

## Environmental Perspectives in John Nkemngong Nkengasong's *God was African*

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### ABSTRACT

The paper deliberates on forms of environmental representations in John Nkemngong Nkengasong's *God was African* (2015), with the aim of unraveling the unsaid. It interrogates the word environment as an inclusive term whose diverse forms interact with humans to the generation of complex stories. Guided by the argument that environments are fragmented by time, geography and forms of nature, the paper questions the effectiveness of modern cultural trends as developmental voices for Africa. It x-rays culture as that materiality from which all else develops. Within this cultural materialist frame it applauds the nature/culture unison of traditional Africa but queries the nature/culture divide typical of the modern African state. It unveils in *God was African*'s nuanced tensions between tradition and modernity evidences of the lapses of a dialogic cultural criticism for Postcolonial Africa. It thus advocates the evolvment of a constructivist cultural frame in celebration of Africa's transcultural space exemplified by *God was African*'s Lewoh setting. Postcolonial ecocriticism, for its commitment to the ecological, political and social concerns of the once colonized spaces gains ground as analytical tool.

**Keywords:** ecotone, culture, environment, history.

### INTRODUCTION

Though African literature has for long sustained an ecotone, modernity's grip on the continents landscapes has buttressed its scope of environmental writing and criticism. Writers and critics respectively discuss and analyze the people's link with the environment – with environmental studies underling an entwined web of humans and non-social forces acting historically (Pablo Mukherjee 2010, 5). Mukherjee's environmental perspective evokes the idea of environmental histories echoing cultures and thus implies that environments should be examined on spatial and temporal terms. Postcolonial literature accordingly arises in projection of nation-states' dwindling environmental conditions. It addresses the complexities surrounding place, communal principles and time. Its environmental politics then abrogates and appropriates established environmental discourses to the chastising of western environmentalisms (Young 2001). Within this postcolonial's increasing investigations on the why and how of modern obstruction of indigenous places, an ecocritical imaginary has emerged –a development which

underlines western environmentalisms in former colonial spaces as foils to indigenous natural and cultural materiality.

In this ecocritical visibility, Nkengasong's *God was African* x-rays the environmental in a science that interrogates the relationship between humans and other species. The novel highlights the importance of spatial and temporal discourses in environmental studies— a politics in which it cross-examines the local and the global in a postcolonial ecocritical turn.

Notionally, postcolonial ecocriticism chastises the westerner's manipulation of formally colonized geographies for western gains (Huggan & Tiffin (2010) and Delougreh & Handley (2011). It analyses western exploitation in the decaying indigenous tangible and intangible heritages. With a lean on cognitive Science's ideas on how creative works influence readers, the concept calls on literary imaginaries to reorient humans on nature's importance to their holistic being (Buell 2001, 6). In its empirical status, postcolonial ecocritical theory captures the realities of palpable societies. It underscores their destroyed physical, social and cultural states – an engagement that makes it a critic of the absolutist ecocritical voice that ignores the power of place in environmental discourse. In its deconstructive turn it reads the cultural as an embodiment of the environmental (Glotfelty & Fromm (1996) –an entwined context where the destruction of one entity occasions the deterioration of another.

In another dimension it underlines intended ills in western exploitation of postcolonial environments (Serpil 2007) – what Rob positions as egoistic tendencies unconsciously directed towards planetary destruction (Rob 2011). Evidently, in its discussions of the local, it echoes the international given the global constraints that define the postcolonial.

*God was African* exposes a postcolonial place, Lewoh county, suffering the effects of imposed western environmentalisms. Lewoh's past, constructed on biotic, cultural and political balance has been suppressed by modernity, to the generation of unhealthy conditions of biodiversity lost, pollution, global warming and climate change. This essay thus cross examines the said traditional past and the intervened modern present for ecological differences in a bid to uncover the way forward.

### **CRAVING FOR THE DECAYED AFRICAN LANDSCAPES**

Environmental studies foreground the material and economic connectivity of biodiversity and social issues (Delougreh & Handley 2011, 3) – a thesis that pinpoints ecoculture as the pillar of sustainable societies. This is the very post on which traditional *Lewoh* is built. It was a place of great worth to its people; a fact assessable in Nkengasong's dedicating *God was African* to his ancestors. His dedication captioned "For my Ancestors" messages the author's acknowledgment of his forefathers and his respect and appreciation of their values. This phrase as well points to the significance of spatiality and temporality in literary discourse and pits the author as a part of his narrative.

Nkengasong's protagonist, Kendem, describes Lewoh County as a clan of eighteen villages to which his own village, Anya, is constitutive. He stresses on the fact that the villages are separated from each other by plains and deep valleys tailored by an endless chain of hills (1). An ugly and fear instilling image of Lewoh is captured in the deep valleys separate hills and in the wild forests located beneath the mounds. Lewoh County thus features as the most

undesirable part of the earth. But its forests, rivers and assorted ecosystems beautifully blend at the feet of the hills to the creation space for settlement and farmlands. This is the perspective from which Kendem hails his ancestors for the wisdom of settling at Lewoh. He appreciates this rough geographical landscape from the angles of the security, farmlands and edible animals it yielded his ancestors (2). This is unlike Joseph Conrad's (1889) which presented a similar African place but described its people, culture and physical landscape as in need of civilization. Instead, Kendem in nostalgia tells how Lewoh's wilds provided recreational and occupational functions to him and peers as teens and how the valleys provided palm tree farms and food crop plants for his people.

Nature thus reflected Donald Hughes' description of it as "the economy that envelops all human efforts and without which human efforts are impotent" (Donald Hughes 2016, 18) in Lewoh's celebrating a symbiosis between man and the natural environment. This was a mutualism in which both parties relied on the each other for sustenance. Their customs and traditions were grafted round this human/non-human connectivity— a liaison that orchestrated the indigenes worship of ancestors, lineages that took the forms of fauna and flora in African believe system (Mbuy Tata 2021). In line with (Anthwal et al 2019), Sarfo Mensah (2009) and Byers et al (2991) Tata believes that deities, demons, supernatural forces and ancestors respectively lived in sacred shrines. Lewoh respectively fashioned its religion on the inseparability of humans, the divine and biodiversity, an ecocultural context that conditioned humans' respect for non-human nature.

Sacred shrines were salient elements of Lewoh's eco-culture. The sanctuaries' structures and apparatuses were intrinsically biotic, a fact that conditioned the indigenes' ecoculture state. This is obviously why Bombabily would proudly tell Kendem that "God was African". The natives breathed God and experienced him daily. He was so loving and caring that the ancestors would offer sacrifices to him through the smaller deities, in praise and thanksgiving. Ngengasong exemplifies this with protagonist's father offering sacrifices in the family sacred shrine in thanksgiving to the ancestors for the wealth of his family. Traditional *Lewoh* thus celebrated the physical, the metaphysical and the sublime in experiences that gave meaning to their lives. These interactions positioned the African way of life beyond the confines of reason.

It sounds fairy that at the *Aseikung* crossroad (located at the lowest part of a valley where three hills met) diverse spirits would gather at night to celebrate the wonders of nature (126). And complexely, the only proof of the spirits' nocturnal activity was the destroyed biodiversity seen at dawn, a fact that renders the tale more unreal. The story however markets the wonders of nature, the indigenes' eco-culture and its entanglement with their spirituality. The story of the twin hills with contrary features, *Nyimgong* and *Nyi-tebong* also carry with it sublime and metaphysical qualities. *Nyimgong* the good hill nourished "fetish priests, potent medicine men and important chiefs and notables" (3). *Nyi-tebong* was believed to be evil and was dreaded for housing "evil spirits" (3). Kendem recalls how only thought of the most dreaded of the evil spirits, *amoh*, (the one believed to kill instantly) would stop him and peers from doing evil. Even now in his adolescence the thought of *amoh* still sends fear waves into the author. The twin hills in their wonderful natural state become religious and moral voices as they continuously promote good and discourage evil. Evidently, the indigenes' instincts guided their lives and ethical outpour.

As illustrated above, their way of life carried with it a sense of the sacred and the divine—spiritual and metaphysical ideas that conditioned their existence. The natural world in both its original and artificial states was an actual metaphor for their existence given that their celebrations and rituals were all hemmed around nature. In this stringent human/biodiversity interconnectivity and the conscientiousness stemming from it, traditional Lewoh provides an image worth emulating. The novel then becomes an advocate of eco-friendliness and evidently, of biodiversity preservation and protection. In underlining the complex and fulfilling relationships that existed between individuals and their surroundings Nkengasong educates on the resourceful connection between place, culture and nature and on the danger of tearing these elements apart.

### **MODERNITY AND THE SUBVERSION OF TRADITIONAL AFRICAN VALUES**

Due to the contrariness defining the past and the present, contemporary environmental criticism increasingly coats place with conflicting stories (Oakes 1997, 509). The present takes the form of the past's shadow and thus gives writers the voice to write in celebration of bygone. This criticism increasing takes sway within the offensive changes mankind is rendering the socio/political and economic landscapes of the earth (Terrel Dixon 1999, 62). In line with the above thesis *God was African* harnesses modernity with an antibiotic tale. The natural environment now exists at the mercy of man and pitifully, to the harming of the once sustaining socio/cultural and political values. The colonial ideology challenges the lucrative indigenous world views and dictates to the African environment in violation of its environmental ethos. The African traditional world view has thus lost its place to the colonial ideology whose presence in Africa has been severely interrogated and condemned. Nature and culture now feature as distinct entities, with nature being a silent other.

Within this modern setting, Nkengasong presents a borderless *Lewoh* under the control of strange ideas. Unlike traditional *Lewoh's* eco-customs that sustained that society's eco-centric existence, contemporary *Lewoh* highlights humans' distancing from nature and wrecking inexpressible pain and suffering on the varied structures of the society. Modernity is therefore captured as running down Africa's aboriginal heritages. *God was African* elucidates this in hills losing their vegetation cover due to modern acts of farming and lumbering. These human violent acts have reduced hills to colossal bare rocks.

The author's focus on the damage farming and lumbering are wrecking *Lewoh* landscapes speaks of the decayed socio cultural and economic lives modern Lewoh have embraced. Hill slope farming has been theorized as dangerous to ecosystems with the explanation that it facilitates the down flow of debris to the resulting of erosion (Kunaka 2023). Equally findings that slopes are fragile and can easily collapse (Kunaka *ibid*), caution against human activities beneath slants. Thus, Kendem is perplexed at the sight of a woman farming under the ever fearful giant "bolder rock" that lay on top of another; a physical feature that was believed to be held static by both the "Rock God" and rituals from powerful priests (128). The woman's activity has the double ills of a slap on African culture and harm to biodiversity. The farming entails the unsafe states of the farmer and that of the forest and water ecosystems beneath the bolder. Uphill farming evidently initiates an ecodegradation process that heavily enhances deforestation, a situation made worse in Lewoh by modernity's enhanced lumbering.

Gallery's (2014) explanation that forest ecosystems house around half of all species, fauna and flora responsible for the sustainability of the humans, enlightens on the negative impact of deforestation in Lewoh. Likening this situation to that of the author's country Cameroon, a fifth of its tropical forest is no more, to the suffering of humans and other species (Mackey et al 2020). The reality of foreign involvement in Cameroon's forests destruction is implied in the scientific statement that Cameroon is the highest exporter of timber to Asia and the European Union (ITTO 2021). This grafts European capitalism as the architect of deforestation in Africa. Kendem captures Lewoh's degraded natural environment with the explanation that the only green that bear witness to traditional Lewoh's wildness are the "dwindling thick forests", "groves" and the "emerging grasslands" of the East (2). He is certain that their unharmed states are a result of the folk stories surrounding them – mystic stories of the named places being dwellings of demons and witches. These supernatural tales have probably scared lumbers and extensive cash crop farmers from advancing there.

Despite the current farm land scarcity in Lewoh, Ngengasong unveils individuals with large low lands cocoa farms. This x-rays the individualistic and materialistic turns that have come with the modern. In its individualistic and selfish frames for one, natives are continuously brainwashed into replacing the ecofriendly palm trees with coffee and cocoa trees—strangers to African ecosystems. Though both coffee and cocoa crops are of international values they need lots chemical assistance for sustenance. Coffee for one, is vulnerable to fungal infection from the moment of its growth, through processing to storage (Bestroppe 2019). Research equally exposes that its vulnerability to climate inconsistency has currently rendered it more fungal infected and low yielding due to the ongoing global warming crisis (Phan et al, 2006). These messages underline coffee farming in *Lewoh* as more of a liability than an asset. This assertion is made tangible by the fact that coffee related diseases affect all the crop's principal parts—roots, stems, leaves and beans (Rutherford et al 2006). Coffee planting in *lewoh* thus heralds in the ecological, economic and cultural unsustainability of the indigenes. This calls for either criticism of the modernists' straight jacket or thoughts of the westerner's intent to destroy Africa.

Michel Foucault long expressed the latter view in his observation that the ability of power structures to fashion and maintain marginalized alternatives of knowledge and world views has expanded the grounds for critical thinking (Foucault 1980). The danger with these power structures as Foucault explains is that those at the helm of power would likely fabricate stories to their advantage. This assertion seemingly qualifies colonial endeavors in *Lewoh*. The westerner seems to have colonized Africa's ecosystems and cultural values for while palm bushes are being replaced with coffee and cocoa plants the indigenes' believe system is being replaced by Christianity. The importance of the palm tree to Africa can be summarized from the varied uses of its structural parts and the tree's contribution to environmental sanity by means of air quality improvement and climate enhancement (Asante & Mazama 2008).

Empirically, the palm tree trunk serves as wood for domestic use and furniture construction. Its leaves serve as raw material for artistic purposes and its nuts and sap generate produce of great nutritional value. Ngengasong highlights the great importance of the palm tree part, the *bamboo* in its furniture quality as doors of sacred shrines. He projects the sap from the palm as an alcoholic beverage with strong socializing, spiritual and healing attributes. The author highlights large quantities of palm wine at the chief of Bayano's funeral festivity (261). Function

wise the wine cemented their festive mode and enhanced cordiality among the mourners. Nkengasong again buttresses the palm wine as an important ingredient for traditional rituals as Kendem's father pours it on the floor of the sacred shrine in the process of offering sacrifices to the gods (102).

The significance of palm wine and obviously of palm trees to Africa is underlined in its great thematic value in African literary works. Palm wine poses as a tool for African communality and it is made available for consumption by wise and courageous individuals with the ability to extract the sap from the tree (Amos Tutuola's 1962). It symbolizes Africa and is the pride of the people (Bole Butake 1990). The above views of palm wine find expression in *God was African's* varied embellishments of the palm tree and the palm wine. Early in the text, Kendem announced this African wealth with the socializing scenario it created at his mother's palm wine bar at his return from the west. But his sudden realization that her mother's bar was the only surviving one owing to the fact that palm trees had been replaced with foreign trees made him sad. This negation feeling was soon made worse by the villagers' revelation that African Traditional Religion was equally being threatened by Christianity.

It is worthy of note that in colonialist robes the westerners long refused African's ability to be knowledgeable in God with the claim that the philosophy surrounding the concept 'god' is beyond the understanding of their vicious and primitive natures (Emile Ludwig 1995). This is an ideology that characterizes the Catholic Church's engagements in *Lewoh* County. The Reverend Father's negative consideration of the African believe system is in consolidation of the various proclamations which until recent, the authorities of the Roman Catholic Church have made against African Traditional Religion. Pope Benedict XV for one, in his November 1919 Apostolic letter condemned slavery but asked the missionaries in Africa to do their best in derailing Africans from their superstitious practices. His Bishops in Africa had to save these savages from destruction by opening "the gates of heaven" for them through Christianity. His successor, Pope Pius (1926) reiterated that Africans had to be "snatched from the gates of hell". The above conceptions deny the existence of an African believe system and create a vacuum for Christianity to come in for the salvation of the unbelievers. *God was African* highlights the above mentality in the Priest declaring late Chief Thompson Taxi- Nyang a good Christian for deserting African ways (271). Visibly, he positions Christianity as a soul saving religion and the African believe system as a senseless and damning phenomenon in projection of the views of his superiors.

This conflict between African tradition and modernity has split *Lewoh* into two as the indigenes who have embraced the modern are seen by their kin as the sell outs. Bombabili, in reverence of African tradition, accuses the western educated Kendem for being one of those who have destroyed the African culture and religion and forcefully replaced them with strange and worthless ones. (129). He interprets in the idea that the westerners' nailed their god on the cross the idea that both the god and his people are worthless. To him therefore "God was African" because the African god is ultimately good. This is a characteristic that is distinguished in friendly relation between Africans and Him. Unfortunately, the practices by which the Africans worship Him are seen by Christians as pagan and barbaric (271).

The text projects the peak of this religious conflict with the council of chiefs' agreement to cleanse their late chief's (Fuo Beyano) corps of Christian inclinations and bury it the traditional

way. Against the dictates of tradition the chief in sickness, went to the African Mission Hospital where he died and against tradition still, his corps was viewed by everyone. Worse still, this corps was kept in the hospital mortuary. The above acts represent insults the tradition and consequently made the chief an outsider to his people and worse still a stranger to the ancestors. As Kenden puts it, chiefs were worthy of their titles because they followed the ancestral paths (120). Respect for tradition was thus a prerequisite for the ancestors' recognition and acceptance of your soul. Ironically the priest is certain the late chief's soul will go to paradise despite his having neglected the ways of his ancestors.

This fight of cultures was one that neither the indigenes nor the Christians were ready to let go. Speaking for tradition, Bombabili positioned this thus, "We wul not surrender." (129). Christianity has destroyed *Lewohs* sacred shrines and replaced them with their churches but Bombabili says *Lewoh* has gods in the forests, hills and rivers that they will continue to worship. To the Christian religion, Christianity would relent not in efforts to deliver the indigenes from their unholy and primitive practices. At the economic level, the rising palm wine price due to limited palm trees entailed the natives' falling standards of living due to the diverse benefits of the palm tree. But cash crop farming had taken over the palm tree fields. This conflicting situation essentially demanded a rethinking of the implications of a postcolonial *Lewoh*.

### THE POSTMODERN AFRICAN SPHERE OF CULTURAL ADJUSTMENTS

*God was African* vividly exposes a post imperialist atmosphere in *Lewoh* in its once established cultural and literary norms ceding their uniqueness to experimentations. This atmosphere is justifiable under Taylor (1980)'s explanation that culture, though defines community membership, is liable to changes and modifications because of the community's inevitable incorporating of new people and new values (Anita 2005, 17). The complex relations that have developed in Africa due to the colonial encounter consequently call for complex developmental approaches—strategies that will combine the traditional and the modern in investigation of the way forward. Cross cultural movements, as the author underlines breed changes in culture—a compact entity whose varied characteristics will need to tolerate their kind in understanding. This is an atmosphere in which the civilization ideas of *God was African's* extreme traditionalist like those its stiff colonialists have become limiting.

Kendem's self-contemplations on the cultural strive *Lewoh* is experiencing yields the realization that true worship is within ones' cultural civilizations. This frame of thought debunks colonial values as the way forward for *Lewoh*. In another internal monologue on Christianity's ascribed ungodliness on African Traditional Religion his consciousness on the notion of God is awoken. His chain thoughts took him to the complexities surrounding the concept of God, the similar perceptions of God in varied religions and to the impact of believe in God on an individual. This inner discourse unlocked his doubts on the validity of the *Lewoh* religion (271, 272 & 273). The stream of consciousness highlighted the importance of place to one's life—what Bombabili's speech in Kendem mother's palm wine bar focused on. The dialogue was testimony to the beauty and wonders of one's birth place, of the dignity it bestows to its occupants and of the needlessness of moving out of place.

This sounded as a conscientizer to Kendem whose quest for western education had sent him wandering into the west. Within this course he distanced self from his roots and cultural background, what Bombabili is proud to never have done (3). Bombabili thus is a disciple of

*Lewoh's* initial glories (that beauty embedded in the connectivity of things) —a psychological view that takes the individual beyond self-interest into the nursing of communal values. Bombabili prides himself for being a pure traditionalist for the reason that he has not moved out of *Lewoh*. This is a misgiving identity construct given the fact that contemporary *Lewoh*, in its transcultural status has altered Bombabili's African status. Anticolonial like anti traditional ideologies, in their separate profiles have become fairy guides for *Lewoh's* development. *Lewoh* now needs a blend of the two world views for the exploration and organization of its complex socio/political and economic standings.

The author captures this intricate plurality of individual cultures in Kenden's declaration that while in America he came to the realization that he was a universal being (164). His mind could not be tied down to the western ways because he was mindful of African ways. Culture, he was awestruck, has the same goals but for the particularities of place and time that guide social consciousness. His education, he became aware, had to extend beyond "reading and writing books" into understanding and practicing the "bestial worship", "ancestral worship" and "tortem worship" (115) definitive of his people. His thinking beyond the particularities of modernism and tradition placed his mindset within the universal —an arena from where he becomes responsible for the wellbeing of the universe. Being universal here builds on Aristotle's ideas of one predicated of many ideas but declared universal through the mind's ability to screen through the particulars in selection of that which is beneficial to all.

This new cultural form functions in integration or imitation of the various cultures that have informed it, a positive cultural trend in church the Catholic Church's teachings are now guided by inculturation. Christian practices in new cultures have to incorporate the basic values of the culture. This is an important theological message that Vatican, through Popes and Synods, has transmitted to African Churches. The Vatican now teaches that there is a strong link between Christianity and culture which entails the practice of Christianity within cultural traditions (Pope John Paul ii). A Vatican council seating again published the wonders and moral uprightness of African culture and as well emphasized on the importance of African values to all religions and races (Second Vatican Council.)

In line with the above Catholicism's new theological standing a reverent Father reverberates in *God was African* on the importance of some African religious values are good. His problem is with those African religious values that refuse the supremacy of Jesus Christ (271). This entails Christianity's acceptance of the godliness of African Traditional Religion. It has consequently incorporated the African accepted godly ways into its worship system—a religious blend practiced at late chief's funeral celebration. The *nkeng*, a peace plant, flanged the Holy Bible in a procession to the Alter (271). Also, *nweh* songs were sung during offertory, a majority of them constitutive of the common songs often chanted, and most importantly those chanted for ritual purposes. In addition, Christians accompanied the late chief's corps to the sacred grove for burial. This is inculturation; what the Catholic Church celebrates in its integration of dependable cultural values into Christianity (Pope John Paul 1). It would certainly safeguard the integrity of religion in *Lewoh* and encourage the understanding of *Lewoh* ways in other cultural settings.

Farmers on their part have resolved to intercropping, may be as a result of modernity's haven swept away a large part of *Lewoh's* farmable lands for its varied purposes. Research spells out



agriculture as the backbone of Africa's economy while emphasizing on how a majority of these farmers are resource-poor small holder farmers. Kendem's family is not an exception as he describes his father's compound as part of large coffee farm on which various food crops and fruit trees grew (17). This is a holistic pluralistic farming method which in line with all holistic systems entails positivity. The farm ensures the production of both cash crops for economic purposes and food crops/fruit crops for consumption. This deconstructs the past agriculture model that pitted cash crop production against food crop farming. This is an advantage to the farmer who uses the same piece of land, and obviously less labour to produce much crops (Mendez et al 2010). The farming systems functions on an understanding of the components of the farm as problems-solving tools for the farmer. The farming systems high developmental potential stems from the fact that it is theorized on sustainability bases and on the premise of large yields.

A lot of positivity equally underlines Kendem's saying that their homestead was secured by a hedge lined with closely spaced shrubs and trees, planted to mark the boundary and to keep away "stray goats and pigs from neighboring compound" (17). The above description is an exposition on the fact that the eco-culture still governs *Lewoh* County. Its domestication of goats and pigs calls for a research on the importance of these animals for economic, edible and agricultural reasons. With regards to the least of the worries above, animal excrement has served as the oldest form of farm fertilize —having been established to improve soil fertility and plant growth/yield. As valuable organic matter, it is important to any community, first from the perspective of it being recycled nutrients that would have been lost. Its accessibility to the *Lewoh* folk entails its inexpensiveness and thus, its aid to low cost fertilizing due to the huge amounts that the farmer has to use on chemical fertilizers for cash crop health. This poses the *Lewoh* farmer as that resource poor individual who integrates diverse farming technics and culture for large crop yields.

Nkengasong's use of the symbol of a "snake" wound round a "calabash of palm oil" (8) in depiction of modernity's impact on African values speaks of the cultural blend that will forever define postcolonial Africa. In a wise manner, he x-rays the alarming extent at which encroaching values have eroded the beautiful African past. This image of a snake coiled round a calabash underlines the difficulty, if not the impossibility of saving the breakable calabash and its cherished content, palm oil. The author however previews the solution in each party's absolute tolerance of the other (97) — a dialogue captured in the fragmentations and subjectivity of values visible in a host of *God was African's* experiences.

## CONCLUSION

The paper elaborated on how the concepts of time and place condition authors' environmental narratives. With a lean on Nkengasong's *God was African*, it highlighted the wonders of the African traditional world view, explored its conflict with modernity and x-rayed both cultures adopting each other's values for futurity. *Lewoh's* past, in its lived interconnectivity between humans and the natural world was a metaphorical representation of Africa's past glories. Its ecocultural stand was its religion as it carried with it ideas of the sacred and the godly. The natural world in both its original and artificial states was the core of *Lewoh* folk's existence, for even their festivities, rites and rituals, were all hemmed around nature. But modern *Lewoh* tilted towards the destruction of forests, hills, rivers and ecosystems— eco-elements that bound with the cultural and political markers for the meaningful existence of traditional *Lewoh*. The

consequence became the destruction of tangible and intangible values to the result of a host of planetary unhealthy elements. The paper however analyzed the way forward in a synchronized model composed of cherished modern and traditional African values.

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