities of cleanness, safety and appearance, but it is still drinking water. Both are water in essence but another is bad for the human immune system. A child or an individual whose *Botho* is undesirable is similarly a person of poor quality, as far as the *Botho* ethic is concerned. A human person can therefore, become more or less.

3.4 Destiny in Relation to Personhood in African and *Botho* Perspectives

This section discusses the African concept of destiny in relation to personhood according to African philosophers and compares it with the Setswana understanding of the concept of destiny. This study adds new knowledge to the literature on African philosophy by using the *Botho* perspective to show that freewill is compatible with destiny. Some African scholars like Kwame Gyekye (1987) and Kwasi Wiredu (1980) do not differentiate between destiny and fate. They hold that only actions beyond destiny are free. In contrast to Gyekye, this thesis uses the *Botho* approach to explain that an individual is free to decide whether to fulfil

destiny or not. While some scholars like Wande Abimbola (1976) suggest that destiny cannot be realised, this study shows that the human person is also free to decide what destiny (understood as a purpose) is.

3.4.1 Definitions of Terms

Destiny is essentially a purpose, often understood in the African tradition as having been assigned by God to an individual person. Etymologically, it is that which is ordained or appointed (Honderich 2005:208). Some (African) philosophers suggest that destiny means the events that will happen in the future. However, destiny according to the interpretation of *Botho*, as illustrated below denies that a fated future, is conceptually possible. Predestination suggests that there is an instigator or a person who ordains such events. Thus, someone or something arranged, predicted, or preordained everything that happens. “Typical theological variants accept the predestination of all circumstances and events in as much as a divine being knows in advance (or even from eternity) that they will obtain” (Audi 1999: 326). In African traditional religions, it is sometimes believed that God had already preordained events in the future, beyond just having assigned people a purpose that they can and ought to realise by making certain choices.

Fatalism, on the other hand is “... the view that there are forces (e.g., the stars or the fates) that determine all outcomes independently of human efforts or wishes; [this is] claimed by some to be a version of determinism” (Audi 1999:228). Usually, predestination and fatalism are synonymous, or predestination might be viewed as a version of fatalism according to which God makes an outcome inevitable. According to Ted Honderich (2005:208), fatalism claims that no action can affect the future for good or ill, so the future cannot be undone by human choice.

However, scholars, like Loraine Boettner (2015) make a demarcation between predestination and fatalism. Boettner argues that the doctrine of predestination does not suggest fatalism.

She attests that:

Predestination holds that events come to pass because an infinitely wise, powerful, and holy God has so appointed them. Fatalism holds that all events come to pass through the working of a blind, unintelligent, impersonal, non-moral force which cannot be distinguished from physical necessity, and which carries us helplessly within its grasp as a mighty river carries a piece of wood (2015: XV).

Boettner goes on to explain that from eternity God has had one unified plan which he is bringing to perfection through the world order of events. She explains that God's decrees are rational determinations founded on sufficient reason. The ends designed in God's plan are first, the glory of God, and second, the good of His people (*ibid*). Boettner further claims that in contrast fatalism excludes the idea of final causes. She explains that fatalism snatches the reins of universal empire, from the hands of infinite wisdom and love and gives them to the hands of a blind necessity. She goes on to say that fatalism in contrast to predestination attributes the course of nature and the experiences of mankind to an unknown, irresistible force against which it is vain to struggle, and childish to repine (*ibid*). Boettner opines that while predestination allows freewill and responsibility, fatalism denies freewill and responsibility. Boettner maintains that fatalism makes the acts of man to be beyond his control and has no room for moral responsibility, while predestination makes these the rule of action for God and man.

Robert Audi (1999:228) is in agreement with Boettner, and observes that there are others who deny fatalism on the ground that determinists do not reject the efficacy of human effort or desire. He goes on to explain that the argument of those scholars who deny fatalism, is that determinists simply believe that efforts and desires, which are sometimes effective, are themselves determined by antecedent factors (as in a causal chain of events) (*ibid*). As it is demonstrated in the discussion, the concept of destiny in Setswana or the *Botho* worldview, shows that predestination is not a version of or even analogous to fatalism.

Destiny can be understood in three ways; firstly, God has predetermined all events including human behaviour so that the human person is not free, regardless of his or her ability to make choices. This understanding of destiny suggests fatalism. Fatalism does not allow human effort or freewill to influence life's outcome.

Secondly, the human person is free to work for his or her destiny by a determined process. This understanding of destiny suggests soft determinism or compatibilism. According to soft-determinism, human persons can be free even if determined.

Finally, all impersonal events are determined while human actions are not determined and are for this reason, free. Libertarianism denies that people have destinies, because of an end-state they are bound to reach. According to Honderich (2005:208), the people's futures, because of their intrinsic freewill, are not settled. Human actions are not predetermined by God or/and determined by the universe, and so human behaviour is free.

This thesis expostulates that according to Setswana traditions, the concept of destiny is a version of soft determinism. According to Setswana tradition, even though the human person

can influence events, there is a level of finitude in human ability. Even a traditional doctor claims not to know his or her skill, but they succeed only when God wills. The human person can never force God or the ancestors to do anything, whether by ritual or faith. On the other hand, the Setswana proverb, *motho ga a itsewe ese naga* (unlike land, country, forest, a human person is unknowable), suggests that the human person is unpredictable, and is free to make choices. Some scholars, like Kwame Gyekye (1987:121) seem to locate freewill only in actions beyond destiny. Gyekye holds that only actions beyond destiny are free. It is commonly held among many Batswana that human persons are free to decide whether or not to fulfil their destiny. Just because destiny (understood as purpose) is inalterable does not necessarily mean one must achieve it, like Gyekye suggests. Thus, it is upon the human person to decide whether to fulfil their destiny or not.

In contrast to Abimbola (1976) who suggests that destiny cannot be realised, because it is chosen unconsciously, this study will show that the human person is relatively free to realise a destiny. For instance, it is commonly held among many Batswana that nobody chooses to be born a chief. The Setswana proverb, *kgosi ke kgosi ka a tsetswe* means a chief is a chief by birth but being born as such, one can choose to exercise his “right” to be a chief. Once a chief, he can choose to continue or not because of, with, and through others. The *Botho* perspective is philosophically preferable because it suggests that the human person is not constrained by destiny but is free to decide. The *Botho* perspective is plausible because it fits common sense. For example, if human beings cannot realise their destiny it wouldn’t make sense to talk of destiny; it is as good as saying there is no purpose to human life.

3.4.2 Setswana Understanding of Destiny

The Setswana concept of destiny is both determined and free. There is a purpose that the human person should strive to achieve. According to the *Botho* perspective, the human person is free because they act in accordance with reason. When an individual freely chooses, initiates, and performs based on their rational deliberations, their behaviour is free. The Setswana saying *Kgosi ke kgosi ka batho* means that a chief is a chief because of, through and with the people. This means that the chief must value the people if s/he wants to continue being chief. Morality is achieved through socialisation on one hand and through hard work on the other hand. One must work to be an ancestor. It is a case for soft-determinism where an individual is free but there are circumstances determining his or her life. The implication is that freewill and determinism are compatible with each other.

The *Botho* compatibilist approach to freewill suggests that human persons not only choose their destiny, but could also choose whether or not to fulfil a destiny (purpose). An example of events that are fixed include, one's parents, genetic attributes from one's lineage; height, colour of eyes, complexion, sex, the environment where one is raised, or an early childhood illness or physical limitation. Even the powers of traditional healers, ancestors and rainmakers are determined by God. Fedelis Nkomazana (2002:53) explains that although traditional healers' ability to divine is a gift, there is a general understanding that traditional healers consult God. However, pre destiny does not imply fatalism. God has allowed human persons a certain degree of liberty.

Nkomazana (2002:53) argues that belief in *Modimo* manifested itself in many Tswana traditional religious practices such as rainmaking, *bongaka* (traditional healing) and agricultural rites of seed cleaning, first fruits (*go loma*) and harvest. These practices suggest

that Batswana believe that, even though God predestines events, there are certain aspects of their lives that are not unalterable, which they therefore, have the responsibility to change for the better. Other efforts that are made by human persons to try and alter their misfortunes are prayers and offering of sacrifices. The act of becoming an ancestor, which is every individual's wish, is dependent on the self, on living a good life. The practice of praising people who do good and/or blaming and punishing those who do evil also suggests that Batswana believe human beings are free and responsible.

Since the spiritual world influences activities in the physical and vice-versa, Batswana believe that destiny, in being able to realise a purpose, can be affected by witches or enemies, and that the victim has the responsibility to change that unfortunate course of his or her life. Dumi Oafeta Mmualefhe (2007:9) explains that in the Setswana worldview, sickness could be attributed to witchcraft, strained relationships, or natural causes attributed to God. The Tswana worldview, while it acknowledges that some external forces can affect destiny, holds that there are some instances where one must carve out one's own destiny. The Setswana saying *mpha mpha o a lapisa motho o kgonwa ke sa gagwe* (begging is not beneficial; better one acquires one's own), puts an emphasis on working hard to achieve a better living. This is to say, some events in an individual's life are determined yet alterable, because an individual is allowed to exercise a certain degree of freewill regarding them. Thus, the person is both determined and free. Human beings are free in accordance with reason, which is a determined process. Freewill is necessary for decision making and moral responsibility.

An individual person in the Tswana world view is determined by God, evil forces, ancestors, witches, wizards, nature, or other human persons. For instance, in Setswana tradition, there is a concept called *kgaba*. According to Letebele (2019:49), *kgaba* is a curse coming from an

unhappy or evil heart of a relative. In Setswana culture, it is generally believed that misfortune and illness are often due to *kgaba*, which is sometimes conceived as witchcraft or the manifestation of displeasure by ancestral spirits. Rolanda Van Der Kooi's (2006:16) discussion of *kgaba* generally points to the description of "evil and harm" and "the harm and heartache others can cause". The general *kgaba* can happen if one neglects a relative or family belongings, if one hurts one's parents or if one neglects tradition. Such a curse can be removed only through a ritual and/or act of reconciliation. Apart from *kgaba*, a human person can also be determined by witches or enemies who operate by spiritual power. Yet the person who is under the attack of witches and sorcerers can appeal to greater forces and protect himself from such. Some misfortunes are attributed to witchcraft, while others are attributed to God. Diagnosis is imperative and is always done by a traditional doctor who will also prescribe the remedy, whether it be medicine, a charm, sacrifice, ritual and/or a corrective action.

Fatalism, which asserts that "whatever will be will be. What is going to happen, will happen" (Harrison-Barbet 1990:333), does not give room to human input. It presents an individual person as passive and waiting for things to happen without his or her contribution.

The Tswana perspective on destiny, presents a picture of constant vigilance and defence against fatalism. This means that the Tswana person expects some occasional misfortunes that are beyond his or her control, but largely counts on the freewill and imperative to take the overall charge of his or her destiny. The Tswana person would find it preposterous not to shield him/herself from, or not to combat, malevolent external forces that are constantly looking to pounce on him/her. The Setswana saying *mokoduwe go tsoswa o o itekang* literally means that a weak cow must attempt to rise on its own in order for people to lend it a hand.

This Setswana saying is meant to encourage incapacitated individuals to make an effort to improve their lives. Fatalism, in contrast, holds that if an individual is destined to die of an illness, it does not matter whether s/he seeks help or not; s/he will eventually die. In Setswana, an individual can succeed in changing his or her circumstances, while in some instances s/he may fail. If, however, that individual succeeds, it is not easy to determine whether the action is performed by the individual or it was caused by higher forces.

3.4.3 African Understandings of Destiny

This section discusses some African philosophers' understanding of destiny and compares it with the *Botho*'s understanding of destiny. It shows that there is no general consensus amongst African scholars in regard to whether destiny is given or chosen, alterable or unalterable, fated or not fated. On one hand there are scholars who think that individuals receive their destiny from God, and that it is unalterable. On the other hand, there are scholars who think that destiny is both chosen by the individual, and it is received from the creator, therefore, it is alterable. It also demonstrates that, according to the *Botho* perspective, destiny is essentially a purpose that can be realised. An individual can therefore, change his or her destiny, i.e. alter his/her purpose. Even if one cannot change one's purpose, he or she would still have the freedom to choose whether to realise it or not.

Yoruba Understanding of Destiny

There are several Yoruba scholars who give different interpretations of the Yoruba's understanding of destiny. On one hand some scholars like Oduwole (1996) interpret Yoruba's understanding of destiny as fatalism, while others like Gbadegesin (1991) and Abimbola (1971) interpret it as soft determinism.

Most of Yoruba scholars share the same version of the myth of creation. According to the Yoruba mythology, each person is created in heaven. The body of the person is created with clay by the god *Orishanla*, at the command of *Olodumare* (the supreme God). *Orishanla* is responsible for creating different body shapes, some of which are beautiful, ugly, tall, short, albinos, crippled and deformed (Abimbola 1971:69-85). *Olodumare* (the supreme God) breathes a part of himself called *emi* (life force) into the body (Abimbola 1971:69). *Emi* is the spirit, that which remains “spirit” with the body until death (Idowu 1962:179).

Gbadegesin (1998:155) holds that before an individual leaves heaven to come to earth, s/he goes to the house of *Ajala* (the potter of all *Ori-inu*) to choose *ori* (destiny) from among many destinies stored in *Ajala*'s storehouse. *Ajala* is responsible for the creation of *ori* and is also responsible for molding heads of different shapes and qualities. Some *ori* is said to be bad while some is good (Abimbola 1976). *Ori* is an immaterial aspect; it is responsible for an individual's personality, and it is the bearer of human destiny (Idowu 1962). Therefore, an individual's choice of *ori* determines his or her personality in the world. Idowu (1962:175) asserts that it is believed that a prosperous person possesses a good *ori* while an unfortunate person possesses a bad *ori*.

In contrast to Gbadegesin (1991), Abimbola (1971), holds that individuals do not choose an *ori*, but rather it is given by *Ajala*. There are however different theories on how an individual acquires his or her destiny in the Yoruba tradition. According to Idowu (1962), there are three ways of acquiring destiny. He declares that one may kneel down and choose his destiny, one may kneel down and receive destiny and lastly one may have his destiny affixed on him. The choice of destiny is witnessed by *Orunmila*. In the descent to earth, a person passes through the waters of forgetfulness which is a boundary between heaven and earth. When s/he arrives

on earth, s/he forgets everything about his pre- existence in heaven. According to Abimbola, the only way s/he can remember his or her destiny is by consulting *Orunmila* through Ifa divination.

Abimbola (1971) suggests that an individual does not know whether s/he is given a bad or good *ori* because by the time s/he arrives on earth s/he is ignorant of the type of destiny that is awaiting him or her. Gbadegesin (1983:183), in agreement with Abimbola (1971) argues that it is possible for an individual to embark on a project, which an individual's *ori* did not choose, resulting in failure and disappointment. It is therefore, important to consult an Ifa through *Orunmila* what sort of things are part of an individual's destiny.

The African understanding of destiny as articulated by the *Botho* perspective implies choice by a conscious mind; a conscious individual chooses whether or not to fulfil destiny, and also what his or her destiny is. Abimbola's (1971) understanding of destiny suggests that destiny is unknown to the conscious person after s/he arrives on earth. In contrast, the *Botho* perspective states that the human person is free to decide what destiny (understood as a purpose) is. For example, Batswana believe destiny given by God, needs hard work. The assumption is that, through consultation with traditional doctors and making offerings and sacrifices to ancestors, a good destiny can be realised and a bad destiny can be improved.

Abimbola (1976) goes on to contend that destiny chosen, or imposed on someone determines a person's fate in his or her life and it is unalterable. He argues that "indeed, the gods are not in a position to alter a man's destiny," (1976:115). Abimbola's understanding of destiny cannot, however, be interpreted as suggesting fatalism. He proclaims that bad destiny can be changed by making sacrifices and making sacrifices to one's *ori* suggests freewill. It is

believed that through the consultation of *Orunmila*, one would know the kind of destiny chosen for him or her, and will be in a position to alter an unfavourable destiny. In his (1975) article, Abimbola expostulates that human persons are responsible for their own voluntary action.

Similarly, Gbadegesin (1991) attests that destiny can be changed through human effort, hard work, prayer and/or sacrifice. He asserts that:

First, there is the idea that the portion gets allocated to individuals as a result of their own 'choice.' Hence, *akunleyan* is an idea of destiny (that which one kneels down to choose). Secondly, there is the conception of destiny as [...] affixed to an individual, not necessarily by his or her own choice. In this model, the individual kneels to receive the pre-ordained portion from the creator. Third, is the concept of destiny [in], which the identity of the choice maker is not clear – whether it is the individual or some other being making the choice for him or her. In addition, there is the idea of a fixation of the portion on the individual. This is the idea of destiny as *ayanmo* (an affixed choice) (Gbadegesin 1991:47).

According to Gbadegesin (1991), even though the Yoruba people subscribe to destiny received while kneeling (*akunlegba*), they still hold the human person free and responsible for his or her actions. Gbadegesin believes that the divination of a newly born baby is an attempt to alter its destiny.

Abimbola's and Gbadegesin's understanding of destiny suggests soft determinism. The fact that an individual can consult with *Orunmila* to remind him or her of destiny and alter bad destiny suggests that the mentioned scholars are not fatalistic.

There are, however, scholars who argue that the Yoruba's understanding of the concept of destiny is a form of fatalism. For instance, Oduwole (1996) explains that the concept of *ori* and its connection with destiny is consistent with fatalism. According to Oduwole, destiny is, "what must happen, and cannot be changed or controlled" (1996:48). She holds that freewill is an illusion; whatever an individual does is predestined. She further contends that destiny is imposed on the human person by powers beyond him. Furthermore, she asserts that *ori*, the determinant of a person's destiny suggests that the human person is not free, and not morally responsible for his or her actions. According to her, efforts to change destiny through sacrifices are a fruitless exercise. She claims that human beings do not naturally accept failure, and that when an individual is informed by an *Ifa* that s/he has a bad *ori*, s/he engages on endless, fruitless efforts to achieve the impossible. In contrast, it is a common view among many Batswana that, through the help of a traditional doctor, an individual may realise that his or her ability to achieve a destiny is affected by witches, and may try to alter his or her misfortunes through divination, prayers and offering of sacrifices.

There are some Yoruba scholars who have presented naturalistic and pragmatic interpretations of destiny. For example, Adele A. Fakoya (2008) observes that destiny has socio-pragmatic significance. He demonstrates the conversational value of *ori* as opposed to its spiritual/metaphysical worth. He explains that, in conversations, the Yoruba people place the socio-pragmatic responsibility on the *ori*, such that if anything does not go according to societal expectation, the human subject's head becomes the object of criticism (2008:71). He further explains that sometimes *ori* is factored into accounting for people's occasional fits of temper. For example, when an individual is angry s/he may ask an offender whether it is all

well with her/his head (2008:71). In another example “somebody with a hot head” can be interpreted to mean an angry person.

Adebola Babatunde Ekanola presents a naturalistic understanding of the Yoruba concepts of *Ori* and destiny (2006). Ekanola observes that even though hereditary and environment factors influence a human person’s destiny, in the case of formation of character a human person has a choice to either allow or disallow these factors to dictate the particular decision and actions which ultimately form his/her character (2006:48). Ekanola contends that character is formed by virtue of the various acts of choices made by an individual and it determines destiny. For example, human wellbeing and success on earth depend on character. Ekanola further explains that in that regard, the choice of *ori* need not be understood as a prenatal choice in heaven, but as made during the course of human existence. Ekanola observes that in perplexing situations that defile logic, explanations are offered in terms of predestination (2006:50).

These pragmatic and the naturalistic interpretations of destiny do not imply complete freewill, but they are consistent with us having it to some degree. In both the interpretations of destiny, the human person is free to choose either to allow or disallow factors that influence particular decisions and actions that form character. The two interpretations of destiny are similar to the Setswana understanding of destiny. In Setswana tradition, character is not fixed; it is determined but free. The Setswana phrase “*o goditse rragwe*” means that an individual person has inherited a particular trait from his or her father. However, it does not mean that a person who inherits a particular trait from his/her parents is not responsible for his/her actions. Human character, which plays a significant role in determining how human persons act, is determined but free. Therefore human persons are morally responsible for their

actions. A human character does not defy logic. Character is made through the course of human existence; it can be altered on earth, either for good or for bad.

The Akan Understanding of Destiny

Wiredu (1996) points out that in the Akan belief, each human person comes into the world with a specific, unalterable, destiny given to him or her by God. He insists that:

The high point of the proceeding is the announcement of destiny. God reveals to the *okra* what career awaits her or him on earth, and how it shall be brought to a conclusion. Thereupon, the *okra* descends to the incarnated into human society to fulfil that blueprint (Wiredu 1996:127).

Wiredu explains that the *okra* is the spark of the Supreme Being and that only God knows everything which can ever happen to human beings. He states that:

... *okra* is, by definition, the *okra* of a person envisaged in a determinate life-story, which the Creator knows in full completeness *abinitio* but we, humans, can only learn by empirical instalments as the individual concerned plays out his or her destiny on this earth day by day (Wiredu 1996:127).

Wiredu argues that human beings do not have freewill, but they can attain it. Wiredu opines that only persons or agents with the ability to act on the basis of rational reflection are free and responsible. He further proclaims that when human behaviour is not deliberate, human beings are not free. Wiredu suggests that babies are not free and responsible. Wiredu's interpretation of destiny suggests soft determinism/compatibilism because he argues that the human person acts from freewill if and only if his or her behaviour is deliberate. The human person is therefore free in accordance with reason, which is a determined process. For

Wiredu, an individual who aspires for a better life is free to alter his or her destiny through hard work and judicious thinking.

Gyekye (1987) states that destiny is given by God at creation, and it is fixed. Gyekye shares the same sentiments with Wiredu (1996) that amongst the Akans, it is traditionally believed that each human being comes into the world with a specific unalterable destiny. According to (Gyekye 1987), destiny is divinely determined, the Supreme Being is good, and therefore this destiny is good. Therefore, there is no need to try and change a destiny that is good. While on one hand Abimbola (1976) holds that destiny can be good or bad, Gyekye on the other hand holds that destiny is good, and that bad things are not included in the message of destiny. Gyekye (1987:77) illustrates this with an Akan proverb that says, “the order *Onyame* has established, no living human can alter”. According to this proverb, events are part of the order of nature established by the omnipotent creator, *Onyame*. The human persons are not free to choose their destiny; rather, destiny is imposed by *Onyame*. According to the Akan people, the soul is the bearer of destiny and before it descends to the world, it receives its message from *Onyame*, which will determine its course of life.

Gyekye (1987) suggests that a fixed destiny supposes that a human person’s life is also fixed in a sense of not being able to realise it. This is, however, not true in the *Botho* perspective, because according to the *Botho* perspective, destiny is essentially a purpose that can be realised. The human person could decide whether to fulfil it or not. Batswana believe that destiny can be good or bad. However, through mystical intervention, an individual may choose to improve the circumstances of their lives, the course of their lives and their destiny. Even if they may not ultimately achieve their purpose, this would not stop them from making efforts to alter their misfortunes.

Gyekye (1987) acknowledges other influences on the human person's soul which he, however, deems too trivial to have a bearing on human destiny. According to him, these include the human person's actions, desires, decisions and intentions or evil forces. Gyekye further, posits that an individual is held responsible for actions that he deliberately performs and can only attribute to destiny those whose cause transcends him. Gyekye goes on to argue that a human person facing failures in life may consult priests and diviners, but in so doing s/he would not be changing his or her destiny but rather would be "trying to better the conditions of life" (1987:116). Gyekye acknowledges that some free choices are possible despite determinism. According to him destiny does not encompass every aspect of a human person's life; only the broad outlines of an individual's mundane life are determined but the specific details of an individual's life. Gyekye postulates that destiny covers an individual's occupation and the manner, place and time of death of the individual, but in some other areas of life, the individual is free to act. There is a difference between events and human actions; as such Gyekye is of the view that many human actions are not in the message of destiny, and therefore free, while events are in the message of destiny and beyond human persons. In contrast, the *Botho* perspective suggests that the human person can decide whether to fulfil destiny or not. Batswana believe that human persons are interconnected with nature. Natural disasters may be a result of the individual's own character. For example, it is believed that murdering a human person can cause drought; to rectify this, the human persons may offer sacrifices to maintain harmony between the forces.

The framework of this study is centred on one of *Botho's* biggest tenets, namely the capacity to better the conditions of the human person's life. In other words, the human person can be better than s/he is in his or her current state. Another important tenet is that every human

person has the desire to change adverse conditions of his or her life to favourable ones, which implies the interest to tamper with personal destiny.

3.4.4 Personhood According to the *Botho* Perspective

We can deduce Batswana's concept of personhood from how one of their philosophers, Joseph Gaie, describes it. When explaining personhood as understood by Batswana, Gaie expostulates that the metaphysical aspect of personhood entails setting apart an individual from non-human things. At this level, the focus is on certain features, of what it means to be a human person. In other words, the aim is to establish the thing without which a being is not a human person. Gaie (2007) argues that the essential elements of personhood include the material, immaterial and epistemological aspects. According to the Setswana metaphysical view of a human person, human persons are essentially physical (bodies) and essentially spirits (in relation). The immaterial aspect is that which, according to Mbiti (1975), leaves the body and goes to join the other spirits at death. Rene Descartes, the French philosopher, proclaims that there are two kinds of substance, viz., the mind and the body. He describes the mind as purely immaterial and the body as physical. In contrast to Descartes' dualism, *Botho* comprises a holistic approach to the human person, not a partitioning of what is whole into two parts. It is believed that the spirit is joined to the body at birth, and it leaves the body to join other spirits at death. Even though the physical body and the immaterial spirit are essential aspects of being human, when it comes to persistence, it is the spirit (in relation) that is important. The immaterial spirit (in relation) is the innermost self, which is synonymous with life. The immaterial spirit is God or part of God.

3.4.5 Personhood According to the Akan Perspective

This section discusses Wiredu (1980) and Gyekye's (1987) understanding of personhood amongst the Akan people and compares it with the *Botho*'s understanding of personhood.

According to Wiredu, the Akan people believe that a person is composed of the body (which is physical), *okra* (received from the Supreme Being and is the bearer of destiny), *mogya* (blood receive from the mother) and finally *sunsum* (which is received from the father).

Wiredu (1980) argues that personhood constitutes:

...*nipadua* (a body) and a combination of the following entities conceived as spiritual substances (i) *okra* (soul approximately), that whose departure from a man means death, (ii) *sunsum*, that which gives to a man's character (iii) *ntoro*, something passed on from the father which is the basis of inherited characteristics and, finally (iv) *mogya*, something passed on from the mother which determines a man's clan identity and which at death becomes the *suman* (ghost) (1980:47).

Wiredu's argument is that both the *okra* and *sunsum* cannot be identified with the immaterial soul. He explains that the Western concept of the soul is used interchangeably with the concept of mind, while *okra* and *sunsum* are different from the Akan concept of mind. *Okra* is an individual's bearer of destiny; it is a particle of the Supreme Being that gives life to a body, so only human persons have *Okra*. Wiredu further argues that while the *okra* survives death and then becomes an ancestor the *sunsum* perishes when the body dies.

Gyekye (1987) disagrees with Wiredu's tripartite concept of personhood. He is of the view that personhood amongst the Akan people is, rather, dualistic. For Gyekye, personhood constitutes the spiritual or immaterial that is *Okra* (soul) and *Sunsum* (spirit) and material or physical) that is *Honam* (body). Even though Gyekye and Wiredu differ on what constitutes the human person according to the Akan tradition, they both agree that the human person

constitutes the material or physical, and immaterial or spiritual aspects. Wiredu and Gyekye also agree that *okra* is the bearer of destiny, which is a view that holds in the Setswana worldview.

Whereas Wiredu (1980) argues that *sunsum*, which originates from the father is not spiritual, Gyekye (1987) contends that both *okra* and *sunsum* are the spiritual aspects of the human person, and originate from the Supreme Being. Gyekye (1987:88) argues that:

The conception of *okra* as constituting the individual's life, the life force, is linked very closely with another concept, *honhom*. *Honhom* means "breath"; it is the noun form of home, to breathe. When a person is dead, it is said "His breath is gone" (*ne honhom ko*) or "His soul has withdrawn from his body" (*ne' kra afi ne ho*). These two sentences, one with *honhom* as subject and the other with *okra*, do, in fact, say the same thing; they express the same thought, the death-of-the-person. The departure of the soul from the body means the death of the person, and so does the cessation of breath. Yet, this does not mean that the *honhom* (breath) is identical with the *okra* (soul). It is the *okra* that "causes" the breathing. Thus, the *honhom* is the tangible manifestation or evidence of the presence of *okra*. [In some dialects of the Akan language, however, *honhom* has come to be used interchangeably with *sunsum* ('spirit'), so that the phrase *honkom* bone has come to mean the same thing as *sunsum* bone, that is, evil spirit. The identification of the *honhom* with the *sunsum* seems to me to be a recent idea and may have resulted from the translation of the Bible into various Akan dialects; *honhom* must have been used to translate the Greek *pneuma* (breath, spirit)].

The central argument is that if the *sunsum* is that which constitutes the basis of an individual's personality, then it cannot be a physical thing, because qualities like courage, jealousy, gentleness, forcefulness, and dignity are psychological, and not sensible or physical. Also that the Akan people believe that the *sunsum* can leave the human body when one is asleep. He, however, asserts that it is impossible for a physical thing to leave the body during a person's sleep.

This section started with a comparative analysis of the Yoruba, the Akan and *Botho* understanding of destiny, noting points of convergence and divergence. For the Yoruba people, the *ori* is the bearer of destiny, whereas for the Akan, the bearer is the *okra*. According to Abimbola (1971), destiny is given by Ajala and cannot be realised except by the help of an *Ifa*. The Yoruba scholars discussed, conclude that destiny is either imposed or chosen unconsciously. In contrast, the *Botho* perspective asserts that a human person is free to decide what destiny (understood as purpose) is. The Yoruba concept of destiny, as understood by Idowu (1962), Abimbola (1971) and Gbadegesin (1991), may be understood as a version of soft determinism. These scholars hold that destiny can be changed for the better through divination, sacrifice, prayer and offerings. However, some scholars like Oduwale (1996) hold that the Yoruba doctrine of destiny is fatal to the freewill a person has in actions and behaviour.

The Akan scholars suggest that destiny is unalterable, it is not chosen by an individual but the supreme God always imposes it. However, they insist that an unalterable destiny is not detrimental to the human freewill. According to Wiredu (1996), free actions are only possible when human behaviour is deliberate, but for Gyekye (1987), the human person is only free as

regards actions that are beyond destiny. In contrast, according to the *Botho* perspective, the human person is always free to decide whether to fulfil destiny or not.

This section concludes by giving a comparative analysis of Joseph Gaie's understanding of personhood in the *Botho* perspective and Kwame Gyekye, Kwasi Wiredu's understanding of personhood in the Akan worldview. It has noted the similarities and differences in both worldviews. The concept of destiny is dependent on what constitutes personhood. The metaphysical aspect of personhood has a bearing on the concept of destiny. In most African traditions, for instance, the metaphysical aspect of personhood is often the bearer of an individual destiny. The implication is that an individual is either free or not free in actions that pertain to destiny.

According to Wiredu (1980), Gyekye (1987) and Gaie's (2007) analyses of personhood, the human person constitutes the material or physical body and the immaterial spirit. That which Gyekye calls the *okra* is similar to what Wiredu regards as immortal, and the bearer of destiny. The *okra*, presented by both Wiredu and Gyekye, is what the Setswana perspective labels as *mowa* or spirit in English. Both *mowa* and the *okra* are received from the Supreme Being. Wiredu (1980) explains that when God created a human being, God apportioned a part of himself in the form of an *okra* for dispatch to the earth to be born of man and woman. The immaterial or spiritual persists through time and it is relational; therefore, it is the basis of personal identity (personal identity will be discussed in chapter 8). The *okra* or *mowa* can appear several times on earth in different bodies. All the three philosophers concur that a person is more than a body; there is an aspect that existed before birth which is capable of existing independently after the death of the body.

There are also some notable differences; Wiredu differs with both Gaie and Gyekye by suggesting that the *okra* is neither spiritual nor entirely physical. He argues that it is rather quasi-physical. Another difference is that, while the *okra* is said to be the bearer of destiny in the Akan's tradition and *ori* the bearer of destiny in the Yoruba's tradition, on the other hand, *mowa* in the *Botho* perspective is not clearly identifiable with destiny. Furthermore, *mowa* is more flexible and indefinite. It is, therefore, not surprising that whereas the Akan and Yoruba are presumably only free in regard to actions that are beyond destiny, Batswana are not limited to destiny but are free to decide what destiny (or purpose) is and are free to decide whether to fulfil destiny or not.

3.5 Material and Immaterial Aspects of the Human Being in African and *Botho* Perspectives

This section discusses material and immaterial aspects of the human being in African traditions and particularly the *Botho* perspective. African philosophers posit three aspects (material, immaterial and mind), four aspects (material, immaterial, heart and mind), or two aspects (material and immaterial) of human nature. This thesis engages four African philosophers who discuss human nature. Human nature consists of what it is to be a human being, or the necessary and sufficient conditions for being a human as opposed to a non-human. I use the phrase "human nature" to indicate the metaphysical components of a human being, unlike others who have sometimes used it to discuss empirical, and particularly psychological, aspects of humanity. Joseph Gaie (2007) observes that human nature is understood to be more complex than simply metaphysical. Some aspects of human nature are metaphysical, others are social and yet others are epistemological. The metaphysical components of a human being are aspects of human nature.

The four African philosophers are Wiredu (1980), Gyekye (1987), Gbadegesin (1998) and Gaie (2007). Gaie represents the Setswana tradition, while Gyekye and Wiredu represent the Akan tradition whereas Gbadegesin represents the Yoruba tradition. These philosophers, except Gbadegesin, were discussed under the subsections 3.4.4 and 3.4.5. This section sums up their views, to show that they hold basically the same view on human nature, even though they posit a different number of aspects. The section draws on these philosophers' work, to articulate accounts of human nature, despite the fact that sometimes they use the word "person" and "human being" interchangeably. The key features they posit as aspects of personhood are most plausibly understood as providing an account of what a human being is (if we distinguish persons from human beings as potentially different things in the way John Locke and other philosophers do).

Gyekye (1987:89) observes that the Akan tradition holds the tripartite conception of a human being, that is, *okra* (soul) which is immaterial, *sunsum* (spirit) which is thought/personality, and hence often considered immaterial and *honam* (body) material. Wiredu (1980:47), similarly observes that according to the Akan tradition, the human being consists of the *nipadua* (a body), *okra*, *sunsum* (that which gives to a man's character), *ntoro* (that which is received from a father) and *mogya* (blood from a mother). Unlike Gyekye, who argues that *okra* is spiritual, Wiredu says that *okra* is quasi-physical – it is neither spiritual nor entirely physical.

Gbadegesin (1998:28) holds that the Yoruba's understanding of human nature is that human beings constitute four aspects, namely, *ara* (body), *emi* (mind/soul), *ori* (inner head) *okan*, (heart). *Ara* is described in physical terms, that is, heavy or light, strong or weak, hot or cold and so on. *Emi* and *ori* are spiritual, while *okan* has a dual nature (physical and spiritual).

Despite some disagreements among the Akan and Yoruba scholars on what constitutes human nature, they agree that the body is an essential aspect of human nature. Even though these philosophers sometimes use the word “person” or “personhood”, it is apparent that to them a human being is more than just a person (immaterial aspect) but includes a material or physical body. Human nature includes a material (body), while personhood is essentially immaterial and relational. According to Mbiti (1975:124), personhood is immaterial and relational for most African scholars because in the African tradition, after bodily death an immaterial aspect continues relating.

Similarly, in Setswana, *Botho* is simply human-being-hood or the essence of being a human person. Gaie (2007:31) explains that Batswana believe that the human being consists of immaterial and material aspects, the material aspect has to do with his or her physical body, so a human being can be described physically as being tall or thin. The material aspect is metaphysically important for constituting an individual as a human being; it is also epistemically important for identifying human beings. There is also the immaterial aspect of the human being. Amongst Africans the immaterial aspects of human nature house the mental aspects. Therefore, a human being is normally rational (2007). Gaie further reveals that even though Batswana often label things as “dead” when they die, they do not like to use the same label on dead human beings. Instead, they use expressions such as “s/he left us/is asleep/is missing” (2007:31). This probably means that Batswana believe that a person continues to exist even though s/he is no longer human or lacks a physical body. Thus, if the body dies, the individual is no longer human, but s/he remains a person because his/her immaterial aspect continues relating. As pointed out below, this possibility is similar to a number of transhumanist perspectives.

Furthermore, amongst Africans there are no dichotomies between spiritual and physical realities. Recall that Ramose (2002:41) contends that the material and immaterial are different aspects of the same reality. They equally interact with, and affect each other at both material and spiritual levels; the living interacts with the living and with the living dead. Kayange (2021:163), similarly argues that the body and the spirit are inseparable when an individual is alive. He maintains that they interact by sharing life-giving principles and that the heart, being the seat of operations of the physical body, is equally a controller of the spiritual. He further states that, when the life giving principle working on both the body and the spirit stops working in the body, it continues to live in the spirit. This suggests that the immaterial remains constant in a person, even if the person is no longer a human being.

It is important to note that Gaie's, Wiredu's, Gyekye's and Gbadegesin's understanding of personhood includes the physical body as one of the elements composing human personhood. The African concept of personhood holds that there are the material aspects, which can be observed and touched, and the immaterial, which are unperceivable. The other thing that is common to these African philosophers' perspectives is that persons constitute a sort of life force, which departs the body only at the person's last breath. The immaterial component of the person has been "bestowed by God and it can outlive the death of [his/her] body" (Metz 2011:543). Whereas the body perishes, the life force survives death and then becomes, if not an ancestor, then at least a living-dead. The ancestors and the living dead are a life force that continues to relate with the living. Thus, the body is essential for survival as a human being, while a spiritual nature plus relationality are essential for survival as a person (ancestor or the living dead).

Nonetheless, this concept of personhood does not dualistically separate the immaterial and material, but perceives them as united interdependent life forces (Mbaegbu 2016:10). The fact that the spirit survives physical death does not imply that the two aspects are opposed or entirely different; it means that they are functionally different. Mbaegbu interprets the African understanding of all reality (whether supposedly material or immaterial) as vital energy, life energy or life force, rather than the Cartesian view that “the mind has the nature of spirituality while the body has the nature of materiality” and where “substance” refers to “that which has an independent existence” (2016:14). Thus, the African solution to the mind-body conundrum can be gleaned from the following statement: “[...] separation between the sacred and the secular, the visible and the invisible, or the spiritual from the material, is impossible” (Dolamo 2013:3).⁶

However, the above discussion does not argue that the African cannot distinguish the material from the immaterial or the visible from the invisible in a person.⁷ The material body at least partially constitutes being human. Chapter 7 of this study illustrates that an individual can lose some characteristic features that are distinct traits of human nature but remain human. However, the African perspective views the body, as a distinct human feature, to be an exception. In Setswana, the body of a human being who has just died is sometimes referred to as a *serepa* (corpse), rather than as the whole human being. One can say, for instance, “his corpse has arrived from the mortuary”, in a context where “he” is the no-longer-visible, and the corpse is the material remains. This suggests that the material body without an immaterial

⁶ This statement appears in Dolamo’s discussion of religion, but reveals an overarching African worldview.

⁷ Obviously, the African acknowledges that s/he can touch a body but cannot touch a spirit.

aspect is not considered a human being. Still, it is important to note that the more common reference to a corpse is metaphorically personalised. For example, Batswana would say, “We have buried him” (Cf. Gaie 2007:33) or would caution one not to make noise in the presence of the dead person because of the belief that the deceased is being disturbed. Additionally, this deference emanates from the Setswana traditional belief that the spirit of the dead person initially resides where his or her body is resting.

On the other hand, Batswana are able to refer to the immaterial aspect as *mowa* (spirit/soul), such as when they say “his spirit or soul” is sleeping. Yet this immaterial aspect of the whole is thought of as personal rather than an “it”, because, whereas the corpse does not rest or sleep, the spirit or soul does. Generally, the immaterial aspect is not considered dead when bodily death occurs, but the corpse is regarded as non-living and as a non-person. Otherwise, personalised references to the corpse are really deference to the immaterial aspect of the person.

Moreover, whilst all living things are said to die, the death of a person is referred to in a deferential metaphorical manner. Batswana usually do not say a person is dead, although they can, given certain contexts; they would rather say “s/he is gone”, “s/he has left us”, “and s/he has disappeared, [etc]” (Gaie 2007). According to Gaie, Mbiti and *Botho* generally, the spiritual aspect survives death and it continues to relate with the living after the bodily death. A person in the African perspective, or at least one influential version, is, therefore, immateriality plus relationality.

In the African thought, reference to the mind, heart and soul can be regarded collectively as consciousness, and each is sometimes referred to interchangeably as the other. In Setswana,

there are organs which sometimes cause *Botho* to manifest. Somebody with *Botho* is described as “one with a good heart or spirit” or “one with a heart”. Somebody without *Botho* is described as “heartless” or who has “an ugly heart or spirit”. Molefe (2017:58) asserts that the heart and the mind give the individual a sense of duty, which sets him or her apart as a rational creature in contrast with animals. Mbaegbu (2016:3-4) states that the conscience is that inner quality central to making moral decisions. These mental aspects are broadly defined as housed within the immaterial aspect of a person.

3.6 Advanced State After Death

Batswana subscribe to the existence of spirit beings. The categories of spirits include the Supreme Being, smaller divinities and spirits of dead family members.⁸ In African thought, death is generally regarded as a rite of passage from one form of human existence to another; namely, from the current human world into the world of the ancestors (Muyambo and Maposa 2013). After death, the immaterial aspect of the human person (spirit) continues to live on earth, and some appear frequently among the living (Ushe 2017). The activities of the departed can be observed when the person becomes a wandering spirit that haunts the spot where s/he died, and when the spirit of the dead person visits his or her family to advice or instruct them.

The former phenomenon occurs as a verdict that the individual has failed somehow in their quest for personhood, while the latter is a reward for successfully acquiring personhood.

There is an ideal standard of personhood that human persons can and must strive to attain,

⁸ These spiritual beings generally fall under established categories in Bantu thought, and the Setswana spirit beings are not an exception.

which will qualify them to become ancestors once they die. The desire for a heightened status of the individual person is important for this research project, which investigates whether the quest for human enhancement and its consequences qualify as *Botho*. Most definitely, the ancestral spirit has powers and qualities that surpass those of the current living. Ushe (2017:174) has consolidated a list of qualifications for this promotion, and it includes the following:

1. The living must conduct the burial rites for the departed,
2. The departed must die a good death,
3. He must live to old age,
4. He must be married and have children, and
5. He must live an exemplary social/moral life.

The ancestors stand in an intercessory position between the living and God, therefore the community depends on the ancestors (Pauw 1960; Moffat 1842). According to Willoughby (1928), God is a more senior and distant being, best approached through ancestors who are generally believed to be nearer to human beings. Tom Brown, in his earlier studies of Batswana, observes that Batswana do not worship *badimo* (ancestors), but they worship *Modimo* (God) and venerate *badimo* (the living dead). He argues:

After much enquiry I have come to the conclusion that the attitude of the ordinary Mochuana towards the dead is on footing with that of the devout of some higher forms of faith, who, while they adore their saints and often times fear them, only look upon them as mediators, and do not place them in any pantheon as gods to whom worship is due (1926:99).

Motsamai Molefe, similarly, explains that Africans do not worship ancestors but they revere them (2016:103). Molefe further explains that ancestor veneration functions within blood relation, and therefore some rituals involve only family members (2016:103). Thus, even though the reverencing of ancestors is communal in orientation, a human person can reverence only his/her own ancestors.

It is commonly believed among many Africans, including Batswana, that ancestors are interested in the affairs of the living. They wish to be remembered and to be informed of what is happening in the land of the living. Kwasi Wiredu explains that honour to an ancestor is done in two ways: the first one is living rightly and the second one involves completing a project left by the deceased (2010:138). Wiredu goes on to explain that the task of completing a project left by the deceased could involve taking care of the deceased dependants, paying some debts left by the deceased or taking care of some specific instructions left by the deceased before death (2010: 138).

It is commonly believed among many Africans including Batswana that not all deceased persons are elevated to the rank of ancestors. According to Gathogo (2008), in the African context, *Ubuntu* suggests that the person one is to become, by behaving harmoniously with humanity, is an ancestor worthy of respect or veneration. In other words, those who uphold the principle of *Ubuntu* throughout their earthly lives will be rewarded or promoted in death by becoming ancestors. In turn, they will achieve unity with those alive. In other words, Batswana recognise the limitations of being human at present, and strive to be super-human in the future, albeit after death. It matters little that it is after death, because they will still live among the living. The living dead can still engage in moral growth in the spirit world. Augustine Shutte (2001) reiterates this idea when he asserts that the person grows only as

she or he is immersed in the context of relationships with other persons. In other words an individual's growth is dependent on relationships with other people. Chapter 9 discusses how this belief could have implications for what enhancements could or could not do.

3.7 Conclusion

This chapter is dedicated to the metaphysical aspect of personhood, and it dealt with the following topics; the metaphysical level of *Botho*; how *Botho* incorporates determinism and freewill; freewill in the *Botho* perspective; *Botho* as a process of becoming; the immaterial and material aspects of a person. Even though the *Botho* perspective is largely concerned with social relations between members of the community, it also deems metaphysical elements of personhood as indispensable. The *Botho* outlook affirms the value of the individual person, and the communal aspect of the person. Even though the human person lives in community with others, s/he must not be conceived solely in communal terms. It is common belief amongst many Africans, including Batswana that the human person develops within the community, but also exists as a metaphysical being. It is commonly held among Batswana that the human being is material and immaterial, free and determined, communal and independent.

Nonetheless, freewill and determinism must not be regarded as absolute in such a way that an individual who does not fall within a certain description, would be regarded as a non-person. The framework of this study leans on a range of stages of personhood within the process of becoming.

This chapter has also made a demarcation between pre-destiny and fate. While most African scholars hold that only actions beyond destiny are free or that destiny cannot be realised, this study holds that human persons are not limited to destiny but are free to decide what destiny

(understood as a purpose) is, and are also free to decide whether to fulfil destiny or not. The chapter has covered the metaphysical distinction of personhood, which is not discussed in most of the works that discuss the communitarian aspect of *Botho*/personhood; they instead focus only on *Botho*'s moral aspects. The chapter has demonstrated that the metaphysical orientation of the *Botho* outlook incorporates determinism and freedom. That means the human person is physically determined by genetic inheritance, physical living conditions and socialisation with family and society and yet free. Chapter 6 applies the *Botho* compatibilist approach to freewill to issues of transhumanism, which has not been done in an African context before.

Chapter 4: The Epistemological Aspect of *Botho*

4.1 Introduction

This chapter explores the epistemological aspects of *Botho*. Epistemology deals with knowledge sources and justification of knowledge. To say that a human person is epistemological means that knowledge capacity is an important feature of being a human person (Gaie 2007:31). According to Joseph Gaie (2007:29), while the epistemological aspect of personhood from the Setswana worldview denotes knowledge, intelligence, and capacity for thought and reflection, these cannot be separated from upbringing, communication, and culture. According to the epistemological aspect of *Botho* a human person is normally a being who, because of rationality, has the ability to know moral truths (Gaie 2007). It is commonly held amongst Batswana that all life-forms have a spirit, but human persons are the only ones with the faculty of reason. The sense of duty arises from the nature of a human person, as a rational creature apart from the animals (Gaie 2007). The epistemological aspect of *Botho* consists of the nature, origin, and limits of human knowledge.

Since Batswana are part of a larger group of people called Africans, there are some similarities between Batswana and other African people in regard to their conception of the nature of knowledge, the ways in which knowledge could be gained, one's ability to justify an epistemic claim, and the role that knowledge plays in human existence. The present chapter broadly concerns these topics.

The previous chapter explored the metaphysical aspects of the *Botho* worldview. Thus, it addressed the question of what a person is ontologically, as distinct from an animal, for example, having freewill. The metaphysical aspect of a person affects the epistemological aspect of a person. This is to say, what a person is certainly influences what a person can possibly know and so this chapter returns at times to themes of spirituality, for example.

The major sections of the chapter are ordered as follows: the first section of the chapter discusses how knowledge is acquired in the Western tradition and *Botho* perspective (4.2), followed by what justifies beliefs about the world in the *Botho* perspective (4.3), after which there is discussion on the nature of reasoning as a source of knowledge (4.4). When different sources of knowledge provide conflicting evidence is then analyzed (4.5). Lastly section (4.6) concludes the chapter.

4.2 How Knowledge Is Acquired in the Western Tradition and *Botho* Epistemology

This section discusses Western Epistemology. In the next sections I will make use of the distinctions on Western epistemology to spell out and/or apply *Botho* epistemology. Even though the focus of this chapter is African epistemology, I believe an overview of Western epistemology would be helpful before discussing the nature of African epistemology. This is important because Western epistemology provides an account of what epistemology is, and I compare it with African epistemology. Whereas on one hand I draw on Western views to contrast them with *Botho*, on the other hand I use these views to spell out *Botho*.

Western Epistemology

In this section, I show that Western traditional epistemology limits itself to the scientific sources of knowledge, therefore limiting its justification to science (and mathematics). I show that Western traditional epistemology is dualistic in nature; whereas the rationalists doubt sense-experience and hold reason to be certain, the empiricists hold sense experience with certitude and deny that reason is a source of much information about the nature of the world.

Rationalism and Empiricism

This section discusses rationalism and empiricism, which are based on rational or empirical judgement. It is restricted to the views of Descartes (1998), Locke (1690) and Hume (1955). Descartes, Locke and Hume belong to the school of rationalism and empiricism respectively. The reason for choosing these two schools of thought is that they suggest that knowledge is largely a matter of identifying facts through reasoning or processing sensory information. These philosophers guide in comprehending different ways to justify science. Their theories are relevant to transhumanism because typical transhumanists believe science is humanity's best instance of knowledge. In addition, although I aim in this thesis to apply *Botho* to transhumanism, it is at times helpful to understand *Botho* epistemology by comparing and contrasting it with some Western concepts.

Descartes' Epistemology

For Descartes, true knowledge is implanted within the human being's mind in the form of innate ideas, which we do not acquire, but which we are born with (Kessler 1992:416). He argues that we cannot initially be certain of knowledge acquired through sense experience. Thus, through reason, Descartes was able to argue for the existence of both the mind and the body. He was a rationalist, and rationalists hold that "our rational powers are capable of forming ideas that reflect the true nature of things" (Stumpf 1993:249). They hold that knowledge of the nature of the world involves the use of reason. Descartes (1998:63-64) contends:

[If] I have persuaded myself that there is absolutely nothing in the world: no sky, no earth, no minds, no bodies. Is it then the case that I too do not exist? But doubtless I did exist, if I persuaded myself of something. But there is some deceiver or other who is supremely powerful and supremely sly and who is always deliberately deceiving

me. Then too there is no doubt that I exist, if he is deceiving me. And let him do his best at deception, he will never bring it about that I am nothing so long as I shall think that I am something.

In Meditations I and II, Descartes determines to doubt each belief, and the foundations on which such beliefs rest. In Meditation II, he concludes that the proposition “I am, I exist” is the first and most certain. He is convinced that he has discovered the indubitable truth about his existence. In so far as he is doubting, he is conscious of his existence. He therefore claims that the proposition, “I am; I exist”, is true because it is clear and distinct. Thus, his essence is to be a thinking thing. He observes that this is the reason why concepts of mathematics are so clear and distinct, that one cannot help but accept them.

Explaining his own existence, in Meditation III Descartes argues a priori for the existence of God, holding that God does not make us think that false things are true, hence we have reason generally to trust sensory information. In arguing for the existence of God, Descartes (1998) says that we all have an idea of God as an infinite being, and such an idea must have an infinite objective reality. In addition to this argument, Descartes appeals to the idea of a perfect being, which he claims he finds in himself. Descartes holds that the idea of God implies a perfect being, and this idea of perfection clearly implies the attribute of existence.

Descartes (1998) also held that his thinking self is distinct from his body, and he can exist without his own body. He states that the body exists on the basis that the mind has a clear and distinct perception of its nature. Thus, Descartes argues for the existence of the mind and the body. According to him, our sense expressions lead us to believe that they come from bodies (Stumpf 1993:245). This means that we know a substance by its attributes, and since we

know two different attributes, namely, thought and the body, there must be two different substances, namely, the spiritual and the corporeal or the material and the immaterial (Kessler 1992:417). Moreover, it is through the mind that we can have a clear knowledge of external objects.

Descartes concludes with the notion that clarity and distinctness are markers of the indubitable truth. The indubitable truth starts with our own existence because the idea that we are thinking beings is clear and distinct. Descartes maintains that clear and distinct knowledge is not possible through our sense experience because our senses are subject to the ever-changing objects. That is to say, the act of questioning one's own existence confirms the reality of his or her mind. "Knowledge of the self is prior to the knowledge of God, and both the self and God are prior to our knowledge of the external world" (Stumpf 1993: 245). This perspective is called "rationalism" because it employs reason, in the sense of a priori reflection, primarily to investigate truth about the nature of reality. Descartes provides a rationalist explanation of why we can ultimately trust experience to give us knowledge. According to Descartes sense experience and hence science gives justification, although only by deduction from indubitable propositions.

John Locke's Epistemology

The next philosophers are empiricists. They claim that knowledge of reality is primarily based on observation, memory, and experience. This approach places basic epistemic value on sense experience and, by extension, on science because scientists regard the senses as indispensable.

Locke (1690), in Book 1 of his treatise discusses innate ideas. Unlike Descartes, Locke denies that we have innate ideas, but instead claims that our knowledge of the world comes through our senses, or by reflecting on what goes on in the mind after having undergone experiences. In Book 2, he maintains that we should “suppose the mind to be, as we say, white paper, void of all characters, without any ideas” (1690:87). Locke describes the human mind as a *tabula rasa*. In this view, the mind is a blank slate without rules, so data is added, and rules for processing them are solely formed by our sensory experiences. In Book 4, Locke defines knowledge as “the perception of the connection and agreement, or disagreement and repugnancy, of any of our ideas” (1690:515). In other words, knowledge results from examining ideas to see whether they agree or disagree.

David Hume’s Epistemology

Hume, like Locke, contends that knowledge is based on empirical consciousness; therefore, all mental activities can be reduced to sensation. Hume is focused on how the human mind operates in view of experience. For him, associations of the mind are the result of sense experience. Therefore, mental activities that are informative about the world can be reduced to sensation. Hume (1955:26) claims that “there is a considerable difference between the perceptions of the mind when a man feels the pain of excessive heat, or the pleasure of moderate sensation, or anticipates it by his imagination”. He classifies everything that the human being is aware of under impressions and ideas, and hence states that “the most lively thought is still inferior to the dullest sensation” (*ibid*: 27). He describes impressions as all lively perceptions that accompany seeing, feeling, loving, hating, desiring, or willing. In contrast, ideas stand for less lively perceptions that arise when the mind reflects on the above sentiments (*ibid*). Our ideas are a reflection on the experiences that we have had.

Both rationalist and empiricist approaches put great emphasis on scientific knowledge and reject altogether mystical knowledge. For the rationalist, scientific claims can be proven to follow necessarily from clear and distinct propositions, while for the empiricist scientific claims are grounded on fundamental sensory data. The scientific approach is successful at producing accurate explanations and predictions, because truth claims can be repeated, tested, or verified. In contrast, religious or spiritual claims are normally taken to be inconsistent with both rationalism and empiricism, as the former are not based on indubitable propositions or supported by our perceptions.

The Epistemological Aspect of *Botho*

This section explains how knowledge among many Batswana is acquired and how beliefs are justified. It shows that among many Batswana knowledge sources are scientific, grounded in both reason and senses, and mystical. It is common amongst many Batswana that knowledge about the world is obtained through the five senses, reason, mysticism, as well as testimony. Further it is acquired either individually or communally. Some of the forms of knowledge are discussed below.

Sense Perception

Conforming to most Africans, including Batswana, knowledge of the world can be gained partly through sense perception and experience. Regarding knowledge acquired through sense experience, Ejikemeuwa Ndubisi (2014:34) states that "... the African person holds that knowledge is gained through what we see, hear, touch, taste or smell". There is a Setswana proverb that says, *e tlaare ke tlaa re ke dipitse ke bo ke bone ka mebala*, literally meaning, "I will say they are horses only after seeing their colour". The meaning of the saying is that one way of knowing is through personal observation or experience. Ndubisi

similarly argues that “... the African finds it very difficult to doubt what s/he has witnessed with the empirical senses” (*ibid*).

According to Grivas Kayange, the Chewa people of Malawi support seeing in the contexts of truth. He argues that, according to the Chewa people, what is seen is confirmed as real (2018:99). He further explains that observation is central even in cases that are beyond human comprehension. He gives an example of a night jar and explains that, despite the fact that the creature is too small, any declaration about its elements must proceed from experience. He further explains that the pursuit of truth calls for patience because the quality of evidence may involve dealing with complicated situations (2018:99). Kayange observes that the knowledge about the character of a person is also possible only after experience (2018:99). Kayange also observes that perception may lead to bad judgement (2018:101). Sense experience is just one way of knowing. There is another form of knowledge that is beyond the ordinary sense perception.

Reason

Knowledge among most Africans including Batswana also involves the use of reason. This form of knowledge involves insights and understanding. Gaie observes that rationality is normally the key feature that distinguishes human beings from other animals (2007). He argues that a human person is rational because he/she is an autonomous agent with capacity to justify their actions with reasons (2007). Rationality expresses itself through reason. Godwin Sogolo similarly observes that the ability to reason logically and to draw valid inferences is an essential characteristic of all human races (1993:68). Thus, all Africans, including Batswana have capacity to reflect and reason accurately. It is through reason that one is able to judge what action is appropriate in the various situations. Odera Oruka defines philosophical sagacity as a

reflective evaluation of thought by an individual (1991:51). Reasoning also involves introspection and reflection. Christopher Anyanwu argues that African beliefs and knowledge about reality are the products of human experience, and the theories of such beliefs and knowledge must be the product of logical reflection (1981: 83). Emmanuel Chukwudi Eze similarly argues that what human beings experience in their daily lives, spur them to want to know more about themselves and the universe. He explains that there is a relationship that exists between human reason and experience. According to Eze, reason refers to the creative emergence of mind in the world across vast areas that include the emotional aspects of perception (2008:52), and so this meaning of “reason” differs from what the Western rationalists mean but includes some of it. Thus reason may involve empathy, imagination and will. Just like people of other races, Africans’ way of knowing does not depend on empirical inference alone, it also involves introspective or reflective awareness and analysis. Emmanuel Chukwudi Eze contends that reason is a form of human language because it accurately frames and mirrors the truths of the various state of what is objectively real (2008:38). Even if African beliefs may not be true, what is important is that Africans engage in some act of introspection and reflection, in order to be aware of such reality.

Testimony

Another form of knowledge among the Batswana is associated with old age. Batswana believe that the elderly are more knowledgeable than the young. This belief is reiterated by the Setswana saying *letlhaku le lesha le agelwa mo go le legologolo* (the new branch is put on top of the old one when fencing). The meaning of this phrase is that young people should rely on older people for wisdom, because on average the older a human being gets, the better informed s/he becomes. It is also observed that whenever Batswana want to share a proverb or saying, they start with the phrase *mogologolo o rile ...* (our predecessors have said...).

Ifeanyi Menkiti (1984: 173), in agreement with this Tswana belief, argues for incremental growth of wisdom as one ages. He illustrates this with an Igbo proverb that says, “What an old man sees sitting down, a young man cannot see standing up” (*ibid*). Thus, knowledge can result from a series of experiences as one grows old. John Ayotunde Isola Bewaji (2007:78) similarly holds that the most important source of knowledge that we have before we rely upon our own aptitudes is tradition. He explains that reason and experience are dependent upon tradition and goes on to explain that the first forms of tradition are the testimonies of others, which provide information that shape people’s attitudes and beliefs. This tradition or authority may be religious, historical, scientific, moral, or even practical.

In the Setswana tradition, traditional healers, ancestors, elderly people and leaders are some of the people considered wise in the community and are usually consulted for guidance. These individuals are believed to have more knowledge because of their accumulated experience. This knowledge can be both mystical and communal, whereby it is transmitted by ancestors to diviners and shared from one generation to another.

Although testimony is not often highlighted as a source of knowledge by rationalists and empiricists, many contemporary epistemologists accept it as one. That is true not merely in the African tradition, but also the Western. According to Duncan Pritchard, aesthetic judgements are transmissible via testimony (2016:109). He explains that an individual person can appropriately judge that an object is red, based on testimony of someone else, having never seen the object (2016:118). Pritchard observes that a friend’s testimony carries more weight than a stranger’s. He further explains that there are instances where a friend’s testimony could justifiably be ignored if one has reason to think his/her friend might be playing a trick on her/him (2016:118).

Mystical Knowledge

Another form of knowledge from a typical *Botho* perspective is mystical, unscientific, or spiritual. This knowledge is gained through the ancestors or God and it is exclusively preserved for some individuals like the diviners and native-doctors. According to Isaac Schapera in his earlier studies on Batswana, it was very common among Batswana to consult diviners for answers to mysterious events. He writes:

People use it to discover the nature and causes of sickness, the reason for a person's death, the whereabouts of missing stock, the prospects of a journey, the meaning of unexpected objects seen about the compound, and in all other situations where they are baffled by some occurrence or wish to ascertain what the future holds in store (1953:64).

Schapera further points out that Batswana believed that the first doctors were taught by God and their knowledge was handed down from one generation to another (1953: 63). Tom Brown in his earlier studies on Batswana observes that Batswana believe that the traditional doctors' act of throwing bones is guided by God (1926:118). He further explains that Batswana think their God speaks through the bones revealing to the people the evil things among them, and how they may be got rid of (1926:118). Furthermore, Brown observes that Batswana believe that *boloi* (witchcraft) is a misuse of knowledge (1926).

John Mbiti (1969:194), in reiterating this view beyond the Batswana, discloses that:

every African who has grown up in the traditional environment will, no doubt, know something about this mystical power, which often is experienced, or manifests itself,

in the form of magic, divination, witchcraft and mysterious phenomena, that seem to defy even immediate scientific explanations.

This form of knowledge, about immaterial matters, is beyond the comprehension of a typical human mind or ordinary sense perception. Mbiti goes on to explain that “access to this mystical power is hierarchical in the sense that God has the most and absolute control over it; the spirits and the living-dead have portions of it; and some human beings ...” (1969: 203).

In most African traditions, there are specialists like witches and traditional doctors who have mystical powers to proactively do good or evil. They can see and hear without their physical eyes and ears, walk on fire, make people mad, send death from a distance, detect thieves and culprits, turn inanimate objects into biologically living creatures (Mbiti 1969:197-198).

Mystical knowledge should be accepted at least for pragmatic reasons. Recall that my discussion on the notions of *Botho* that need to be embraced in the first major chapter. Among other things, mystical knowledge could function as an effective tool for social cohesion in the community. This knowledge is usually characterized by moral principles that promote the community’s common good. Furthermore, mystical knowledge may help human persons to understand the meaning and purpose of life. When human beings ascertain their destiny, they will be able to determine the right course of action for their lives.

Individual and the Community

The individual and the community, though they are not the same entity, are complementary of each other (see chapter 3). Therefore, knowledge from both the individual and the community matters. Martin Ajei (2007:191) explains that for some versions of African epistemology, it is not sufficient to attain knowledge alone without doing so in a social

context. Thus, knowledge is social because what an individual thinks s/he knows is subjected to his or her community, because the community would have often taught him/her what s/he knows.

According to Henry Odera Oruka (1991:51):

philosophic sagacity is a reflection of a person who is: (1) a sage and (2) a thinker.

As a sage the person is versed in the wisdoms and traditions of his people, and very often he is recognized by the people themselves as having a gift.

Sages are usually old people who are considered wise in the community. People consult them for guidance and direction. The knowledge to be a traditional doctor can also be shared with the community. John Mackenzie in his earlier studies on the Batswana observes that anybody who wants to become a traditional doctor could do so by paying an ox to someone who has the knowledge to train him. He writes:

Admission to the profession is to be obtained on the payment of a fee, and going through the course of learning under one or more of the initiated. An ox is the usual fee on entrance. The instruction is called “teaching to dig” because most medicines and charms are obtained from the plants which are dug up in the fields. So Bechuana lecturer takes his pupil or pupils with him to the open country one day, and to the mountains the next, and shows him where the healing plants are to be found. In the course of time he communicates to his pupil all his knowledge (1971:381).

Applying *Botho* Epistemology to Western Epistemology

In traditional Western understanding of knowledge of the world, there are two major sources of knowledge, viz., experience and reason, both of which are scientific in the sense of

providing reason to believe only, or at least primarily, scientific claims about the nature of reality. On one hand, empiricism places high value on sense experience, while on the other hand, rationalism places high value on reasoning, which, in turn, provides reason to rely on sense experience. In contrast to these characteristically Western understandings of knowledge, it is common amongst most Africans, including Batswana, that knowledge can be acquired by human persons partly through either sense experience or reasoning, without one being fundamental to the other. Human beings know things through observation, perception, sensation, testimony, reasoning, inference, memory and introspection.

Christopher Anyanwu (1981:94) explains the characteristically African standpoint when he posits that in African epistemology, knowledge comes from the cooperation of all human faculties and experiences. Anyanwu explains that the subject sees, feels, imagines, reasons or thinks and intuitively all at the same time (1981:94).

Leopold Senghor (1965: 33– 34) similarly observes that, for the African, knowledge is typically intuitive.

Senghor states that:

The life-surge of the African, his self-abandonment to the other is thus actuated by reason. But here, reason is not the eye – reason of the European, it is the reason by embrace which partakes more of the nature of logos than ratio... classical European reason is analytical and makes use of the object, African reason is intuitive and participates in the object.

Senghor was criticised for “denying Africans any capacity for engagement in rational discourse and a reduction of the African mode of knowledge to sensuality and emotion” (Udefi 2014: 110).

However, Jonathan Chimakonam (2017) rightly observes that Senghor (1965) should not be understood as saying that African epistemology is inferior as compared to Western epistemology, rather he is identifying structural differences between Western and African epistemology. Chimakonam further explains that Senghor's argument shows that African epistemology is unique in an inclusive sense of logic relativity.

Senghor's argument is that in African epistemology the metaphysical dualism that grounds modern Cartesian epistemology does not exist. As it has been mentioned earlier in this thesis, the absence of dichotomies in African epistemology means reason and feelings are intimately fused. This is what Anyanwu (1981: 94) means when he posits that in African epistemology a human being "sees, feels, imagines, reasons or thinks and intuits all at the same time".

Therefore, intuition does not suggest the absence of reasoning or vice versa.

In addition, the empiricists and rationalists have attempted to ground scientific knowledge on their philosophies. Even though the rationalist places high value on reason, while the empiricist places high value on sense experience, they both agree that knowledge is not mystical, intuitive, or a function of an external authority such as a prophet or a religious text. However, it is common amongst many Africans that reality does not only refer to objects of experience and thought like in the Western tradition. In addition to the material aspect, it is common among many Africans, including Batswana, that the immaterial aspect of the human being also informs human knowledge. Some reality transcends the physical, and senses alone cannot apprehend such a reality. Instead of relying on either sense experience or reason or even both, there are instances where knowledge depends on the immaterial. For example, the human being as a subject can conceive of reality beyond matter. S/he can easily imagine

things beyond what is perceivable in space and time. An example is divination as traditional knowledge. A diviner is believed to help individuals to obtain knowledge that is beyond everyday observation and perception. This knowledge could be some hidden truth or solution to a problem. This form of knowledge is not only beyond the comprehension of human minds (Gyekye 1987: 15), it also defies scientific explanations (Mbiti 1969). Further, the belief in the living dead, normally accepted as possible amongst Africans, suggests that it is possible for knowledge capability to be beyond the material reality. It is common among many Africans, including Batswana, that there are some imperceptible agents like ancestors or the living dead who lack bodies and so presumably do not see or feel. These imperceptible agents acquire knowledge through reasoning, testimony and mysticism. This means that experience is only part of knowing; it is not complete knowledge for the African tradition.

Amaechi Udefi (2014:108) observes that the early discourse of African epistemology links the African mode of knowledge with African ontology. African ontology has to do with African traditional thoughts, experiences and the cultural view of reality. When considering reality from the perspective of many African cultures, it comprises both the physical and the metaphysical or spiritual. Reality is therefore multi-dimensional, physical and metaphysical. Subairi Nasseem (2003:264) explains understanding of knowledge amongst Africans when he contends that “the African seeks for the ego as a centrality in the cosmic scheme in order to avoid the embarrassment of dualism and monism – be it idealist or materialist”. Amongst most African people especially Batswana knowledge is holistic, meaning that there is no fragmentation of the mind and body, spirit and material, subject and object, or individual and the community.

Thus, knowledge among many Batswana is obtained through fusion between reason, experience and spirit. Knowledge, and the sources of knowledge, therefore come from the cooperation of both the material and immaterial aspects of human nature. As already mentioned in the previous chapter, the material and the immaterial relate and interact with each other. For mystical knowledge to be clear to human beings, it must be transmitted to them by God, the living dead, traditional doctors or anyone who is gifted. It only makes sense when transmitted to the material reality. Thus, the living may acquire knowledge through visions, hallucinations, and dreams. This form of knowledge is boundless because it is not limited to observation and perception.

Within the framework of this study, it is argued that the spiritual and scientific or physical worldviews explain the same reality from two different perspectives. Chapter 1 presented the pragmatic justifications for important unscientific beliefs and insights in the *Botho* perspective, some of which will be questioned by some readers, because indigenous knowledge forms are often regarded as substandard in academic contexts. The chapter explained that, taking cognisance of African values and cultures, including their epistemological and metaphysical views, will promote the values entrenched in African indigenous knowledge systems. It also explained that, while some of *Botho*'s claims are true or plausible, other claims might not necessarily be clearly/obviously true but we can work with them tentatively rather than assume they are not true because they fail to meet our criteria of truth. Doing so would support local cultures. Epistemic justice recommends engaging with denigrated worldviews.

4.3 What Justifies Beliefs About the World?

According to the modern Western tradition, justification of knowledge is based on either reason or sense experience and in either case it must be certain. For rationalists like Descartes, for a belief to be justified, the subject must have direct cognitive access to the proposition, which is indubitable. Thus, rationalists justify their claims of knowledge through awareness by merely reflecting on their knowledge basis that cannot be doubted.

For empiricists, things outside the subject's mind can affect the justificatory status of the subject's belief. Thus for empiricists knowledge claims are justified if they are related and determined by at least factors that are external to the person but apprehended on the basis of sensory data, such as having a visual experience, that is certain.

In contrast to such modern Western epistemology, in African epistemology the basis of justifying knowledge claims does not prioritize one source. Knowledge justification can be either what is seen or cognitive activities like understanding, comprehension, consciousness and judgment, and neither one has to be certain. It is enough that they are likely to be true. Moreover, the act of seeing is linked with activity of the mind like understanding, comprehension, consciousness and judgement. Thus, when an individual person is seeing, s/he is also conscious of what s/he sees.

Further, it is commonly held amongst Africans that mystical knowledge and knowledge acquired from the senses are two aspects of one and the same reality and either one or the other could be used for epistemic justification. Placide Tempels (1959:50) reiterates this view when he explains that, while on one hand the Bantu believe their parents and ancestors

can instruct them by means of divinations, on the other hand they draw other arguments from their own experience (1959:50).

Furthermore, knowledge claims can be justified through the testimony of a third party, again even if we are not certain of what was said. This source of knowledge is called testimony. For example, to settle disputes some people who witnessed something as it happened could testify or verify it as truth. If the opinion of the eye witness is considered true, that means Africans do not question all sense experience as it is in the case of Rene Descartes' epistemology, instead taking it to be generally reliable. However, testimony does not only involve what has been experienced by the third party directly, it may involve things the third party has been told about or informed about. It may also involve reflection, understanding and judgement of the wise people. For example, old people and people in authority are considered in settling disputes because of their wise counsel. Sometimes their knowledge does not involve experience but it involves reflection and understanding. Whereas the modern Western tradition limits its justification of knowledge or epistemic claims to two sources, African epistemology considers science, mysticism and testimony to justify knowledge claims because they see reality as multi-dimensional. It is ideal to have more than one source because when one source provides conflicting evidence with the other, additional sources can be considered.

Based on views of most Africans including Batswana, human nature conforms to both the material and the immaterial elements. This means that the justification of knowledge is not limited to the physical world, but the internal means are also acknowledged. Whereas sense experience applies to the visible world, mysticism applies to the non-sensory world. For example, the knowledge of the traditional doctor usually comes from God hence cannot be

justified through scientific means. Similarly, the African belief in the reality of gods, spirits, and the living dead is not interpreted in physical terms because these beings cannot be experienced by human beings. Further, the living dead are imperceptible agents who lack bodies and so presumably, they do not see or feel. The internal justification of knowledge is expressed in the Setswana sayings, which express the immaterial reality. For example, the saying, *pelo e ja serati* has similar meaning with the English saying “love is blind”. The other Setswana sayings, *o se bone nong go rakalala godimo go ya tlase ke ga yone* and *o se bone tholwana borethe teng ga yone go a baba*⁹ reflect the reality of a conflict between appearance and reality. These sayings suggest that some knowledge of reality is beyond everyday observation and perception. They are used as a warning against basing justification on the external, without giving much recognition or acknowledgment to the internal aspects.

4.4 The Nature of Mind as the Ground of Knowledge

It is a commonly held view among many Africans, including Batswana, that the mental aspects of human nature are housed within the immaterial aspect of a person. The previous chapters stated that, according to the standard interpretation of transhumanism, the human mind is not different from physical objects, and has no existence independent of the human body. In contrast, to transhumanism, minds are spiritual organs in the *Botho* perspective, and so all knowledge is ultimately either itself a certain configuration of spiritual energy or contained by it.

The mind can acquire knowledge without the aid of material aspects. For example, if I am supposed to fly to Hvar, Croatia for an international conference, and while preparing myself

⁹ Tholwana or thontholwana is an inedible wild fruit.

for this trip, I start feeling like I should not proceed with the trip, yet I do not sense danger. That would be my intuition giving me a heads up. This form of knowledge is mystical as opposed to knowledge acquired from sensory experience, let alone from reason.

4.5 When Different Sources of Knowledge Provide Conflicting Evidence

All knowledge claims are routinely susceptible to errors and can be subjected to doubt.

Sometimes sources of knowledge can provide conflicting evidence, for example, one's senses versus testimony.

One of the common conflicts among the Tswana tradition are chieftaincy succession.

Someone might claim that s/he has been bestowed a chief by his or her great grandparents and another person may counterclaim the same by using his or her birth right as legitimacy to the throne. In this case, individuals could seek clarity from the elders or from the chief.

Similarly, in conflicts that involve land issues, or authority over resources, the parties may seek the help of the elders or the chief. Andrew Uduigwomen (2009: 172) explains that sometimes "in African traditional setting, experimentation is not resorted to if a disagreement arises between two parties regarding what one claims to observe. Rather, the testimony of a third party is sought to settle the difference". Whereas Western traditional epistemology limits itself to two sources of knowledge or justifications, African epistemology justification can be scientific (reason and experience), or through testimony or through mysticism.

Testimony can be examined if doubt arises. If somebody's testimony is not convincing, more other people may be invited to verify or nullify the other person's claims. Those who give testimony could have eye witnessed, they could have learned by being told or by reading and they could have learned by reflection and understanding. Furthermore, it is common for most

Africans to seek interventions of diviners, traditional doctors and ancestors to unfold mysteries.

4.6 Conclusion

This chapter discussed Western and African epistemology or theory of knowledge. For Western epistemology I focused on the works of Descartes, Locke and Hume, representing rationalism and empiricism respectively. I specified some of the differences between this modern Western and African epistemology. Knowledge in the *Botho* perspective is both metaphysical and scientific. Some of the forms of knowledge discussed in this chapter are old age testimonial knowledge, perceptual knowledge, and mystical knowledge. Knowledge can be acquired individually and or communally. Mystical knowledge and knowledge acquired from the senses are two aspects of one and the same reality, and either one or the other could be used for epistemic justification. In chapter 7 I will show that the way justification is acquired in African epistemology, particularly the *Botho* perspective, influences knowledge acquisition in a transhuman context.

Chapter 5: The Moral/Normative Aspect of *Botho*

5.1 Introduction

This chapter explores the moral/normative aspect of *Botho*. Morality deals with what is good or bad about a person in relation to others. Moral/normative personhood or the ethical aspect of *Botho* consists of the way a human person ought to behave and be treated. Chapter 3 discussed the metaphysical aspect of *Botho*. In contrast to the metaphysical personhood, which refers to the essence of a person, moral personhood refers to a process of becoming a real or complete person, by being recognised as having exhibited good character and acting accordingly for the sake of the community. Moral personhood can also mean humanness or virtue, so that the more personhood one has, the better his or her moral character.

The previous chapters explored metaphysics and epistemology in the *Botho* perspective. This chapter discusses morality, precisely how one becomes a complete person, i.e. exhibits virtue. Metaphysics, epistemology and morality are intimately connected. Immateriality presupposes the presence of the mental aspects which enable reasoning. Reasoning presupposes knowledge of moral truth. Thus, knowledge of moral principles manifests the moral concept of *Botho*. Additionally, the presence of immateriality presupposes relationality which essentially defines metaphysical personhood in the *Botho* perspective. Therefore the metaphysical reality that a person is gives rise to the moral person.

The major sections of the chapter are ordered as follows: the first section of the chapter discusses Ubuntu/*Botho* as a moral philosophy (5.2); followed by a discussion on the three facets of *Botho* in section (5.3). A discussion on persons, community and *Botho/Ubuntu* as expressed by African philosophers follows in section (5.4), incorporation and full personhood in section (5.5). Lastly, moral cause and relationships are discussed in section (5.6) and section (5.7) concludes the chapter.

5.2 *Ubuntu/Botho* as a Moral Philosophy

In this section I discuss *Ubuntu/ Botho* generally from a moral perspective. *Ubuntu* has been variously described as a “recognition of the humanity of other persons, respect for others, creation of community” (Mnyaka & Motlhabi 2009:78) and “being humane, respectful and polite towards others” (Ramose 1999:13). Therefore, a human person is fundamentally a part of the community.

Scholars of personhood in the African context often highlight that *Ubuntu* entails an interrelatedness amongst individuals. Thus, to be human is to belong. Metz (2011:540) argues that according to *Ubuntu*, an individual becomes a moral person insofar as s/he honours communal relationships. Metz also explains that actions are wrong when they fail to respect friendships with other people or the capacity for it (2011:540). Interdependence is the backbone of African societies, and the community is made up of relational individuals. The Setswana saying is, *Moroto wa yo esi ga o ele* (one individual’s urine does not flow; Moloto and Molao 1975), means that an individual needs the community, and the community needs the individual. The individual is embodied in the community. People must, therefore, behave in a way that acknowledges their interdependence and interrelatedness with other people. All people are interdependent; no one can live without the support of other human persons, because life is perceived on a communal basis. It has meaning, only if, it is of benefit to fellow human persons. In the Setswana world view, when somebody feels honoured by another person they usually say “you have made me a person”. According to Dumi Oafeta Mmualefhe (2007:3), “*Botho* emphasises relationship; it is about concern for others. The very definition of *Motho* cannot be divorced from the existence and the wellbeing of others”.

In the *Botho* worldview, a human person is a member of a community of human persons. Whilst an individual is also a person in his own individual right, such a person is primarily able to relate with others. The personality is largely corporate, where the individual is the embodiment of the whole society. From this notion, one observes that the society exists because of its individual members, meaning that everyone's contribution is vital.

Along the same communitarian lines, the term *Botho* is also employed in reference to virtue. According to Metz (2011:533). *Ubuntu* ethics, means “a normative account of what we ought to most value in life”. Metz explains that selfhood and humanness are value laden concepts, and that since selfhood is value laden “the ultimate goal in life should be to become a complete person” (2011:533). Metz asserts that identity, and solidarity are two most important values in the community. He further states that identity makes people think of themselves as belonging to one another, hence they become sympathetic and friendly with one another, while solidarity makes people “engage in mutual aid, to act in ways that are reasonably expected to benefit each other” (2011:538). Virtue is something that individual people do not initially have, but it comes after a process that requires an individual to learn the prescribed norms and social rules. It is also developed by participating in the community. Small children are required to undergo the special process of social integration into the community through specific rituals. According to Rupert Hambira in the distance past, Batswana observed rites of passages (2001). Hambira observes that the rites of passage were like a school that ran from the cradle to the grave. He gives an example of confinement of the mother and the child after birth and initiation schools for boys and girls and argues that through the rites of passage *Botho* was imparted among individuals (2001:6). Everyone has

the capacity to develop moral virtue. Values such as sharing, hospitality and family hood are at the core of *Botho*. To have virtue is to have *Botho*, and the lack of virtue is lack of *Botho*.

The three aspects of *Botho* are discussed below to illustrate how *Botho* can be applied. It is in recognition of these three aspects that one can be said to have *Botho*.

5.3 The Three Facets of *Botho*

The *Botho* perspective states that a person is a person because of, with and through other people. This is the interpretation of the saying *Motho ke motho ka batho* in Setswana and *Umuntu ngu muntu nga bantu* in Nguni languages (Dube et. al. 2016). The saying embodies the aspects of personhood as discussed below.

5.3.1 A Person Is a Person Because of Other People

This statement concerns process and socialisation. It means that mostly other people make an indispensable contribution towards what a person becomes physically, socially, and morally. Moreover, it is the community that defines an individual as significant, so that the individual cannot be considered important independent of the community.

5.3.2 A Person Is a Person With Other People

A person is a person with other people, means that personhood is made in partnership with other people. There is need for other people in one's life for one to continue to be a person. In every person's journey of life, they need companionship. For example, a rich person who owns businesses is recognised as rich because of his or her workers and clients. This companionship makes him or her to be who s/he is, and can also help him or her remain the same person.

5.3.3 A Person Is a Person Through Other People

The concept that “a person is a person through other people” invokes reciprocity. A person’s goodness to others should be rewarded with goodness in return. Emmanuel Kant’s (1991) well-known second formulation of the categorical imperative, states that you ought not to regard other people as mere means to your ends but as ends in themselves. The *Botho* perspective similarly states that in our becoming, we must regard other human persons as ends in themselves. However, the difference that *Botho* has compared to Kantianism is that *Botho* prioritises the ability to relate with other human persons while Kantianism prioritises the notion of reason. This is the argument that Menkiti (1984:172) was preoccupied with; when he said that western thought regards personhood as “some isolated static quality of rationality, will, or memory”. Most probably Menkiti was not negating rationality as an aspect of personhood, and neither is *Botho* negating rationality as a basic component of personhood. The difference between *Botho* and the Kantian philosophy is that, while Kant emphasises reason independently as the cornerstone of personhood (Gyekye 1992), *Botho* additionally acknowledges the capacity to enter into social relationships. When my goal is to acquire a PhD, I need a supervisor and I have to use my supervisor to fulfill my dream. The supervisor also has goals, s/he wants to acquire knowledge, retain his position, and get promoted or earn a better salary. Therefore, I become what I become through my supervisor, and s/he through me. We are both using each other in a positive way, if we do so cooperatively and out of concern for each other’s needs. In section 5.6.3 I discuss *Letsema* or *Molaletsa* as examples of a tripartite relationship.

5.4 Persons, Community and *Botho/Ubuntu* as Expressed by African Philosophers

This section examines several African philosophers' understanding of *Botho/Ubuntu* in light of the metaphysical and ethical aspects of personhood with which this thesis is concerned.

The discussion demonstrates how the *Botho/Ubuntu* perspective covers the holistic reality of the individual person. This discussion is done under the following topics: communitarian priority in personhood, the individual's prevalence in personhood, and reconciling irreconcilable concepts in personhood.

5.4.1 Five Ways of Identifying Personhood

Scholarship discusses five ways of identifying personhood. The first entails setting apart an individual person from impersonal things such as animals (Gaie 2007). The second method, entails distinguishing an individual person from other individual persons (see Leke Adeofe in his article "Personal Identity in African Metaphysics" (2004). These two approaches are metaphysical.

The third mode, entails identifying relationality and a capacity to fit well in society. This notion of personhood identifies a person as a moral agent, an individual capable of acting according to duty (Wiredu 1996). The fourth notion of personhood involves virtue, becoming a complete person, an agent who has fulfilled his or her duties. This is what Ifeanyi Menkiti (1984) discusses as illustrated below. A fifth sense of "person" is a being with a dignity. For example, Molefe (2022), discusses a person as one with dignity and rights in *ubuntu*.

The African understanding of normative personhood leans heavily towards communitarianism. Menkiti (1984) discusses his view about normative personhood, and its relationship with the community in Africa, in his article "Person in African Traditional

Thought”. He explains that “man is defined by reference to the enviroing community” (1984:171.). Likewise, Mbiti (1969:108-109) explains that in traditional life, the individual is simply part of the whole because whatever happens to the whole group happens to him/her. In a similar vein, the *Botho* outlook holds that a person becomes a real person or a good person in so far as s/he integrates her/himself into the community. Thus, to become a real or complete person, one must act for the sake of the community or live up to what it counts as excellence.

5.4.2 The Individual’s Prevalence in Personhood

As already mentioned in chapter 2, scholars traditionally accuse each other of misinterpreting the extent to which African communitarianism overrules individuality, whether normatively or metaphysically. For example, Chukwudum Okolo (2003) critiques African Metaphysics as understood by Tempels and Mbiti. Okolo criticises the idea that an individual person only becomes real in their relationships with others, and that he or she has no reality or independent personhood in him/herself. Okolo (2003:213) mentions the view that: “it is the community which makes the individual, to the extent that without the community, the individual has no existence ...” Okolo argues that communitarianism erases the individual’s identity and freedom.

Another proponent of African communitarianism who holds a similar mindset as the Setswana perspective is Thaddeus Metz (2011), who is of the view that the best interpretation of *Ubuntu* does not normatively prioritise the community over the individual person. In his view, *Ubuntu* is not detrimental to the individual person in their freedom, rights and dignity. According to Metz, *Ubuntu* is an ethic that respects both freedom and community. He explains that “the ultimate goal in life should be to become a (complete) person, a (true) self

or a (genuine) human being” (2011:533). For Metz, the role of *Ubuntu* is for the individual person to attain the fullness of personhood, which s/he does by relating communally to others, not by conforming to whatever a community demands.

5.4.3 Reconciling Irreconcilable Concepts in Personhood

At face value, it appears that there is inconsistency in the *Botho/Ubuntu* concept that accepts relations. Metz’s (2011) attempt to show that *Ubuntu* ethics is consistent with dignity and rights resulted into criticism by Anthony Oyowe (2013). Oyowe dismisses Metz’s attempt to ground freedom, dignity and rights on *Ubuntu* and argues that *Ubuntu* is inconsistent with individual dignity, freedom and rights. According to him, solidarity or harmony and freedom are irreconcilable values. Oyowe believes that one cannot be harmonious with the community and still be free. Thus, harmony is more consistent with communitarianism, but the idea of freedom is not (*ibid*). One can choose harmony or freedom but never both; by going for one, you hurt the other. One is thus caught in the middle. Oyowe is of the opinion that Metz is fragmenting the moral concept into two distinct and equally valid aims, and thereby reveals an internal incoherence.

However, Augustine Shutte (2001) correctly observes the weakness of Oyowe’s argument. He notes that the argument emanates from western thought, which is fundamentally individualistic, and fails to reconcile communal solidarity, and personal freedom. Shutte (2001:12) says,

The dominant forms of European thought, philosophical as well as political, have failed to reconcile individual freedom with social community. Freedom is understood as independence, community as dependence, and these are opposed. The reason for this failure is to be found in the materialism of European culture. In the logic of

science, if something is dependent on something else, whether an object or force, it cannot be independent. And this applies to human beings as well since they are just as material as anything else. So either you have the independence of individualism or the dependence of collectivism.

Shutte's interpretation of the African perspective on this concept is that independence and dependence are simply different sides of the same coin; that is, while the community is essential, the individual person is also essential in his or her own right. Similarly, the *Botho* perspective does not have a problem with reconciling independence (freedom) of the individual or the absolute dependence on community.

The *Botho* perspective is accommodative of the individual's aspiration to self-improvement and personal achievement. For instance, the Setswana saying, *Molapo o tlatswa ke melatswana* (a river is filled by smaller streams; Guma (1967), specifically highlights the importance of an individual. The individual is represented by the stream, and the community is represented by the river. To uphold the value of priority, the community does not necessarily deny an individual his or her potential or freedom. For example, whereas the community is a prescriber of norms (Menkiti 1984), an individual is free to develop his or her (moral) personhood. Thus, an individual determines how successful s/he becomes at being a perfect person. Further, the community makes decisions that are not only binding on the individual, but also can be questioned by the individual. If, for example, the community takes a decision that violates an individual's rights and freedom, the individual has the power to resent it. This is because the *Botho* perspective treats communal harmony and individual freedom as relative rather than absolute.

Kayange (2021), in agreement with the *Botho* perspective, follows a version of compatibilism. Kayange argues that the community is necessary because it follows from human nature, but at the same time, individuals choose to act, either based on what it dictates or on the individual's interests. He argues that the responsibility is possible because Africans have available alternatives to agree or disagree with the community. Kayange goes on to explain that a human person is determined by either the community or the self, depending on the type of virtue practiced. He explains that "... individuals may decide to act generously towards the other, as motivated by the desire to achieve communal good. In other circumstances, the African individual may act inspired by the desire to fulfill individual oriented virtues (self-regarding virtues) such as self-control" (2021:146). He contends that practical reason guides decision making, and an individual can decide to sacrifice a community-oriented virtue to fulfill a self-regarding virtue.

5.5 Incorporation and Full Personhood

The general African thought is that a person attains real or full personhood through incorporation into society. This process of moral development in line with social standards is captured well in Botswana government's Vision 2016 (1999:2), which defines *Botho* as follows:

a process for earning respect by first giving it and to gain empowerment by empowering others. It encourages people to applaud rather than to resent those who succeed. It disapproves of anti-social – disgraceful, inhuman, and criminal behaviour and encourages social justice for all.

In line with the *Botho* viewpoint, personhood is constructed during the course of one's life, from the moment of birth until death. The community plays a critical role as the human

person goes through the gradual process of social transformation. When a person has diminished in quality, the community loses its own quality. Mmualefhe (2007:12) holds that no matter how bad a human person is, one “should never give up on a person”. This is because; in their entire earthly lives, human persons are in a process or a journey of becoming. Mmualefhe goes on to state that because of the communitarian nature of Africans, one who is said to have lost *Botho* does not only reflect on his or her own being, or lack of being, but that of the family, which ultimately ends at the door of the community. Their disharmony is lack of good health for the community, so it is not merely for the one who has lost *Botho*. Thus, *Botho* is self-evaluating. The loss of *Botho* by an individual is a call to the community to re-assess itself. The total rejection by the society of one, who has lost *Botho*, puts into question the *Botho* of the very community. Mmualefhe (2007:12) contends that “we can never even be excused from the inescapable network of mutuality, by the mere fact that someone else has broken the relational code.”

Setiloane’s (1976:40) statement that *Ubuntu* is not automatically acquired means that more features of *Ubuntu* become added to every person, while other features grow in depth over the years, particularly social or moral features of personhood. This can be summed up in the words of Menkiti (1984:172-173), who states that:

[...] personhood is something which has to be achieved and is not given simply because one is born of human seed. [It] is something at which individuals could fail, could be competent, ineffective, better or worse. Hence, the African emphasised the rituals of incorporation so that what was initially biologically given can come to attain social self-hood.

Therefore, it can be expected that, generally, “the older an individual gets, the more of a person he becomes” (Menkiti 1984:173). Menkiti posits that according to the notion of *Ubuntu*, young children are not morally capable beings, so they are not yet persons at all. Incorporation means inclusion of the individual as part of the whole community. Menkiti explains that without incorporation, individuals are “mere danglers to whom the description of person does not apply” (1984:179).

As already mentioned in section 3.34, children are in the process of acquiring full personhood. This study holds that children are not full persons in the sense of moral virtue. Setiloane (1976:40) explains that a child is born with a light dignity which has to be strengthened by the dignities of others. The maturation of a child into adulthood requires the presence of other people. Therefore, adults guide children because the adults’ personal potentiality is more developed than that of children. One of the Setswana proverbs used to teach young people to be obedient to the elderly is *ngwana yo o sa utlweng molao wa batswadi o utlwa wa manong* (a child who does not hear the parents’ law hears that of the vulture). The meaning of this proverb is that children who are disobedient to their parents are vulnerable to danger.

In subsection 4.2 it is mentioned that older persons have more knowledge than younger persons. Thus, the process of personhood suggests epistemic progression. Knowledge in the African context is acquired through culture, tradition, and religion. Children are taught values through folk stories, songs and poems. Values are also instilled through socialisation. Benjamin Ray (1976) observes that the rites of passage are used as educational institution to impart values in African societies. He explains that:

The most elaborate rites of passage usually concern the initiation of the young into adulthood. In this way, a society not only socialises its young by outwardly moving them into new roles of social responsibility, but also transforming them inwardly by moulding their moral and mental disposition towards the world (1976:132-133).

Ray further explains that in the initiation ceremonies, young people go through the process of ignorance to enlightenment with divine knowledge. The Tswana tradition similarly evolved in observance of the rite of passage. *Bogwera* and *bojale* are Tswana initiation schools for boys and girls which marked the transition from childhood to adulthood.

5.6 Moral Cause and Relationships

Since chapter 3 discussed physical, social and invisible causes of personhood, this section explains the moral cause. Arguably, the most fundamental aspect of personhood from the *Botho* perspective is ethics. According to *Botho*, an individual is fundamentally a moral being, and the judgement of whether s/he is a good or bad person is based on his moral achievement. A moral wrong in the *Botho* perspective is an epistemological reality. It is a lie or failure to acknowledge reality for what it is. For example, the oppression of other people based on their sex, race, tribe, nationality, religion or age, is failure by the oppressor to acknowledge his or her interrelatedness with the victims. Moral wrongdoing is the acknowledgement of what ought not to be acknowledged, or failure to acknowledge what ought to be acknowledged. This can be compared with Kant's statement, "I ought never to act except in such a way that I could also will that my maxim should become a universal law" (1991:149). "I am because of other people", means other people define me, and I define other people, and the whole community. If I mistreat other people, they will define me as a bad person. Similarly, if I treat people with respect, they will define me as a good person.

Moreover, people and actions are deemed good or bad from the standpoint of social relationships, regardless of whether the person judges him or herself, or is judged by other people. This is because the human person does not live in splendid isolation. Thus, virtue is dependent upon interaction with the environment, including other people. The presence of other people will cause one to behave in a right or wrong way. For instance, in the case of rape, both the victim and the rapist are necessary. We can therefore argue that the rapist has caused the victim to be the victim, and the victim has caused the rapist to be the rapist. Be that as it may, causality is not responsibility. To say that somebody has caused another to be an offender does not necessarily mean that the victim is responsible for the offence. The victim's presence is necessary for the offence to take place, but the offender is the one who is responsible. Likewise, in the morally good act of charity, the giver and the one who is given have both caused each other's actions. A morally good or evil person is so because of the way s/he relates with the society and/or the environment.

When an individual does something wrong to another person, they are failing to acknowledge the connectivity of all in the society. The *Botho* perspective is therefore, similar to the so-called Golden rule, namely, "do unto others as you would have them do unto you". Wiredu (1996) similarly argues that, for a human society to qualify as a society there must be a standard principle of conduct. He terms it, "the principle of sympathetic impartiality" and argues that it may be expressed by the imperative, "let your conduct at all times manifest a due concern for others" (Wiredu 1996:29). For example, in Setswana, greetings are important, when people exchange greetings they tell each other about themselves and their belongings. When other people are not well, one would do whatever they can to help, including, giving them information on where to get help. This is what due concern for others entails.

A human person is perceived in terms of his or her relationship with the community, “I am because of other people” (Tutu 2004:25) means that other people define me and I define other people. My observation is that some fundamental features of Afro-communitarianism define, nurture and preserve the individual and the minority. Some of the Setswana practices like *mafisa*, which is discussed later in this chapter, demonstrate that the *Botho* perspective seeks to provide for all individuals, even when they are poor and lower in the social hierarchy. The *Botho* viewpoint demands that human persons acknowledge and pay deference to any other being which exhibits the characteristics of metaphysical personhood. Failure to treat a human person with dignity, simply because of dissention, is not *Botho*. Likewise, the oppression of other people based on their sex, race, tribe, nationality, religion, or age is contrary to the *Botho* perspective. If the community of black people discriminates against a white person, for instance, that community becomes a community of racists. The community has become in part because of its relationship with a white person. That is to say, the white person defines the community. Entertaining oneself, or a particular group of people at the expense of an individual or the minority, is against *Botho*, because the oppressor (or oppressors) behaves as if they have no relationship with the others. A morally good person, according to *Botho/Ubuntu* is welcoming, hospitable, warm, generous, and willing to share (Tutu 1997:39).

However, to uphold the value of the priority of community, does not necessarily deny an individual his or her own identity, potential or responsibility for his or her actions. It is practically impossible for individuals to always agree with the community. In a certain incident, several individuals are likely to disagree with the community, and on the next incident, they might side with the community, while a different set of individuals disagrees.

Similarly, it is impossible for the individual to be absolutely free, for s/he will sometimes compromise and at other times disobey. This is expected occasionally in the African community, without necessarily leading to the ostracisation of the individual in question. Otherwise, this would lead to the constant ostracisation of individuals, which entails a destabilisation of the community.

5.6.1 Morality in Politics

Batswana believe that *kgosi ke kgosi ka batho* (Mogapi 1985) or the chief is a chief because of his subjects. The chief rules with, because of and through other people, which is a recipe for his success. Even though one is born a chief, and into an office traditionally believed to be ordained by the ancestral spirits, one is expected to live up to communal expectations. Abuse of this birth right can bring it to an end. Batswana believe that *molao o sefofu, o tle o je mong wa one* (the law is blind, and can even eat its creator). In other words, no one is above the law. Another idiom says *molao tau o loma le mogokgo* (the law is a lion; it bites the great man too).

The chief cannot justly work for his own happiness at the expense of the community's happiness. That is, because according to the *Botho* perspective, no one is inherently more important than the other; no one can claim that his or her happiness or unhappiness counted more than the happiness or unhappiness of the average person. The missionary, Robert Moffat, observed the democratic nature of Tswana chieftaincy, whereby subjects were not obliged to accord the chief prejudiced deference. Moffat says that this was not the tyranny that is often associated with other *Bantu* chiefs (1842:248-249). Thus, the *Botho* perspective has similarities with democracy in respect of freedom of speech and consultation.

Nonetheless, this study holds that the *Botho* perspective does not only acknowledge the majority but also esteems the individual, the minority and the poor in the society.

5.6.2 Freedom in Politics

The *Botho* perspective does not deny an individual expression as a free being. In Setswana, an individual person is seen as having an intrinsic value, and must therefore, be given honour due to a human person (Dube et. al. 2016). Batswana's traditional politics is a politics of consensus, which originates from a respect for all human persons and their right to air their opinions. The opposition is always invited to freedom of speech through the sayings, *mmualebe o bua la gagwe gore mona lentle a tswa la gagwe* (the one who says a bad word says his/her own word so that the one with a good word can say it) meaning that every person has the right to express their views, and *mafoko a kgotla a mantle otlhe* (all words spoken at the public gathering are valuable). Every individual is worthy of respect, and should be allowed to say what they have in mind. It is against *Botho* to suppress an opinion, which the majority does not approve of because the suppressed opinion may have substance. Freedom of thought and feeling presupposes the ability to reason as an integral part of every rational being, and the possibility for disseminating information. Another saying which expresses freedom of speech is *kgosi thotobolo o olela matlakala otlhe* (Mogapi 1985; the chief is a dumping site and must allow all rubbish). This means that the chief has the obligation to listen to, and assess everything that is presented to him. If it is false or foolish, it will be corrected at the public gathering through an open discussion.

However, freedom does not include rebellion, disrespect, scorn and abusive remarks.

Individuals are advised to guard against negative words through the saying, *motho o tshwarwa ka leleme, kgomo e tshwarwa ka kgole* (a human person is trapped by his or her tongue while a cow is trapped with a rope) and *lefoko ga le bowe go bowa monwana* (a

spoken word cannot be reversed, but an accusing finger can be folded back). An interpretation of the above sayings is that communication impacts on the well-being of the speaker and the listeners. Somebody who behaves according to *Botho*, speaks the truth, and can restrain him/herself from destructive talk. When one loses temper in public, for example, one will be advised to be in control of one's emotions through a saying, *pelo potsane, e a golegwa* (a heart is a kid, it must be tied securely; Mogapi 1985). In this instance the heart refers to a temper—when you are angry (*o betilwe ke pelo*) you have to restrain yourself. If you do not secure kids they can go astray—small kids can follow anything—dogs, people etc and get lost in the process.

5.6.3 Morality and Dignity

A helpful basic description of dignity can be found in the *World Book Dictionary*, which defines dignity as “the quality of character or ability that wins respect and a high opinion of others” (Barnhart and Barnhart 1990:587). Scholars are divided on how to categorise dignity, whether ethically, metaphysically, or both. The African worldview, however, recognises and embraces both an innate metaphysical, and a socially acquired moral, dignity. Austin Mbozi's view of dignity is similar to this perception where he espouses a belief in, firstly, an “inherent dignity that derives from our rationality” and secondly, “harmonious relations” (unpublished work: page 7).

On the metaphysical side of the debate, Gabriel Setiloane, who studied Batswana religious ideas, defines *seriti* (dignity) as:

A physical phenomenon, which expresses itself externally to the human body in a dynamic manner. It is like an aura around the human person, an invisible shadow, or a cloud, or mist forming something like a magnetic or radar field (1976:13).

Metz (2011) also understands human dignity in inherent terms, but relationally and not in terms of life-force, as exemplified by the following statement:

a human being has dignity in virtue of his capacity for community or friendship, conceived as the combination of identity and solidarity, where to identify with others is to share a way of life with them and to exhibit solidarity with others is to care about their quality of life (2011:544).

According to Metz, a human person has an innate capacity for relationships, whether s/he actualises this capacity or not. Metz argues that a human person always carries his or her own dignity, even if for some reason s/he happens to be in solitude, for instance in prison. Even though Metz differs with the *Botho* perspective by ruling out the spiritual aspect of personhood which *Botho* recognises, both perspectives acknowledge the inherent worth of an individual person. For Metz there is no inconsistency between the individual and the community.

This perspective coincides with that of *Botho*, because *Botho* recognises that human persons are naturally oriented towards each other. Nonetheless, it is the position of this thesis that scholars of Afro-communitarianism have been rather extreme when attaching relationality to personhood. Thus, while some, like Polycarp Ikuenobe (2016), would say that an individual has no dignity unless s/he has acted morally or communally, a *Botho* interpretation of personhood states that individual persons have a metaphysical dignity which accompanies being human, be they young, old, moral, amoral, intelligent or insane. Dignity is both metaphysical and moral, it is both innate and acquired. In the Setswana perspective, the human remains must be handled with care because they carry human dignity. A human

person has dignity from birth, and it is never lost. A person is a person because of, with and through others irrespective of their status.

The *Botho* perspective provides the standard for how a human person ought and/or ought not to be treated. On one hand the human person has inherent dignity as long as s/he possess the immaterial aspect even if s/he does not actualize the capacity to enter into a moral relationship with other people. For example people who are in solitude, for instance prison. On the other hand the human person has a greater acquired dignity when they actually enter into relationships with other people. Thus, what grounds the two kind of dignity for *Botho* is the immateriality of human communal nature and moral relationship with other people.

According to the *Botho* view, a human person is not only dignified because of his or her capacity for interconnectedness with fellow human persons, but also for actualising that capacity. Ikuenobe (2016:460) insists that “...respect by others is not something that one who is capable of morality ‘has inherently,’ but is something earned and deserved based on the active and positive use of one’s capacity for moral excellence or superior achievements.” Ikuenobe incorrectly rejects inherent dignity, but is right to note another sort that is acquired.

Interconnectedness within *Botho* can be contrasted with the Kantian conception of dignity which narrows inherent human dignity to the capacity for rational agency (Kant 1991). In view of the *Botho* perspective, each human person has a role to play, which will ideally bring solidarity to the community, while also maintaining the individual’s rights and dignity that she has as a relational being. Dwight Hopkins (2005) is in agreement with the *Botho* perspective when he posits that solidarity gives rise to reciprocity amongst people. He explains that the full majority realises itself, when each member of the collective participates

in reciprocity. For each person to reach the fullness of the self there must be a mutual interacting process. Hopkins elaborates that each member must be alert because his or her actions contribute either growth or reduction to the life of the entire community or its own individual life. Likewise, for John de Gruchy (2006:36), “sharing a common humanity binds people together rather than separates them”. In this context, denying the humanity of others inevitably leads to the reduction of one’s own acquired dignity. That means dehumanising others dehumanises oneself.

An example of perceiving the personal dignity of a victim is when a misfortune or death occurs to an individual; the whole community mourns. This mindset helps to prevent divisions and categorisations but encourages solidarity and respect among fellow members of the community. An individual who does this seamlessly is normally given greater acquired dignity than one who does not, with varying degrees of dignity granted according to the level of ability to contribute to communitarianism. In the African context, the individual “... took care of the community and the community took care of him/her; when s/he suffered, s/he suffered with the community” (Matolino 2008:124). There is a sense of selflessness and concern for the well-being of fellow society members.

In a communitarian society, there are moral virtues of love and compassion, which acknowledge and uphold the dignity of each individual, especially the disadvantaged. Some of the important traditional practices in the Botswana society are *majako*, *mafisa*, *go tshwaela* and work parties. *Majako* is when someone who has not ploughed their own field works on the field of the one who has ploughed. The person who has ploughed then gives the one who has not ploughed a portion of the harvest as an appreciation of the work done. *Mafisa* is when those who have more cattle loan some to those without for their everyday use, such as

milking and using them for draught power. The borrower temporarily cares for the cattle like they were his own until he acquires his. A cattle owner often pays his or her herdsman through *go tshwaela*, to mark and set apart a heifer as a gift (Schapera 1955:217). These practices restore dignity by raising the living standards of the underprivileged.. The other example of a *Botho* cultural practice is work parties, viz., *Letsema* or *Molaletsa*. When, for example, someone is building a house, clearing bushes in their field or harvesting, they would cook a lot of food, brew traditional beer, and would request neighbours to assist with the work as well as invite them to the feast. The people help each other not because they need a meal, but because of charity, and the goal of upholding the dignity of their neighbour. From this viewpoint, Vuyani Vellem aptly sums up the African notion of dignity by saying that: “...dignity [...] should be sought in the interconnectedness of humans” (2010:314).

The interconnectedness of human persons is also identifiable in Setswana proverbs like *molomo fa o ja o roga o mongwe* (when a mouth eats, it insults the other mouths) (Mmualefhe 2007). This means that it is not right to eat when others are watching with nothing to eat/ to enjoy privileges that others are not enjoying. Another Setswana proverb that Mmualefhe quotes is *bana ba motho ba kgaogana tlhogwana ya tsie* (siblings share the head of a locust) which means that even if you have as little food as the head of a locust, you must share it. Communal efforts to help each other are based on the belief that *mabogo dinku a a thebana* and *sedikwa ke ntsa pedi ga se thata* (Mogapi 1985). These sayings are similar to the English saying, “many hands make light work”. Helping each other seeks to maintain the dignity of each person in the society.

5.6.4 Non-human Things and Human Persons

It is commonly held among most Africans including Batswana that human persons cannot survive without the rest of nature such as, land, animals, trees and vegetation, ancestral spirits, mountains, rivers, and others. According to the Setswana tradition, nature must be preserved because it is the source of food, shelter and other materials that make day to day human life possible. This perspective falls within Placide Tempels' (1959) exposition of the *Bantu* worldview of life forces, who explains that God made non-human forces for the purpose of serving human beings, in order to strengthen their human vital force. Thus, in the context of many Africans including Batswana, the benefits found in nature are good for the maintenance of human dignity.

Since non-person things support the life-force of human persons, based on the *Botho* viewpoint, the inherent worth of non-persons is low in quality as compared to that of human persons. Setswana has a proverb that says, *ga le fete motho le tlhaba kgomo* (a bullet ought to bypass a human person to stab a cow; Mogapi 1984:121). This means that, if a choice has to be made, something else must die in place of a human person. The life of a human person is considered priceless. According to the *Botho* perspective, it would be morally wrong, for a bullet to be directed at a human person. In accordance with the *Botho* standpoint, whilst the human person has moral obligations towards persons and non-persons, such obligations are more important towards persons than non-persons. The human person's moral obligations towards moral persons are correlated with human rights. The obligations towards non-persons are for natural balance. Batswana believe that murder can result in drought; this is because human persons are believed to be interconnected with nature as well as dependent on it. Divinity is also nature. The human person has some obligations to future generations, so they must preserve nature such as land.

5.7 Conclusion

This chapter has discussed the moral or social and ethical aspect of *Botho*. The moral aspect of the *Botho* perspective is largely concerned with social relations between members of the community. It involves the normative issue of how to treat people, and moral responsibility, that is how an agent should decide. This chapter has also discussed examples of what morality requires, as well as the human dignity from the *Botho* perspective. It discussed two senses of dignity, namely, dignity as inherent in human beings and dignity as acquired by them. The next chapters evaluate the impact of biotechnological enhancements on freewill.

Chapter 6: The Impact of Enhancements on Freewill

6.1 Introduction

The preceding two chapters laid out the *Botho* perspective, which serves as the analytical tool in the present chapter, and the subsequent ones (chapters 7 and 8). In the present chapter, the metaphysical aspect of *Botho* tackles the question of whether or not transhumanism would impair free-will or even enhance it. Of the three chapters on *Botho*, chapter 3 dealt with the metaphysical aspects of *Botho*, chapter 4 covered epistemological aspect and chapter 5 covered the moral/ethical aspects, and ideas from these three chapters are relevant to free-will issues. Chapters 7 and 8 are functionally similar to this sixth chapter in that they continue the analysis of hypothetical enhanced persons using the *Botho* tool. This chapter, deals with determinism and freewill and leaves the discussion of other major ontological aspects of human beings and personhood to chapters 7 and 8.

The current and next chapters demonstrate that modest biotechnological enhancements are consistent with metaphysical aspects of the *Botho* perspective.¹⁰ However, it argues that extreme degrees or kinds of transhumanism or enhancement, whose ultimate goal is a new species, will be inconsistent with the metaphysical aspect of the *Botho* perspective in terms of remaining a human.

It has been observed that scholars, who discuss the human person in the context of Afro-communitarianism, tend to give inadequate attention to the metaphysical perspective of personhood in favour of the moral and relational understanding. Scholars who bring the

¹⁰ The data on enhancements and transhumanism, to which I will apply the *Botho* worldview, was presented in chapter 2, with greater emphasis on gene and cybernetic enhancements.

African communitarian mindset into the personhood debate generally identify the individual person as non-autonomous. In contrast, the third chapter of this thesis demonstrated comprehensively that, in the *Botho* perspective, the individual person also exists as a metaphysically autonomous entity. The present chapter also contributes new knowledge by applying a prominent metaphysical orientation within the *Botho* worldview, particularly its discussion of determinism and freedom, to debate about enhancements.

As previously mentioned in the first chapter, many African scholars address transhumanism in the normative aspect of African personhood. For example, Fayemi (2018) deals with transhumanism and personhood in a Yoruba African context. Du Toit (2005) explores the possible benefits of Africans being transhumanists. These scholars, however, do not discuss transhumanism in the context of freewill. This study differs from theirs, in that it thoroughly addresses the issue of freewill, as one of the metaphysical aspects of personhood, not merely the ethical considerations. Thus, this study discusses freewill in the context of transhumanism. Such an enquiry has not been undertaken before by scholars working in the African philosophical tradition.

In the discussions, the human person is physically determined by genetic inheritance, physical living conditions, and socialization with family and society, but still possesses freewill. This section argues that some forms of transhumanism could improve freewill while other forms could limit freewill.

The reader is to recall that, from chapter 3 that, for *Botho*, freewill is constituted by action taken upon rational reflection. Therefore, this chapter argues that some forms of transhumanism like cognitive enhancement could improve freewill. Antonio Dieguez and

Carissa Veliz (2017:3) have argued that moral enhancement does not limit freedom. Their central argument is that if a morally educated person is not less free than an evildoer, there is no reason to suppose that a biotechnologically enhanced individual would be less free. In contrast, this thesis uses the *Botho* approach to explain that freedom means that, in theory, one can do both good and evil, but is able to avoid the undesirable. Therefore, the removal of evil means, the enhanced person would be less free; however, s/he would still be free because freewill exists in degrees. Thus, enhancement could limit free-will, although it would not necessarily eliminate it completely.

The metaphysical topics discussed in this chapter are embedded within the following hypothetical enhancements: gene enhancement, cybernetic enhancement and cognitive enhancement. Other kinds of enhancement are also discussed, but in less detail; mind uploading is a good example. There are varying degrees of possible application of these enhancements. This study will conclude that, whereas moderate applications of the enhancements are consistent with *Botho*, in terms of remaining human, some radical forms are consistent with *Botho*, in terms of a being remaining a person. This chapter illustrates that some enhancements could improve freewill.

The first section of this chapter, discusses the ontological aspect of personhood, namely, determinism and freewill (Section 6.2). It discusses freewill issues in transhumanism and the *Botho* compatibilist approach to freewill in the first subsection (6.2.1). The next sub section (6.2.2), discusses personhood as a process. It explains that according to both the *Botho* perspective and transhumanism, personhood is not fixed but is boundless, which implies freewill. Section (6.2.3), discusses the concept of destiny in an African perspective and how it

relates to the issues of freewill. Section (6.2.4), expounds the implications of biotechnological enhancement on freewill from the *Botho* perspective.

6.2 Determinism and Freewill (Ontology)

This topic has already been discussed from the perspective of *Botho* in the third chapter, so this section alludes to the findings. This section demonstrates that deterministic or mechanical processes in the brain, which would be enhanced biotechnologically in a transhuman, would not necessarily result in the lack of freewill. Thereafter, it exhibits that soft determinism is the default sort of freewill that we have. It further illustrates that the *Botho* standpoint and transhumanism attest to soft-determinism, and not hard determinism. This study therefore holds that, according to the *Botho* perspective, there would be determinism and free-will, each to a certain degree, in both un-enhanced and hypothetically enhanced human beings. From this viewpoint, human beings are free in accordance with reason, which is a determined process. It also shows that the understanding of destiny according to the *Botho* perspective allows room for the human person to exercise freewill. Therefore, human persons are morally responsible for their actions. This thesis supports the claim that all human behaviour is caused, but the human persons are still free. This chapter, argues that moderately enhanced human persons would remain free to choose, based on their rational deliberations. Moderate enhancement is, therefore, not detrimental to human freewill.¹¹

¹¹ Only the radical types and/or some done to an extreme measure would undermine freedom, as discussed in the section “Limited Freewill Due to Radical Biotechnological Enhancement”.

6.3 Freewill and Determinism in the *Botho* and Transhumanist Framework

This subsection, displays that, in the study's *Botho* and transhumanist framework, there is no freewill–determinism dilemma or incompatibility. The *Botho* perspective has both elements of freewill and determinism. The human person could be determined by genetic inheritance, living conditions, socialisation, spiritual influences and physical events. The Setswana saying, *motho ke motho ka batho ba bangwe* could mean “I am because of my parents”. That is to say, parents have produced me biologically, psychologically and socially. I may be fat because of the genes I inherited from my parents, and I may be sick because of the genes I inherited from my parents. Similarly, whenever I do good or evil, my parents will be praised or blamed. The genes, the society and even the environment have a role to play in an individual's becoming a person.

Botho subscribes to soft determinism. The fact that personhood is a process, according to the *Botho* perspective, can imply freewill. The individual is free, responsible, and mandated to construct an ideal personhood (see chapter 5 section 5.4). The human person is free because s/he can govern himself/herself with his or her reasons. According to the *Botho* perspective, a human person is a being who, because of rational capacity, can relate. This makes him/her free. The *Botho* viewpoint holds that human persons are morally responsible for their behaviour. An individual is free to make deliberate choices of action. Being good or bad therefore depends on the self, the relationship with other people and the individual's use of the environment. The practice of holding people responsible for decisions, actions, and habits rests on the premise that they have freewill.

The extent of freewill is not fixed, Walter Glannon (2012:337) elaborates on this view by saying that “freewill can come in degrees, depending on the extent to which we control the

mental states that issue in our actions. Because causal determinism does not entail constraint, coercion, or compulsion, freewill is compatible with causal determinism.” Thus, a human person can be determined and be partly free to various extents or be determined and completely constrained, this is soft determinism. Hard determinism, however, holds that the human person is not free because his or her actions are a result of deterministic or mechanistic processes in the brain, whether conscious or unconscious (Glannon 2012). There is nothing inherent to transhumanism that rules out soft determinism, which is why some transhumanists usually describe the human person in soft deterministic terms. According to them, because human action is determined by brain events, the process is intrinsic by default, so that we can generally argue that there is no constraint, coercion or compulsion; which means that the person is free (Glannon 2012). Therefore, according to transhumanism, enhancements would not necessarily limit human freewill. When considering the *Botho* framework, based on the intrinsic nature of mental processes, we also consider such a person to fit well the traits of human personhood and thus to remain a *motho*.

6.4 Implications of Enhancement to Freewill

This section, discusses the implications of biotechnological enhancement to freewill and argue that biotechnological enhancement as such, would not necessarily limit freewill, but radical enhancement could. The section also contends that some forms of transhumanism could improve freewill.

6.4.1 Improved Freewill Due to Enhancement

In this section I show that biotechnological enhancement could indeed improve freewill. Nick Bostrom (2008:107) discusses improvements in cognition as referring to the improvement of general intellectual capacities such as memory, deductive and analogical reasoning, also

attention span. These improvements might be achieved through nanotechnology and gene enhancement. According to Allen Buchanan et. al. (2009:6), gene intervention can be done by introducing particular genes into the body cells of an individual, into germline cells (sperm cells, egg cells or embryos) or through a process in which abnormal or undesirable genes are “switched off” – that is, deactivated so that they no longer produce their distinctive effects. Gene enhancement could be used to improve cognition, and genes that regulate intelligence could be manipulated to work better. In reference to nano technology, Ray Kurzweil (2003) discusses possibilities of controlling human biological systems at the molecular level to improve human functioning. An example would be the introduction of prosthesis in the human body which would surpass the original biological mechanism. Since these enhancements would be applied to any human capability or function, they may be used to improve focus and memory among students or ageing people. For instance, tiny computers would be interfaced with the brain to speed up the processing of information, to increase memory, and to improve problem solving skills. Where knowledge and all relevant information are processed, choice is being made from an informed position. An enhanced individual would be free insofar as s/he possessed advanced knowledge about the contents of the choices s/he chooses. The improvement in cognition implies the improvement in knowledge. Knowledge capability influences freewill. That way, by advancing cognition, enhancement would also advance a human person’s freedom. The advanced human person would be freer than his or her unenhanced version since the boundaries of what he could do, would be extended. John Harris (2007:15) also says that human persons are the product of a natural germline-altering process called evolution, which has changed and continues to change their nature. For that reason, Harris advocates for a quicker evolution, arguing that, instead of chance, human persons should be masters of their genetic endowments, be in charge of their evolution and accelerate progress. He gives an example of a human person

learning something new. He argues that every time the human person learns something new s/he changes connections, and form in the brain which physically change its structure. These changes improve human cognitive function. In regard to destiny, acquiring mystical knowledge would help individuals to realize their destiny. As already mentioned, knowledge acquisition could improve freewill. An individual who is well informed would choose appropriate actions to fulfil his or her destiny. For example, s/he could choose to alter their success in life; find possible solutions to the problems in life, which may hinder him/her from fulfilling his or her destiny. S/he could also utilise spiritual forces to control the powers of the world to his or her will. These actions presuppose freewill; an individual in this case is directing his own destiny.

6.4.2 Unlimited Freewill Despite Enhancement

Biotechnological enhancement does not necessarily limit freewill because according to transhumanism and the *Botho* outlook, personhood is not static (see chapter 5 section 5.4). For both perspectives, personhood is externally caused, but does not end at that causal level; personhood continues to be shaped additionally through the individual's contribution until they die. Genetic enhancement, for instance, does not necessarily result in a lack of the sort of freewill that *Botho* seeks in a human. For example, attempting to modify the human genome would not violate human freewill. If genetically enhanced people were essentially not free, we would have to ask; what makes a human person whose genotype has been produced by biotechnological enhancements different from a person whose genotype has been produced by nature? Yet we know that the genotypes could be the same.

According to Amanda Sebastienne Grant (2019), potentiality plays a central role in transhumanism. Grant argues that biological limits are barriers to human potential and that

through the use of reason and other capacities, the human person can overcome these limits. As seen in chapter 5, the *Botho* standpoint says personhood is a process. The Setswana saying, *ga se motho* (s/he is not a person) suggests that personhood has degrees. A human person with a moral deficit is metaphysically a person, though of poorer quality, which can be improved. Similarly, a child's morality is not yet fully developed, so s/he can become better over time. Therefore, the human person possesses the capacity to transform him or herself in a way that earns him or her moral credit.

Nick Bostrom (2005c:211), holds that “what we are, is not a function solely of our DNA, but also of our technological and social context. Human nature in this broad sense is dynamic, partially human-made, and improvable”. David Resnik (2012:8) similarly contends that “... human beings are members of a species (*Homo sapiens*) that has evolved over time and will continue to evolve”. The fact that human nature is not static weakens the dichotomy of “natural” versus “unnatural” because our “given genome” changes over a lifetime. This brings to mind the natural process of evolution, although evolution is much slower. Thus, Grant (2019:6) contends that “... we cannot choose whether or not to manifest our potential to transcend humanity because it is inevitable, but we as individuals, can choose whether or not to utilize transhuman technologies once they exist”.

In the same way, genotypical changes do not necessarily curtail individual freewill only because they are administered artificially. In fact, one can argue that the natural evolution of human beings has been very radical. If the freedom and rationalisation of the individual, of, for example, two thousand years ago, were contrasted with those of today, such a person would most probably consider today's person a posthuman in contrast to him or herself. In other words, it is likely that the advances that the transhumanists' hypothesis suggests are no

more radical than what evolution has already done or at least could do. Evolution only took much longer and will still take much longer to have the same positive effect on the human person that is proposed by transhumanistic changes.

This study is of the view that, for *Botho*, the human person is free by virtue of his or her being rational. In respect of transhumanism, therefore, if the human-machine is rational, it is also free. If a genetically enhanced human person can still think and act consequent to her thinking, then s/he is free. Thinking is a mental activity; the human person is conscious of this mental process, and can choose his or her reasoning as well as how to act in light of it. This is what makes him/her free.

On a trivial note, this could be assuring to critics, that there are scientific and technical limitations to genetic manipulation, which would constrain any enhancement procedure from crossing over to radicalness. Resnik (2012:8) says that "... technological limitations will make it difficult for parents to have absolute control over their children's traits for the foreseeable future. A parent might be able to increase a child's natural abilities only marginally, if at all". This kind of modest advancement is amicable to the *Botho* perspective.

This study demonstrates how different types of biotechnological enhancements could alter the brain state. For instance, using cognitive enhancement, may change the way the human person thinks, and may affect his or her moral decision-making; but the human person would remain free. If we suppose that cognitive enhancement increases reasoning and creativity, yet affects memory, we would still see that the individual's decision-making effort is exerted on choosing the best option. There is a better chance of them remembering given their enhancement than the original unenhanced state. The *Botho* perspective argues that the

human person is free because s/he is rational. If our thoughts are a result of impersonal, irrational causes, they cannot be considered free. A fitting example is an automata or robot. The behaviour of such robots is predictable, while human behaviour is unpredictable. Human persons can predict and influence what that robot could do, it is not a person that could make decisions. Human persons, in contrast, are free to deliberate, choose and act. Human persons are not spectators of their behaviour; they organise their thoughts and reflect. However, robots are so far not conscious or capable of performing intentional actions. Thus, choice and deliberation enable an individual to change their course of action or their minds, which is not the case with the robot, that is why the latter is predictable.

Enhancing people without their consent would be morally wrong because it would take away their freedom on a particular occasion (physical and mental ability to exercise their freewill), but it would not take away their general freewill (ability to process information and make their own decisions). Therefore, it would limit their freedom of action (that is, the decision to or not to be enhanced) but not their freedom of will.

Walter Glannon (2012:335-336) observes that human-machine interfaces and psychotropic drugs can alter the human physical and psychological properties and radically change the way the human person chooses and acts. As noted above in reference to evolution, the genomes of an individual person change naturally over a lifetime, and mechanical processes are affected by natural changes. Biotechnological enhancements would do the same, whether quickly, slowly, radically or modestly, depending on the enhancement and/or its degree of application. In that regard, altering the brain of the human person could artificially affect the way s/he chooses and acts, rather than the familiar natural changes that most human beings prefer. However, this need not take away, but could restrain to an extent, the person's freewill

and ability to choose. Hence, the argument is that brain alteration does not automatically result in lack of freewill. Nature itself and social nurture offer no more guarantees of mental stability than biotechnological enhancements.

Regarding destiny, through the use of some enhancements, individuals could be free to either realise or fulfil their destiny. In African traditions, including Setswana, it is believed that an individual may be sent back to the earthly realm to fulfil his or her destiny through the body of a newborn. This African belief can be likened to mind uploading or transferring a human mind into a different substrate. Such an individual would choose to live a longer life, and would be free to fulfil his or her destiny without being limited by bodily death.

Another example of enhancement is where nano-robots (nanobots) could be introduced into the human organism, as devices that monitor and repair damaged cells and tissues hence, reversing cellular degeneration (see chapter 2). This enhancement would contribute to a long life. A longer life in the African perspective suggests that an individual could qualify as an ancestor. Such an individual would be able to attain a respected position in the community, have children, and live to an old age. Edwin Smith (1950:111) reiterates this idea when he explains that “in the spirit world, the hierarchy of age and authority is similarly respected. Requests are made to the invisible father and he forwards the message to the next above him, unless a specific ancestor is demanding attention”.

Further, in the Tswana traditional religion, the oldest member of the family is at times regarded as ancestor by the junior members of the family, since the aged are believed to have

access to the ancestral spirit by virtue of their position (Byaruhanga-Akiiki 1985). Therefore, this enhancement could help an individual to fulfil his or her life's destiny in this life.

Other types of enhancement could help individuals acquire mystical knowledge. These will be discussed under section 7.3.2). Gene enhancement could be utilized to improve morality or good behaviour in individuals. The good behaviour could be necessary to fulfill specific societal roles and functions as well as fulfilling one's destiny as a good or full person. In the African society, to become an ancestor one must possess integrity and morality.

6.4.3 Limited Freewill Due to Radical Enhancement

Some biotechnological enhancements, by their nature, could limit freewill, while others would limit it only if they were done with an excessive measure, or to a radical level, as some extreme posthumanists desire. Nonetheless, this study observed that outrage raised about enhancement primarily emanates from fear of the speed of change, that the human person would be capable of, rather than the loss of freewill. The speed would be observable but claims of loss of freewill would be hard to support. The study holds that moderate biotechnological enhancements would not necessarily take away freewill, although they could affect morality and identity.

Cybernetic enhancement could substantially alter mental states. For instance, cognitive augmentation may interfere with information processing in executive brain functions such as reasoning and decision-making. Enhancements which result in an individual devoid of thinking, but acting according to other deterministic processes would eliminate freewill. For instance, if nanotechnology could create robots, that would take over human decision-making.

The human person develops freedom independently, but robots are programmed. Robots may not change their minds and they may be predictable, but human persons can change their minds, hence the Setswana saying *motho ga a itsewe e se naga* (unlike land, country, forest, a human person is unknowable). The meaning of this Setswana saying is that the human person is unpredictable. According to the *Botho* perspective, conscience is the inner quality central to making moral decisions. Freedom according to the *Botho* viewpoint is tied to reasoning or consciousness, without this consciousness, a person cannot be free. Therefore, we can attribute freewill to conscious beings only.

According to Mark Coeckelbergh (2013:109), posthumans, just like human persons, would be vulnerable and susceptible to the influence of their environment and the interactions between each other, but some posthumans would not be self-conscious like humans are. He explains that such posthumans' vulnerability would be different from humans; those posthumans would not have an existential vulnerability, but an "essential" or "objective" one.

Coeckelbergh (2013:110) elaborates on this by pointing out that some posthuman "in contrast to a human, would not be aware of these relations and would not be self-aware: it would be related to the world, but would not consciously and actively relate to the world". Posthumans who are not conscious could be likened to puppets. In defining a puppet Cowburn (2008:196), explains that:

A puppet is moved this way and that by a conscious agent, who imposes his or her plans on the puppet from above or below, whereas according to determinism most of the time our actions are determined by our natures and our experience, not by conscious agents distinct from us.

In contrast human persons can perform intentional actions. Thus, in the *Botho* view, the radically enhanced person – a puppet – would lack freewill.

Another form of enhancement is mind uploading. In mind uploading, a conscious mind is uploaded into a computer structure and stimulated. In this way, the levels of the physiological or nervous activity are raised. The mind is not necessarily enhanced, but it is primarily stored in a different medium. Since consciousness is the brain's physical activity, it can be stimulated physically. It is probably possible to produce consciousness through computerisation (Bostrom 2003:17). If consciousness that was aroused through computerisation in an uploaded mind, influenced neurons in the brain, the uploaded person would be free. However, if such consciousness did not initiate actions, freewill would not exist in such a setting, and the enhancement would be against the *Botho* perspective. This would plausibly be described as a case where the person survives, but is no longer a human being and lacks the ability to act freely.

Mind uploading is an example where rational capacity could be rendered static, rather than evolving as expected over the days, weeks, months or years that would lapse between updates. For example, an uploaded person would no longer be able to go shopping on his or her own, play ball games or make new friends with unenhanced humans, because his or her body material, looks and functions would be incompatible with theirs. S/he could be a computer box that mostly sits on a desk or could have a robotic body that would limit his or her experiences. This would drastically limit his or her freewill, though it would not completely take it away, in so far as one mental act of deliberation could cause another one.

Judging from the discussion above on mind uploading, the material brain does not oppose freewill, but is also not essential for it either. Still, the immaterial aspect of personhood does

not oppose freewill. Based on the *Botho* outlook, there are no dichotomies between spiritual and physical realities. The fact that the spirit survives physical death does not imply that the two aspects are opposed to each other; it means they are functionally different. In such a scenario, opposition of freewill does not occur for either the material or immaterial aspect as such. In contrast to Descartes' dualism, *Botho* comprises a holistic approach to personhood – not a partitioning of the whole into two separate parts. As has already been stated (chapter 3), according to the Setswana understanding of destiny, there is interdependence between the physical and spiritual worlds. For example, a person can pour his or her drink or food on the ground in a ritual to feed the ancestors. The ancestors are immaterial whilst the food is material, but both the food and the ancestors are not opposed to each other. Therefore, human freewill is not necessarily affected by either the material or immaterial state. Since there is no separation between the material world and the spiritual world, if the material world is determined and free, we could say the same thing about the spiritual world. The human person is determined by the spiritual powers but is still free because s/he is able to change his or her life events through appealing to spiritual powers.

Dieguez and Veliz (2017) argue that even if people were transformed into moral angels, the possibility of falling morally would not disappear. They explain that only moral automata would destroy human capacity to choose freely. A scenario where an enhanced human becomes a moral automaton is where the human person no longer deliberates. If a person has a good habit through which he responds to a certain provocation, he has to deliberate hard in order to respond that way. According to the *Botho* perspective, deliberation is not only important but is required for individuals to deserve praise or blame. Habit comes because of training, and any action from habit is free in so far as it is a result of training, but not free if it is accidental or unprocessed.

According to Dieguez and Veliz (2017:4), for a cognitive enhancement, brain stimulation could counter-act impulsive and unconscious biased attitudes in order to produce better cognitive control of the individual's responses. They further argue that people who are morally good and always try to do what is regarded as right are not necessarily less free than immoral people (*ibid*). They are not necessarily freer either. There is no credible explanation for judging a morally enhanced person to be not free, or less free than a virtuous person who is not morally enhanced. They give the example of moral education and argue that it is an innovation that contributes to moral enhancement, and moral education must not be said to take away human freewill on the basis of that effort. Furthermore, it does not follow that moral enhancement would lead to diminished options; rather, improvement in reasoning would result in new and more options (2017:6).

This study departs slightly from Dieguez and Veliz views, however, by holding that if one were enhanced never to be able to choose evil, s/he would be less free; however, s/he would still be free –since freewill exists in degrees. S/he may be free as regards choosing good, but the fact that evil has been removed from his or her options makes him/her less free. This is supported by Cowburn (2008:18), who states that “... a free act is different from both determined and random events. The multiplicity of possibilities makes it different from a predetermined event, and the conscious choice makes it different from a random event”. He goes further to explain that multiple possibilities do not mean equal moral goodness, reasonableness or attractiveness of all possibilities. He explains that human persons are not always necessarily morally good; it is possible for a human person to see clearly that an attitude or action would be immoral, and nevertheless, still choose it. Unlike Dieguez's and Veliz's arguments, therefore, Cowburn's position means that to remove evil from the

possibilities would make the enhanced less free. Likewise, this thesis argues that the person would remain free but in a smaller degree as regards some areas of morality.

Furthermore, according to *Botho*, freedom is relative, which means it comes in degrees. Knowledge capabilities and other things influence freedom. Even if we removed evil from the options, a human being would still have the freedom to choose from the degrees of good. For example, to resolve a conflict, an enhanced innocent party could choose from the following options: to be silent; vocally accept fault; accept fault and apologies; accept fault, apologies and offer a hug or; accept fault, apologies, give a hug and buy a gift. The possible options do not end at buying a gift but are infinite, which further amplifies the individual's freedom of choice. Similarly, an improvement in reasoning would result in increasing options. The agent is still deserving of praise. Even if the degree of application were to be radical, it would still not completely impair freedom. The features it could impair are the moral quality of decisions and behaviour as well as the person's identity.

As an illustration, alcohol can temporarily tamper with one's rationality, while biological enhancements would do it more permanently; also, alcohol has uncontrollable side effects on the mind and body while hypothetical enhancements would not be uncontrollable.

Consumers of alcohol sometimes say that it improves their mood. Nonetheless, when alcohol slows down cognitive processes and leads to inappropriate social interaction, this behaviour is morally wrong according to the *Botho* perspective, even though the individual is still free.

What makes this individual free is his or her ability to deliberate, even if that ability is imperfect.¹²

6.5 Conclusion

This chapter has demonstrated that modest biotechnological enhancements are consistent with metaphysical aspects of the *Botho* perspective in regard to freewill. The chapter explored both the radical and modest forms of enhancements in order to explore contrasts between them as well as to identify those that are consistent with *Botho* in terms of freewill. It has shown that according to the *Botho* perspective, there would be determinism and freewill, to a certain degree in both un-enhanced and hypothetically enhanced human beings. Thus, freewill is maintained in some types and degrees of biotechnological enhancement, specifically those that maintain or enhance reasoning and the ability to act, however, it is lost in those that impair these capacities. It can therefore, be concluded that gene enhancement and cybernetic enhancement, among other kinds of enhancements, are consistent with *Botho* in terms of freewill. This is, especially, when the goal is not to create a different species that would lack self-awareness, deliberation, or choice. The chapter has revealed that some enhancement could improve freewill while others could limit it. It has also established that some enhancements could be used to help individuals to realise and fulfil their destiny.

¹² My use of alcohol for illustration takes advantage of the fact that everyone has probably witnessed the effects of alcohol on cognition, but the example falls short of enhancement in the sense that the effects are more disadvantageous than those of a hypothesized enhancement.

This chapter is restricted to issues of freewill. It left other major ontological aspects of personhood to chapters 7 and 8. Therefore, the next two chapters undertake a similar function to that of this chapter. Chapter 7 continues the analysis of hypothetical enhancement, focusing on the material and immaterial aspect of the human person and human knowledge.

Chapter 7: The Impact of Enhancements on the Material/Immaterial Aspects of the Human

7.1 Introduction

The preceding chapter advanced claims about the impact of biotechnological enhancements on freewill as understood from a *Botho* perspective. It dealt specifically with issues of freewill and determinism. The discussions showed that freewill can be affected by the material brain, but that freewill need not be lost, and could be enhanced, if the brain is enhanced. The present chapter is functionally similar to the preceding chapter, as it continues the analysis of human nature using the *Botho* standpoint articulated in earlier chapters. It examines the impact of biotechnological enhancement on other ontological components of humans, namely the material/immaterial aspect, human knowledge, and related dimensions of human nature. This chapter focuses only on what is involved in the aspect of being human. The discussions on what makes an individual a person, what constitutes a person's identity, and how transhumanism might bear on these aspects is discussed in the next chapter.

The chapter starts by discussing what constitutes human nature and the changes and effects that could be brought by enhancement on those aspects.

It maintains that, based on the *Botho* viewpoint, a “human being” is more than just a “person” because it includes elements like, a body. As already mentioned in chapter 3, the human body is a distinct human feature, without which a being cannot be human.

The chapter applies this metaphysical understanding of humanness to scenarios like uploading, where an individual may lack some aspects that constitute human nature. Thus, uploading the contents of a human brain into a computer would affect human nature so that

the enhanced individual could continue to exist as a person, but not as a human being. Many Western philosophers have addressed the issue of being human, and transhumanist debates have occasioned further reflection on that. I address this issue using the *Botho* perspective in the context of enhanced individuals. It is common amongst many Africans including Batswana that human persons are essentially material bodies and immateriality. My interpretation of this African perspective is that, whereas the material body ensures human survival, the immaterial aspect survives the death of the material body and continues to exist as a person. There is no consensus on what the posthuman would look like, and it admittedly could take a variety of forms. However, using the metaphysical perspective of *Botho* we can decide whether a posthuman is a human being, a non-human person or an automaton. Even if there is controversy about what is human and what is not human, or about whether something counts as posthuman, there are at least some clear cases that debaters would accept. Human nature, in accordance with the *Botho* perspective, is understood partly to include the material body. Supposing that the body is improved or replaced the individual could remain a human, but if the human body is discarded, the individual could be a non-human person.

For example, an individual who replaces half of his/her body with artificial material is probably still a human being. However, mind-uploads with consciousness and no particular human body at all are no longer human beings but could be persons, supposing that consciousness entails the immaterial aspect and relationality which constitute personhood in the *Botho* perspective. Thus, if a being that has been human now lacks a body, it could persist as non-human. However, it could remain human without consciousness if it has the material and immaterial aspects. Further, an unconscious programmable robot whose behaviour is fully determined by us is neither human nor person.

The following chapter concludes that modest biotechnological enhancements would be consistent with human nature, and that extreme degrees or kinds of transhumanism, whose ultimate goal is a new species, would be inconsistent with the *Botho* perspective in terms of remaining human. It also demonstrates that moderate biotechnological enhancements may bring changes to the material and immaterial aspects of the human being, but need not substantially affect these aspects. This is because the material aspect changes through time and the immaterial aspect is affected by those changes. It further demonstrates that radical changes to the body may substantially affect material and immaterial features, and ultimately lead to loss of humanity.

Regarding human knowledge, this chapter contends that according to the *Botho* outlook, knowledge and the source of knowledge come from the co-operation of both the material and immaterial aspects of human nature. It explains that the metaphysical intuition, and community in the *Botho* epistemology, applies to transhumanism and does not limit human knowledge. It also argues that some forms of transhumanism could improve human knowledge. It also shows cases where enhancement would threaten knowledge.

This chapter adds new knowledge to the literature on African philosophy by introducing transhumanism in the context of *Botho* metaphysics pertaining to human nature. Chapter 3 has highlighted key African scholars who discuss human nature in African context, namely, Gyekye (1987), Wiredu (1980), Gbadegesin (1998) and Gaie (2007). These scholars present different views of the number of constituent parts of a person. However, a point worthy to note is that they have a common understanding that an individual is made of both the spiritual and physical components. Whereas the physical body depicts human nature, the spiritual force depicts a metaphysical person (ancestor). Another scholar who discusses human nature

is Grivas Muchineripi Kayange (2021), who explains that most of the African studies support dualism, and partly a form of physicalism known as quasi-physicalism. However, this study's approach differs from the mentioned scholars because it discusses human nature in the context of transhumanism.

Scholars who discuss transhumanism in the African context are Fayemi (2018) and Chimakonam (2021). Fayemi examines the relationship between personhood and transhumanism in the African context. He argues that some transhumanist elements are embedded in African ontological conceptions of personhood. Chimakonam similarly examines the relationship between Afro-communitarian personhood, and transhumanism. She claims that technologised personhood is not compatible with Afro-communitarian personhood. Whereas Chimakonam discusses the impact of transhumanism on Afro-communitarian personhood, Fayemi discusses the transhumanist elements embedded in the metaphysical and normative aspects of African personhood. Both scholars suggest that transhumanism might have an impact on the African understanding of personhood. However, being human is not the same as being a person; therefore, human enhancement technologies might impact on an individual in either or both of two ways. Namely, whether an “enhanced” individual is still a human being and/or whether or not the individual is still a person. This study differs from Fayemi and Chimakonam's in that it thoroughly addresses the metaphysical aspects of personhood (in the following chapter), in addition to the immaterial and material/physical aspects, which constitute human nature from the *Botho* perspective. Such an enquiry has not been undertaken before by those working in the African philosophical tradition.

In addition, this study addresses the epistemological aspect of human nature and how transhumanism might bear on this aspect from the *Botho* perspective. Scholars who discuss African epistemology are Placide Tempels (1959), Leopold Senghor (1965), Innocent Onyewuenyi (1991), Christopher Anyanwu (1981), Ejikemeuwa Ndubisi (2014), Elijah John (2009) and Andrew Uduigwomen (2009). These scholars maintain that all races are gifted with a unique nature, and ways of knowing things; therefore, African epistemology is distinctive from Western epistemology (Udefi 2014:112). However, the approach of this thesis differs from the mentioned scholars because it discusses the African epistemology in the context of transhumanism. Such an enquiry has not yet been undertaken.

Section (7.2) discusses immaterial and material aspects of a human being. It explains that the human being, as determined by *Botho* perspective, is constituted by immaterial and material aspects while being a person is constituted by the immaterial aspect (and a further relational condition). It further explains that, according to standard interpretations of transhumanism, the human being is constituted by the material aspect and consciousness, while being a person is constituted by consciousness alone. The section also discusses natural monism as an alternative to materialism in the transhuman perspective. The section further discusses, with responses from the *Botho* viewpoint, how transhumanism might bear on the immaterial and material aspects of the human being. The section “The Epistemological Aspect of Human Nature” section (7.3), explicates how knowledge is acquired and justified according to transhumanism and the *Botho* perspective. The section discusses how epistemology fits in transhuman perspective and implications of knowledge in a transhuman context with responses from the *Botho* perspective. Section 7.4 discusses “Human Nature according to Transhumanism and *Botho*” as well as outlines the kinds or degrees of enhancement that make one human, or non-human according to the *Botho* standpoint. It further discusses the necessary and sufficient conditions required for being a human as opposed to a non-human,

the immaterial and material aspects of human nature, how mind uploading would affect immaterial and material aspects, and the implication of cybernetic enhancement.

7.2 The Immaterial and Material Aspects of the Human Being

This section largely draws on the exposition of the immaterial and material aspects of being human from chapter 3, and applies them to biotechnological enhancements. It explains that according to standard interpretations of transhumanism, being human is constituted by the material body and material consciousness. It goes on to explain the transhuman materialistic account of the human being, as well as the immaterial and material aspects of *Botho*. Lastly, it discusses, with responses from the *Botho* perspective, how transhumanism might bear on the immaterial and material aspects of the human being. It contends that standard interpretations of transhumanism have some similarities with the *Botho* perspective in regard to the understanding of human nature.

Transhumanism and the *Botho* perspective concur that the material body is what partially constitutes being human, while what constitutes being a person for the *Botho* perspective is the immateriality and relationality, but for transhumanism it is consciousness, which transhumanism regards as material. The human being in the *Botho* perspective could remain human without consciousness, but s/he could become non-human without the material body. Similarly, the human being in the transhumanist perspective could remain human without consciousness, but could become a non-human without the body.

The immaterial and material aspects of *Botho* on one hand, and the body and consciousness components of transhumanism on the other, would interact with, and affect each other. In transhumanism, the body and consciousness affect each other because they are regarded as

material. There is no immaterial aspect to human nature, according to typical forms of transhumanism. As specified by the *Botho* standpoint, the immaterial aspect does not die along with bodily death, but in transhumanism, it is the consciousness that does not have to die along with bodily death.

What transhumanism regards as consciousness, and need not perish along with the body appears to be what *Botho* regards as the spirit, which need not perish with the body either. In discussing the impact of enhancement on the immaterial and material aspects, this thesis argues that moderate biotechnological enhancements need not substantially affect either of the aspects. It argues that already, biological cells, tissues and neurons “naturally” die and are replaced all the time until the death of the body. These processes of death and replacement are simultaneous, and any changes in the nature of the being, are so slow that they are generally unobservable until after many years. The natural changes in the material aspect, therefore, do not substantially affect either the material or immaterial aspects of the individual. Nonetheless, this thesis argues that radical enhancement may substantially affect the material and immaterial aspects, and could result in beings which, based on the *Botho* view, would not be human beings. This chapter only draws the metaphysical aspect of being human, which contrasts with the moral sense discussed above in chapter five.

7.2.1 A Transhuman Materialistic Account of Human Nature

This section explains that the transhumanist account of human nature is materialistic. It argues that, according to the standard interpretation of transhumanism, the material body constitutes being human while consciousness constitutes being a person.

Locke (1690:324) argues that:

For should the soul of a prince, carrying with it consciousness of the prince's past life, enter and inform the body of a cobbler, as soon as deserted by his own soul, everyone sees he will be the same person with the prince, accountable only for the prince's action: but who would say it is the same man? The body too goes to the making of the man, and would, I guess, to everyone determine the man in this case, wherein the soul, with all its princely thoughts about it, would not make another man: but he would be the same cobbler to everyone besides himself.

According to Locke if the cobbler's memories (consciousness) are transferred into the prince's body and the prince's memories are transferred to the cobbler's body, the one in the cobbler's body would think he is the prince and the one in the prince's body would think he is the cobbler. Locke doesn't use the term "human-being". I use the term "human being" to refer to what Locke calls a "man". According to Locke, what makes up a person is consciousness, but what makes up a man (human being) is a physical body. The prince's body is therefore the man (human being), while his consciousness is the person. The *Botho* perspective similarly says a human body is essential for something to be a human being, so I assume what Locke calls a "man" is a human being according to the *Botho* perspective. Locke's view suggests that some beings could intuitively be humans or manage to survive as human beings without having any psychological features, for example, human embryos, human foetuses, and aged adults in addition to psychologically and mentally crippled individuals, who are not self-aware. According to this perspective, the memory is irrelevant to our persistence as human beings. If I am to lapse into permanent mental incapacity, I would remain human for as long as my body lives, but, for Locke, the person would have perished.

Locke helps us understand “personhood” and being “human” according to transhumanism. His view is relevant to transhumanism because transhumanism’s emphasis on rationality and disembodied consciousness as the defining aspect of personhood. According to the standard transhumanist perspective, while on one hand consciousness has to be preserved, on the other hand the human body is physically limited; hence, there is need to either upgrade it or to completely discard it. According to transhumanism, human nature is not fixed. The material body needs alteration to raise its capabilities or appearances beyond normal human levels. For example, body alteration could be done, by replacing body parts with prosthetic body parts, altering skin colour through bleaching, beauty surgery, body building or cognitive enhancement.

Transhumanism also suggests the possibility of human consciousness existing without bodies, whereby the mind is downloaded into a new body, or allowed to remain in cyber reality. According to Bostrom (2003:5-6), the enhanced individual may not be human. He explains that enhanced individuals would not be limited by the frailties of human bodies; therefore, the human body could be discarded, while consciousness would be preserved. Thus, an individual would transform from being a human being to being a person that is no longer human. It would, therefore, depend on the degree of transformation to determine the humanity of an enhanced individual. If the body is preserved, the enhanced individual could remain a human being. However, if the whole body is discarded, the enhanced individual would not be human.

Transhumanism and Neutral Monism

Neutral monism holds that ultimate reality is all of one kind (Abdul 2019). Neutral monism is an alternative to the materialism/idealism/dualism disagreements in relation to both big

history and transhumanism (Abdul 2019:56). The goal of neutral monism is to “close the apparent chasm between mental and physical entities by exhibiting both as consisting of groups of the more basic neutral entities” (Abdul 2019: 56). Materialism is challenged by the view of the self as patterns of information which come across as more consistent with transhumanist goals (Abdul 2019:735). According to transhumanism, personhood is mere information patterns within the substrate of brain. This information that makes a person includes memories, hopes, dreams and countless mental events. Abdul observes that information ontology is firmly located as a neutral monistic entity, and hence the computationalist view proposed by transhumanism entails rejection of the strictly materialist conception of the nature of human persons (Abdul 2019:733). During mind uploading the information is transferred into another substrate. If the entire information-bearing pattern is reproduced, then the consciousness and personhood represented by that information-bearing pattern would be replicated in a new substrate. The person thus replicated would potentially be immortal as the substrate. Abdul further observes that mind uploading through computational-informational ontology is possible through incorporation of the neutral monism of information within their methodological and metaphysical frameworks.

I do not think computationalists must reject materialism as Ojochogwu Abdul suggests. Materialists do not share a uniform view about the nature of psychological properties. Some materialists accept the reality of consciousness. Modified forms of materialistic theory of mind and body have been developed. For instance epiphenomenalism is the view that thoughts, feelings etc are not merely physical states in brains but they are adjudged to be a by product of the sequence of physical occurrences, something like the smoke given off by fire (Popkin and Stroll 1993:129). Thus, human beings have a material brain which operates to produce consciousness. Uploading consciousness into a machine is technologically feasible if

mental aspects and consciousness are physical processes of the brain and perhaps merely if they are correlated with them. If consciousness could survive death just like the immaterial aspect in the *Botho* perspective, then persons could be reincarnated with the same consciousness in different bodies.

7.2.2 Implications of Enhancements for the Material/Immaterial Aspects of the Human Being

This section discusses some forms of enhancements, and indicates from the *Botho* standpoint their implications to the immaterial and material aspects. It explains from the *Botho* perspective that moderate biotechnological enhancements may bring changes to the material and immaterial aspects of the human being, but they need not substantially affect these aspects. This is because both the material body and the mind are not fixed; the human body changes through time and the human mind is improved by means of information technology. Similarly, the immaterial aspect is affected by the changes to the material body, and it also affects the material body. For instance, a blow on the head may cause an individual to lose consciousness; spiritual experiences may affect bodily processes, ultimately causing diseases. Some diseases of the brain may affect not only the mental life, but the spiritual life as well. It is explained that there is interaction between the material and immaterial aspects, as long as an individual is alive. However, interaction between these aspects stops at death. It also spells out some form of enhancements that may radically affect the immaterial and material aspects, like, uploading the human mind into an info sphere or getting rid of the entire human body.

Transhumanism usually includes a materialist account of human nature, which means that transhumanists generally discuss changes to the material aspect but not to the immaterial aspects. In contrast, the *Botho* view holds that the human being is both material and

immaterial and that both aspects would interact with and affect each other in the context of enhancements. That means that changes to the material aspect sometimes affect the immaterial aspect. If the body survives, it is inseparable from the immaterial aspect. However, when the body dies, the immaterial aspect would separate from the body, and the individual would not continue to exist as a human being, unless the immaterial is transferred to another homo sapient. Thus, a dead corpse does not affect anything as such. Drawing from the *Botho* perspective, this section discusses how enhancements to the material aspect might affect both the immaterial and material aspects.

First genetic enhancement is discussed. Genetic enhancement would allow material to be added, removed, or altered to grant the human being superior human traits and behaviour such as the potential to live longer. If the human body lives, changes to the material aspect need not affect the immaterial aspect. According to Buchanan (2009), human nature contains bad, as well as good genes. Buchanan claims that eliminating some of the bad genes would not alter human nature in any significant sense. He maintains that the gene pool is always changing no matter what people do. According to Buchanan, the “natural” process by which evolution operates alters the gene pool, and the natural selection favours those who happen to have genes that confer immunity to the diseases (*ibid.*). Bostrom (2005a) similarly argues that the human being, in his or her present form, is but, a transitory entity within an on-going evolutionary change, a process which is by no means complete. Gene enhancement alters the material aspect of the human being, but altering the material aspect as such is not an issue because this aspect is already constantly changing. I presume effects will be mutual, if the material aspect is affected by changes but not substantially affected. Similarly, the immaterial aspect would be affected by the material change, but it would not be substantially affected. Individuals with new genes or desirable genes would still be humans.

The human being is “substantially affected” by a transhuman act when the essence of being human is tampered with such that a being is no longer human. The clearest time a transhuman act is tagged “substantially affected” is when there is the absence of a living body, for example through death. If the material aspect is substantially affected, resulting in the body perishing, there would be separation between these two aspects. The immaterial would not be affected because it would no longer be limited by perceptible conditions. However, it would no longer exist as a human being, but could exist as a person.

Transhumanism advocates for technological transformation in the form of bodily improvements and artificial bodies. All these bodily transformations would not substantially affect either the material or immaterial aspects. Ray Kurzweil (2003) is of the view that human biological systems should be replaced by mechanical systems. Prosthetics would replace most components of the skeletal system and other body parts. A prosthesis is an artificial body part, or an artificial feature or piece of material applied to a human’s body. Neurons would also be replaced by circuitry and neuroprosthetic devices. Kurzweil further states that it would be possible to upgrade the digestive system by delivering nutrients through nanobots. Nanobots could also be used to enable the body to eliminate food eaten for pure pleasure and to allow such food to be digested in a way that it would no longer be absorbed by the body. This kind of enhancement would enhance physical appearance; an individual would not gain weight because his or her body would not absorb unnecessary fats. Red blood cells could be replaced with artificial respirocytes so that an enhanced individual would be able to run for a long time without the need to breath. Other possible replacements would be the platelets, white blood cells, heart and most of the vital body organs. The replacement of the vital organs could overcome the aging process. In all these replacements

or changes in the material aspect, the immaterial aspect is affected but not substantially affected by the changes. If an individual dies, the body would also die but the immaterial aspect would survive. There would no longer be an interaction between these aspects. The surviving immaterial aspect would not be a human being, unless it is transferred to another homo sapient.

Other enhancements that may bring changes to the physical body without necessarily altering the immaterial aspects are, pharmacological agents meant to increase physical capabilities, such as to run faster for longer or to develop muscle mass at greatly increased rates. To achieve this, the pharmacological agents may need to simultaneously alter the brain and body's states, mood, forms and functions. There is also cosmetic surgery, which is used to enhance physical and facial appearances such as breast enlargement and facial contouring. People can also transform their bodies through tattooing, body building, piercing, dieting, and changing their skin colour by tanning or bleaching. Genetic enhancement, pharmacology, cosmetic surgery and nanotechnologies would not substantially affect being human as understood by *Botho* because they do not involve getting rid of the entire human body, but they involve replacing and improving the body parts. Getting rid of the entire human body would lead to the death of the body. According to the *Botho* perspective, the self would continue to live but it would no longer be human. As long as the material body survives, the immaterial and material aspects would remain in connection, and they will affect each other.

While improvement of the human body does not affect human nature, uploading of the mind may affect it. For example, radical forms of enhancement may substantially affect the material and immaterial aspects of the human being. Such forms of enhancement include disembodiment and replacement of the entire human body with a virtual body, nano-body, or

cyborg body. For example, Kurzweil (2005:138) envisions a scenario where it would be possible to scan and upload the human brain into a human-like structure. The human-like structure would have human feelings and would be immensely intelligent. While the “body” structure could die, the mind would continue to live on the Web in the posthuman future.

Replacing the entire body, or discarding the entire body, would lead to the death of the initial body. When the initial body dies, the immaterial aspect would separate from it. There would be no more interaction between the immaterial aspect and the body. The immaterial aspect would not survive as a human being without a body, but it could survive as a person.

However, one of the possibilities is that the immaterial aspect could inhabit a new human body. If it inhabits a new body, it will remain a human being. However, not all bodies are sufficient to remain human. For example, a silicon body, or a computer/machine with a bundle of information would not qualify as a human being as determined by the *Botho* viewpoint. This is because a computer would not count as the sort of body essential to humanity.

Most of the enhancements are meant to alter the material aspect. However, like it has already been mentioned, in accord to the *Botho* perspective, there is a causal relationship between the material and immaterial aspect, such that enhancements to the material aspect might also affect the immaterial aspects. Moderate enhancement to the material aspect may affect both the material and immaterial aspects, not substantially. As aforementioned, the effects are mutual. If the material aspect is not substantially affected, plausibly the immaterial aspect would not be substantially affected. In the case of death, where the immaterial is substantially affected, the immaterial would no longer be affected by material changes because it would have separated from the material aspect. However, radical enhancement to

the material aspect may substantially affect the material aspect. In this case, there would be no affection between the two aspects because the body would die and separate from the immaterial aspect. The next section discusses the *Botho* approach to epistemology and the role of epistemology in the conceptualisation of enhancements. Based on the *Botho* perspective, knowledge is another ontological aspect of human nature.

7.3 The Epistemological Aspect of Human Nature

This section largely draws on the exposition of African epistemology, particularly the *Botho* perspective and Western epistemology from chapter 4, and applies them to biotechnological enhancements. Recall how knowledge is acquired and justified according to Western epistemology which is applicable to transhumanism and African epistemology, particularly the *Botho* perspective. This section shows that transhumanism considers knowledge to be science-based; the only legitimate claims about the nature of human knowledge are those that can be confirmed by the methods of the natural sciences. It also shows that transhumanism limits knowledge of reality to two main sources, viz., rationalism and empiricism, which are different ways of understanding scientific knowledge. Recall that from chapter 4 that the *Botho* perspective tends to consider knowledge to be holistic in nature. For example, according to the *Botho* perspective, the human being has a rational capacity which is relative to experience, but also, knowledge capability is mystical. Mystical knowledge lies beyond the sciences; it is not based on either rational or scientific judgement. The section provides examples of enhancements, which may limit knowledge capability and of those which may increase it.

This section introduces transhumanism in the context of African epistemology. Most African scholars who discuss transhumanism in an African context focus only on the metaphysical

and normative aspects of personhood. This study differs with those because it addresses human knowledge as one of the aspects of human nature in the *Botho* perspective and how transhumanism might bear on knowledge acquisition.

7.3.1 How Epistemology Fits in the Transhumanist Perspective

Recall from chapter 4 that epistemology concerns itself with ways of knowing, and how we know what we know. As it has already been said, the standard interpretation of transhumanism rejects the idea that the spirit exists, or that the human being is simultaneously an immaterial thing, espousing instead a materialistic explanation for all states of body and consciousness. Proponents of transhumanism believe in the potential of science to improve human lives. This is aligned with Western epistemologies that consider knowledge as scientifically based. However, disembodied consciousness, which is proposed by transhumanism, suggests the possibility of acquiring mystical knowledge. In the absence of bodily organs it is impossible to acquire knowledge through sense experience. Therefore, knowledge acquired by disembodied consciousness is internal (reason and mysticism). Since consciousness can be improved, posthumans can acquire more knowledge based on their consciousness and reasoning abilities. Disembodied consciousness could also acquire mystical knowledge of revealed truth without empirical evidence or facts. Further, through minduploading, knowledge which is lost upon the death of the body could be preserved and developed to make more knowledge. Ultimately knowledge would continue to evolve. Moreover, disembodied consciousness could merge with other uploaded individuals, forming a community of meta-beings. This community would share knowledge among themselves.

7.3.2 Implications of Knowledge in a Transhuman Context with Responses from the *Botho* Perspective

This section discusses how knowledge justification in Western epistemology influences knowledge acquisition in a transhumanist context, and it responds from the *Botho* perspective. It is of the view that some forms of transhumanism could improve human knowledge. It also argues that disembodied consciousness need not limit human knowledge. It shows that metaphysical intuition in transhumanism, applies to *Botho* in the case of the living dead and that lacking bodies and senses does not have to limit knowledge.

According to the *Botho* perspective, knowledge can be acquired mainly through the five senses, mysticism, reason, and testimony. Mystical knowledge and knowledge acquired from the senses are two aspects of one and the same reality, and either one or the other could be used for epistemic justification. Western perceptions of knowledge partly constitute epistemology in the *Botho* standpoint. For example, David Hume and John Locke claim that knowledge is based on empirical consciousness. Rene Descartes holds that what can be known, involves the use of reason. These philosophers acknowledge reasoning and sense experience just like in the *Botho* perspective. For instance, after Descartes doubted many things in search for indubitable truth, he acknowledged that the self and things exist. Descartes could not doubt what he did not know, he indirectly appealed to the senses. Similarly, Hume accepts mathematics. Thus, whereas rationalism always finds a way to accommodate the input of experience, empiricism usually admits introspection as a source of knowledge. Most Western epistemologists, however, omit mystical knowledge, which partially constitutes epistemology in the *Botho* perspective.

This study is of the view that mind uploads in transhumanism share similar attributes with the living dead in the *Botho* perspective. For instance, mind uploads could be rational with self-consciousness and self-reflection. Mind uploads and the living dead do not have bodies and senses, their knowledge would come from metaphysical intuition, reasoning, and testimony. Similarly, traditional doctors and diviners are believed to know about ancestors without using senses. The mentioned beings take the metaphysical route in justifying their knowledge claims, and in that process base their justification on the internal, without giving much recognition or acknowledgment of the external aspects. According to this view, sense experience is not the sole source of our knowledge of the phenomena of the world. Thus, epistemic justification can be derived from either external or internal sources.

This study argues that some enhancements could improve knowledge acquisition. For example, cybernetic enhancement to create immortality of the mind would be preserved for future use and could be developed or enhanced to produce more knowledge. The information could be uploaded onto a web site and would be accessed by people throughout the world. Moreover, uploaded individuals could merge with other uploads in cyber reality and share knowledge.

As already mentioned, the *Botho* perspective ascribes knowledge to both the community and the individual. Through interaction, enhanced humans would share ideas with un-enhanced human beings who would gain knowledge. Moreover, intelligent people would interact with other intelligent people and they would boost each other's knowledge. Cybernetic enhancement towards super intelligence, through genetic enhancement, whereby embryos are selected for intelligence and other traits, could add knowledge to the community at large. Enhanced human beings could help others solve problems; and those who have challenges

could ask questions, which would ultimately add to their acquisition of knowledge. The Setswana proverb *e anywang e leletse e ruta e e mo maleng* (Literally, the one that suckles looking up teaches the one that is in the stomach. This means the ways of the elders are copied by the young (this is especially so with bad habits). Therefore, intelligent people could pass knowledge to others, who would in turn broadcast the knowledge they have acquired.

Cybernetic enhancement to increase longevity would benefit the society because enhancing longevity means there would be many elderly people who are better custodians of knowledge. If human beings lived long, they would acquire a greater amount of knowledge during their existence.

Pharmaceutical enhancement is another example which can improve mental processes involved in gaining knowledge and comprehension. They can also improve cognitive functions like boosting alertness, memory retrieval and concentration. Human nature is not fixed, but changes through an individual's entire life. The human brain grows new cells, makes new connections, and even increases in size. These changes improve cognitive function. Enhanced humans would have their options, and capacities expanded, so they would be able to make better decisions, and solve cognitive problems faster and more successfully. Enhancement of the human body or body transformation may lead to improved experiences and new knowledge.

Some forms of enhancement may affect an individual's ability to acquire mystical knowledge. Through cybernetic enhancement, human consciousness may be duplicated in machines and be vastly improved. Andersen et. al. (2014:223) concur with the *Botho* perspective and transhumanism that knowledge is not just based on sensory input. They hold

that the human brain uses internal models to predict what would happen in the world. They explain that in normal circumstances, the brain compares its prediction with external input from sensory apparatus. If there is a mismatch, it elicits a prediction error signal, which normally causes the brain to correct and update its prediction. They further argue that depriving individuals' sensory information obstructs the brain from monitoring the situation for potential errors. Therefore, sensory deprivation could elicit mystical knowledge. In the case of mind uploads and the living dead, the lack of bodies and senses could similarly be a form of sensory deprivation. The lack of bodies and senses suggests that disembodied consciousness is cut from external reality hence, becomes dependent on internal models. Disembodied consciousness could therefore foster mystical knowledge on mind uploads.

Other enhancements that may foster mystical knowledge are gene enhancement and pharmacological enhancement for cognitive or mental abilities. These enhancements may raise conscious level. According to the *Botho* perspective, the immaterial aspect houses consciousness. Andersen et. al. similarly hold that mystical experiences are in fact the same experiences of "pure consciousness" (2014:219). Spirituality or acquisition of mystical knowledge requires consciousness. An individual needs to be aware, and to be self-aware, in order to apprehend spirituality or mystical knowledge. The more an individual is conscious, the more s/he feels connected to spiritual reality.

Peek (1991:195-196) explains that in Africa, diviners are either chosen by the ancestors or volunteer themselves. Whereas those who are chosen could inherit the skills, those who volunteer themselves during their adulthood could be trained. Gene enhancement or modifying the human genome would produce children who are highly conscious. This enhancement is analogous to diviners whose skills are determined at birth by ancestors.

Similarly, pharmacological enhancement could raise consciousness or self-awareness in adults, ultimately fostering their mystical knowledge.

This study acknowledges that some enhancements could limit knowledge acquisition. A good example would be enhancing an individual to a point where s/he becomes an automaton or robot. As aforementioned, an automaton is an unconscious determined machine which cannot reason or have any experience. It would not be able “to see” for itself or to experience in a direct, firsthand manner. Further it would not be able to be told about or informed of anything (testimony from others). Furthermore, an automaton would lack the capacity to acquire mystical knowledge because it would be incapable of self-consciousness and self-reflection.

7.4 Human Nature According to Transhumanism and *Botho*

In the previous chapter and previous sections of this chapter, aspects of human nature according to the *Botho* perspective, freewill, immaterial and material parts of human beings and the epistemological aspect were discussed. In the preceding chapter and sections, these aspects of human nature were singled out. However, they are once more discussed in this section in consolidation with the other aspects that are currently being explained because being human does not depend on one aspect. The purpose is to find out when a transhuman is a human or non-human as determined by the *Botho* view. This section discusses merely the metaphysical aspect of being human, setting aside moral considerations of humanness.

This section discusses the nature of the human being according to transhumanism and the *Botho* viewpoint. It contends that a modest, restrained or bridled form of transhumanism, retains human nature as opposed to a radical advancement. If the changes were moderate, they would not alter the nature of the human being, and his or her capabilities such as,

rationality, knowledge and freewill. However, if they were radical, they may undermine the human status or reduce it to that of a mere object. It discusses the kinds or degrees of enhancements that would make an individual human or non-human according to the *Botho* perspective. There is a more specific meaning that the Setswana worldview brings to the understanding of human nature. Therefore, this study contributes towards familiarising the African socio-cultural context with the debate on transhumanism.

7.4.1 Human Versus Non-Human

This section discusses the essence of being human, as distinct from animals and distinguishes the aspect of being a human being from that of being a person. It argues that it is consistent with *Botho* to hold that an individual can be a human being and still not be a person, or can be a person and still not be a human being.

Recall that from chapter 3 that human nature consists of what it is to be a human being, or the necessary and sufficient conditions for being a human as opposed to a non-human. These terms were explicitly distinguished in chapter 3. As it is illustrated in this study, a “human being” may or may not be a “person” and a “person” may or may not be a “human being”. According to the African tradition, human nature is understood to include the material body, and therefore beings that lack the material body like ancestors are probably best understood as persons and not human beings.

This section discusses all the necessary and sufficient conditions of being human in the *Botho* standpoint. As reported by the *Botho* perspective, a human being is more than just a person and it includes a body (Gaie 2007). The *Botho* perspective would regard an individual who is unconscious, a human being because being human according to this perspective is not

exclusively conscious or rational. As long as an individual has the physical body and the immaterial aspect, s/he is considered a human being according to the *Botho* perspective. Similarly, rationality, will or memory do not exclusively make one human. A human can lose some of his or her characteristic features and retain her humanity, for example, an Alzheimer's patient remains human. Further, every individual's way of reasoning differs from others. An imbecile is a human just like the genius. Similarly, a murderer, saint and clown are all humans. Moreover, disability does not suggest that an individual is non-human. In Setswana, a sick person who cannot do anything for him/herself or an elderly person who is very weak and/or sick can be described as *ga go na motho mo go ene* (there is no person in him/her), this phrase implies ability, and not what identifies a human being.

In relation to the concept of human versus person, one observes that individuals like God and ancestors are not humans but are still persons. What makes God and ancestors “non-humans”, although they are rightly described as “persons”, is in the first instance that they lack material bodies. Similarly, human minds uploaded into computers are not humans but are still persons. What makes intelligent Martians and human minds uploaded into computers aptly characterised as “persons” is the fact that, even though they are not human, they may have an immaterial aspect, which houses self-awareness and rationality and be relational. Being a “person” as something distinct from being a human is discussed in greater detail in the next chapter.

7.4.2 Freewill, Materialism, Reason and Human Nature

Chapter 6 exclusively discussed freewill as an aspect of human nature. However, this section discusses freewill in consolidation with the other aspects that are currently being explained. It explicates that; transhumanism need not alter human nature. It further elaborates on how

transhumanism acknowledges that human beings have the material body and that they are free, rational beings. As seen in the previous chapter, in transhumanism and the *Botho* worldview, it is recognised that the realities of determinism and freedom occur mutually for the individual. Determinism does not necessarily imply lack of freewill, although it may imply relative freedom. Transhumanism is materialistic in its description of human nature. However, materialism does not necessarily limit human freewill. Human beings are free by virtue of being rational. Enhanced human beings will be free if they can reason. As for rationality, transhumanism acknowledges the nature of the human being by insisting that s/he is a rational being.

7.4.3 Material, Immaterial Aspects and Human Nature

The aspects of being human under discussion in this section are the material and immaterial aspects. This section explains that changes in the material body need not make an individual non-human. It explains that, as long as an individual does not lose his or her body, s/he remains human. Thus, if the material body and immaterial aspect interact, the human being persists. It argues that biotechnological enhancement need not substantially affect either the material or the immaterial aspect. It further maintains that an individual who loses his or her memory, and has half of his or her body replaced is still a human being. Supposing that half of the body was to be replaced with artificial material, the *Botho* perspective would regard that individual a human being.

According to the *Botho* perspective, the human body is essential for human nature. This body does not physically remain the same throughout the process of becoming. S/he changes over time as his or her atoms and molecules are replaced and as s/he grows. People like amputees and those with artificial additions like implants, artificial limbs and artificial organs consider

such additions essential parts of themselves, and the people are considered human beings. The notion that the human body is a fleshly machine could be true. The human body works as a machine where most body parts are replaceable. It is therefore possible, according to the *Botho* view, to be a human being with some of the body parts replaced. Like already mentioned, the cells of a body change over time, what makes it the same body is the immaterial aspect which continues to interact with it. Suppose the brain and all limbs are replaced, an individual would remain human because his or her body continues to interact with his or her immaterial aspect. What enables individuals with prosthesis, or whose physical bodies are partly mechanised to remain humans is the continuity of the material and immaterial aspect. Once these two aspects separate in the case of death, the individual would no longer be human.

7.4.4 Body and Mind in the Mind Upload Kind of Enhancement

This section, argues that human nature requires a human body, and therefore an individual whose mental contents have been transferred to a computer, and then downloaded into a robot is no longer a human being. However, if the enhanced individual is essentially immaterial and relational, it could be a person.

An example of an enhancement that would make an individual a non-human is where the contents of a human brain are uploaded into a computer. The person would arguably continue to exist, but not as a human being. Kurzweil (2005) speculates that the fusion of humans and machines will usher in a new phase in the evolution of the human species in which intelligent machines will augment human physical and mental capacity then supersede the humans who have designed them. Julian Savulescu (2009:214) explains that to achieve immortality and

super-intelligence, the human mind would be uploaded or transferred into a new cloned human body and brain, or into a computer.

The argument from the *Botho* perspective is that uploading the human mind into machines is incorrectly assumed to imply that the human body is not essential for a thing to be human. According to Kurzweil (2005:388), “it is the persistence and power of patterns that support life and intelligence [that] is far more important than the material stuff that constitutes it”. Thus, consciousness is more important than the physical body. As determined by the *Botho* standpoint, the body is a distinct human feature, even if the “upload” may have rationality, rationality alone is not the human being. It would be difficult to understand how the human being is distinct from an animal because there must be an essential reference to his or her body. The human is nonetheless, not an animal because characteristically s/he is rational, has a self, and has a different sort of body.

In discussing the possibilities regarding uploading, Bostrom (2003) contends that in one of those possibilities, the original brain or biological entity would be preserved. He claims that through virtual reality, an uploaded individual could partake in all the sensory experiences available to biological human beings and would “interact with people on the outside and even rent robot bodies in order to work in, or explore physical reality” (Bostrom 2003:18). This means that an uploaded individual continues to engage. The *Botho* perspective would fail to recognise an uploaded individual as human, regardless of his or her ability to relate because a mere relationship without the human body does not make an individual human.

According to Kurzweil (2005), the human beings can survive while leaving behind his or her current body, but not unless s/he has physical embodiment. Kurzweil believes that actual physical embodiment can be very different from the current physical embodiment. The

Botho perspective would not agree that a human being could become “embodied” in a computer or a robot because human beings do not inhabit objects, but inhabit the bodies of human beings. If the body is observably different from that of a human being, it would be non-human according to *Botho*. Further, if the enhanced human is mere matter without the immaterial aspect, it would not be human based on the *Botho* outlook.

7.5 Conclusion

This chapter examined the immaterial, material and epistemological aspects of human beings. From the discussions, it has been shown that moderate biotechnological enhancement would not affect either the material or immaterial aspects of a human being. However, radical enhancement could substantially affect both the material and immaterial. The material and immaterial interact and affect each other. If the material body dies, the immaterial aspect would separate from it, and there would no longer be interaction. The material body is an aspect without which a being would not be human. In accordance with the framework of the study, the examination reveals that, while *Botho* is inimical to certain artificial changes or degrees of change to what is currently perceived as human, there is a misconception that *Botho* is automatically opposed to every type and degree of transhumanism. This is exemplified by Francis Fukuyama’s argument against transhumanism on the grounds that it will alter human nature. Such a misconception is based on a lack of detailed research on the topic, or at least the *Botho* perspective offers a different understanding. Generally, proponents of the *Botho* perspective are unlikely to grant humanity to an individual whose human nature they deem to have been tampered with, or whom they deem to have transitioned into a posthuman like mind uploads. However, this study has demonstrated that the *Botho* perspective would grant humanity to individuals that retain elements like, a human body. The

next chapter discusses the impact of biotechnological enhancement to being a person and personal identity.

Chapter 8: The Impact of Enhancements on Personhood and Personal Identity

8.1 Introduction

Chapters 6 and 7 examined the impact of biotechnological enhancements on major ontological aspects of humans, namely, freewill, material/immaterial features, knowledge, and human nature. This chapter (chapter 8) continues the analysis of “persons” and “personal identity”. It explores what makes an individual a person, which would be different from being a human being, and what constitutes a person’s identity as distinct from that of other persons. The chapter distinguishes different contexts or meanings of personhood, namely, the metaphysical, moral and physical/material.

It expounds that immateriality and relationality are sufficient for an individual to be a person in the *Botho* viewpoint. For instance, in the previous chapter it was explained that an Alzheimer patient, or an unconscious person would still be a person according to *Botho*. This is because personhood in the *Botho* view is not merely consciousness, but it is constituted by the immaterial aspect, which houses consciousness. It further explains that mind-uploads with consciousness could be persons because the presence of mental abilities suggests the presence of immaterial elements, and relationality, which constitute personhood for *Botho*. It further demonstrates that a person could exist without a body in both the transhumanism and the *Botho* perspective.

Regarding personal identity in the *Botho* perspective, it shows that immateriality and relationality are necessary, and sufficient for a person’s continued existence. Immateriality in this broader context refers not only to consciousness from the perspective of transhumanism, but also to the notions of life force and spirituality. These, according to the *Botho* perspective, are thought to house consciousness. In contrast to transhumanism, the *Botho* perspective

argues that what is essential to being a person in the metaphysical sense is the housing of consciousness, not consciousness itself. It discusses personal identity in the context of the afterlife and contends that, while the material aspect is essential for human nature, the immaterial aspect plus continuity of relationships ensure personal identity over time.

Whereas the *Botho* standpoint elevates spirituality over materiality, transhumanism elevates consciousness over embodiment. Thus, both the *Botho* perspective and transhumanism dispute material and bodily continuity as a requirement for personal identity, and broadly speaking uphold mental or spiritual continuity. For both the *Botho* and transhumanist perspectives, personal identity is separable from the body; it is in consciousness for transhumanism, and in the immaterial spirit plus relationality for *Botho*. The transhuman's "disembodied consciousness" could therefore be likened to "the living dead" (disembodied spirits) in the *Botho* perspective.

Moreover, it asserts that identity, as specified by *Botho* viewpoint, does not stop at spirituality or materiality; it covers relationality so that the community and family play a role in relating with an individual as the same person. It argues that, even if an enhanced individual may not remember that s/he is the same person, s/he would be the same person, as long as other human persons like his family and friends relate with him/her as the same person, and as long as s/he retains the same immaterial nature. Therefore, loss of consciousness would not necessarily cause loss of personal identity.

One argument that lends novelty to this study is that a biotechnologically enhanced individual can remain a person and one with a particular identity under the *Botho* perspective. Scholars in African philosophy have largely ignored the debate about personal identity in the context of transhumanism. Instead, some have overruled the possibility of an enhanced being

continuing to be a person in the moral, as opposed to the metaphysical sense. On one hand, Chimakonam (2021) appeals to Ifeanyi Menkiti's Afro-communitarian account of personhood to maintain that the kind of personhood we can attain through enhancement is a merely technologised personhood, and not Afro-communitarian personhood. Nonetheless, my observation is that Menkiti holds that a virtuous person is someone who has become a complete person, or who has fulfilled his or her duties. This account of personhood is strictly moral. Therefore, Chimakonam (2021) addresses only normative personhood, which focuses on what an individual does to become a real person, roughly to exhibit virtue. In contrast, this chapter covers the metaphysical distinction as one of the fundamental components of personhood. It attests that, for *Botho*, even a radically "enhanced" individual is often, still a person instead of some other kind of being (even if not a complete or good person).

On the other hand, Fayemi (2018) gives us the first favourable opinion of transhumanism by an African philosopher. Fayemi states that some transhumanist elements are embedded in African ontological conceptions of personhood since both believe that human nature is a work in progress, and is alterable depending on moral choices. However, his focus differs from that of this thesis where he does not explain how enhancement may affect the metaphysical aspects of personhood. Fayemi largely discusses transhumanist elements embedded in the normative aspect of African personhood, whereas this study does not deal with the normative, but focuses on the metaphysical.

Furthermore, this chapter covers personal identity in the context of enhanced persons, viz., whether enhancement has any impact on the identity of a person as distinct from that of other persons. Such an enquiry has not been undertaken before by those working in the African philosophical tradition. In respect to *Botho*'s approach to personal identity, this study is of the

view that immateriality and relationality are necessary and sufficient for a person's continued existence. The study explores the impact of biotechnological enhancement on the metaphysical aspect of not just personhood, but also personal identity, as far as the concept of *Botho* is concerned.

The first section (Section 8.2) discusses personhood according to the *Botho* and transhumanist standpoints. It contrasts the two uses of the concept "person" in the *Botho* perspective, viz., the metaphysical and the normative. The section also discusses the physical and material perception of personhood according to the standard interpretation of transhumanism. Section 8.3, examines responses from the *Botho* perspective, what it means and implies to define personhood as strictly material. The final section (8.4) deals with Personal Identity. It investigates what it means for a person to persist from one time to another or to be the same person at different times according to transhumanism and the *Botho* perspective. The discussion includes implications of biotechnological enhancement on personal identity with responses from the perspective of *Botho*.

8.2 Personhood According to the *Botho* Perspective and Transhuman Perspective

This section demonstrates that, according to the *Botho* perspective, the metaphysical aspect of personhood consists of life force, and spirituality that are thought to house consciousness in a relational manner. It explicates both the metaphysical and normative aspects of personhood in the *Botho* perspective and lastly, the material personhood in transhumanism. After addressing different aspects of personhood, it focuses on the *Botho* metaphysical aspect of personhood, which is relevant to trans/posthumanism. Regarding transhumanism, it argues that consciousness defines personhood. The metaphysical aspect of personhood strongly suggests that there can exist persons who are non-human. For instance, people whose minds have been

downloaded into computers could qualify as persons on the basis that they have mental abilities. As mentioned earlier, mental abilities could point to the presence of a person in the *Botho* perspective in the sense that they suggest the presence of immaterial elements and relationality, which constitute personhood for *Botho*.

8.2.1 Metaphysical Aspect of Personhood: Immateriality

Recall that from chapter 3 that metaphysical personhood normally includes material and immaterial aspects. Immateriality in this broader context refers not only to consciousness, as transhumanism does – immateriality also includes the concepts of life force and spirituality, which, from the perspective of *Botho*, are what contain consciousness. While Western philosophers such as Locke (1690:318) suggest that embryos, foetuses and some adults who have entered a permanent vegetative state may not qualify for personhood because they are not conscious, the *Botho* perspective regards them as persons. What makes them persons is life force and relationality.

As already mentioned in chapter 3 it is common to see the material aspect included as an aspect of human personhood. However, it seems that African scholars emphasise the immaterial aspect over the material, which suggests that it is possible to be a person without being a human. Placid Tempels (1959:50) similarly states that human persons are nothing more than essential energies or vital forces. According to this view, reality and persons imply force. Tempels explains that the universe is controlled by God who possesses force and gives it to everything he created. Tempels further explains that “... created beings preserve a bond, and intimate ontological relationship comparable with a causal relationship which binds creatures and creator” (1959:58).

Another example would be the African belief in the concept of life after death, or the possibility of surviving the death of the body, which suggests that the immaterial aspect is more emphasised. If an individual can survive the death of his or her body, a living body could not be a necessary condition for being a person. The living dead, despite their lack of bodies and hence, not being human beings anymore, persist as persons. The immaterial aspect is essential for the metaphysical personhood in the *Botho* perspective, whose conceptual equivalent in transhumanism is consciousness. An example is an individual whose mental contents have been transferred to a computer, or downloaded into a robot. According to the *Botho* theoretical framework of this study, such an individual is no longer a human but could be a person.

8.2.2 African Relational Metaphysics

In chapter 3, Tempels (1959) explains the African thought by means of the ideas of “vital force”, and of “relationality”. Tempels’ argument of relational metaphysics is further developed by Mbiti (1969), Menkiti (1984) and Metz (2018) who claim that the self cannot exist, unless as a part of a larger whole. It is also elucidated in the previous chapters that immateriality in relation is a key to personhood according to the *Botho* perspective. Whereas the immaterial aspect survives bodily death, persons are fundamentally relational, therefore a being cannot exist except in community with others. While the framework of this study recognises relationality as fundamental to personhood, it does not perceive the individual person only from a relational perspective, for it also has an immaterial aspect.

Recall that from the previous chapter (chapter 3) that the main difference between persons and animals is that persons are rational and relational or at least these mental abilities suggest the presence of immateriality and relationality, which ultimately constitute personhood for

Botho. For instance, a pride of lions or a troop of baboons is relational in a way, but not like persons; they lack a self that can persist without a body.

Tempels view of being in vital force suggests that all beings are related in some way. Mbiti (1969) introduces the concepts of kinship, tribe, clan and family in his communitarian thesis, which converges with the *Botho* perspective. He explains that the “kinship system also extends vertically to include the departed and those yet to be born” (1969:105). The *Botho* viewpoint similarly accepts the kinship relation as essential or central. The human person, according to the *Botho* perspective, essentially relates with his or her surrounding, his or her family, tribe, descendants, and God (Dube et. al. 2016). People are related either by blood or by marriage; hence my family would include not only my nuclear family but the extended one as well. The departed relatives also belong to the family.

In the Setswana worldview, death is conquered by the relational aspect of the human person. Communal relationships between the living and the ancestors connote the continuation of life beyond the grave. Chapter 3 expounded the concept of the living dead. Recall that Menkiti’s account differs with the Setswana view of the living dead. Whereas memory is a key sustaining relation in Menkiti’s context in Setswana context disembodied existence does not depend on the memory of other people. What exists in the mind, memory and thoughts of people is not a person, but the idea of a person. As reported in chapter 3, the immaterial aspect doesn’t die and the living need not to remember the living-dead for them to survive. Batswana for example used to bury their dead with things to use in the next life. This was not conditional. All needed to use their current implements in the next life whether or not they would be remembered, whether or not they might become ancestors (Amanze 2002: 200-212).

According to the standard interpretation of transhumanism a person is essentially the contents of his or her mind, the *Botho* perspective on the contrary contends that the metaphysical aspect of personhood is the immaterial aspect (which houses consciousness) plus the continuity of relationships. The living dead are, therefore, persons not only because they are immaterial but also because they relate with the living.

As already explicated in chapter 5, normative personhood depends on what an individual does. A virtuous or good person is one who successfully carries out moral duties. It is very important to draw a line between ontological or metaphysical personhood, and normative or moral personhood because some scholars conflate the two uses of personhood. For instance, the claim that an individual is not a person because s/he exhibited bad character is not to be taken literally to mean that they are not essentially persons. Rather, the claim is used metaphorically to mean that an individual has failed to exhibit “humanness” or what is valuable or virtuous to persons (Gaie 2007:33). This chapter sets aside normative personhood in order to focus on metaphysical personhood. It holds that enhanced individuals are metaphysically persons, even if they may not be human beings or exhibit humanness (virtue).

8.2.3 Physical/Material Aspect of Personhood in Transhumanism

According to the standard interpretation of transhumanism, persons are essentially material with no immaterial elements. The standard interpretation of transhumanism identifies mental states with the material aspect, or something that must be embodied (even if not in a particular human body). According to Kurzweil, a person is “a pattern of matter and energy that persists over time” (2005:383). He says that this information is lost when a person dies. He argues that:

I am principally a pattern that persists in time. I am an evolving pattern, and I can influence the evolution of my pattern. Knowledge is a pattern, as distinguished from mere information, and losing knowledge is a profound loss. Thus, losing a person is the ultimate loss (2005:385-386).

The standard interpretation of transhumanism emphasises rationality, and potentially disembodied consciousness as the defining essence of personhood. This understanding of personhood is similar to a Lockean understanding of personhood, which defines a person as:

a thinking intelligent being that has reason and reflection, and can consider itself as itself, the same thinking thing, in different times and places, which it does only by that consciousness which is inseparable from thinking, and, as it seems to me, essential to it ... (Locke 1690:318).

As already illustrated in the previous chapter, transhumanism subscribes to materialism. However, many materialists accept the reality of consciousness. According to materialists who accept the reality of consciousness, a person's life continues after natural bodily death if consciousness continues. Minds could be downloaded in another medium without loss of continuity of consciousness. Since personhood is defined in terms of rational capacities, it may include non-humans and exclude human beings. Thus, thinking animals and thinking machines (or spirits) could be included in the category of persons.

8.3 Implications of Enhancement for Personhood

This section argues that the human body is not essential to being a person according to both the standard interpretation of transhumanism and the *Botho* perspective. It contends that

individuals whose minds have been downloaded may not possess a particular human body but could be persons just like the living dead in the African tradition. It shows that, according to the standard interpretation of transhumanism, a person is essentially a pattern of information, so when the body dies and there is no other physical substrate to house the information, it causes the pattern to be lost forever. However, according to the *Botho* standpoint, a person is essentially immaterial and relational. This chapter therefore, argues that according to both the standard interpretation of transhumanism and the *Botho* perspective, body modification need not affect personhood because maintaining the mortal body is not essential to preserve the person.

It further asserts that, while the standard interpretation of transhumanism says a person is purely a mental entity that is fixed, the *Botho* perspective states that a person is a spiritual force that is fixed and essentially relational. Therefore, whereas the standard interpretation of transhumanism says that an individual ceases to be a person when enough of his or her brain has not continued to exist, the *Botho* perspective considers such an individual is a person if his or her spiritual force is fixed and other persons continue to relate with him/her as a person.

The transhumanism approach presupposes that an individual is not a person if s/he does not remember certain experiences. However, my study diverges from this as it holds that, even if an individual may not remember certain experiences, she or he would still possess the same spiritual force, and other persons would continue to relate with her or him as a person. For example, some family members would help the person to recall some forgotten experiences. The person is defined as distinct from the memories. Thus s/he is not her or his memories rather his or her memories belong to her/him. The *Botho* perspective is therefore somewhat

more philosophically attractive than the transhumanism approach. It is also apparent that personhood according to the *Botho* perspective does not require a body because belief in ancestral spirits suggests that there is something more to being a person beside the material body and the brain.

According to Nick Bostrom (2003:17), it matters little whether a human brain is implemented on a silicon chip inside a computer or in the gray, cheesy lump inside a skull, assuming both implementations are conscious. One possibility of mind uploading enhancement could be where an uploaded individual chooses to remain in cyber reality, whereby the brain is stimulated and the person exists in a virtual environment. This scenario is similar to the African traditional concept where the living dead exist without bodies. According to the Setswana tradition, the immaterial aspect persists through time; the person can survive the death of his or her body. It is not clear whether the ancestral spirits always put on different bodies, but it is believed that they retain their identity and possess heightened status, powers and qualities that surpass those of the current living (See the section “Advanced State after Death” in chapter 3). In a scenario similar to where the living dead continue relating with the living, the enhanced person could remain a person according to the *Botho* perspective (if her immaterial aspect and relationality continued).

Another possibility of mind uploading enhancement is cloning an entirely new body and transferring the information to the clone or to an entire silicon body. According to the standard interpretation of transhumanism, the one in the new body would be a person if it is self-conscious. This is similar to the African concept of reincarnation where the ancestral spirit inhabits a newborn baby, and the newborn baby is given the name of the person whose

spirit is believed to live inside him/her (Mbiti 1975:125-126). The Setswana perspective similarly holds that there is continuity of personhood in different physical bodies.

Improving the design of the human body through genetic enhancement and beauty surgery does not have to affect personhood. Individuals could reshape their bodies without losing their selves. Therefore, even if half of the human body was replaced through enhancement, s/he would remain a person. For instance, a person whose legs, arms, hands, and all other limbs are replaced could still remain a person. On one hand, according to transhumanism, rational, conscious electronic computers made of metal and silicon are persons. On the other hand, according to the *Botho* perspective, the gods and the living dead are persons because of the continuity of the immaterial aspect and the relationality.

Bostrom (2003) claims that through virtual reality, an uploaded individual could partake in all sensory experiences available to biological human-beings, such as enjoying food and drinks. “Uploads wouldn’t have to be confined to virtual reality; they could interact with people on the outside and even rent robot bodies in order to work in, or explore physical reality” (Bostrom 2003:18). An individual in the said scenario would be a person according to the *Botho* perspective because relationality is essential for personhood in this perspective. The living dead interact with the living daily. The living dead can eat, drink, advice and punish their family members, such relationships enable them to remain persons.

This study holds that some enhancements could improve normative personhood. Fayemi (2018) holds that human nature can be altered; he draws a link between this ontological aspect and transhumanism. Fayemi goes on to discuss the normative aspect of personhood. He argues that personhood is a process in which, through harmonious relationships, an

individual acquires moral virtues. Thus, the more one progresses morally, the more one's personhood grows. According to him, transhumanism and Afro-communitarianism are also compatible in regard to normative personhood. It is important to note that Fayemi addresses values and ideals that people should live up to, and these ideals are not advanced as what constitutes an individual as a person in the first place (something metaphysically distinct from an animal). He suggests that personhood comes only after a process. In contrast, this thesis contends that before a process, an individual is metaphysically a person if s/he possesses life force, and spirituality that are thought to house consciousness and relationality.

Chimakonam (2021:51-52), in examining Fayemi's normative personhood, argues that technologised personhood is engineered, whereas with normative personhood, an individual goes through the process of achieving, and succeeding or failing at it. Chimakonam suggests that individuals whose personhood is technologically given, would not be full persons according to Menkiti's account of normative personhood because they did not go through the process. In contrast, this thesis contends that metaphysical personhood has nothing to do with process because it is not acquired. What one acquires is moral character. A person cannot be defined only by what s/he acquires or does. Before the process, s/he is essentially a person, even if it is one that can still develop or become morally better.

In regards to enhancement, moral enhancement should not affect the immaterial that houses consciousness and relationality. The enhancement would only change the individual's psycho-social moral nature (Fayemi 2018). Moral enhancement would enhance cognition and increase one's awareness of relationships with other persons.

Radical forms of enhancement may produce automata. Automata are not persons, according to both transhumanism and the *Botho* perspective. They are unconscious, programmable

machines whose behaviour is determined. Descartes (1998:32), in his attempt to distinguish a machine or automata from a person, argues below that persons are free agents while machines are programmed.

The first of these is that they could never use words or other signs, composing them as people do in order to declare their thoughts to others. For people can certainly conceive of a machine, so constructed that it utters words, and even expresses some bodily actions that cause certain changes in its organs. For instance, if you touch it in one spot it asks what you want to say to it; if in another, it cries out that you are hurting it, and so on; but not that it arranges them [the words] diversely to respond to the meaning of everything said in its presence, as even the most stupid of men are capable of doing. Secondly, even though they might perform some things as well as or even better than human beings, they would inevitably fail in others, through which it would be discovered that they were acting, not through understanding but only from the disposition of their organs. For whereas reason is a universal instrument which can be of use in all kinds of situations, these organs need some particular disposition for each particular action; hence, it is impossible to conceive that there would be enough of them in a machine to make it act in all the occurrences of life in the way in which our reason makes us act.

An automaton or a machine does not have reasoning ability, consciousness, or self-awareness. It does not use language, does not have the ability to initiate action, and does not have moral agency or the ability to engage in moral judgments. However, these features are not essential for personhood according to *Botho*. Rather immateriality and relationality are necessary and sufficient criteria. These features would usually suggest the presence of the immaterial aspect, and the lack of these features would normally mean its absence. Hence, an

automaton would not be a person according to both the standard interpretation of transhumanism and the *Botho* perspective.

Even though transhumanism and the *Botho* perspective have similarities in their understanding of personhood, they have some notable differences. One case would be the existence of self-awareness without immateriality or relationality; for example, a conscious purely physical, isolated being. In this case, transhumanism holds that an individual with self-awareness without immateriality or relationality could be a person, whereas the *Botho* perspective would nullify such an individual's personhood. Persons do not just drop from the sky; persons are essentially birthed by parents and raised in a particular family. Therefore, a merely physical individual who does not have relational history with any person or family would not be a person. The *Botho* perspective provides a better or at least a plausible account of personhood, given this contrast.

Another case where transhumanism and *Botho* diverge would be the existence of immateriality and relationality but not consciousness. Regarding this case, transhumanism would nullify the personhood of an individual with immateriality and relationality but not consciousness. According to the *Botho* perspective, immateriality normally houses consciousness. However, even if a being lacks consciousness it could still be a person, for *Botho* if other human persons relate with him/her as the same person, and if it retains the same immaterial nature. Existence of immateriality and relationality therefore suggest that a being is a person. The *Botho* viewpoint is plausible in this regard.

8.4 Personal Identity

This section discusses what it means for a person to persist from one time to another or to be the same person at different times according to transhumanism and the *Botho* perspective as well as implications of biotechnological enhancement on personal identity with responses from the perspective of *Botho*. It shows that transhumanism is compatible with the *Botho* perspective because both perspectives agree that persons are more than mere material bodies and could in principle survive without their current body (both perspectives), or even the brain (both perspectives). Based on the *Botho* view, the human person can survive the death of his or her body, and become a living dead. Reducing the human person strictly to a material body therefore, negates the possibility of life after death. According to transhumanism, the persistent aspect is consciousness, while for the *Botho* perspective it is the spirit or life force that remains in relation to others.

This section advances that the immaterial aspect of the person, as determined by the *Botho* perspective, is not the contents of his or her mind, but rather a vital force or spiritual energy. A human person who has lost his or her memory through brain transplant, for instance, is sensibly identified by other people as the same person. They might say out his or her name and how they are related to him or her. Many African scholars, such as Leke Adeofe (2004), and Bisong (2014) dealt with the question of personal identity, under-considered relationality as one of the necessary and sufficient conditions for personal identity. That omission makes this study important.

Chimakonam (2011) holds that an individual continues to be the same person over time if there is continuity of the same physical body, and if the society can identify him/her as the same person. Thus, to him, personal identity resides in the material body plus relationality.

He suggests that a person would cease to exist after losing his or her body at death, meaning that the living dead in African tradition are not persons, and in fact do not even exist.

Bisong (2014), on the other hand holds that an individual continues to be the same person over time if there is continuity of rationality or consciousness. Bisong's position suggests that when an individual loses his or her memory, s/he ceases to be the same person; this is against the *Botho* viewpoint. This chapter demonstrates that *Botho* is at least plausible, if not more attractive.

8.4.1 *Botho*'s Approach to Personal Identity

Personal identity is the unique numerical identity of persons through time. This is to say, a theory of it specifies the necessary and sufficient conditions under which a person at one time and a person at another time can be said to be the same person, persisting through time. There is a relationship between personhood and personal identity in the *Botho* perspective. While metaphysical personhood answers the question, what a metaphysical person in general is, personal identity answers the question, what makes a particular person essentially who s/he is, and what makes a later specific person the same as the earlier person. The metaphysical features of a person, which persist from one time to another depend on the basic metaphysical nature of a person. Therefore, how one answers the question, "what it is to be a person" has implications on how one answers the question "what does it mean for a person to persist from one time to another"?

According to the *Botho* perspective, a person is essentially the immaterial aspect (life force) and relationality. These two features are necessary and sufficient criteria for a person over time as the same person (distinct from other persons). Metz (2018:216) explicates the sort of relation that constitutes personal identity in the *Botho* perspective.

Person X is numerically identical to person Y only if, and partially because, Y is presently in the same relationships as X. These relationships might be cognitive, emotive, and volitional, e.g., how one thinks about others and how they think of one, what one's attitudes are about others and what others' attitudes are about one, and how one's decisions affect others and how their decisions affect one.

This relationship involves children yet to be born, the living dead, nuclear and extended family members like parents, children, siblings, aunts, uncles, grandparents, and cousins. For example, the living and the living dead are related to one another, as if the living dead are still on earth because at death an individual carries along his or her personality. S/he would have the same name, likes and dislikes. His or her family know the kind of things that make him or her angry/sad/happy. His or her family will love him or her and communicate with him/her. S/he continues to play his or her role as a brother, sister, uncle, aunt, parent and grandparent.

According to the *Botho* perspective, the immaterial and relational aspects ensure continuity. Thus, the *Botho* standpoint upholds the immaterial over the physical body when it comes to continuity. This approach presupposes that the material or bodily continuity is not required for personal identity. Since the body is not a necessary and sufficient condition for personal identity, a person can continue to exist once the body is dead. The living dead or ancestors are therefore regarded as the same persons over time. This claim is reiterated by Mbiti (1975:124), who holds that the departed spirit after the death of the body, retains its personal name and identity, which ensures its continuation of life.

It is interesting to note that based on the *Botho* approach, thoughts and memories are only part of the spirit. Immateriality, therefore, does not only refer to consciousness, but also to the

notions of life force and spirituality. This means, we cannot choose thoughts and memories separately as the necessary features of personal identity. Further, identity, as specified by the *Botho* perspective, covers relationality. Therefore, a person who has lost consciousness does not lose his or her identity. The same argument could be applied to the concept of the living dead, who retain their identity not only through the continued persistence of their immateriality, but also by their relationship with the living.

8.4.2 Personal Identity According to Transhumanism

John Locke is a materialist philosopher who attributes personal identity to consciousness. His account aids in comprehending personhood from the perspective of transhumanism. He explains that consciousness is a necessary and sufficient criterion for personal identity (1690:319).

Derek Parfit (1984:208) interprets Locke as holding that consciousness or psychological continuity includes memory or mental contents.

Ray Kurzweil (2005) offers a “patternist” perspective as an alternative to the materialist account which reduces all biological and non-biological systems to patterns. According to him, a person is not to be identified primarily with his or her body, nor with a soul, but with “a pattern of matter and energy that persists over time” (2005: 383). Kurzweil argues that atoms and cells that comprise the body, change over the course of one’s life, so one’s identity cannot possibly be tied to the preservation of a particular body. He claims that a person has a fundamental identity that is distinct from the body. A person should therefore, associate his or her fundamental identity with the pattern of matter, and energy that s/he represents.

Hans Moravec (1988:117) similarly defines the essence of the person “...as the pattern and process going on in my head and body, not the machinery supporting that process. If the process is preserved, I am preserved. The rest is mere jelly”. Moravec is of the view that, if one retains the same mental structure and takes a different body, s/he remains the same person. The “new” person would normally have some of the same thoughts and memories as the “old” person. Similarly, Bostrom (2003:17) states that “... you survive so long as certain information patterns are conserved, such as your memories, values, attitudes, and emotional dispositions, and so long as there is causal continuity so that earlier stages of yourself help determine later stages of yourself”.

In sum, what largely identifies the human person as the same person at different times according to typical instances of transhumanism is the memory continuation. This thesis demonstrates that based on the *Botho* outlook, an individual does not have to remember everything that s/he has done or experienced, for him or her to be the same person at different times; other people may relate with him/her as the same person even if s/he lost her or his memories.

8.4.3 Implications of Enhancements for Personal Identity

This section discusses different types of enhancements, and state whether or not the enhanced person would remain the same person in accord with the *Botho* perspective. It illustrates that an individual with a different body, or no particular body could remain the same person in both the standard interpretation of transhumanism and the *Botho* viewpoint. It further establishes that, while in the standard interpretation of transhumanism an individual remains the same person only if s/he has psychological or mental continuity, in the *Botho* perspective s/he could remain the same person without psychological or mental continuity. It also

demonstrates that the *Botho* standpoint is philosophically plausible relative to the transhumanist perspective.

It continues to show that, based on the standard interpretation of transhumanism, there is a possibility of creating more copies of the self; this suggests that one person can be two or more at a time. The *Botho* perspective, however, does not have such implications for personal identity because it is not possible for one spirit to inhabit different bodies at the same time. The *Botho* view is more philosophically plausible in this respect. The biotechnological enhancement under discussion is cybernetic enhancement or enhancement by nano-technology.

According to Chimakonam (2011), personal identity is based on the society, which, in turn, means that the body is central. He contends that “for the definition of the self to be meaningful, it must make sense to others, because a person is meaningful only in relation to the society” (2011:200). Chimakonam holds that the correct definition of personal identity is bodily continuity. Thus, it is not what a person thinks, but what others see (*ibid*).

Chimakonam makes a metaphysical point about who continues to persist and is responsible for previous choices. He argues, “I may be convinced that I am a criminal but if others do not see me as such, I’m not. Similarly, no matter how good I think I am, if others see me as a criminal, that becomes my identity” (2011:200). He suggests that a kind of relationality is involved with identity not mere bodily continuity.

Chimakonam identifies personhood, and ultimately personal identity with the material body. He imagines himself undergoing mental surgery. The surgeon transplanted his mind into the body of Prof. C. S Momoh and the professor’s mind into his body. After the surgery, the

professor's body has Chimakonam's mind and Chimakonam's body has the professor's mind. He argues that even if the body that has the mind of the professor thinks he is Professor Mommoh other people will see it differently. That is to say, we are not what we think we are but what others say we are. According to Chimakonam, identity lies with the body, even if the body is given a new mind.

Chimakonam conflates being human, which requires a material body with being a person, which does not require a material body. This position is in contradiction with the African beliefs about the living dead. The living dead do not have bodies, yet they are referred to as persons and the same persons over time. Regarding enhancement, the "enhanced" individual whose mind has been downloaded and exists in a silicon body would not be the same person according to Chimakonam, whereas according to the *Botho* standpoint it is the same person if his or her immaterial aspect and relationships continue.

Another African scholar who examines personal identity in Yoruba is Leke Adeofe (2004). He states that the Yoruba are considered to have a tripartite conception of person. A person is a union of his or her *ara* (body), *emi* (mind/soul) and *ori* (inner head). The *ara* is physical while, the *emi* and *ori* are mental (spiritual (2004:2). He argues that for the Yoruba, personal identity is based on an individual's destiny, purpose, and roles. He is of the view that personal identity lies with the *ori*. *Ori* is an immaterial aspect which is responsible for an individual's personality, and is the bearer of human destiny. He maintains that:

My concern with personal identity is concern with my psychic unity, not my soul, unless I'm worried about the possibility of life after death. Concern with psychic unity is concern with the extent to which activities in my life fulfil a purpose. The purpose

in turn provides meaning to my life, and it is that meaning that evidence to my unity, that my life is on track (2004:13).

Adeofe (2004:10) explicates that the life that is lived consciously, and the purpose that emerges from it, provide psychic unity to the individual (*ibid*). If, for instance, I transfer my *ori* to my son, his personality would change, with changes in personality there is a likelihood of corresponding changes in social roles; and with social roles comes new social identities. He contends that transferring my *ori* does not violate my “human- beingness”, since the human identity would be preserved in the union of the body (*ara*) and the soul (*emi*). He argues that the *ori* is functionally isomorphic with the soul. He likens the concept to the Lockean mentalist approach and asserts that Locke regards the person as consciousness, and the body as the human being. Hence, when consciousness is transferred to another body, personal identity resides with the new body which now houses consciousness. Adeofe misses relationality as one of the criteria of personal identity. In accord with the *Botho* perspective, a person is essentially immaterial and relational.

According to the *Botho* perspective, change in personality and destiny, does not necessarily result in a change in personal identity. An individual’s personality is shaped by genes and environmental influences. Through gene enhancement or moral enhancement, an individual may change some undesirable traits like hot temper, friendliness, or self-control during emotionally charged situations. Similarly, a person who is born a chief, and socialised to be a chief may decide to alter his or her destiny by joining politics instead. A change in personality and destiny does not result in a change of personal identity based on the *Botho* standpoint, and plausibly not.

Bisong (2014) argues against Chimakonam's criterion of personal identity. He states that "if the physical body is the seat of personal identity, then personal identity inevitably ends at death, and thereby man cannot be a being unto eternity" (2014:57). He holds that personal identity resides in consciousness and not in the body. He explains that the body houses consciousness, "to attribute identity to the physical body is to confuse a person for a man. The identity of a man is the physical body, but the identity of persons is consciousness" (2014:57). Bisong's understanding of personal identity is similar to Locke's view, which has greatly influenced transhumanism. The *Botho* perspective in contrast states that personal identity lies in the immaterial spirit that is thought to house consciousness plus relationality. The *Botho* perspective identifies the immaterial aspect as something other than the contents of the mind, but rather something like a spiritual force. As explored in the discussion, Bisong and transhumanism differ with the *Botho* perspective where an individual loses his memory in the process of enhancement. While the *Botho* perspective states that such an individual is, or at least could be, the same person, Bisong, like transhumanism, would say s/he is definitely not the same person.

During mind uploading, some individuals could discard their bodies, and such individuals would remain the same persons according to both the standard interpretation of transhumanism and the *Botho* perspective. Similarly, the belief in life after death that is linked with the *Botho* perspective is incompatible with reducing persons to material bodies.

Some "enhanced persons" may feel that they have continued to be the same person after the uploading process while others might not. That is, s/he might be designed to closely imitate memories, skills, personality, and knowledge of the original person, while some might not. If the memory of the enhanced individual persisted, transhumanism would say it is the same

person. According to the *Botho* perspective, what constitutes personal identity is the immaterial aspect (spirit) and relationality. Supposing the brain is damaged, and the person does not remember his or her life, his or her plans and intentions, the *Botho* standpoint would consider that person the same person because according to this viewpoint, a human person is more than just a stream of consciousness. Even if s/he has lost her/his memory, other human persons in his community and his family would relate with him/her as the same person. For instance, they will call him/her by his or her name. The *Botho* perspective is more plausible in this respect.

Based on the *Botho* view the cessation of consciousness would not result in the formation of a new individual person. For example, an individual person who develops amnesia from some organic trauma might be considered the same person. People would call her/him by the same name, her/his family would visit and wish for her/his recovery and no new birth certificate or passport would be issued. The *Botho* perspective would consider an “enhanced person” who is not conscious of him/herself after the uploading process of the same person. According to the *Botho* perspective, such an enhanced person would be the same person if s/he is relational and s/he has the same spiritual nature.

Bostrom (2003) discusses the possibilities regarding uploading, the first of which is concerned with the probability that uploading could entail a process whereby the original biological brain of the individual choosing to upload does not survive. The second possibility is that the original brain or biological entity would be preserved (*ibid*). Supposing that the original biological brain of the individual choosing to upload survives death, there could be copies of the same person. Since the person does not have to be connected to a particular physical body to be the same person, if the pattern is preserved in different copies, there would be copies of the same person. This position is counterintuitive.

The *Botho* perspective, in contrast, argues that the immaterial aspect, plus continuity of relationships, ensures personal identity over time. As specified by the *Botho* outlook, the spirit of a human person can inhabit the body of a new-born child (Mbiti 1975:125-126). Mbiti explains that when features, characteristics and personality of the spirit of the living dead are noticed in a newly born baby, then people would say so and so has come back (*ibid*). In most cases, the new-born child is given the name of the person whose spirit has inhabited his or her body. Mbiti goes on to explicate that in some African societies, a person can have two spirits. This belief suggests that the spirits of one person can inhabit the bodies of two different persons. However, in the *Botho* perspective, a person has only one spirit. Furthermore, the spirit of one person cannot inhabit different bodies at the same time. Ideally, identifying one person as the same person at the same time would therefore not be problematic, as determined by the *Botho* perspective.

According to both the standard interpretation of transhumanism and the *Botho* perspective, body modification, alteration and replacement need not affect personhood or personal identity. The person could be the same person. What makes such an individual the same person, according to the standard interpretation of transhumanism is his or her continued consciousness, while, for the *Botho* perspective, it is the continued immaterial aspect and relationality. This study has provided reasons that favour the *Botho* perspective considering the discovery that transhumanism tends to fall short of other characteristics that complete the concepts of person and personal identity. For example, whereas transhumanism presupposes that an individual is not a person if s/he does not remember certain experiences, *Botho* holds that such an individual is a person because s/he would still possess the same spiritual force, and other persons would continue to relate with her/him as a person. This scenario renders the

transhumanism view of a person doubtful, or even downright false. In another example, of personal identity, transhumanism presupposes that there is a possibility of creating more copies of the self. However, the *Botho* perspective does not have such implications for personal identity because it is not possible for one spirit to inhabit different bodies at the same time. It is logically problematic for one person to be identical with two or more people at the same time. This scenario proves the inadequacy of the transhuman approach.

8.5 Conclusion

This chapter has used the *Botho* concept to analyse and hypothesise on the personhood and personal identity of enhanced persons, particularly their materiality, immateriality and relationality. This is in fulfillment of the study's main objective, which is to examine biotechnological enhancements metaphysically. Using the *Botho* lens, this chapter has argued that the loss of materiality does not necessarily entail the loss of personality, meaning that an individual can remain a person even after bodily death, or would be considered a person even if his or her body is transformed or replaced. Both transhumanism and the *Botho* perspective distinguish and separate the essence of a person from the body. Substituting the human body for an artificial one should not affect personhood. One of the significant examples discussed is mind uploading where the human mind would be uploaded onto a computerized container. The discussion has also shown instances where the *Botho* perspective and transhumanism diverge. For example, whereas transhumanism ascribes personhood to the existence of self-awareness without immateriality or relationality, the *Botho* perspective does not. Another example is the existence of immateriality and relationality without consciousness. The *Botho* standpoint ascribes personhood to the said case while transhumanism does not. The discussion has also shown where other works which discuss "personal identity" are inadequate when it comes to either understanding the African tradition or having a philosophically attractive view. The chapter has further demonstrated that *Botho* is a novel

perspective on both the African notions of personal identity and the implications of enhancements in an African context. Thus, *Botho* is preferable to transhumanism regarding personal identity.

Chapter 9: Implications of Enhancement for Morality with Summary and Conclusions

The previous few chapters (chapters 6-8) examined the metaphysical aspects of *Botho*.

Unlike literature addressing African ethics and enhancements, these chapters discussed how transhumanism bears on freewill, human nature, personhood, and personal identity. This chapter gives a summary and a conclusion on how transhumanism interacts with these metaphysical aspects of the *Botho* perspective. It further reflects on the metaphysical claims drawn in the previous chapters by suggesting some moral conclusions that this study has not yet exploited. It discusses which enhancements are morally impermissible according to *Botho*. Lastly, it recapitulates the study's significance.

The general conclusion of this study is that the metaphysical aspect of *Botho* is not applicable to certain forms of transhumanism in relation to freewill and the material and immaterial aspects of human nature. Examples of enhancements that could be consistent with *Botho*'s accounts freewill, human nature, and personhood, consider manipulating the body's machinery to produce desirable genes. This can be done by adding genes to the human genome (if they do not exist already). If they already exist in the human genome but are not expressed, they could be activated. Another example is cloning, where a woman may give birth to a genetic copy of herself, spouse or deceased family. This could be done by implanting one's genes into an unborn child. Another example is the introduction of additional pigments into the genetic makeup of individuals to improve their hair, skin and eye colour. It is an open question, for all I have said so far, whether these enhancements would be morally desirable.

Another example of enhancements that could be consistent with *Botho*'s metaphysics is replacing healthy body parts with artificial, mechanical or genetically engineered prostheses.

The fusion of human and electronic technology would lead to the formation of a hybrid known as a cyborg. The extension of the human body parts and its function could improve its performance or extend its life span.

Replacing the human body with superior genes or replacing biological systems with mechanical systems need not affect human nature or other metaphysical aspects of *Botho*. Similarly, if the human mind is transferred to a new human body, the person would remain a human as per *Botho*.

However, there are some form of enhancements which could replace human nature. For example, uploading minds from physical bodies and brains into a new type of computer. The enhanced individual would exist without the limitation of a physical, organic body. The enhanced individual could choose to remain in cyber-reality. If the mind existed without the body in cyberspace, it would no longer be human but it could be a person (if its life force and relationships remain).

Regarding freewill and knowledge capabilities, the study has established that cognitive enhancement could improve both. Some pharmacological enhancements like modafinil could improve cognitive capabilities like memory, mental aspects or and consciousness. Through the use of gene enhancement, embryos could be selected for intelligence. Mind uploading would allow consciousness to be backed up and sustained in forms far more durable than the human body. This consciousness could then be improved. Improved consciousness would produce virtually infinite and unlimited knowledge since available information would be continually reassessed. Improved knowledge suggests that enhanced individuals could make

informed choices. Enhanced individuals would be free to explore, to think and to create. An improved consciousness could also confer a unique moral standing on enhanced individuals.

However, enhancing an individual to a point where s/he becomes an automaton /robot would destroy his or her capacity to acquire knowledge and to choose freely. For instance enhancement could produce conscious, sentient, intelligent machines/robots that lack materiality and immateriality. These machines/robots could be programmed or behaviourally determined with set of rules regarding their morality hence not free. These machines/robots would be neither humans nor persons.

The study has, however, demonstrated that the metaphysical aspect of *Botho* is consistent with some radical forms of transhumanism regarding knowledge acquisition, personhood, and personal identity. Whereas radical enhancement may affect being human or human nature, it would not necessarily affect personhood or personal identity and it would not limit knowledge capability. However, a conscious machine without immateriality and relation would not be a person. About personal identity, a posthuman could be the same person through time if s/he retains the immaterial aspect and relationships. Further, a posthuman could still acquire knowledge and his or her knowledge capability could be enhanced. A posthuman could also be free to develop his or her moral personhood.

In addition to the metaphysical issues, there are some moral conclusions that can be drawn from this study. Recall that the moral aspects of *Botho* raise and answer questions concerning right, wrong, social norms and reasons for acting one way or another. When a person is behaving according to how they ought to behave for example, they are said to have *Botho*; if they behave immorally, they are said to have no *Botho*. According to Gaie (2007), the theory

of *Botho* shares some characteristics with other moral theories, and it can be applied to morality just like other moral theories. Hence, the ethical aspect of *Botho* is applied in this chapter to assess human acts as either being morally wrong or right.

As already mentined from chapter 5 *Botho* emphasises the need for relationships and the concern for others. That is, an individual is truly human when s/he establishes humane relations with other human beings. For example, whereas it is *Botho* to work together to ensure the wellbeing of the whole community, it is not *Botho* to let a member of a community suffer if the community could assist.

Recall that *Botho* is also employed in reference to virtue. An individual with virtue in the *Botho* ethics is sympathetic, kind, loving, friendly, caring, sharing, respectful and compassionate. According to Broodryk (2008:17), *Botho* values are geared towards ensuring a happy and qualitative community life in the spirit of family.

Enhancement is consistent with freedom in the *Botho* perspective. An individual in the *Botho* perspective is viewed as capable of making informed choices regarding the decision of whether to enhance himself/herself or not. Thus, the human persons are not helplessly subject to the society's rules, but retain their individual freedom of choice. This kind of freedom is necessary to a human person's sense of moral responsibility. Freedom suggests that an individual is allowed to manifest his or her capacity to become a virtuous person. Growth or process of personhood depends mostly on others. An individual could therefore, become a good person through the community and the community could become a good society through its individual members. Allowing individuals freedom would promote their dignity.

Enhancement also suggests the individual's ability for rationality which is acknowledged by the *Botho* perspective. Being rational suggests that human persons can make informed choices about whether or not to enhance themselves, which traits to enhance and the extent or degree to which the enhancing should be done. Rationality also implies acting with self-control, having the ability to assess the reasons for or against enhancement and making rational decisions. Morality depends on making rational choices. For example, enhanced individuals would choose to participate with others on a co-operative basis and help each other out of sympathy.

Transhumanism need not erode important human values, such as empathy for others. Moral requirements in the *Botho* perspective are nothing more than a product of the community itself. This means that, even though the individual person is free, his or her freedom is limited to some extent by moral obligations and laws. S/he makes decisions not as a separate individual, but as a participant in the community. The decision to enhance oneself would involve consulting and considering others, so that an individual may be well advised. Therefore, as long as the human community exists, laws will be in place to protect the wellbeing of human persons. The law and the ethical reflection of *Botho* would promote solidarity. People would, therefore, seek the good of others and the community.

In response to the fear that enhancement would exacerbate the already marked inequalities between the rich and the poor, the Setswana tradition has practices such as *mafisa*, *majako*, *molaletsa*, and *letsema* which show that the *Botho* perspective constitutes moral virtues of love and compassion (see chapter 5). In the context of transhumanism, the community would come up with initiatives such as public funding to ensure that the disadvantaged members of the community have access to enhancements.

Enhancing children with genes that allow superior athletic performance, longevity, better cognition, eliminating genes for criminality, and so forth is consistent with *Botho* because it would not only benefit the individual but the whole community. Enhancing longevity through either gene enhancement or nano-technology would promote relationships among family members. Individuals would be happy to have their parents live longer. Living longer would also allow individuals to contribute to the society with their wisdom and talents. Furthermore, since normative personhood is not fixed, increase in lifespan would suggest increase in chances to acquire full personhood. Cognitive and emotive enhancement through either gene, pharmaceutical or nano-technology would improve areas of emotive and cognitive functioning, both of which could be helpful in restoring communal harmony.

It would not be wrong to enhance an individual if s/he remains either a human or a person. For example, altering, replacing, or removing some material aspect would not substantially affect human nature. However, removing the entire human body could substantially affect human nature, yet retain the person and so in this case enhancement might not be objectionable. Both human beings and persons have the capacity for relationships. Therefore, enhancing an individual to a degree where s/he remains either a human or a person would not threaten human relationships. Thus, the enhanced individual would interact with people in a human way. However, it would be wrong according to the *Botho* perspective if an individual becomes an automaton. As seen from previous chapters, an automaton is neither a human being nor a person. Further an automaton is no longer free; hence it is unable to develop its (moral) personhood. Furthermore, an automaton would no longer be able to acquire knowledge; therefore, it would not make informed moral decisions. Lastly, an automaton lacks immateriality in relation. Enhancing an individual to a degree where s/he becomes an

automaton would be morally wrong in light of the *Botho* perspective because such individuals would lack the capacity to engage in relationships. They would also lack the ability to love others, and the human dignity which is rooted in the human capacity for relationships.

This study has covered the metaphysical distinction of personhood, which is not tackled by most of the works that discuss the communitarian aspect of *Botho* or personhood. African scholars who deal with metaphysical concepts like freewill, human nature, personhood and personal identity do not discuss them in the context of transhumanism. A few scholars who discuss transhumanism in the African perspective focus only on the moral aspects.

Furthermore, African scholars who discuss personal identity leave out relationality as one of the necessary and sufficient conditions for a person's continued existence. Therefore, this research contributes a new African voice to the metaphysical concepts of enhancement.

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