

# Nature and Human Domination

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## ABSTRACT

In this paper, I contend that non-human animals are being subjected to torture and cruel experimentations by humans which are ongoing for centuries. This attitude which is ingrained in the thoughts of humanity is extended to other creatures in nature beginning with mankind and the non-human world. Several endangered species are getting extinct in various ecological niches in an alarming rate. The pre-colonial outlook of Africa did not experience these rapid ecological crises until the influence of phenomena such as colonization and globalization emanating from the Western culture. I argue that African countries have created a lot of ecological imbalances in their environment in an attempt to 'develop'. Also, factors like poverty and ignorance are germane in prompting Africans to over exploit and destroy their environment. Furthermore, in this paper I suggest that, Africans have to adopt an indigenous and Eco-bio-communitarian perspective to development based on effective African spirituality whereby man and nature commune together. Children must be thought African values from the primary to the university levels. This will enable them know that for human existence to be fruitful, there must be an interdependent relationship between man and nature.

**KEYWORDS:** *Eco-bio-communitarian; Totems; Nature; African Spirituality; Eco-justice, Development*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Human beings who happen to be at the apex of biological existence as opined in Darwinism have been controlling the other species in nature for centuries. This domineering attitude is still ongoing and has a lot of devastating consequences that need to be properly investigated. It is as a result of challenges ranging from climate change and environmental degradation that mankind urgently needs to rekindle her concern about nature and start questioning her attitude towards other humans and nature. This paper aims at exposing the ways humans torture animals as well as the rest of beings in nature and the integrity of the environment. Humanity takes from nature more than it is needed thereby exposing the environment and the few wildernesses available to degradations and ecological loss. Nonhumans here refer to mammalian vertebrates whose nervous systems are almost identical to ours and their reaction to pain is remarkably similar to those of human beings (Freeman and Bluesteel, 2011). To say that they feel less pain because they are lower animals, as humans have traditionally claim may be absurd. This is against the utilitarian principle that requires the greatest good for greatest number of beings in nature (Solomon and Greene, 1999). Some of the nonhumans include Birds, Rats, Dogs, Monkeys, Chimpanzees, Gorillas, Elephants, Lions, Rhinoceros, and Hippopotamus.

In this paper I argue that humans should grant equal moral consideration of concern and interests to animals and the rest of nature to ensure peaceful coexistence with nature. Animals go through cruel experimentations in laboratories. For instance, the applications of chemicals on their skins,

mouths, and eyes without the use of anesthesia, just for humans to have new shampoos, perfumes, nail hardeners and air-fresher. Human beings are egocentric as has always been the case, because enough of these products already exist on our markets. Though dominion is granted to humans in an ominous language, in Genesis 1: 26, mankind has instead, misconstrued this authority to mean exploiting nature to satisfy their needs whenever they desire. As such, they greedily and ignorantly misuse these natural resources especially those that are non-renewable. This attitude is contrary to the acceptance and recognition of the relationship of interdependence between man, animals, plants, water, land and earth that prevailed in Africa before colonization. Before the advent of colonization, humanity in the African continent co-habited peacefully with nature, but the domineering and proselytizing impact of western culture is gradually eroding these indigenous values. In fact, some Africans have failed to consider other components of nature such as animals, plants, mountains, rivers and sacred forests. They have failed to realize that there are no boundaries and everything is interrelated. The basic intuition of biocentrism is limited in the sense that a lot of harm is done to the rest of Nature, without knowing that we are harming our selves. Due to poverty and ignorance Africans have contributed in destroying their own environment. The fact that, African conservation philosophy rests essentially on spirituality, implies that it is possible and necessary to restore the lost and depreciating values by going back to nature specific places (Mangena, 2013). In order to make African conservation philosophy sustainable, the protection of nature specific places is paramount. In addition, children

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should be taught the important values of ecological preservation. With such sensitization it will curb the tremendous problems a waiting future generation.

## 2. The Human Person and the Domination of Nature

Cameroon, like other African countries, is facing serious environmental crisis. Man has been extracting more than is needed in nature thereby destroying ecological niches. For some time, mankind has had a commanding influence over the other species as the most dominant of all the species. But, some men have decided to abuse these advantages by portraying tyranny against humans, nonhumans, and nature as a whole.

There are two contrasting theories that explain the origins of the universe, that is, creationism which argues from a biblical stand point and evolutionism from a scientific perspective. The creationists argue that, God is the creator of human beings, the universe and all the creatures that abound in it ex-nihilo (out of nothing). In Genesis 1: 26, authority is granted to mankind in an ominous language. The book of Genesis asserts that: "And now we will make human beings; they will be like us and resemble us. They will have power over the fish, the birds, and all animals, domestic and wild, large and small" (Gen. 1:26, 2004). Human beings are given the authority to take care of all the creatures that move on earth beginning from the fish of the sea, birds of the sky, plants and animals that moves on the planet earth. This grant of dominion is misconstrued to mean, to use these creatures in satisfying their needs as they desire. This misinterpretation accounts for the imaginary story in Genesis describing how Adam and Eve harvested from the forbidden tree thereby violating the instructions of God. Hence, most of humanity misunderstood this grant of authority to mean using the birds, fowls, fishes, and the rest of God's creatures to satisfy their numerous desires. This tendency of lordship over all other creatures than being the servant of all the other creatures is prima facie today in all sectors of human life. Humankind is a problem to its kind that is to say to other men, animals, plants, water, soil, and all creatures available in nature. It is due to the destruction of the wilderness, sacred places, biodiversity, and coupled with the wickedness and evil thoughts of everyone on earth as reported by the author of Genesis; that God decided to wipe out all he had created. God instructed Noah to build an Ark and preserve at least two species each of plant and animals without selecting just the ones that were useful to humanity (Ibid., Gen. 6: 20-22, p. 9). We can infer that the grant of authority to care for other creatures was bestowed to mankind centuries ago. It is in line with this view that Singer contends that, "the remnants of true wildernesses left to us are like Islands, amidst a sea of human activity that threatens to engulf them" (Singer, 1993). A wilderness is scarce to come by today. As such, humanity has a duty to conserve and preserve the few existing ones.

On the other hand, supporters of the theory of evolutionism like Charles Darwin posits that, species in the universe survives due to the process of natural selection and better capacity to adapt by suppressing the weaker ones. Those species that were vibrant and proficient enough dominated the other ones and thrived. Fossil records, conjectures the process of hominization (the process of becoming human beings) of modern man. Humankind developed the ability to move on two legs (bipedalism) as their brain sizes increased

more than any other species. Locomotion and upright posture gave human beings a leap ahead of all the other species. Humankind evolved through several stages to the modern man that he is today with varying brain sizes. From *Dryopithecus*, *Australopithecus*, *Homo habilis*, *Homo erectus*, *Homo sapiens Neaderthal*, to *Modern man* (Taylor et al., 1997). From this evolution one can conjecture that, humankind may have originated from other primates, such as; Chimpanzees, Gorillas, Monkeys, and Apes. Mankind with its two legs became tall, muscular, hardened and practical. With almost a full brain size which is the result of four million years of evolution. Mankind had definitely survived from millions of countless deaths and hardship. The population of mankind which was initially small witnessed a rapid off shoot in a geometric progression. Natural selection that is to say, death, hardship, and misery have kept him cut away from other primates due to developed anatomy (structure and appearance) and Physiology (internal functioning of an organism). This explains why her creative skills emanating from an increased brain size of about 1400cm<sup>3</sup>, enabled her to look for varied ways to ease its lot (Degrazia, 1996). Humanity would remove his enemies with compassion in order to prove that they are veterans of all the species. Humans have learnt centuries ago to enslave other animals and even other humans. Mankind greedily takes from the world around him/her and from those who are weaker. It is due to this struggle that Charles Darwin observes that: "All living things have change in response to environmental conditions by the natural selection of randomly occurring mutations developing from the simplest forms to complex forms which are prolific and stronger, due to their better adaptation to their environment" (Darwin, 1882). Humanity has been able to undergo the process of hominization from very simple to complex forms due to their ability to resist death, hardship, competition, misery and succession over other species.

But, as already asserted above, mankind still perpetrates speciesism in nature in that, they earnestly protect and defend their kind against animals. Speciesism is a tendency that we experience today in our daily life as we relate with nature as a whole, that is to say, humans earnestly respect and protect their kind as sacrosanct against other species; which is analogical to racism and sexism. Cases of racism are recurrent today when for instance human beings of African descent relate with those of European descent and the feeling of inferiority complex from the former and superiority complex from the later ensues. This is so because; Western culture has been preponderant over other cultures of the world for centuries now. This domineering attitude is expressed by humans over nonhumans, rich against the poor, the stronger over the weaker, and humans over other creatures in the universe. This attitude has been ingrained in the thoughts of some humans such that, it is considered as an unquestionable truth. Often times, any serious and consistent challenge of such an attitude run the risk of riddle. But, it must be noted that the complacency with which this attitude is held can be shattered by a frontal attack (Singer, 1975) Sexism on the one hand, is prevalent especially among women who always accuse men of chauvinism and for violating their rights. Feminists have argued obstinately that women are equal to men. This is the reason why Peter Singer contended that, "If the argument for equality was sound when applied to women, why should it not be applied to dogs, cats, horses, and brutes?" (Singer,

2009). Nonhuman animals have rights too and should not be used as a means to satisfy our selfish ends. When making ethical judgments, we should endeavor to go beyond a personal, racial, sexist, and speciesists view so as to take into account the interests of all species involved (Singer, 2011)

By and large, humanity attributes a sacrosanct place to their kind in nature against all the other existing beings in the universe. This is very common in the domain of experimentation. The analysis made about the ethics of experimentation is that, retarded humans, infants, and imbeciles are not as conscious and rational than Chimpanzees, Gorillas, Dogs, and Pigs are; as such, they should instead be used as tools in experiments rather than using animals (Singer, 1975). It is urgent to question and assess some of the experiments that our scientists carry out on animals to advance our knowledge of psychology. Some humans caged animals to walk on wires connected with very high current. In the same line, psychologists apply concentrated substances in the eyes of Rabbits in particular without the use of anesthesia, leading to squealing, writhing, yelping, moaning, and facial contortion (Singer, 1975). This pain and suffering inflicted on animals is against the principle of utility that advocates for the greatest good for the greatest number. There is no moral consideration of concern and interests given to sentient beings. Besides, sentient beings like Dogs are subjected to experiments which are cruel and unethical in most laboratories when their furs are clean for chemicals to be applied on their skins just to obtain a new Shampoo, Perfumes, Floor polish, and many other cosmetic products. Do we not already have enough of these cosmetic products on our markets? (Singer, 1975). Why do humans continue to destroy nature with this arrogance?

Humanity has fail to accept and recognize the fact that humans have a responsibility as beings at the apex of biological existence and with responsibility granted to them by God to care for nonhuman animals and other creatures in nature. Animals have rights to feeding, housing, medical care, and care same as the one we give to our fellow humans. Humans keep animals as pets (animals which are living in captivity caught from the wild) but still violate their rights. Some of the animals humans keep as pets include Dogs, Cats, Falcons, Canaries, Raccoons, Toucans, Quail, Pigeons, Snakes, Tortoise, Snails, Centipedes and Monkeys. Some of these animals play the role of companions and helpers to human beings. Humans are expected to feed, bathe, clothe, provides shelter, and medical care to animals in case we intend to keep them as our pets-companion animals, working animals, and show animals (McLeod, 2015). Though this attitude of keeping animals as pets is very common in the Western world than in Africa, it does not mean that some people in Africa do not keep pets. The only issue is that the legislation protecting these animals is flawed in Cameroon and may be the same situation obtains in other African countries and the world as a whole (Boss 2009; Singer 1975). Keeping wild animals as pets requires a great deal of research, preparation, provision of ideal housing and diet, as well as medical care. We should note that every day or week animals kept as pets ought to be bathe as we equally do to humans. They should be as well taken to the veterinarians regularly for checkup and administration of relevant vaccines. It should be noted that animals such as Dogs, Cats, and Lions can be kept as pets but if we fail to care for them the

repercussion is that, it can be dangerous to us and the society as a whole. Some Environmental Movements in the world strongly opposes keeping wild animals as pets. Their principle applies to both native and non-native species, whether caught in the wild or bred in captivity. Astonishingly, the overwhelming majority of people who obtain these animals are unable to provide the care they require (The Humane Society of the United States, 2009). Lions for example need to be given enough meat since they are naturally carnivores. Failure to do this can be dangerous to us because we can become their food as well as any other members of the human community. Dogs are a problem to humans when we fail to provide them food and adequate medical care. When a stray Dog happens to bite a human being and transmit a virus that causes the disease called rabies, the life of humanity is in total jeopardy (Levine, 2004). This is because rabies is a deadly disease that needs immediate and appropriate medical attention as soon as any case of a Dog bite is reported. When this is not done as soon as the incident of bite takes place, the human being can perish within three to four days.

The expression of dominion to humans, nonhuman, and plants has ushered a lot of challenging problems to humanity today. When mankind cut down trees and clears the forests for residential, infrastructure, and commercial purposes, the immediate consequences are destruction of many habitats. The relationship of interdependence that humans, animals, and plant species are supposed to experience in nature is perturbed. Let us consider first the transformation of natural systems by mankind today and its associated effects. When trees are flourishing well they play an important role by intercepting water droplets during precipitation. The tree trunks and branches facilitate infiltration of water into the water table. The overflow of this excess water gives rise to the streams and rivers available to humanity. But, when we instead cut down these trees, we destroy ecosystems and ecosystems services and functions like the provision of water which is very useful to man, animals, and plants. This is vice and not virtue in that, flooding is quick to occur because the trees are absent to intercept water and that our Dams which generate power can start failing to fulfill the function for which it was designed to perform. Two reasons stand out clearly to explain this poor functioning of the Dams. A lot of soil particles carried along by running water after rainfall may be deposited in the Dams which may in turn change the purpose for which it was made. (Singer, 1993). The worst case is when our rivers start drying off. This really implies that humans have cut down several watershed trees and the vegetation cover, thereby jeopardizing nonhumans, humans, and other species in nature. There is no reverence for life in general which sounds unethical as animal and plant species disappear in the wild. We only become ethical when we show sincere respect to sacred places, mountains, rivers, plants, animals, and humans. Mahamat Gandhi was right when he argued that the moral integrity and progress of a country is measured by the way citizens respect nonhumans and nature (Gandi, [www.worldanimal.net/documents/4\\_religion](http://www.worldanimal.net/documents/4_religion)). This implies that it is moral to coexist by respecting our fellow human beings so as to develop the same thought patterns which can be extended to nonhumans and the rest of nature. The moment this mindset is not well developed in individual human beings, there is likelihood that, animals and nature in general may not be respected. The relationship of

interdependence between nonhumans, plants, water, soil and land is poignant since ecological balance is appropriate for the peaceful coexistence of beings in nature (Tangwa, 2004). Mankind remains a member of the community of interdependent beings rather than conqueror of it which is rooted in Judae-christianity that regard humans as sacrosanct. The community of interdependent beings is an evolutionary possibility and an ecological necessity (Aldo, 1947). The natural law of becoming corroborates this given that man and the universe are engaged in an irreversible process of change (Amougou, 2010). It is impossible to completely stop this natural dynamism. But, how do Africans perceive biological diversity in nature?

### 3. The Moral Conception of Nature: An African Perspective

Africans of the Pre-colonial era lived in harmony with nature. This implies that, Pre-colonial Africa practiced environmental conservation before the advent of European colonization and imperialism. On the contrary the later on his arrival on the African soil introduced values and ideas which were foreign that has created disorder in the African universe. This acceptance and recognition of peaceful coexistence of interdependence between humans and the earth is described as eco-bio-communitarian that is, harmony between creatures in nature (Tangwa, 2004). Tangwa expresses this view when he notes that, the difference between beings in the spiritual, material, profane, metaphysical, and mystical is slim (Tangwa, Ibid.) Africans actually uphold the attitude of *live and let live* in their approach to nature. In other words, African Philosophy about nature conservation is based on taboos and totems and has portrayed the view that spirituality in conservation matters is essential. Contemporary Africans are expected to assess their conservation philosophy since the advent of colonization to underline where the problem lies precisely as they embrace foreign values like Christianity and Islam. Western values are not to be understood as superior and African values considered obnoxious as in the imagination of some western scholars. Africans should select the good aspects in western values and consume them with circumspection (Omogrebe, 1989). These values should not be misunderstood as the ideal, as is always the case, coming to replace indigenous ones.

Many plant and animal species in the African universe are considered as taboos and totems. This means that, the natives of each ethnic group, do have an inseparable link with some plant and animal species leading to their conservation and protection. This attitude ensures the implementation of bio-justice because when humans revered Snakes, Elephants, Lions, and Cattle, mountains, waterfalls, rivers, valleys, sacred forest, and particular trees they end up protecting these species thereby establishing a peaceful coexistence in nature. In Kenya for example the **Herero** regard all cattle as sacred and as having originated from their 'tree of life' (Mbiti, 1979). We have also observed that the Hindu do not eat beef from cattle. They take good care of all animals based on their cosmology. The *karma* of the Hindu requires the avoidance of harm to one another and nature as much as possible. This approach to nature of considering animals as totems and taboo species by African tribes is morally sound and helpful in enhancing conservation. This can really check wildlife traffickers as they must encounter difficulties in harvesting

indiscriminately and illegally these animals. The disposition toward the attitude of *live and let live* is based on the belief that humans in some circumstances can transform into animals, plants, forces, and wind; is prevalent within the African world and has significant implications for the way nature is approached (Tangwa, 2004). Children in this community are groomed with these virtues to understand that these totems should be revered, protected, and forbidden to kill. Traditional authorities in Africa also enhance conservation by prohibiting some species from being harvested completely. Some of these taboo species are forbidden from being hunted by custom and tradition, when it is done accidentally, the culprit or violator must be cleanse else the entire tribe or village will suffer negative effects (Tangwa, 1996). Usually the violator is expected to report any such incident so that, some rituals are performed to safe the individual and the entire clan. For instance in Bali Nyonga of the North West Region in Cameroon, my place of abort, Horses are not killed and eaten because it is belief that it was very useful during the period of migration to their present settlement, whereby Horses facilitated movements. Horses are still considered as companions and helpers among indigenes of my community today. The Royal stool as well is usually placed on the skin of a Lion to signify that the paramount Fon of Bali Nyonga is a Lion. This is with the assumption that, the Lion is the king of the forest. Due to these totems regarding fauna and flora species, some of them are safeguarded. A Lion for instance, is an endangered species which is totally protected by the Ministry of Forestry and wildlife in Cameroon.

The attitude of considering some places as forbidden to visit or taboo areas has been helpful in African cosmology. Most clans have revered places such as sacred forest which is forbidden from all indigenes and foreigners from daring into it, no matter the motive for doing so. A part from these sacred places we have valleys, grooves, waterfalls, mountains, and particular trees such as the fig tree, where sacrifices are offered to the gods. These places are totally revered within the African world which usually harbors a large number of fauna and flora which helps in the preservation of endangered species that are getting extinct in an alarming rate (Chukwuonyelum, 2013). The conservation drive is further enhanced by diviners, priests, spiritualists, herbalists, and medicine men in Africa (Ouma, 2012). This is done when they carved out their own specific places in the wilderness and prohibit indigenes from exploiting any resources from there. This actually go a long way to preserve plant and animal species that could easily be lost due to over exploitation of animal and plant species thereby reducing the rapid extinction of species in nature. What is wrong with the attitude of *live and let live* today? Africans have tended to exploit from nature more than what is necessary for their use. By so doing, they shatter the relationship of peaceful coexistence between creatures in the African system.

### 4. African Development and Ecological imbalance

For centuries now, Western culture has been dominating the other cultures of the world. This dominion originates from the period of colonization and industrial revolution that saw the West exploiting resources in Africa, India, and Asia. It is as a result of this that they came in touch with other cultures and are still determined to subdue and dominate them. Though they introduce important changes like formal

education and infrastructural development, which has been helpful to the Africans. The problem with some infrastructures like roads is that most of them were instead meant to facilitate the evacuation of raw materials for their European industries. To this regard, Ojomo argues that, “with respect to land for instance, the drive to “develop” has led to increased deforestation, with its incalculable effects such as turbidity, erosion, flooding and desertification” (Ojomo, 2010). Africans have always failed in undertaking serious feasibility studies and environmental impact assessment before realizing their projects. These projects have led to the massive clearing of the vegetation leading to the loss of numerous animal and plant species. A majority of African population still lives in the rural areas and are relatively poor compared to those dwelling in urban areas. Due to this situation, the rural poor that solely depend on the forests for their lives and livelihood are bound to take more than what they need from nature. This has contributed enormously to the destruction of the environment. These communities easily connive with the illegal exploiters of natural resources like, Non Timber Forest Products, and endangered animal and plant species that have been prohibited from exploitation. They perpetrate this act due to ignorance given that the long term effect is grave but their focus is on their immediate interests. More so, they do not have the necessary skills to transform their abundant raw materials to satisfy their varied needs. The net advantages they benefit from the exploitation of their resources is so trivial because it is the legal and illegal exploiters that actually determines the prizes of their raw materials. This domineering attitude is rooted in science and technology where western culture is the acknowledged master at whose feet the African culture sit as pupils and apprentices (Tangwa, 2010). Unfortunately Africans do not determine the prizes of finished goods imported to their markets produced using raw materials from Africa.

Furthermore, the issues become so complex when African educated elites instead conspire with the occidentals to card away our natural resources and especially the non-renewable ones. Evidently, the number of Timber that is illegally felled daily is on the rise. Unfortunately this is not followed by a commensurate number of trees planted. This has actually created an imbalance in the African ecosystems and forests leading to the obvious challenging problem of climate change. So many species are losing their habitats as a result of this repeated violation of the utilitarian principle. It is a vice that deforestation is not accompanied by afforestation thereby exposing the limited arable land to all types of erosion. The situation is precarious when these unethical behaviors caused by humanity affects the rest of creatures in nature. That is, ecosystem services and functions are distorted resulting in the extinction of some vital species. Some of these endangered species which are totally protected are still being harvested indiscriminately or with aberration by Africans from the wilderness. Due to this biocentric inequality Naess contends that, “all things in the biosphere have an equal right to live and blossom and to reach their own individual forms of unfolding and self-realization within the larger self-realization” (Naess, 1989). In this view, humans have to realize that whenever they do harm to the rest of nature, they are doing something detrimental to themselves. This is because there are no boundaries in nature, everything is interrelated systematically. It is proper to perceive things as individual

entities that need to be protected by virtue that interdependent relationships exist between beings in nature. In this way, humanity may respect human and nonhuman individuals in their own right as part of the whole without feeling the need to set up hierarchies of species with humans at the top.

### 5. Development in Africa: Towards an Indigenous Perspectives

Since most countries in the African continent experienced colonization, the obvious reaction is that when faced with problems affecting their environment and nature as a whole they tend to look for Western solutions. But people like any other animal, need to use nature in order to survive. The issue is that resources are not used prudently. We use the soil for growing our crops, trees for lumber for building our homes, and earth as a source of mineral and energy. The outlook of the African world is full of diversities which is different from the Western realities and Philosophies. Thus, Tangwa argues that “it is, however, no secret that Africans, in spite of remarkable diversities, do have a common outlook on life, a common world-view and similar philosophies and practices comparable to the Western world-view, outlook, philosophies, and practices” (Tangwa, 2010). To tackle these problems, Africans need to view it from an indigenous perspective. In order to reduce the rate at which humans, nonhuman animals, plants, and water are disappearing in the face of the globe, Africans have to engage in effective African spirituality. More so, Africans have to revalue their culture especially by virtue that conservation of biodiversity in Africa essentially rests on spirituality. Also, Africans need to urgently establish the relationships their ancestors had with nature by respecting certain species as taboo species forbidden to be killed by humans. The relationship based on totems implies that each man or a clan has it specific fauna or floral species that are strictly protected. By so doing a lot of plant and nonhuman animals will be safeguarded in the wilderness. Some of the totally protected endangered wildlife species like Elephants, Lions, Gorillas, Chimpanzees, and Rhinoceros are nonhuman animals that most tribes consider as taboo species not to be hunted by anybody. A part from nonhumans, Africa is rich in water falls, mountains, sacred forests, streams, trees, valleys, and grooves that are revered strictly by indigenes. It is very obvious that each tribe in the Africa must possess at least two or three of these places. Following the hierarchy of forces that exist in the African universe, human beings interact between the deities and ancestors as well as animals, plants, minerals and objects. This implies that in the hierarchical order, God is at the top, followed by Deities, ancestors, human beings, animals, plants, minerals, and other objects (Temples, 1969). The world view of the African cosmos is such that Human beings are expected to communicate with ancestors that are the living dead in order to restore peace in the lives of the living in case of any malaise.

Humans are responsible to establish serenity and, harmony, within the whole clan. These revered places mentioned above often times are places reserved for sacrifices, libations, prayers, rituals, and incantations. These sacrifices are mostly carried out annually for specific purposes such as fertility, good harvest, peace and harmony, and restoration of health. In this manner, the traditional methods of conservation need to be revived. That is why Nkwame

Nkrumah warns that values that come to us via Christianity and Islam must be consumed prudently (Nkrumah, 1970). By this, he is not rejecting these foreign values but warning Africans to select positive aspects and indigenize them within their community. But, it is sadly observed that the proselytizing impacts of Judea-Christian religion and Islam have propelled Africans to abandon and ignore most of their values.. As such, Africans need to make introspection so as to device ways to curb extinction of species in nature. They have to continue to practice traditional methods of preservation.

The mindset of Africans can only change in as much as they make an effort to modify their school curriculum. From every indication, that is not what obtains in most African countries. The school programmes of most African countries does not reflect indigenous realities. They are programmes copied from the occidental world that does not seek to address the interests and aspirations of the indigenous Africans. This indigenous perspective to development need to be mainstreamed into the school curriculum; not the dominant western content as it is the case now in Africa. Environmental Education in African schools and colleges would enhance eco-justice because African students/children, will come to realize that there is need to be a peaceful coexistence between man and nature; since both depend on each other This modification is already implemented in other African countries like Kenya and Nigeria which are already showing results (Anja, 2001). It is ethically founded that the minds of young children are capable of assimilating moral codes concerning the environment and society quickly than adults. If they are exposed to these values early, there is a likelihood that they will grow without forgetting it and the peaceful coexistence that is supposed to prevail between interdependent beings will be enhanced.

In this connection it leads to sustainable development that requires a synergy of actions because the individual, households, governments, civil societies, competent Non-Governmental Organizations, Community Based Organizations (CBOs) and Common Initiative Groups (CIGs) are responsible for ensuring eco-justice As such, these problems equally need concerted ideas so as to stem the tide of this malaise. The adult population that is already showing limited care to the environment need to be sensitized and re-educated on the impact of their activities on the environment and future generation. With effective sensitization implemented in African countries, the cruelty and tyranny that mankind manifests to humans, nonhuman animals, and the rest of nature will reduce tremendously (McCloskey, 1979).

## 6. Conclusion

This paper set out to establish the peaceful existence and interdependence between man and nature in Africa. From an eco-critical perspective .The paper defended the view that humans, who is the apex of biological existence has a responsibility to peaceful coexistence with other creatures in nature. From the analysis above, one will realize that the human nature peaceful coexistence is of categorical imperative; because he who takes care of the well being of nature, takes care of his well being and the opposite is true for he who destroys nature. This explains why the

contemporary world is talking about global warming and climate change. In the community of interdependent beings, it is evolutionarily possible and ecologically necessary that humans, nonhumans, plants, water, land, earth, and the rest of creatures in nature peacefully cohabit with each other. Each species in nature, that is, biotic components (living plant and animal species in nature) and a biotic component (nonliving beings in nature) play a teleological function in the process of survival of species in all ecological niches in nature. As such, It is imperative to question this hitherto belief by virtue that humanity interacts with other species so as to effectively survive in nature. There is no denying that the first relationships were established in Ethics between individuals in the society. Later accretions saw additional elements such as nonhuman animals, earth, land, soil, and water into the relationship; thereby adding the responsibilities of humankind to care for multiple creatures and beings in nature. This requires that the land ethic simply enlarges the boundary of the community to include soils, waters, plants and animals or collectively: the land (Aldo, 1977). The way pre-colonial Africa approached nature is morally grounded because they evolved the attitude of **live and let live**. This means that, within the African traditional outlook humans do not only respect their kind but are also more cautious in their attitude to plants, animals, and inanimate things. This implies that, pre-colonial Africa accepted and recognized the peaceful relationship of interdependence between humans, animals, plants, spiritual, matter, mystical, metaphysical, and the profane. Their philosophy about conservation rests essentially on spirituality wherein certain plant and animal species are considered as totems and taboo species. This actually enhances peaceful cohabitation between species by virtue of the fact that they are forbidden to be killed and destroyed. Africans revered sacred forests, mountains, waterfalls, rocks, grooves, valleys, trees, shrines, which are fundamental in guaranteeing peaceful coexistence among interdependent beings in nature.

Due to the influence of Western culture through its phenomena such as colonization and globalization African countries are in a struggle to meet up with western standards of development. They have failed to understand that the realities and context of Africa vis-a-vis the west are not the same. Africans too have contributed in the extinction of endangered plant and animal species due to poverty and ignorance. Most of those who dwell in rural areas tend to connive with traffickers in totally protected fauna and flora species because they do not have other means of livelihoods. This is further worsened by the fact that the uneducated population do not bother about the future generation when they exploit natural resources. However, in order to mitigate the consequences of this wanton aggression expressed to nonhumans and nature as a whole, Africans need to adopt an indigenous perspective to development for a responsible mastery of the environment. Such development should be based on effective African spirituality whereby, Africans are taught their values grounded on taboos and totems with respect to the environment in the nursery, primary, secondary, and universities. As such, there is need to strengthen Environmental Education in schools and acknowledge the necessity of coexistence and interdependence between mankind, animals, plants, and the ecosystem as a whole that prevailed in pre-colonial Africa.

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