

**THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN MAN AND NATURE IN LUGBARA
PROVERBS: AN ECOCRITICAL PERSPECTIVE**

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DECLARATION

I, **Pariyo Roland Jerry**, declare that this study is an original output of my personal intellectual struggle which has never been submitted to any other higher institutions of learning for any formal award. All works cited to aid this study have been formally acknowledged using the Modern Languages Association Style (MLA)

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APPROVAL

This is to certify that the work covered in this dissertation by Pariyo Roland Jerry was designed and carried out under our close supervision and is hereby dully approved for presentation to the Board of Graduate School and Senate of Kyambogo University.

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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my mother Ndeezo Grace who has never ceased to support my efforts, my late grandmother Zillah Azikia who laid a firm foundation for my hard work, siblings; Isabel, Mike, Liberty, Christine, Julius, my best friend Maliko Pamela, and all lovers of nature.

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the relationship between man and nature in Lugbara proverbs, focusing on conceptualizing and contextualizing the humanness of nature and in turn its impact on conservation of nature. Investigation of data collected revolved around; examining how nature has been personified, analyzing the harmful practices of man towards nature and exploring the relationship between man and nature in Lugbara proverbs. The qualitative method of data collection and analysis was used for an in-depth exegesis of the data collected. The theory of Ecocriticism and the Anthropocene theory which are both nature centered approaches to examining man and his environment in Literature were used. It was observed that in Lugbara proverbs, nature is personified with absolute clarity of what is human or not human about nature and the acceptable context of this humanness. The largely personified entity was fauna. These personified elements of nature function as conduits of known values or human attributes as a result of the linguistic, conceptual and contextual realization of the proverbs examined. As such, a cultural intersection emerges out of these with full force thus shaping man's approach to conservation of nature. It was further observed that man being overly concerned with his subsistence, goes to the extreme of exploiting the available provisions of nature by poaching or reaping through trapping of weaker animals and birds. In attempt to deal with intrusion into the human space by nature, man takes to harmful practices which have the potential to influence negative attitudes towards specific elements of nature which are seen to be interfering with the peace and comfort of man. Such attitude fundamentally slows down the process of nature conservation in a situation where humans do not wish to coexist with the specific elements of nature regarded as intruders. Despite the negative attitudes and practices evidenced of man towards nature, there is also evidence of a harmonious existence with nature which repudiates the Anthropocene theory that man's attitude towards nature is by and large destructive.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

This study examines the relationship between man and nature in Lugbara proverbs (an Oral Literature aspect), focusing on conceptualizing and contextualizing the humanness of nature and its impact on conservation of nature in turn. Nature has often been presented in general terms yet not all nature can be personified. Should any be personified, it is paramount to provide a clear interpretation for what is human or not human about nature and the acceptable context of this humanness.

1.2 Background to the Study

Concerns such as; land degradation, poaching, climate change and their devastating impact on the ecosystem has become a fierce ghost at national and international levels. The most overheard concerns are raised about climate change as a precursor to other environment related problems like extinction of some precious tree and animal species. According to Rosegrant et al., “the world continues to face a possibly stagnant or even declining stock of natural resources” (439) whose depletion is most significantly attributed to destructive human activities which have massively and inevitably contributed to a large portion of climate related problems. As Cramer et al. asserts, “scientists [even] know that the recent climate change is largely caused by human activities” (5). In addition, Rebecca et al., state that the “ecosystems now face unprecedented challenge” (12) resulting from human activities thus risking the provision of most services gleaned from the ecosystem. Such challenges in the environment are not new to Uganda and West Nile in particular. The region has experience floods, witnessed climate change due to destruction of rain forests and wetlands. Therefore, the

universality of these problems and the urgency to combat them makes it possible to put into perspective all probable solutions which should be provided both in the academia and by responsible stakeholders who share a common goal in conservation of the environment.

Literature is one of the formidable tools to use to raise an ecoconsciousness among the societies of different nations which have all had their lot of environmental hazards. It is not just a tool for entertainment but can be used to preserve nature. Literature enjoys the reputation as one of the subjects which has vehemently made pronouncements in rejection of man's brutality against nature. There is notable evidence in ancient literature to prove the existence of efforts made by authors, playwrights and poets to address environmental concerns man was faced with – which concerns continue to surge and resurge even in the present day. Such concerns for nature among Literature scholars became more eminent in the 19th Century Romantic Period when chief proponents of the values of the period “cultivated love and worship of nature, along with its simplicity and richness” (Bravo 2007) through a vast body of literature drawing man back to the power of imagination and nature.

Writings of authors like William Wordsworth (1770-1850), Samuel Taylor Coleridge (1772-1834), Percy Bysshe Shelley (1792-1822), John Keats (1795-1821), Lord Byron (1788-1824) and William Blake (1757-1827) became the “biting and stinging eco-prophetic witnesses” (Kate Rigby 240) of what the future held for as long as man ruthlessly dealt with nature. Romanticists brought to light the need to pay attention to nature as a powerful tool to “acquire insight into the human condition” (Sofi 81) by extolling its various dimensions such as; the magnificent features – high hills, river banks, the green meadows, sun rises and sets –, and nature as an escape from a society which is morally depraved. They decried the “gulf between nature and humanity” (Sofi

82), fervently speaking against the unhealthy civilization brought about by the brutalization of nature using machines. Victorian Age writers like Charles Dickens (1812-1870) and Thomas Hardy (1840-1928) among others, demonstrate in their novels like Hard Times and Tess of the D'Urbervilles respectively the repression and exploitation that nature experienced by the dawn of the industrial revolution. Nature was made subservient to technology. The ecological havoc accelerated by “man’s lust for progress and social mobility” (Lennertz 146) subdued nature. Evidently, these critical movements have greatly shaped literary scholarship over the years but they have also left a lot to be desired. A lot keeps unfolding for which we must continuously apply ourselves to study in order to offer relevant answers to questions that daily confront humanity.

The treasure troves handed down by the Romantic and Victorian Age writers to the subsequent Ages – in form of oral literature, poetry, prose fiction and plays – have inspired more Literary scholarship surrounding man’s relationship with nature. One of such scholarships is the Ecocritical theory of literary studies. According to Buell Lawrence, the literary theory of ecocriticism is “a study of the relationship between Literature and the environment conducted in a spirit of commitment to environmental praxis” (430). Ecocritics bring into focus the representation of nature in myriads of literary works encompassing all genres. They read texts to deliberate on the “explicit or implicit, deliberate or subliminal” (Buell 430) environmental issues presented in these works. Of recent, environmental concerns have also begun to be articulated in form of the emerging Anthropocene theory of environmental studies. This school of thought firmly pronounces that the earth has moved into “a novel (new) geological epoch characterized by human domination of the planetary system” (Malhi 78). It is an epoch the earth has entered in following the “Holocene -the last 11,000 years where life on the

planate has been entirely sustained by Agriculture” according to Sali (948). This transformation is being attributed to human activities which have seen that “biophysical conditions of the Holocene epoch have been compromised” (Castree 234). More attention continues to be drawn towards destructive human actions, and the need to desist from such actions thus raising more questions. This is crucial in the fight to save nature from dangers of extinction.

In a newspaper article dated 3rd September 2020, Farida Kulabako laments the tragedy which has befallen the “precious Shea tree” species in several parts of Uganda, noting that merchants “cut and burn” (29) them for charcoal thus its alarming impact on the country’s Shea industry. The cutting of Shea trees is already an indication that other species too could be undergoing such destructions from man. If therefore trees are not being spared, it can be argued that the ground will be subjected to all forms of hazards – both natural and artificial. This therefore calls for a more urgent response to drum into the human conscience the values they have long cherished which originate from proverbs, fables, folktales et cetera. It is upon this background that this research investigated Alfred Titus Dalfovo’s publication Lugbara proverbs (1986) – data collected over a period of twenty-five years among the Lugbara people of West Nile. I sought to understand the contribution Lugbara proverbs make towards conservation of nature with a special interest in conceptualizing and contextualizing the humanness of nature to arrive at a possibly new perspective on conservation of nature.

The Lugbara are classified as the “Moru-Madi” (Shiroya 125) subgroup of the Eastern Sudanic group, flanked by the Madi to the east, Kaliko and Logo to the west. They are settled on open rolling plains between 1220 and 1520 meters above sea level (Shiroya 1). Besides small recognizable hills are; two massifs Eti (Mt. Wati) and Liru found in the Terego district. These two massifs have a significant historical place in the

cultural formation of the Lugbara people because their hero-ancestors are believed to have settled and died on these two massifs (Shiroya 4). The land is also covered with “a network of permanent [and] seasonal streams and rivers, flowing into the tributaries of the Nile” (Middleton 2). It experiences a well distributed rainfall. Lugbara population largely relies on subsistence cultivation of crops like millet, sorghum, legumes, and sweet potatoes among others. Cattle keeping, rearing of goats, sheep and fowl are also part of their economic activities. According to oral history, until the arrival of the Arabs via Sudan, the Lugbara community is not known for external economic activities such as trade since the household held subsistence farming as substantial enough to meet the everyday demands of the common man but communities engaged in barter-trade which kept their social and cultural fabric strong.

Despite political independence of each subdivision of the Lugbara, a common language was a necessary ingredient in moving towards cultural unification. Middleton observes that by 1950 the Lugbara had sixty clans which could be traced genealogically to “the hero-ancestors Jaki and Banale” (23). However, it is evident now that several clans have since developed and their number as of now has not been recorded for purpose of academic or information consumption. These clans too have social norms and practices which developed from their vast experiences and wisdoms collected as they kept expanding. Overtime, these experiences and wisdoms became practical solutions to socio-environmental problems guided by “customs, values, morals and beliefs of the people” (Agatha 2). It is apparent from the Lugbara cultural wisdom that their land had several tree and plant species which eventually got destroyed as the people tried to expand.

From time immemorial, the Lugbara land has been confronted with huge challenges of extinction of precious surviving natural resources like Shea butter trees,

birds like the guinea-fowl and the francolin among others. The region looks back with sorrow at their rich history in which the white rhinos and pythons were a part of the community but got extinct due to poaching of the wild for food or commercial purpose. Such devastating challenge requires rigorous efforts from all corners to address it. If no action is taken at all fronts, then we risk losing the remaining flora, fauna and a thorough destruction of the lovely topography. I capitalized on this backdrop of information about Lugbara people in order to put into perspective what the proverbs say about nature to help readers appreciate their value ecocritically.

1.3 Statement of the problem

Amidst the growing concern for ecocritical studies in Literature, it is notable that this emerging literary theory has not taken off in our literary arena as a nation yet the earnestness to respond to environmental issues is not abated any second. This could be attributed to the laxity by researchers to prey on several literatures about nature. Oral literature is one of the underexploited genres of literature for nature related answers. This dearth in ecocritical studies in oral literature in Uganda could also be attributed to the misconception that too much scholarly work has been done in the field of oral literature of the peoples of Uganda. It is indisputable that there are numerous research papers across the globe and Uganda in particular, addressing thematic and aesthetic concerns dominant in proverbs of different tribes and cultures. However, there is acute shortage of evidence to prove existing efforts already made ecocritically to appreciate particular oral literature subgenres like short fixed forms and narratives in Uganda.

As one of the most vulnerable countries to environmental challenges, it is viable to vest energies in unearthing ecocentric proverbs of the different languages in Uganda to cultivate an ecoconsciousness among the people in a bid to foster environment conservation. Lugbarati, spoken by the Lugbara people of the north western region of

Uganda, is one of such languages rich in nature proverbs. It is a dialectically endowed language which requires an intensive scholarly ecocritical investigation. There is evidence of scarcity of research related to the contribution of Lugbara proverbs towards conservation of the environment. This research draws on the theory of Ecocriticism and the Anthropocene theory to examine the idea of man and conservation of nature in Lugbara proverbs with a special interest in conceptualizing and contextualizing of humanness of nature in ecocentric writings and how this in turn influences nature conservation.

1.4 Theoretical Framework

This study employs the theory of Ecocriticism and the Anthropocene theory for interpretation of the data collected. Conceptualizing and contextualizing the humanness of nature is primarily premised on interconnections and interdependence of three key ideas. These ideas are; (a) human-nature coexistence, (b) harmful practices of man towards nature, and (c) culture. This interaction among the three ideas is situated upon the aforementioned two theoretical frameworks which have guided ecocritical studies over the past decades. Both theories; Ecocriticism and the Anthropocene, deal with understanding man and the environment, arguing for a harmonious coexistence between man and nature with primacy given to nature as that which should be predominantly advocated for while treating humanity as a destroyer of nature.

1.4.1 The Theory of Ecocriticism

Popularized by the Western Literature Association (WLA) in the 1970s, Ecocriticism is a trending post-modern revisionist school of thought which gained attention of many American and British researchers in the 1980s and 1990s respectively. Research reveals that the American Ecocritical studies were inspired by the works of 19th Century writers like Ralph Waldo Emerson (1809-1882), Margaret Fuller (1810-

1850), and Hary David Thoreau (1817-1856) while the British Ecocritical scholars are believed to be inspired by the 1970s Romanticism movement which sees Jonathan Bates as the founding figure of British ecocritical studies with his classic paper, Romantic Ecology: Wordsworth and the Environmental Tradition (Routledge 1991). Raymond Williams in 1973 published The Country and the City, an ecological study in which he looks at the environmental images which serve as symbols of social and economic changes in the society. Later in 1974, Joseph Meeker published The Comedy of Survival: Literary Ecology and Play Ethics, in which he argues that environmental crisis results from separation of culture from nature and elevation of culture as superior, with absolute moral predominance. In 1996 William Ruckert published the Ecocritical masterpiece Literature and Ecology: An Experiment in Ecocriticism and became the first to use the term Ecocriticism. Subsequent publications saw works by Cherryl Glotfelty and Harold Fromm (1996), and Lawrence Buell (1996) who defined ecocriticism as a “study of the relationship between Literature and the environment conducted in a spirit of commitment to environmentalist praxis” (430)”.

Cherryll Glotfelty (1996) in Slovic (2015) observes that ecocriticism is “the study of the relationship between literature and the physical world” (xviii). Ecocriticism takes an earth-centered approach while dealing with the existing relationship between man and his environment in Literature. Eco-critics look at issues such as; *(i) nature as consisting of human and nonhuman organisms, (ii) bio-centric view over anthropocentric view, (iii) culture as associated with geography and landscape, (iv) environmental justice and sustainable development* where nature is not a subordinate but a co-inhabitant. These thematic features form the core of any ecocritical discourse. As such, they are of high interest to this research. Ecocriticism takes into consideration the fact that neither humans nor nonhumans exist entirely on their own thus forming the prominent

components of nature. Therefore, in appreciating a literary material from an ecocritical perspective, one has to take heed to analyzing this coexistence in order to arrive at logical conclusions about man and nature relationship.

From time immemorial, humans have largely been known for furthering their own interests in protecting nature. Even the agenda of conservation of nature has never been in the interest of conserving nature per se but with humanity at the back of the mind. Ecocriticism therefore advocates for a paradigm shift in perspective such that nature is genuinely valued by humanity. For this cause, while analyzing a literary text, one must contest for the cause of nature above that of humans. Eco-critics offer a renouncement of anthropocentric views by the revaluation of the natural environment. Injustice is not only meted against humans alone. Nature is undeniably a victim of unjust human encroachment. In scenario of injustice where one entity often suffers, development is hampered. In this case, for humanity to reap the benefits of nature while furthering development there ought to be fairness towards nature. This is one of the key thematic strands of ecocritics.

The Eco-critic therefore aims at shifting “the critical attention” of the Eco-critic reader from “the inside to the outside” (Mishra 167) with a view to protecting nature. It is safe to say from an ecocritical perspective that environmental crisis results from separation of culture from nature. Disregard of nature has dire consequences on humanity. It is regarded, not only by Eco-critics but by all lovers of the environment, that the present nature related challenges (climate changes inclusive) confronting humanity are a lump sum payment from nature in retaliation to man’s negligence of or ‘inhumanity to’ nature. Ryan points out that ecocriticism has “privileged local engagement with the natural world as a literary-activist mode” (163) voicing local and emplaced interaction with nature as a corrective to pervasive ecological degradation and

human estrangement from more-than-human worlds. Such views raise moral questions about man's attitude towards nature. Gomides agrees more when he asserts that ecocriticism "analyses and promotes works of art which raise moral questions about human interactions with nature, while motivating audiences to live within a limit that will be binding over generations." (16) This places emphasis on the primacy that should be given to Oral literature as a pivotal to promoting sustainable development.

1.4.2 The Anthropocene Theory

The Anthropocene theory is significant in understanding the magnitude of not only an epoch humanity has entered into but also the urgency with which we must respond to environmental challenges which have manifested as a result of this entrance. It gained popularity in the mid-twenty first century, through the advocacy of Paul Crutzen and Eugene Stoemer (2000) and has become a terminology of interest among Literary Scholars. Anthropocene refers to the concept that earth has moved into "a novel geological epoch characterized by human domination of the planetary system." (Malhi 78) This evidently confirms that humans have been a focal force for biophysical changes globally, thus producing the aforementioned condition – the Anthropocene. According to Sali, Anthropocene replaces "the Holocene period -the last 11,000 years where life on the planet has been entirely sustained by Agriculture" (948) ushering in a crisis in which the spread of increasing human activity and multifaceted nature of human influence has a significant influence on the planet. Castree emphatically states that the Anthropocene clearly depicts "the transformation earth's surface has undergone by human activities" (234) thus affirming that man's ingenuity and innovation capacity is responsible for the "current unsustainable trajectory" (Olsson 30).

It is apparent from the afore-cited critics that Anthropocene is an invite into not only investigating man's brutality to nature but also acknowledging our guilt (as

humans) in fostering environmental degradation. Acceptance of our contribution is not enough in the face of aggravating environmental challenges. We need to engage in scholarly investigations to understand from different entities the angles from which these exploitations come and how we can combat them. Savi Mela points this discourse on the right course by arguing that Anthropocene demands us to make literary studies a possible field for theoretical articulations that may add to the debates on “climate change, forced dislocation”, and “the mass extinction of several species” (945). Critics like Garrard Grey advocate for a “reflexive Anthropocene” (150) perspective to get humanity out of this undesirable condition. The concept of Anthropocene therefore helps to unearth proverbs in which there is an indication of invasion of nature and a violation of the rule of coexistence between man and other entities of nature. This has a strong relationship with the damages we see unfolding daily in the names of deforestation, bush burning, charcoal burning, which – among many – are prominent methods by which nature has suffered greatly.

Human culture cannot be alienated from the physical environment. With or without permission from nature, man has always drawn instructions and lessons from nature to live wisely. This is what is reflected in most literature, Lugbara proverbs inclusive, hence its relevance to this research. Stella Okoye-Ugwo asserts that “...all ecological criticism shares the fundamental premise that human culture is connected to the physical world, affecting it and affected by it.” (154) Stella’s definition highlights the unique relationship that man is presumed to share with nature. Yet this very culture poses a threat to nature as observed by Simon Estok in Slovic Scott (2015). Simon remarks that, “many of our cultures have...developed an adversely attitude towards nature” (60) the result of which is senseless exploitation and domination of nature with a view to propel human progress. If human culture has largely been curved out from the physical

environment, this then gives more reason for this research to contribute to the body of knowledge already redeeming this truth. The theory of Ecocriticism and the Anthropocene are therefore two theoretical frameworks which have been meticulously used to give a proper basis on which my research has been anchored.

1.5 General objective of the study

The main objective of this study was to analyze the conceptualization and contextualization of the humanness of nature in Lugbara proverbs and its impact on conservation of nature.

1.5.1 Specific objectives

The specific objectives are;

1. To examine how nature has been personified in Lugbara proverbs.
2. To analyze the harmful practices of man towards nature.
3. To explore the relationship between man and nature in Lugbara proverbs.

1.5.2 Research questions

This research was guided by the following questions;

1. How has nature been personified in Lugbara proverbs?
2. What are the harmful practices of man towards nature in Lugbara proverbs?
3. What is the relationship between man and nature in Lugbara proverbs?

1.6 Scope of study

This research was limited to an ecocritical study of assorted proverbs with elements of nature mentioned in them from Alfred Titus Dalfovo's 1986 book; Lugbara Proverbs, an outstanding, well researched compilation of Lugbara proverbs gathered from the different geographical boundaries of the then Arua and Yumbe districts. The

Lugbara occupy the greater part of West Nile region. They are flanked by the Madi to the east, Kaliko and Logo to the west. Kaliko and Logo are tribes located in the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of Congo but do have a Lugbara dialect spoken in their land. The Kakwa and Alur occupy the North and Southern borders of the land respectively. The land now consists of five districts which were geographically unified as Arua district. Arua district gave birth to Ma'di Okollo, Terego, Maracha and Yumbe districts in which Lugbarati is spoken in its various dialects. This variation in dialect is evident in Dalfovo's book where the rendering of several proverbs are synonymous with the different dialects spoken in each district. Dalfovo in his own words affirms that this collection of proverbs took "twenty-five years to compile" (5). He adds that, "the long time dedicated to this research...allowed, among the rest, repeated checking and counterchecking of these proverbs" (5) in order to minimize the possibility of having recorded proverbs which are "mere sayings of one or a few people lacking the popular and traditional acceptance (which is proper) of proverbs." (5). Such clarity of intention and the considerable amount of time dedicated to compiling this work by the author possibly allowed for such a wide scope of coverage. A large portion of the proverbs recorded in this book either have a segment with mention of one of the elements of nature or the whole proverb has two elements of nature as subject and object in the syntax of the rendered proverb. This research concerned itself with only proverbs which make mention of flora, fauna and topography. These have been categorized as nature proverbs for easy comprehension. The proverbs are first stated in their original language which appear in bold and their English translations appear in italics enclosed in brackets for easy identification.

1.7 Significance of the study

The unprecedented challenges posed to our environment keep increasing in severity hence the need to make available simple and understandable explanations to the public about the magnitude of the problem. Extinction and reduction in fauna and flora are becoming rampant every single day due to hostility from man. Our topography keeps facing immense challenges from degraders. Such is the scenario we are entangled in which necessitated this research. As a contrivance, this research will contribute to building an ecocentric consciousness among users of not only Lugbara proverbs but also that of other languages as well. It further provides answers to questions about the concept of nature's humanness such as; what attributes of humans is assigned to nature in these proverbs? What is the implication of this to the idea of nature conservation? How does man interact with nature in Lugbara proverbs? Does this interaction provide clues to when to call nature human and when not to? Is it possible to leverage on man's relationship with nature in Lugbara proverbs and use it to promote conservation of the environment? What happens when man understands his position as far as his relationship with nature is concerned? This research further provides an ecocritical perspective from which Lugbara proverbs can be appreciated by scholars of oral literature of the Lugbara people. It has the potential as a relevant tool in the hands of concerned stakeholders, government and opinion leaders in tackling environmental concerns.

1.8 Definition of Key Terms

Anthropocene – a theory which blames man entirely for the destruction of nature.

Theoretical framework – theories adopted to interpret the data

Contingent measure – a backup plan for any eventualities.

Ecocriticism – refers to the concept that earth has moved into “a novel geological epoch characterized by human domination of the planetary system.”

Humanness – nature as human.

Topography – used to refer to sceneries like valleys, hills, mountains, flatlands, planes, the wilderness.

1.9 Literature Review

The following review puts into perspective the contributions of different scholars regarding man’s interaction with nature with a view to citing the gap in each relevant article in conceptualization and contextualization of the humanness of nature in ecocritical readings. It is sectioned into three parts; antagonism in man-nature relationship, Nature Imageries, and Nature Personification. I consider these as prominent emerging thematic strands, relevant to my study.

1.9.1 Man-nature Relationship

Myriads of write-ups present man and nature in a never-ending animosity. It is either man depicted as the victim or nature. Mishra (2016) depicts this in her attempt to demolish the ego-consciousness of man using an ecoconscious exploration of issues envisaged in largely Indian literature. Mishra argues that several Indian literatures epitomize the destruction of nature further affirming that the present ecological crisis is “a bi-product of this human culture” (09). This culture evolves from the coexistence with nature consequently leading to a *built culture* which often is a true reflection of the selfish agenda of man to see that the environment is destroyed as long as he is thriving. While Mishra focuses on Indian literature, my study will look at Ugandan literature. In particular, the oral literature of the Lugbara people because the Lugbara have a special relationship with nature depicted in their proverbs. Admittedly, human culture is

fashioned by the natural world or the natural world is impacted by it – a view held by Stella Okoye Ugwu (2013). Stella observes that all human culture has a connection to the physical world. Man finds himself the domineering entity in this man-nature relationship.

Despite these rich views, both critics consistently demonstrate their failure to address how literature conceptualizes the humanness of nature and the particular cultural contexts in which we can find nature addressed as human. My study capitalizes on this gap to investigate the concept of humanness of nature and contexts in which nature is regarded human especially in Lugbara proverbs. Building cultures is premised on our understanding of how good a system works for people in particular contexts. This usually helps to curve out a culture which will be admired without inflicting damage on nature as man furthers his ecoconscious agenda. Besides, failure to identify with specificity what makes nature human and whether the humanness seen in nature is universal makes possible for a remorseless dealing with nature. When there is a struggle to appreciate when, where, or whether to call nature human, generalization of the elements of nature will make it difficult to ascertain the ideal conservation methods required when dealing with nature. Lugbara proverbs articulate with clarity the place of nature among the Lugbara indigenous people. It forms a central part in the lives of the Lugbara as reflected in the numerous nature proverbs selected for this study. What remains to be investigated is how these impact on the idea of preservation of the bionetwork or conservation of nature.

Declaring parts of nature as merely ‘the environment’ varies from one geographical location to another and as such it is very important to establish the same in Lugbara proverbs. Nature having a soul would mean the need to validate nature’s biology and consequently its linguistic ability which happen to be aspects I seek for in my research. Sahu Geeta (2014) extends this debate with the view that man’s

relationship with nature is interrelated as well as interdependent. In this interrelatedness, Sahu argues that the predatory behaviour of animals and nature's conflict with man are a reflection of the human mind. Vipin K. Sharma (2017) agrees with this view by identifying nature as a storehouse for man to find solace. Vipin notes that a man is never lonely when he gains consciousness of his non-human relationship. Comparatively, these two critics agree that there is an existing man-nature relationship where nature is a reflection of human attitudes. This relationship thrives well on man gaining understanding of his natural environment as dependable. Notably, Sahu and Vipin eschew treating the concept of the humanness of nature as a reality which should be looked at closely for the sake of what nature is. Both do not provide an answer to the question of whether nature is endowed with the same attributes as man is and how this in turn impact man-nature relationship to aid conservation. My study seeks to ably address this.

Contrastingly, Emmanuel and Bridget (2015) project the African environment as perpetrating actions against humanity because humans are part of the natural existence. This is a thorough deviation in view from the former critics. Accordingly, to Emmanuel and Bridget, nature is an agent of conspiracy in the destruction and frustration of mankind. Humanity strives to survive the threats and caprices of nature thus they invite us to consider nature as evil, cruel and heartless. Emmanuel and Bridget present a very contentious issue from a colonial perspective. It is anger vested in nature as an aftermath of individual experiences in a foreign land. The question which remains is; what is the perception of the African who is used to his or her own land? How would he or she conceptualize and contextualize the notion of nature's 'caprices and threats' – as both call it – in light of the idea of nature being humanness? How is the understanding of the native about nature different from that of the European or Asian or any other race? It is

evident from the different perspectives presented by Sahu (2014), Vipin (2017) Emmanuel & Bridget (2015) that man and nature relationship cannot be generalized to be the same in different contexts as some would regard nature as human while others disregard the former view by simply considering it for what it is, thus affecting how man and nature relate in different contexts. Such contradictions in views raise a researcher's eyebrows. My research exploits these contradictions to understand the conceptualization and contextualization of the humanness of nature in Lugbara proverbs with a view to promoting nature conservation.

As aforementioned, the Lugbara conceive of nature as a fundamental influencer of life which is why several of their (Lugbara) proverbs have some component of nature mentioned in them. There is seemingly an existing man-nature relationship depicted in the selected Lugbara proverbs on study which once subjected to the research questions at hand, a viable solution might be provided to further the objective of nature conservation.

1.9.2 Man's Anthropocentric Attitude towards Nature

A lot of debate revolves around man's anthropocentric attitude in his interaction with nature thus shifting the attention to depictions of nature without a precise and specific conceptualization and contextualization of the humanness of nature. Various critics have made worthy contributions to prove the hostility between man and nature, and sometimes the harmony that ought to exist between both. In these contributions, the ego-consciousness of man is prized above ecoconsciousness. That is why David, Mohammadi et al. trace the historical background regarding human's relationship with nature with a goal to making man aware of the benefits of an intimate connection with nature (9). They identify industrial revolution as the enemy who has separated man from his environment or hampered positive relationship. Mohammadi et al. further argue that

this impact of industrial revolution on nature has destroyed man's source of restoration from psychological and physical injuries.

Mallika & Ratan (2016) concur with the argument presented by Mohammadi et al. According to Mallika & Ratan, Victorian age writers like Charles Dickens (1812 – 1870) and Thomas Hardy (1840 – 1928), among others, served as agents of awareness in their time to publicize the evils of industrial age in a bid to advance the cause of natural environment. Whereas the afore critics blame industrial revolution for the existing man-nature conflict, Stella Okoye-Ugwu (2013) points out from an African perspective how colonialism is responsible for the colossal damage caused between man and his natural world. She argues that Africans possess a history of forefathers whose fiber of life is embedded in the environment. The common denominator in the observations made by all the critics discussed so far is man's contribution to disorganizing a harmonious relationship which had once existed between him and nature regardless of the geospatial space and methodology. Undeniably, nature should be considered as the victim of man's anthropocentric attitude often culminating into harmful practices towards nature. Beautiful as these views are, they do not address the conceptualization and contextualization of the humanness of nature, a gap I dedicate time to investigate in my research. This would easily ascertain why nature is harmed by man and how this knowledge aids man's response to nature conservation.

They win on their side a one Gogoi Gitanjali (2014) who agrees with the views that colonialism has played a part in nature destruction. Gogoi notes that the advent of colonialism is to blame for the exploitation of nature, giving lee way for denigration of the cultural attachment of the indigenous African to nature as relayed in Chinua Achebe's Things Fall Apart (1958) and Arrow of God (1964). Indeed, these texts show that the colonial enterprise was man's greatest interference with nature. While relating

with nature with an entirely anthropocentric agenda, these proponents of the view that colonialism was a major actor in destroying man-nature relationship do not cite how much human nature is and in what context nature should be considered human when propagating an anthropocentric attitude. Should nature be considered as entirely subservient to man? Are there no incidences when nature reacts just like man would react to confrontations from without? Such are questions which needed to be answered by the critics but unfortunately are not answered. Further still, they also do not address the question of the interaction between indigenous people who have never experienced interference from the external world of colonialists and nature yet face the same malaise of environmental challenges. Their arguments leave an unexploited ground that I tread on in this research.

Lugbara nature proverbs reflect the salient characteristic life of the Lugbara people which might not have even been known to the colonialist and this is why my research exploits this fertile ground to ascertain the conceptualization and contextualization of nature in these proverbs. Another proponent of views on colonialism as a perpetrator is Joao de Mancelos (2007) who says that Harjo Joy accuses the colonizer of actions against nature which originally was in the hands of the American Indians. In the process there was a depletion of local ecosystem due to introduction of foreign species into the indigenous land. These are harmful practices towards nature which necessitate why man needs to recognize his proximity to nature and the fact that there are limitations to help him find his own way into a world where man and nature ought to live in harmony. Lunjerai Hove's article published by Njanyi Tendai (2014), explores how colonialists thrived in their agenda through destruction of nature. According to the researcher, the loss of freedom of the Africans is linked to loss of land; which land issue is a metaphor of nationalism. There is no disputing of Njanyi's

assertion since man is sustained by nature. However, it is noticeable that Njanyi does not bring into focus the special attachment the Africans have towards nature. Such special attachment motivates the kind of response that man has towards nature. This is of value to my study as it seeks to understand the conceptualization and contextualization of the humanness of nature particularly in Lugbara proverbs. Bringing this into perspective will make it relevant for one to understand the degree of attachment man has towards nature and at what level such attachment is, and whether this reveals any sort of humanness in nature for one to be able to come up with possible solutions to nature conservation.

1.9.3 Nature Imageries

Malaksha and Pourqarib (2018) delve into an investigation of John Keat's selected poems to understand the many faces of nature revealed therein. Their focus on the concept of wilderness and the sublime in these poems yields the result that nature as presented in Keats' poems is beautiful and redeeming, dangerous and limiting. Their view does not differ much from what Mallika & Ratan (2016) argue about nature. The two suggest that nature functions as a mysterious force which is sometimes for or against humans. Much as I concur with the facets of nature presented by the aforementioned critics, their analysis is hinged upon man's reaction to nature and as such we are deprived of the knowledge of the humanness of nature which should be the precursor to the aforementioned qualities of nature as beautiful, redeeming, dangerous and limiting. The researchers implicitly point out nature as possessing some sense of humanness but they do not categorically state what should be considered human in nature. My research thrives on this gap to investigate the conceptualization and contextualization of nature in Lugbara proverbs to aid conservation of nature. As shall be evidenced in subsequent discussions in other chapters, the Lugbara have a special relationship with nature that several of their proverbs contain an element of nature.

1.9.4 Nature Personified

Mancelos critiques Joy Harjo's use of the horse and personification of flowers to influence the atmosphere in her poems. The critic attributes this success to the poetess being indented towards presentation of nature as superior which has seen this castigation. Mancelos limits his research to only animal and flower species leaving out possible aspects of humanness of the topography. If flora and fauna exhibit characteristics of being human, then the contribution of topography to this degree of humanness is paramount as well.

The several arguments and counter arguments presented in consideration of the relevant literatures afore is a testation to how significant nature is to the Lugbara. The necessary opinions that I go for in these literatures are emphatic enough to uphold the research gap I seek to close in my research which is conceptualization and contextualization of the humanness of nature in Lugbara proverbs.

1.10 Methodology

1.10.1 Research Design, Data Collection and Analysis

This study is library-based research which employs the qualitative method of data analysis where raw data was thematized for easy analysis and interpretation. The primary data was collected from Alfred Titus Dalfovo's publication Lugbara proverbs (1986) – data collected over a period of twenty-five years among the Lugbara people of West Nile. Having read through it, I proceeded to identify relevant secondary sources to ascertain the viability of the topic and validity of the problem statement. These materials were obtained from credible online sources such as Research Gates, Eduacademia and University websites, libraries of Kyambogo University and Mount Saint Mary's College Namagunga, oral history and good will information obtained from some researchers who have widely researched about the Lugbara people.

Raw data obtained from the primary source was first extracted and written in a manuscript book set aside for this research. Besides the manuscript book set aside for this research, a lot of information was also written in notebooks as I compiled the data I had assembled. The assembled data was classified into three categories; flora, fauna and topography, using the qualitative data analysis method. This content was proofread, edited and corrected for analysis to arrive at the results and conclusions relayed in this dissertation. This was later transcribed into soft copy through typing and was stored in an electronic data base where specific folders were created for this research. Information was also stored on an external hard drive set aside as a contingent measure in case of any technical faults with the computer in use.

1.10.1 Primary Source

Alfred Titus Dalfovo provides a credible collection of nine hundred and four (904) Lugbara proverbs in his 1986 publication Lugbara Proverbs. Before the actual rendering of the proverbs from pages 27 to 247 of Dalfovo's book Lugbara Proverbs (1986), the author provides preliminary information such as introduction, approach, characteristics of proverbs, arrangement of these proverbs, dialectical variations, orthography, notes and references ranging from page 5 to 25. The proverbs are then arranged in alphabetical order without a deliberate effort to categorize them under themes or specific stylistic devices. Alfred Dalfovo provides each proverb in Lugbara, their literal translation and explanations regarding meaning as well as context of use. Whereas this makes it easy for any reader to identify which proverbs he or she is interested in, one can clearly see the absence of a focused discussion about man and nature in these proverbs. One other weakness is that the author does not arrange these proverbs under specific eco related themes thus leaving a fertile ground this research prays on. To reconcile some of the gaps in the text with the general objective of my

research, I had to zero in on proverbs in which a word or two talk about nature. As such, out of the nine hundred and four (904) proverbs discussed by Dalfovo (1986), two hundred thirty-six (236) of these proverbs mention either a plant, or an animal or any physical feature like land, hill and mountain among others. I therefore termed them as “nature proverbs”, further categorizing them into three elements of nature; flora, fauna and topography.

1.10.3 Organization of Thesis

My thesis is organized into five chapters, each dealing with specific objective. In Chapter one I provide background to the study as a backup to the problem statement. This information is authenticated with a review of related literature. I also elaborate on the theoretical framework and suitable research methodology used for this research. Chapter two examines how nature has been personified in Lugbara proverbs giving leeway to examine relationships, instances where there is a cultural intersection with nature, with oral proverbs as being a significant part of this cultural embodiment. In Chapter three, I focus on how nature has been perversely dealt with by humanity as embodied in the harmful activities and destructive tendencies portrayed by man towards nature in the proverbs on study. Chapter four addresses the harmonious relationship existing between man and nature in Lugbara proverbs, repudiating the Anthropocentric notion that humanity is a danger to nature due to his destructive tendencies thus illustrating how man coexists harmoniously with nature and promotes healthy development, a step further into conservation of nature. The concluding chapter is a discussion of my findings and conclusions drawn.

CHAPTER TWO

PERSONIFICATION OF NATURE

2.1 Introduction

This chapter examines personification of nature in Lugbara proverbs as an instrument that primarily opens the horizons for an understanding of the concept of humanness of nature. It focusses on the analysis of instances of use of personification in Lugbara proverbs to ascertain the cultural intersection between man and nature.

Myriads of researchers who have provided definitions of personification agree that personification involves endowment of inanimate objects with human qualities. Such scholars include Walter & Bart, who define personification as a rhetorical figure by which “something not human is given a human identity” (01). Graesser et. al. also affirms that personification occurs when “animals, objects, social organizations, and abstract notions are given qualities of people” (141). Another scholar who shares the same conviction with the preceding scholars is Hamilton who observes that we personify when we “metaphorically ascribe agency to normally inanimate objects, forming non-existent or imaginary entities into realistic actors or agents” (411). These views categorically state that nothing is considered human as long as it has not deliberately been assigned any human traits which distinguish it as human. Notably, these are views which I agree with and have adopted for use in this research. To clearly understand personification of the “abiotic and biotic” (Elaine 68) forms of nature in Lugbara proverbs, it is vital to state that the response to literary appreciation is sensory, emotional and intellectual. The reader is subjected to activities encompassing the cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains. This active form of reading produces images which represent the “implicit sense of the real” (Fadece 17). It therefore calls for consideration of the term personification in specific contexts. As Aletta G. Dorst observes,

“personification is not a single unified general process” (115). One has to take into consideration both the linguistic and conceptual realization of personification in the proverbs on study in order to make a fair exegesis for authentic results.

The proverbs in this research have been largely analyzed from a conceptual perspective; which perspective shows how “the images used in the proverbs are visualized and interpreted” (Mmadike 98) at the literal level of translation of these proverbs to suit the research objectives. The words used at the literal level of translation are themselves appropriate vehicles which convey the ideas embodied in this chapter as desired. As Umeh argues, at this level one engages in visualization of actual pictures being provided by the words in the proverbs (18). In spite of the preceding direction, there are instances of analysis where the “relevant-context situation” (Sami Ben Salamhm & Maalej 22) perspective comes into play. This is attributed to the fact that in most of the instances, contextual explanations offer understanding of what is being communicated at the literal translation levels provided. Several of the proverbs in use allude to fables in which most of the elements of nature contained in these very proverbs are characters. As such, exploration of the notion of personification of these proverbs was made very easy. This further made the cultural intersection between nature and humanity to emerge with absolute clarity.

2.2 Parts of Human Body

The primary entry into the idea of personification in Lugbara proverbs is the use of parts of human body which will often be referred to as metaphors of human body. This is so because a lot of human action and thoughts are fundamentally grounded on metaphoric conceptualization of the things in the environment surrounding man (Lusekelo & Kapufi 107). There is evidence of use of metaphors of human body as “a measure for non-human world” (Skara 184) in these proverbs. These were uncovered

from proverbs in which, present were words which directly name the parts of the body with corresponding verbs and adjectives to qualify their functioning. Knowledge of this extent of nature's humanness has a lasting impact on determining what methods or approaches to be used, or appropriate behaviour to be adopted in a bid to curtail emerging environmental concerns.

Lugbara proverbs conceptualize nature as a human body in possession of body parts such as, the mouth, legs, hands, and a stomach as body itself. These different body parts are not all found on one element of nature but on different elements forming a unified being. They are used as "a general system of symbols" (Elena 184) for the non-human world. Implicitly, they suggest that regardless of the element of nature in focus, utilization of words which would otherwise be used to only talk about humans but have now been used to refer to these creatures makes them human. When these parts are pieced together, there is a formation of a human figure. Further still, the actual rendering of the proverbs also suggests that the individual parts of nature on whom the body metaphors seen can still be individual humans themselves. Arguably, a person cannot possess a limb or any of the human physical faculty without necessarily being human. Each body part has been used in part but the overall mirroring of the humanness in the particular biodiversity on display remains to be conceived mentally. This can shape man's desire towards a positive outlook to nature and its conservation.

To begin with, the first proverb is a rhetorical question which asserts that; *Ajiko (Ece) aca ku; ajiko (Ece) dra ra ya?* (The pot (Calabash) has not arrived; is the pot (Calabash) broken?). It raises a question when there is a delay in serving a meal or drinks. The "Ajiko" and the "Ece" are representations of elements of nature. They are objects curved out of nature to aid man's service. The use of the verb "arrive" to refer to "Ajiko" – the pot and "Ece" – the calabash respectively suggests that these elements of

nature have 'legs'. The Lugbarati rendering of the proverb in which they are used depicts them in a human space where "Ajiko" and "Ece" are expected to arrive in fulfillment of their duty to feed man with food. Before a person arrives, he or she must have set off from one station to a particular destiny. Consequently, there is a depiction of the two biodiversity elements as the ones executing the locomotion, not humans carrying them. Locomotion is found in creatures which have the legs. However, when the terminology used to refer to the movement of the elements of nature changes, referring to that particular element of nature by its original traits waters down the actual description intended to be brought out by the users of the specific proverb in consideration. As noted earlier on, the verbs and adjectives in use are words which best suit descriptions given to humans thus the labelling of the elements of nature studied as humans.

In another proverb, the ground hornbill, also known as "Gbuluku" is portrayed as a person in authority who brings to books people responsible for theft or forceful ownership of what does not rightfully belong to them. This is done through its act of "chasing" (Dalfovo 159) after such perpetrators. The proverb says that; *Gbuluku 'ba odroo 'ba azi afa si odro odro* (The ground hornbill chases a person because of the things of another person). A belief is held among the Lugbara according to oral tradition that the large hornbill chases thieves thus revealing them to people. People are therefore cautioned not to steal as they will definitely be discovered or caught. The perpetrators referred to in this specific proverb are humans. This interaction between humans and animals is conceptualized as personification at play particularly because of the verb *chases*. It is further important to note that the one who *chases* must have a reason for executing the action of chasing. Otherwise, he or she can be regarded a fool. We ultimately see that the ground hornbill is not a fool according to the proverb afore stated. Its action is directed towards wrong elements within the society and not every person.

This attitude of the ground hornbill projects a cultural intersection between man and nature which is vital in determining execution of conservation. If an element of nature has acted within an established moral sphere, man too ought to act within this sphere of handling nature according to the contribution of each element of nature to man himself. It is worthwhile to preserve fauna like the ground hornbill seeing its significant position in bringing forth a positive moral ideology. Furthermore, the decision to run is primarily processed in the human mind before execution of the action. In this context therefore, the ground hornbill is endowed with more human traits such that it becomes easy to appreciate that it has been personified. To personify nature only for the sake of personification yields an aesthetic value of the proverbs under consideration. Such aestheticism is instrumental in influencing man's attitude in how he takes on the responsibility to protect nature in case of potential threats from fellow men. The same mindset he has towards protection of his vital body parts can be the same mindset developed in his dealings with nature's safety.

A second metaphor of the human body at play is the mouth. Nature is given a mouth in Lugbara proverbs such that we find it easy to associate it with being human. According to a proverb studied; *Nyaku ni ti nji 'ba piri si* (The earth opens its mouth for all). This proverb is used to illustrate the notion of the "universality of death" and the "fundamental equality and destiny of all human beings" (Dalfovo 185) where eventually everyone will have his or her grave dug out in the earth. Much as this proverb seems to be presenting a beastly image of nature, its position is anchored as a personified entity by another proverb which posits that; *Nyaku ni 'ba piri ma andri ni* (The earth is the mother of all). The earth – "Nyaku" is in possession of a mouth which it often "opens for all" (Dalfovo 185) to receive all of humanity. Consequently, it exercises an indomitable authority in ensuring fundamental equality and destiny of all humans. When therefore it

is referred to as “the mother of us all” (Dalfovo 185), all doubts about the authenticity of personification are dispelled as one comes to recognize the fact that a mother in this context refers to a human, procreator, caretaker and in possession of the faculty of reasoning like a real person. Had the earth been regarded as the mother of other creatures, it would have been hard to conceptualize it as human in this context. By virtue of its motherhood being associated with begetting of the human race, it is therefore explicit that it has been personified. Noteworthy is the fact that this form of personification projects nature as larger than human life due to its ability to not only produce man but other elements of nature as well. This is relevant to help man reevaluate his idea of nature conservation. He would rather take a more respectful approach in dealing with nature as his parent other than just nature itself.

The use of the metaphors of human body such as ‘the private part’ cannot be separated from the idea of reproduction in a mother in the proverb discussed above. Nature is depicted as capable of reproducing. This implies that it possesses the human organs of reproduction, particularly the female one. It is a natural configuration of any female animal whether human or non-human to bear offsprings. It does not only produce humans but even other entities of nature as well. However, these elements of biodiversity which nature is said to have produced are referred to by Lugbara proverbs as humans. A proverb examined states that; *Anyu su ni anyu ma zaapi* (Honey is the daughter of a bee). A person in need of honey must only look for honey according to this proverb. He or she must also be prepared to face the hazards and be able to confront disagreeable situations in order to collect gratifying results. Honey is a sweet viscous substance made by several bees then stored to nourish bee colonies. In this realm of nature, it ought therefore to remain as something consumable by human beings. Nevertheless, Lugbara proverbs regard it [honey] as “zaapi” to mean “the daughter” of “the bee” (Dalfovo 74).

Implicitly, “the bee” is labelled as a human capable of producing children. It is noteworthy therefore that, substituting conventional knowledge with the common noun “daughter” for what is known as an insect, stamps with authority the view that these are creatures who have been given attributes that are distinctly possessed by humans hence making them human.

Relatedly, *Angu owiza eri katoa (kaniku kalio) ni* (The dawn is a katoa (or kalio)). This proverb is used to explain the fact that the dawn is quick in its return to bring forth a new day. Night might look long yet light appears quickly. It is a proverb “used to sustain hope and endurance in time of trial” (Dalfovo 67) by giving the confidence that bleak conditions or gloomy situations are temporary. They will disappear rather fast as such bringing joy with it. Special attention is drawn to the label given to *the dawn*. It enjoys the status of a female but in particular, a woman called “kalio” or “katoa” (Dalfovo 67) by the Lugbara. A “kalio” or “katoa” is a woman who produces frequently. She is contrasted with “kutiri” (Dalfovo 67) – a female who produces at larger intervals. Regardless of the spacing in reproducing, one common denominator with the two types of women referred to here is that they possess relevant reproductive organs which help us to distinguish them as females. Their descriptions are significant illustrations of nature’s humanness on display. It should not be forgotten that these proverbs still allude to the notion of metaphors of human body. Nature’s reproductive system is brought to light. It takes reproduction to beget a daughter and to be branded a female whose fertility is high. As already noted, different components of nature in Lugbara proverbs are unified for a proper conceptualization of the view of nature’s humanness. *The dawn* is therefore a highly fertile mother whose frequency of reproduction is regular. Irrespective of this frequency, the idea of its humanness stands out to the ecocritical reader of this proverb.

To be in possession of “the mouth” as a metaphor of human body is one thing. All creatures have a mouth. However, when a creature is in possession of the ability to express itself through language which is recognizable as human language, that creature or element of nature qualifies to be regarded a personified entity. Four species of insects are depicted in actual conversation between each other in proverbs which shall be illustrated shortly after. A distinction is often made between man and animals by man’s ability to speak. Aristotle affirms in *The Politics* that man is the only animal capable of speaking (Logos 1253a). This linguistic divide gives credibility to arguments for instances of use of personification. In the proverbs studied, two ground hornbills – the “Gbuluku” answer each other “apologetically” (Dalfovo 159) in a conversation in which both cannot help each other since they are suffering the same predicament. The specific proverb in use goes as; *Gbuluku kini, “Gbufu mi avu mari, gbufu ma miri avu.”* (The ground hornbill said, “Gbufu you blow mine Gbufu I blow yours.”). The fly – the “Onyukunyu” and the grasshopper – “Ese” are the second set of insects involved in the utilization of the human faculty of speech. The proverb in use says; *Onyukunyu kini, “Ese la e nga mi i.”* (The fly said, “Dear grasshopper, you yourself fly.”). This proverb is derived from a story (Dalfovo 214) in which the grasshopper undermines the ability of a fly to fly as ably as the grasshopper himself. In anger the fly retorts that the grasshopper flies himself. The proverb points the need for “a realistic appraisal of people’s capability” (Dalfovo 214) in order to avoid pressing demands which strain people. The termites – “onya” complete the set of insects involved in a conversation. They exonerate themselves from accusations of failure to fly, giving the presence of “the wind” as an excuse.

According to the proverb in focus; *Onya nga ku, onya kini, “Oli (rika)”* (The termites do not swarm, the termites say, “The wind”). People who have failed in

executing their tasks often formulate excuses which may sound reasonable yet are not valid in actual fact. They are likened to the fly. By this assertion, the proverb condemns omission of work as well as excuses arrived at for such omissions. Wind is conceptualized as the presence of an adversary seeing it usually prevents the termites from swarming. According to oral tradition, termites swarm in calm weather. I draw attention to the line of argument most preferred for this study. The insects and birds identified in the four proverbs engage in human conversation which characteristically is known for man. As observed earlier on, endowing creatures such as insects or birds with human qualities qualifies the branded creatures as personified. Considering the proverb which asserts that the termites give the wind as an excuse for not flying, the personification of the termites alone implicitly points to the personification of the wind as well. In this context the wind can be viewed as human – a rival or an adversary in particular. Both can talk as well.

There is another subtle suggestion of speech among elements of nature when weaver birds – “Agalio” are equated in conversation to cowives – “A’i-azi” (Dalfovo 48) whose talking is unbearable. It is suggested by the proverb studied that; *A’i-azi ti ci, agalio ti ci dri (‘di) ku* (Co-wives are talkative, weaver-birds are not talkative). Weaver birds twitter. Such noisy twittering is associated with chirping of numerous birds nesting in a colony on some tree. It is used to disapprove of the negative disposition in co-wives while fronting a caution against the negative consequences of over talking. By virtue of giving them the description as talkative, the proverb is suggesting that they are humans. Another bird which receives similar description is the garrulous and gossipy trickster according to the proverb; *Dria dria ‘ini (kaniku Kpikpi ni) obelea ni*. (The one everywhere in haste (or the unsettled one) is the gossipy trickster). Indigenous Lugbara describe this gossipy trickster as “talkative and deceitful” (Dalfovo 120), often

uncomfortable when silent in the presence of others. Utterance which is intelligible is connected to a functioning human faculty of speech which processes, transcribes and later vocalizes what the mind has conceived in form of words to be released by the mouth. Speech is speech only when the “mouth” is used and to refer to what has been uttered as speech is admitting the presence of a metaphor of human body in the aforementioned proverb.

Collectively, the insects observed in the proverbs studied herein speak. They initiate conversations and give responses to lines spoken by the *persons* they are conversing with as demonstrated in the direct speeches of the ground hornbill and the fly. This is further confirmed by use of the verbs “say” and “said” which are words descriptive of present and past speech respectively. The same mouth that is used for speaking is the same mouth used by other elements of nature which do not have a mouth to actually eat or drink. One proverb studied revealed subtly supplements on how the “mouth” is present as a metaphor of human body in Lugbara proverbs. The said proverb notes that; *Ojoo ma ibiko mvuu yi took ku* (The leaves of the doctor do not drink water for no purpose). A traditional doctor soaks leaves in water when performing his professional duties of treating people. The Lugbara do not consider such treatment of the leaves a random activity. There is a specific purpose that it serves. As such, people likewise have a purpose for performing actions. Such purpose needs to be enumerated as necessary once known. The aforementioned proverb raises the cultural significance of beliefs among people. Leaves do not have mouth and neither is the proverb in focus a mere colloquial expression. It can only be through assigning the leaves human qualities that they are said to be having mouth. Combined with other metaphors already cited, this points out how nature indeed is human. One element of the human body cannot function well without the other. It amounts to the assertion that without other parts, one part is

literally dead. There is close connection between “the mouth” and “the stomach”. Precisely, the mouth is the entry to the stomach.

Lugbara proverbs help us to have a glimpse of man’s stomach in the assertion that “the field” is “the stomach” of man in the proverb which says that; *Amvu ni ‘ba anyajo ni* (The field is the stomach of man). It is from the field that people obtain food for their subsistence. The whole proverb is used to voice a concern for cultivation since man obtains food from the field. The earth receives care from humanity in form of cultivation. Otherwise, dire consequences await humanity in the event that they do not treat this component of nature as part of the human body. Just as humans would treat their own body with care, so they too hold with care or caution this part of their body – the stomach. An earlier on stated stance in page 29 established that the metaphors of human body can collectively be combined to form a human figure or each element can also be treated separately as implicitly pointing to a human figure irrespective of which metaphor of human body is in use in each proverb. In the interest of this research, simply branding the field as “man’s stomach” conjures up an image of a unified entity forming human body or better still a person who must be in possession of actual human body parts which in this context are already pointed out in the previous arguments.

Nature also has hands which play a significant role in conceptualizing a human figure. The first proverb on hands notes that; *Eni bi (kaniku ko) ceria dri si (bu)* (The night catches a bird with the hand (unawares)). A similar proverb also asserts that; *Eni bi gbuluku (amba) dri si* (The night catches the (grown-up) ground hornbill with a hand). Contextual explanation to the two proverbs argues that it is very difficult to catch a bird, and particularly the ground hornbill during day, but an easy task to do with a single hand at night. A person is considered helpless at night when he or she experiences a difficult situation. The proverb therefore encourages vigilance among people. It further conveys

the meaning that people should be in position to discern when circumstances are in their favour regardless of how bleak it appears like the night. They ought to seek to take advantage of these circumstances to catch their enemies unawares. Night is not only “the dark part of the diurnal cycle considered a time unit” (Dalfovo 141) but also a natural phenomenon. It is here compared to a human being who is engaged in the act of catching a bird in the night. Primacy is given to the literal translation to front the idea of personification of nature. This idea is strengthened further by a proverb which asserts that nature has eyes to see other components around it but not the ground itself. It goes that; *Eni ndre angu ku* (The night does not see the ground). While it has “hands”, it also has “eyes” which see everything else except the ground. This explains why it is able to catch birds even though it does not see the ground itself. These two proverbs join the previous proverbs to convey a conception of an image of a person who is involved in acts of humanity. He too has human defects like shortsightedness. The cultural intersection in these proverbs rotates around the idea of caution and vigilance. Humanity is urged to exercise these disciplines to further his safety on top of eschewing dangerous situations. Such exercise that man is engrossed in for his safety is what can be transferred to promote nature conservation agenda where man disciplines himself to promote not only his safety but also that of nature.

The sight which the night possesses is extended to the rest of the biodiversity who exhibit human attributes as well. One of such is the archetypal figure in numerous fables, the “Etoo” also known as “the Hare”. According to the Lugbara; *Andrendreka si, Etoo ma lico ve ra* (By aping others, the house of the Hare was burnt). Its variants state that; (a) *Andrenreka si, mi Etoo 'i yaa?* (In your aping others, are you the Hare?) (b) *O'bi'bia si, mi Etoo 'i ya?* (In your imitating others, are you the Hare?). All the proverbs cited above recall the story of “Etoo” or Hare, known for its keen intelligence to emulate

others. In the alluded fable (Dalfovo 64), Hare is said to have emulated his friend's style of cooking. By this, he finds himself in a predicament where his house is burnt. While encouraging people to take initiative to exhibit creativity and originality, these proverbs condemn such behaviours like aping other people. The Hare faces consequences of its action of imitating or mimicking others. Peculiar to this section is the fact that "the Hare" could not have fully executed its mimicry or imitation had it not been made possible by his visual faculty. His eyes are the entry point to his mind where he finally processes the decision to imitate or mimic others. The consistency with which the seeing is coordinated with the processing of the decision is what makes it possible to realize the concept of a "human performance" in this. The notion of nature's humanness does not hold water if there is no depiction of a "human body".

Whereas it is easy to draw the conclusion that the other body metaphors already link us to a conceptualization of nature's body, we do not disregard the assertion of two proverbs about "the wind" and "Ebio" which are said to be in possession of bodies. The first proverb says that; *'Ba ne ku la si oli (ma) rua* (What people do not see is the body of the wind). The wind has a body but this body is said to be "invisible" to humans. Logically, an amorphous thing or object cannot be ascribed to a definite shape unless it is given human traits or a medium through which the invisible comes alive. Several human actions such as; bush burning, winnowing among others often act as mediums through which one can notice the presence of wind. Besides a sensual realization of the same, the trees that people plant around are often blown by either mild winds or strong violent winds. It therefore remains in the hands of man to choose which medium to use to help humanity associate with the wind. Choosing activities like bush burning exposes not only nature to the dangers of fire but also humanity to the dangers of loss. Yet planting trees would prevent dangers and also offer man an economic reprieve should he find himself

in a financial crisis. He would then choose to replace the already grown-up trees by planting more while harvesting the grown-up ones to gain financial advantage.

The second proverb which employs the use of the word “body” says that; *E’yo ni mi ji Kpere Ebio ma rua tia* (The problem will take you up to Ebio’s body). This body is visible and tangible unlike that of the wind. “Ebio” is a giant in Lugbara fables (Dalfovo 156). He is also a representation of the climax of human troubles. Fables do not go without personification of the animal characters involved in them. This is significant in conceptualization of the specific nature’s humanness. Consciousness that the animals that man sets out to hunt are largely animals that feature in his (man’s) own crafted moral stories to enlighten, entertain and mould human character will easily curtail dangerous human behaviours towards nature. Such a realization is made even more possible when man considers the metaphors of human body which act as a reminder to him that the greatest part of nature is conceptualized just as human as man is himself. This humanness is constituent of different components to form a unified human figure. This however, does not impede examining the different biodiversity as separate humans. Dealing destructively with one element of nature would mean harming the whole body of nature. When one part of the body is in pain, the rest are in danger of facing the same fate. This view intertwines with the values enshrined in the social, historical and geographical background of the Lugbara people. Chun Yan asserts that “metaphors are grounded in bodily experiences but shaped by cultural understanding” (253) of the users of these proverbs. As shall be discussed in a latter part of this chapter, the biodiversity present in the proverbs studied so far are relevant cultural links which are carriers of the messages of these proverbs. An appreciation of these symbolic figures alongside the implied cultural values can shape the discourse of environmental conservation tremendously.

2.3 The Human Character Dispositions in Nature

There is an existing pattern of behaviour which classifies an organism as human. It is what is commonly known as characterization. Characterizing nature is fundamental to demystifying personification. Ability to speak, walk, see, eat or drink is already one step closer to considering the innate attributes common in man which has been given by the users of Lugbara proverbs to the biodiversity in the respective proverbs analyzed in this very section. Both negative and positive traits have been assigned to animals, birds, insects and a few plant species thus projecting the notion of personification. I firstly present the negative attributes, later the positive attributes.

In the first proverb; *Edro ni afu 'ba 'ba azi ma olaa si* (The rat becomes proud because of someone else's cassava). In the presence of abundance of cassava, the rat usually boasts when in fact what is before him belongs to somebody else. It is ridiculous therefore for people to take pride in property or activities which do not rightfully belong to them. Children are thus cautioned by users of this proverb not to take pride in the cattle and assets of their parents. The sort of pride exhibited by the rat has the potential to bring upon him destruction. It can either be killed or harmed. Besides, when what is proud of is taken away from him, he does not have the legal authority to redeem what he would otherwise regard his property. "The fox" and "the rat" too are proud animals as shown in the proverbs; (a) *Obalako (alu alu) ni enya ru 'ima so 'bi si* (The fox (or every fox) boasts of its own tail) and (b) *Oce ni enya ru 'i(ma) so 'bi si* (The dog boasts of its own tail). When contrasted with the pride of "the rat", the two creatures aforementioned possess a somewhat positive depiction of boasting which can rightfully be termed as "self-esteem".

Another proverb asserts that; *Ara(g)u aziri (la) gu ara(g)u aziri ma so 'bi si* (A red Hussar monkey laughs at the tail of another red Hussar monkey). "The red Hussar

monkey” (Dalfovo 80) exhibits a form of pride subtly displayed in its ridicule of another red Hussar monkey not knowing “he” is also in possession of the same buttocks or tail it is ridiculing. Meanwhile, “Etoo” – the Hare, our archetypal figure with his “excessive self-assured confidence” attempts to imitate or mimic another person. “He” thus ends up reaping the consequences of “his” pride – a burnt hut according to the proverb; *O’bi ’bia si, mi Etoo ’i ya?* (In your imitating others, are you the Hare?). This rhetorical question rendered as a proverb recalls a story in which the Hare attempted to imitate his friend the fox cooking which resulted into the disastrous fire that burnt the Hare’s hut. Pride goes a long way to hinder the “Ezoo/Ozoo” – the warthog and “Ewa” – the elephant (Dalfovo 39), from having proportionate growth in their teeth and tusk respectively. According to the two proverbs; (a) *A’da ku si, ewa dri zo doo ’do* (For lack of criticism, the trunk of the elephant grew very long). (b) *A’da ku si, ozoo si fu zaramataru* (For lack of criticism, the teeth of the warthog have grown out disproportionately). Both proverbs commentate on the unhappy result of the refusal of criticism or correction by the warthog and the elephant. For the warthog, is the long canine teeth while for the elephant, it is the long tusk. The implication of this is that people must allow a timely criticism and corrections necessary to avoid veering an irreparably wrong direction. Timely formation and readiness in accepting criticism or correction yields the desired result in the process of character formation according to both proverbs. Due to this self-destructive pride, “(A)ndalaka” – the hawk, “aria” – the small bird and “Cirea” find themselves victims of the fire. This is affirmed in the proverb which says that; *Afu (kaniku ani) si(a)ndalaka (kaniku aria kaniku cirea) vee aci (kaniku kulini) a* (Through pride (or irony), the hawk (or bird) burnt itself in the fire (or ash-storm)). While flying over an area that is burning, the birds mentioned, in attempt to prey on insects escaping the raging flames, find themselves victims of the fire instead. The flying of the three birds with “wings spread

out and confident” is “ostentatious pride” (Dalfovo 46) which is responsible for the burning or death of the afore creatures. On the other hand, “Ope” – the guineafowl, is characterized as possessing a “presumptuous and disdainful” (Dalfovo 46) behaviour only considered as pride as demonstrated in the proverb; *Afu si ope dri si(ru) ra (kaniku si ru ule)* (Through pride the guinea-fowl’s head turned bald (or really bad)). This is derived from the apparently proud way in which the guinea-fowl walks. The proverb inculcates humility and modesty in character.

The consequences reaped by the guinea-fowl is similar to that reaped by the frog as denoted in the proverb; *Odrukudru hwe afo si* (The frog burst through pride). It condemns pride while recalling the story in which the frog tried to inflate itself to a size bigger than its natural one until it burst. Pride does not go unpunished unless it is a demonstration of self-esteem which is cognizant of the need to value other people. Evidently, these creatures do not have the faculty of reasoning as humans do yet they have been endowed with this most devaluing disposition of human character. This acts as a cultural link between man and nature. Man sees himself in nature and so must deduct from nature the useful instructions to better his conditions. With this in mind, environment conservation begins to take precedence seeing that man himself is able to recognize the value of nature he daily relates with.

The abundance of negatives traits used to personify the biodiversity sees the depiction of some biodiversity as greedy. There is a depiction of an uncontrolled longing for satiation and material possession among animals has been termed as greed. According to the first two proverbs related to this assertion; (a) *Elifiri sib a ni ocoo ki* (To look for something with greed suits dogs). (b) *Elifiri si etu vee obau ni kai* (Because of greed, the sun scorched the hyena very much). The word “elifiri” in the first proverb implies the idea of one who is continually around to see if food or anything else may be

obtained free of charge. The proverb is used to contrast human character from that of creatures to caution humans not to behave in this manner which is only suitable for dogs. There are two ideas derived from the afore; firstly, greed and secondly covetousness. Both attributes are a manifest result of the desire to have more than what one ought to have. In part (b), the proverb recalls the story (Dalfovo 136) of the hyena waiting for the lion to finish what it has been preying on so as to have the left over. It suffers under the intensive heat which scorches “him” to death as he waits to feed its greed.

A third proverb points out that: *Etu fu obau ni ori ti* (The sun scourged the hyena near the ancestral shrine). The hyena usually lingers around the ancestral shrines with the hope of getting some meat from the leftovers of the sacrifices being made at the shrine. The hyena is kept waiting under the scorching sun by its greediness for food. Another outright manifestation of greed is seen in the snake. *Uri ovunga olio vu andre* (The small basket of Uri turned into a mother’s basket). In the context of use, a story is told that *Uri’s* small basket was spoiled by a person to whom it had been lent (Dalfovo 238). *Uri* deals shrewdly with the character by claiming that the size of his basket was bigger. He does this to obtain something better than what he had. The proverb is a caution to those who intend to use property of untrustworthy people who are capable of demanding hefty fines for the damages caused. In other words, people should not mishandle property which does not belong to them. The craftiness of the snake in demanding for something better is as a result of its greed. Just like pride, greed has undesirable consequences such as humiliation. Death on extreme cases of greed is one of the greatest punishments for the perpetrators while cheating is another accomplice of greed as depicted by the snake obtaining a bigger basket. These are negative character dispositions which are found in humans but have been assigned to the snake. Besides these negative character traits, there is an implicit interaction between the snake and the person whose basket it claims

for himself. This makes it human because snakes hiss but here this particular snake speaks. It uses persuasion to take away from a human being what does not belong to it.

Lugbara proverbs put no limitation to the negative characterization of nature when nature is endowed with human emotions. It has the ability to get angry, show stupidity or harbour grudges. It should be noted that these are not mainstream animal behaviours considering the portrayal of their attributes in the proverbs studied as shall be seen in the subsequent illustrations. The literal translations of these proverbs make it explicit that they are personified. It is said in one proverb that; *A'u fe ei tamba 'ba azi dri, obalako de ei ra* (The hens entrusted themselves to someone else, the fox finished them off). The stupidity of the hens (the chicken) in entrusting themselves into the hands of another person – an adversary, is a human folly. “The chicken” fail to weigh distinctively the consequences of entrusting themselves into the hands of their arch rivals. It is human to make a decision to be able to transfer custodianship of oneself to another human. If the chicken had simply been picked by humans, it would have been hard to realise the personification depicted. The stupidity of the chicken extends further to it failing to control its temper. This is confirmed in the proverb; *Aoko (kaniku aza kaniku omoko) si, a'u ze ze moloa* (Through anger (or stupidity or grudge), the fowl defecated in the poultry). It defecates in the poultry pen while “brooding” over “its grievances in spiteful isolation” (Dalfovo 75) because it cannot exercise mastery over its emotions. It is a dramatic description given to the chicken by the proverb studied. One can see the humanity in the chicken unfolding as it methodically and deliberately takes to expressing its objections but without any verbal utterances except actions. The word “grudge” is also used to refer to why the fowl defecates in the pen. It is human beings who have the potential to harbour grudges in their hearts for long. The rendering of this particular proverb eases one’s conceptualization of the idea that the fowl has been

personified seeing it is endowed with the ability to keep frustrations at heart to be avenged at an appointed time. Unfortunately, there is no Lugbara proverb which suggests when the fowl actually avenges this grudge it has held for long. The failure by the fowl to realise the negative consequences of her action makes its already miserable condition even more despicable according to the explanation provided to aid contextual understanding of this particular proverb. Notably, the guinea-fowl has a recurring appearance in several proverbs, manifesting different facets of human character. One proverb studied portrays “her” a shy bird. The proverb goes: *Drinja si, ope dri si ra* (Through shyness the head of the guinea-fowl turned bald). This relates that the baldness on the guinea-fowl’s head is as consequent of allowing itself to be overcome by shyness. Humans are herein advised not to be shy or else become victims of their own shyness. It is no doubt that shyness is a human trait. It being assigned to a bird already makes the bird human. The guinea-fowl is not the only shy creature. The tortoise, a reptile, is also another shy creature who meets “his” doom when he fails to summon courage to overcome “his” shyness as affirmed in the proverb; *Drinja si, okuku dra o’boa* (Through shyness the tortoise died in its own shell). Had it not been overcome by its own shyness; the tortoise could have stuck its head and legs out of its shell to flee for its life in the water. He is compared to shy people who are often doomed due to failure to pick courage to overcome circumstance due to being shy. By nature, the tortoise is known as a slow, calm creature which takes time in its accomplishments. When it keeps in its shell, it is a defense mechanism. This contrast in its natural disposition and the branding given to it in Lugbara proverbs allows for the argument that the tortoise is a human being. It can be seen throughout the preceding discussions that biodiversity has been ascribed to traits such as proud, greedy, shy, and capable of harbouring anger, stupidity, and grudge culminating into personification.

As earlier on cited, characterization of nature is fronted in two dimensions in Lugbara proverbs: negative and positive. Having dealt with the negative traits assigned to the biodiversity, I turn to present findings depicting positive characterization of the biodiversity. As a precursor to the positive traits revealed, it was observed that there is an existing world of nature in the human world. In this world, procreation goes on, relationships are built and maintained, and services rendered to fellow creatures the same way humans do. As such, creatures are portrayed to offer care or show kindness, offer leadership, show respect, gratitude and exhibit mastery over fellow creatures. These observable behavioral patterns are likened to human behaviour through the figure of speech in focus – personification, asserted in the proverb; *Ocoo eco ni avizu agii ma dra si ku* (A dog cannot play with the death of its friend). Much as a dog may play with anything, it will never do so with a grave situation. It does not meddle in crucial matters like those concerning the death of a friend (Dalfovo 191). People are therefore warned to avoid unsafe or problematic situations that dogs would avoid. Eschewing the contextual explanation given, the literal translation gives a perfect rendering which shows a conceptualization of nature personified. This is portrayed by nature’s overt manifestation of care, compassion and understanding of when to behave. This level of concern from the dog unfolds a deep sense of connection which is normally common in human beings. Better still, to call the dead dog a “friend” already points to personification.

The second proverb studied under this category says that: *Anyu ni pati fu ma ojoo* (The bee is the doctor of flowers). Bees are continuously seen visiting flowers. This behaviour is what a medicine man’s behaviour is compared to in this proverb. His visitations made to clients to solve their problems particularly related to sickness and misfortunes are approved of as it is viewed as bringing life and progress. In a negative sense, the proverb is used against people with “fastidious admonitions” (Dalfovo 74) as

self-appointed counselors to show disapproval. To put into perspective this explanation, “the bee” is called a “doctor” of flowers, implying that “he” is responsible for the treatment of flowers. The Lugbara word *Ojoo* used in this context is the word translated as “doctor”. According to Lugbara tradition, *Ojoo* is known for connecting humanity with the metaphysical world thus is regarded as a “life-giver”. This would therefore endow on the bee and flowers status as humans or doctor patient due to the care that a doctor renders to his or her patients as the patients undergo treatment for recovery. In another proverb: *Ecikili ‘du oti ma avu* (The black ant took the corpse of the brother-in-law). Using “human paradigm” (Dalfovo 127), conclusion can be drawn that black ants show a great care for their relatives and friends as can be seen whenever they carry dead fellow ants. The proverb is used to inculcate the idea that human beings ought to show even more concern for their relatives, friends and neighbors in need, especially in extreme cases of death. Care shown by black ants in the afore proverb defies Lugbara cultural construct where there are boundaries when it comes to dealing with in-laws, particularly when it concerns the death of an in-law. One of such boundaries defines roles of relatives during the burial of a person. In-laws may not be as involved as the near relatives of the dead in the funeral and burial process of the deceased. However, the black ants “by pass traditional demands” (Dalfovo 127) to show how fast help should be rendered in times of urgency. They pick the dead body of the brother-in-law for burial showing how much they care. This display of human behaviour cannot be treated merely as animal instincts. The black ants are depicted to have an organized community shown by how much indented they are towards leaning on one another – most importantly leaning on a leader. This explains why there is an extended metaphor in a proverb where they are shown to be in confusion because of the absence of a leader. It states that; *Ecekelendreki drile ako si ababa* (The black ants are confused through lack of a leader).

Their ability to discern the necessity of a leader in their community is incredible. One can notice that when the leader of moving ants in search for food is removed, the rest scatter in disarray and are lost. A community of humans without a good leader would be considered close to a group of black ants in disarray because of the absence of a leader. Therefore, to talk about unity among humans is to refer to how organized and united the black ants are.

In the world of creatures, there are creatures or relatives which are poor. The “Ajaroo” or “Magerego” (Dalfovo 49) also known as the squirrel is one of the victims of poverty. The proverb of interest says: *Ajaro la ru onyukunyu adripi ma saki si* (The squirrel lies on the tail of the brother of the fly). Similar versions state that; *Magerego la ru unyu adripi ma kote si* (The squirrel lies on the tail of the brother of the fly). The context of this proverb explains a story that the squirrel was so poor that it had nowhere else to sleep except the “small and insignificant” (Dalfovo 49) place represented by the tail of the “brother fly”. It depicts the miserable conditions of a poor person who has to rest satisfied with anything offered to him however insignificant it is. Accreditation of the idea of personification herein is firstly on the premise that the fly is said to have a “brother”. Tacitly, one can see a family of flies which perhaps comprises the parents and children. The other side of the argument is that in Lugbara culture, relationships thrive on ancestral blood ties. People of the same lineage can call themselves brothers and sisters, and accord the necessary respect in addressing the elderly. Should the same principle be applied to the relationship existing between the flies, it is still evident that there are existing relationships which allows for one creature to refer to another as brother. Use of human nomenclature to refer to a fly as “brother” brings the personification to the forefront. Secondly, the proverb which yielded to this result is crafted from a fable which leaves no doubt that “the squirrel” and “the fly” have been

personified as humans. A poor person does not own property. He too finds it hard to own a domicile convenient to erase thoughts of poverty. When the fly is personified, its tail adopts significance as symbolic relics of already discarded bedding. The squirrel, poor as he is, finds contentment in this providence of luck. Contentment usually elicits gratitude from the beneficiary.

The elephant and the grey heron exhibit the above in two proverbs; (a) *Ewa mvu yi efufua dri* (The elephant drank water on a small termite). (b) *Otonoko mvu yi kulu alu si* (The grey heron drank water on one grasshopper). The two creatures convey their gratitude to their host by consuming an insignificant meal consisting of “efufua” – a small termite and “kulu alu” – one grasshopper respectively (Dalfovo 151) and they take water on it. To accept the little a person has been given with gratitude is largely human. Humans are urged to show gratitude for the little they have been given just like the elephant and the grey heron. Nature is also full of kindness and respect. A recurring bird (guinea-fowl) is revealed to have also suffered another consequence of too much “amiability” and “tolerance” (Dalfovo 83) as it boomerangs on it as shown by the proverb; *Asi ndriza si, ope dri si ra* (Through kindness, the head of the guinea-fowl turned bald). People do not desire to turn bald. The proverb argues that *too much* kindness is bad and ought to have a limit since it may usually tend to boomerang on the one exhibiting this kindness. Contrastingly, the guinea-fowl outlasts humans in its exhibition of kindness to the extent that it does not put a limit to its show of it. This acts as a key cultural intersection where the value of kindness if being fronted as a relevant part of a society which is thriving. Where there is kindness, usually an element of respect does not miss. The respect that nature shows is demonstrated by the “A’uata” – the cock, which avoids crowing freely as it does in its home in order to please its host. It is asserted that: *A’uata ‘be cere ‘ba azi aku (kaniku angu) a ku* (The cock does not crow in somebody

else's home (or land)). It is asserted to remind visiting persons not to freely talk or act in a home they are visiting. They are expected to show respect for their host. Taking precaution is a premeditated decision that starts from the cognitive realm before it is overtly manifest in form of actions. At this level, it is more human than animal for the cock to act with such consciousness.

The last proverb studied under this section depicts the idea of ownership as part of nature. It states that: *A'baliko (kaniku atiriko) ni ajiko 'dipi ni* (The a'baliko-shell (or the snail-shell) is the owner of the pot). The "a'baliko-shell" – *khaya, anthotheca* is used for scrubbing the inside of a pot. Despite the size of the pot, it is the small *a'baliko* which exercises some mastery over it thus implying that what is small often gives value and pre-eminence to what is big. Such is necessitated by collaboration. It further points to the fact that it is not the pot that is responsible for the noise it makes but the *a'baliko* shell. Therefore no one is expected to blow his or her own trumpet but leave it to others. When an aspect of the biodiversity is said to be an owner, this is directly communicating how it has been personified. The word "owner" is used to describe those entitled to a prized possession. Since it is an "owner", it "exercises a kind of mastery" (Dalfovo 27) over the pot thus making it to produce the sound it normally does while scrubbing. The pot is from nature, so is the *a'baliko*. However small or insignificant the *a'baliko* is, its preeminence is recognized as the vital role a weak person plays where he or she is deemed insignificant. Humanity's distinction from the rest of the creatures by its unique overt manifestation of traits sets a precedence on which the biodiversity is given these qualities.

2.4 Cultural Intersection

Lugbara proverbs act as a conduit of human culture depicting what is referred to as cultural intersection. I reiterate that environmental crisis is mostly as a result of

separation of culture from nature. Nature is a reflector of human character, attitudes and belief systems. This can be clearly seen in the cultural intersection which is primarily portrayed by a category of the material elements. Material elements are tangible or figures that can be envisioned in the mental faculty of man. There are also mainstream cultural values which are embodied in the complete rendering of the proverbs, both literal and translated. These form another category of cultural links termed as immaterial. They cannot be touched but can only be conceptualized in the human mind. They are part of the universal societal values which form the bedrock of a stable society. These include; hard work, cultural collaboration, social cohesion/societal hierarchy and their significance, gender relations, and respect.

Among the Lugbara, there are animal figures which play symbolic roles as abstract values and ideas known among the indigenous peoples. As a native, my childhood experiences were flooded with stories which had certain animal characters like the hare, the fox, the hyena, the elephant, the tortoise, the guinea-fowl among others. These characters up-to-date are widely known for what they represent. A mention of a particular character triggers certain ideas without individuals having to be fed on a story or fable to recall what the lesson required for them to learn is. “Ebio” for example, is a giant representing tough situations that individuals have to waver. A mention of “Obau” – the hyena, quickly triggers a thought about greed while “Etoo” – the Hare, is the archetypal representation of craft, wit, imitation and mimicry. The indigenous people associate slowness and shyness majorly with the tortoise and perhaps the sheep which is not talked about by any proverb. They understand that when a person talks about “Obalako” – the fox, ideas of theft, destruction and loss of chicken come to mind. Evidently, these animal figures and the salient cultural values communicated by the material and immaterial elements of Lugbara proverbs studied in the previous two

sections show that there is an interlink between the culture of the Lugbara people and the ecological sphere of the said proverbs. I contend that ecological knowledge is not alien from the cultural experiences of the Lugbara speakers. The use of some proverbs is not only to serve a role of edification, aestheticism but also transmitting valuable ecological knowledge which can trigger environment conservation.

2.5 Conclusion

This chapter unraveled the presence of personification of nature in Lugbara proverbs. Nature was observed to have been personified in two-fold. Firstly, there are human body parts such as mouth, hands, legs, stomach and body which implicitly project the particular elements of nature in focus as humans. It is further revealed that Lugbara proverbs contain animal figures who function as conduits of known cultural values due to the symbolic role they (animals) play in the lives of the Lugbara people. The linguistic, conceptual and contextual realization of the proverbs analyzed made it easy to determine human character dispositions such as pride, greed, anger, foolishness and gratitude which are mapped on to the non-human elements of nature in the proverbs of interest to make them human. These act as a lens through which the existing cultural intersection between man and nature in Lugbara proverbs can be seen. Nature is a mirror reflecting what man associates with as his character traits. These traits are transferred onto nature such that separation of culture from nature generates a violent attitude towards nature which endangers it. These further form bases for selection of appropriate nature conservation methods which do not hamper survival of both man and nature.

CHAPTER THREE

HARMFUL PRACTICES TOWARDS NATURE

3.1 Introduction

This chapter draws from the Anthropocene concept to analyze the harmful practices of man towards nature or damages inflicted on nature by humans, highlighting activities and attitudes which explicitly or implicitly suggest an infringement or damage on nature by man in Lugbara proverbs. Humans have unleashed direct attacks on nature, some of which have had unprecedented effects whereas others have had mild effects which eventually turn out to be adverse. There has been massive exertion of powerful influence over the earth's ecosystem since the time of industrial revolution. This has resulted into change not only on planet's surface appearance but also "its chemistry and Geology" (Garrad et al. 149).

Man's environment is under "constant threat from man himself" (Hamid et al. 743). These threats emanate from human activities which endanger nature in several ways. Often it is in the guise of search for food that the biodiversity is exposed to mild or adverse damages in the hands of the indigenous people "70% of whose sustenance depends intensively on biodiversity" Girma Gizachew (176). No better terminology can define this apart from subsistence farming or poaching. Whereas subsistence farming is cultivation of crops for consumption as food at the family level, subsistence poaching is an act where "poachers hunt wildlife illegally as source of food" (Richard et al. 175). Recognition of these two is not in opposition of sustainability of humanity by nature but it is rather to explore how endangered nature is when humans prioritize their wellbeing above that of nature in the process inflicting damages or triggering events that may lead to nature's destruction. Both practices have the potential to exacerbate an already existing challenge of destruction of nature by humanity. Farming or poaching methods

deployed by the indigenous people either promotes or subdues the goal of nature conservation. There is existing evidence of harmful practices of man towards nature in Lugbara proverbs. Most activities suggested to be carried out by the indigenous people in the proverbs studied show that the fauna is largely endangered than any other form of biodiversity. Some of the proverbs studied portray nature from a negative perspective which is dangerous in determining how humanity responds to the different forms of nature and the question of nature conservation based on how man has been made to conceptualize it. I firstly present the findings where direct confrontations are levelled against nature. Later, evidence showing negative perceptions about nature which breed contempt and foster harmful treatment of nature are relayed.

3.2 Direct Confrontation of Nature by Man

The first proverb studied asserts that; *Acika 'bi 'bia ma ta ru ni* (Smoke is the food of bats). A closely related one submits that; *'Bi 'bia ki kani o'a acika si ni* (It is only bats that live on smoke). Among the indigenous Lugbara, fires meant to burn the grass in the fields is usually lit in the evening. Due to the danger posed by the devouring flames, insects are forced to flee for safety from the grass into the air. They then become prey to the bats which feed on them. Both proverbs cited above are used to depict the view that people are characteristically different. "Natural attributes and appropriate roles" must be left to people "without undue interference" (Dalfovo 35). A second meaning derived states that bats alone feed on smoke while humans have to work. These beautiful assertions are potentially dangerous to perpetuating fire conditions. It does not address the question of fire. The users of these proverbs do not address the contingency measures in place to contain a wild spread of fire already lit, which is why the Anthropocene reader will regard this activity destructive towards nature. Firstly, fire does not start by itself. Someone deliberately lights fire with an intention of either

burning the bush or simply out of leisure to see fire burn. In a worst-case scenario, once it starts, it does not also stop by itself. However good the intention behind the fire is, an anthropocentric reader cannot be blinded by such motive considering the fact that animal, bird, insect and plant species are vulnerable once a bush fire starts. This has a detrimental impact on the goal to conserve nature in an era which has seen more environmental challenges than any other in human history.

To put into perspective argument about the dangers of fire, a proverb related to the already stated in the previous paragraph argues that; *Afu (kaniku ani) si (a)ndalaka (kaniku aria kaniku cirea) vee aci (kaniku kulini) a* (Through pride (or irony), the hawk (or bird) burnt itself in the fire (or ash-storm)). This provides a clearer entry point into understanding the detrimental impact of bush burning on the environment. We must appreciate the environment in light of the definition provided by Hamid et al. (2016), who defines it as a; “life-sustaining system in which various living beings like animals, including man, birds, insects, micro-organisms like algae, fungi, protozoa, amoeba and non-living beings like air, water, and soil are interrelated” (24). This definition encompasses the endangered components of the material world once a destructive human activity is on course. It further agrees that the environment has all the necessary conditions for the survival of both living and non-living organisms, and plant species as well. The proverbs so far looked at therefore reveal how these suitable conditions are under threat because of the harmful practice of bush burning by humanity. The first detrimental impact is on the habitats of other living organisms. The methods employed in carrying out subsistence farming can eventually turn out to be destructive to habitats of organisms. Once habitat is destroyed, to rule out the death of precious species of organisms and plants would be to agree that bush burning is a good practice. Not only are organisms like insects destroyed, but pests like rats are also endangered as well. A

most hostile effect of bush burning is on the vegetation surrounding and the air. On the vegetation, this effect is manifested through “collapse of the leaf tissue, bleaching or other colour changes and alterations in growth” (Hamid et al. 24). Any form of abnormality in growth is a depiction of malfunctioning in nature.

A far-reaching impact is arguably the greenhouse effect and depletion of the ozone layer. This is achieved with ease especially when man sees no harm in the smoke rising to the air. A theory called differential association by Sutherland (1974) ably suggests how man by observation and association practices what he sees being practiced around him. I draw on this to illustrate the fact that massive industrial gas emissions, and negligence of industrial waste originates from simple practices like bush burning where people do not see any threat in what they would otherwise regard as insignificant amount of smoke rising into the air. Yet the contextual explanations provided for the three proverbs in use observe how birds symbolically represented by bats and the hawk succumb to the smoke rising up in the event of searching for their food. Emission of dangerous gas into the air is inevitable when there is air pollution especially through smoke from bush burning. It cannot be doubted that the gases emitted also contribute to the death of the birds in the air. All these are the result of negligence or failure to pay attention to the dangers which may arise from the smoke coming from what looks insignificant. Therefore, the same way attention is not given towards bush fire smoke is the same way humanity over time ignores huge gas emissions from industries.

A substantial view in support of an earlier view on the death of bird, insect and animal species is that primarily all living creatures in their natural form have a mechanism of hunting for food which does not need man’s artificial aid. However, should there be one, they will not hesitate to pursue their spot in what would be considered a golden opportunity from a human perspective that food has presented itself

to one searching for it. However, these creatures, as already mentioned, find themselves in a trap too deadly to escape hence succumbing to it. This therefore is an antecedence for the argument that bush burning arising from fires set in the course of practicing subsistence farming are harmful towards nature. They directly affect the biodiversity within their jurisdiction and indirectly influence human attitudes of negligence as far emissions of gas by industries or other anthropogenic pollutants are concerned.

To further substantiate on the fact that tree species are in danger from the wild bush fire, the next proverb states that; *Ali (kaniku oli) aci ni anuu 'i si* (The fire of *ali* extinguishes by itself). “Ali” also known as *Acacia, hockii* or *Acacia, Gerradii*, is a thorny shrub or slender tree which catches fire quickly and its fire dies out quickly as well. According to this proverb, choleric characters should be left to themselves as they regain their calm rather quickly. Besides the admonition provided in this proverb, there is a hidden danger which was not cited out by the author. This hidden danger is the threat that the fire of the *ali* poses to nearby bush or other tree species once it is set ablaze. In the process of burning, if such thorny shrubs or bushes are near other tree species, they may easily transfer the fire to any other nearby or even bush tree species. Such are the proverbs which ought not to be used at all by the indigenous people seeing they do not present any caution against misuse of fire. As is evident from the literal translation, the proverb sees no problem with lighting an *ali* tree forgetting the trouble it is capable of causing. This form of negligence extends to the rudimentary method of catching swarming termites where a bundle of “Agalaka” also known as *Hyperhenia, rufa* is tied and lit. Regardless of the species of *hyperhenia, rufa*, it is considered the suitable source of light for catching termites by indigenous Lugbara. One proverb observes that; *Agalaka piri agalaka* (All agalaka grass is the same), implying that they are used for the same purpose – catching swarming termites. It is further personified as “the eye of termites” in

the proverb which states that; *Alaka ni onya ma mifi ni* (The alaka grass is the eye of the termites). Tied into small bundles with a string, *hyperhenia, rufa* is burnt to attract and catch swarming termites at night. When termites see this light, they are drawn towards it. This light is compared to the “enlightening presence” (Dalfovo 83) of a leader often appraised and encouraged by the users of these proverbs. However much this method is a way of subsistence harvest of termites, it carries in itself a danger which cannot be underestimated. The first of such danger is of the unintended killing of insects by fire which has been lit to specifically catch swarming termites. Insects by nature are drawn towards any source of light. Harvesters of the swarming termites will not bother what insects have been drawn to the fire because their major interest is the termites. Due to this, these insects do not only get burnt in the fire but those which survive are treated as pests in the process of preparing termites for cooking. A question which remains yet to be answered is of how many small organisms die in one instance of fire.

In the wake of safe sources of energies in use such as pressure lamps, rechargeable bulbs, solar lamps among others, this traditional method of catching swarming termites must be boldly branded as a harmful practice which endangers organisms of nature. Challenges of affordability should not inform a learned person to trade the position of environment conservation for allowing the poor man to also have something to catch. This discourse deserves to be on the lips of concerned persons in order to further the agenda of environment conservation. The universal importance of grass cannot be underestimated as stated in the first proverb which points out that “all grass is the same”. In every part of the world, man is thrilled at the sight of anything green because grass together with other vegetation are important in generating oxygen which man lives on. As such, grass therefore deserves to be put to better use than burnt to produce carbon dioxide which is not the primary gas it was meant to produce.

The last proverb under this section which implicitly suggests misuse of fire remarks that; *Ewa onyo eja 'i ozozu* (The elephant broke firewood to roast itself). It is curved out of an oral story in which the elephant broke trees only for these trees to be used to roast it. The proverb emphasizes the notion that while working to see someone's downfall, people find themselves working against themselves and for their own downfall. The elephant is a rare species which many people may not easily see or catch for food yet here it is revealed as food for man. Two dangerous activities are executed herein simultaneously; use of fire to destroy nature and hunting down of the elephant as food. The latter shall be addressed in the paragraph after. This proverb gives a clue to the perception that the indigenous people have towards the wild fauna. They simply regard them as food. This food can best be prepared using fire. As dangerous as the mention of the word fire is, considerable efforts have to be made to ensure that proverbs such as these which perpetuate destructive tendencies like bush burning or setting ablaze something should be discouraged among users. Better ways of character moulding can be introduced. Should these proverbs be used, they can be used to explicate to their users the dangers inherent in the practices talked about such that the Anthropocene vision is realized and nature is saved.

As a continuation of the explanation on the last proverb stated in the previous section, focus is now drawn to another direct attack on nature which is poaching. As already evidenced in the proverb the elephant broke firewood to roast itself, the indigenous people engage in hunting or poaching activities. Lugbara people emerge from the Lado Enclave created by the Franco-Congolese Agreement of 14th August 1894 according to R.O. Collins (1960). Collins observes that the Enclave was watered and ideally situated for elephants such that Leopold II, King of the Belgians and the Sovereign of Congo Free State declared it "a government monopoly" (217). He further

asserts that “nowhere in Africa were elephants in greater concentration than in Lado” (2017). This clearly shows that hunting is an inalienable part of the human past for places which have developed and is still part of the present day to day life of individuals in remote places. The civilized human has modified this harmful behaviour as licensed poaching or poaching as a sport hence has only upgraded to advanced subtle attacks on nature which have been normalized by the elite society as a civilized way of living. Africa has no doubt been a fertile ground for licensed poaching. Historically, renowned world leaders like Winston Churchill; Theodore Roosevelt, writers like Earnest Hemmingway among others have hunted in the wilds of Africa. Collins quotes Former US president Theodore Roosevelt while on his hunting expedition in the Enclave toasting “To the Elephant Poachers of the Lado Enclave” (220). This does not swift the pendulum of argument against harmful practices towards nature on one side since the rich and the poor alike are perpetrators against nature. Richard Obour et al., quote Lauson & Vines 2014 to support the preceding argument by observing that, “unsanctioned slaughter of wildlife is to fuel the demands of middle-class customers from areas such as South Asia that value [ornaments from already hunted wild] as status symbols” (172). Whether the rich man hunts or not, he is not innocent from the offence because of indirect participation which sees him buying from the hunters themselves. The definition of hunting brings at the forefront two perspectives; hunting as a sport and hunting for food. Whichever perspective one adopts, it still remains an activity which endangers the wild. Different species of fauna are endangered by hunters.

Lugbara proverbs reveal that the indigenous people are actively involved in hunting. The predominant victims are wild animals like; the elephant, the buffalo, the dik-dik gazelle the duiker, and birds such as the guinea-fowl. These sources of food for man are a significant representation of the damage which was done, is already being

done and will continue to be done should no more urgent responses be given to the challenges the wild faces. The search for food is involved when it comes to hunting in the context of the Lugbara people. In a one last reference to the proverb earlier cited that the elephant breaks trees to roast itself, accusing finger is pointed at the indigenous people who hunt down elephants in mysterious ways for food. The next proverb compares lack of gratitude expressed by a person to the lack of concern displayed by an elephant which has been shot with an arrow. It goes that; *I gbi(do) 'di ewa rua* (You have shot an arrow on an elephant). This proverb points out that it is useless to seek help from stingy people since they will show lack of concern similar to that shown by an elephant which has been shot. People are thus encouraged not to be “selfish and ungrateful” (Dalfovo 161) but rather reciprocate favours and help. In another context of the said proverb, shooting an arrow at an elephant to kill it is impossible and useless since the elephant will not be affected by this. Yet, a third application of this proverb cautions those who hunt to be careful when shooting at elephants seeing the elephants can be provoked to violent reactions on certain instances. The second and third meanings are derived out of experience of poaching. The second one shows a failed attempt at poaching elephants while the third confirms a persistency by other people to hunt elephants regardless of the failed attempts in the former scenario. Observable among the indigenous Lugbara is that poaching is a subsistence activity. As observed by Collins (1960), the indigenous Lugbara who lived in the Lado Enclave often hunted for the Whites elephants tusks in exchange for meat. This was done subtly because the Belgian government had declared the Enclave its sole space for obtaining tusks to fund its administrative expenses. I use the terminology “subsistence poaching” as a replacement for the term “hunting” which are synonymous in this context. According to Lin 2014 quoted in Richard et al., poaching is the “illegal *killing of wildlife against established*

laws (local or international) and includes any unlicensed taking of animals, *animals taken out of season*, in excess of bag limits, *by banned weapons* or *during trespassing*” (171). Lin points out significant key terminologies which have been italicized for emphasis. Firstly, killing of animals is inevitable in the event that a group of people go to poach. These killings do not only go against laws established by man but also those established by nature. Whether licensed or unlicensed, hunting remains hunting and dangerous to biodiversity increase. Increase in fauna is endangered when animals are hunted out of season or in season. Further procreation is prevented when there is continuous hunting taking place. With a strain on the already old ones and the death of new ones, what remains apparent is a possible extinction of precious animal species. Lastly, I draw attention to the killing of animals using banned weapons or during trespassing. This observation points out the possibility of poachers or hunters introducing “more lethal and destructive dimensions to the plunder of wildlife” (Richard et al., 172). They are either deliberately orchestrated or carried out during insurgencies or any domestic brawls. Having made these observations, it is befitting to point out that subsistence poaching or a spot has the potential to turn out to be a dangerous expedition against other animal species. This is why it ought to be treated a harmful practice towards nature. The assumption herein is that if those who go for hunting do not find the elephant for the leisurely shootings, chances are that they will turn to other animals in the wild such as the buffaloes, the dik-dik gazelle, and the duikers as shall be illustrated in sequent explanations at a later stage of this section. As noted by Richard Obour et al., subsistence poaching “can expand to in cooperate large scale killing and trading of endangered species and wild, [and] eventually rival commercial poaching in very destructive ways” (176). Laing is quoted by the former critics (Richard Obour et al.) suggesting that poachers can use “tactics such as poisoning water holes, often resulting

into the death of entire herd of animals” (172). Laing’s views categorically affirm the anthropocentric view about the role of man in the destruction of nature. It also confirms why any form of hunting; subsistence or commercial cannot be given a benefit of the doubt as ‘not harmful to nature’.

In one proverb it is said that; *Odru na aju ‘i mva rua* (The buffalo dodged its spear into its offspring). This recalls a story in which the buffalo succeeded in avoiding a spear hurled at it at the expense of its offspring that was instead hit by it. It is used to discourage dodging problems on others as a solution which is not only unauthentic but evil as well. From this proverb, there is outright hunting or poaching of the wild. Young species of the animals being hunted are endangered species as the adults in attempt to escape danger, find themselves endangering their young ones. Another proverb also proclaims that; *Velevele gbi ndire* (The last one shoots the duiker). Duikers are small species which are left to be hunted down by those who go last for hunting since the big ones have already been hunted by those who arrived first at the hunting ground. This proverb discourages being late or last for activities. It must be recalled that proverbs are not curved from a void. There is always a cultural context from which they are formulated. Users often rely on personal experiences to craft what in the long run becomes an acceptable short fixed form of a philosophic saying. In line with this argument, the hunting of the duiker is not out of the blues. The actual experience has yielded to this present assertion. Which is why, attention is shifted from the lesson brought out by this proverb to the actual rendering and contextual explanation given in order to articulate the idea of hunting as a harmful practice towards nature. The duiker represents other small animals which continue to face and will face the same fate. Humanity will prey on what he deems worth his satisfaction. As such, when hunting goes to the extremes, there is imminent danger to not only a reduction in number of the

wild animals being hunted down but also a threat of extinction of the species endangered as pointed out before.

By principle of practice and association, the indigenous Lugbara are depicted as skilled in their hunting expeditions. Two proverbs reveal that they have understood the pattern of life of the wild that they know which ones to easily hunt down. The first proverb remarks that; *Odru vele ma saki ari* (The last buffalo has blood on its tail). In a herd of buffalos, it is the last one which is “spared, wounded and eventually killed” (Dalfovo 197). The claret blood on the back of the buffalo is the sign of having been wounded. It takes expertise to realize which animal to shoot at. Having shot, experience is further required to pursue or know that it will eventually die. Such experience is what the indigenous people are equipped with according to oral tradition. Another prominent victim of hunting in the Lugbara proverbs is the dik-dik gazelles. Their safety is never guaranteed because they usually get caught up where they think they are safe. This is relayed by the proverb which states that; *Ova goli a ri otaku a* (The dik-dik gazelle in its abode is in the pot). The dik-dik gazelle can hide confidently in its abode not knowing what lies in wait for it. They often easily end up in the ‘cooking pot’. Their repeated return to the same place of hiding – usually *ilianga shrub* is a return to their demise. It is further an affirmation of the fact that creatures such as animals are not as intelligent as humans are. In their little intelligence, they are trying to live within their territory. Therefore, the sensible human needs to recognize that it is his responsibility not to go beyond his geographical boundary of living. Anything beyond that is infringement on nature often manifested as poaching, deforestation and land drainage among others. This acts as a huge obstacle to the goal of nature conservation.

Five proverbs similar to the above discussed proverb agree that by returning, a dik-dik gazelle goes to its death. They affirm that; *Ovaa gu vele, ova gu dra dria/Ova*

da dri vele, ova da dri dra dri(a)/Ova ve vele, imvi dra dria (The dik dik gazelle returned, the dik dik gazelle returned to its death). The last two go as follows; *Velevele ova tu dra dria/Velvele si, ova gu dra dria* (By returning, the dikdik gazelle went to its death). The repeated returning of the dik dik gazelle to the same habitation exposes it to deadly ambushes or traps. Once entrapped, they eventual get killed. The proverb intends to discourage people from returning to a dangerously problematic situation in which they had earlier on been. They are to blame for the troubles which befall them. ‘Deadly ambushes’ and ‘traps’ are words used hand in hand with hunting in this context. Equipped or aware of the pattern of life of the dik-dik gazelle, the hunters do not leave their positions of hunting. As a result, they find it easy to hunt down the dik-dik gazelles particularly in their hide out. Important to reiterate is the view that unrestrained hunting is dangerous to not only the increase of fauna but extinction of precious species as well. Since humans keep updating their knowledge about these creatures, the animals are utterly vulnerable to human traps.

The safety mechanism of the dik-dik gazelle is its fleeing from danger seeing humanity instead promises it more danger than protection. A proverb studied states that; *Ova ni ‘i pa ongu si* (The dik dik gazelle saves itself by fleeing). It is “prompt and swift” (Dalfovo 222) to flight from hunters. Likewise, one should be swift in fleeing for one’s safety. To maintain the lens of focus, despite the swiftness in flight for safety, the dik-dik gazelle is not a match to the hunters’ spear or arrow. It is as endangered as the vervet monkey whose safety is only in the forest where it can be able to access tree tops which humans find risky to climb. The proverb in use notes that; *Oy(o)a pa ru jere si* (The vervet monkey saved itself because of the forest). This proverb shows that outside the forest a monkey would not be able to take cover for safety especially from any potential danger. In this context, the danger is from humans who treat the vervet monkey as “a

stranger” (Dalfovo 223) and therefore unwelcomed into the affairs of humanity unlike other tamed animals. Implicitly, any unwelcomed person or thing must be done away with thus drawing a clear line between who man associates with and what they do to those they do not associate with. There are no records that the indigenous people eat monkeys. What is evident in the aforementioned proverb is the fact that man and the vervet monkey are in animosity where the latter is often in danger of being killed for spot. These views ultimately prove that hunting or poaching is a harmful activity stemming from a negative conscious of humanity towards particularly the wild as a source of food thus agreeing with the Anthropocene reader that man is a destructive being whose destructive tendencies are endangering nature’s wellbeing thus blurring the conservation vision.

Birds too have been subjected to harmful practices of humanity in Lugbara proverbs. Birds are trapped either using a string trap also called *rerea* in Lugbarati, or a light net for catching birds. This is confirmed by the proverb which states that; *‘Ba se rerea (kaniku baka) ope ocezari ni ku* (One does not set the trap for a tamed guinea-fowl). There is no need of a trap for domesticated guinea-fowl. Laying a trap in this case would be a waste of time and energy. Its first meaning is to regard useless effort being made by a person to obtain what he or she already has achieved. A second meaning is related to a married woman who ought not to be disturbed by other men seeing she now has a family. It also seeks to promote love and affection among family or clan members. Relationships therefore ought to thrive on gentleness and sincerity. Beautiful as these lessons are, the primary explanation given to the fact that one does not need to “waste his time or energy” (Dalfovo 318) to lay traps for already domesticated birds shows how the indigenous people practice bird hunting. The guinea-fowl is symbolic of other birds. The manner in which these are trapped indicates the severity of such actions on these

innocent birds. The string used for trapping may not be the only method used for trapping all birds seeing they are of different sizes and species. The tense of this proverb is also suggestive of the fact that trapping of birds or simply hunting of birds is a common phenomenon among the Lugbara people. It is confirmed by a proverb which asserts that; *'Ba afu ope aiza baka 'i pi be ku* (One does not scramble over a trapped guinea-fowl with the owner). A guinea-fowl trapped belongs to the owner. Quarrelling over it is not a point despite the "rude, forceful or impolite" (Dalfovo 92) claims of the owner.

As methods of hunting birds vary, mimicry of the cry of adult birds also suffices for to be used by bird hunters. A proverb examined reveals that mimicry can help one deceive the young one of the guinea-fowl. It goes that; *'Ba ope mva eci ope ma awu si* (One can deceive the young guinea-fowl by the cry of the guinea-fowl). Although the intention of such mimicry is not explicitly stated by this proverb or any other proverb, previous arguments already reveal that it is to trap the guinea-fowl for food. This has detrimental effects on the birds which are ever being trapped. As already mentioned, the undeniable fact is the reduction in number of the birds being hunted down and threats to extinction of these birds' species. Often, they attempt to relocate to new habitats but along the way end up being captured for food. Another perspective to be considered is that of the effects of these traps on non-target birds. No method proves effective in reducing risks associated with bird traps on other bird species apart from the ones the trappers are interested in. Other birds may get trapped unknowingly since traps are indiscriminate. They do not have the human intelligence to discern which bird to trap and which one to leave. Mimicry of the cry of an adult guinea-fowl is the only method close to being safe for other birds which can distinguish sounds and escape for their lives. However, once we consider the motive behind the mimicry, one realizes it is as

dangerous as any other method since the birds eventually suffer the same fate. This argument augers well with the Anthropocene notion of man's destructiveness towards nature as has often been cited in previous explanations.

3.3 Negative Conceptualization of Nature

Negative conceptualization represents negative attitudes. It is manifested in the negative linguistic descriptions used to talk about biodiversity in Lugbara proverbs. Once people have a negative attitude towards something, there is usually contempt manifested in their dealing with this particular thing. The Lugbara proverbs already mentioned here show a negative branding of animals like dogs, snake and the frog. Necessitated by sampling, one cannot fully present the overall picture of negative descriptions assigned to various biodiversity. The limitation is further due to linguistic barriers and possibly the low interaction with other creatures or perhaps their interference into the day-to-day affairs of humanity. However, this does not bar the recognition of these attitudes as potentially dangerous to eliciting harmful responses or treatment of the flora and fauna. The proverbs studied for example do not acknowledge nature for what it is but they instead treat what should be a natural disposition of nature as negative. Every creature, including man, has been endowed with natural attributes or traits which are inalienable from birth. As animals and birds grow up, these traits begin to rear their heads, requiring acceptance as they are and then an effective way of dealing with each creature is come up with. When there is therefore a misconception of particular traits or even a correct appraisal of traits of specific animals, the human conscious can be covered by a negative blackmail of that animal or bird.

Lugbara proverbs have evidence to authenticate the view that they perpetuate negative conceptions about nature. One proverb regards a mother-dog as "a bad dog" with "bad character". It goes that; *'Ba o'a oce andresi, adreni ti andresi ku* (People stay

with a mother-dog). Bad character among the Lugbara is signified by *a mother-dog* while good character is represented by *a mother-cow*. As such, people who have bad characters are also regarded as possessing the very traits of the mother-dog. These characters can corrupt good morals especially when good people associate with them. Another meaning of the proverb refers to poor people as “oce andre” to mean “mother-dog”. They are therefore to be ignored just like one would ignore a mother-dog because these dogs are regarded morally bad. Another proverb firmly states that; *Onji ni oce andri* (The bad thing is the mother-dog). This is so because mother dogs do not care for their offspring once they are weaned. The users of this proverb praise the young people who attempt to do good with the proverbial remark that, “the mother-dog is bad, but what you do is good” – a remark which is part of the contextual explanation given to the proverb stated before this assertion. It is also used to show the indifference of some people towards the needs of others. This generalization is even made more specific by referring to dogs from specific places or clans as stated in the proverb; *Onji ocogo Paracari* (The bad one is the dog of Paraca). The dogs from Paraca allegedly have a care-free behaviour which is regarded as a bad behaviour by the indigenous people. Human beings are expected to behave responsibly and not exhibit this “care-free” behaviour which is only proper to dogs. Where there is absence of the right occasion to refer to the mother dog, references like “the black dog” are used.

A proverb found in Dalfovo’s text, also commonly heard among the Lugbara, is associated with *hunger*. It goes that; *Ocoo eni ‘di la ru atiliko a ci* (The black dog has lain in the oven). Its variant says that; *Ocoo eniari la ru andru atiliko a ci*. (A black dog lies today in the fireplace). Primarily this proverb is uttered in escape or denial of the responsibility of cooking. Sykes and Matza 1957 called this neutralization theory; “the rationalization or neutralization individuals give to justify their failure to do what they

ought to do” (173). Herein, a person blames the dog for his or her irresponsibility in order to deflect criticism. Second contextual meaning points out that the black dog in this case is associated with a “deep sorrow” in the family which leads to lack of cooking at home by the family members. Various negative descriptions given to the dog in the proverbs discussed afore have the potential to influence how people treat their dogs. Dogs are one of the domesticated animals and as such they deserve a fair treatment from the very humans who domesticate them. Due to such attitudes, one cannot deny the fact of maltreatment of these animals by their owners. Humanity should take responsibility for their negative actions other than neutralizing or rationalizing it with negative references to living organisms which are part of nature. This is considered harmful. Nature – particularly the fauna – has so far been seen as a scapegoat from bad circumstances or justifying bad character.

The topography too is associated with negative attributes. This comes about in the rhetorical proverb which asks; *Mi Anyara ayia ri i ya?* (Are you the Anyara in the wilderness?). The Anyara are a clan living in the west of Lugbara land. They are considered backward people. Consequently, the wilderness is associated with backwardness. People are therefore cautioned not to “associate with the alleged dullness of this clan”. It suffices to argue that in this proverb, the wilderness, a beautiful part of topography is blamed for the mental ineptness and primitivity of the Anyara people. Whereas humans can be backward, nature cannot be backward. There is a further misrepresentation of nature in the proverb which states that: *Odrukudru aluri ini yi mifi woro* (One frog dirties the entire surface of the water). Lugbara believe that one frog is “sufficient to disturb and to muddy the entire water” (Dalfovo 196). Communities equally have individuals whose duty is to destabilize the peace of that community. They cause confusion and trouble in the entire community thus discrediting or blackmailing

the good reputation of members of that particular community. One wonders why man's own folly is compared to the presence of one frog in the water. Water and land surface are the habitat for all amphibians including "the frog". In its natural habitat, it would not be right to associate negative human behaviour with this creature since it has the ability to provoke harmful acts towards amphibians. Besides, the frog is only relishing its habitat as it is supposed to by nature. Arbitrary acts such as killing frogs just because they have been conceptualized as responsible for making dirty water surfaces become apparent in this context. When a child who has not fully comprehended the meaning of this proverb listens to it, he or she may be driven to kill any frog that they find their way since they are an interference in man's livelihood. I pointed earlier that these creatures have been created to be what they are. They did not possess negative attributes until man's negative conceptualization of them twisted their beauty to associate them with negative characters in the human world. The last of such attitude is embodied in one proverb which is an insult to a people who have physical deformations with their mouth. It states that; *Ti mvuru ma mileti eri ori (ma) mileti le* (The face of a short-lipped person is like the face of a snake). Contextually, a "short-lipped" person is one who is "severe and cold looking" (Dalfovo 235). Since such people rarely utter words, their appearance is like that of a snake from which people recoil in fear. It is an error to assert that all snakes are dangerous. Rather than use their unique physic to describe potentially dangerous people, there should rather be other admonitions given man to front the need to describe cold looking persons. As pointed out, describing negativity using an element of nature promotes harmful tendencies towards the particular element of nature referred to which consequently hinders the vision to conserve nature effectively.

Having considered the direct confrontations towards nature and harmful attitudes which are capable of shaping how humanity views nature, I now consider the last

harmful acts of humanity which endanger nature. This in particular is recklessness. Man is careless. His carelessness often leads to the demise or harming of different elements of nature he is in contact with. Subjecting nature to man's reckless treats is what exposes nature to destruction. Man is the first enemy of nature. He will unrestrainedly vent his anger towards nature regardless of the consequences. This is why due to anger a person kills a prized animal species – the mother cow. The proverb studied reveals that; *Aooko so ti andrapi* (Anger killed a mother cow). A mother cow is one of the most fruitful and cherished possession among the indigenous people. Besides the benefits reaped from having a mother cow, it is also believed among the natives that moral uprightness or general goodness is what can be associated with a mother cow as compared to a mother dog which is regarded as morally dangerous. Uncontrolled anger blinds people hence driving them to the “the absurdity of killing [their] mother cow” (Dalfovo 76). People are thus being cautioned to exercise restraint over their anger so as to avoid losing the present force and fruitful future yields. Regardless of the value that humanity attaches to animals like “the mother cow”, when he is out of control of his anger, he destroys his own. Coupled with the deliberate killings that man carries out on animals, the long-term effect is vast. If he is capable of doing it to domesticated animals, then he is capable of doing it to the wild animals as well.

Besides the carelessness of failure to control his anger, man also shows carelessness when the hens which entrust themselves to him are eaten by the fox according to one proverb. The proverb goes; *A'u fe ei tamba 'ba azi dri, obolako de ei ra* (The hens entrusted themselves to someone else, the fox finished them). This proverb recalls a fable in which the hens out of their stupidity dedicated the task of taking care of themselves to someone else. This exposed them to their arch enemy the fox who ate all of them. It is a caution to people who loath the task of having to take care of themselves.

They ought to assume this responsibility or expose themselves to extermination like the chicken. Man, in this proverb, shows that he does not bear the responsibility for the welfare of the chicken. After all they are his meat. It helps to reiterate the view that even though humanity shares a close relationship with domesticated animals, he still exhibits destructive or harmful tendencies towards it as well. Because man does not wish to coexist with some animals of the wild, they treat animals like monkeys as strangers. It is no wonder that we earlier on noted how a vervet monkey's safety is only in the forest because it can be hunted or easily caught and killed in the open. When it comes home, it is treated as an unwelcomed visitation, thus the rhetorical proverb; *A'di omve oya (e)za ani ya?* (Who called the vervet monkey to meat?). Domesticated animals have a close relationship with man himself. This therefore enables them to participate to some extent in the life of humans. It is not the case with monkeys which are not domesticated. Consequently, they do not belong to the home. Their residence is the forest in which they have exercised mastery of the art of survival. Should they appear at home where man lives, they are treated strangers whose disturbing presence is disapproved. Implicitly, the vervet monkey can be killed or even stoned. Human actions are premeditated, more so actions which are detrimental to the wellbeing of nature. It does not matter whether the latter end of the actions was considered first or not. This destructive tendency is what the Anthropocene deems abominable if we are to promote environment conservation agenda.

3.4 Conclusion

The views discussed in this section confirm the Anthropocene views that humanity is not friendly with nature. Lugbara proverbs demonstrate that humanity, being overly concerned with their subsistence, go to the extreme of exploiting the available provisions of nature by poaching or reaping through trapping of weaker animals and birds. They carry out practices like bush burning in preparation of land for cultivation. It is further

noted that humans see a threat or any unwanted intrusion by a living organism which may not be dangerous as dangerous. The result is that they do away with such creatures considered to be interfering with human comfort. These eventually have harmful effects on nature such as decrease in number and in worst case scenario extinction of precious animal, plant, insect and bird species. Without a doubt, Lugbara proverbs demonstrate that negatives descriptions employed to talk about biodiversity has the potential to influence harmful treatment of nature. If nature is viewed in this light, it is evident that the conservation objective may be far from being achieved.

CHAPTER FOUR

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN MAN AND NATURE

4.1 Introduction

This chapter explores the harmonious relationship existing between man and nature in Lugbara proverbs, repudiating the Anthropocene notion that man is a danger to nature due to his greed which often makes him disregard prioritizing nature conservation as an emergency. It affirms the coexistence between man and nature, a step further into conservation of nature. Man has always largely depended on nature for all his needs. As such, extraction of basic physical needs like food, herbs, building materials among others are done within the ethical paradigm which permits a harmonious existence between man and nature.

In the context of the Lugbara people, discourse on man and nature relationship can be understood in two folds; the physical and spiritual. Both understandings contribute to positively shaping the perspective from which humans ought to interact with nature. The physical relationship between man and nature thrives on observable interactions between human beings and the different living and non-living elements of the material world. This interaction elicits feedbacks from both entities. The spiritual dimension of man-nature relationship reveals how humanity approaches the unseen world. It is anchored on practices such as ancestral worship and their understanding of fate (symbolized by death). The beliefs of the indigenous Lugbara reiterate the notion of harmonious existence. This view is weaved into the arguments presented for the different facets which conceptualize the relationship between man and nature.

4.2 Sustainer – dependent

A harmonious existence factors in the concept of mutuality and the willingness to meet the obligations that govern this kind of coexistence. Lugbara proverbs evidently

attest to this truth and the view that human survival is determined by how well humans have appreciated their position within the natural world (material world) as dependents on nature. In the Lugbara proverbs studied, humanity sees nature as sustainer, capable of supplying the physical needs of man such as food and raw materials for construction of shelter among other necessities of life which require raw materials from nature. Man counts himself as a dependent whose interaction with the sustainer is governed by ethics which promote sustenance of humanity in one hand and conservation of nature in another. Nature is regarded as the sole provider of all human wants on condition that humans put up with the burden of tilling it. It is on this ground that mutuality is “beneficial both for the environment and for the individual elements of its constituent parts” (Mark Cross 01) among which humans belong. Such profound stance promotes a harmonious existence between man and nature postulating that when nature is approached as an entity that requires care to thrive, risks of destruction are prevented.

An earlier on studied proverb is reconsidered here as the genesis of the man-nature relationship. It makes a strong assertion that; *Nyaku ni 'ba piri ma andri ni* (The earth is the mother of us all. As a mother, the earth has the ability to feed everybody by its produce like an ordinary mother would do. This proverb implies that willingness to cultivate a piece of land guarantees food and life to everybody. A mother figuratively is one who nurtures young ones. She is also a cocreator with nature, endowed with the ability to bear offspring. All motherly instincts become inalienable from the earth in light of the context of the argument for the sustainer-dependent relationship that man and nature are involved in. The earth can be conceptualized as endowed with an intrinsic intuition found in mothers where they are predisposed to caring for their infants while procreating as well. Whereas an infant will reap the care of the mother by motherly affection and the infant's cry of the need for attention, man has to reap the care of

mother-nature by cultivation and protection of the latter. This is in alignment with the purpose of the above proverb which is to encourage hard work, in particular, cultivation of land (the earth) for man to obtain food to sustain him. Therefore, nature as a mother is in possession of nourishment embodied in what is cultivated to feed man but must be got through man's hard work. Evidently, as man seeks sustenance, he finds himself conserving nature by either default or a deliberate decision out of fear of his own survival. What ought to be emphasized more is that, conservation should not then be seen from the perspective of man attempting to survive but rather from the perspective of a man who cherishes the natural environment he lives in.

The immutable contribution made by food obtained from the garden is "beauty" as stated in the proverb; *Ndri eri anya ni* (Beauty is millet (food)). According to this proverb, man is considered without "beauty" if he has not fully fed on what gives him "beauty". Beauty in this context does not necessarily refer to the quality of being attractive. It points to an idea of man's overall health conditions as should be the nature of a living person. Humans give priority to food before being fed. Another context refers to the politeness with which a visitor is expected to partake of what he has been given. This gives an indication of how food which is provided by nature is of paramount significance to both the host and the visitor. Due to the relevant position assigned to "millet" which symbolically stands for food, it is befitting to regard it as "the beauty of man" (Dalfovo 181). Important to remember is the fact that nature's motherly instinct desires to see man in possession of "charm and attraction" (Dalfovo 181) which is produced by the abundance of food emanating from nature. Without a doubt, nature occupies the primary space in the sustenance of man. This sustenance is majorly obtained from *amvu* translated as *the field*. The field is the center of attraction and a pivotal channel of provision of food crops, shelter, raw materials or resources for works

like construction, leisure which are but a few of what man gleans from nature. A close interpretation of the word *field* shows it as more specific compared to reference to *earth* which can also be translated as the planet.

It is asserted in one proverb that; *Amvu ni 'ba anyajo ni* (The field is the stomach of man). The field is where food crops, tubers and vegetables are obtained from. What the field yields is that which sustains its dependents. In the context of the proverb stated above, nature yields food suitable for every caliber of people regardless of age. “The bachelors”, meaning “young men without wives” (Dalfovo 201) feast on *awubi* (*coutalaria, Ochroleuca*), as pointed out by the proverb which says *Ojolo nya awubi* (A bachelor eats awubi). “Awubi” is a vegetable which feels slippery in the mouth. Its other name is “agupi-nya-ku” which is translated as “men-do-not-eat” (Dalfovo 201). It is widely known among the Lugbara that people generally do not like to eat *awubi*. However, a bachelor’s despondent situation conditions him to survive on *awubi* instead of other delicacies which could have been be prepared only by his wife. *Awubi* is indicative of other vegetable which can be harvested from nature freely. Nature’s sustenance of man and consequently its preservation remains the key ideas that need to be emphasized here. Even if the status of the bachelor changes his drawing sustenance from nature will not change. Dislike for *awubi* does not provoke any destructive tendencies towards nature as is implied in the afore proverb. One would expect that what is not liked by the majority is dealt away with but this is not the case revealed by Lugbara proverbs. What clearly stands out is the acceptance that the greens which majority do not like can still be a source of food to other people. As a result, the need to survive makes man to inevitably conserve nature, although sometimes without a deliberate effort to simply conserve it for the sake of making it thrive.

While the bachelor feeds on *awubi*, the elderly people specifically feed on *kumvuku milk*. This assertion is supported by the proverb, *Anji mbe ki kumvuku (kaniku aridri kaniku lekewa) ku* (Children do not drink the kumvuku milk). *Kumvuku* is a cow whose milk is reserved for the elders only. It is not meant to be tempered with by anyone including the bachelors who in this category are relegated to the position of children by Lugbara tradition. This proverb implies that functions and privileges of elders must not be interfered with. They must be respectfully allowed to enjoy such special privileges. Palpably, the different foods obtained from nature indicate how dependent man is on nature. Nature remains his primary provider, especially of food. Harmonious existence with nature is therefore fostered as man continues to enjoy nature's providence. Every activity done is in the interest of protecting that from which he obtains his sustenance.

Birds are other sources of food for the Lugbara as stated in the symbolic use of *the chick* in the proverb, *A'u(a)mv ani alu onjayia (kaniku ai) si* (The chick tastes good because of the pepper (or salt)). By virtue of being young, the meat of a chick is not palatable. For it to be tasty, "little pepper" or "salt in pepper" (Dalfovo 86) is required. This proverb is applied to situations where a young person or an analogous situation requires enthusiasm to make him or it enterprising and attractive. In some instances, an elderly man in need of a young wife uses this to justify his position and object opposition to his decision to marry a young lady. Irrespective of the application of this proverb, what remains apparent is the literal assertion and explanation which clearly shows how man cannot do without food. An implicit suggestion in the mentioned proverb indicates that extreme conditions of hunger can force man to the extremity of eating what is not yet ready for consumption. This argument is supported by a proverb which states how a clan was forced to feed on raw shea fruits due to the indispensability of human survival predicated on food provided by nature. The proverb goes that, *E'yo amale ku ri si, Ojepi*

ri ru kumara awa si (For not deciding properly, the Ojepi clan survived on unripe kumara). *Kumara* refers to *Butyrospermum, paradoxium* commonly known as shea tree. In a story among the Lugbara (Dalfovo 154), the Ojepi clan members were compelled to eat the unripe fruit of the shea tree because they did not choose a proper course of action which they would pursue for themselves with determination. As a reminder of the need for proper foresight and effectual planning based on one's own resources, this proverb raises the consciousness that the indigenous Lugbara understand the value of food for man's survival. Where there is no food, there is no life. Consequently, under extraordinary circumstances, man finds himself partaking of what is left of nature in order to survive as symbolized in the Ojepi clan eating raw shea tree fruit. The circumstances which lead to a people consuming what is unpalatable are harsh conditions of lack because one is poor or simply because what is left is not sufficient enough to supply the needs of the unfortunate. For man to constantly benefit as a dependent on nature, he must be in position to fulfill conditions which keep nature in position to produce its yields. Otherwise, humanity is bound to experience the consequences of what he has failed to take care of. It is already emerging clearly that the indigenous Lugbara community treasure their relation with nature as there is no evidence of massive and deliberate confrontations which lead to adverse destruction of nature. This is already in disagreement with the Anthropocene view which considers man a destructive element of nature. As earlier on noted, man benefits from the bounty of nature if he is willing to till or cultivate or take care of the field. Cultivation is not an activity which engenders nature unless humanity goes to the extremes of use of artificial equipment capable of massively destroying what is natural. Uses of dangerous artificial chemicals such as fertilizers pose immense danger to the environment. It was discovered from the proverbs studied that this is not the case with the indigenous Lugbara. What stands out is the rudimentary

method of cultivation using hoes. This does not complicate the already existing sustainer-dependent relationship between man and nature. It further makes conservation of nature an easy goal to achieve from the Lugbara perspective seeing methods of cultivation used do not endanger nature.

Nature itself provides suitable conditions for man to cultivate. One of such conditions deemed suitable for cultivation is rain. For man to be able to till land, it must have been made tillable by forces of nature. This is an overt manifestation of nature's motherly instinct not only towards man but to all creatures inhabiting the physical nature. It can be regarded as "innate urge and mechanism that controls" (Borovska Viktorija 01) how nature reacts in its responsibility of matriarchy. The bond is created when humans begin cultivating for food. Continuity of this relationship is so cherished that lazy persons are upbraided when they show tendencies of absconding from their rightful duty to enhance production by nature. Several proverbs studied revealed use of the word "hoe" as symbolic of digging or cultivation and other necessary works present. The proverbs encourage cultivation as the primary way of promoting the already existing harmonious relationship. When people cultivate, they are taking care of nature which in turn gives them yields for food. Evidence of man's compliance to the condition of cultivation is seen in the presence of food on the "apalako" as one proverb presents. It states that, *Abiri apa(lako) dria yo* (There is no hunger over the apa(lako)). Its variant declares, *Apa(lako) dria abiri yo*, translated as (Over the apa(lako) there is no hunger). *Apalako* is a small raised platform on which food stuff for consumption are kept. This is done as a safety measure against destruction of food by domestic animals such as goats, sheep, and birds such as the fowl and duck. These are common domesticated creatures which enjoy coexistence with man. It should be observed that food cannot find itself on the *apalako* without cultivation. The proverb is also used by the rich against the poor to

indicate that the latter could have food and later enjoy a better status if only they work hard. This is why another proverb emphasizes that, *Ocoo ko abe ku la ni* (It is the dog that does not handle a hoe). The dog in this case is symbolic of a stupid or dull person who claims he or she cannot be able to handle a hoe. The proverb argues that as long as a person is capable, the means to obtaining food is by handling the hoe. A capable person is expected to work. Only the “abnormal or sick persons” (Dalfovo 192) are exempted from such duties. Criticism is leveled against lazy persons who do not regard preservation of the relationship between man and nature as worthy of attention. Such a character shows “repulsion for work” (Dalfovo 37) as relayed in the proverb, *Aco mini ofu* (For you the hoe is leprosy). People who do not wish to handle the hoe presume it to be a hated disease. They will do whatever it takes to avoid the hoe. This kind of behaviour among these lazy persons is considered utter protest against survival of humanity seeing man’s survival is largely if not entirely dependent on nature.

Relatedly, lazy characters are sternly criticized in another proverb which affirms that, *Acoo abe ni eri ozaa oza* (The handle hoe stings him). It is descriptive of the reluctance of a person to pick up the hoe and dig “as though a hoe handle were a wasp, bee or some other animal which is capable of stinging or hurting him” (Dalfovo 37). The hoe stands a symbol of harmony between man and nature. It is the catalyst which promotes harmonious existence especially man is driven to cultivate land. Aversion of work such as land cultivation is therefore condemned in this case. People must be willing to undertake the needed work for upkeep, especially cultivation of fields. Further still, it is proclaimed by one proverb that; *Acoo abe ‘ba azaza driari dra ni* (A hoe handle in the hands of a lunatic is death). A hoe handled by a normal person gives good results like yields for food. It is believed to be dangerous in the hands of a “mad” person who might expose not only the field but can “forfeit the care of domestic animals” (Dalfovo 37) due

to irresponsibility. Implicitly, humanity exhibits responsibility, man and nature relationship remains unharmed. Fields produce their crops only after intensive care. One must therefore seriously and eagerly work to achieve or have sustenance from nature.

Yields from the field are seasonal. Having perfect understanding of the seasons and times fosters the right dealings with nature. This is confirmed in the proverb, *Azi amvua ri oko o'du alu ku* (Work in the field does not end in one day). The variants of the afore proverb state that; *'Ba eco amvu 'aa de si 'duwi 'duwi o'do aluri 'aa coti ku* (One cannot dig a field and finish it clear immediately in one day) and *'Ba aa amvu diti de coti ku* (People do not dig a field throughout the day and finish right away). The field cannot be dug throughout the day and finished immediately in one day. It must be “spread-over a whole season” (Dalfovo 90). A given activity equally needs time, which time is usually long. People are expected neither to overwork nor finish early. The virtue of patience and slow attention to work is encouraged by this proverb. Notably, understanding of seasons is a demonstration of the consciousness not only about plenty of yields and not getting good yields but also an indication of how man allows nature to take its rest from what may otherwise result into destruction other than cultivation for sustenance. It is this understanding of seasons and times which produces the admonitions clearly seen in the proverb stated before. Arguably, this is as a result of the knowledge that harmony is paramount to a thriving relationship between man and nature. If man does not practice fallowing, he risks not only nature but also reaping desirable crops from nature. As fallowing takes place, at the appropriate time he must pick up the hoes to cultivate. One proverb instructs that; *'Aapi kuri nya ku* (The one who does not dig does not eat). He must hold the *abe*, a symbol of cultivation if he or she is able to survive by what nature provides. The digging is done at two levels as revealed by the proverb which says; *Abe 'aa (kaniku fu) nga (kaniku amvu) ceni ku* (The handle does not dig the field by itself).

Firstly, to *aa* means digging deep for turning the soil. Later what has been dug must be tilled. Lugbara proverbs refer to it as *fu* – which means digging for the purpose of weeding. In fact, the context of use of the afore proverb cited proves that having a hoe does not necessarily entail “having the yields from the field” (Dalfovo 28). Humanity is encouraged to make use of his “energies and toils at their disposal” (Dalfovo 28) to do what is necessary for their subsistence. Failure to fulfill the necessary conditions of cultivation and tilling may result to failure to obtain food. A stranger is depicted to have no granary base in a foreign land since he may be given a small piece of land which may also not produce enough food crops to be stored in the granary according to the proverb which states that, *Andi ma ero pale yo (ni)* (The foreigner has no granary base). Often foreigners are given a small piece of land to cultivate. The produce may not be so much to need a granary for storage. His condition is therefore uncertain as regards food. The proverb firstly encourages those living on land to work it. Secondly, it encourages production of abundant food to store away to avoid a state of food insecurity.

Attention is drawn to the word *ero* which means *granary*. Traditionally, a typical Lugbara homestead must have a granary in the middle of the compound. This granary is specifically meant to preserve what has been harvested from the field. This calls for cultivation and other necessary steps to make sure the fields yield for man’s possession. This automatically fosters a harmonious relationship between man and nature. Another proverb in this category remarks that, *Abe ni duu ‘i ipi dri si* (The handle smooths away by the hands of its owner). “Carefully and skillfully...handling” the hoe through “constant and iterated” (Dalfovo 29) work will produce the needed results from nature. The proverb is used to emphasize the idea that, constant practice makes perfect. It is further a step towards encouraging application and perseverance if one is to obtain from the bounty of nature. Nature is projected as constantly supplying the provisions of man

regardless of whether man cares for it or not. However, the results of reaping vary based on the subscription to the terms and conditions. The proverbs studied illustrate the intimacy that humans share with nature in which “the hoe” is seen as a mediator facilitating the harmony. When the hoe lover is obsessed with digging, he should be able to understand the fact that there is an inalienable connection between him and nature. Man cannot be separated from nature. Firstly, he lives in the ecosphere. Conscious of this, his dealings with nature through practices such as cultivation are an attempt to make sure that he gives back to nature in form of care as he receives from nature in form of sustenance. This is an outright repudiation of Anthropocene view that man is a destroyer of nature and not a protector. Sufficing to say is that the users of Lugbara proverbs show clearly how they are practicing harmonious existence with nature minus any form of infringement on nature. There is danger when humans use machines to cultivate but the use of “hoe”, shows how the Lugbara rely on simple tools to do cultivation. Using hoes requires energy. Such energy is proportional to how much a person has fed hence squashing thoughts of destruction of nature since such would only be done at the expense of human health. Important to recall is that these hoes are made using elements provided by nature. In particular, the hoe handles are logs hewn from trees to make handles which can help man to cultivate the ground for his welfare. This amplifies the connection which the hoe handle has with its owner plus the actual cultivation process.

There are other benefits that humanity obtains from nature without necessarily picking the hoe to cultivate it. As man’s sustainer, there is a limit to consumption of certain provisions. According to two proverbs, “honey” is one product of nature which ought to be consumed with care. Honey is ascribed to an attribute which makes it *pleasurable* thus something that people enjoy whenever they consume of. Ordinarily bees will colonize where they feel at peace, this disposition of bees is respected by the

indigenous Lugbara people who call for exercise of caution or restraint from excessiveness in behaviour while attempting to harvest honey. This indicates that the indigenous people have the consciousness that if they do not deal calmly or rightfully with nature, it is bound to retaliate against humanity for the harsh treatment. This is confirmed by the proverb which remarks that; *Anyu ni 'ba odu su si* (The bee stings people because of honey). Its variant states that; *Anyu ni no 'ima susi* (The bee buzzes because of its honey). Another variant points out that; *Anyu su ru ri i ri* (The bee with honey defends itself). A last variant state; *Anyu ombari 'ba odu su si* (The aggressive bee stings people because of the honey). The proverb in focus and its variants clearly state what happens whenever there is a breach in the rule of coexistence by either side. Bees are particularly alert when they have their honey and are ready to defend it. It is characteristic of them to become aggressive, attacking anyone who comes near them. Bees of this caliber are compared to the activeness of rich people who are ever attentive when it comes to securing their property. They realize that to maintain the harmony in relationship with nature, humans must stay within their established jurisdictions or otherwise face consequences for their overstepping of boundaries. Both nature and humans have limitations which must not be breached otherwise; one entity is either harmed or destroyed. Humans are said to allow bees to move freely expecting that when their turn to harvest honey from bees comes, the bees should allow them to also benefit freely. If not, people resort to using fire to extract the valuable honey from bees.

Cordial relationships between humans are said to be found on the principle of “a balanced attitude of give-and-take” (Dalfovo 93). This same principle is what sustains man-nature relationship. Ngungu falls victim of his own cow when he fails to “deal genially with it” (Dalfovo 187) according to the proverb, *Ngungu a ti fu(ra) Ngungu(ra)* (Ngungu’s cow gored Ngungu). Ngungua allegedly did not deal well with cow. The

result was a tragedy which saw Ngungua perishing instead of nature. People are encouraged to handle their own property and those of others attentively. This is what breaches the harmony that exists between man and nature; when one entity abrogates the principle of coexistence. It is said in one proverb that; *Ocoo mini oceeri mi ci ni* (The dog you have raised bites you). Its variant goes; *Mi ocoo oce imi ci(ceni)* (You rear a dog to bite you). These two proverbs point out scenarios where the person that one has nurtured or benefited may eventually fight against one. In general terms, one's property may be the source of trouble to oneself. It realistically envisages this possibility as liable to occur, and it cautions people against. Nature, as already observed, is part of this property which requires looking after. A domesticated animal like a dog cannot become a source of trouble for man if man has really dealt well with it. The assumption is that given the care that man must take as a fulfillment of the cordial existence rule, nature should not turn out to be violent to the very person that takes care of it unless there is a breach in the rule of cordial existence, articulating how the indigenous Lugbara people understand their position as far as coexistence with nature is concerned. There is no indication of any direct harmful attitude of nature towards man without man having to fail in his role of promoting harmonious existence. Lugbara, therefore, generally enjoy an amiable relationship with nature. The benefits that man obtains from it (nature) put him in a position where he cares for rather than destroys nature thus refuting the Anthropocene view.

4.3 Nature as a Conduit of Human Character

Man's relationship with nature is also premised on the perspective that nature is a channel of human character. Nature in Lugbara proverbs is treated as consisting of near relatives, some of whose characters the Lugbara people have borrowed from while others are a direct contrast to human character which the users of these proverbs deviate from.

Because nature offers relevant life lessons to the users of these proverbs, the relationship between man and nature is projected as being harmonious. Lugbara proverbs employ the use of simile and implied metaphor in its commentary on human-nature relationship. Nature is treated as a near-relative from whom man actually sees his character reflected. This attitude does not allow for unnecessary destruction from what is rightfully a mirror of human character. Nature is cared for and left as a reflection of human character as shall be seen in the subsequent paragraphs.

Man's "greedy, uncontrolled eating habit" (Dalfovo 144) is compared to that of a grasshopper licking the newly germinated millet in a proverb which states that; *Eri anya mbee njenje le* (He licks millet like grasshoppers do). Anya refers to millet; *Eleusine, corocana* which is also symbolic of food. According to the aforementioned proverb, the uncontrolled behaviour of greed is not approved of among the indigenous people. People ought to exercise constraint when eating. Otherwise, they risk being characterized gluttonous or greedy. Due to this greed, some people are likened to flies which self-invite themselves into feast which they have not officially been invited into. This character is condemned in the proverb which asserts that; *Omve ru ceni onyu (kunyuu) ni* (The self-invited is a fly). When people come to the knowledge of a common meal, or some other gathering, they are prompted by their greed and impatience to invite themselves to the event. He is prompted by greed and impatience to show his unwanted and disturbing presence which can often be rewarded with "embarrassment and humiliation" (Dalfovo 210). A variant to the proverb stated points out that; *Omve ru ceni ni nga imi li ra* (Self-invitation will get you right). According to Dalfovo if humans are not showing impatience for food, they are demonstrating unwelcomed interferences into conversations to which they have not been invited (210). The two proverbs are uttered to remind people to be satisfied attending celebrations to which they have been invited.

Such human attributes possessed by nature provoke humans not to interfere with it because in nature they see a daily reminder of themselves. Therefore, nature being a mirror necessitates an establishment of a cordial relationship in which humanity respects what reveals to him his personality traits. Whereas man and nature may share attributes which make them near relatives, the contrasts in some of the attributes clearly distinguish nature as humans. These contrasts still have a considerable contribution to the manner in which man and nature relate. The users of these proverbs appear to be showing an attitude of indifference to nature yet gleaning useful lessons to shape their own characters. In another proverb, man is compared to “the nocturnal night jar” also called “swift-like birds” (Dalfovo 40) which do not have homes to draw a contrast in characters which should make human’s distinctly humans. The proverb in focus says; *Ad(r)amanaka jorovu yo ni* (It is the night-jar that has no nest). The *Night jar*, also known as *goat sucker* has a characteristic of appearing suddenly in the evening when it is dark. No one sees or knows where it comes from. The impression that it has no proper nest or a home is conveyed to those who roam about as if they have no proper home to stay at. It is also used with young men who are reluctant to build themselves a house. Everybody needs a house. The person accused of not having a house can use this proverb to refute allegations by stating the contrary. It is portrayed by Lugbara proverbs that whereas these birds do not have a proper nest, humans on the contrary have a proper home and therefore ought to live their lives like ones with a proper home. They are also not like “the water”, which, once starts flowing in one direction, there is no turning back. This is a strong warning to characters who have made it a habit to abscond their responsibilities yet they will not abscond forever.

Man is further upbraided not to be “still and indifferent” (Dalfovo 115) like a tree in the proverb; *Ciri ni, fe ni ya?* (Quiet, is it a tree?). He ought to have active social

networks, and establish active relationships with his social environment not being indifferent as indicated in the proverb. It directly refers to persons who are not interested in what is happening around them. They are thus encouraged to establish active relations with their social environment instead of living in isolation. What one learns from, one keeps; a conclusion which can be drawn from the proverbs considered herein. The users of these proverbs would not have used them had they put an end to the different components of nature used in the proverbs. It is further evident that man is in constant observation of what revolves around him such that he knows which component of nature to draw a lesson from. Instead, we see elements like insect being victims of what humanity regards unconventional characters of nature. Such is possible seeing that flies are drawn towards their feeding ground by smell. In the process of seeking to benefit from what man has made for his satisfaction, the flies find themselves unintentionally being trapped to their death. A rhetorical question is raised in form of a proverb which asks, *Mi 'de onyukunyu ni o'de lesua rile 'dini a'dosi ya?* (Why do you fall in as a fly falls into milk like this?). This is descriptive of people who enter suddenly and uninvited into conversations. Once in, they immediately take active part in the conversation as one is updated about the topic of discussion yet they actually start this conversation without knowing what people have been talking about. The proverb discourages interferences. Other variants assert that; *Mi o'be ru ojo a(si) kile onyukunyu ni o'be ru lesu a rile* (You fall into affairs like a fly falls into milk). *Onyuku 'de ta lesu alea 'di onzi* (The fall of the fly into the milk is bad). These are all manifestations of human characters which man is able to observe in nature thus clearly portraying nature as a conduit of human character. Humans see in nature a fact that there is often resemblance between the parent and the offspring. In the principle of procreation, the young one resembles the parent which has begotten the latter. Just like “the angilia”, “the edio (or edoo)”, “the kumara” and “the

odolo (or odilo)”, people with the same qualities are said to resemble each other in character. Users of these proverbs also believe that such people often found together as confirmed by the following proverbs; *Angili ‘de angili ndu(a)* (The angili fruits fall under the angili tree). Its variants go as; (a) *Edio (kaniku edoo) ‘de edio (kaniku edoo) ndu(a)* (The edio (or edoo) fruits fall under the edio (or edoo) tree). (b) *Kumara la ‘de kumara ndu(a)* (The edio (or edoo) fruits fall under the edio (or edoo) tree). (c) *Odolo (kaniku odilo) ni ‘de odolo (kaniku odilo) ndu(a)* (The Odilo (or Odilo) fruits fall under the odolo (or odilo) tree). According to these proverbs, *Edio (compendium, nigricans)*, *the edoo (vitex, doniana)*, *the kumara (Butyrospermum, patadoxum)*, *the odilo (kigelia aetiopica)*, *the angilia (parinaric, curatellifulia)* or any other tree cannot drop its fruits anywhere else except under it. Likewise, a person bears the fruit that are according to his nature. Thus, a son resembles his father, and a member takes after his family. A person in need may as well use this proverb as a motivation for seeking help from his relations. In both contexts, these proverbs explicitly show that man looks at nature as a conduit of character. His relationship with nature is premised on the fact that nature is a true reflection of his character traits. This alone squashes Anthropocene view that man is destructive towards nature. The consciousness that nature is a mirror of human character makes it easy for man to cultivate a character of conservation of nature seeing he will always draw an understanding of his personality from it.

4.4 Nature as Man’s Social and Economic Prestige

Social economic prestige among the indigenous people is largely connected to nature; in particular, the environment. Nature holds a prominent position in Lugbara proverbs as a source of man’s socioeconomic prestige. Man by nature is a being that seeks fame and recognition. This does not come randomly. A person enjoying fame must have stretched beyond the lines of ordinary persons to either acquire property or exhibit

talent or character which is above reproach. This eventually allows him to ascend the socioeconomic ladder as one who has achieved. Social recognition therefore places such a person above his or her peers. He or she may also attain a position highly valued in the society because of the fortune obtained from nature. Economic acumen in this case is therefore pivotal in informing how the Lugbara relate with nature. It is observable in Lugbara proverbs that the components of nature responsible for wealth acquisition receive a peculiar treatment from their owners. This is already in opposition to Anthropocene views.

To justify the above opinion, land is the first indispensable part of the wealth of the Lugbara people. As such, they affirm that, *Angu 'ipi ako ni yo* (There is no land without an owner). People claim ownership of every part of the land for one reason or another. Embedded in the afore proverb is the general principle of ownership, cautioning people who may disregard it. This implicitly cautions those who would wish to encroach on land which is not theirs. Encroachers often impact on land negatively or face consequences of their actions which usually can be death. However, having ownership of land itself guards against any harmful practices. Therefore, to have land – an element of nature – is an outward show of how man relates with nature harmoniously. Wealth is often sought after because of the benefits that come with it. This is why the Ojapi people is said to have “coveted” the cows of the Aringa people as proclaimed in the proverb; *Ojapi liki ru Aringa(ma) ti si (oye)* (The Ojapi people coveted the cows of the Aringa in vain). An oral narrative is shared among the Lugbara that (Dalfovo 200) the Aringa people used to pass through the territory of the Ojapi clan bordering Yumbe and Terego District. The Ojapi took advantage of this passage to barter food, beer, and other items for some cows that had been raided. The story states that sometimes the Ojapi clan waited in vain for the Aringa people to exchange what they had. The afore proverb draws

from this incidence to front a vital lesson which teaches people not to expect barter for things all the time like Ojapi clan did. People are encouraged by to provide and produce things for themselves through their own work. They are also called upon to be realistic in their expectations bearing in mind the persons they are dealing with. To contextualize the focal point at hand, focus is shifted to *the cows*, the main items which triggered the barter trade between the Ojapi and the Aringa people.

Cows are part of fauna which man treats with utmost regard because there is a hope of benefiting from it. Raiding is as a result of love for wealth. Elements of nature which are men's source of wealth push them to the extreme of practices like raiding. Once wealth is acquired, their social prestige is heightened as those who have more receive more reverence from their counterparts. As those who have rubbed shoulders with their fellows who have, those who do not have are lowly ranked. Ojapi clan picks interest in trading other items for cattle because they have realised the value of being in possession of cattle like the Aringas. Land and cattle are both components of nature which contribute to man's socioeconomic prestige thus fostering a positive attitude of care for them (nature) from their respective owners. Other proverbs equate the value of cattle to "the birth or presence or cry of a woman or girl" (Dalfovo 184). They articulate the position of the "girl" or "woman" in relation to wealth and social prestige of the girl's father or family. They regard "a baby-girl", "a girl" and "women" as the "beauty of cows" (Dalfovo 184). The primary proverb in regard states that; *Nguti okuri (kaniku zamva) ti(ma) onyi 'bi ni* (A baby girl means the beauty of cows). Its variant asserts that, *Zamva (kaniku Ngoti Okuri) ti (ma) onyi bi ni* (A girl means the beauty of cows). This assertion expresses the possibility of recovering one day the bride-wealth for the girl child consisting mainly of cattle. Considering the nature of Lugbara traditional marriages, a large head of "cattle constitute a prestigious asset as cherished beauty"

(Dalfovo 184). The significant position women or girls hold as access to wealth for a family in this context is as equivalent as the position nature holds as man's source of socioeconomic prestige among the Lugbara. Whereas there is no evidence to prove the degree of attachment the indigenous people have to monetary possession, there is certainly evidence to qualify the notion that nature holds a significant place in their lives. Praising the presence of daughters is praising the need to harmoniously exist with nature since the girl is an equivalent of wealth that a man is to obtain when he gets cows from his in-laws. In Lugbara marriages, animals take a central place compared to money or physical materials which are artificial. To reach an agreement of marriage, one must have firstly protected and cared for the cattle to be exchanged in appreciation of the parents or family of the girl to be married. Whether the cattle have been given as dowry already or simply kept yet to be given, the element of harmonious coexistence for socioeconomic prestige remains as paramount issue. Marriages receive such treats that people are cautioned not to interfere with the marriages of others seeing it is a source of wealth where cattle are obtained.

Besides marriages, domestication of cattle by the indigenous people is one of their attempts to coexist with nature knowing the mutuality they share. This view is validated by proverbs which show domestication of animals by constructing shelter to harbour these precious possessions of the indigenous people. Therefore, the cattle pen is associated with wealth and its worth is the cows. The proverb in focus says; *Ti fi oku ti lico akuni aa ku* (A cow does not enter a home without a cattle pen). Conventional knowledge has it that a cow does not enter of its own accord a compound where there is no cattle pen. A cow likes to go where other cows are. This trait of the cows is compared with the characteristics exhibited by people who have similar character traits. The proverb argues that such people tend to gather together and support each other.

Considering the fact that no one hates wealth, this in itself is already an affirmation of the idea that the Lugbara people harmoniously live with nature. This relationship further influences the man-to-man relationship, something noticeable from the characteristics of cows which only enter homes where there are other cows. Those in possession of it are socially ranked above those who do not have it seeing they are economically handicapped. Social stratification is inevitable in this context as people who are rich and in a high social position use proverbs of this nature as “motivation and justification of their mutual cohesion and support” (Dalfovo pg. 233) while the poor use it to show “disinterest of the rich for them” indirectly censuring the “exclusivist attitude of the rich” (Dalfovo 233). When both relationships are considered, it can clearly be seen that man pays more homage to nature for what it provides for him while his relationship with fellow men is inconsistent and entirely based on economic position of each person. Thus, the argument presented by the proverb, *Ti onyi'bi eri vele aku a yo* (There is no beauty of cows at his home). An earlier view already established that cows are not kept for beauty but as an asset for bride-wealth. This particular proverb is uttered when someone is reluctant to use his cows as bride-wealth. He is in fact being warned to concede that cows are not being admired and kept at home. They are to be used for proper purpose. It is further a mockery of those who do not have any animals in their homes.

Other proverbs which show the indispensability of nature in man's socioeconomic vision talk about goat, cows and *oluo* thorns which are symbolic of valued property. When issues arise, there is a reference made to “issues lapping all” (Dalfovo 155) one's cows, someone “eating for nothing” (Dalfovo 223) another's goats and “someone's property being” (Dalfovo 94) *oluo* thorns for others. These assertions are directly related to nature as man's socioeconomic position and have been authenticated respectively using the specific proverbs which state them and their

contextual explanations. The first states, *E'yo mbe (ma) ti woro* (An issue has “lapped” all my cows). According to this proverb, a disastrous loss is indicative of the extreme seriousness of the problem at stake, created by the very person now suffering. Wealth holds such a position that the degree of the seriousness of the problem at hand is likened to the loss of cows because cows constitute a great part of a man’s wealth. Nature plays a great role in branding people’s property and how others deal with such property. The second proverb asserts, *'Ba azi(ma) afa olup-oci* (The things of others are the *oluo* thorns). People are required to handle other’s property with care because this property is *Oluo – Erythrina, abyssinica*. The thorns on the *oluo* easily hurts once it comes into contact with human body or anything on the body. The proverb warns against coveting and stealing what belongs to others. Thorns are not friendly to humans yet the person who respects his boundaries may not become a victim of thorns. The understanding fronted by the indigenous people herein is of how they have learnt to live with different components of nature such that the *oluo* tree still continues to dwell in their midst irrespective of the potential danger one is bound to face should he or her interacted irresponsibly with it. The place of animals as a source of socioeconomic prestige among the Lugbara applies to goats as well. In the last proverb considered here, a person who recalls how in the past something of his was taken free of charge uses this proverb to refuse to render further unpaid help to the one who is seeking for help. The proverb states that, *Oye la si, i nya andra ma ndri* (For nothing, you ate in the past my goat). Loss of any property to beggars is associated with a goat. This is so because of the value attached in goats as man’s source of socioeconomic acumen by the indigenous people. By virtue of conceptualizing nature as a source of socioeconomic wealth, a positive relationship is established by default. Care for nature and wealth for humanity are clearly seen as synonymous in Lugbara proverbs. This wealth or lack of it determines the social

interaction in line with the etiquettes that govern relationships among the indigenous people. While wealth creates social division among the *haves* and *have nots*, nature continues to reap the benefits of being cared for by humanity thus refuting Anthropocene view about man's brutality towards nature.

4.5 Nature as Man's Spiritual Source

An earlier premise was set for the statement that man's relationship with nature as shown by Lugbara proverbs is twofold. The second fold is the spiritual dimension which transcends the material world. For man to achieve this spiritual interaction there is involvement of procedures which are physical. One of such is rituals. Rituals grant an opening to the spiritual realm from which those approaching the deities hope to obtain answers to questions they have or else a solution to issues which are plaguing people. Agatha Alidri observes that "a mystical relationship existed" (06) between the native Lugbara and nature from time immemorial. She illustrates that the Lugbara revere some animals which are not only vital in the process of access into the spiritual world but also carriers of spirits themselves. The earth and land were treated as sacred provisions of nature in the past. These are reflected in the traditional wisdom transmitted from generation to generation. Proverbial wisdom studied agree to this fact observed by Agath Alidri (2016). The mystical interaction between man and nature involves components of nature such as land, water, sacrificial animals and birds, and special sticks obtained from the flora. According to Middleton John, some of these creatures are not only requirements in the performance of rituals but are mediums which occasionally possess souls (28). When they act as requirements, "sacrifice to the dead and to spirits may be of a living animal or of grain and dried meat" (Middleton John 28). Before authentication of these views using proverbs studied, primary recognition is given to the ultimate mystical figure among the Lugbara known as *Adro* or God. Middleton points out that;

“Although most of Lugbara ritual is concerned with the dead, God is nevertheless associated with almost every relationship between the living and the dead. God is ‘the creator of man’ (*ba o’bapiri*) who long ago erected the world. He is conceived of in two aspects as God in the sky, remote from mankind and ‘good’ (*onyiru*) and as God in the streams, close to mainland and ‘bad’ (*onzi*). His power may be manifested in many ways, in natural phenomenon such as lightening and in the form of spirits which are given shrines by men” (27).

This is proven by use of words *Adro* – God, *acife* – divination stick, and *ori* – ancestral shrine, respectively in several proverbs. The first proverb studied in this context points to the acknowledgement of the supernatural deity called *Adro* which means God, whose all-seeing characteristic is at the fore front. The proverb states that; *Adro ne Alia ni ra* (God sees Alia). Alia is a person in traditional stories (Dalfovo 43) who acts in a hidden or secret manner. When he is used in the proverb above, it is a strong reminder to people not to worry about the concealed activities of characters like Alia. They are being urged not to try to intervene in matters such as Alia would not dare to intervene. God sees such things. Those who act secretly especially against other people and those who act deceitfully in general are discouraged from doing so. They are being watched by a power far superior than they. Possible negative consequences also await them as *Adro* supplies a just restitution for those who have been wronged by the secret actors. *Adro* is not treated by the Lugbara as *a small god*. He is looked at as the overall supernatural God. *Adro* possesses knowledge which enables him to see what is done in private. He [*Adro*] provides a just retribution for whatever has been done by a perpetrator in secret. Such consequence can be a mysterious sickness. Interaction with *Adro* or any other deity is methodically performed such that the required response from the spiritual world can be obtained. This also guards against offending the *Adro*. Retribution meted against humanity is not an arbitrary intervention of the spiritual world into the affair of mortals.

Middleton notes that, “a mystical agent sends sickness to living people, usually as a consequence of *an invocation made* because of an offense” (29). Besides being an invocation made, (or request from) by humans, it is also consistent with the rules of harmonious existence that the indigenous people subscribe to earnestly. This usually involves courting the mystical using sacrificial offerings for appeasement hence explaining the need for the *acife* – divination stick, *ori* – ancestral shrine, water and the relevant birds and animals for this process. Once a diviner is in possession of the divination stick and other requirements, he is not yet in position to fulfil the requirements of divination until it is carefully orchestrated. This is why one proverb categorically states that, *‘Ba ndri (nga) acife badakaru ku* (People do not divine at random). According to this proverb, divination is not practiced by everybody at random. It is performed by specific persons having the competence to do so. Each specialized activity needs to be carried out by its expert. There must also be a reason for approaching or consulting deities otherwise, penalties can be seen to implicitly abide for as long as a person who wishes to interact with the spiritual world does it without carefully observing the specified terms of carrying out such. Goats, chicken, and sheep are the renowned creatures which are sacrificed to maintain man’s relationship with the spiritual world (Middleton 28). Due to its momentousness, the rituals involved are not performed by anyone but elders as indicated the proverb, *Acife amba pia ta ni* (The acife is the food for elders). Elders, who are referred to as *‘ba-‘wara* by the Lugbara are the rightful persons to perform divinations or carry out any sacrificial offerings in thanksgiving, before planting, or for atonement among other rituals. These elders are people who are not just advanced in age but also rich in clan history, endowed with wisdom above the ordinary, belong to right lineage of diviners in some cases and are experienced in relating with the supernatural forces of nature. Since elders are advanced in age, knowledge and

traditional wisdom, they do not just do random divinations. They are experienced enough to carry out the rituals in the acceptable order. The spear grass is also identified in another proverb as a significant component of nature in the divination process as in the proverb, *Acife idri yabi ndu ni (kaniku inyandi)* (The life of the acife is the root of the spear-grass). Spear-grass is *imparata, cylindricum* which is what the divination stick is dependent on. The proverb points to the indispensable need a person may have of something specific. Another proverb says; *Acife ni uu yi si* (The acife sounds because of water). Further still, *Acife ci (kaniku bi 'ba) e'yo kokoru ku* (The acife does not stop (or catch people) without a cause). When moving the *acife* (divination stick) in the process of divination, it is pushed through a loop formed by the spear grass. When the *acife* stops in the process of divination, it is an indication that the person in question is indeed guilty. The stopping of the *acife* or its smooth passing through the loop is believed to be a communication from the spiritual world. With such acknowledgement of the existence of the spiritual world, to argue that humans are entirely destructive towards nature would be an affront of cultures like that of the Lugbara who revere the spiritual world and would do what it takes to maintain this relationship. As such, *Adro's* manifestation of the two facets as 'onyiru' and 'onzi' (Middleton 09) is consequential of how he has been approached or related with.

Approaching *Adro* and other spiritual deities is synonymous with ancestral shrines among the Lubgara. They are places earmarked for such ritualistic manifestation of acts of relationship with the spiritual world. Authenticity is given to this argument by a proverb in which the hyena is scorched outside an ancestral shrine. The proverb goes that; *Etu fu obau ni ori ti* (The Sun scourged the hyena near the ancestral shrine). The hyena has hopes of gleaning from the remains of the animals sacrificed in the shrine. Besides an already existing relationship being practices with the spiritual world, the

presence of the hyena, is in itself a mutual existence between man and nature. After sacrificial offerings of meat are made, often the hyena is attracted to linger around the place in hope of getting some meat when people have left home. Much as this proverb is condemnation of greed, it indirectly shows the fact the hyena has always benefited from what would be regarded leftovers. In another rhetorical proverb, a person is questioned for the need to always be part of an activity even if he or she has not been invited. The proverb asks, *Endika, endika si mi ori bii ya?* (By also, also are you sacrificing to the ori). Ori is used in two ways to refer to a ghost usually known to the Lugbara as “an ancestor for whom a shrine has been placed by his descendants” (Middleton 04) or it may simply refer to “an ancestral shrine” (Dalfovo 148). According to the contextual explanation, every important member of the clan is to be invited on occasion of sacrifice to the *ori* (ancestral spirits). It is a right and duty. However, some people have the eagerness to be invited to all occasions which is why this uncouth attitude is condemned because it is only expected to be displayed by those who qualify for these rights and duties. Relatedly, the unjustified behaviour is condemned by the proverb which asks, *E’yo si mi ku; mi ori niya?* (For not being left out; are you the ori?). In the past when food and beer were prepared, they had to be offered first at the ancestral shrines of the *ori* (spirits) before being consumed by the family. Therefore, the person who wants to always be present where food and water/drink are shared is compared to the *ori* that can never be left out of such activities. In firstly appeasing the deities with drinks and good, what emerges with clarity is the efforts being made by humans to maintain a harmonious relationship with nature. Any sacrifice involving animals or crops is just a requirement to access the spiritual dimension of nature if this good relationship is to be kept secure. This dimension is further articulated by the acknowledgement of the afterlife since one cannot be said to be sacrificing to ancestral spirits if they had not once lived in the physical

world before. Notably, this afterlife in view of the Lugbara providers considered is directly connected to nature.

4.6 Man and Fate

Lugbara proverbs conceive of a natural force which is inevitable in the life of the indigenous people. They envision death as the gateway into the spiritual world where only the spirit of a man goes. His body does not only remain part of the soil from which he was formed but the dead is also believed to be living near the home of the living. Middleton corroborates this assertion in the statement, “those that have died stay near us in our homes and we feed and respect them” (26). Proverbs which talk about death ought to take into consideration the general belief among the locals about death. Death is considered inevitable destiny of all men. Humanity has no control over it but to accept its presence with willingness. Man is looked at as inseparable from nature for his origin is nature as reflected in the proverb which asserts that, *‘Ba nyaku nya ojazu ru nyakuru* (Man eats soil to turn into soil). Soil is got from the earth as observed in an earlier proverb which states that the earth is “the mother of us all” (Dalfovo 240). Man’s time on earth keeps waning as he ages. He is “going to die one day, be buried and become part of the earth” (Dalfovo 105). Death’s inevitability is so undeniable that men are cautioned not to live their lives like those with hopes of rejuvenating it one day. Since man cannot escape death, he therefore ought to live life cognizant of the reality of death. Acceptance of destiny shapes how he can relate with it and the ancestors who have gone afore him since “for the Lugbara, living and dead of the same lineage are in a permanent relationship with each other” (Middleton 26). The indigenous people have welcomed this ultimate reality, thereby acknowledging nature as the superior force to which one day everyone must bow. This is the cause for campaigning for wise living in recognition of nature’s generosity of life for a specified amount of time. Once this elapses, man must

return to where he came from. There is a universal understanding of death which the Lugbara have which is related to the world view about death by most people. This understanding is what determines how they live their lives with nature itself. A welcoming attitude is what can be seen prevailing in their relationship with destiny. No one stands in opposition to it or treats it as a cruel master since it is the final end of man.

The inevitability of death is characterized in several forms such as; one that “does not leave”, “does not know”, “does not exclude” the person of reputation (Dalfovo 120), of no reputation, the afflicted, and the weak. This is confirmed in the proverb, *Dra ku 'ba azi ku* (Death does not leave anyone). Everybody must be alert. It “indiscriminately and unceremoniously” strikes, “bites...equally sharply” (Dalfovo 118). The several facets in which death manifests could literally be treated as cruelty towards man according to the proverbs aforementioned, however, the common consciousness of the indigenous people revealed in the different contexts of use of these proverbs indicates that the Lugbara respect death due to the connection which it establishes between the physical and spiritual world. Even where there is a harsh tone used to convey a message to the listener, it is conceptualized by the users of the proverbs as a better way of admonishing those who are negligently living their lives in disrespect of destiny. Death's superiority is recognized as invincible and thus one must humbly accept it. Man ought not to exhibit “unwise reactions and comments with regard to death” (Dalfovo 119). It is such a strong force to contend with emotionally as evidenced in the proverb, *Dra le asi okpo* (Death needs a strong heart). Therefore, humanity must not take it “lightheartedly” (Dalfovo 119) but face it with the courage and determination it requires. The discourse on death's centrality in this chapter is in line with mainstream practices of burials and funerals. What would otherwise be considered as destruction of nature in a bid to fulfill a cultural rite is the channel into the spiritual world. It was observed in the proverbs studied that

the indigenous people do not practice destructive rituals which suggests that they greatly treasure harmony when it comes to relating with death as an agent that conveys men to the spiritual world a repudiation of Anthropocene view which is against man's engagement with nature.

4.7 Conclusion

There is an existing harmonious relationship between humans and nature in Lugbara proverbs. This relationship is both physical and mystical. The way the indigenous people approach nature in Lugbara proverbs is in a manner which endangers neither nature nor humans in their pursuit of survival. The indigenous people revere nature as a channel through which they see a reflection of who they are. Clearly man, in these proverbs, sees nature as a source of socioeconomic prestige. He communicates with the mystical world, as seen in the very attitudes and way of life reflected in the lives of the indigenous Lugbara while sacrificing to *Adroo* or ascertaining the origin of a misfortune. Such acknowledgement produces attitudes which do not lead to depleting of the components of nature. They see in nature their final destiny and have humbly accepted the out-come without opposition or venting their anger on nature before their final departure to become one with nature after death. These views renounce the Anthropocene views that man is destructive in his tendencies towards nature. Rather, man is projected in a relationship which promotes conservation of nature other than one which violates nature.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION

5.1 Introduction

This chapter summarizes the main findings and conclusions arrived at in the course of this study. It also states recommendations based on more research gaps identified which could still be explored to respond to ecocritical questions which are daily arising. This study in particular set out to understand the conceptualization and contextualization of the humanness of nature in Lugbara proverbs and its implication to the more urgent issue of environment conservation. It was guided by three research questions which ask how nature has been personified in Lugbara proverbs, what the harmful practices towards nature are, and what the relationship between man and nature in Lugbara proverbs is.

5.2 Main Findings and Conclusion

Conceptualization and contextualization of the humanness of nature in Lugbara proverbs is primarily hinged on the idea of personification of nature. There is evidence in Lugbara proverbs that a large component of nature is personified – regarded human. Most of this personification is implicitly embodied in parts of human body (which have also been termed as metaphors of human body) and more direct portrayals of nature as human in direct allusions to fables. Contextual explanations of several proverbs reveal how the fables are the possible origins of the specific proverbs. This allusion softens what would otherwise be a difficult task in assigning human attributes to the literal translations of some of the proverbs studied due to the fact that the proverbs have no explicit portrayals of nature's humanness. The fact that nature is regarded human triggers a more humane response from man such that he does not brutalize nature since it is full of representations which are human. However, not the entirety of nature is personified.

Majorly the fauna is conceptualized as human. This can possibly be attributed to the fact that the fauna personified are majorly animal characters which are renown in several fables and folk tales among the indigenous people. Whereas personification would ideally mean every personified entity of nature is considered human, in the context of the Lugbara, the abundant metaphors of body at play add up to form a human figure in some instances. Therefore, nature as a whole becomes human. This notwithstanding, the specific metaphors of body used in the relevant proverbs also allow for a conceptualization of that particular element of nature as a human entity of its own. The twofold conceptualization of nature in this context points to the need for humanity to constantly relate with nature under strict ethical guidelines in order to avoid infringements on nature which later turn into outright violation of the rules of coexistence between man and nature. This has a significant impact on conservation seeing that man's interaction with nature can then be predicated on the need to gently deal with nature. The notion that nature as a whole is human, is validated by the discovery that the earth from which the flora springs, the fauna feeds and the sceneries are, is regarded the mother of all. This further requires that no harmful practices be carried out against the vision of the earth as an embodiment of all life, thus promoting conservation agenda.

Lugbara proverbs, however, contradict the position of harmonious living with nature through mild interruptions of the peace of the ecosphere through harmful practices such as bush burning, poaching or hunting and negative descriptions of some elements of nature. The gravity of destructive activities carried out by the indigenous people as implied by Lugbara proverbs is not at the scale of organized mechanical violence against nature commonly practiced in the organized society, in the names of urbanization. It is evident from the study that the indigenous people majorly use rudimentary methods in

their interaction with nature especially as far as cultivation is concerned. Whereas these tools for cultivation may not exert immediate environmental pressure, they have the potential to influence negative tendencies in the long run. These harmful practices blur the conceptualization of nature. In this context, no regard can be accorded to nature since it is not being conceptualized as a human figure. Brutalization of it would be a confirmation of the Anthropocene view that man is destructive towards nature consequently hindering nature conservation.

Regardless of the mild manifestations of harmful practices towards nature, a larger portion of Lugbara proverbs portray a harmonious existence between man and nature. Human character traits mounted onto non-human components of nature are the first entry into the idea of harmonious existence between man and nature. Man in this context relates with nature as he would relate with a fellow man. He is conscious of the rules that govern harmonious living between two persons. Any contradictions have negative consequences such as death of the person or destruction of property. Majority of the proverbs analyzed in light of this view largely reveal that the indigenous people preserve the already existing harmony. The few instances in which man has deviated from this guiding principle results into negative consequences for man. This indicates nature's superiority over man that it has the potential to retaliate against man should he breach the rules of coexistence. Whereas man is destroyed for good, nature recuperates and continues to thrive. Such superiority exhibited by nature elevates it above a conceptualization which regards it as human. Ultimately, it surpasses the realm of humanity to stand out as an entity far greater than humanity. A thing which sustains, gives socioeconomic prestige, and responds to unresolved questions of the human heart must be a supernatural entity. In the context of the Lugbara, nature is clearly elevated to this level such that conceptualization of it as human becomes a difficult task. To

conceptualize an element of nature as human varies in different contexts. Regardless of which context one subscribes to, the nature related ideas raised in the different proverbs ought to be consistent with ecocritical and Anthropocene tenets. Values raised in consistency with the two theories can be isolated under each category and their efficacy ascertained by comparing these values with the practice of the locals. As has already been observed, the indigenous Lugbara conceptualize nature as human and at the same time not human. As human, it has an imprint of superiority over man as the one which can provide or punish depending on how it is lived with. This notion significantly shapes the discourse on nature conservation where it is apparent that nature deserves protection from man for it to benefit man in the short and long run. Methods of conservation employed must therefore take into consideration this relationship shared.

Conclusively, conceptualizing nature as human requires an understanding of the context in which this is being undertaken. Geographic locations often do not permit a generalization of nature as human. In contexts like that of Lugbara, nature is far superior than is envisioned as human. When this notion is drummed into the conscious of users of nature related proverbs, it produces a reformed mindset which is able to adhere to the rules governing man's coexistence with nature.

5.3 Dissemination Plan

This study is a vital tool which can be used to change the mindset of the users of Lugbara proverbs in their approach to or interaction with nature. Once published, this research paper will be published and circulated widely among Lugbara Literature scholars to aid them in their study of other areas of Literature related to nature. Through radio talk shows, information compiled in this study will also be shared with the listeners of programs about Lugbara cultures so that they are enlightened about their roles in the fight to conserve nature.

5.4 Recommendations

Lugbara proverbs provide lots of ground to be covered to arrive at more answers to issues confronting the environment.

1. Primarily, use of nature related proverbs which raise ecoconsciousness among the indigenous people should be encouraged while discouraging those that foster negative practices and attitudes towards nature.
2. More research needs to be conducted to corroborate evidence of mention of nature in the various fables, folk tales and ogre stories from which some of these proverbs have been curved out to understand the ecocritical contribution of these tales to conservation of nature.
3. Research also needs to be conducted to find out ecofeminist views in Lugbara proverbs and how these either contribute to or hinder nature conservation.

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