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## Oral Prose Narratives in Green: An Ecocritical Reading of Mwaghavul Folktales

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### ABSTRACT

*Verbal art held a critical place during the precolonial era in Africa. These oral forms encapsulated African indigenous knowledge, the belief systems of the people and ceremonies that bound the members of the community together. However, the displacement of Traditional Indigenous Knowledge occasioned by the contact with Western knowledge systems has left an indelible bearing on indigenous cultures, with many cultures or aspects of cultures becoming extinct. The neglect of Mwaghavul Traditional Ecological Knowledge is one feature of their life that has been grossly affected by this cultural drift. This study examines ecological ideas in the folktales of Mwaghavul people in Mangu Local Government of Plateau State. Twenty-four (24) folktales were collected by the researcher and twenty additional folktales were selected out of 100 folktales collected and stored in the Mwaghavul digital archive by Peace Sorocho Longdet in her unpublished PhD thesis (2019). A total of forty-four folktales were used for analysis. Data was also collected through four unstructured interviews administered by the researcher to four elders in four communities of Mangu L.G.A. The study is based on postcolonial ecocritical theory which is concerned with how nature was envisioned by Mwaghavul people in precolonial times and how this perception has been altered by the impact of colonialism. The folktales and interviews were analyzed and four ecocritical ideas were identified and discussed. They include the preservative role of nature, nonhuman nature has life, nonhuman nature as an integral part of human existence, and Mwaghavul traditional ecological ideas about the use and conservation of nature. These strands of ideas indicate that the environmental practices in Mwaghavul folktales promote conservation, re-enforce ecological sustainability and dissuade the exploitation of nature. The findings support the prevalence of ecocritical ideas particularly in Mwaghavul folktales and by extension oral literature. The rich traditional ecological knowledge captured in Mwaghavul folktales validate the need to retrieve silenced or buried knowledge of indigenous communities.*

**Keywords:** traditional ecological knowledge, ecocritical ideas, conservation, Mwaghavul folktales and indigenous communities.

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## Introduction

The thrust of this paper is to track the indigenous ecological knowledge embedded in Mwaghavul folktales. The aim therefore, is not just to identify and discuss the strands of environmental ideas and ways of conserving them but to also create the awareness that environmental conservation is not exclusively a western world idea and ideal but that Africans were very much aware of nature and had in their own way devised means of protecting and conserving the environment. It is also a call to Africans to look into their rich oral narratives in order to find ways of creating a nexus between African traditional ecological knowledge and current technological advances in tackling the global climate change. In precolonial Africa, verbal art was the soul of aboriginal communities that predated the ideological interruptions by Eurocentric worldviews. Oral literary art transcended recreational purposes and encapsulated the people's values and norms. They underpinned the rites, rituals, and ceremonies which bound members of the community together, enabling them to adapt to their environment, and ensuring their survival, one generation after another. Margret Bruchac opines that these

indigenous oral traditions often contain insightful explanations that focus on details: origin stories, referencing natural and constructed features of the

landscape, descriptions of beings that inhabit the landscape, articulations of the reciprocal relations between these beings, and traditional interactions that guide human interactions with place (Bruchac 3817).

Members of the host communities from where the Oral traditions were native highly valued such 'insightful explanations.' Descendants of aboriginal cultures considered oral traditions and the knowledge encoded in them as sacred and specific guidelines prerequisite for their continued existence. Such autochthonous understanding is known as Traditional Indigenous Knowledge, "a hereditary system of learned awareness and skill that enables wisdom to be gained and tools to be constructed, as needed, from the materials at hand. This knowledge is rooted in a particular ecosystem, but they are not necessarily static" (Bruchac 3815). Most, if not all, human societies, at inception, were established on indigenous knowledge systems, from which many have evolved into scientific and theoretical modes of thinking.

However, many communities in Africa are struggling to preserve the traditional wisdom they had relied on for their existence, because colonialism, neocolonialism, modernity, urbanization, globalization and other related influences have threatened the culture and traditional indigenous knowledge of the people. According



to John McLeod, this cultural dislodgment has happened because colonialism, which is an aspect of imperialistic drive,

suggests certain ways of seeing, specific modes of understanding the world, and one's place in it that assists in justifying the subservience of colonized people...persuading people to internalize its logic and speak its language; to perpetuate the values and assumptions of the colonizers as regards the way they perceive and represent the world (18).

Traditional Indigenous knowledge can be defined as a "network of knowledge, beliefs, and traditions intended to preserve, communicate, and contextualize Indigenous relationships with culture and landscape over time [...] conveyed formally and informally among kin groups and communities through social encounters, oral traditions, ritual practices and other activities. they include oral narratives that recount human histories, cosmological observations and modes of reckoning times, symbolic and decorative modes of communication, techniques for planting and harvesting, hunting and gathering skills, specialized understandings of local ecosystems, and the manufacture of specialized

tools and technologies (e.g. flint knapping, hide tanning, pottery making, and concocting medicinal remedies) (3814)

Traditional Indigenous Knowledge (TIK) represents all knowledge forms that a community owns collectively, holds dearly and has transmitted over many generations. The UNESCO glossary of terms defines TIK as the Knowledge, innovations and practices of indigenous local communities around the world developed from experience gained over the centuries and adapted to the local culture and environment, traditional knowledge transmitted orally from generation to generation. It tends to be collectively owned and takes the form of stories, song, folklore, proverbs, cultural values, beliefs, rituals, community laws, local language and agricultural practices, including the development of plant species and animal breeds. Traditional knowledge is mainly practical, particularly in such fields as agriculture, fisheries, health, horticulture, forestry and environmental management in general." (UNESCO Glossary)

Both Bruchac and the UNESCO Glossary affirm that TIK is a system of knowledge which develops over many generations of communal experiences and practices. Also, they agree that ideas of TIK are packed in oral literature and other aspects of folklore which serve as depositories for folk wisdom and ensure the sustainability of such wisdom in the community. While the UNESCO



glossary indicates that traditional practices in the fields of agriculture, health, forestry and environmental management draw from this rich knowledge database. Bruchac links TIK to the “scientific disciplines of biology, botany, geography, and cosmology” (3816). According to Fikret Berkes et al, TIK is based on “detailed observations of the dynamics of the natural environment, feedback learning, social system-ecosystem learning” (Berkes et al. 409). Land, animals, and vegetation were a valuable part of the ecosystem within this knowledge system and the African worldview. For instance, the world was considered circular, interrelated and interconnected within the African worldview. In “Pathisa Nyathi Talks African Cosmology, Rain Ceremonies, Nature and Rituals” (Cultural Expressions), Nyathi notes how in African thought the earth was perceived as a mother. Like a mother who nourishes her suckling, the earth nourishes her inhabitants by yielding food which grows upon it. The earth was in turn cared for by her inhabitants. This was one of the reasons why African indigenous communities were deliberate about conservation practices, and caring for nonhuman nature. The extraction of resources had to be done circumspectly and sustainably since ‘mother’ will be required to provide food next cyclical season when the circle continues.

In line with this thought, the world of humans and nonhumans in the community was fluid as depicted in

most folktales. Just as they were living together in the same house with their dogs, poultry, goats, and cats -though living in the same house with cats and dogs, till date is not alien or exclusive to Africans -then came the interruption and exploitation of nature through colonialism, coupled with the insatiable quest for modernity that followed. These patronizing events led to the denigration of the deep meanings that maintaining an ecological balance held for indigenous people and with it a worsening environmental predicament in post-contact societies. “The seizing of ‘foreign’ lands for government and settlement was in part motivated by the desire to create and control markets abroad for western goods as well as securing the natural resources and labour-power of different lands and peoples at the lowest possible costs...” with the aim of “bringing wealth and riches to Western nations through the economic exploitation of others” (McLeod 7).

This impact has been the concern of postcolonial eco-critics with particular interest in environmental justice. They consider the result that a long history of imperialism has on humans in the African ecology. Beside human exploitation, the African environment is perhaps the most abused entity with the impact still felt today and perhaps ever increasing. It is imperative that the tide of postcolonial ecocritical interests turn to include a strong defense for the environment itself.



Part of the effort in this defense is an attempt at recovering the African and particularly the Mwaghavul notion of nature, the environment and ecological responsibility. Such intimate knowledge of place in Mwaghavul land is not documented in written texts but in their indigenous oral literary forms and cultural lore.

It is evident that green studies on modern African literary texts are not as widespread as Eco studies on texts with Western authorship. However, environmental discourses on Oral literary forms from Africa are almost very negligible. Existing green studies on the continent concern western-styled texts written by Africans, and this creates a gap and a need for studies that examine ecological ideas or Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) contained in African verbal art forms. Presently, much ecocritical readings within Nigeria are limited to ecologies in the Niger-Delta geographical region and are mainly focused on issues related to resource extraction. This study acknowledges these existing efforts whatever the magnitude, but expands the boundaries by exploring eco-centred issues from the Central region of the country. The need, therefore, is to an all-inclusive presentation of a postcolonial ecocritical concern within Nigeria. The choice of the Mwaghavul ethnicity, a language group in Central Nigeria, is to further this commitment within marginalized ecologies.

In response to the alarm that African languages and entire

indigenous cultures are getting lost, studies on oral literature and specifically folktales are gaining the interest of more and more researchers. Such research efforts are commendable and still in short supply considering the multiplicity of African languages. Mwaghavul is one of the major languages in Plateau state yet Peace S. Longdet's study on Mwaghavul folktales completed in 2019 is the only in depth study of its kind known to the researcher. The study was aimed at preserving the oral texts, examining literary aesthetics and discussing their functionality which is traditionally the focus of most studies in Oral literature.

However, there is a paucity of oral literary researches that focus on the recovery of Traditional indigenous knowledge that is scientific. Traditional Indigenous Knowledge which crosscuts the fields of biology, agriculture, cosmology, horticulture, fishery, health, ecology, geography and botany are also captured in folklore. Reclaiming silenced indigenous knowledge must exceed the question of analyzing literary aesthetics in oral literature, and aim at identifying, documenting and recovering native knowledge captured in oral art. The present study attempts to retrieve Mwaghavul indigenous knowledge with the aim of identifying and recuperating strands of Mwaghavul traditional indigenous ecological knowledge. Traditional ecological knowledge is a major aspect of indigenous knowledge that has been neglected and is a dynamic and



intimate knowledge of the natural environment, acquired by the native inhabitants of a place spanning hundreds of years.

Sadly, identifying and preserving such evolving knowledge of an environment is often not the concern of most researchers of Oral literature or Postcolonial ecocritics. Researchers of Oral literature tend to pay more attention to literary aesthetics and functionality while most discourses in postcolonial ecocriticism focus on environmental degradation and its effects on humans. This leaves a knowledge gap on the recovery of traditional ecological knowledge. This retrieval project should neither be romantic nor nativist since Africans must seek to define, adopt and follow their own culture while taking into cognizance industrial capital and modernity. Synergizing traditional ecological knowledge and scientific ecological solutions can lead to a holistic ecological approach that is more suited for the African ecology. (Berkes et al. 412, Bruchac 3815, Wu 28).

## **Theoretical framework**

### **Methodology**

### **Literature Review**

### **Mwaghavul Cosmology**

Cosmology is a field that studies the nature of the universe, its origin, structure, space-time relations and fate. Mwaghavul speakers may not have documented their view about the cosmos in texts and they certainly did not approach cosmological matters empirically but

they had a way of perceiving the world and it influenced their relationships. Baba Pathisa Nyathi a writer, historian, scholar and an expert in African cosmology notes the similarity in cosmic thought across the continent. He argues that evident in the design of African huts, utensils such as baskets, calabashes and pots, dance formations, drums, traditional court sitting arrangements is an attempt to copy nature and an appreciation of a circular or cyclical view of the world. Their observation of the spherical shape of planetary bodies like the sun, moon and the unchanging course of the seasons lead to their globular view of the world and accounts for the continuity, endlessness, eternity and perpetuity of life with no beginning or end like the circle (Cultural Expressions).

Mwaghavul cosmology conforms to this circular and broader African cosmic world-view notable in their architectural design, their utensils and the objects they make. The continuity and interconnectivity that this perpetuates is seen in their view that all life forms are connected and even death is not considered an end but a beginning at another realm of existence. Death becomes a gateway to joining the ancestors *nji* who can only be joined if certain conditions are met. Among the Mwaghavul, ancestors were venerated and only the goddess *Naan* and the deities *Kum* were superior to them. Not all who died were believed to have joined the ancestors except those who had lived according to the



expected moral standards; left heirs behind to bury them; died at a ripe old age after serving the community; died a good death and were given proper burial rites. Only those whose death met these five criteria were said to have joined the ancestors. (Danfulani 117) Burial ceremonies were elaborate, considered important and handled delicately to maintain the fluid connection between humans *gurumo*, ancestors *nji*, deities *kum*, and the goddess *Naan*

Non-human nature was also a vibrant part of this circle of life. Sacred places *pewaar* such as a “hut, an open land, forest, grove, brook, mountain top, rock, a twig, stick, bushes, a tree or group of trees” were marked off as the dwelling place of deities and ancestors or where they embodied. Those spaces were considered abominable for humans to visit, fish, cut firewood, hunt, or even fetch water at certain hours of the day. Human activities at such places were completely banned or restricted (like the stream). *Pewaar* were sites of reincarnation and dwelling places for totemic species or animal counterparts and this practice fostered the conservation of certain nonhuman entities and the sustainability of all creation.

The circle captures the Mwaghavul philosophy and represents the unity, relatedness and connectivity that exist in the cosmos and among all created things. It refers to many parts that make a whole in the ecology. The binary idea of living and nonliving was nonexistent and since

all creation was accorded life, therefore all of creation must be respected and there is a delicate balance or equilibrium that needs to be maintained to avoid a disturbance that can lead to natural disasters. This basic indigenous knowledge ensured the sustenance of the Mwaghavul community whether human or non-human.

### Mwaghavul Oral Literature

Mwaghavul oral art forms fit into the broad categories of African Oral Literature discussed by Finnegan in *Oral Literature in Africa* (1970). They include prose called *Tangcham*, drama called *Tan*, and poetry called *Nnyam*. *Tangcham* is subdivided into legends *benwe*, myths *wenshi*, and folktales *Tangcham* (Longdet 35). Mwaghavul people also have Oral poetry which suited various occasions such as elegies, panegyrics, nuptial songs, children’s songs and Veleng (flute language). Except for elegiac and praise poetry, many Mwaghavul poems are satiric combining humour, entertainment and messages aimed at correcting societal ills.

Folktales are among the narrative forms of Mwaghavul Oral Literature. Like in other African communities, Mwaghavul folktales play a major role in the transmission of values, customs, beliefs and all aspects of culture. Although in Nigeria some communities such as the Bajju of Kaduna State restrict storytelling to women, among Mwaghavul people men and women





participate in its narration. Even children are not left out in the art of telling folktales. Sometimes folktales were told late in the afternoon when children are back from shepherding or early in the evening while awaiting supper. The opening of Mwaghavul tales vary slightly and this gives room for the performer's creativity. Tales may begin with *Ni an lokachi di...* (It was at a time when...), or *Ni a kisisi...* (It goes like this...) depending on the choice of the storyteller and occasion. It is conversational and dramatic such as "The Hare just got married" and the teller simply goes on to tell the rest of the tale. This opening is effective in bringing the world of the story closer to the audience.

Mwaghavul folktales capture a rich variety of themes which were only discussed briefly in the study but are not included in this paper. The brevity of the analyses was mainly because an in-depth study of Mwaghavul folktales, their functions, thematic preoccupations had been discussed extensively in "Transposition of Mwaghavul Folktales into Texts for Children", an unpublished PhD thesis by Peace S. Longdet.

### Greening Mwaghavul Folktales

Environmental thinking in Africa is often associated with the idea that there is interconnectedness between humans and nonhumans in African cultures. This ecological sensibility in African contemporary literature is what Cajeta Iheka calls the 'aesthetics of proximity' in *Naturalizing Africa* (2018). He

defines the concept of proximity as 'the process by which African literary artifacts depict the interconnectedness of human lives with Others in the environment' (23) Mwaghavul folktales reveal this interlinking of people and nature around them giving credence to their ecological awareness. The folktales are replete with their awareness of their flora and fauna with references made to the trees, plants fruits, animals, bodies of water, and forests found in their geographical location. Mwaghavul tales bear evidence of a rich ecological awareness that governed their relationship with the animals and plants around them and their responsibility to care for them.

Harry Garuba explicates Iheka's concept of proximity from a theoretical and analytical framework which he conceptualizes as *animist materialism* or *animist realism*. "Animism is often simply perceived as a belief in objects such as stones or trees or rivers for the simple reason that animist gods and spirits are *located and embodied* in objects...The objects thus acquire a social and spiritual meaning within the culture far in excess of their natural properties and their use value" (Garuba 267). According to Danfulani, "many folktales of the Mwaghavul...recount the punishment meted out by *Kum mo* to tired load carriers who were tempted to rest under the cool shed of trees found on such sacred grounds" (108). Such tales deterred adventurous youngsters from trespassing sacred grounds thereby sustaining conservation practices of



the community and respecting matters of communal interests.

Many of the folktales analyzed in this study exemplify this animist materialism and agency is not limited to human subjectivities. The concept that a close proximity exists between human entities and nonhuman 'Others' is a reoccurring motif in the tales consequently, four strands of ecological ideas are evident in the analysis of Mwaghavul folktales carried out in the course of this research. These four strands of thought relate to the ecocritical ideas Ursula Heise opines are of interest to ecocritical discourse. According to Heise,

Ecocriticism analyzes the role that the natural environment plays in the imagination of a cultural community at a specific historical moment, examining how the concept of "nature" is defined, what values are assigned to it or denied it, and why, and the way in which the relationship between humans and nature are envisioned..., it investigates how nature is used literally or metaphorically in certain literary or aesthetic genres and tropes (4).

The coming sections explicate how nature or the environment is perceived and represented in the oral literature of the Mwaghavul community prior to the colonial contact.

### **Classification of Ecological Ideas (EI) in Mwaghavul Folktales**

Four strands of traditional ecological ideas were derived and classified from the analysis of the folktales. Twenty-nine out of the forty-four folktales that make up the sample size were used in the analysis of Mwaghavul environmental ideas. Ecological Idea (EI) was used in classifying the strands of ecological thoughts identified.

The first ecological idea is the Preservative Role of Nature (EI1) depicted in eight folktales. Nature here is valued for its stabilizing role. In *The Child Admidst Wild Animals* (MF50), "poverty struck a woman and her son. In order to make a living, they would go to the tamarind tree, pick its fruit, come back and sell". The poverty-stricken woman and her son are preserved from hunger and earned an income because of the fruitful tamarind tree. This indicates the economic value of trees to individuals and the whole community. Animals are also refreshed by it as the land around the tree is a resting ground for wild animals. Also, in MF59, a dove warns an obedient girl about some deceitful spirits and returns again and again to caution her. This timely warning saves the girl's life and gives her access to treasures which she returns home with. The fate of her stepsister, the playful and disobedient girl is however not the same because she disregards the dove. In the tales, nonhuman always seems within reach to bail man out of his challenges not as a subordinate





but a counterpart validating the proximity and interconnectivity of human and nonhuman nature relationships.

Ecological idea two depicts that Nonhuman nature has life (EI2) evident in five folktales. Harry Garuba's concept of animist materialism validates this perception. The idea of animate and inanimate is rendered invalid. Within Mwaghavul worldview, nature has life and the value assigned to it in folktales is indicative of this. In MF56, Nariin encounters a tree with human hair instead of leaves. Not much is said about the tree after her first encounter with it but this halfhuman halfplant image is similar to the image on the cover page of *PostColonial Ecocriticism* by Graham Huggan and Helen Tiffin (2015 edition) illustrating humans and plants are intertwined by a common denominator- life. This life which is in humans is also associated with lakes, animals and fishes. Similarly, Lake Ampudong in *The Ampudong Young Woman* (MF73) is embodied by the spirit of a beautiful woman. This image of a woman turning into water and water emanating from a woman is a depiction of animist realism. Objects and nonhumans are animated and narrations can stretch reality as far as required.

Another strand of Ecological idea is nonhuman nature is an integral part of human existence (EI3) portrayed in eleven folktales. Mwaghavul folktales mirror all organisms as interconnected and no life form can thrive independent of the other. For this reason, man is

enjoined to care for his environment and reap the rewards that are sure to follow effortlessly. This strand of indigenous ecological thought is reminiscent of Nyathi's analogy of nature as a mother. Nyathi also uses the image of a circular and cyclical African cosmic worldview to illustrate continuity, connectivity and pertainence of existence between humans and nonhumans, life and death. In *The Outlets of Dushuu Spring* (MF74), an old man fails to acknowledge this oneness because he is overwhelmed by his personal pain. After his wife drowns, "the old man at night carried stones and blocked the outlet, and the water dried up". His action makes the water outlet at Timjaghas dry up, putting an end to irrigation activities in that community. Another man meets a fatal end in *The Wild Olive Tree at Ampudong* (MF76) due to his failure to acknowledge that water gives life to the tree and serves as a means of dispersing its seed. Also, he failed to recognize that by throwing a handful of ripe fruit before satisfying his own needs, he is only participating in an unending cycle in which tree, water and man are intertwined and all benefit from the other. The cycle in this folktale depicts how all life forms are interdependent and each has a vital role to play.

The fourth Ecological ideas focus on the use and conservation of nature (EI4) referenced in 13 folktales. In all the tales, trees help humans to escape impending doom emphasizing the importance of trees to the habitat. This discourages



deforestation and promotes the conservation of forest reserves. The value of trees is perhaps why Mwaghavul people did not light fires frequently. Nathaniel Dapiya affirms that in precolonial times, women made sure the embers at their cooking hearth did not go out completely. According to Dapiya, this might have been connected to the fact that fire was a significant component of the annual hunting festivals. *Wus*, the name of the first hunting festival means “fire”. So symbolic were fires that they were not an option when clearing farmlands. This controlled use of fires did not eliminate its impact on animals, insects or the ecosphere which was subject to pollution, yet it was an ecofriendly practice reducing the fire’s impact on the environment. Other conservation practices evident in the folktales pertain to the use of water. The water of

Ampudong in *The Ampudong Young Woman* (MF73) can only be used by the lake and cannot be taken elsewhere. Although such a belief may seem farfetched, yet the lesson here is that water and natural resources are not inexhaustible therefore they need to be conserved.

Mwaghavul traditional ecological ideas also presented also foster ecological sustainability. *The Outlets of Dushuu Spring* (MF74) reveals the fact that the continued existence of humans and nonhumans can be threatened by man’s activity. Man’s sustained existence is dependent on nature and vice versa. In fulfilling his personal vendetta, the old man may have succeeded in

blocking the outlet of water at Timjaghas, but the effect of losing the outlet has its toll on the community. Sometimes communities that lose their source of water become vulnerable and exposed to abuse by those who have water. They can also be forced to relocate because their sustainability is threatened. In *The Wild Olive Tree at Ampudong* (MF76), humans are required to throw a handful of ripe olives into the water so they can be dispersed before the fruits are harvested for consumption. This indicates that the reproduction of olives or other forms of nonhuman nature should be of utmost concern to humans as opposed to consumerism. Based on the tragic end of the man in the folktale, it is implied that disregarding practices that foster ecological sustainability results in self-destruction. The disposition of the destitute orphan boy in MF90 illustrates how empathic hunters should be toward their game. Hunting should not be a callous activity with consumption as the utmost goal but it should be done with some consideration for the animals. Such an attitude will ensure the continued existence of nonhuman nature and regulate hunting activities. That an animal/game is to be used for food does not imply that it should be treated with callousness.

From the forgoing, it is evident that the folktales reveal how nature is imagined by the Mwaghavul people, the value they ascribe to nature, and their practices which foster the conservation of natural resources and ecological



sustainability. The tales reveal they were an environmentally conscious group before the colonial encounter or ecocritical discuss received its present attention in Western literary discourse. Their environmental awareness indicates an understanding captured in a Native American proverb which states "Treat the earth well; it was not given to you by your parents; it was loaned to you by your children. We do not inherit the earth from our ancestors; we borrow it from our children" (Native American Proverb cited in Iwaketok 2017). Human consideration must be on preserving the environment for the future and not the delights of the present. Such ecological orientation governed their relationship with the environment and is useful for managing ecological problems today. Mwaghavul folktales reveal the environmental consciousness of the people and foreground the premise of this study that traditional ecological knowledge should be recuperated from oral lores as part of environmentalism in postcolonial societies.

### CONCLUSION

Findings of this paper reveal that a rich ecological awareness existed among the Mwaghavul people before the advent of colonialism and by extension, Africa as a continent. The traditional ecological knowledge depicted in their folktales have been passed down to generations and some of these practices could be tapped into. Through the four strands of ecological ideas classified in this

paper, it is noteworthy that African indigenous perspectives to environmental issues are largely untapped, unknown and under-explored. This paper's overall effort is to bring to the fore the rich body of traditional indigenous knowledge inherent in Oral literature and also indigenous communities. Again, the significance of this paper also is to encourage an earth-centered approach to African literature harnessing these African indigenous perspectives to ongoing deliberations and solutions on sustainable ways of handling the global climatic and environmental crises.

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