

**A CRITICAL ASSESSMENT OF AFRICAN COMMUNITARIANISM
FOR ENVIRONMENTAL WELL-BEING**

By

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Dedications

I dedicate this epistemic project to my late son Taonga Xavier (Jnr) Watadza. The strength of our love to you has penetrated the metaphysical durawall that demarcates heaven and earth. We are in spiritual unison with you, our beloved son.

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Abstract

It is an undeniable truism that the world at large and Africa in particular is facing serious environmental problems such as deforestation, water pollution, air pollution, wetlands destruction, poaching as well as global warming. These problems are mainly caused by economic pressure for industrialisation, technological advancement, population growth, poverty and ignorance. Efforts to tone down these environmental problems have been largely influenced by the employment and deployment of Western ethical theories like land ethic, deep ecology, ecofeminism and social ecology as well as scientific approaches. Whilst these strategies are credited for forming the foundation of environmental discourse, they have not been a one-size-fits-all approach. As a result, they have registered modicum results in mitigating environmental challenges especially with particular reference to Africa. This is simply because they have proved to be anthropocentric and they are not flavoured with socio-cultural realities which identify the indigenous folk and shape their relationship with the natural environment. It is against this backdrop that the researcher feels that African communitarianism as a theory embedded on Ubuntu, Indigenous knowledge system such as taboos and totems and African traditional religion and morality, can chip-in to supply a home-grown solution to African environmental problems. Conscious of the pejorative effects of colonial hegemony through Christianity and the ever-present modern world of scientific undertakings, the researcher recommends a formulation of an environmental ethic that integrates traditional African religion, Christian ethics and scientific conservation methods to ensure an environmental policy that informs and directs sustainable socio-economic trajectory in contemporary Africa.

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CHAPTER ONE

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Introduction

The research project is a critical assessment of African communitarianism for the enhancement of environmental well-being. This chapter comprises of background to the study, problem statement, research aims and objectives, rationale and research methodology. The main purpose of this Chapter is to first provide a brief overview of the limitations of traditional Western theories of environmental ethics such as land ethic, deep ecology, social ecology and eco-feminism. These theories have been largely criticised for being anthropocentric and as a result, till the present day, they have not been very significant in the formulation of a policy and strategy for the eradication of environmental degradation particularly with special attention to Africa. This entails that these theories prioritise the interest of human beings other than non-human species of nature. Brennan (2002:2) argues that many traditional Western ethical theories are anthropocentric or human centred in that they assign intrinsic value to human beings alone. A source of concern therefore is that, while these theories fall very short in providing a remedy to ecological damage, African and the world's environment is at auto-cruise speed to degradation. Kalemba (2010:54) argues that Africa must respond urgently and positively to fight the deforestation and land degradation that add to the problem of climate change. In addition, the impact of the pollution caused by the industrialised nations constitutes an important threat to Africa and this together with deforestation has impacted negatively on the state of the environment on the continent.

Most of these ecological problems are mainly caused by insatiable economic growth, poverty, ignorance, industrialization and technological advancement. In Zimbabwe for instance, the violent and disorderly land invasions of year 2000 and illegal diamond mining have resulted in huge environmental destruction. During this period, wild animals were killed for meat by new farm settlers, trees were cut to clear land for agrarian activities as well as to provide firewood for both rural

and urban use. Uncontrollable veld fire on new farms was the order of the day especially in summer. In South Africa, elephant overpopulation, overgrazing, intensive use of pesticides and erosion are some of the major environmental problems affecting the country. Writing about overpopulation of elephants in South Africa, Brehens (2011:217) pointed out that elephants are herbivores and their vast mass requires that they consume enormous quantities of vegetation daily to supply their nutritional needs. In the process of foraging they are also notoriously destructive, pushing over trees, tearing off bark, and trampling smaller plants underfoot. Confined as they are to small areas, breeding successfully, they have begun to become a threat to biodiversity and other species in their ecosystem.

Taking into considering these varying and disturbing ecological problems facing Africa and the fact that Western ethical methodologies have not provided solution to Africa's ecological problems, it is evident that a new approach is needed and that African communitarianism is thus proposed. This proposal emanates from two major observations: firstly, the theory is hinged upon African religio-socio-cultural experience and as a result it is a local solution to local environmental problems. Secondly, it is a theory to depend on because its major tenets which are religion, morality, holistic approach, the idea of common good, good will, ubuntu and harmonious and interdependence relationship with nature make the foundation and pillars of African environmental outlook. Illustrating his positions on the conciliating relation between humans and the environment in traditional African culture, Tangwa cited the instance of his own culture, the Nso in Cameroon. For Tangwa, the "Nso attitude toward nature and the rest of creation is that of respectful co-existence, conciliation and containment" and he observes that there are frequent offerings of sacrifices to God, to the divine Spirits, both benevolent and malevolent, to the departed ancestors and to the sundry invisible and inscrutable forces of nature (Tangwa, 2006:390). This will expectedly provide a reliable foundation to thoughts and policy formulation on African environment.

Ugwuanyi (2011:05) asserts that African thought and culture have held a theory of life itself considerably humanist; one which harbours potential for a form of thinking that could spur a people to seek for a man-centred and man desired world. This in itself suggests a fertile ground for environmental ethics. What this

means is that one cannot try to understand African environmentalism without understanding the culture of African people. For instance in African traditional religion certain mountains, rivers, forests, trees are considered sacred because through them God could communicate to his people, so they are of divine significance. The same applies to certain animals. In African traditional society, every clan belongs to a particular totem which they identify themselves with. The concept of totemism has a bearing on the African people's environmental disposition because one would not kill and eat an animal of his totem. By so doing, animals could as well be preserved. Cited in (Mangena, 2013:39), Nyajeka argues that the *mutupo* (totem) principle focuses on fostering the primary relationship between animals and humans, animals and the deity, humans and humans, deity and humans, nature and humans, the dead and the living. The *mutupo* principle attempts to enumerate and approximate the ideal mode of life which assures a sustainable future for all existence. An analysis of fundamental elements of *mutupo* principle reveals that it is a principle which seeks to create a cosmology that takes the existence of human entities seriously Nyajeka (1996:12). Thus if one's totem is pig, one cannot therefore eat pig meat and this is meant not only to protect pig species from extinction through arbitrary killing for meat but also to show that pigs and human beings are related (Mangena, 2013:40). Equally significant to the concept of African religion and cultural beliefs in relation to environmental ethics is the aspect of taboos especially among the Shona people of Zimbabwe. Taboos are part and parcel of the Shona morality and environmentalism. Because of their prohibitive nature, they shape human behaviour in relation to nature.

To complement introductory remarks on how African religion and cultural belief represent African environmental worldview, this chapter also provides, though not in greater detail, ideas of some African environmental ethicist namely Tangwa, Ogungbemi and Ugwuanyi. These scholars talk about eco-bio communitarianism, ethics of nature relatedness and the articulation of African moral principle and traditional practices in relation to environmental ethics respectively. Of importance and interests from these ideas is the realisation that they are all premised on African communitarianism so together they are calling for an environmental ethic from within.

1.2. Background to the study

The researcher has realised that current theories in environmental ethics especially of Western origin such as land ethic, deep ecology, social ecology and eco-feminism, to mention a few, are by and large anthropocentric and just like any academic theory, they are fraught with down sides and limitations. This has not reduced in a significant way the level of unprecedented environmental degradation in Africa and the world at large. For instance, critics of deep ecology argue that Naess' ecology is more than the extended social democratic version of utilitarianism which counts human interest in the same calculation alongside the interest of all natural things, for example trees, wolves, bears, ants, forest and mountains in the natural environment (Witzoszek 2009:78). Furthermore, deep ecology has also been criticized by feminists. Plumwood (1991:121) argued that the theory of the expanded self is in fact a disguised form of human-indeed masculine- egoism, unable to give nature its due respect as a genuine other independent of human interest and well-being. Peterson (2013:99) asserts that the fourth tenet of deep ecology which states that the flourishing of human life and culture is compatible with substantial decrease of the human population is completely at odds with reality of population growth in Sub-Saharan Africa. If deep ecology were to be applied in the African context, Africans would need to adopt a paradigm shift that seems quite impossible: desisting from striving for a higher standard of living. Eco-feminism has also been criticized as a theory in environmental ethics. Feldman (1998:91) argued that the problem with eco-feminism is that the claim that the domination of nature is wrong in the same way that the domination of women is wrong makes no sense, since domination can only be considered to be unjust when the object dominated has a will.

The researcher has also observed that African traditional approaches to environment which are all enshrined in African communitarianism can provide some lessons and ideas that can be used in formulating a much more sustainable philosophy of environmental management. But before discussing the connection between African communitarianism and environment, the researcher thinks that it is of paramount importance to provide a brief conceptualization of African communitarianism though the greater part of this concept will be covered in Chapter two. African communitarianism refers to the school of thought in which

an individual's identity and role in the society is understood as an integral part of the larger community. In this case, the community is considered more important than the individual. Among other proponents of African communitarianism are Menkiti and Gyekye. In "Person and Community in African Thought" (1984), Menkiti argues that, in Africa, the community has priority over the individual. He distinguishes between Western views which generally hold that a person is a lone individual and African views, in which a person is identified by reference to the environing community quoting John Mbiti's statement "I am because we are, and since we are, therefore I am". According to Menkiti as far as Africans are concerned, the reality of communal world takes precedence over the reality of individual life histories, thus the communal ethics has ontological and epistemological precedence (Menkiti 1984:171).

Gyekye (2003:42) in his version of moderate communitarianism argues that communitarianism sees the individual as inherently communal being, embedded in a context of social relationship interdependence. This entails that from a communitarianism point of view an individual is not understood as in isolation, rather, as he relates and depend on others. What is crucial to note from the Gyekye and Menkiti's articulation of African communitarianism is that an individual is "inherently a communal being embedded in a context of social relationships of interdependence". It is not an exaggeration to say that the community in this case refers to both of human beings, animals, plants and non-living things of the natural world. If this is the case, then it is therefore safe to argue that it is through, traditional African religion, the idea of common good, holistic approach, co-operation, goodwill, consensus, and totemism and taboos that an African environmental consciousness is hinged and reflected.

Chemhuru and Masaka (2012:121) assert that taboos (*zviera*) form an integral part and parcel of the Shona morality. Among Shona people of Zimbabwe, environmental taboos have a pivotal moral role towards the ontological wellbeing of both the individual person and the environment at large. Prohibitions and restrictions through taboos on unsustainable use of certain plant species, forests, mountains, rivers, pools and nonhuman animals, among other ecological species in the ecosystem, is not a new epistemology among the Shona people, but reflects

a long tradition. At the same time, they are currently very lively and continue to shape Shona environmental ethics (ibid).

Tatira (2000:13) rightly notes that, “the Shona people realise the importance of preserving the environment as a factor in overall development. This knowledge is manifested in some of the taboos that control child behaviour in relation to the environment”. Writing about the relationship between Shona taboos and the environment, (Chemhuru & Masaka, 2010:127) argues that another taboo that discourages the abuse of water sources is *ukawetera munvura, unozorwara nechirwere chehozwe*, which means “if you urinate in water source, you will suffer from bilharzias”. In this taboo, fear of contracting a disease is used as a deterrent for those who may be tempted to urinate in water sources thereby polluting them. Therefore this taboo implicitly teaches people to act in a way that is compatible with the pursuit for a liveable environment even though fear of contracting a disease is used as a deterrent. Thus the taboo is coined in order to foster environmental awareness among the Shona (Chemhuru and Masaka, 2010:127). In this regard, Tangwa (2006) notes that, “as human beings, we carry the whole weight of moral responsibility and obligation for the whole world on our shoulders” Thus, Shona taboos are ethical tools that do not only foster good human relations but also promote good relations between human beings and nature.

Segun Ogungbemi defines African environmental ethics as the “ethics of nature relatedness” (Mangena 2013:30). For Ogungbemi, the ethics of nature relatedness can be succinctly stated as ethics that lead human beings to seek to co- exist peacefully with nature and treat it with some reasonable concern for its worth, survival and sustainability (ibid). Ogungbemi (1997:208) argues that in traditional Africa, man recognizes the importance of water, land and air management. The ethics of care is extended to the understanding of environmental protection, conservation and management in Africa. Ogungbemi further postulates that in the traditional communities, the ethics of not taking more than you need from nature is a moral code (ibid). Perhaps this explains why earth, forests, rivers and wind and other natural objects are traditionally believed to be both natural and divine. The philosophy behind belief may not necessarily be religious but a natural means by which the human environment can be preserved.

According to Mangena (2013:31), in defining African environmental ethics, Godfrey Tangwa argues that within the traditional African metaphysical worldview, the dichotomy between “plants, animals, and inanimate things; between the sacred and the profane, matter and spirit, the communal and the individual, is a slim and flexible one.” For Tangwa this metaphysical worldview involves the “recognition and acceptance of interdependence of and peaceful coexistence between earth, plants, animals and humans” (Tangwa, 2006:389). This metaphysical outlook underpinned the ways, manner and cosmically relations between human and his fellow humans. It is also responsible for why traditional Africans were more cautious in their attitude plants and the various invisible forces of the world (ibid). His environmental theory is significant to the research because it reflects the interdependence of and peaceful co-existence between earth, plants and humans in the pre-colonial traditional African society.

Ugwuanyi articulates on the moral principles of the world and how it suggests an idea of environmental ethics and locates philosophy that interprets traditional religious practices and the environmental principles that could be derived there-in. For him, morality in Africa is grounded in a form of communitarianism which is a theory of shared identity and good will. From communitarianism flow Africa’s core values: co-operation, consensus, reconciliation and commonality (Ugwuanyi, 2011:10). Based on this claim, he declares that a relationship with the environment that generates discord or factions among humanity cannot be permitted by the African moral principle of communitarianism.

The aspect of totemism among African cultural beliefs also has a bearing on the environmental disposition and outlook. For Murove, totemism shows characteristics of the Bantu mind: The strong tendency to give a human soul to animals, to plants, to nature as such a tendency which is at the very root of the most beautiful blossoms of poetry, a feeling that there is community of substance between the various forms of life (Murove, 2004:201-202). Chivaura shares the same plate of opinion with Murove when he asserts that, the adoption of totemism in African world-view such as the leopard, lion, elephant, crocodile, hippo, fish, python or eagle is to prevent people from destroying animals or flora and fauna they identify with as totems. Killing anything adopted as a totem becomes an offence (Chivaura, 2005:235).

Central to African communitarianism is African traditional religion. Traditional African religion as an element of culture depicts environmental consciousness. Mbiti argues that in African religion God, spirits, humanity and non-humans exist as a unity, and to break that unity is to destroy one or more of the modes of existence, and to destroy one of them is to destroy them all (Mbiti, 1969: 51). This entails that among African traditional societies, there is a strong connection between God, the living, the dead and the environment. This kind of interdependence and connectedness is very foundational in as far as the conception of African environmental ethics is concerned. Nyamiti shares this understanding when he concludes that the universe is a sort of organic whole composed of supra-sensible or mythical core relations or participation (Nyamiti, 1973:21). Magesa asserts that the African world is the manifestation of God, His power, and benevolence. Accordingly, a big rock where people go to sacrifice is not just a big rock but it incorporates, shows, and for that reason is, in fact some supernatural quality of the divine. The same can be said of practically anything that inspires awe: mountains, trees, snakes, certain animals and so on. While African religion understands that these elements are by no means God but creatures, it also recognises that they have divinity in them because they exist by the will and through the power of divinity. In a sense, they exist by the will and through the power of the divinity and they represent the divinity and surely demonstrate God's will and power to humanity (Magesa, 1997:14)

Still on African traditional religion and African environment, Peterson (2013) argues that Ugwuanyi's basis for claiming that traditional philosophy and religion are a third source of environmental ethics is the observation that for traditional Africans, religion is a "complete way of life". African religion is not textually preserved- rather it is captured everywhere through myth, songs, dance, painting, carving, adages, symbols, sculptures and languages. Lending support to the notion of environmental communitarianism, the practice of traditional religion itself is communal. The individual is identified with the religion of his community (Ugwuanyi, 2011:7). This therefore entails that if one is identified with the religion of the community he or she cannot afford to go against the dictates and expectations of the entire society, be it environmental, social and religious. An

individual cannot go and cut trees from a forest which is considered to be sacred by the whole community.

Maathai, a Kenyan environmentalist and founder of the Green Belt Movement postulates that, I saw how important culture was to the larger goals of the Green Belt Movement and to managing our natural resources efficiently, sustainably and equitably. Many aspects of the cultures of our ancestors practiced had protected Kenya's environment (Maathai, 2007:175). From this idea one can learn that culture in African society is an indispensable element if ever there should be serious and practical environmental policy, ethic and strategy.

Paying attention to the above discussion one can deduce that, African communitarianism in particular is a rich theoretical concept that can be used as a resource to formulate a sustainable philosophy to enhance environmental well-being. This observation has motivated the researcher to embark on a study that unpacks the philosophical richness or grounded-ness of African communitarianism with the view of gaining ideas that can be used in the development of a sustainable approach. The researcher believes that current environmental ethical theories are inadequate and a new theory is needed and that the ethos of African communitarianism such as the collective approach, African religion, African morality, the idea of common good can supply the required ingredients.

1.3. Rationale

The proposed research is considered philosophically important because:

Firstly, it seeks to answer the question: What should be done to develop an environmental ethic that is anchored in African communitarianism to solve African environmental challenges? By so doing, the proposed research is pragmatic. According to Light (1996:84) environmental pragmatism is a new strategy in environmental thought which argues that theoretical debates are hindering the ability of the environment movement to forge agreement on basic policy imperatives. This new direction in environmental thought moves beyond theory, advocating a serious inquiry into the merits of moral pluralism (ibid). This therefore means that this research project strives to augment efforts to solve

problems of environmental crisis by resorting to African communitarianism as an alternative approach.

Secondly, this research seeks to provide an alternative approach to environmental ethics. While credit is given to Western approaches and schools of thought on environmental ethics, however it has been noted that some if not most of them are anthropocentric in nature. Brennan (2002:2) argues that many traditional Western ethical theories are anthropocentric or human centred in that they assign intrinsic value to human beings alone. This means that they put priority to the interest of humans only other than attaching inherent value to the environment as well. This implies that there is definitely a need for a sustainable ethic which is not only anthropocentric, hence the proposal of an environmental ethic anchored on African communitarianism. Why African communitarianism? Because it is a theory that reflects African thought, it is hinged on aspects such as the holistic approach, African traditional religion, African morality, the idea of common good, respect for nature and more importantly the interdependence and harmonious relationship between Africans and nature. Tangwa (2006:389) argues that within the African worldview, the distinction between plants, animals, and inanimate things, between the sacred and the profane, matter and spirit, the communal and the individual is a slim and flexible one. For instance the belief that humans in certain circumstance can transform into animals and plants or into plants and forces such as wind is very prevalent within this system and has very significant implications for the way nature is approached. Mkenda also postulates that, in the traditional African culture, the human being was not isolated from nature. Human being as a creature of God was part of the whole creation. Though the human being was regarded as part of nature, the Africans traditionally viewed him as the centre of the universe. Everything in the universe exists in relation to human beings (Mkenda, 2010:2). However, it has to be noted that the fact that traditional African societal setting puts human beings at the centre of the universe does not mean it is very anthropocentric because the underlining concept is harmonious and interdependence relationship between human beings and nature.

Thirdly, this research can lead to the development of a sustainable environmental theory which can be used to direct environmental policies and laws for environmental management. Furthermore, knowledge to be gained can go a long

way in helping different stakeholders in environmental management be it students, non-governmental organizations as well as government ministries in Africa and other nations by way of providing ideas and techniques on how certain environmental issues are grappled with. More importantly, this research can also trigger questions which may require further investigations and this is very important in the expansion of knowledge in the fields of environmental philosophy and environmental management.

Fourthly, by advocating for an environmental ethic anchored on African communitarianism, the researcher seeks to consolidate and defend the existence of African Philosophy, a once controversial and contested knowledge arena. The African continent has been considered as a continent without a philosophy and civilization. Ugwuanyi (2011) noted that modernity in the Western notion of it which has strong influence in several parts of the world has harboured provocative ideas which do not capture the idea of man in Africa. Arising from this, African world view has been ignored in the formation of relevant theories in philosophy. This state of affairs can be said to be as old as the enlightenment period of Western philosophy (ibid).

In addition, Kelbessa (2005:19-20) postulates that despite the fact that advances have been made through recent discourses on the environmental concern of non-Western traditions most of the related research has centred on Asia, Native American Indians and Australian Aborigines, with little attention being paid to most of Africa. Those who have studied non-Western religions and philosophies have overlooked the contribution of Africa to environmental ethics. They have either kept quiet or what they said about Africa was rather thin compared to what they said about Native Americans, Asians and Australian Aborigines. This therefore entails that special attention regarding environmental ethics has not been rendered to the African continent despite the existence of people with a culture, land, forests, mountains, rivers and animals in the very continent.

Furthermore, Peterson postulates that the articulation of an African environmental ethic is therefore crucial for two reasons: first, Africa's environment is in qualitative unique crisis, one that must be considered with exactitude to its context. Second, even with globalization and the creation of

“global village” Huntington’s clash of civilization thesis still holds in support of the notion that we are not “one world” (Peterson, 2013:100). As a result, a unique African environmental philosophy is necessary to define how Africans ought to live in relation to environment because an African environmental ethic is the moral canvas upon which Africa itself may advance its own response to African ecological problems and in turn address its role in deforestation and climate change (ibid). It is against this background that the researcher found it philosophically important to suggest the possibility of an environmental ethic anchored on African communitarianism to send a louder philosophical message to the entire world that Africans like any other race have the capacity to come up with ideas to enhance environmental well-being through indigenous cultural experiences and knowledge avenues such as communitarianism.

Apart from contributing to the field of environmental ethics, the researcher wants contribute to the development of African moral thought. This is so because the researcher cannot give a successful critical assessment of African communitarianism without taking into consideration the African moral concept. For Gyekye (1998) morality in Africa is grounded in a form of communitarianism which to a larger extent is a man centred ideology. Metz (2007) puts it that an action is right insofar as it promotes a shared identity among people grounded on good-will; an act is wrong to the extent that it fails to do so and leads to encourage the opposite of alienation and ill-will. According to Brehens (2011:08) African philosophy for many reasons, ranging from the historical denigration of African culture by others, to colonial hegemony to racist and politicized accounts of Africa to the oral, non- literate nature of traditional African thought and so on has been relatively slow in its development. Nonetheless, it has made great strides especially in establishing itself as a field with its own voice, perspective and contribution to make to the academy.

The researcher also seeks to challenge the idea that African environmentalism is anthropocentric. Callicott argues that, apparently Africa looms as a big blank spot on the world map of indigenous environmental ethics for a very good reason. African thought orbits; seemingly around human interests hence one might expect to distil from it no more than a weak and indirect environmental ethic, similar to a type of ecologically enlightened utilitarianism, found on long-range human

welfare (Callicott 1994:158). The researcher has learnt that scholars who hold the claim that African environmentalism is anthropocentric derive their conclusion from the works of some African philosophers. For instance, Brehens (2011:52) argues that Mbiti's work on African religion has also been used to claim the anthropocentric nature of African thought. Because man thinks of himself as being at the centre, he consequently sees the universe from that perspective. It is as if the whole world exists for man's sake. Therefore African people look for the usefulness (or otherwise) of the universe to man. This means both what the world can do for man and how man can use the world for his own good (Mbiti 1975:38). More to that, another aspect of African thought and worldview that has been accused for being anthropocentric in as far as environmental ethics is concerned is ubuntu. Cited in Brehens (2011:51), Horsthemke suggest that ubuntu is by definition anthropocentric and any attempt to expand ubuntu to embrace respect for the environment would have to ground concern for nature in terms of its usefulness to humans.

However, the researcher thinks that the above assertion that indigenous African environmentalism is anthropocentric was made without a critical appreciation and understanding of African religion, ontology and the general communitarian way of life with relationship to nature. This is because the African notion of Ubuntu promotes environmental well-being. For instance Mkenda asserts that, the Akamba people of Kenya define *mundu* (a person) according to his relation to nature and others. One has to co-exist peacefully with other people, other living being and inanimate beings within his or her environment. Good acts are those that keep harmony and peace in the web of relationship within the community (Mkenda, 2010:4). Bujo argues that, the African is convinced that all things in the cosmos are interconnected. All natural forces depend on each other so that human beings can live in harmony only in and with the whole of nature (Bujo, 1998:22-23). Murove reiterates that traditional African ethics in general recognized the intimate bond between men and their environment, the debt that the members of any generation owe to their forebears, and their consequent responsibility to posterity (Murove, 2004:195). Opoku argues that in Africa there is community with nature since man is part of nature and is expected to cooperate with it, and

this sense of community with nature is often expressed in terms of identity and kinship, friendliness and respect (Opoku, 1973:77).

Kelbessa is one of the philosophers who contributed notably in disputing the view that African environmental world-view is anthropocentric. In his study of the Oromo people of Ethiopia, he found that, the moral code of the Oromo people does not allow irresponsible and unlimited exploitation of resources and human beings. It reflects deep respect and balance between various things. The Oromo do not simply consider justice, integrity and respect as human virtues applicable to human beings but they extend them to nonhuman species and mother earth (Kelbessa, 2005:24).

1.4. The Statement of the problem

The problem to be investigated is how the doctrine of African communitarianism can be of use in the development of an authentic ethic for environmental management in Africa and beyond. Questions that will guide the whole process are: (i) what are the fundamental assumptions underlining the doctrine of African communitarianism? (ii) What are the main strengths and weaknesses of African communitarianism as a philosophy in enhancing environmental well-being? (iii) In what way can the doctrine of African communitarianism close existing epistemological gaps in the contemporary discourse on environmental ethics?

Environmental depletion of both flora and fauna is one of the major problems affecting contemporary Africa. Mabogunje (1998:05) argued that Sub-Saharan Africa suffers from environmental problems including deforestation, soil erosion, desertification, wetland degradation and insect infestation. Efforts to deal with these problems however have been handicapped by a failure to understand their nature and possible remedies. Ugwuanyi (2011:1) asserts that the reason for engaging on African environmental debate arises from the growing threat of environment as an aspect of humankind that needs theoretical and practical solution. From the researcher's view, environmental problems might be caused by insatiable desire for economic growth, industrialization, urbanization, population growth, technological advancement, poverty and ignorance. For Zimbabwe in particular, the land reform program, diamond mining and other socio-economic

undertakings pose serious environmental problems. Scoones, Marongwe and Mavedzenge (2010:88) postulate that the Fast Track Land Reform in Zimbabwe resulted in the destruction of the natural environment. Veld fires expanded massively following the resettlement. There was extensive hunting of game in the area and trees were cut to clear fields for farming and to sell firewood for urban dwellers. This was a clear defiance of policy on the part of government and knowledge from villagers. Further degradation of the land comes from illegal gold mining, most of them are people who have been resettled and who have found it difficult to produce on farms. Thus the years 2000-2005 have seen a gradual resurfacing of deserts on most farms along highways in Zimbabwe piles of dry wood are common sight Makanyisa, Chemhuru and Masaka 2012:181).

Furthermore, writing about overpopulation of elephants in South Africa Brehens states that, elephants are herbivores, and their vast mass requires that they consume enormous quantities of vegetation daily to supply their nutritional needs. In the process of foraging they are also notoriously destructive, pushing over trees, tearing off bark and trembling smaller plants underfoot. Most wildlife management experts maintain that unless their numbers are curtailed, elephants are capable of doing substantial and even irreparable damage to the ecosystem they currently inhabit. Brehens (2011:217). Equally disturbing are the environmental threats posed by Global Climate Change. This has become one of the most topical environmental ethics issues of our time. There are growing concerns about the effects of continued increase in global temperatures over the next few decades. Climate models suggest that even a moderate further increase in temperature could have catastrophic results for humankind as well as other aspects of nature (ibid). Kalemba (2009) argues that Democratic Republic of Congo as one of Africa's counties should fight to protect the existence of tropical forests under threat from industry because it is estimated that 40 percent of Congo's forest will be lost in the next forty years if nothing is done now. Consequently, it is justifiable that there is a search for a sustainable African oriented philosophical solution to address environmental problems.

In addition, studies have depicted that since the inception of environmental ethics as a sub discipline of Philosophy in the 1970s, it has been largely understood from a Western perspective hence anthropocentric. For example, White (1967:7) argues

that the main strands of Judeo-Christian thinking had encouraged the overexploitation of nature by maintaining the superiority created of humans over all other forms of life on earth and by depicting all of nature as created for the use of humans. Because of this Western orientation, earlier theories on environmental ethics such as deep ecology, land ethic, social ecology as well as eco-feminism could not provide a lasting solution to solve environmental problems affecting African and non-African societies. This brings up and justifies the idea of having an environmental philosophy, strategy and policy anchored on African communitarianism to salvage rampant environmental crisis.

1.5. Research Aims

The researcher aims to:

- i. Find out how African communitarianism as a philosophy can be used to develop an environmental ethic that enhances environmental well-being in Africa.
- ii. Make a contribution to the expansion of knowledge in the field by providing supplementary pedagogical literature on environmental philosophy for students, readers and other environmental stakeholders.
- iii. Provide philosophical and theoretical ideas for practical policies and solutions to environmental problems affecting Zimbabweans, Africans and the world at large.
- iv. Demonstrate the idea that African philosophy is a competitive knowledge area that can supply us with very useful knowledge items that we can use to direct development in Africa and beyond particularly solving environmental problems.

1.6. Research Objectives

- i. To critically examine the fundamental assumptions underlining the doctrine of African communitarianism.
- ii. To examine the main strengths and weaknesses of African communitarianism as a philosophy in enhancing environmental wellbeing.

- iii. To adopt the doctrine of African communitarianism and use it to close existing knowledge gaps in the contemporary discourse on environmental ethics in an effort to come up with an authentic tool for environmental management in Africa and beyond.

1.7. Methodology

To come up with a successful research project, the researcher shall conduct the research through qualitative research design and philosophical analysis. The researcher prefers qualitative because it enables an in depth understanding of a phenomenon. Qualitative research methods were developed in the social sciences to enable researchers to study social and cultural phenomena (Myers 1997:12). Philosophical analysis has to do with a critical and reflective conceptualization of the phenomenon under study (Schofield 1982:31). This means that the researcher will critically analysis and evaluate the African notion of communitarianism and environmental ethics as they are contained in both primary and secondary texts. This implies that the researcher will critically read, analyse and reflect on journals, articles, magazines, textbooks and any relevant literature on African communitarianism and environmental ethics.

1.8. Conclusion

In this introductory chapter, the researcher has argued that the proposal to have communitarianism as an alternative approach to environmental discourse and management emanates from the observation that Africa is exposed to rampant environmental problems caused by industrialisation, economic growth, ignorance and poverty just to mention a few. Zimbabwe's violent land reform programme of year 2000 for example caused serious environmental problems. The researcher has also find out that the idea that current theories in environmental ethics such as land ethic, deep ecology, social ecology, eco-feminism and others are fraught with shortfalls and they have not significantly contributed to the eradication of environmental degradation in Africa and beyond hence the need for an indigenous socio-cultural remedy. As a result the researcher is of the view that the ethos of African communitarianism can provide the much more needed formula in coming up with an environmental ethic that can be depended on in environmental

management and environmental philosophy. This means that the major tenets of African communitarianism which are religion and culture, morality, holistic approach, the idea of common good, the harmonious and interdependence relationship with nature are examined side by side with environmental ethics. The researcher has also managed to show how taboos and the aspect of totemism represent African environmentalism. Why African communitarianism? Because it is an approach which is quite different from western approaches in the sense that it is grounded in African religious and cultural experiences. Attention has also been made to the contributions of Tangwa, Ogunbemi and Ugwuanyi to African environmentalism noting that the trio's environmental philosophies are by and large microcosm of the macrocosm of an environmental ethic anchored on African communitarianism.

The next Chapter discusses the concept of African communitarianism as espoused by Placide Tempels, John Mbiti, Ifeanyi Menkiti, Kwame Gyekye and Masolo. The conceptualisation of African communitarianism is important in providing a framework upon which an African environmental ethic can be anchored.

CHAPTER TWO

2. CONCEPTUALISATION OF AFRICAN COMMUNITARIANISM

2.1. Introduction

This chapter seeks to provide a conceptualisation of African communitarianism as espoused by Tempels, Mbiti, Menkiti, Gyekye and Masolo. It is fundamental to indicate at this initial stage that the main thrust of this chapter is to discuss how the concept of the person in relation to the community is understood by the above mentioned philosophers. However, I have reserved the criticism of these scholars' views on the understanding of the person for Chapter Four.

Through his thesis of vital force, Placide Tempels takes force to be central to all Bantu way of life. In his conception of a person, he holds that Bantu people is a living force, a supreme force that was created and called by God to participate in his creation as the most powerful among created beings. For Tempels Bantu people as vital force, needs to engage in relation with his surrounding environment of supernatural world, fellow human beings and inanimate things Tempels (1959:67). It is through this interaction that the Bantu people find their place and space in the communitarian society. Tempels further argues that observing moral rules and achievement of moral worth is a pre-requisite for the Bantu people to be recognised in a communitarian society. A person who is not moral was considered to be of no importance to the community.

Taking the discourse from Tempels, Mbiti also discusses the place of the individual in the African context. Mbiti starts by showing that in the traditional African thought individuals belong to different tribal group. For Mbiti these tribal groups have distinct religious system with which they identify themselves with (Mbiti 1970:135). Found in these tribes is the aspect of kinship which regulates the life of all members. Through kinship, the relationship among Africans is found among the living, the dead and the yet to be born.

Mbiti argues that in traditional life, there is no isolated individual. A person needs other members of the community. The individual owes his existence to other people including those of past generations and his contemporaries. The community must therefore, create or produce their individual. Mbiti argues that

physical birth is not enough; the child must go through rites of incorporation so that it becomes fully integrated into the entire society. These rites continue throughout the physical life of the person, during which the individual passes from one stage of corporate existence to another (Mbiti 1970:35). Mbiti argues that whatever happens to the individual happens to the whole group and whatever happens to the whole group happens to the individual. The individual can only say “I am because we are; and since we are, therefore I am”. This is a cardinal point in the understanding of the African view of human person (ibid).

Like Mbiti, Menkiti holds that the conception of the person in the traditional African thought involves a definition of a person by the environing community other than mere physical or psychological characteristics. For Menkiti the concept of personhood cannot be reduced to the Cartesian *cogito ergo sum* Menkiti (1984:170). Menkiti argues that the reality of the community world takes precedence over the reality of individual life histories. Without the community, the individual cannot be. The community for Menkiti takes epistemic and ontological precedence over the individual (ibid). For personhood to be attained an individual has to go through a long process of social and ritual transformation. Furthermore, for Menkiti the community has got a role in prescribing certain norms to the individual. These moral prescriptions are very important in nurturing the individual to become fully person who is accepted by the community. In Menkiti’s view personhood is attained and as such one can fail to attain personhood.

Gyekye’s version of communitarianism is different from Mbiti and Menkiti. Matolino (2008:75) postulates that Gyekye accuses both philosophers for failing to accommodate the rights and freedom of individuals within the community. Accordingly Gyekye regarded Mbiti and Menkiti’s version as radical and philosophically indefensible. In his moderate communitarianism Gyekye (1997:49) views the community as a reality in itself and not as a mere association of individuals. He however stresses that individual capacities should be recognised for they define who a person is. But he carefully concedes that these capabilities should be realised within the context of a community.

At the heart of Gyekye's version of moderate communitarianism lie aspects such as the common good, community of mutuality, the principle of reciprocity, an ethic of responsibility and the concept of rights. These aspects together contribute to an understanding of a person in the traditional African thought.

Masolo is also another African philosopher who has contributed significantly to the concept of African communitarianism. Masolo (2010:231) argues that Negro-African society puts more stress on the group than on the individual, more on the solidarity than on the activity and needs of the individual, more on the communion of persons than on their autonomy.

According to Masolo (2010:241) knowledge of communitarian values is passed on to individuals at crucial points in their growth and development from childhood to adulthood. This is done both systematically through well-defined procedures and randomly in the course of everyday life where people learn from the examples of others, from various modes of speech (such as orders, commendation and praise, criticism and rebuke, and proverbs and stories), and from a person's participative learning when he or she is asked to perform certain duties or is shown how to do normal things of life in some very specific ways.

Bujo (1990:95) asserts that in an African traditional setting, there is no individual human being without the community and the community is a communion of individuals. For Bujo, an African person whose acting and thinking is always in solidarity and almost identical with his or her tribal community is nonetheless able to make an ethical, responsible decision as an individual (ibid).

Bujo (2003:95) postulates that the fact that individuality is inseparable from the communitarian nature of human existence in an African society implies that every person has to contribute to the well-being of the community. It is from this contribution that the individual is recognised as having such significance in that very community.

2.2. Placide Tempels on African communitarianism

Placide Tempels in his discussion of the understanding of a person in the African traditional thought, he wrote the work entitled *Bantu Philosophy* which many African scholars in particular reject. Although his work was taken as

controversial, it is considered to be the foundational work on the African conception of a person upon which other Philosophers especially Mbiti construct their arguments concerning the issue. Deacon cited in Coetzee and Roux (2002:110) argues that the provocative and revolutionary nature of Tempels work did not go down well with the colonial powers in Congo, hence his banishment from Congo by the Colonial administration and the Catholic Church. Tempels takes force to be central to all Bantu schemes of things. “Vital force, increase of force and vital influence are the three great notions which we shall find necessary at the base of Bantu psychology. It is on this plan that we wish to pursue this part of our study” Tempels (1959:64).

For Tempels Bantu human person is a living force. The human being was supreme force that has dominion over other created things and he had been called by God to share and participate in his creation through the exercise of this divinely granted force. A human being in this view is not a mere living being, but the ultimate expression of the fullness of life. The Bantu see in a human being the living force, the force or the being that possesses life that is true, full and lofty. A human being is the supreme force, the most powerful among created beings. Human beings dominate plants, animals and minerals (ibid). The credit Tempels get from this notion is that he managed to depict that Africans are a people with a culture, are religious people and that they possess a complete way of life. As a non-African, like other missionaries, colonisers and some Western thinkers, Tempels could have written denying religion and civilization among the Africa people. For instance, Coetzee and Roux (2002:109) wrote “it is hardly to be believed that God who is a wise being should place a soul, especially a good soul in such a Black and ugly body”. This notion belittles and disconnects the Black people from their Supreme Being, rendering them as a people without a religion. I find this denigrating. Hume also wrote “I am apt to suspect the Negroes to be naturally inferior to the whites .There never was civilized nation of any other complexion than the white, nor even any individual eminent in action or speculation. No indigenous manufacturer among them, no arts, no sciences.... Such a uniform and constant difference could not happen, in so many countries and ages, if nature had not made an original distinction betwixt these breeds of men” Emevwo Biakolo, in Coetzee and Roux (1998:2). So, by portraying the

African people as having a way of life Tempels was accused of committing intellectual offence. Deacon as cited in Coetzee and Roux (2002:110) argues that if the African was recognised as having a “philosophy”, the African could by repercussion be said to have civilisation as cited. This notion presented a threat to the superiority of the European, as justified by enlightenment philosophy as well as to the economics of the colonial mission. This entails that granting a philosophy to Africans would mean that Africans are more or less equal to Europeans and this would not provide justification for colonialism.

Cited in Matolino (2008:56) Tempels argued that Bantu ontology admitted that one should be able to grow, increase his force at every turn, becoming greater and stronger or even more successful. But Matolino recognised that this growth was not an endless process. He noted that Bantu thought also admitted that one’s vital force could be completely lost, either gradually or suddenly. In his own words ‘man’ can come to an end in complete annihilation of his very essence, the paralysis of his vital force, which takes from him the power to be an active force Tempels (1959:66). This means death. If one dies according to Tempels he loses his vital force and he depends on the living to renew it. Relatives of the deceased person have a duty to renew his force through some ceremony that will induct that person into ancestral world. The ancestral world cannot be entered automatically upon death. It requires that the living keep the force of the recently deceased functional (ibid). Ezekwonna (2005:43) postulates that though a reality for African and Igbos in particular, death is an unwelcome phenomenon but their ancestral belief is what gives them hope that death is not the end but a transition into the world of ancestors. Parinder (1965: 58) also echoes the same view when he articulates that the ancestors are believed to have survived death and to be living in a spiritual world, but still taking active interest in the affairs of their families Parinder. This shows that in the traditional African society, death does not mean the end. There is the metaphysical world with ancestors and there is a connection between the living and the dead since the living are the ones who renew the force of a deceased person and make him join the long dead members of his clan or tribe. This again shows the communitarian nature of the traditional African society because one could not renew his own vital force. One needs other members of the community for his vital force to be re-activated.

Tempels goes on further in explaining what this concept of person means in real terms. He is of the view that a human being is more than a mere assemblage of powerful forces within and without which that may drive one's life in a certain way as opposed to another. Tempels argues that the vital force that is found in man, as an individual, comes more to life fruition or realisation when that individual engages in relations with his surrounding environment. He relates to the supernatural world, to his fellow human beings and to inanimate things. Thus, Tempels argues "the living *muntu* is in relation of being with God, with his clan brethren, with his family and with his descendents. He is in a similar ontological relationship with his patrimony, his land, with all that it contains or produces with all that grows or lives on it" (Tempels 1959:67). Here, Tempels is clear and simple. Three issues can be derived from the above assertion: Firstly, without interacting with other forces (members of the society) an individual cannot be recognised as a complete person. Secondly the living person is mandated in the African traditional thought to relate to the supernatural world of ancestors. This implies the religious nature of African people. Thirdly, for a person to realise complete life, he has to relate apart from fellow beings, to inanimate things. This is very interesting because one can argue that Tempels meant that a person should seek harmony with nature.

Tempels postulates that the Bantu ontology is very different from European ontology. He stated that the Bantu cannot be a lone being. It is not good enough to say that he is a social being, he feels and knows himself to be a vital force, at this very time to be in intimate and personal relationship with other forces acting above him and below him in the hierarchy of forces. He knows himself to be vital, even now influencing some forces and being influenced by others. The human being, apart from the ontological hierarchy and the interaction of forces has no existence in the conceptions of the Bantu (Tempels 1959:67). The point being stressed by Tempels is that without a relationship with other members of the community, the Bantu human person cannot be. On the same concept Dzobo (1992:131) argues that the whole of life in Africa is geared towards creativity. He says that 'man's' ultimate task is to multiply and increase, but this power is not merely restricted to the ability to create children. It must extend to relations in community and good social standing. For him, the creative process is not limited

to bringing forth children, but it is seen as embracing the whole of man's life and his relationships. He is to see his individual life and that of his society as fields that are sown with life's experience and which should yield fruit. Matolino (2008:60) concurs with Dzobo when he argues that whatever one may take this force to be, what Tempels is driving at is that this force in question alone is not adequate to grant existence to the individual. The extra requirement that is needed is that the individual must be able to interact with other forces in the hierarchy of forces. Once that interaction is happening, and then ontologically, the individual is thought of as a real person that exists. Existence is affirmed by the ability to interact, the ability to turn vital force into meaningful relationship that are respectful of others and that create life in lower forces.

Tempels also discusses the importance of observing moral rules and the achievement of moral worth. He argues, it is always to accord with this conception of forces that the Baluba speak of "*muntu mutupu*" to indicate a man of middling importance devoid of real force, while the "*muntu mukulumpe*" indicates the powerful man who has his part to take in the community. The word "*muntu*" inherently includes an idea of excellence or plenitude. And thus the Baluba will speak of "*ke muntu po*", which means "this is not a person", of a man who behaves unworthily. They will use the phrase of a newly-born who has been begotten outside the normal ontological, moral and juridical conditions of clan life Tempels (1959:67). Maina (2008:196) argues that from Bujo's perspective an individual person in an African society is required to fully interiorise the ethical demands of the community. These ethical demands include the integration of the ancestral norms by every member.

Tempels articulates that another important criterion in defining the individual in the African context is the names given to newly born child. He says that the name not merely given to child for the sake of naming a baby like Joseph or Mary. Names in African culture are full of meaning. For Tempels "the name expresses the individual's character of the being. The name is not a simple external courtesy it is, the very reality of the individual" Tempels (1959:70). Through names, African people could express their histories and achievement and it is normal that a parent names his son after his deceased father or any other deceased relative. Matolino (2008:63) argues that these names showed that man could never just

appear alone and exist on his own. The names that were given to individuals showed the connectedness of the tribe, clan and family or tried, at times to show the ties between the living and the dead. Hence every African name has a meaning.

Dzobo shares the same opinion with Tempels when he argues that “the African view of man is derived from African view of reality which is found in the indigenous religion, creation myths, personal names, symbols and proverbs (Dzobo 1992:128). Paris argues that names in places do not only express the family history and the story of the child’s birth. He argues that they actually determine someone’s future and shape that person’s destiny and identity. Just by bringing one to understand the name, Paris says one will know so much about that individual. All African names are meaningful. They tell the story of the child’s birth and destiny. Much can be known about a person by understanding his or her name. While revealing the family understands of the person’s value, the name eventually shapes the person’s own self-understanding (Paris 1995:104).

Tempels further argues that another criterion of the individual, of the concrete vital force is a man’s visible appearance. He asserts that, the level of force in an individual can be expressed in different ways. His vital force can be itself in a particular way in certain aspects or modes of external appearance of the man, which we may call moments or knots of high vital tension (Tempels 1959:54). For Tempels these expressions may come in the form of the speech or eye movement or any bodily expressions that the individual may use. This would show his state of force, whether it’s very high, diminished or somehow exhausted. Tempels also notes that this vital force can exert itself on other individuals in a negative way. That for example, a person who curses another, and the cursed gets sick may as well be held responsible for that illness (Matolino 2008:64).

In summing up Tempels’ position concerning the understanding of a person in an African traditional thought, one can say that Tempels considers Bantu man as a vital force who can realise complete life through interaction with other living forces, the supernatural world and nature.

2.3. John Mbiti on African communitarianism

John Mbiti is another African philosopher who contributed to the debate of the conceptualisation of a person in relation to the community in an African thought. Mbiti took further the discourse from Placide Tempels and as Tempels' successor, Mbiti has been accused for being a follower of Tempels. Kaphagawani writes: As is well known Mbiti excelled as one of Tempels' chief disciple. Like Tempels, Mbiti too was greatly driven by the zeal to reveal another way in which he believed African modes of thought to be characteristically distinct from Western counterparts Kaphagawani (2000:72).

Mbiti starts by discussing the tribal nature among Africans and how this concept is connected to African communitarianism. According to Matolino (2008:65) Mbiti claims that each and every different tribal group or people in Africa have a common ancestor and share a common language as well as common rituals. Where a tribal group shares the same history it at least mythologically will trace its ancestry to the first man created by God or they will trace their ancestry to the first leaders of their tribe who established their group. This entails that Mbiti's brand of communitarianism is one that mirrors African traditional religion. Religion is very central in African traditional cultures.

Writing on tribes in Africa, Mbiti asserts that each tribe has got its own distinct religious system with which that tribe identifies with. Members of a particular tribe are permanently fixed to their tribe because they are born in that tribe. Thus he argues; these are the main features of an African tribe, people, society or nation. A person has to be born a member of it and he cannot change tribal membership. On rare occasions he can be adopted ritually into another tribal group, but this is seldom done and applies to both African and non- Africans. Tribal identity is still a powerful force even in modern African statehood, although that feeling of tribal identity varies like temperature, from time to time depending on prevailing circumstances (Mbiti 1970:135). This aspect of tribes is very fundamental in the discourse of communitarianism because before we consider the whole community, we should recognise tribal groups through which different people belong and identify themselves with.

Mbiti also postulates that in the traditional African society, kinship system regulate the life of all members of the tribe. The entire tribe was tied to this kinship system. For Mbiti the kinship system is like a vast network stretching laterally (horizontally in every direction) to embrace everybody in any given local group. This means that each individual is a brother or sister, father or mother, grandmother, or cousin or brother-in-law, uncle or aunt or something else to everybody else (Mbiti 1970:136). This entails that each and every member of the tribal group is related and no individual is treated as a foreigner. Such societal setting contributes to the establishment of a communitarian society with a shared identity.

Furthermore, Matolino (2008:68) argues that for Mbiti the kinship system is not merely restricted to the relations of people who are living but it also extends to include those who have passed on in life and those who are yet to be born. The living has a duty as seen above towards the dead, to keep their little soul alive and offer libations for it. Appiah also observes that, for as we shall see, many ritual acts of a religious nature have components that appear to be modelled on other social relations among people informs the notions of relations with other sorts of beings (Appiah 2004:26).

Concerning the place of the individual in the traditional African society, Mbiti argues that a human person owes his existence to other people including those of past generations and his contemporaries. He is simply part of the whole. The community must therefore make, create or produce the individual, for the individual depends on the corporate group. Physical birth is not enough; the child must go through rites of incorporation so that it becomes fully integrated into the entire society. These rites continue throughout the physical life of the person, during which the individual passes from one stage of corporate existence to another. The final stage is reached when he dies and even then he is ritually incorporated into the wider family of both the dead and the living (Mbiti 1970:141). From this assertion one can deduce two sacrosanct ideas which are: that the community has a special role in nurturing and upbringing of an individual for him to be socially acceptable and that in traditional African thought, death does not mark the end of life and relationship among the people of the same tribe or clan. There is strong bond between the dead, the living and the yet to be born.

Matolino (2008:68) postulates that Mbiti thinks the individual's links to the community are of such an enduring nature that they cannot be separated from her own existence. The community also has a role in ensuring that the individual is indeed transformed into a real person. For Mbiti biological birth alone is not enough. There has to be some induction into all the stages that he calls 'corporate existence' and an individual cannot do that induction on her own, she requires the assistance of her fellow human beings in her community to attain that existence. It is a deeply religious transaction. Only in terms of other people does the individual become conscious of his own being, his own duties, his privileges and responsibilities towards himself and towards other people (Mbiti 1970:142). Again this simply entails that for one to fully realise his destiny purpose and worthiness in life he needs other people.

Stressing on the symbiotic and mutual relationship between individual and the community, Mbiti argues that whatever happens to the individual happens to the whole group and whatever happens to the whole group happens to the individual. The individual can only say "I am because we are; and since we are, therefore I am". This is a cardinal point in the understanding of the African view of man (ibid). This ideology depicts that in the traditional African society, individual achievements and challenges are taken to be of the community and the reverse is true. This collective approach as part and parcel of African communitarianism is very fundamental in identifying a people. Eze (2008:2) concurs with Mbiti when he argues that a community is formed by a 'people' a group of individuals that live together by fortune or misfortune of shared histories and heritage, of common fate and destiny. No community exist in a vacuum. At the same time however, an individual's subjectivity is necessarily located and actualised within a community.

2.4. Ifeanyi Menkiti on African communitarianism

Ifeanyi Menkiti is another philosopher who contributed meaningfully to the debate of the person and community in the African traditional thought. Menkiti starts by outlining the difference that exists between the Western and the African concept of personhood. He claims that whereas most Western views abstract this or that feature of the lone individual and then proceed to make it the defining or essential characteristic which entities aspiring to the description of a human person must have, the African view of a person denies that person can be defined

by focusing on this or that physical or psychological characteristic of the lone individual. Rather a human person is defined by the envioning community Menkiti (1984:171). Menkiti proposes that this is a matter that is best decided by the community since the reality of the communal world takes precedence over the reality of individual life histories, whatever these maybe (ibid).

Outlining African difference like Mbiti, Sogolo (1993:90) argues that the African conception of a human person refers to asset of beliefs or picture of a person in the form of empirical generalisation. Sogolo is firmly against any formulation of personhood that has an appeal to universal understanding. To him such a view is devoid of experience but only heavily laden with theory. Thus, there may be some intellectual satisfaction in formulating a general theory or theories of human nature but it appears that the manifestations by a community of any theoretically implied human characteristics stands more significant. The point of significance here does not lie in some abstract understanding of what a person is capable of becoming but on the actualisation of his potentials and capabilities. In discussing the African conception of human person and society, the main objective is to provide a picture of human person and society held by African communities and to establish how human conduct, institution and thought patterns are governed by this conception (ibid). This shows that both Menkiti and Sogolo seek to establish African communal experience as the base for an understanding of the person.

According to Matolino (2008:71) Menkiti contends that the individual comes to be aware of herself through the community. She comes to be whatever she is because of the community. Menkiti comments that the individual realises the community as a stubborn perjuring fact of the psychophysical world that the individual also comes to know himself as a durable, more or less permanent, fact of this world Menkiti (1984:172).

Menkiti argues that the individual the individual can only become ‘a person’ because of the existence of the community and the community in his view, must take epistemic and ontological precedence over the individual. Menkiti makes it quite clear that in Africa it is the community that defines and gives the status of personhood to individuals. In his own words, he says “in the African view, it is the community which defines the person, and not some isolated static quality of

rationality, will or memory” (Menkiti 1984:172). This further strengthens the idea that without the community, an individual cannot be.

Menkiti urges that a proper understanding of person or more precisely, the attainment of such a status is based on the belief that the concept of *mntu* in Africa “includes an idea of excellence of plenitude of force at maturation” (ibid). For Menkiti, those who do not have the above mentioned attributes could just as well be referred to as non –persons. He uses the phrase ‘*ke muntu po*’ which literally means ‘this is not a person’ to refer to those who show a lack of that plenitude of forces as suggested by Tempels.

Menkiti argues that it is not enough to understand a person as a biological organism with certain psychological traits. Instead, he proposes that for personhood to be attained, an individual has to go through a long process of social and ritual transformation until it attains the full complement of excellences seen as truly definitive of man (ibid). The long process of social and ritual transformation entails that the community has a special role in nurturing an individual because without other members of the community one cannot go through social transformation. According to Wiredu (1996:15) the concept of a person is a social concept before it is anything else. Personhood is not an automatic quality of the human individual; it is something to be achieved. By this position Wiredu accords primacy and value to the community over the individual. On the same note, Taylor argues that human beings can only develop their characteristically human capacities in society. The claim is that living in a society is a necessary condition of the development of rationality in some sense of this property, or of becoming moral agents in the full sense of the term, or of becoming a fully responsible, autonomous being Taylor (1999:27). This entails that full development of a person cannot be realised outside the context of a community.

Furthermore, Menkiti argues the community has got a role in prescribing certain norms to the individual. The individual may not question these societal prescriptions if he or she is to become a fully recognised person in their respective communities. Thus, as far as African societies are concerned, personhood is something at which individuals could fail, at which they could be incompetent or

ineffective, better or worse. Hence the African emphasised the rituals of incorporation and the overarching necessity of learning the social rules which the community lives so that what was initially biologically given can come to attain social self-hood that becoming a person with all the inbuilt excellences implied by the term Menkiti (1984:173). Maina (2008:194) also argues that the individual in an African communitarian ethic is at the centre of the determination of moral norms. It is not possible to answer the question of who comes first, the individual or a community in an African communitarian ethic, since one presupposes the other. Societal moral stipulations are very important and should be integrated and incorporated to be part of the individual development because without them one cannot fit and become a complete person in the African worldview.

Menkiti argues that in Africa personhood is not automatically granted at birth but is acquired as one gets along in society. This getting along in society takes quite a lot of time, usually being attained by people who are of advanced age. These people, who are much older according to Menkiti, had the time to learn what it means to be a person through accumulation of knowledge of social values and norms that govern their particular society. By living up to, and adhering to these norms, they become successful in living up to the standard of personhood. Young people and children as postulated by Matolino (2008:74) are lesser persons because they have to learn all the moral requirements of their society and they still have to come to know how to behave as their elders do. So, for Menkiti personhood is something that is gradually acquired as one gets older and more accustomed to the ways of her respective community. If one defies or fails to fully comprehend the requirements of her community then she cannot become a person in the maximal sense of the term.

Menkiti argues that for one to be considered a full person, that particular individual should exhibit unquestionable moral worth. Matolino points out that Menkiti claims that the English language supports this notion of personhood as a status that is gradually acquired by noting that it is acceptable grammatically in English to refer to a baby as an 'it' while the same reference cannot be used for an adult. The transition from an 'it' as a baby to a 'him or her' as an adult depends largely on the moral conduct of the individual. For Menkiti, the various societies found in traditional Africa routinely accept the fact that personhood is the sort of

thing which has to be attained, and is attained in direct proportion as one participates in communal life through the discharge of the various obligations defined by one's stations. It childhood marked by an absence of moral function, into the person status of later years, marked by a widened maturity of ethical sense- an ethical maturity without which personhood is conceived as eluding one Menkiti (1984:176). This simply entails that if an individual does not behave according to the moral expectations of the community he or she can fail to graduate from the 'it' status to full personhood. Adulthood is therefore conferred by the community.

For Menkiti, the traditional African society has no place and space for an immoral and evil person. A virtuous or generous person is considered a full person with great importance in the society. Evil and self-centred or immoral people contribute nothing to society hence Menkiti thinks they are not persons. Sharing the same view with Menkiti, Paris argues that the symbiotic functions of various societal practices contributed immensely to the on-going task of moral formation, which was not complete until the end of the person's life. Hopefully, by the time the person became elder he or she would have attained wisdom, viewed as the accumulated communal knowledge underlying all of life's experiences. This connoted the capacity to guide and judge others. In fact, old age implied not only the attainment of such wisdom but also the temporal proximity of elders to ancestor hood. These factors were the basis for the African reverence of elders whose words of blessing or curse were extremely powerful Paris (1995:109). Stressing on the concept of morality in Africa Mbiti also argues that the essence of African morality is that it is more "societal" than "spiritual", it is morality of conduct rather than a morality of being. This is what one might call "dynamic ethics" rather than "static ethics" for it defines what a person does rather than what he is. Kindness is not a virtue unless someone is kind; murder is not evil until someone kills another in his community Mbiti (1996:70).

2.5. Kwame Gyekye on African communitarianism

Before discussing the nature of his version of moderate communitarianism, Gyekye began by attacking Menkiti and Mbiti for exaggerating the value and importance of community in the understanding of personhood in Africa. Gyekye

disapproves Mbiti and Menkiti's version of communitarianism as radical and philosophically inexcusable.

Another accusation that was levelled against Menkiti by Gyekye is the assertion that full person is attained when one is older and has been a member of the society for a long time. Gyekye claims that the terms 'more of a person' and full person are incoherent and bizarre Gyekye (1997:39). Gyekye notes that Menkiti does not tell us what those excellences are which enable the old to be more of persons than the young. In persuading the issue further, Gyekye argues that if it is correct that personhood depends on age and the attainment of moral rectitude, it then raises a problem that Menkiti could just as well fail to resolve. Thus the difficulty is in considering elderly people as necessarily moral, or as necessarily having the ability or disposition to practice moral virtues satisfactorily. For, surely there are many elderly people who are known to be wicked, ungenerous, and unsympathetic: whose lives in short do not reflect any moral maturity or excellence. In terms of moral conception of personhood, such elderly people may not qualify as persons Gyekye (1997:49).

Gyekye found Mbiti and Menkiti's version of communitarianism problematic especially in the sense that it does not recognise individual freedom. According to Matolino (2008:77) Gyekye claims that although an individual is a social being, he is also other things. The other things that he has in mind concern attributes such as virtue, the ability to make individual choices and rationality. He argues that if these attributes play any meaningful role in individual's life like setting goals and making important decisions then it cannot be said that an individual is completely defined by the social structures that she finds herself in. He concedes that although many of our goals are set by the community we live in, it is still possible for individuals to make their own choices and decide on what goals to pursue and what to give up. To this Gyekye argues that "in the light of the autonomous or near autonomous character of its activities, the communitarian self cannot be held as shackled self, responding robotically to the ways and demands of the communal structure. That structure is never to be conceived as reducing a person to intellectual or rational inactivity, servility and docility. Even though the communitarian self is not detached from its communal features and the individual is fully embedded or implicated in the life of her community, the self

nevertheless, by virtue of or by exploiting what I have referred as its “mental feature” can from time to time take distanced view of its communal values and practice and reassess or revise them” Gyekye (1997:55-6). Gyekye’s point seems to be very significant because in real life, individual freedom is necessary for one to make choices for the development of the self and the community at large.

Bell concurs with Gyekye when he argues that to uphold the value of the priority of community does not necessarily deny an individual of her own identity, her potential creativity role in a community, nor does it absolve her of personal responsibility for her actions toward the whole community. It is also clear that as multicultural factors increase, new values are placed on older ones- the African concept of community must be re-valued in light of present realities Bell (2002:64). By this notion Bell suggest that although the community still has a respectable space in the understanding of the individual in Africa, it has to accommodate the real pressures of multicultural factors brought by globalisation and acculturation in the modern dispensation in Africa. Bujo (1998:97) affirms that freedom and the ethical responsibility of the individual within the black community cannot be expressed more forcefully. Once more, the reciprocal relationship between the community and the individual has to be emphasised. When we say that on the grounds of participation theory, an individual is not in position to live outside the community, then the same community must be eager to promote and support the interest of the individual. The clan community therefore must do everything to enable each one to have fullness of life. On the same aspect, Obiechina postulates that of necessity, the hold which the community has over the individual cannot be so constrictive that the expression of his individuality is completely frustrated; the individual cannot be so individualistic in his outlook that he regards his interest as entirely independent of those communities within which he lives. Either case would have led to the complete impoverishment of both. In the traditional society a happy means exist which imparts strength and unity. Its essential humanism, as exemplified in the folktale narratives, arises from the awareness of the individual destiny with a large, more inclusive communal destiny (Obiechina 1965:94).

Although Gyekye rendered Mbiti and Menkiti’s version of communitarianism problematic, he however concedes with approval that Menkiti’s account based on

moral conception is appealing to the communitarian view of person. He turns his attention to the understanding of person that exists among the Akan. Matolino (2008:77) asserts that Gyekye notes that the Akan understanding of person, which is communalistic, would classify someone who chooses to lead isolated lifestyles as non-person. An individual who exhibits morally reprehensible conduct is also branded as a non-person. He says for the communitarians personhood is earned in the moral arena and not just handed over to the individual at birth. Matolino (2008:77) argues that for Gyekye, the moral conception of personhood is given concrete expression by the Akan people, especially when it comes to the burying of the dead. The grief shown in mourning the departed individual depends on her moral conduct. If a person conducted herself in a manner that was morally worth, then she is properly mourned regardless of her class or wealth. This simply shows that in the traditional African thought one's moral standing is highly treasured and determines one's relationship with the whole community.

Turning to his moderate communitarianism, Gyekye argues that communitarianism sees the individual as an inherent communal being, embedded in a context of social relationships. For him, a community refers to a particular social setting and networks characterised by sharing an overall way of life. Sharing an overall way of life entails the existence and acknowledgement of common roles, values, obligations and meanings or understandings Gyekye (1997:43). Senghor (1964:28) also claims that Negro-African society is collectivist or more exactly, communal, because is rather a communion of souls than an aggregation of individuals. This simply entails that the individual is perceived, understood and conceived as part and parcel of the community.

For Gyekye communitarianism views the community as a reality in itself and not as a mere association of individuals. A community in the context of communitarianism is seen as a group of persons linked by interpersonal bonds, which are not necessarily biological, who consider themselves primarily as members of a group and who share common goals, values and interest (ibid). Gyekye holds that the interpersonal bonds that exist among individuals need not to be biological for a community to be formed. This distinction separates Gyekye from Menkiti and Mbiti.

Gyekye argues for a concept of person that is different from Mbiti and Menkiti. From his knowledge of the Akan language and cultural traditions Gyekye (1997:40) argues that there are certain proverbs that exist in his language which clearly show that it is accurate to recognise and conceive the individual as an entity that exist on his own who is responsible for whatever happens to him in his own life. Below are some of the proverbs quoted by Gyekye from his Akan language which he claims, show the individuality of each member of the African community:

1. The clan is like a cluster of trees, when seen from afar, appear huddled together but which would be seen to stand individually when closely approached.
2. Life is as you make it yourself.
3. It is by individual effort that we can struggle for our heads.
4. Life is war Gyekye (1997:40)

These proverbs indicates that individual effort is recognised in African scheme of things and to consider the community as the sole mentor of the individual is grossly misrepresent the understanding of a person.

Okolo also shares the same opinion with Gyekye when he argues that the status of the self as an individual entity then is recognised in African philosophy, proof that self has somewhere a double status- one as a being- in -relation-to -others, the other as unique and non-duplicatable. One of the clearest ways the African establishes this fact of uniqueness, identity and discreteness is through name. African names are not just mere labels of distinction, to differentiate, for instance James from John Okolo (2003:215). What Okolo asserts at this point is that names in Africa echoes special meanings about a particular individual. A name in Africa for instance can express the fortunes or misfortunes of the family or can explain the circumstances that surround the birth of that particular person.

Writing about the Igbo people of Nigeria, Ezekwonna argues that we can confidently talk of personal names and behaviour as ways of recognising personal identity in African- Igbo ontology. It is important to mention that Igbo names have meaning and each name is reasonably personal. A name like Chukwuna (God knows) remains identical to a person and does not cease to exist in the

community. According to Ezekwonna (2005:75) a name is the first mark of personal identity in African communities and it is impossible to talk of somebody without a name which has meaning among Africans. Bujo further elucidates this point by saying that there is a difference between names given to a child in the traditional African setting and in the western sense where names are transmitted from father to the son. Every child has his own name which is given according to the circumstances at birth. The name given to him characterises him and makes him unique and as historical person in the community (Bujo 2001:147).

In his version of moderate communitarianism, Gyekye elaborates what he calls the idea of common good. By common good Gyekye meant those universal desirable things needed for the normal function of an individual within a society. Cited in Mwinobi (2003:66) Gyekye argues that the common good means a good that can be said to be commonly, universally, shared by all human individuals, a good the possession of which is essential for the ordinary or basic functioning of the individual in a human society Gyekye (1997:45). Of interest from this assertion is the idea that the common good is essential for basic functioning of the individual in a society. This sounds communitarian because it concedes that the individual exist in a society.

For Gyekye it should be understood that by “the goods of all members” one is referring only to what can be regarded as the basic or essential goods to which every individual should have access. There is no human being who does not desire peace, freedom, respect, dignity, security and satisfaction (ibid). By arguing that every human being requires peace, freedom and other basic aspects, Gyekye is simply pushing further his position that the understanding of a person includes other aspects apart from the stipulations and dictates of the community. This is so because if one has peace, freedom and satisfaction for instance he can she can claim to be a complete individual before the approval of a community. A peaceful, free, secured and satisfied individual can become a better individual in the bigger human community.

Central to Gyekye’s communitarianism is the idea of community of mutuality. Gyekye (1997:42) maintains that a community whether it is a communo-cultural community or a political (multicultural) community, is understood as a group of

persons interconnected by interpersonal bonds who among other share common goals, values and interest. Such a community Gyekye calls a community of mutuality. Individual members of the kind of community are seen as inherently communal beings and never as isolated individuals.

Gyekye further holds that the sharing of an overall way of life is an important characteristic of a cultural community that distinguishes it from a mere association of individual who are held together and sustained merely contractually (Gyekye 1997:42). This entails that if individuals share a common way of life they will be identified as one community with mutual way of life.

In the community of mutuality, members are expected to show concern for the well-being of one another with the aim of advancing the common good and interest. As Gyekye puts it, members have intellectual and ideological as well as emotional attachments to their values and as they cherish them, they are ready to pursue and defend them (ibid).

Gyekye (1997:144) maintains that since there are various constitutive elements of culture apart from language, it should be possible for people to share any aspect of a culture without a shared language. Also, the issue of common good, irrespective of shared language cannot be separated from the notion of the community because as a member of the community, the individual would need to have food, shelter, security, good will friendly and self-respect.

As part of his moderate communitarianism, Gyekye discusses what he calls the principle of reciprocity. He claims that the communitarian moral and political theory, which considers the community as a fundamental human good, advocates a life lived in harmony and co-operation with other, a life of mutual consideration and aid and of interdependence, a life in which one shares in the fate of the individual's nature or potential. For Gyekye, this kind of life, that is life of mutual consideration and aid and of interdependence is very rewarding and fulfilling Gyekye (1997:76). Koenane (2014:181) echoes the same opinion when he argues that the idea of poverty was therefore taken care of because wealth was measured in terms of having the cattle and the ability of people to ensure that their neighbours had some kind of feeding. Koenane (2014:183) further argues that the Africa communitarian outlook was primarily a welfare approach and being kind

to others and allowing them to share in one's fortune was never a big deal in rural African communities. From this assertion one can see that in a communitarian society members could mutually rely and depend on each other for their better lives and the better of the whole society. For Gyekye the concept of mutuality that is based on interpersonal bonds could be expressed as follows, "members of the community are expected to show concern for the well-being of one another, to do what they can to advance the common good and generally to participate in the community life" (Gyekye 1997:76). By this notion Gyekye cements the view that in a communitarian society individuals are expected to live together, assist each other in times of need. By so doing the community will be identified as one.

Another aspect that is central to Gyekye's moderate communitarianism and that distinguishes him from Menkiti is the idea of rights. For Gyekye individuals should be allowed to exercise their rights in the private domain. Gyekye maintains: individual rights to expression that are of strictly private nature may not be disallowed, unless is overwhelming evidence that such expressions can, or do, affect innocent members of the society Gyekye (1997:65). If Gyekye is clear that individual should exercise their rights in private domain then it means he is acknowledging that the stability and well-being of the society takes precedence and should not be disturbed by individual rights.

The aspect of responsibility as a principle of morality underpins Gyekye's communitarianism. In his attempt to show the meaning of responsibility as it applies in his idea of communitarian ethics write: "by responsibility, I mean a caring attitude or conduct that one feels one ought to adopt with respect to the well-being of another person or other persons Gyekye (1997:66). This caring attitude Gyekye talks about refers to character and personal disposition that enables one to consider the welfare of other individuals of the community as very important hence strives to improve it.

Gyekye points out that an ethic of responsibility stresses sensitivity to the interests and well-being of other members of the community, though not necessarily to the detriment of individual rights (ibid). Here, Gyekye is reminding people that the aspect of individual rights should not be compromised in the whole equation where the individual is deemed to be responsible in the community.

Gyekye maintains that the communitarian ethic acknowledges the importance of individual rights but that it does not do so to the detriment of responsibilities which the individual member have ought to have towards the community or other members of the community. According to Mwinobi (2003:79) Gyekye holds that community life constitutes the basis for moral responsibility and obligations. This entails that individuals are bound to behave and interact in a way that is morally acceptable. Each member of the community demonstrates a high level of moral responsiveness and sensitivity to the needs and well-being of other members. There is a close connection between the ethic of responsibility and other ethical values underpinning the communitarian ethics.

For Gyekye the ethical values of compassion, solidarity, reciprocity, cooperation, interdependence and social well-being, which must be counted among the principles of the individual with respect to the community and its members. All these considerations elevate the notion of responsibilities on the individual with respect to the community and its members. All these considerations elevate the notion of responsibilities to a status equal to that of rights in the communitarian and moral thought Gyekye (1997:66).

2.6. Masolo on African communitarianism

Masolo (2010:231) argues that Negro-African society puts more stress on the group than on the individual, more on the solidarity than on the activity and needs of the individual, more on the communion of persons than on their autonomy. This entails that the welfare and flourishing of the society takes precedence over individuals in the African setting.

For Masolo (2010:241) knowledge of communitarian values is passed on to individuals at crucial points in their growth and development from childhood to adulthood. This is done both systematically through well-defined procedures and randomly in the course of everyday life where people learn from the examples of others, from various modes of speech (such as orders, commendation and praise, criticism and rebuke, and proverbs and stories), and from a person's participative learning when he or she is asked to perform certain duties or is shown how to do normal things of life in some very specific ways.

Significant in Masolo's version of African communitarianism is the aspect of initiation ceremonies among traditional African societies. Masolo (2010:242) postulates that it is during the period of seclusion during initiation ceremonies that young people are taught the values that sustain the social order. They are taught the knowledge that regulates their performance of adult roles, which inscribe the specific traditions and customs that define their community and distinguish it from others. Masolo further postulates that, initiation is a communal ritual in which age sets take an oath of collective responsibility to safeguard the deepest knowledge of society and its ways. In this sense, being a person is attained through an educational process that intensifies at every stage in a person's growth and development (ibid).

Masolo (2010:243) argues that the period of seclusion in the forest gives society the space and time to cultivate and groom the person in etiquette that embodies the fundamentally altruistic impulse underlining social being. It is this altruistic character that will enable an individual to share whatever one has with other members of a community. In connection to this, Koenane (2014:183) asserts that we believe that the African communitarian outlook was primarily a welfare approach and being kind to others and allowing them to share in one's fortune was never a big deal in rural communities.

Masolo (2010:245) argues that communitarianism represents the view that the attainment of human needs and interest is best served in union with others. Wiredu (1996:22) also postulates that in its moral definition communitarianism exemplifies belief in the principle of practical altruism as an important social virtue. It recognises and encourages sharing with others as an important characteristic of human life.

Of much interest in Masolo's version of African communitarianism is how he managed to marry the African communitarian ethic together with the modern African life. Masolo (2010:248) argues that Africans have appropriated the meaning and effects of the modern economy in their own way. One of these ways is how Africans relate their access to modern economic benefits or goods associated with the new economy and there is little doubt that they experience the pain of sacrificing for others. But in doing this, they are driven by a sense of

culturally specific “obligation”, the communitarian ethic. This simply implies that the communitarian philosophy has survived through time and history and is continuing to direct, influence and shape human behaviour and development in the modern African socio-economic dispensation.

Modern Africa is experiencing a number of ills such as war or political instability, famine and floods (Masolo 2010:257). It is through the altruistic and benevolent nature of Africans that they are managing to assist each other from these plights. To this Masolo (2010:252) writes, one cannot imagine what it would be like without the charity and benevolence of all those others, African and non-Africans alike, who have taken refugees, pure strangers in most cases, into their homes and provided for them for no other reason than their concern for those who are experiencing hardship. One could cite an endless list of cases where this ethic has been a sustaining and reassuring value to millions of Africans in situations of near despair.

2.7. Conclusion

In this chapter, I discussed how the concept of person in relation to the community in the African thought is understood by Placide Tempels, John Mbiti, Ifeanyi Menkiti, Kwame Gyekye and Masolo. Though these philosophers differ in the way they present their views pertaining to what exactly underpin and undergird African communitarianism, they do share a common ground that the individual in the African concept cannot be understood outside the community. The individual cannot exist without other members of the society. Placide Tempels through his vital force thesis holds that the Bantu human person is a living force which needs to interact with other persons for it to realise complete life. For Tempels, communitarian morality is of significance if a person needs to be accepted in the African society. Mbiti discusses tribal nature of traditional African society arguing that tribes have distinct religious beliefs to which they identify themselves with. For Mbiti the individual does not and cannot exist alone except with others members of the clan or society. Mbiti and Menkiti hold that physical birth is not enough to identify a person. An individual has to be incorporated through rites and rituals to be identified as a person.

Gyekye stands for a different version of African communitarianism. Though he concedes that the individual is understood as part of the bigger community, he accuses Mbiti and Menkiti for coming up with what he termed radical communitarianism which according to him does not recognise the issue of individual autonomy and rights. For Gyekye, individual autonomy and rights should not be compromised at the expense of the community. Gyekye's moderate communitarianism constitutes rights and freedom, the community of mutuality, the common good, and the principle of reciprocity as well as responsibility as a principle of morality. Masolo's version of African communitarianism also acknowledges that the community and the individual cannot be conceived separately and the welfare, moral demands and expectations of the community takes precedence over those of the individual. Masolo discusses the significance of initiation ceremonies in imparting important social and cultural knowledge in traditional African setting. What makes Masolo's version of African communitarian ethic different from those of other philosophers is that it encompasses the modern African society. In this regard, Masolo managed to depict that contemporary Africans are sharing personal economic gains with other members of the community. Such works of charity and benevolence are made possible because modern Africans are conscious of the communitarian philosophy. All these aspects as discussed in this chapter provide a clearer understanding of a person in relation to the community in the African socio-ethical thought.

The next Chapter looks at a critique of Western environmental ethical theories which have shaped the environmental discourse since its inception in the 1970s. A critical evaluation of these ethical theories will provide a background upon which an advocacy for their substitution with other approaches particularly of African orientation will be established.

CHAPTER 3

3. A CRITIQUE OF WESTERN ENVIRONMENTAL ETHICAL THEORIES

3.1. Introduction

This Chapter seeks to provide a critical appreciation of Western environmental theories namely; land ethic, deep ecology, ecofeminism and social ecology. A critical understanding of these traditional environmental theories is crucial in providing a foundational background regarding environmental ethics debate.

Leopold's land ethic states that an interaction with nature is right when it tends to preserve the integrity, stability and beauty of the biotic community and is wrong when it tends otherwise (Leopold 1949:225). This means that humans are allowed to interact with nature if their interaction does not harm the nature. However, this assertion sounds anthropocentric in the sense that if ever there is a room for human beings to interact with nature chances are that they will use nature to their advantage.

Land ethic entails that human beings exist as part of the integrated community of animals, plants, soils, rocks and water. Humans have a moral obligation to preserve the integrity of the biotic community by seeking co-existence with nature.

Critics of Land ethic has argued that Leopold's use of the word 'stability' is controversial in the sense that it presented nature as static or stagnant. Knight and Riedel (2002:31) argues that word stability in particular has been problematic. The term seems to endorse a view of healthy nature as static or unchanging that contemporary ecologists reject. The researcher found Knight and Riedel's argument significant because nature itself passes through a number of stages and processes such as reproduction and adaptability to various climatic conditions hence cannot be regarded as stable. Furthermore, there are some natural hazards such as floods which pose threat to other plant and animal species. In such circumstances it is questionable to regard nature as stable.

Sessions (1995:68) argues that Naess's deep ecology entails that nature should be allowed to flourish for it has value in itself. From a deep ecologist point of view, well-being and flourishing of human and non-human life on earth have value in themselves. For deep ecologist, humans have no right to reduce the richness and diversity of nature except to satisfy vital needs. Deep ecology further discusses that human population should decrease in order to ease pressure on the natural environment. Realising the excessive human interference on nature, deep ecology movement calls for practical course of action to be taken to conserve nature.

Ecofeminist argues that there is a connection between the domination of women by man and the domination of nature by human beings. Ecofeminist suggest that the domination of nature can only end by ending the domination of women by man. Murphy (1988:86) postulates that many ecofeminist explore the symbolic association and evaluation of women and nature that appears in art, literature, religion and theology. Drawing on feminist literature some argue that patriarchal conceptions of nature and women have justified a two-pronged rape and domination of the earth and the woman who live on it.

Social ecologist such as Bookchin argues that environmental problems emanates from hierarchical social structures. In other words, social ecologist asserts that there is a connection between modern and capitalistic societal hierarchies and environmental problems. Bookchin (1986:38) asserts that environmental problems are directly related to social problems. In particular Bookchin claims that the hierarchies of power prevalent within modern societies have fostered a hierarchical relationship between humans and natural world.

3.2. Land ethic

Aldo Leopold's land ethic is one of the prominent American environmental theories. For Leopold, an interaction with nature is right when it tends to preserve the integrity, stability and beauty of the biotic community and is wrong when it tends otherwise (Leopold 1949:224-225). From this assertion one can argue that Leopold adopts a prescriptive approach in which he judges the rightness and wrongness of an interactive action with nature basing on the ability to preserve or disturb the natural ecosystem. In other words, Leopold is simply implying that human beings should avoid all kind of interaction with nature that damages the

same. Leopold's land ethic is premised on an understanding that humans exist within an integrated community of life that also includes other animals, plants, rocks, soils and waters. For Leopold, these collectively constitute what he referred as biotic community or the land (Leopold 1949:224-225). Leopold (ibid) asserts that humans are plain members and citizens of the biotic community and therefore have a moral obligation to act consistently with the long term welfare of that community. That welfare is linked to the ways a community functions especially to its capacity under human use to remain fertile and productive over the long term.

Callicott (1987:41) understands Leopold's ethic as a claim that the land community has intrinsic value and that humans are duty-bound to respect it by fostering its ecological functioning. By intrinsic value, Callicott entails that land community has inherent worth and should not be treated as means to ends but as end in itself.

Norton (2003:61) viewed Leopold's ethic chiefly as an outgrowth of pragmatic efforts to promote land conservation. For Norton, Leopold's aim was to craft an ethic that would prompt people to live in ways that foster long term human welfare. As a result, Leopold's ethic remains within the standard anthropocentric ethical paradigm and is best analogized not to Kantian or other deontological perspectives but to the pragmatic moral reasoning of William James (ibid). This simply entails that Leopold's ethic accommodated human interest hence the accusation that it is anthropocentric.

Although Leopold's land ethic has been applauded as one of the popular western conservationist environmental discourse, it has been challenged for a number of reasons. Knight and Riedel (2002:31) argue that word stability in particular has been problematic. The term seems to endorse a view of healthy nature as static or unchanging that contemporary ecologists reject. The word integrity also poses difficulties in the sense that the term typically refers to the totality of species and perhaps also to the full range of biological assemblies that existed in particular landscape before humans arrived.

Jardins (1997:1) asserts that Leopold's normative conclusion (the land ethic) seems to be derived in some way from the facts of ecology. Even assuming that a

factual and meaningful basis exists for attributing integrity, stability, and beauty to ecosystems (which is in the air) how these facts are connected to the value conclusion remains an open question.

The validity of Leopold's ethic has also been questioned by Callicott. Callicott (1999:45) asserts that Leopold's ethic is questionable because of changes in ecological thought since his day. Callicott view Leopold's ethic as a throwback to an earlier, discredited era of ecological understanding. The researcher feels that Callicott's argument sounds logical in the sense that for any theory to be significant, it should move with time. This means that it should be applicable in different ages of time so, if land ethic cannot find its space and place in the contemporary environmental debates then its authenticity and validity is very questionable.

3.3. Deep ecology

According to Sessions (1995:2) deep ecology is a radical environmental philosophy that was articulated and presented in April of 1984 by Arne Naess and George Sessions to essentially gather up environmental thought with eight basic principles. The first basic principle in deep ecology movement is that, the well-being and flourishing of human and non-human life on earth have value in themselves. These values are independent of the usefulness of non-human world for human purposes. This principle entails that both human and non-human species have inherent or intrinsic value in themselves. Ambrosius (2005:2) asserts that the most important part in the first principle is that every human and non-human has its own inherent value and thus has its own right to live and flourish. Essentially, everything has an "own" to it, and therefore has its own irreducible right to live, to blossom, to reach its own fullness in existing and reproducing. In its own right, each living thing is independent and separate of its "usefulness" to any other thing specifically of humans.

The second principle of deep ecology movement is that, "richness and diversity of life contribute to the realisation of those values and are also values in themselves" (Sessions 1995:68). This principle addresses the reason why everything should be considered as having its own value through the explanation of interconnectedness. This idea strengthens the significance of biodiversity in the universe, that

everything is connected to everything else. There is dependence and reliance of everything upon everything and nothing can be more or less than anything else in the web of life. Devall and Sessions (1985:15) argue that deep ecology really calls for humans to view everything as in the relationship Naess describes between object A and B. “An intrinsic relation between two things A and B is such that the relation belongs to definitions or basic constitutions of A and B, so that without the relationship A and B are no longer the same thing”. So what it means is in their endless relationship and interdependence all things help to contribute to the richness and diversity in life and the web is moreover not about the complication with the inclusion of all things, but the beautiful complexity that is brought about by all things. This principle stipulates that there is need to value the richness and diversity of life forms in and of themselves because we rely on them.

The third principle of the deep ecology movement is that, humans have no right to reduce the richness and diversity except to satisfy vital needs (Sessions, 1995:68). This principle is prescriptive in the sense that it categorically puts it that humans have no right to disturb nature save for vital needs. This is one of the most controversial principles of deep ecology movement because firstly it sounds anthropocentric in the sense that it admits that human beings have the right to reduce richness and diversity of nature to satisfy their vital needs. For the researcher, this implies that human beings are therefore free to destroy nature as long as they satisfy their vital needs. The second problem with this principle is that the term ‘vital’ is relative. It varies from people to people, from place to place and from time to time depending on other socio-economic and religious factors. In other words there is no a universally applicable conception of what is vital. Cutting trees to get firewood is vital to other people whilst it’s a different case altogether in the other society. Ambrosius (2005:3) argues that the second principle of deep ecology is somewhat of a vague area and it was meant to be left this way for individuals’ interpretation of what they define as vital needs. While some would say that vital needs are just food, clothing and shelter, many others may say that all of the daily activities and ways of life are vital needs.

The fourth principle of the deep ecology platform says that, the flourishing of human life and culture is compatible with a substantial decrease of the human population. The flourishing of non-human life requires such a decrease (Sessions

1995:68). This means that the increase in human population puts pressure on the environment hence the need to cut population growth. Devall and Sessions (1985:5) argue that for Naess, increasing population is simply not the best for quality of life, nor is it good for the environment and therefore needs to be significantly cut back. By doing so, this will bring about stabilization of the ecosystem. If this is not done, Naess says that substantial decrease in richness and diversity are liable to occur. On this one Naess and Sessions seem to have a valid point theoretically but practically it is difficult to cut human population taking into consideration that world over population is growing daily.

The fifth principle of the deep ecology platform says that, present human interference with the non-human world is excessive and the situation is rapidly worsening (Sessions 1995:68). This principle simply identifies the source of environmental problems which is none other than human interference. Human interference with nature has become very excessive to such an extent that it is severely destroying the natural ecosystem. Boudouris (2005:28) shares the same view when she argues that certain human activities have definite bad effects on the environment and result in a serious ecological imbalance which can surely bring very dangerous consequences for the subsistence of human beings themselves and risk the lives of other beings on the globe. To this principle Naess further explains that human interference has continually done more harm than good because ecosystems are developed to maintain themselves.

The sixth principle of the deep ecology asserts that, policies affect basic economic, technological structures. The resulting state of affairs will be deeply different from the present (Sessions 1995:68). This principle simply entails that there is need for a paradigm shift in terms of policies regarding human interference with nature. This change in policy and human worldview on nature will result in a better environmental state of affairs. Maathai concurs with the sixth principle of deep ecology when she argued that today we are faced with a challenge that calls for a shift in our thinking so that humanity stops threatening its support system. We are called to assist the earth to heal her wounds.

The seventh principle of the deep ecology says that, the ideological change is mainly that of appreciating life quality (dwelling in situations of inherent worth)

rather than adhering to an increasing higher standard of living. There will be a profound awareness of the difference between big and great (Sessions 1995:68). This principle asserts that to reduce environmental degradation caused by man's overdependence on nature, people should strive for quality life. Ambrosius (2005:3) clearly points out that the seventh principle of deep ecology platform supports a simplified life style. It addresses the fact that quality of life should take precedence over quality of things to reach a higher level of happiness instead of higher standard of living. It calls for voluntary simplicity, meaning that not only is it that the human reduction of needs must happen, and it is essentially thought to have a purpose of completely transforming every single part of human life.

The eighth principle of deep ecology platform says that, those who subscribe to the foregoing points have an obligation directly or indirectly to participate in the attempt to implement the necessary changes (Sessions 1995:68). This principle calls for real action to liberate natural environment from human domination. It is the pragmatic principle of deep ecology because it calls upon those who subscribe to deep ecology movement to practically see to it that nature is not negatively interfered by human life. Boudouris (2005:31) shares the same view when she argues that, I think that it is the right time for us to extend the meaning of the common good to include the natural world. Natural world in this sense is to be shared by every possible human being and an essential human element for human subsistence.

Shedding more light on meaning of the eighth principle, Ambrosius (2005:5) asserts that the aforementioned seven principle, after read and understood, call for an obligation of direct and indirect action. It is not necessarily about obligation, however, but what understanding of these principles should bring about in its awareness and intension of a better living and in theory a better environment. Deep ecology does not call for just the earth to be fought for itself but for these values to be fought and for a new change in the world to develop and take over. By addressing just the environment, there are many things that are overlooked and essentially what this philosophy is trying to get across is a coming about of a better world as a whole, spawned by the better individual. It is something that can and should be adopted by all humans, and through living these principles, it is theorised that not just the environmental problems will disappear, but social,

political, economical and human relational problems will dissolve as well (ibid). This simply entails that all social, political and economic spheres are linked to the environment and a good relationship with natural environment guarantee a good life altogether.

The deep ecology movement has been criticised from various angles. Among the critics, Watson cited in Brennan (1999:115) finds deep ecology problematic especially in its desire for man to be treated equally with nature, when all other nature is allowed to live out its evolutionary potential in interaction with one another while man is supposed to not to do so. Furthermore, Watson's biggest problem with deep ecology is its anti-anthropocentric approach. Watson believes that humans will only care about the environment if they see its usefulness for humans thus there is a very good reason for thinking ecologically, and for encouraging human being to act in such a way to preserve a rich and balanced planetary ecology (ibid). For Watson, moving beyond anthropocentrism has the risk of losing the majority of the population in the environmental movement and this is where Naess and Sessions failed (Ambrosius, 2005:4).

To counter the above allegation by Watson, Naess gives an example by telling a story of a pack of wolves which came to a small village. The small village went out to their unattended herd of sheep one day and realised that a pack of wolves had eaten every single sheep. The people of the village became very angry and worried because they feared that if the wolves had eaten their sheep, what would stop them from eating their own children on their way to school. The people of the village decided that the best thing to do is to kill the pack of wolves. Now as an environmental protector of these wolves, an anthropocentric argument would not serve them. No one would understand why it would be beneficial to serve the wolves because they would not understand the premise of the wolves being a necessity to human survival. However, people would be much more likely to defend the wolves from being killed if they saw that the wolves had their own intrinsic value just as humans do and just as the sheep did, to live and flourish. In this case, the killing of the wolves would be decided against and the community members would work something out where the wolves and their children would all be protected (Ambrosius 2005:4).

Bookchin (1988:13), a social ecologist criticised deep ecology for reducing humans from complex social beings to simple species, a scourge that is overpopulating the planet and devouring its resources. Although human beings are responsible for degrading the environment, describing them as a scourge overpopulating the planet is not proper. The researcher feels that such description is a fallacy of composition because not all human beings are ignorant about conservation of natural environment.

According to Norton (1991:41) scholars have found the disclaimer that deep ecology is not a normative system and ought not to be judged as such disingenuous. They have treated deep ecology as the legitimate object of the analysis of moral philosophy. Some regard deep ecology as strident axiological egalitarianism that is useless in adjudicating conflicting interests. If all organisms are of equal value, then there is no basis upon which to make prescriptions because the kind of value distinctions necessary for evaluating the moral situations of environmental ethics are deliberately disqualified. This principle of bio-centric egalitarianism, on this view, renders deep ecology impotent as an ethical theory.

Deep ecology has also been criticised by feminist. The Australian philosopher Val Plumwood for instance argued that the notion of the expanded self- results in boundary problems stemming from the impulse of subordination (Plumwood 1993:178). Furthermore, Richard Sylvan (1985:10) argues that some ecofeminist holds that affirming the ontological interconnectedness of all human and non-human organisms and the non-living environment does not necessitate an embrace of the holism of self-realisation. The premise that individuals are not absolutely discrete does not entail the conclusion that all relations are internal and individuals are ontologically chimeras. Certainly removing human apartheid and cutting back human supremacy are crucial in getting the value of theory (ibid).

Critics of deep ecology argue that it is just too vague to address real environmental concerns. For one thing, in its refusal to reject so many worldviews and philosophical perspectives, many have claimed that it is difficult to uncover just what deep ecology advocates. For example, on the one hand, Naess offers us eight principles that deep ecologists should accept, and on the other he claims that

deep ecology is not about drawing up codes of conduct, but adopting a global comprehensive attitude. Now, if establishing principles is important, as so many ethicists believe, perhaps deep ecology requires more precision than can be found in Naess and Sessions's platform. In particular, just how are we to deal with clashes of interests? According to the third principle, for example, humans have no right to reduce the richness and diversity of the natural world unless to meet vital needs. But does that mean we are under an obligation to protect the richness and diversity of the natural world? If so, perhaps we could cull non-native species such as rabbits when they damage ecosystems. But then, the first principle states that non-human beings such as rabbits have inherent value, and the fifth principle states that human interference in nature is already excessive. So just what should we do? Clearly, the principles as stated by Naess and Sessions are too vague to offer any real guide for action.

3.4. Ecofeminism

According to Warren (1990:125) ecofeminism is the position that there are important connections-historical, experiential, symbolic and theoretical between the domination of women and the domination of nature, an understanding of which is crucial for both feminism and environmental ethics. For Cheney (1987:145), ecofeminism is a sensibility, intimation that feminist concerns run parallel to, are bound up with concern for a natural world which has been subjected to much the same abuse and ambivalence behaviour as have women. Most fundamentally, ecofeminism is the belief that we cannot end the exploitation of nature without ending human oppression and vice versa (Gaard, 2011:19). From these articulations, one can deduce that generally ecofeminism is the position that ecology and feminism are related and that these movements need liberation from male or human domination.

Before providing the main ideas that underpin ecofeminism, the researcher feels that it is plausible to begin by providing a short socio-history of the ecofeminist movement. Mayer (1994:6) argues that Susan Griffin traces in chronological order, the different attitudes that have been advanced throughout the history of western societies about women, about nature, about women's nature and about the natural women. Griffin begins with the beginning of Christianity and shows how

it serves as a fundamental for the association and the resulting negative view of both nature and women. For Griffin (1998:7) the ultimate Christian goal is to rise above this earthly world and to go to heaven and be with God, who is of eternal form and not matter. The human body is mere matter, and God gave it a soul. He did this for men and only men. Women were created from man's matter and have none of the Godly element in them. Therefore they are tied to the material world and are inferior to men who are connected to the eternal world. The researcher feels that such a conception is dehumanising because it reduces women to objects only to be used to further the interest of man.

Mayer (1994:6) asserts that Griffin goes on to show that the vast majority of our culture's scientific findings and intellectual endeavours have been designed or manipulated to support such a dichotomy, one that divides man/woman, active/passive, and most importantly for ecofeminism, human/nature. Several feminist other than Griffin have studied the manner intellectual and scientific thought has supported the dichotomy. The association between woman and nature is crucially attributed to the period of enlightenment. Mayer argues that during the enlightenment period, the framework of modern science was constructed. In the enlightenment period, salvation is seen in the power of man to use his distinctly human rationality to overcome the wilderness of nature and harness the elements by his will (Mayer 1994:6). So it became not only the scientific job but the moral responsibility of man to exert power over nature. While this attitude toward nature was becoming firmly entrenched in the cultural mind, nature and woman were becoming closely linked. As a result of such beliefs advanced throughout history, the association of nature and women has become embedded in the conceptual framework of our culture (ibid).

According to Warren (1991: xi) many ecofeminist philosophers have argued that, ultimately, historical and causal links between the domination of women and of nature are located in conceptual structures of domination and in the way women and nature have been conceptualised, particularly in the western intellectual tradition. Murphy (1988:86) postulates that many ecofeminist explore the symbolic association and evaluation of women and nature that appears in art, literature, religion and theology. Drawing on feminist literature some argue that

patriarchal conceptions of nature and women have justified a two-pronged rape and domination of the earth and the woman who live on it.

Starhawk (1989:10) postulates that many ecofeminist and ecological feminist philosophers have documented empirical evidence linking feminism and the environment. Some point to various health and risk factors caused by the presence of low level radiation, pesticides, toxic and other pollutants and borne disproportionately by women and children. Others provide data to show that First World developments policies foster practices regarding food, forests, and water which directly contribute to the inability of women to provide adequately for themselves and their families.

Warren (1990:45) argues that much of the ecological feminist philosophical literature on feminism and the environment has linked the two ethically. The claim is that the interconnections among the conceptualisation and treatment of women, animals and the rest of non-human nature require a feminist ethical analysis and response. Minimally, the goal of feminist environmental ethics is to develop theories and practices concerning humans and the natural environment which are not male- biased and which provide a guide to action in the pre-feminist presence.

Warren (1987:4-5) suggest that although the concept of ecofeminism has come out to mean quite different things to different ecofeminist it is at least based on the following claims: (i) there are important connections between the oppression of women and the oppression of nature, (ii) understanding the nature of these connections is necessary to any adequate understanding of the oppression of women and the oppression of nature, (iii) feminist theory and practice must include an ecological perspective and (vi) solutions to ecological problems must include a feminist perspective.

Mayer (1994:7) further argues that ecofeminist goal is the adoption of a new attitude toward nature, one that realises the interconnectedness of humans and nature instead of treating nature as a resource for filling human needs. The reason for adopting a new attitude is the desire to end the oppression of women as well as

nature, not just prolong the environment's life span so that humans can continue to use it.

Ruether (1975:204) wrote that women must see that there can be no liberation for them and no solution to the ecological crisis within a society whose fundamental model of relationship continues to be one of domination. They must unite the demands of the women's movement with those of the ecological movement to envision a radical reshaping of the basic socio-economic relations and the underlying values of this modern industrial society.

Archambault (1989:17) asserts that some ecofeminist have argued that women are in a better position than men to relate with nature, that they are in fact closer to nature. These are the proponents of the body-based argument which claim that women, through their unique bodily experiences like ovulation, menstruation, pregnancy, child birth and breast feeding are closer to and can more readily connect with nature. Fortman (1985:245) argues that women are typically more dependent than men on tree and forestry products and they are primary sufferers of forest resources depletion. Trees provide five essential elements in these household economics: food, fuel, fodder products of the home (including building materials, household utensils, gardens, dyes, medicines) and income-generating activities, As trees become scarce, it is women who must walk farther for firewood and fodder and who must carry it back themselves. Although this point seeks to support the view that women are related to nature, it carries some overtones of anthropocentrism.

Just like any other school of thought, ecofeminism has also received quite a considerable number of criticisms from fellow feminist themselves as well as other philosophers across the intellectual village.

Attacking the position that women are closer to nature simply because of their unique body experiences such as menstruation and ovulation just to mention a few, Roach (1991:52) argues that although men do not menstruate, bear children, or breastfeed, they do share all other human biological processes such as eating, sleeping, eliminating wastes, getting sick and dying. In addition in their ejaculation of semen they have experiences of a tangible stuff of the reproduction

of life. Furthermore, if child bearing or breastfeeding is what attunes women to nature, are women who do not experience these biological processes any less connected to nature.

Eckersley (1992:67) argues that because women have historically been less implicated than men in the process of environmental degradation, they occupy a vantage point of 'criticism otherness' from which they can offer a different way of looking at the problems of patriarchy and ecological destruction as do other groups such as indigenous people and other ethnic minorities. However, Eckersley cautions ecofeminist to be wary of over- identifying with, and hence accepting uncritically the perspective of woman.

Mayer (1994:20) argues that the first objection at ecofeminism's assertion that ecology and feminism must co-operate in order to achieve their goals, that neither a movement to end the oppression of women nor one to end the abuse of nature can be complete or successful without taking the other into consideration. This assertion is simply false because it is entirely possible to imagine that the goals of ecology could be met while those of feminism are left unmet and vice versa. For instance, it is perfectly conceivable that our society could come to the realisation that, unless we reform our treatment of the natural world we live in and with, we are dooming ourselves to certain destruction. This can happen without integrating feminist views.

Archambault (1989:15) postulates that the most common criticism of ecofeminism is that the claim that women are essentially or biologically closer to nature is regressive, that it reinforces the patriarchal ideology of domination and limits ecofeminism's own effectiveness. As a result it merely perpetuates the notion that biology determines the social inequalities between men and women. This notion is also echoed by Dobson (1990:202) who argues that ecofeminism proposes a dangerous strategy, to use ideas that have already been turned against women in the belief that, if they are taken up and lived by everyone, then a general improvement in both the human and no-human condition will result. If they are not taken up, then woman will have sacrificed themselves to environment, and this is a price some feminist are clearly not prepared to pay.

As another critique of ecofeminism Biehl (1991:26) reiterates that if we believe that women are connected with nature and possess the character traits necessary for preserving the environment, then it follows that they are most qualified to serve the earth. Men cannot be expected to participate in this restoration project since they presumably lack the sensibility to nature that women have. Women will therefore simply end up in charge of cleaning up the global mess- fulfilling their traditional role as nurturing mothers. In the end, the implications of ecofeminist ethics hardly appear to be emancipator for women.

Feldman (1998:91) argued that the problem with eco-feminism is that the claim that the domination of nature is wrong in the same way that the domination of women is wrong makes no sense, since domination can only be considered to be unjust when the object dominated has a will.

The researcher feels that eco-feminism is just a project of disgruntled women who have realised that the feminist movement will remain a utopia given the patriarchal nature in most societies. As a result they think that their views can get attention if presented alongside environmental issues. The researcher therefore suggests that feminist movement should continue to fight for the liberation of women and leave environmental issues to be grappled with independently.

3.5. Social ecology

Social ecology is a theory that was propounded by Bookchin. Bookchin (1986:38) asserts that environmental problems are directly related to social problems. In particular Bookchin claims that the hierarchies of power prevalent within modern societies have fostered a hierarchical relationship between humans and natural world (ibid).

Bookchin (2001:64) argues that humans must recognise that they are part of nature, not distinct or separate from it. Human societies and human relations with nature can be informed by the non-hierarchical relations found within the natural world. For example, Bookchin points out that within an ecosystem, there is no species more important than another, instead relationships are mutualistic and

interrelated. This interdependence and lack of hierarchy in nature, it is claimed, provides a blueprint for a non-hierarchical human society.

Best (1998:337) asserts that social ecology claims that all current environmental problems are ultimately social problems, rooted in an irrational and anti-ecological society whose crisis cannot be solved through piecemeal, single-issue reform measures.

Bookchin (1990:32) further argues that dislocations in the human nature relations stem from dislocations within the human world itself and environmental problems emerge from long history of hierarchical social relations that culminate in a class-ridden, profit-driven, accumulation-oriented capitalist society. Best (1998:338) postulates that for Bookchin global warming, the destruction of the rain forest, the dumping of toxic wastes, and the overconsumption of resources exist not so much because human beings have developed anthropocentric attitudes, abuse their technological genius, cannot adequately govern themselves, or are breeding out of control, but rather because they have a long history of dominating each other and of colonizing the social and natural worlds as mere resources for power and profit.

Bookchin (1990:32) postulate that social ecology seeks to reveal the historical factors that have rendered many human beings into parasites on the world of life rather than active partners in organic evolution. This entails that as an ecological movement, social ecology seeks to do away with all historical and social ideologies that promotes human's exploitative dependence on nature and call for a mutual relationship between human beings and nature.

Bookchin (1986:6) points out that the historical emergence of hierarchy in human society over tuned a social equilibrium of equality, which led to the domination of some groups of human beings over others and the idea or notion of the domination of nature. Social domination in its long, millennial history has given rise to all the religious, moral and philosophical justifications for the domination of nature, the destruction of wildlife, and the destruction of wildlife and the destruction of human life. Every ecological problem we face today apart from those caused by nature itself has its roots in social problems.

Bookchin (1990:121) reiterates that the reduction of the female to a mere object of male power and desire had enormous consequences for subsequent history, as the domination of man over women led to the domination of natural world. The subjugation of her nature and its absorption into the nexus of patriarchal morality forms the archetypical act of domination that ultimately give rise to man's imagery of a subjugated nature. This simply entails that there is a similarity between ecofeminism and social ecology. Both theories consider the domination of women by man as the source of ecological problems on earth. Ecofeminist and social ecologist therefore believe that for any project of ecological liberation to be successful, it has to first liberate women from male oppression and also understand the power hierarchies that exist in societies.

Social ecology has also been criticised for its limitations. To begin with, Best (1998:351) argues that Bookchin did not offer analysis of crucial ecological issues such as the disappearance of wilderness and wildlife. He clearly decries the loss of ecological diversity, but he does not aggressively champion the preservation of land and species as fundamental social policy.

Best further suggest that Bookchin also does not take a strong stand against overpopulation problem, another focus of deep ecology as opposed to social ecology. Bookchin steadfastly ignores the problem except to point to areas where population numbers are going down and to target, rightly so western lifestyles as more critical an issue than increase of people in underdeveloped countries.

One major problem that has been identified in social ecology is that the assumption that societal hierarchies are the source of domination of nature is irreconcilable because in the natural ecosystem there are weak individuals and weak species which are often killed, eaten and out- competed in an ecosystem. This simply entails that hierarchies do exist even in natural ecosystem and if it is the case then should we blame societal hierarchies for the domination and exploitation of nature.

Social ecology has also been criticised for being anthropocentric because in his account, Bookchin (2001:125) talks of the liberation of both humans and nature.

According to Eckersley (1992:152) this liberation process will not just occur on its own accord, rather, human beings must facilitate it.

Another problem with social ecology is that are there examples of non-hierarchical societies that have no ecological problems at all? Failure by Bookchin to provide such evidence based on anthropological and historical research findings renders social ecology weak environmental theory. This simply entails that Bookchin misrepresented the causal link between societal structures and environmental exploitation.

3.6. Conclusion

In this chapter, the researcher has discussed the facets of traditional Western environmental ethical theories. Of interest is that the researcher observed that in as much as these theories differ in terms of their articulations concerning the relationship between humans and the environment, they share common ground. For instance, all these theories agree that human interaction with nature is the root cause of all environmental problems. These theories also concur that nature should be preserved for its own good and to achieve this, human beings are duty-bound to conserve and preserve nature. This shows that these theories constitute the major aspects that underpinned environmental debate in the Western societies. However, these theories have been criticised for their shortfalls. Most of them have been found anthropocentric. This means that they fail to attach inherent or intrinsic value to non-human things. Ecofeminism in particular has been criticised for alleging that without liberating women from male domination efforts to liberate nature from human oppression will remain a utopia. This is because it is argued that there is a clear cut line between feminist movement and ecological concerns. For instance a society can come to a realisation that it has to treat nature properly for the continuity of its life without paying attention to feminist ideologies.

Social ecology has also been found problematic because the allusion that environmental problems emanate from societal hierarchies poses more questions than answers. For instances, does it mean that all societies without hierarchies are free from environmental problems? What about environmental problems caused

by natural hazards such as floods? Are floods societal? Taking into consideration the discussed drawbacks, one can note that although Western environmental theories are applauded for their contribution to the historicity, authenticity and rhetoric of environmental discourse, there is need for more new approaches to interpret emerging environmental problems across the globe.

The task of the next chapter is to critically expose the significant relationship between the African concept of communitarianism and environmental ethics. In other words the chapter seeks to provide information that will close the knowledge gaps which Western environmental ethical theories failed to close.

CHAPTER FOUR

4. THE CONTRIBUTION OF AFRICAN COMMUNITARIANISM TO ENVIRONMENTAL ETHICS.

4.1. Introduction

This chapter seeks to critically lay bare the relationship between the concept of African communitarianism and environmental ethics. The underlining fundamental assumption is that African communitarian societies put priority to the welfare of the community other than the individual. Gyekye (2003:42) in his version of moderate communitarianism argues that communitarianism sees the individual as inherently communal being, embedded in a context of social relationship interdependence. What this entails is that a communitarian society shares and upholds similar religious beliefs, an understanding of morality, proverbs and more importantly guided by Ubuntu. These, among other aspects define a communitarian society. Basing on this premise as a rallying point, it suffice to indicate categorically from the onset that the main thrust of this chapter is to see how African religious beliefs, morality, proverbs and Ubuntu can supply us with necessary environmental knowledge upon which an African environmental ethic can be formulated. The main objective is that by end of this chapter one should stand, with intellectual strength and vigour, to vehemently consolidate the claim that it is indeed pragmatic and practical to have an environmental ethic with indigenous African flavour.

The researcher has observed that African traditional religion through creation myths, sacred animals, sacred places, sacred forests or trees, taboos, totems and proverbs and witchcraft is a rich source of environmental pedagogy. According to Sheridan and Nyamweru (2008:6) the supremacy of sacred groves and community beliefs are mutually dependent. Since sacred forests are considered places of memory it is a taboo to harvest natural goods from such groves. According to Kaoma (2010:88) many African cultures believes that God, ancestors and other spirits can manifests in nature. For instance, the *Mere* people of Kenya believe that ancestors reside in sacred forest, caves, water pools and valleys. These places play a crucial role in different cultic observances. The Chewa of Malawi and

Zambia believe that ancestors reside in certain trees, graveyards, cooking stones and rivers.

On the relationship between Ubuntu and environmentalism, Ekwealo (2014:199) argues that while some critics may argue to contrary on Ubuntu's ecological spirit, the ethical implications of Ubuntu can still be seen to have ecocentric implications. This is because the values it promotes when taken to their fullest cannot really be in defence of human beings alone. It shares in the universal essence contained in the African metaphysical and epistemological meaning of force or spirit which links up humans, animals, plants, and the so called inanimate.

The African conception of morality as an element of communitarianism, also embraces an environmental disposition. A community with shared moral worldview has similar environmental outlook. Ugwuanyi (2005:6) argues that it should be supposed that since the environment is meant to serve as a moral support then it should be treated as such. It is clearly wrong to except a good from an environment that has been badly treated. Such terms of reciprocity are what the African moral world demands.

4.2. Traditional African religion and environmental ethics

Traditional African religion is one of the major elements of African communitarianism. Through it, one can have an appreciation of African environmental outlook. Opoku in Kelbessa (2010:470) points out that there is a community with nature since man is part of nature and is expected to cooperate with it; and this sense of community with nature is often expressed in terms of identity and kinship, friendliness and respect. Writing on African traditional religion, Ugwuanyi (2005:7) points out that African traditional religion is a cultural and religious manifestation specific to Africans. It is regarded as indigenous religion because it originates from the people's environment. Taringa (2006:200) postulates that human life is also one with the animals, plants and the rest of the world. The highest good is to live in harmony with all sacred forces. Mazrui et al in Murove (2004:201) postulates that traditional African culture and religion had started from the premises that the whole universe, no merely man had been created in the image of God and so many African societies made some trees

sacred, some hills holly, some animals totemic siblings, some forests the abode of ancestors. African cultures made no sharp distinction between the human race and other species.

Traditional religion in Africa is a communal religion which individuals becomes a part of by belonging to a particular community. Everyone in the community is anticipated to partake in rituals and festivals. It is impossible for individuals to disassociate themselves from the community rituals, festivals, worship or sacrifices (Mazrui et al in Murove 2004:202). This clearly depicts the communitarian nature of African traditional religion because each member of the community is expected to conform to all religious beliefs and practices as dictated by the community.

Ugwuanyi (2005:7) asserts that African traditional religion can be described as a complete way of life. It is taught orally to the younger generations who in turn do the same to the next generation (ibid). The religion is preserved everywhere through myths, legends, songs, dance, painting, carving, adages, symbol, sculpture and language. Even the trees and rivers around remind the community of something about this religion and form of worship. From this submission, one can argue that African religion as an element of culture is a comprehensive religion in the sense that it encompasses the philosophy of life of a people and the environment.

According to Sheridan and Nyamweru (2008:6) the supremacy of sacred groves and community beliefs are mutually dependent. Since sacred forests are considered places of memory it is a taboo to harvest natural goods from such groves. Doing so is also considered an attack on ancestors and other spirits. From this perspective, people are likely to conserve nature out of reverence for spiritual forces resident in nature as opposed to instrumental reasons alone. For this reason, most sacred areas are lightly used as compared to the less sacred ones. Parinder in Kaoma (2010:135) notes that Shona sacred groves are refuge spaces for every creature. The Zimbabwe ruins, he argues are uncanny and sacred places. It is said that if one tries to break a twig from a tree, it cries out 'do not break me'. No living creature may be killed there, and if an animal is pursued into the ruins it calls out 'do not kill me'.

According to Kaoma (2010:88) many African cultures believe that God, ancestors and other spirits can manifest in nature. For instance, the *Mere* people of Kenya believe that ancestors reside in sacred forest, caves, water pools and valleys. These places play a crucial role in different cultic observances. The Chewa of Malawi and Zambia believe that ancestors reside in certain trees, graveyards, cooking stones and rivers (ibid). Further, particular animals such as zebras, lion and certain snakes are considered ancestral avenues through which ancestors visit their former communities and are often recognised by their descendants. Gelfand in Chimuka (2001:29) argues that according to Shona philosophy, God has no shape. He is not in the form of a human being. The Shona say that the creator is as they know, a whiff of wind or air who inhabits the heavens above but who may be found in places as the depth of earth, in the mountain or forest

Kaoma (2010:126) argues that among the Tonga of Gwembe for example, domestic animals are named after their dead relatives. Apart from the spiritual significance of such naming, the act shows that Africans relate to the natural world. Mbiti, cited in Kaoma (ibid) argues that God is the originator and sustainer of man, the spirits explain the destiny of man, man is the centre of this ontology, animals, plants and natural phenomena and other objects constitute the environment in which humanity lives provides a means of existence and if need be humanity established a mystical relationship with them. What is crucial from Mbiti's submission is that God, human beings and the natural environment constitute African ontology. It is through the conception of God that the African people become conscious of their natural environment through which they practice their religion. Again, worth noting from Mbiti's argument is the fact that by alluding that man is at the centre of the ontology, he does not imply that man should harm the natural environment. Rather, man should seek coexistence with nature.

Writing on the need for an inter-religious dialogue on ecological issues, Evers (1997:251) argues that since all religions contain reference to creation or other explanations of the origin of the earth combined with ethical demands to use the resources of the earth in a responsible way, to protect the different species of animals and plant life and to be aware of the fact that each generation is

responsible for the next, there is a growing expectation that the different religions actively join the group of concerned people to work towards the creation of an ecological ethics. Evers' point sounds very logical in its contribution to the environmental debate because it seeks to find ecological solutions within various religions.

Mbiti (2001:368) postulates that another basic element of African religion concerns human relations with the world of nature. Humans are not masters over nature to exploit it without feeling or treat it without respect. Instead people are one with nature, responsible toward nature, able to communicate with nature, and the chief priests of nature. This position is also echoed by Ekwealo (2014:197) who argues that Africans do not believe that a human being is a special image of God who was charged with the lordship of nature. Rather, Africans believe in the unity of forces, and a human being's special position is rather more that of a caretaker of the universe, a task which goes with appropriate responsibility and consequences.

Another aspect that makes part and parcel of African religion particularly Shona is witchcraft. Taringa (2014: 46) points that the Shona also hold a strong belief in witchcraft. Very often they explain disease and misfortune in terms of witchcraft. They believe that witches use animals, birds and snakes as familiars. Boudillon in Taringa (ibid) confirms this observation. He writes, "Witches are supposed to keep familiar beasts of the night or of stealth, such as hyenas, owls, ant bears and snakes, which they can ride and send on their errands: these beasts can be used to bewitch a victim". Most Shona people are afraid of killing these animals because of fear of witchcraft. Others kill them in the belief that witches may not frequent places where there are no familiars to use (Taringa: 2014: 46)

4.2.1. African creation myths and environmental ethics

Traditional African religion cannot be understood without considering creation myths. Most creation myths depict the relation between the origin of a particular ethnic or tribal group of people and the environment. Bucher in Taringa (2014:43) argues that the Shona myth of creation traces the origin of life and existence of nature to a great pool (*dzivaguru*). The myth begins with *Mwari*

making the first human called *Mwedzi* (moon). This is at the bottom of the pool (*dziva*). *Mwari* gave *Mwedzi* a medicine horn (*gona*). *Mwedzi* asked to go out to the dry land. *Mwari* gave him a wife called *Masasi* to accompany him. The two lived in a cave. They gave birth to grass, bushes and trees. After this *Masasi* went back to the pool and *Mwari* gave *Mwedzi* another wife called *Morongo*. *Morongo* gave birth to all kinds of animals. Eventually she bore boys and girls. Because the children had grown up, *Morongo* refused to continue sleeping with *Mwedzi*. She asked him to sleep with his daughters. As a result he became chief (*mambo*) of a great people. *Masasi* chose to sleep with a snake that she hid under her bed. One day *Mwedzi* forced *Masasi* to sleep with him and the snake bit him. *Mwedzi* fell ill and there was drought. The children consulted a diviner about the persistent drought. They were told to send the sick chief back to the pool. After this they chose another man to be their king.

According to a Sudanese *Bassa* myth of creation, God created the world and all creatures including humanity (Kaoma 2010:132). At that time there were no animosities between humanity and animals; humans and non-humans lived in peace. Unlike other myths that blame animals for death, the *Bassa* attribute death to human disobedience. It is believed that the ever-working and watching Supreme Being *Lolomb* had warned humanity to resist sleeping but humanity chose to fall asleep and thus the reason death came into this world. This led to hostility between humans and the rest of creation (ibid).

Wringley P in Kaoma (2010:133) postulates that the Chewa people of Malawi have a myth of *Kaphiri-Ntiwa*. According to this myth, human beings, animals and God lived together in harmony until one person invented fire and set the grass ablaze. The animals fled in terror and God too escaped into sky, leaving humans alone with their disastrous power and knowledge. This myth points to an ancient African time where humans and non-humans lived together harmoniously. What is imperative is that if the contemporary Chewa people of Malawi could live with the myth, their encounter with nature would be improved for the better because to them, animals and plants will be their friends.

Another creation myth is of the *Lozi* of Zambia. Parrinder in Kaoma (2010:134) points out that according to the myth, *Nyambe* created earth and all its creatures. Unfortunately one creature called *Kanommu* (human being) imitated God, forged iron spears and killed an antelope. *Nyambe* was very annoyed with *Kanommu* for killing his own brother. *Nyambe* forgave *Kanommu* but *Kanommu* did not repent. Armed with his spears, he killed a buffalo and other animals. *Nyambe* was very upset and sent misfortune on earth and then retired to the sky. To date the *Lozi* believe that it is evil to kill certain animals and birds. Umaru (2006:28) alludes that the Yorubas of Nigeria believe that rivers, hills, forests in some locations have their own spirits hence people offer sacrifices to spirits that indwells the trees and the rivers.

The researcher has deduced two important issues from the above discussion on creation myths. Firstly, Africans believe that there is a Supreme Being responsible for all creation, be it human, animal, and plants. This shows that Africans are a religious people. It is through the conception, belief and respect of God that Africans consider some animals, trees, places and water sources sacred. By considering nature as sacred and religious, Africans end up conserving environment. Kelbessa (2005:22) postulate that for the Oromo of Ethiopia, *Waaga* (God) is the guardian of all things and nobody is free to destroy natural things to satisfy his or her needs. Mbiti in Kelbessa (2005:23) also reiterates that humans are not the masters of the universe. Instead they are friends, the beneficiaries and the users although they are at the centre of the universe. Secondly, the researcher has noted that as portrayed in the myths, God, human beings and animals lived together peacefully in harmony. Such a relationship was very significant in so as it could promote interdependence. To this, Tangwa (2006:389) argues that this metaphysical worldview involves the recognition of and acceptance of interdependence and peaceful coexistence between earth, plants, animals and humans. This metaphysical outlook underpinned the ways, manner and cosmically relations between human and his fellow humans. It is also responsible for why traditional Africans were more cautious in their attitude to plants, animal and inanimate things and the various invisible forces of the world.

Traditional African societies practiced their religion through various natural phenomena such as land, trees or forests, animals, water bodies and mountains.

Taboos and the concept of totemism cannot be excluded from the discourse of African religion and environmental ethics. This is so because taboos and totemism seeks to protect the environment from a religious point of view.

4.2.2. African Traditional Religion and Land

Writing about how environmental is African religion, Taringa (2006:204) postulates that the Shona share with most Africans the belief in land. Land is believed to be sacred because it bears the remains of the ancestors particularly in the form of graves of the chief. Shona religion is based on the grave (ibid). In central rituals of *kumutsa midzimu* (ritual in honour of ancestors) the point of entry is the grave. In other rituals libations are poured on the ground. In the land is also buried the umbilical cord of people. Land is the abode of the dead. What this simply entails is that there is a strong religious and cultural connection between Africans and their land and as a result traditional African society consciously or unconsciously preserve natural land. Taringa's point also shows that there is a difference between African and Western conception of the land. With Africans taking land as sacred and religious, Western societies regard land as important for mining, farming and other capitalistic and economic activities. This does not mean that the traditional Africans do not use land for agrarian and mining activities, rather, the Africans balance religion and economics in their usage of land.

4.2.3. African traditional religion and Animals

Traditional African religion respects certain animals because it is believed that the living dead communicate with the living through such animals. Taringa (2006:206) argues that most African societies recognise that spirits operate in the human world animals, birds and fish. For instance each Shona subgroup has its own taboos and restrictions towards particular animals. Nyajeka (1996:137-138) postulate that the *mutupo*(totemism) principle focuses on fostering the primary relationship between animals and humans, animals and the deity, humans and humans, nature and humans, the dead and the living. The *mutupo* principle attempts to enumerate or appropriate the ideal life which assures a sustainable future of all existence. An analysis of the fundamental elements of the *mutupo* principle reveals that it is a principle which seeks to create a cosmology that takes the existence of non-human entities seriously.

Taringa (2006:206) further argues that most Shona names are the names of the totemic animal. Members of the clan are forbidden to eat the flesh of the animal. In some cases there is a taboo on some part of the animal. A person may not be allowed to eat for example, the heart or trunk of an elephant or possibly inedible part. If one breaks the taboo one may lose hi her teeth or experience some other harm. Cited in Taringa (2006: 7) Pongweni argues that the totemic animal has a taboo attached to it or to part of its carcass such that the totem bearer is forbidden to eat. Infringement of this taboo has certain concomitant magical sanctions such as loss of teeth or leprosy. What this entails is that since Africans are a religious people, infringement of such a taboo is not an option. This has a positive bearing on the preservation and conservation of animal in general.

Mangena (2013:16) postulates that if one's totem is *nguruve* (pig) one cannot therefore eat pig meat and this is meant not only to protect pig species from extinction through arbitrary killing for meat but also to show that pigs and human beings are related. Thus for a person of pig totem, eating pig meat will be more like eating oneself. It can therefore be argued that totemism does not only name or point to a natural relationship that exist between human beings and non-human animals, it also point to a spiritual relationship. For instance if one is of the pig, lion, elephant, fish and crocodile totems among others, then he or she will regard these animals as sacred and will treat them with reverence(ibid). Murove (2009:317) argues that the concept of *Ukama* provides the ethical anchorage for human social, spiritual and ecological togetherness. African environmental outlook rests on the sacredness of animals and other non-human components of nature so if the principle of totemism by and large advances the sacredness of nature then one can safely argue that totemism is indeed one of the pillars of African environmentalism.

Abiola and Jeyifo (2010:23) concur with the above positions by arguing that totemism can be viewed as an elaborate, lived metaphor that serves to establish equivalences between heterogeneous modes of existence, the human and the non-human. Junod in Grange (2015:6) in his ethnology studies of *baPedi* notes that totemism shows well one characteristic of the Bantu mind: the strong tendency to give a human soul to animals, to plants, to nature as such, a tendency which is at

the very root of the most beautiful blossom of poetry, a feeling that there is a community of substance between various forms of life.

Chemhuru and Masaka (2010:130) assert that having noted the human propensity for abuse of non-human animals and the difficulty of reconciling the interest of humans with those of non-human animals, it can be argued that the concept of totem is a wildlife conservation strategy. What is interesting in this argument is that Africans realised that there is need for an environmental conservation strategy through indigenous knowledge systems such as totems before the advent of westernisation. This is so because totemism is part and parcel of the religious belief system of African people. This is very important in consolidating the position that African environmentalism is as old as humanity in traditional African communities and the fact that it was not written down like western discourses does not relegate the same to the intellectual outskirts.

Boudillon in Chemhuru and Masaka (2010:131) argues that it is a taboo among the Shona, for one to eat one's totem animal because one would lose one's teeth. Because no one would want to lose his or her teeth, no one would eat the animal of his or her totem. Such a strategy could foster wildlife conservation. Duri and Mapara (2007:18) noted that taboos concerning totems were institutional wildlife conservation measures meant to preserve various animal species so that they could be saved from extinction due to unchecked hunting. Mazrui in Murove (2004:208) stresses that a mind that does not see itself as part of the natural environment is susceptible to exploiting the natural environment for its own selfish ends. As opposed to such an environmentally exploitative mind, he says that the African mind is predisposed to ecological concern because of its totemic frame reference.

Murove (2004:204) argues that the immortality of *Ukama* further advances *Ukama* between human beings and the natural world, whereby human identity is signified in totemism, thus furthering *Ukama* between and the natural world. It is mainly for this reason that ancestorhood is not limited to the relations between humans and extends to other species of existence.

4.2.4. African traditional religion and forests and mountains

The treatment of nature as sacred and religious among the traditional African society is not limited to land and animals. The same philosophy also extends to forest, trees, mountains and water bodies. Taringa (2006:208) argues that the Shona believes that certain forests and mountains are sacred. One major reason for this belief is that these places are burial sites of their chiefs. These places therefore are habitat of ancestral spirits. Access to natural resources in these forests is a special prerogative of the chiefly house. Access not sanctioned through ritual is dangerous because it may result in death (ibid). For instance, one of the weekly papers in Zimbabwe, the *Manica Post* of the week 6-12 August 2004, carried the story of a 19-year-old girl *Loveness Bhunu* who disappeared in the sacred *Nzunza* Mountains. She had gone there to look for sweeping brooms. The story surrounding her disappearance is that she angered the spirits of the mountains by despising the size of the sweeping broom. A clear message from this incident is that the spirits in sacred places do not tolerate violation of religious beliefs. Mukanya in Chivaura (2005:234) asserts that before venturing out into world and tempering with the environment, the elders must give permission and perform appropriate rituals to carry out functions such as clearing the forest for farming, catching fish from the lakes for food or hunting animals for meat. In his research among the Korekore, a dialect of Shona, Gelfand in Taringa (2006:209) notes that so interesting is this feeling among the Shona that one entering a strange area in a forest, a mountain or a beautiful spot is not allowed to comment on it lest he or she upsets the ancestral spirits of the region.

Kelbessa (2005:22) argues that in Ethiopia it is believed that some trees have a specific relationship with God and should not be touched by the axe. Individuals who violate this principle are morally wrong. Singer in Kelbessa (ibid) shares the same plate of opinion by arguing that religion was thought to provide a reason for doing what is right, the reason being that those who are virtuous will be regarded by an eternity of bliss while the rest roast in hell. Senghor in Murove (2004:209) writes that negro-African reasoning is intuitive by participation whereby the consciousness of the world and all that exist are united in an inseparable oneness.

Chemhuru and Masaka (2010:128) assert that some sacred forest and mountains are reserved for certain Shona traditional ceremonies and relevant taboos help in

preserving them. Such taboos discourage people from visiting these sites thereby aiding the cause for a harmonious living between human beings and the whole of nature. This has gone a long way in maintaining the naturalness of sacred places compared to other areas deemed non-sacred because people have respect of these areas.

Taringa (2006:201) postulate that among the Shona rocks, bodies of water and mountains are personified as living beings. For example before climbing a particular mountain or entering a particular forest one must ritually ask its permission. So, most aspects of nature are perceived as kin, endowed with consciousness and the power of ancestral spirits. Trees, animals, insects and plants are all to be approached with caution and consideration. This simply entails that Africans in general treat nature with reverence because nature points to their religion and philosophy.

Taringa (ibid) postulates that in most African traditional societies, certain trees are considered sacred. People of Karanga, a dialect of Shona for instance believe that all large trees should not be cut because they belong to the ancestral spirits. Daneel (1991:99) argues that virtually all large trees were protected as they belonged to the ancestors who were believed to dwell in tree branches. Taringa (2006:209) postulates that the belief in ancestral spirits living in tree branches is also implied in death rituals. In the bringing-back-home-the-ancestors ritual some Shona use the branches of certain big trees. Such trees can only be cut with the ritual permission of the chief. What is important to note from this belief is that certain trees could be protected from being cut because of their significance in rituals.

4.2.5. African traditional religion and water

Water is one of the precious resources needed by both human beings and non-human life. As a result, Africans want to keep water safe. Ogungbemi in Ojomo (2011:106) points that water is another natural resources that has been adversely affected in modern Africa through human activities. The deposition and dumping of toxic waste on the African coast and inland by industries both within and outside the continent, pollution of water through oil exploration and *defacto*

spillage, and through bacteriological and chemical agents like fertilizers have made our waters unsafe not only for humans but also other species in our waters.

Among the Shona, water bodies are considered sacred because they are abode of animals associated with spirits. People should approach these water places carefully observing the taboos. For instance Taringa (2006:210) asserts that people should not use iron buckets to draw water from these places. They must use gourd, wooden or clay containers, which have not been used for cooking. The guardians of such water places and animals such as python and *njuzu* (water spirits). The Shona believe that these animals keep these waters on behalf of *varipasi* (underworld). Wrong doers may be drowned in the pool by these animals (ibid). Water from such sources is used for ritual purposes for example the Shona believe that it has healing powers, can be used by traditional healers to initiate spirit possessions and cooling avenging spirits. Some water sources are associated with a historical healing spirit medium. What this entail is that rivers, pools and other sources of water could be saved from unscrupulous human use simply because they are considered sacred and religious.

4.2.6. African taboos and environmental ethics

African environmentalism is hinged upon taboos. This means that traditional African people's encounter with the environment (animals, trees, water) has been regulated by taboos. Taboos make part and parcel of the socio-cultural and religious life of the African people. Ezekwonna (2005:11) defined a taboo as prohibition against touching, saying, or doing something for fear of immediate harm from a mysterious supernatural force. Chemhuru and Masaka (2010:123) defined taboos as avoidance rules that forbid members of the human community from performing certain actions, such as eating some kinds of food, walking on or visiting some sites that are regarded as sacred, cruelty to non-human animals, using nature's resources in an unsustainable manner. For the Shona people, taboos are understood as specific rules that forbid people from performing certain actions, otherwise the performance of such forbidden actions is a negation of the moral code that govern human conduct (Chemhuru and Masaka, 2010: 124). The violators of the Shona moral code as contained in taboos are said to invite misfortunes for the community and themselves, such as bad luck, disease, drought and death. Taboos refer to the sacred character of people and things, and the

uncleanness that follows violation of the prohibitions with which they are surrounded (Parrinder in Olabode and Siyanbola 2013:5).

Chemhuru and Masaka (2010:125) postulate that Shona adherence to totem is one of the typical examples of the observance of taboos. For example if a person belongs to the clan of *vaera nzou* (those that must not eat the elephant meat) then he is prohibited from eating these non-human animals. It becomes part of that person's ethos to avoid taking elephants as a source of meat. For the Shona people going against such prohibitions invites illness or the loss of the offender's teeth. Totemism is important in extending some moral considerations to non-human animals.

Tatira in Chemhuru and Masaka (2010:124) rightly notes that the Shona people realise the importance of preserving the environment as a factor of overall development. This knowledge is manifested in some of the taboos that control child behaviour in relation to the environment. Thus Shona taboos are ethical tools that do not only foster good human relations, but also promote good relations between human being and nature. Workineh (2002:54) argues that the Oromo worldview regulates the freedom of human beings in their dealing with nature. Thus, the Oromo worldview has fostered a responsible attitude towards nature, plants and animals. The essence of this view is to live in partnership with the natural environment.

Apart from being a source of environmental ethics, Shona taboos signify a concept of wholeness between human beings, the community and the environment. Ramose in Chemhuru and Masaka (2010:125) asserts that the principle of wholeness applies also with regard to the relation between human beings and the physical or objective nature. To care for one another, therefore implies caring for the physical nature as well. Without such care the interdependence between human beings and the physical nature would be undermined. Furthermore, there are also in Africa taboos which deal with environmental health, and as Agbola and Mabawonku (1996: 79) inform us, elaborate religious rituals and taboos are used extensively in African traditional society to sustain the environment and keep it from all disease vectors.

Writing on Shona water taboos, Chemhuru and Masaka (2010:126) notes that in Shona *ukachera mvura nechirongo chitema, tsime rinopwa* which means if you fetch water with a sooty black pot, the well will dry up. Although it is clear that the purpose of this particular taboo was to instil the culture of hygiene in public water sources, the Shona's explanation of this taboo is that sooty black pot would cause a well to quickly dry up. Since water is considered precious, no one would want to contribute to the drying up of the well by violating the taboo (ibid). Adherence to this taboo would therefore guarantee safe water for the entire community. Bujo in Kelbessa (2010:469) notes that the African is convinced that all things in the cosmos are interconnected. All natural forces depend on each other, so that human beings can live in harmony only in and with the whole of nature.

Chemhuru and Masaka (2010:127) further postulates that an analysis of Shona environmental taboos show that deterrence is used as a way of safeguarding their observance as ethical tools that promotes sustainable use of nature's resources. For example, in the taboo that discourages use of sooty black pot to draw water from the well because it will dry up, individuals are frightened that their water source will dry up although one cannot scientifically prove the claim.

Another taboo that discourages the abuse of water sources is *ukawetera munvura unozoita chirwere chehozwe* meaning if you urinate in water you will suffer from bilharzias (ibid). In this taboo fear of contracting the disease deter people from urinating in water thereby polluting the water. Tangwa (2006:392) notes that as human beings, we carry on our shoulders, the whole weight of moral responsibility and obligation for the whole world.

Duri and Mapara (2007:15) argue that institutional prohibitions, such as taboos were designed to develop positive societal attitudes towards the environment. This also involved restricting the cutting and using of certain types of vegetation. These prohibitions were/are a way of preserving nature. Ogungbemi (1997:204) argues that in our traditional relationship with nature, man and woman recognise the importance of water, land and air management. To our traditional communities the ethics of not taking more than you need from nature is a moral code. Perhaps this explains why earth, forests, rivers and wind and other natural objects are traditionally believed to be both natural and divine.

Chemhuru and Masaka (2010:128) argues that the Shona recognises the interconnectedness and coexistence between people and natural vegetation and wildlife in so far as playing a crucial role in the sustenance of human life. According to Shona belief systems, some sacred sites, such as mountains have symbolic importance. For instances it is believed that these sacred mountains developed some natural fires as a way of informing people of the advent of the rainy season.

Another taboo that prohibits the cutting down of trees is that *ukatema muhacha, mvura haizonayi* which means if you cut down *the muhacha* tree it will not rain. Chemhuru and Masaka (2010:129) assert that this taboo is based on the understanding that the *muhacha* tree is an important fruit tree that produces fruits that are very nutritional to both human beings and animals especially in times of drought where there will be a shortage of food. Duri and Mapara (2007:22) argues that taboos like that of the cutting down of *muhacha* tree is still effective up until contemporary times because the Shona people believe that life should be respected, especially that of little non-human creatures that depend on wild fruits for nourishment.

Chemhuru and Masaka (2010:132) postulate that another Shona taboo that prohibits cruelty to animal species is *ukauraya mutsumwatsumwa, n'ombe dzako dzinozotsemuka minyatso* which means if you kill a praying mantis, your cows will crack their teats. Cows are an important measure of wealth among the Shona because they provide milk, meat and are used in paying lobola. Koenane (2014:3) argues that wealth/*maruo* as Sesotho referred to being blessed with resources such as land, cattle, sheep, goats, pigs, chickens and many other animals which characterised one as having plenty. The cow is not owned but only allows its products to be used for the enhancement of human life for everyone in the community. As a result, no one would want to risk losing his cows by killing a praying mantis.

4.3. African proverbs and environmental ethics

As part of African people's language and oral tradition, proverbs have also been used to carry environmental messages. Ekwealo (2014:199) postulates that

proverbs are a medium for disseminating, worldview and philosophy especially in Africa. They are a condensed metaphysical system from which anything about reality could be alembicated. Thus to be in the ancient African system is to be in proverbs. Explaining the importance of proverbs, Achebe (2008:6) stated that among the Ibos, the art of conversation is regarded very highly and proverbs are palm oil with which words are eaten.

Olabode and Siyanbola (2013:8) postulate that another proverb among the Yoruba of Nigeria that relates to environmental sanitation is: *Ti a ba gaba ile, ti aba gba ita, akitan ni a dari re si*. This means that if we sweep both inside and outside of a house, we dump the refuse into a refuse dump. The proverb is pointing to the importance of dumping refuse in the appropriate places. This, if done will prevent various diseases and afflictions associated with refuse. In actual fact this proverb affects mostly urban dwellers where residents usually dumped refuses indiscriminately even in cases where government made available facilities for refuse dump. What this entails is that Africans have knowledge of sanitation and environmental well-being as constituted in proverbs. The advantage of African environmentalism enshrined in proverbs is that it will be passed from generation to generation through oral tradition. This will guarantee the survival of African environmental ethics in the future.

Ekwealo (2014:200) further asserts that the first proverb that introduces environmental consciousness is that *Uwa mmadu na uwa mmuo bu ofu* meaning that it is the same stream of life that encompasses the world of humans and the world of spirits. This ecological emphasis serves as the background ecological wisdom that reminds everyone about the universality of all consciousness and the harmony of the universe, for it also introduces the relationship of the celestial and terrestrial worlds.

Ekwealo (ibid) points that another proverb in which plants are used says ‘those whose palm kernel were cracked for them by a benevolent spirit should not forget be humble. Such proverbs which involve plants show that the relationship between the human and plants are normal affairs.

4.4. Ubuntu and environmental ethics

On Ubuntu, Ramose in Metz (2010:331) points that to be a human being is to affirm one's humanity by recognising the humanity of others and, on that basis, establish humane relations with them. One is enjoined, yes, commanded as it were, to actually become a human. This proposition breathes a communitarian spirit because it is in strict sense centralising the notion one cannot realise his or her humanness without incorporating the humanness of others.

Grange (2015:304) points that Ubuntu is a concept that is derived from proverbial expression (aphorisms) found in several languages in Africa South of the Sahara. However, it is not only a linguistic concept but a normative connotation embodying how we ought to relate to the other- what our moral obligations is towards the other (both human and non-human). Lenka Bula (2008:378) argues that Sesotho aphorism *motho ke motho ka botho ba bang* literally translates as 'no person is complete in him/herself, she or he is fully human in as far as far as she or he remain a part of the web of life, including creation and the universe.

Metz and Gaie (2010:75) argue that morality in Africa South of the Sahara (as embodied in Ubuntu) is distinct from Western approaches to morality in the sense that sub Saharan morality is essentially rational in the sense that the only way to develop one's humanness is to relate to others in a positive way. In other words, one becomes a person solely through other persons- one cannot realise one's true self in opposition to others or even in isolation from them. This simply entails the communitarian nature of Ubuntu. It is through this communitarian nature of African that their environmentalism is embedded.

In his account of Ubuntu as a moral theory, Metz (2010:333) postulates that "an action is right just insofar as it is in solidarity with groups whose survival is threatened; an act is wrong to the extent that it fails to support a vulnerable community. Taking this notion from an African environmental point of view, it entails that all efforts by Africans to conserve and preserve the environment are by and large right because they are in solidarity with environmental principles of a community, a community that is being threatened by climatic changes, deforestation and pollution, making it vulnerable to severe environmental degradation.

Grange (2015:305) further postulates that African morality differs from an Aristotelian or other Western moral philosophy in that it defines positive relationship with others in strictly communal terms, the proper way to relate to others, for one large part of sub-Saharan thinking, is to seek out community or to line in harmony with them. What is crucial for the researchers to note from this submission is that harmony and relations in the community is central. It is from this harmony among individuals in the community that will translate into harmony with nature.

In showing the relationship between Ubuntu and African environmentalism, Ekwealo (2014:199) argues that while some critics may argue to contrary on Ubuntu's ecological spirit, the ethical implications of Ubuntu can still be seen to have ecocentric implications. This is because the values it promotes when taken to their fullest cannot really be in defence of human beings alone. It shares in the universal essence contained in the African metaphysical and epistemological meaning of force or spirit which links up humans, animals, plants, and the so called inanimate. Etieyibo (2011:125-127) concurs with the above position by arguing that because Ubuntu has these values, it fosters among other things the attitude of a shared concern as well as collaboration and solidarity because it is concerned with collective well-being, it does not commodify and monetize the natural environment. Individuals basically think about communal well-being, Ubuntu's values of caring and sharing clearly encourage the development of a non-exploitative attitude towards the environment, an attitude that if cultivated by all will leave the world more sustainable it currently is

Murove (2009:316) argues that Ubuntu (humanness) is the concrete form of Ukama (relatedness) in the sense that human interrelationships within society are a microcosm of the relationality within the universe. Suffice to say this relationship between humans and humans, humans and nature is the cornerstone of African environmental ethics in the sense that relationships go hand-in-hand with respect. This therefore entails that through Ubuntu and *Ukama*, Africans approach nature with respect and dignity.

Writing about the Shona people of Chief *Norumedzo* in Masvingo Province, Zimbabwe, Mawere (2012:110) argues that both locals and strangers are

constantly advised by the chief through headman and village policeman not to tamper with it as tampering with the *jiri* is believed to anger ancestors who in turn might cause *harurwa* (sting bugs) extinction and the *mizhanje* trees not to produce fruit. It is during the exploitation of resources from *jiri* that the exploiters should demonstrate their highest level of ubuntu to the environment-locally known as *hunhu* (humanness).

Writing on the negative effects of failing to uphold Ubuntu by the Shona people in *Mukanganwi* area in Masvingo Province, Zimbabwe, Mawere (2012:111) noted that while natural phenomena can be partly blamed for the erratic rainfall in *Mukanganwi* over the past few decades, human causes like deforestation and veld fires seen to be significantly contributing to the climatic changes in the area. In fact it can be inferred that reluctance on the deployment of Ubuntu in people's relations with natural environment has compromised the rainfall pattern over the years. Kaoma (2010:121) concurs with this notion hence he argues that Africans understand that abundant life depends on how humanity relates with non human beings. A person with Ubuntu cannot mistreat non-humans or destroy earth.

Lamenting on the lack of Ubuntu Mawere (2012:112) argues that the colonial Zimbabwean government, instead of seeking ways to merge the local people's Ubuntu embedded in their indigenous knowledge systems with expert science in the national conservation project, it despised and castigated to the dustbin of oblivion all conservation practices embedded in Indigenous knowledge systems. By default or otherwise it failed to realise that Ubuntu as a philosophy of life of the local people- the Shona, was rich system that the bearers had used successful for centuries now in conserving the natural environment.

Mawere (2012:9) argues that in some parts of Southern Zimbabwe the philosophy of Ubuntu is still used in small scale environment conservation projects and with visible consequences to the environment. Where the philosophy of Ubuntu still prevails, the consequences are positive and otherwise in those areas where the philosophy has lost its grip.

4.5. African morality and environmental ethics

The concept of morality is significant to African communitarianism. Maina (2008:196) argues that from Bujo's perspective an individual person in an African

society is required to fully interiorise the ethical demands of the community. These ethical demands include the integration of the ancestral norms by every member. As a result, it has also been considered as a springboard for African environmentalism. This entails that one can have an appreciation of African environmental outlook by looking at how Africans' understanding of what is right and wrong.

Kelbessa (2005:24) points that the Oromo moral code does not allow irresponsible exploitation of resource and human beings. In this case, then it can be argued that the Oromo conception of *saffuu* is based on justice. It reflects a deep respect and balance between varying things. The Oromo do not simply consider justice, integrity and respect as human virtues applicable to human beings but they extend them to non human species and mother earth. This simply shows that environmental consciousness among Africans stems from their moral worldview.

Bujo in Ugwuanyi (2005:6) argues that in Africa morality is grounded in a form of communitarianism which to a larger extent is a man-centred ideology. Metz (2007:15) asserts that an action is right in so far as it promotes a shared identity among people grounded on good-will, an act is wrong to the extent that it fails to do so and leads to encourage the opposite and ill-will. What is important to note from Metz's position is that when he say an action is right in so far as it promotes shared identity, he does not only refer to human beings, rather he includes non-human components of nature.

Writing about environmental ethics through African moral world, Ugwuanyi (2005:6) argues that it should be supposed that since the environment is meant to serve as a moral support then it should be treated as such. It is clearly wrong to except a good from an environment that has been badly treated. Such terms of reciprocity are what the African moral world demands. Thus it is totally wrong and contrary to an African environmental world if the source of ill-will and discord finds its root in the resources of the environment because by doing so, the environment is negative or destructive moral agent.

Kaoma (2010:120) notes that indeed the Bantu moral conscience promotes recognition of the harmony and interaction of forces and respecting them. As

Placide Tempels observed, the Bantu have a notion of what we may call immanent justice, which they would translate to mean that, to violate nature incurs her vengeance and that misfortune springs from her. They know that he who does not respect the laws of nature becomes a person whose inmost being is pregnant with misfortune. This ethical conscience of theirs is at one point philosophical, moral and juridical.

4.6. Conclusion

In this chapter the researcher has managed to show the significant relationship between African communitarianism and environmental ethics. The researcher qualifies the relationship as significant because Africans can think and formulate a policy and strategy of African environmental solutions to African environmental problems basing on the fact that African culture breathes an environmental spirit. African traditional religion, Ubuntu, proverbs and African morality are the facets of African communitarianism that has been discussed side by side with environmental ethics. On African traditional religion the researcher has found that generally Africans believe in a supernatural Being who they believe manifest through nature. This religious belief explains why certain trees, mountains, rivers, animals are considered sacred. It is because of the religious nature of traditional African people that creation myths, taboos, totems assist in the interpretation of African environmentalism. Taboos and totems have been found very environmentally friendly in traditional African scheme of things because they prohibit bad encounter with nature and render certain totemic animals sacred. Creation myths point to a mutual relationship between humans and non-humans in the ancient time.

This discussion would have been a half-backed intellectual cake if it fails to show at all costs the connection among African morality, Ubuntu and environmental ethics. To this, it has been observed that morality in an African understanding is viewed in form of communitarianism. As a result, it embraces demands of the community including non-human components of nature. Considerable literature has also been supplied in this discussion to show that Ubuntu is the springboard for African environmentalism. To augment the claim that oral tradition has an important role in African people's lives, it has also been noted that proverbs are an indigenous linguistic vehicle for environmental messages. Drawing examples

from Yoruba and Ibos of Nigeria, it has been shown in this discussion that proverbs depict the relationship between human beings and nature.

Taking into consideration the above discussion one can therefore argue that Africans should not bury their religion and culture if they want to successfully win the war against environmental crisis. Using indigenous knowledge systems such as discussed above is another reliable way to conserve and preserve nature for today and for future generations.

The next chapter seeks to provide a summary of the research, evaluations and recommendations for the next research.

CHAPTER FIVE

5. EVALUATION AND SUMMARY

In this dissertation the researcher has given a critical analysis of the African environmental ethic or policy to salvage rampant environmental problems affecting the continent. The thrust of the research is premised on the realisation that Western environmental ethical theories have proved to be too anthropocentric to an extent that they have not been significantly instrumental in curbing environmental problems particularly in Africa. As a result, this research emerged to close the knowledge gap that exist between Western environmental ethics and African environmentalism by arguing that it is possible to formulate an environmental ethic hinged on African communitarianism. Why African communitarianism? The researcher feels that African communitarianism is a theory to go by because it is a theory that reflects African philosophy through religion, morality, Ubuntu and the interdependence and interrelatedness of African people with the natural world.

In chapter one, the researcher has provided background information to the study, problem statement, research aims and objectives, rationale and research methodology. In this chapter, the researcher has also managed to have an appreciation of some of environmental problems affecting African nations. These include deforestation, water and air pollution, land degradation, global warming and climatic change. The researcher has observed that most of these ecological problems are mainly caused by poverty, ignorance, industrialisation and technological advancement as well as rapacious and desire for economic growth.

The researcher managed in chapter one to provide introductory remarks on African environmental philosophies of thinkers like Ogungbemi, Tangwa and Ugwuanyi. Ogungbemi alludes that in the traditional African society, people recognise the importance of water, land and air. For Ogungbemi, the ethics of not taking more than one needs from nature is a moral code in the traditional African scheme of things. This explains why earth, forests, rivers and wind and other natural objects are traditionally held to be both natural and divine. What this entail is that there is interdependence and interconnectedness between African people

and nature. This relationship shaped the attitude, behaviour and contact of African people with nature.

Tangwa bases his African environmentalism conception on metaphysical outlook of pre-colonial African societies which he called eco-bio-communitarianism. This metaphysical worldview entails the recognition and acceptance of interdependence and peaceful coexistence between earth, plants, animals and humans. Such metaphysical worldview underpinned and undergird the ways, manners and cosmically between humans and his fellow humans. Tangwa further emphasise that within traditional African worldview, the difference between plants, and inanimate things, between the sacred and the profane, matter and spirit, the communal and the individual is a slim and flexible. By this, Tangwa simply reinforces the view that pre-colonial African setting, through its religion and communitarian rootedness and orientation, co-exist peacefully with the rest of nature.

Using the case study of the *Nso* people in Cameroon, Tangwa argues that the *Nso* attitude toward nature and the rest of creation is that of reverential co-existence, conciliation and containment and he observes that there are frequent offerings of sacrifices to God, to the divine Spirits, both benevolent and malevolent, to the departed ancestors and to the sundry invisible and inscrutable forces of nature. This shows the connection that exists between African religion and the environment. This bond is very significant in the sense that it shapes African people's attitude towards nature. Sacred and religious animals, mountains, rivers escape destructive human interference because they are considered spiritual and divine.

Ugwuanyi attempted advancing environmental ethics through the African worldview. For him African religion and morality forms the base of African environmentalism. Ugwuanyi argues that it should be supposed that since the environment is meant to serve as a moral support then it should be treated as such. For Ugwuanyi, it is clearly wrong to except a good from an environment that has been badly treated. Such terms of reciprocity are what the African moral world demands.

On the relationship between African traditional religion and environment, Ugwuanyi argues that symbols, which forms part of African religion are formed from trees or moulded from the earth hence they generally find their origin in the environment. These Philosophers are credited for significantly contributing to the discourse of African environmental ethics. In their understanding of environmental philosophy from an African point of view, these Philosophers share in common the notion that African traditional society has a sound environmental disposition of interdependence and coexistence with nature. The trio's environmental philosophies are by and large microcosm of the macrocosm of an environmental ethic anchored on African communitarianism.

In chapter two, the researcher discussed the conceptualisation of the concept of African communitarianism as espoused by Placide Tempels, John Mbiti, Ifeanyi Menkiti, Kwame Gyekye and Masolo. Placide Tempels through his vital force thesis holds that the Bantu human person is a living force which needs to interact with other persons for it to realise complete life. Tempels argues that the vital force that is found in a person, as an individual, comes more to life fulfilment or realisation when that individual engages in relations with his adjoining environment. He relates to the supernatural world, to his fellow human beings and to inanimate things. What is more important to note from Tempels' submission is that, an individual should not only relate to his fellow human beings but to the supernatural world and inanimate things. This straightforwardly indicates African environmentalism in the sense that through religion certain animals, mountains and forests are considered sacred and divine. The relationship with inanimate things which Tempels alludes to mirrors interdependence, coexistence and interconnectedness between, humans and nature, humans and the supernatural as well as nature and the supernatural.

For Tempels, communitarian morality is of utmost significance if a person needs to be accepted in the African society. The African communitarian society has no place and space for individuals who violate the moral values of the community. It is the existence of the moral principle which makes it easier to construct an African environmental ethic because a morally upright individual relates well with nature and the rest of creation.

In his version of communitarianism, Tempels also discussed the concept of African names given to babies at birth. To this, Tempels argues that names in the traditional African thought are not just names like John and Marry as it is in Western society. In traditional African thought, names carry socio-cultural and religious messages of a people. In most cases in Africa, a child is given a name of a deceased relative in the clan. This shows the relationship between the dead and the living. Such relationship is very significant because it shows the religious nature of African people. This religious orientation through names points to African environmentalism.

Mbiti begun by discussing tribal nature of traditional African society arguing that tribes have distinct religious beliefs to which they identify themselves with. Tribes form communitarian societies and it is in these communities that a morally and religious environmentalism is enshrined. This is made possible because people of the same tribe are bound by same religion, same principles guiding and regulating morality and more importantly, they share the same taste of how an individual is conceived in an African society. They are also bound to share how a person has to relate with nature.

Mbiti also postulates that in the traditional African society, kinship system regulate the life of all members of the tribe. The entire tribe was tied to this kinship system. For Mbiti the kinship system is like a vast network stretching to accommodate everyone in the tribe. This entails that each and every member of the tribal group is related and no individual is treated as alien. Such societal setting contributes to the establishment of a communitarian society with a shared identity. Once a society becomes communitarian, one can therefore argue that such a society has similar religion, morality and a similar environmental outlook.

For Mbiti, the kinship system is not merely limited to the relationships of people who are living but, it also extends to include those who have passed on in life and those who are yet to be born. This is the onto-triadic nature of African ontology. The living has a duty towards the dead, to keep their little soul alive and offer libations for it. This point to a religious nature of Africans and it is very necessary to indicate that the offering of libation and other religious rituals done for the dead are carried using branches of certain trees. These rituals are carried on graves

which are on land. What this entails apart from showing that Africans are religious people is that African religion is inseparable from the surrounding natural environment. This automatically contributes to a positive attitude towards the environment because certain trees are considered sacred because they are used in performing rituals and the fact that land carries graves makes it divine.

For Mbiti the society contributes in shaping the humanness of an individual who cannot exist alone except with others members of the clan or society. This implies that the community can ensure that a harmonious relationship among members of the society as well as between humans and nature is maintained. For Mbiti, physical birth is not enough to identify a person. An individual has to be incorporated through rites and rituals to be identified as a person.

Menkiti concurs with other African Philosophers in the conception of a person in the African thought. Like Mbiti, Menkiti argues that a person in African thought is not defined by physical or psychological characteristics rather a person is defined by his or her relation to the envioning community because communal realities takes precedence over individual's history and experiences. If this is the case then, it is logical therefore to argue that the traditional African community makes sure that conservative and preservative environmental taboos, laws and regulations are observed in the best interest of the entire community. Failure to abide with societal norms renders an individual an incomplete person.

Menkiti also discusses the significance of rites and rituals which incorporates a person to become a complete person who is socially accepted in the community. The long process of social and ritual transformation entails that the community has a special role in nurturing an individual because without other members of the community one cannot go through social transformation. It is through these rites of passages and rituals that an individual becomes aware of the religious, social, political, moral and more significantly, environmental expectations of a particular community.

Menkiti argues that for one to be considered a full person that particular individual should exhibit unquestionable moral worth. To this, Menkiti argues that the community has got a role in prescribing certain norms to the individual. The individual may not question these societal prescriptions if he or she is to

become a fully recognised person in their respective communities. Thus, as far as African societies are concerned, personhood is something at which individuals can fail. For Menkiti, the traditional African society has no place and space for an immoral and evil person. A virtuous or generous person is considered a full person with great importance in the society. Evil and self-centred or immoral people contribute nothing to society hence Menkiti thinks they are not persons.

Menkiti argues that in Africa, personhood is not automatically granted at birth but is acquired as one gets along in society. This getting along in society takes quite a lot of time, usually being attained by people who are of advanced age. These people, who are much older according to Menkiti, had the time to learn what it means to be a person through accumulation of knowledge of social values and norms that govern their particular society. By living up to, and adhering to these norms, they become successful in living up to the standard of personhood hence significantly contributing to the preservation of socio-cultural values of a particular society.

Gyekye stands for a different version of African communitarianism. Though he concedes that the individual is understood as part of the bigger community, he accuses Mbiti and Menkiti for coming up with what he termed radical communitarianism which according to him does not recognise the issue of individual autonomy and rights. For Gyekye, individual autonomy and rights should not be compromised at the expense of the community. Gyekye's moderate communitarianism constitutes rights and freedom, the community of mutuality, the common good, and the principle of reciprocity as well as responsibility as a principle of morality. For Gyekye, communitarianism views the community as a reality in itself and not as a mere relationship of individuals. A community in the context of communitarianism is seen as a group of persons linked by interpersonal bonds, which are not necessarily biological, who consider themselves primarily as members of a group and who share common goals, values and interests.

Stressing the significance of morality in his version of moderate communitarianism, Gyekye notes that the Akan conceptualisation of person, which is communalistic, would categorize someone who chooses to lead lonely lifestyles as non-person. An individual who exhibits morally blameworthy

conduct is also branded as a non-person. He says for the communitarians, personhood is earned in the moral arena and not just handed over to the individual at birth

In his version of moderate communitarianism, Gyekye elaborates what he calls the idea of common good. By common good Gyekye meant those universal enviable things needed for the normal function of an individual within a society. Relating this concept of common good to environmentalism one can argue that the community shares the common environmental good that the welfare of natural environment is of great importance.

As part of his moderate communitarianism, Gyekye discusses the significance of the principle of reciprocity. Gyekye claims that the communitarian moral and political theory, which considers the community as a elementary human good, advocates a life lived in agreement and collaboration with other, a life of mutual consideration and aid and of interdependence, a life in which one shares in the fate of another individual. For Gyekye, this kind of life, that is life of mutual consideration and aid and of interdependence is very rewarding and fulfilling.

Gyekye maintains that the communitarian ethic acknowledges the importance of individual rights but that it does not do so to the detriment of responsibilities which the individual member have ought to have towards the community or other members of the community. What this simply entails is that the individual cannot pursue individual goals which are outside the communal moral and social dictates.

Masolo's version of African communitarianism also acknowledges that the community and the individual cannot be conceived separately and the welfare, moral demands and expectations of the community takes precedence over those of the individual. Masolo discusses the significance of initiation ceremonies in imparting important social and cultural knowledge in traditional African setting. Masolo argues that the period of seclusion in the forest gives society the space and time to cultivate and groom the person in manners that embodies the fundamentally philanthropic impulse underlining social being. It is this altruistic character that will enable an individual to share whatever one has with other members of a community.

What makes Masolo's version of African communitarian ethic different from those of other philosophers is that it encompasses the modern African society. In this regard, Masolo managed to depict that contemporary Africans are sharing personal economic gains with other members of the community. Such works of charity and benevolence are made possible because modern Africans are conscious of the communitarian philosophy.

All these aspects as discussed in chapter two provide a clear understanding of a person in relation to the community in the African socio-ethical thought. These thinkers agree that the individual in the African communitarianism cannot be understood outside the community. The individual cannot exist without other members. A person becomes a full person because of interaction with other members of the community.

In chapter three, the researcher discussed the traditional Western environmental ethical theories. These include land ethic, deep ecology, ecofeminism and social ecology. To begin with, Aldo Leopold's land ethic states that an interaction with nature is right when it tends to preserve the integrity, stability and beauty of the biotic community and is wrong when it tends otherwise. For Leopold, human beings should seek to coexist with nature and the rest of creation such as animals, rocks, plants and water. This entails that human interaction with nature is justified only if it does not cause harm to the same.

Critiques of Leopold's land ethic argues that the employment of the term 'stability' poses problem in the sense that it can be mistaken to mean that the natural environment is static and stagnant. Nature goes through stages such as reproduction and adaptability to different weather conditions. More to that, other environmental hazards such as floods and earthquakes threatens other species of the natural ecosystem. In this case it does not sound well to consider nature as stable.

Arne Naess's deep ecology entails that nature should be allowed to grow for it has inherent value in itself. From a deep ecologist point of view, well-being and flourishing of human and non-human life on earth have value in themselves. Humans have no right to reduce the sumptuousness and diversity of nature except

to satisfy basic needs. Deep ecology further discusses that human population should decrease in order to ease pressure on the natural environment.

Like any other environmental theory, deep ecology has also been found with shortfalls. The idea of reducing population as a measure to ease pressure on the environment probably works in Western communities and not in Africa where the population is increasing because people believe in more than one child. Furthermore, Social ecologist has criticised deep ecology for reducing humans from complex beings to mere species of part and parcel of the universe.

Ecofeminism is the belief that there is a strong historical, causal, and theoretical connection between the oppression of women and the oppression of the environment. For ecological feminists, man dominates women the same way nature has been dominated by people. As a result feminists believe that one cannot end the exploitation of nature without ending human oppression and vice versa.

To augment their position, feminist such as Warren, Plumwood, Ruether and many others assert that women are in a better position than men to relate with nature, that they are in fact closer to nature. These are the proponents of the body-based argument which claim that women, through their unique bodily experiences like ovulation, menstruation, pregnancy, child birth and breast feeding- are closer to and can more readily connect with nature. They also argue that because women are responsible for household duties they are closely connected to nature because the walk long distances to fetch firewood and water.

Critiques of ecofeminism argue that the allegation that without liberating women from male domination, efforts to liberate nature from human oppression will remain a utopia is not true. This is because it is argued that there is a clear cut line between feminist movement and ecological concerns. For instance, a society can come to a realisation that it has to treat nature properly for the continuity of its life without paying attention to feminist ideologies. Furthermore, the submission that women are closer to nature because of their unique body experience has been attacked. To this, anti-ecological feminists argue that although men do not menstruate, bear children, or breastfeed, they do share all other human biological

processes such as eating, sleeping, eliminating wastes, getting sick and dying. In addition in their ejaculation of semen they have experiences of a tangible stuff of the reproduction of life. Furthermore, if child bearing or breastfeeding is what attunes women to nature, are women who do not experience these biological processes any less connected to nature. Failure to get answers to all the raised questions renders ecofeminism a weak theory to depend on in our search for a lasting solution to environmental problems.

Bookchin's social ecology theory suggests that environmental problems are directly related to social problems. In particular Bookchin claims that the hierarchies of power rampant within modern societies have promoted a hierarchical relationship between humans and natural world. Bookchin further argues that humans must recognise that they are part of nature, not different or separate from it. Human societies and human relations with nature can be informed by the non-hierarchical associations found within the natural world. For example, Bookchin points out that within an ecosystem, there is no species more important than another, instead interactions are mutualistic and interconnected. This interdependence and lack of hierarchy in nature, it is alleged, provides a scheme for a non-hierarchical human society.

One of the problems with social ecology is that are there examples of non-hierarchical societies that have no ecological problems at all? Failure by Bookchin to provide such evidence based on anthropological and historical research conclusion renders social ecology weak environmental theory. This simply entails that Bookchin misrepresented the causal link between societal structures and environmental exploitation. Social ecology has also been criticised for being anthropocentric because in his account, Bookchin talks of the liberation of both humans and nature. This liberation process needs human beings to facilitate it.

Of interest to note is that the researcher observed that in as much as these theories differ in terms of their articulations concerning the relationship between humans and the environment, they share common ground. For instance, all these theories agree that human interaction with nature is the root cause of all environmental problems. These theories also concur that nature should be preserved for its own

good and to achieve this, human being are duty-bound to conserve and preserve nature. This shows that these theories constitute the major aspects that underpinned environmental debate in the Western societies. However, these theories have been criticised for their shortfalls. Most of them have been found to be anthropocentric. This means that they fail to attach inherent or intrinsic value to non-human things.

In chapter four the researcher managed to show the significant connection between African communitarianism and environmental ethics. The researcher thinks that the relationship is very significant because it can provide Africans and non-Africans with a theoretical framework upon which they can formulate a policy and strategy to provide African solutions to African environmental problems. The argument emanates from the fact that African culture breathes an environmental spirit. African traditional religion, Ubuntu, proverbs and African morality are the facets of African communitarianism which has been discussed side by side with environmental ethics.

On African traditional religion, the researcher has found that generally Africans believe in a supernatural Being who they believe manifest through nature. This religious belief explains why certain trees, mountains, rivers, animals are considered sacred. It is because of the religious nature of traditional African people that creation myths, taboos, totems assist in the interpretation of African environmentalism.

Creation myths point to a mutual relationship between humans and non-humans in the ancient African time. It has been observed that most creation myths involve God, human beings land, animals, mountains and forests. This cosmic relationship between the supernatural, human beings and the environment shaped African people's understanding of traditional religion as well as their encounter with nature.

Taboos play a fundamental role in traditional African environmentalism. As prohibitive and avoidance rules, Taboos have ensured that public water sources, particular animals and trees are safe from human destruction. Fear of making a well to dry if one uses a pot with black soot and causing no rain by cutting a

muhacha tree have regulated the behaviour of African towards nature. Totems have been found very environmentally friendly in traditional African scheme of things. Totemic animals are considered sacred and cannot be killed for meat. If a person is of the elephant totem, he or she considers the same to be sacred. Totemism also shows the relationship between human beings and the environment.

The researcher has also discussed in chapter four, the relationship between African morality and environmental ethics. To this, it has been observed that morality in an African understanding is viewed in form of communitarianism. As a result, it embraces demands of the community including non-human components of nature. A morally upright individual cannot ill-treat animals and other components of natural environment.

Ugwuanyi argues that it should be supposed that since the environment is meant to serve as a moral support then it should be treated as such. It is clearly wrong to except a good from an environment that has been badly treated. Such terms of reciprocity are what the African moral world demands. Thus it is totally wrong and contrary to an African environmental world if the source of ill-will and discord finds its root in the resources of the environment because by doing so, the environment is negative or destructive moral agent.

Considerable literature has also been supplied in this discussion to show that Ubuntu is the springboard for African environmentalism. It has also been observed that, the ethical impact of Ubuntu can still be seen to have ecocentric implications. This is because the values it uphold when taken in its entirety, accommodates both human beings and inanimate components of nature. It shares in the universal essence contained in the African metaphysical and epistemological meaning of force or spirit which links up humans, animals, plants, and the so called inanimate.

Failure to uphold Ubuntu by the Shona people in *Mukanganwi* area in Masvingo Province, Zimbabwe has caused erratic rainfall in Mukanganwi over the past few decades. Human causes like deforestation and veld fires are significantly contributing to the climatic changes in the area. In fact it can be inferred that

reluctance on the deployment of Ubuntu in people's relations with natural environment has compromised the rainfall pattern over the years.

To augment the claim that oral tradition has an important role in African people's lives, it has also been noted that proverbs are an indigenous linguistic vehicle for environmental messages. Drawing examples from Yoruba and Ibos of Nigeria, it has been shown in chapter four that proverbs depict the relationship between human beings and nature. Proverbs as part of language conveys messages for environmental sanity.

From the research one can deduce three aspects which are very significant. Firstly, African continent is facing serious ecological problems. Secondly, Western environmental ethical theories have not significantly solved environmental problems especially in Africa. Thirdly, the ethos of African communitarianism can supply the required ingredients in the formulation of an African environmental ethic that can direct efforts in grappling with environmental problems.

It has been indicated in this research that it is possible to construct an environmental ethic anchored on African communitarianism. However, the researcher has realised that although African communitarianism embraces environmentalism, it has its own shortfalls. To begin with, African modern society has been largely influenced by acculturation, westernisation and globalisation. This has had an effect on the erosion of cultural values and mores that defines and identifies African people. As a result, the communitarian way of life is no longer pronounced as it used to be in the past. Therefore, constructing an environmental ethic based on African communitarianism alone without considering socio-cultural and religious nature of the modern day will be tantamount a negation of truth values and existential realities.

On the same note, another elephant in the communitarian room is Christianity. Most African communities have been christianised. This is posing serious problems in the sense that, Christianity is replacing African traditional religious values. Most sacred mountains are no longer considered sacred. Sacred forests are being destroyed by people in search for timber for construction and firewood to mitigate acute electricity shortages. Furthermore, the ever-growing population in

African communities is putting too much pressure on African land as people hustle for accommodation and land for agrarian activities. Capitalists' insatiable and rapacious desire for economic growth has not spared the sacred land. Both local and multinational companies in Africa are competing in clearing land for commercial mining and agriculture. In their pursuit of profit maximisation, these business corporations are contributing to environmental degradation in Africa.

Sacred water sources such as pools and rivers have been subjected to agro-chemicals which threaten aquatic life. Taboos which used to protect water sources are only read as part and parcel of history of pre-colonial African societies. Taboos are no longer shaping people's encounter with nature in the contemporary African society. In modern Africa, people of the same totem are marrying each other. People are eating meat of their totemic animals. Poachers are killing animals of their totems. A Zimbabwean news paper, The Sunday Mail of 1 November 2015 has a story of 55 elephants which were killed by poachers using cyanide chemical in Hwange National Park. This is a clear sign of the gradual death of the belief in totemism.

Another problem with African communitarianism when it comes to environmental issues is that, since it puts priority to the group rather than an individual, individuals who commit environmental crimes cannot be held accountable. In this contemporary African era where there is need for the crafting of stern environmental laws, individuals who cause serious harm to the environment should face the wrath of the law as individuals.

Relying on African communitarianism in formulating an environmental ethic can have a challenge in the sense that the concept of totemism, which is part and parcel of African environmentalism, makes other animals more important than others. Totemic animals are considered reverential than those which are not totemic. This is problematic in the sense that animals which are not linked to totemism fall prey to human consumption. The same also applies to trees which are not considered sacred. Such trees are cut by people on daily basis for domestic purposes. This shows that African communitarianism is discriminative in nature and renders other species vulnerable.

Paying particular attention to the above discussion, especially on the drawbacks associated with the concept of African communitarianism, it is logical to argue that its authenticity in formulating a sound environmental ethic and strategy that can direct efforts in grappling with environmental trajectories becomes questionable. African communitarianism therefore needs to be re-branded, re-defined and reconsidered to suit modern practical environmental dictates. African communitarianism therefore has to transcend itself and go beyond the banalities and barriers of African traditional religion, morality and Ubuntu to accommodate Christian ethics and scientific methods that concerns environmental conservation. Christianity and scientific methods should work together with African communitarianism if efforts to curb ecological problems are to yield tangible results.

The researcher believes that since Christianity is one of the major religions in contemporary Africa, considering its tenets in formulating an environmental ethic would provide a practical solution to environmental problems. For instance in the Bible, it is chronicled in Genesis that at first, God created Adam and Eve and put them in the garden of Eden. It is evidenced in the Bible that the two were living in harmony with nature until they disobeyed God's instruction and ate the forbidden fruit. This alone shows that the interdependence and interconnectedness of humans and nature is not a unique phenomena to traditional Africa. Furthermore, in Leviticus chapter 11 and Deuteronomy chapter 14, it is written that there are certain animals like pigs and rabbits which should not be eaten by Christians. Such animals are considered unclean. Given that Christianity has become one of the major religions in Africa, animals such as pigs and rabbits are safe from human consumption. In Ruth chapter 3, Boaz instructed his servants not to harvest everything from the fields but leave some grains for the poor and wild animals. This entails that Christian teachings embrace the welfare of non-human species. The above Biblical stories shows that Christian orthodox and doctrines have environmental concerns and should be incorporated in the formulation of a contemporary environmental ethics.

Scientific environmental conservation methods cannot be ignored in the search for ideas that can assist in conserving the environment. In most African countries, organisations and other environmental players are embarking on scientific

methods of conserving the environment. In Zimbabwe for instance, the Environmental Management Agency (EMA) has adopted a Polluter Pays Principle strategy. This strategy entails that an industry or business entity that pollutes the environment should pay accordingly hence more pollution means more money to be paid. EMA has also made it a pre-requisite that any business organisation which intends to operate in Zimbabwe, be it in agriculture, mining and manufacturing should first satisfy the minimum requirements of Environmental and Social Impact Assessment. These requirements are stipulated in the Environmental Management Act. The main purpose of such environmental assessment is to see whether the proposed business enterprise has no negative impact on the environment and the society.

Scientific methods of environmental conservation, if used alongside African communitarianism and Christian ethics, can go a long way in curbing ecological problems. This integration will not only ensure environmental pragmatism, but will re-align the African communitarian principle with the realities of contemporary Africa. In addition, such integration will fulfil the much awaited and needed collaborative approach from various spheres to fight environmental problems. By accommodating Christian environmental ethos and scientific methods, African communitarianism guarantees its relevance in the intellectual market and avoids relegation into the academic dustbin.

The researcher suggests that since the role of oral tradition has been replaced by classroom education, African learning institutions should make environmental ethics a compulsory course to all students regardless of which program one is undertaking. This will assist students to acquire environmental knowledge necessary for interpreting environmental problems affecting the continent and providing relevant solutions to curb the scourge. It's a shame on the education system to produce Accountants, Lecturers, Lawyers, Teachers, Medical Doctors, Engineers, Human Resource Managers, Journalists and many other professionals who only work for the capitalist without advancing the environmental conservation agenda. Former South African President Nelson Mandela once said, "Education is the only tool a person can use to change this world." In this case we are calling for environmental pedagogy for all.

The role of traditional chiefs in environmental conservation needs to be revisited in an endeavour to augment efforts to formulate a sustainable environmental ethic. In the traditional African society, traditional chiefs were the custodians and guardians of societal values including environmental protection. Chiefs could exercise their jurisdictional powers at traditional courts to convict and punish those who harm nature. Chiefs could also, after performing certain rituals, grant a person permission to enter a forest that was sacred. Such arrangements could make sure that forest animals, mountains and water sources are protected from negative human interference. It is however disturbing that in this contemporary era, the role of traditional chiefs has been greatly affected by western life. Most of the chiefs are now professionals with much of their time spend in urban areas. This leaves the rural folk without monitoring hence the room to destroy the environment is greatly increased. The role of traditional courts has been replaced by modern courts which are rocked daily by corruption. Traditional chiefs should be further empowered. In addition, the Traditional Chiefs Act of African countries should clearly stipulates that one is not allowed to be employed somewhere, somehow and anyhow if he or she is serving as a chief. This will give chiefs ample town to monitor their areas.

KEY WORDS DESCRIBING THE TOPIC OF A DISSERTATION

African communitarianism; environmental ethics; land ethic; deep ecology; ecofeminism; social ecology; African myths; taboos; proverbs; ubuntu

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