

## **AN APPRAISAL OF THE ECO-BIO-COMMUNITARIANISM OF GODFREY TANGWA**

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**ABSTRACT:** One of the major problems confronting the human society is the issue of the treatment of other nonhuman entities and the ecosystem. Most times, humans tend to exercise unnecessary dominion over every other being in the universe and hence causing harm to them. However, the major question at stake is the question of whether these nonhuman entities and the environment deserve some form of moral consideration from man. Is intelligence a valid criterion for the human entity to suppress the nonhuman entities? Is the human entity the only privileged entity in ethical considerations? What is really the difference which deciphers the human from the nonhuman? Are the nonhuman entities only at the mercy of consumption? All of these questions and more are the concern of the study and it employs the reconciling environmental ideology of Godfrey Tangwa as a blueprint. However, to do this, the study employs the analytic method of research which shall help to expose the ideology of

Godfrey Tangwa and at the same time explore some contents in the ideology which reconcile the moral status of humans, nonhuman animals and the environment. At the end of the discourse, the study explores some points of appraisal which can be deduced from the ideology of Godfrey Tangwa hence showing its strengths and weaknesses.

## **INTRODUCTION**

Human perception captures three entities within its purviews. They are: humans, animals and the eco-system. However, there is the traditional and conventional orientation which was organized to make it feels as though the human part constitutes the alpha and omega with an absolute authority and control over the rest of nature. This orientation however brings the other entities of nature as being for use/abuse by humans. Of course, some measures this on the platform of intelligence and rationality, and because animals and other entities of nature are seen to lack these qualities, it is then assumed that humans occupy the privileged position among the entities of nature which places them above all other entities. However, this births some kind of intimidation, manipulation, use/abuse and other negative attitudes towards the lower entities.

This attitude towards lower entities however extends to the fact that humans see other entities of nature as objects of experimentation in their sort for scientific and technological advancement, enhancement and development. Infrastructural facilities are built and used by humans precipitating diverse effects on nature (particularly the atmosphere which is polluted and uninhabitable for humans). Humans still feel as though their actions cannot be termed wrong because they feel those things of nature do not feel pain. As a result, the point of Tangwa is that it will be wrong to think that moral duty is only from human to his fellow humans. Hence, for the survival of man and the sustenance of the universe, there is the need to also understand that just as man has a duty to his fellow humans, he also has the duty to the animals and the ecosystem. Hence, when humans use nature just the way they like for their advancement and improvement, have they done anything wrong?

Godfrey Tangwa takes his position from the African orientation pertaining the treatment of the entities and things of nature, and unlike Western ethics, African environmental ethics recognizes the interconnectedness and interdependence of all beings than individuality of being. However, there are few questions to ask: Is the environment valuable in its own right, regardless of its usefulness for people? Do animals or plants have moral rights? Are they somehow intrinsically valuable? If they are intrinsically valuable or worthy of moral consideration, what makes them so? What obligations, if any, do humans have to the natural world? Should the interests of people take precedence over the interests or needs of the environment? One of the central open problems of environmental ethics is how to justify our obligations to respect nature. It is generally thought that it is wrong for human beings to pollute and destroy the natural environment and to waste natural resources-but wrong in what sense? Is it because a sustainable environment is essential to human well-being? Or is it wrong because nature has intrinsic value that ought to be respected? All of these questions are points of reflection which births the discourse in this study.

To fully capture this problem in a more systematic level, there is the need to ask some contemplating questions on what really gives the ground that other entity do not worth moral consideration and that only human do. Are the human entities the only privileged entity in ethical considerations? Are the nonhuman entities and the environment only at the mercy of human consumption? However, other than the focus for consumption, do animals and the ecosystem also have intrinsic value? How do we balance man's sort for technological development with the strife for the survival of the other entities in the universe? Should humans be held responsible for how they use technological equipment to damage nature and cause animals pain? However, why do Africans protect nature as expressed in Tangwa's work? What are the imperatives to be taken into consideration in salvaging the African environment from further deterioration? What is the position of man in preserving the nature in the African orientation? With these questions above, it suggests that the study seeks some form of equal moral consideration of entities (both human and the environment) and it is in this that it employs Godfrey Tangwa's eco-bio-communitarianism which explains the relation between man and the other entities in

the universe which is the ultimate emphasis of the African perspective concerning the treatment of the environment.

In his article titled “Some African Reflections on Biomedical and Environmental Ethics”, Tangwa based his conception of an African orientation in environmental ethics on a metaphysical outlook, and for him this was also responsible for why traditional Africans were more cautious in their attitude to plants, animals and inanimate things and the various invisible forces in the world (389). Tangwa further maintained that the dichotomy between “plants, animals, and inanimate things, between the sacred and the profane, matter and spirit, the communal and the individual, is a slim and flexible one” (389). Making reference to *Nso* culture, he maintains that the *Nso* attitude toward nature is that of respectful co-existence, conciliation and containment: “there are frequent sacrifices to God, to the divine spirits, both benevolent and malevolent, to the departed ancestors, and to the sundry invisible and inscrutable forces of nature (390).” His point is that African culture is not against technology, but rather also conscious of the treatment of other entities of nature. Hence, the eco-bio-communitarianism finds a peaceful relation between humans and nature with the scientific and technological enhancement.

Briefs above expose the necessary contents present in the environmental discourse of Godfrey Tangwa which is in his concept of eco-bio-communitarianism. Taking a cursory look at the word communitarianism, it is self-shown that it is an African perspective and while that of the eco and bio suggests that in the African society, there is a deep relation and cooperate existence between humans and nonhuman entities and also to the environment. Following the position of Tangwa, it means that the African society is neither based on the theories in environmental ethics such as anthropocentrism, biocentrism and ecocentrism—but rather of eco-bio-communitarian society which finds a surviving essence both for human, animals and the environment. However, there are some contents which are domiciled in the environmental theory of Godfrey Tangwa and it is in the exposition of these contents that this essay is focused on which include the inter and co-existence of human and other nonhuman entities, the spiritual essence of the nonhuman entities as a ground for moral consideration, and the modern technology and the balance of the survival

of the environment. All of these are embedded in Tangwa's eco-bio-communitarianism.

### **Tangwa's Eco-Bio-Communitarianism**

The environmental discourse of Tangwa is closely related to Segun Ogungbemi's view of "Nature-Relatedness" as a background to eco-bio-communitarianism. Let us establish that one of the peculiar features of the discipline of philosophy is that it is an embodied discipline which is well elaborate to the point that it will be very difficult to see an isolated theory. Schools of thought emerge in philosophy having its background and influence from another school of thought. It is that a school of thought either emerges in philosophy as influenced by another school of thought or it emerges as an antithesis to another school of thought. This same illustration is evident in the work of Godfrey Tangwa being the fact that he was seemingly presenting a thesis on the environmental philosophy just like Segun Ogungbemi. Even though the work of Ogungbemi appears to have been at variance with Tangwa they were having diverse focus but similar thought on environmental ethics. Thus, Ojomo's (2011) statement that says:

Godfrey Tangwa on an African perspective to environmental ethics Tangwa is another African philosopher that has made some reflections and contributions toward creating philosophical awareness on the need for an ethic of the environment in Africa. Though his work has no reference to the earlier work of Ogungbemi, but their point of focus is essentially similar (576).

Having shown the influence between the two African philosophers let us then do a brief exposition of the nature-relatedness of Ogungbemi and then see the similarities with that of Tangwa. Ogungbemi is an African philosopher (particularly from the Yoruba culture) who was moved by the issues of environmental crisis which ravages the modern Africa continent. Ogungbemi in his *An African Perspective on the Environmental Crisis* discusses the nature of the environmental crisis in Africa. In doing this, he came to a number of conclusions concerning the principal causes of the environmental crisis in Africa and proposes some ethical reflections and practical suggestions on how to mitigate the challenges posed by the environmental crisis.

Ogungbemi construes environmental crisis in global content as one of the greatest global problems of our time. To further establish this issue of environmental crisis, Nneji (2010) explains that “in Ogungbemi’s thought, environmental crisis is a conjunction of some natural disaster such as earthquakes, volcanic eruption and storms, together with man’s activity of exploration and utilization of natural resources through the ingenuity of science and technology, which have impacted negatively on the environment (65). However, while recognizing the universality of the environmental crisis in the modern African environment, Ogungbemi notes that in understanding the nature of the environmental crisis within the content of sub-Saharan Africa, three points are sacrosanct, they are - Ignorance and poverty, Science and technology and Political conflict, including international economic pressures.

To further understand Ogungbemi’s position, there is the need to elaborate on these three points. As concerning ignorance and poverty, the majority of traditional Africans lived in rural areas where the people wallow in poverty, and lack basic amenities such as good water supplies, adequate lavatories and proper energy use. As a consequence, the rivers are polluted with human waste, exposing the people to avoidable water-borne diseases such as dysentery, typhoid and cholera. Concerning science and technology, we can point out to how air, which is an essential natural resource for living, has been threatened by human techno-scientific activities. Most fundamental in this regard is the uncontrolled nature of the emission coming out from automobiles, industrial machines, artillery air raids and the likes.

It is based on these lacks of care for nature and the disasters that come after that he recommended what he calls the ethics of care which is his ideology of nature-relatedness. He says:

Ethics of nature relatedness asserts that our natural resources do not need man for their existence and function. The ethics of nature relatedness can be succinctly stated as an ethic that leads human beings to seek to co-exist peacefully with nature and treat it with some reasonable concern for its worth, survival and sustainability (207).

This quote of course explains the fact in the traditional African society, there is a value and dignity placed on nature which demands human sense of duty and responsibility for its preservation. To explicate this further, Ogungbemi reminds us of the way the people's behaviour in the traditional African society was to nature. He says:

In our traditional relationship with nature, man and women recognize the importance of water, land and air management. To our traditional communities the ethics of not taking more than you need from nature is a moral code. Perhaps this explains why earth, forests, rivers and wind and other natural objects are traditionally believed to be both natural and divine. The philosophy behind this belief may not necessarily be religious, but a natural means by which the human environment can be preserved. The ethics of care is essential to traditional understanding of environmental protection and conservation (204).

To put this into close, the environmental ethics of Ogungbemi was triggered by the environmental crisis which the contemporary African society faces and at the same time reminding us about the traditional African behaviour to nature which is co-existing. It is to further explain these positions that Tangwa establishes his own theory of eco-bio-communitarianism. To simply put, the difference between the two philosophers is that they use different terms and their content is actually wider than another, but the goal still remains one. The goal is to return the contemporary society to the consciousness of the traditional African way where there is suitable existence between man and other entities of nature.

### **The Inter and Co-existence of Human and other Nonhuman Entities in the Ideology of Tangwa**

This segment attempts to establish the relational essence of nature and man in the ideology of Tangwa. He attempts at creating philosophical awareness on the need for an ethic of the environment in Africa, and his own position is anchored on the doctrine of "let all live". Let all live in this context establishes the understanding that whether living or nonliving, all entities and things in nature deserve the opportunity

for survival. It means that whether we accept as humans that the other entities of nature need survival or not, Tangwa places a necessity for the understanding to be birthed in our consciousness that all entities deserve survival. We can then deduce that for Tangwa, life is not survival but rather it is existence. This means that, anything that exists whether such has life or not, deserves to be sustained.

In his *Environmental Ethics: An African Understanding*, Tangwa started his argument by first clarifying us about what we mean when we mention African environment. By this attempt, we can explain then that there is Africa as a continent and there is Africa as a people. As a continent, it describes a geographical location, while as a people it describes culture. But for Tangwa, he follows the second dimension of the senses of Africa but also expatiate on it. For him, he has what he calls the “African environment” which ought to be added to the senses of description of Africa. He says:

By the designation African environment, I mean the land of Africa together with its constituent elements; namely human beings, non-human animals, its biotic composition, its skies as well as its spiritual furniture. The African environment allows for a tripartite interaction of beings such as human beings, non-human entities and spiritual beings (cited by Mangena 29).

Before we dig more into the available of interaction between living and the nonliving entities in the African environment, let us analyze the above quote. From the above, we first understand that African environment is all about togetherness and however the togetherness here is not just anchored on human to human relation, but also that other realities in the African universe are also included in what is contained in the togetherness. Human beings following this have strict relation to the nonhuman entities (animals and other things of nature). Looking at the quote very strictly, we will discover that at the first instance the author uses nonhuman animals but in the second phase, he uses nonhuman entities. By nonhuman entities, it means other constituents of nature that are outside of the human species. In line with this, Tangwa points out that:

...within the traditional African metaphysical worldview, the dichotomy between plants, animals, and inanimate things; between the sacred and the profane, matter and spirit, the communal and the individual, is a slim and flexible one. It is in line with this metaphysical framework that one can consistently and coherently situate the people's essence (31).

Indeed, this slim dichotomy shows that human beings are in harmony with nature, and if this is the case, then human beings have the responsibility to confer moral respect to nonhuman animals including nature's biotic composition. In fact, we can position that when all living beings are granted moral respect depending on their nature, it will be easy to deal with the subject of environmental crisis approached and treated by traditional Africans. Illustrating his positions on the conciliating relation between humans and the environment in traditional African culture, Tangwa cited the instance of his own culture, the Nso in Cameroon. If we should ask Godfrey Tangwa the reason for his theory, we are assured in this study that his response shall be that it is a theory that reflects African thought and worldview. It is hinged on aspects such as the holistic approach, African morality, African traditional religion, African ontology, the idea of the common good, respect for nature and more importantly the interdependence and harmonious relationship between Africans and the environment. In this regard, it is very necessary for human beings to change their attitude towards the environment.

It is evident in Africa that there is need for re-imbibing an attitude of respect for nature and understanding that it is just a mere part of the whole. It is therefore high time for human beings to realize and be conscious that they are part of the biotic community and every member of that community, be they plants, animals, insects or birds have a right to survive and deserve respect from every other member of the community. it is in this that we should understand that:

If we can bring ourselves fully to admit the independence of nature, the fact that things go on in their own complex ways, we are likely to feel more respect for the ways in which they go on. We are prepared to contemplate them with admiration, to enjoy them sensciously to study them in their complexity as

distinct from looking for simple methods of manipulating them (Passmore 141).

However, Sunday Akpan have pointed out that there are still other areas in the matters of eco-bio-communitarian orientation in Africa that Tangwa hasn't been able to explore and that he wishes to point it out. For him, it is aspect of human survival but at the same time still concerned about the preservation of the environment and other nonhuman entities. Of course it is earlier stated that although Africa is not anthropocentric but that does not connote that there is no respect for human survival. In other words, for Sunday Akpan, eco-bio-communitarianism also treats human survival. Thus, He says:

But one thing which must be remembered is that all species of the biotic community survive through the prey-predator relationship amongst them. It is a natural process and therefore has to continue. Thus, it should be taken for granted that human beings to a certain degree are predators, i.e. they are dependent on other species for their survival. This role of predatorship of human beings is permissible as far as their survival is concerned but not beyond that, as long as it does not translate to egoistic and dominating tendencies. Human beings, apart from being predators for their survival, need to act justly and humanely towards all other species of the biotic community (162).

This means that human beings' well-being, health, and self-realization, depend crucially on peaceful coexistence with minerals, plants and animals. However, let us quickly clarify here that peaceful coexistence here is non-exploitative in nature. It is that we come to the understanding and consciousness not to pick from nature more than what we need.

### **The Spiritual Essence of the Nonhuman Entities as a Ground for Moral Consideration in the Ideology of Tangwa**

However, other than the physical relation and coexistence which connects man with other nonhuman entities and the environment, Tangwa also emphasize on a spiritual essence which is also involved in our consciousness and attitude to nature in Africa.

Of course, one of the identities which can be deduced from the character essence of the African person is that level of spirituality involved in the consciousness of whatever he/she does. So, Godfrey Tangwa believes at first and primarily that humans are just like stewards to the nonhuman animals and the things of nature but that it is also given by the invisible.

To this end, Isaac Darko mentions that “it embodied the conscious plans and actions of humans to allow other creatures play their respective roles in the universe without unnecessary interruptions” (139). In performing these roles, humans, are to a larger extent accountable to the supernatural. Tangwa holds that to carry out these stewards’ responsibilities effectively, indigenous communities developed and enforced beliefs, practices, rules, norms and customs that each community member was to observe that each time they treat the environment unjustly, they face the wrath of the supernatural. Tangwa further notes that:

Environmental stewardship means the recognition that we are part of our surroundings; we look over our surroundings and account for our surroundings. We are all caretakers or stewards, with the chief or clan head as the chief steward of the land...we have a responsibility to ourselves, which is how we treat our bodies, the animals and our surrounding...we do this for today and tomorrow... it is a serious and sacred opportunity given by the ancestors (cited by Akpan 141).

It is pertinent to explore some explanations from the quote above. A steward is just like a keeper of a particular thing and for a particular purpose. He is not the owner but rather given to handle by an external being or force for a particular purpose. This illustration however best explains the position of Tangwa. It is because man does not own nature but rather a steward that Tangwa opines that man will definitely give an account on how he has been able to handle that which has been given to him adequately. This specifically explains how humans, through conscious efforts must promote and act in ways that would encourage peaceful coexistence among humans as well as with our surroundings including the animals, plants and others. It is a moral duty that propels community members to care for the earth in honour of past, present and future generations.

Dankor opines that among the Ghanaians, there is of course a belief that:

There is a spiritual duty that manifests in the physical obedience to things that will ensure that the gods are pleased with our duties. All the things around may have spirits; the trees, water, sun, moon and even the air we breathe. They are a physical manifestation of the spirit world. Stewardship must, therefore, flow from the spirit of a person; the heart and mind...it is the mind that listens to the voice of the gods and ancestors (Donkor 22-23).

However, there is the need to clarify some certain misconceptions which might be birthed. From our discussion so far in this section we have been mentioning and emphasizing on the spiritual and it might sound as though the Africans preserve their environment out of the fear of being punished by an invisible force. This of course on one hand may be right to a certain point but to another point, this interpretation may be wrong. Africans do not preserve their environment ultimately out of fear but rather out of the consciousness that there is a communal relation which exists between the physical and the spiritual in such a way that this relation defines the very essence of the African person. In fact, Placide Tempels calls this “being is force and force is being”. This is also the sense of spiritual essence which Tangwa is talking about.

Of course another point can also be established on the basis that the supremacy of sacred and community beliefs are mutually dependent. According to Kaoma (2010) “many African cultures believes that God, ancestors and other spirits can manifests in nature. For instance, the *Mere* people of Kenya believe that ancestors reside in sacred forest, caves, water pools and valleys. These places play a crucial role in different cultic observances (88).” This is also based on this that sacrifice which is a spiritual obligation can be presented as a ground for the right treatment of nature and nonhuman animals. Although some may position that the contemporary African society is monotheistic in religious practice but the fact is that the traditional African society is pantheistic in religious practice. It is based on this pantheistic orientation that an African believes that when he makes sacrifices, God is there at that point to accept it. To further establish this, let us note this “according to Shona philosophy, God has no shape. He is not in the form of a human being. The Shona say that the

creator is as they know, a whiff of wind or air who inhabits the heavens above but who may be found in places as the depth of earth, in the mountain or forest (Gelfand 29).”

The point here in this quote is that God is in nature and because of this, nature ought to be preserved and hence nature is also useful as sacrifice and ingredients of atonement. The point here is that human beings and the natural environment constitute African ontology. It is through the conception of God that the African people become conscious of their natural environment through which they practice their religion. Again, worth noting from this section is the fact that by alluding that man is at the centre of the ontology, he does not imply that man should harm the natural environment. Rather, man should seek coexistence with nature.

### **Modern Technology and the Balance of the Survival of the Environment in Tangwa’s Ideology**

We live in a technological and scientific world but at the same time the environment becomes very toxic in the midst of these technological and scientific investments and improvements. The point here is that there has been the consideration for scientific development at the expense of the preservation of the environment and nonhuman animals. Also, it becomes one of the concerns of Tangwa in his eco-bio-communitarianism to establish a balance between the sort for scientific development and that of the preservation of the environment. And at the end of his argument, his position is that the African society is not against technological development but also that even in the midst of these technological developments, the people still see it as a form of responsibility to preserve the environment.

The point here is that it is true that technology has tremendously shaped human society, economy and environment. The quest for better ways to human development has always been a key driver of technological advancement. However, such advancements have somewhat turned human beings to slaves of modern technology, its effects are therefore devastating (Akpan 1). Several persons have described technology as alienating making humans lose their connection with fellow beings and nature, besides causing environmental degradation. Hence, the position of

Tangwa is that environmental challenges threatening humanity are not something that can be simply overcome by reducing or increasing technological use, but rather by humans re-thinking the attitude in which technology is applied to the environment. In his *Some African Reflections on Biomedical and Environmental Ethics*, Tangwa notes that:

Africa had developed her own science and technology before the advent of modern science and technology which sought to ameliorate human sufferings and provide a slow pace development with cognizance that humans and environment co-exist and insofar as humans realized this fact and treated nature with caution there would be harmony and peace. But failure to recognize this fact humans and nature will be in conflict and it is humans that will be worse for it (55).

The main reason man ought to keep smooth relationship and constant environmental preservation even in the midst of technological improvement is because if that is not observed, there is always the propensity of making the universe inhabitable. However, this uncomfortable inhabitation in the African environment through technology can also be interpreted in the midst of African culture. This can of course be put in another way to be the effect of western technology on African culture.

The major problem here is that not all western technologies are congenial with African worldview. Some of these western technologies have rather helped to reduce African cultural values. The youths appeared to be the most venerable group affected by the influx of these western technologies. African societies are now facing many problems, among which is sex abuse. These seem to be having effects on African society. In the traditional African context, girls avoided pre-marital sexual experience for fear of social punishments usually meted out to girls who lost their virginity before marriage. Today's situation shows a sharp contrast to the African cultural values. Many western electronic games, movies literature and bad models promote immorality, profanity, and violence. Some of them (games) glorify occult practices and features gang wars, drug use, explicit sexual content, foul language and intense violence.

Today in Africa, most of our girls are almost naked on the street. The consequences of this acts are enormous, we have many rape cases everywhere. Indecent dressing has been blamed for everything AIDs, sexual harassment, a lot abortion, death, etc. the desire to pursue foreign fashions (clothing styles, make up, bangles, and jewelleries) excessively advertised by foreign media forced many African children into prostitution because of material things. Some become drug carriers. This made them to lose their family and religious values as well as African cultural values in general. We now have culture that is very alien to Africa thought. Exposure of the body suggests careless life style and is contrary to the values, ideas and norm of African society and it often attracts undue attention from male and female alike.

In many African institutions of higher learning, our girls deliberately dressed indecently or expose their body parts and made unnecessary visits to lecturer's offices and make suggestive or provocative gestures. These made some male lecturers to demand for sex from female students in exchange for carpet grades. This obviously have a very serious implication on the standard of education in Africa.

The point here is that we deserve and it is part of our duty to make sure that we live in a kind of environment which is not devoid of a conducive state. However, this conducive state can be in form of preserving the physical environment and it can be in the form of protecting the culture and identity of the people which enhances peace in their environment. All of these are part of the obligations to be fulfilled according to Tangwa if Africa will be in a conducive environment in the midst of modern technological development.

## **Evaluation**

By way of summary, we began by exploring the influence of the idea of nature-relatedness of Segun Ogungbemi, after which we examined the inter and co-existence of human and other nonhuman entities in the ideology of Tangwa. We further explore the essence of the interdependence and relation in the works of Tangwa following the spiritual side of the emphasis. However, we buttressed the emphasis by looking at the modern technology and the balance of the survival of the

environment in Tangwa's ideology. Having done a recap of such, let us then do an evaluation of these contents.

However, the major contributions of Tangwa are- the first is that he was able to represent the African essence in totality, and outside of that he was able to define the reason why we have peaceful atmospheric condition in the continent. He also tried as much as possible in his theory to place a kind of ideology which is devoid of western intervention and influence. However, this is very difficult to attain in African philosophy and this is because of the factor of colonialism. Africa before colonialism is quite different from Africa after colonialism interrupted by western religions and ideologies. In the pre-colonial African society, it is true that Africa has the respect to human dignity and liberty but at the same time, the people also recognize that the environment which they live in also deserve some certain moral treatment. Duty and moral obligations for the pre-colonial African emphasis is not just on human to human relationship but rather that it also extend to the other entities in the human society. This is why he calls it eco-bio-communitarianism. However, irrespective of race and continental difference, we can recommend this ideology as a global ideology so that humanity as a whole can enjoy peaceful environment in their existence.

Tangwa's thought on the co-existence of the human and the nonhuman, one of the things Tangwa fails to recognize is that the relationship is determined by man. Man as a rational being determines the level of relationship to have with the other nonhuman entities and other than this, the value to be given and be recognized to these entities are also measured by man. Having understood this, then it is better to also come into consciousness that although man might want to act and allocate values outside of utility but the fact still remains that no matter how man strives to achieve this, most times he cannot. He is still an appetitive and desiring being who allocates values according to how a thing becomes useful to him and for him. In other words, in as much as man still has some certain desires, he cannot come to that state where he/she can treat other beings as end in themselves. He pursues that which satisfies his needs and hence other nonhuman entities can be a means to attain this.

Furthermore, let us evaluate the spiritual essence which Tangwa was emphasizing on. One of the things that Tangwa also fails to understand is that we now live in a technological and scientific world, and hence the determination of the essence of a thing most times can manipulate that of the spiritual essence in as much as it will help to achieve the scientific and technological advancement. Science and technology remain one of the major sponsor of development and advancement of humanity and hence things can be used to attain this. Even following the hierarchy of the African society, it is shown that humans are superior to the nonhuman entities and nature. Following this, one of the benefits in superiority is in the ability to manipulate those who are beneath. Hence, if man uses nature and the nonhuman entities to attain his technological advancements, he is justified.

## **5.2 Conclusion**

From the foregoing, it is necessary to put the ideology of Godfrey Tangwa's eco-bio-communitarianism into focus primarily because it is an undeniable cliché that the world at large and Africa in particular are facing serious environmental problems such as deforestation, water pollution, air pollution, wetlands destruction, poaching as well as global warming. These problems are mainly caused by economic pressure for industrialization, technological advancement, population growth, poverty and ignorance. These factors however are the various factors which stimulate the intelligence of Godfrey Tangwa. The burden of his idea we can maintain is the strife to establish peaceful existence of the African people and also to restore Africans to their initial patterns and ways of thinking especially concerning nonhuman entities and the nature around them.

Eco-communitarian implies interdependence and peaceful co-existence among humans, animals, earth, and plants which is against the Western perspective that is said to be anthropocentric and individualistic. African moral principle and traditional practices is in relation to environmental ethics respectively. Of importance and interests from these ideas is the realization that they are all premised on African communitarianism so together they are calling for an environmental ethic from within. Let us mention that in promoting life, African thought system is linked with the environment, for the reason that it is through a healthy environment that life is

improved. As a communal system, African thought system is concerned with whatsoever affects human life. In this view then Africans view the universe as a profoundly religious universe, hence they treat it as such. Africans view an individual as part of the environment. Environment to an African means a whole life. Everybody then in traditional African culture had a religious and moral responsibility towards the environment. They knew that to destroy the environment means to destroy the human person.

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