

## ECOCRITICAL INSIGHTS IN NOL ALEMBONG'S AND JOHN NGONG KUM NGONG'S POEMS

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### Abstract

This paper examines the ecocritical dimensions of selected poems by Nol Alembong and John Ngong Kum Ngong, focusing on Alembong's *Forest Echoes* (2010) and Ngong's *Season of Shadows* (2019). Specifically, it analyses Alembong's "Green Call" and Ngong's "The Penguin's Brooding" as environmentally conscious texts that articulate humanity's relationship with nature and the broader ecological crisis. The study demonstrates how both poems intertwine intellectual reflection and emotional appeal to heighten ecological awareness and emphasise the interconnectedness of living systems. While "Green Call" foregrounds the urgency of global environmental protection and sustainable practices, "The Penguin's Brooding" highlights the fragile interdependence within ecosystems, particularly through symbolic representations of animal life and habitat vulnerability. Both poems evoke culturally embedded natural settings, prompting an exploration of the complex relationship between nature and culture and the ways cultural practices shape environmental outcomes. Drawing on ecocritical theories—especially ecocentrism and critiques of environmental injustice—the paper interrogates the poets' visions of a non-hierarchical, interdependent ecological future. It argues that these works advocate ethical responsibility towards the environment while challenging anthropocentric assumptions that privilege human interests over those of other species. Ultimately, the study shows that the poems not only critique ecological degradation but also propose imaginative pathways towards sustainability, ecological harmony, and a more balanced coexistence between humans and the natural world.

**Keywords:** Ecology, ecocriticism, sustainability, interdependence, environmental justice

### Introduction

With the continuous unbearable weight of decayed environmentalisms on the planet, literary environmentalism increasingly gains prominence in the literary world. Its discourses find voice within the broader field of Green Studies, which amongst other engagements cries foul to natural species' continuous subjugation of each other, a repulsive context that implicitly appeals to ethical ideologies for positive change. Within this mental frame, literary environmentalists integrate ecology and ecological issues in their works. From these perspectives they hint nonstop on the connectivity of everything natural and the impacts of the absence of this harmony on planetary existence. Their environmental presentations increasingly act as calls for humans and the other living organisms to bond together in an interrelation that accepts difference and neutralizes class distinctions. Their

works question traditional knowledge that position nature as a space far away from humans, and culture as values independent of nature. Their stories become discursive forums for alternative cultural possibilities; a complex literary engagement as their ecological perspectives far from being place specific tend to embrace worldwide environmental commonalities.

African Poetry has proven to be the most effective continental literary type for the sensitization of environmental matters. Its efficiency for ecological issues upholds Coleridge's and Wordsworth's *Lyrical Ballads and other Poems's* depiction of poetry as the genre with the most faithful devotion to nature. Their poetic quality is renowned for enhancing readers' emotions to nature. In line with Coleridge's and Wordsworth's teachings, African poets go beyond merely celebrating scenic beauty

into engaging in profound environmental issues. In respect of Clark's (1958-1998) sustainability environmental guide, their poems often use natural imagery and symbols to communicate ideas of the connectivity of being and the responsibility of each towards the other. Their ethical and mental intelligence evidently positions nature as the totality of the physical universe and the behavioural patterns of organisms. Their engagement on the concept of nature then takes an ecocritical dimension—capturing the ways living beings act, see, feel or think about the environment. In disclosing the complex idea that the way one understands nature affects the way one interacts with it, and that the way one interacts with it either enhances or suppresses the earth's existence, their views become upholders of nature's importance. The forgone clause captures how positive cultural elements foster the greening and re-greening of the environment, a perspectival discourse that renders African environmental poetry a valoriser of Buell's (2005) ecocritical perspective that nature writing is a tool against unjust environmental behaviours.

Inyang (2022) captures this thematic concern in the poem "The Tree" where the personae (a tree) is undergoing nature's cruelty and lamenting against it. The personified tree evaluates humanity's heartlessness in its inability to sympathize with it for having been naturally placed at the mercy of natural phenomenon. The tree interprets self-centeredness in humans evaluating the negative effects of 'storms', 'floods', 'heat' and 'cold' only from the perspective of what these natural forces do to humans. The personified tree cannot envision that humans fail to see that it suffers the same fate but to a greater degree given that it is biologically fixed on the same spot and as such remains a permanent victim of natural phenomena. This humans' insensitivity to the tree's plight adds wounds to its injury—the tree begins to brood on the fact that it nourishes and shelters elements of biodiversity without being appreciated by them. The poem thus functions as a critique of the lack of discourse between humans and non-human nature and as an underpinning of the fact that its void is the principal problem facing ecology. Still

in Ayang (ibid) another of his poems, "Nature and Culture", regrets the absence of the concord that originally defined nature and culture. The understanding that bound them together is no more—culture would play and drum for nature to sing and dance! The poet obviously underlines this nature/culture bond as the symbiosis necessary for ecological holism. The absence of this pleasant-sounding nature/ culture relation is what both Alembong's "Green Call" and Ngong's "The Penguin's Brooding" blame for the ongoing decayed environmentalisms. They regret its absence and seek to re-establish for the benefit of ecocriticism.

As commonly put, ecocriticism studies the relationship between literature and the natural environment. It is "an interdisciplinary approach to the study of nature, environment and culture" (Levin 2022, p, 171). It is said to function in the dimensions of an ethical discourse, a critical tool for the critique of class and, in foreground of discourses of nature's connectivity and of the intrinsicness of nature and culture. It acts in the dimensions of an environmental theory, a critique of environmental injustices and as key to environmental sustainability (Glotfelty 1996). Its engagements then logically include denouncing all forms of biodiversity marginalization and promoting nature preservation and protection. In this guise it advocates the rights of fauna and flora for both their interest and that of the planet. Ecocritical outlook on environmental injustices would pinpoint both human and non-human driven issues, a context from where it would direct manners, attitudes and behaviours towards nature sustainability. The ecocritical adherence of African poets is vastly implied in their highlighting the complementarity of species, underlining the similarity of their plight, and in their denouncing species subjugation of the other

Alembong's "Green Call" and Ngong's "The Penguin's Brooding" function across ideologies, species and geographical spaces and consequently establish appealing networks for environmental and social evaluations. The poets each highlight strands of environmentalisms that are neither author nor poem specific. "Green Call" articulates a network of experiences and visions in

relation to flora, while critiquing the cultural shattering of the forest and insisting on the closure of the nature culture divide. “The Penguin’s Brooding” articulates the nuanced and complex unhealthy relations that surround animal relations—unwholesome relations in which some bird species are in danger of extinction. Each of the ecopoems obviously depicts a diverse portfolio of multiple settings and a network of natural and socio/cultural ideals relating to biodiversity. While Alembong x-rays the entire macro space of humans/non-human illogical relations, Ngong limits his views to cultural discourses in the world of birds. Both poems however unite in the objective of blaming living organisms for their non-commitment to ecological reality. Renewed environmentalisms would reaffirm ecological perspectives—guides that would serve as springboards for sustainability (Estok 2001).

The above scenario constitutes the ecstasy of the ecocritical in the selected enlightening verses as both poems underscore the view of a literary text as “a set of instructions for mental composition” (Scarry 2001, p.244). Scarry evidently qualifies ecocritical materials as enrichers of their audiences’ emotional and cognitive abilities. This consciousness emanates from the poststructuralist context that literary texts are lined-up with so many ideas, all of them worthy perspectives of discourse. This is an ambiguous situation that requires the reader’s psychological procession of both author and character intentions to realize meaning (Koopmam & Hakemulder 2015). “Green Call” and “The Penguin’s Brooding” in their complex environmental portfolios would then require the insights of both effective and cognitive sciences for their ecocritical analyses. The article’s primacy becomes to interrogate both how the selected poems engage with environmental consciousness and the rationale embedded in their complex expository schemes.

### **Objectives**

The main objective of this study is to examine the ecocritical concerns articulated in selected poems by Nol Alembong and John Ngong Kum Ngong, with a view to understanding how contemporary African poetry engages with environmental crises and ecological

consciousness. By focusing on Alembong’s “Green Call” and Ngong’s “The Penguin’s Brooding,” the study seeks to illuminate the ways poetic language constructs, critiques, and reimagines human relationships with the natural world.

Specifically, the study aims to:

1. Analyse the representation of nature, environmental degradation, and ecological awareness in the selected poems.
2. Examine how poetic devices—such as imagery, symbolism, and tone—articulate the interdependence between humans and the natural environment.
3. Apply ecocritical perspectives, especially ecocentrism and environmental justice, to interpret the poets’ visions of environmental responsibility and sustainable coexistence.

### **Theoretical Framework**

This study is grounded in ecocriticism, a critical approach that examines the relationship between literature and the natural environment. Ecocriticism interrogates how literary texts represent ecological realities, environmental degradation, and the ethical responsibilities of humans towards nature. As noted in the source document, ecocriticism is “an interdisciplinary approach to the study of nature, environment and culture” (Levin, 2022, p. 171). It functions simultaneously as an environmental theory, an ethical discourse, and a critical tool for analysing environmental injustices and sustainability concerns. Cheryll Glotfelty (1996) further emphasises that ecocriticism addresses biodiversity marginalisation, advocates preservation of fauna and flora, and foregrounds the interconnectedness of all living systems.

A central pillar of this framework is ecocentrism, which challenges anthropocentric assumptions that privilege human interests over those of other species. Ecocentrism affirms the intrinsic value of all components of the ecosystem and promotes a holistic vision of planetary coexistence. The pasted article underscores that African environmental poetry frequently

highlights the “complementarity of species” and condemns the subjugation of one species by another, thereby reinforcing ecological interdependence. This orientation aligns with the view that literature can serve as a medium for environmental consciousness and ethical transformation. Lawrence Buell (2005) supports this perspective by arguing that nature writing and environmentally oriented literature function as instruments against destructive environmental behaviour.

The framework also incorporates the concept of environmental justice, which examines the unequal distribution of ecological harm and the ethical implications of environmental exploitation. Ecocritical discourse, as reflected in the document, denounces both human-driven and non-human-driven forms of ecological oppression and seeks pathways towards sustainability. Simon C. Estok (2001/2013) emphasises that renewed environmental consciousness must guide behavioural change to ensure ecological continuity. In the poems under study, environmental degradation is presented as a consequence of fractured relations between nature and culture, a condition that necessitates moral reorientation. Another important dimension of this theoretical framework is the nature–culture interrelationship. The document stresses that ecocritical perspectives challenge the conventional separation of nature from culture, arguing instead that the two are deeply entangled. Literary environmentalism portrays ecological crises as outcomes of cultural practices, technological expansion, and exploitative human behaviour. This position echoes the argument that environmental destruction often arises as unintended consequences of development activities (Wolf, 1989). By foregrounding the mutual influence between cultural landscapes and natural ecosystems, the framework enables a nuanced interpretation of environmental decline as both ecological and socio-cultural.

Furthermore, the study draws on affective ecocriticism, which explores how emotions and cognition shape human engagement with the environment. The article highlights that literary texts can enhance readers’ emotional and cognitive

awareness of ecological issues, functioning as “instructions for mental composition” (Scarry, 2001, p. 244). Insights from cognitive science, such as Antonio Damasio’s (1999) work on emotion and consciousness, reinforce the idea that environmental perception is mediated through affective responses. Such perspectives illuminate how poetry can evoke empathy for non-human life and foster ecological responsibility.

By integrating ecocriticism, ecocentrism, environmental justice, nature–culture theory, and affective ecocriticism, this framework provides a comprehensive lens for analysing the selected poems by Nol Alembong and John Ngong Kum Ngong. It enables the study to demonstrate that these works not only depict environmental crises but also advocate ethical coexistence, biodiversity preservation, and sustainable futures. Ultimately, the framework positions contemporary African poetry as a powerful site for ecological reflection and transformative environmental discourse.

### **Methodology**

This study adopts a qualitative, interpretative research design grounded in ecocritical literary analysis. It focuses on a close textual reading of selected poems—“Green Call” by Nol Alembong and “The Penguin’s Brooding” by John Ngong Kum Ngong. The analysis examines themes, imagery, symbolism, tone, and narrative voice to uncover representations of environmental degradation, ecological consciousness, and human–nature relationships. Ecocritical concepts such as ecocentrism, environmental justice, and nature–culture interconnectedness guides the interpretation. Relevant scholarly sources on ecocriticism and African environmental literature are also consulted to contextualise the findings. The qualitative approach enables an in-depth exploration of how poetic language constructs environmental meaning and advocates sustainable coexistence. This method is appropriate because it prioritises textual nuance, cultural context, and ethical dimensions rather than numerical measurement.

### **Ecocritical Perspectives in Alembong’s “Green Call”**

Alembong’s “Green Call” in its ecological wealth moves past the essentialist concept of green

into presenting green as a multifaceted environmentally friendly concept that bridges the gap between the natural world and the built-in society. The personae's repetitive use of the word green may imply his imploring for the application of ecological issues in literary studies. This is an interdisciplinary proposition that takes the literary figure to the field of the green. Green studies often function within the premise of crying foul to human nature's suppression of non-human nature, and underlining ethical applications as a solution to unhealthy ecological issues—evident tenets of ecocriticism. Alembong's opening stanza highlights its multi-layered environmentally related thematic frame—the interconnectivity of natural and cultural landscapes, the danger of fracturing the nature/culture and nature/human bonds, and the complexity signifying the concept of green. The issues raised underscore a poem delving into human behaviours and reacting to nature and ecologies. The poem thus connotes a metaphor for mankind's relation with nature.

Both the poem's 'grey' and the 'green' environments are outcomes of human actions—the former signifying environmental decay and the latter symbolizing environmental sustainability as put below:

The forest is green when man is green  
The sky is grey when man burns green  
Who knew roses can bud the green  
When roses never look green

The stanza may be interpreted from the perspectives of the impact of cultural landscapes on natural landscapes, the impact of culture on the global environment, and the unimaginable and mysterious components of 'green'. The visual images of green forest and grey sky are obvious indicators of the positive and negative cultural values affecting nature. The green forest vividly underpins mankind's green practices while the grey sky signifies man's harsh acts on nature. Physical landscapes- the forest and the sky are here x-rayed as entities upon which conceptual properties of global warming and ecological sustainability are integrated. The poet's ideas iterate Stonier's (1996) theorization that the environment constitutes organisms and ideas. Acting within this frame of thought, Alembong

underlines cultural entities as results of organisms' interaction with the environments in which they live; the context, from which natural ecosystems get maintained, improved upon or destroyed by human cultures. The image of the grey sky generated by the burning of green captures the burning issue of global warming and its resulting climate change that is negatively affecting both fauna and flora. Seemingly, he is calling for environmental modification given the fact that cultural landscapes are liable to change.

The poet strategically structures the poem in depiction of how unhealthy relations between humans and non-humans have rendered the climate unpredictable to the yielding of intricate outcomes. He x-rays this in the morbid relations he creates between habits and biodiversity. He pinpoints the grey sky resulting from the burning of green; the destruction of animals ensuing soil infertility; unwholesome plants resulting from lack of green and unhealthy plants yielding insufficient and harmful fruits. Inherently then living beings are in a web of destruction resulting from a string of humans' practices that generate more harm than could be visualized. The poet entreats that the environment is being destroyed by forces that did not set out to do so. Environmental destruction as Wolf explicates, is "the indirect results or side-effects of actions aimed at different goals" (Wolf 1989, p. i). Wolf discloses how the carbon dioxide that is destroying the ozone layer and rendering life unbearable is the by-product of mankind's developmental goals. Alembong nuances the effects of this nature /culture fracture by highlighting that 'traffic' (a human built space), in its toxicity can become a hindrance to development.

The poem implicitly builds on the importance of the green for existence, a concern made clear in the personae's stressing on green's efficiency for both natural and artificial elements that are connected to humans. The efficacy of 'green' is evident in the poet's cram of the word green in the poem. It appears one hundred and three (103) times in his fifteen stanzas poem; a poem of which twelve of the stanzas have four lines each, and the remaining two stanzas are composed of five lines each—with each of the

lines made up of a word. Interestingly, the word green appears in all lines of the poem either in single, double or quadrupled capacities. This seemingly signifies the coded positive capacity in which the persona utilizes the word; its usage capturing healthy ecosystems and ethical values. Green thus becomes a symbol of sustainability in this usage of it that envisages environmental awareness, resource productivity, and both community and cultural thoughtfulness.

Again, the single word lines that make up stanzas thirteen and fourteen of the poem are repeated word-perfect, “Green/Rule/Ensures/Everlasting/Newness”. By implication, the colour green in the varied categories highlighted in the poem depicts an end to both the natural and human induced decay implied in the poem and echoes a gate way to biodiversity revival and bloom. Green subsequently features as a symbol for living beings’ survival and the contrast for their decay. Its usage in the poem portrays the poet’s ability to create meaning by positioning words in inclusive forms where they become covertly expressive. Multiple repeated end stanza constructions like ‘Traffic flows when lights are green’ and ‘The forest beams when man builds green’ apparently emphasize on how both natural and cultural details serve as unique and worthy components of environmental sustainability.

Holistic sustainability as Alembong overtly stresses, criss-crosses the borders of deep ecology into social and ethical ecologies, and becomes a concoction of all, for the realization of its goals. The beautiful outcome of this interdependent culture is x-rayed in stanza eleven in the sky that will ‘gleam’, and render the earth more productive, to the sustainability of fauna, symbolized by the ‘duck’ and flora symbolized by the ‘green fields’. The beaming sky images a sky void of destructive gasses— that gluing sky that presupposes the absence or reduced rate of pollution and obviously, a life characterized by controlled rates of traffic. Traffic flows are increasingly conditioned not only by advance technology but equally by increased population rates. The latter factor seems to be a serious deterrent to greenery given both the varied

combustible transport facilities necessary to ferry the population around and the increased food stuff it needs for survival. This implied population concept connotes increased population to increased food shortages and general misery (Marthus 1798). Apparently, greater crop yields can only be a produce of a gleaming sky, that sky the personae is wishing for. This complexity defining greenery enhances the difficulty of cultivating it given the poet’s outcry that human actions continuously decay green for capitalist interests.

Alembong’s all-inclusive benefits of green projects the importance of green and the necessity of cultivating a culture of green despite the fact that a majority of life’s sustaining goals are achieved through environmental decay mechanisms. The poet here supports the views that life sustaining goals could be achieved “without us causing much damage” with the way forward being “firm intensions and specific actions” (Wolf 1989, p. 11). Thus, firm resolutions against forest burning, hunting, and soil and air pollution will attune human spirits towards environmental renewal—the sustainable future encouraged in Alembong’s poem.

### **Ecocritical Perspectives in Ngong’s “The Penguin’s Brooding”**

Ecocritical studies as afore mentioned, challenges the foundations of knowledge by crying foul to the superiority tales ascribed to some species and by adopting an earth-bound voice that celebrates everything natural. Ngong’s “The Penguin Brooding” vividly, explores an underlying affectionate relationship between the penguin, a terrestrial scavenger, and the eagle, hawk and vulture, a group of opportunistic scavengers. The poem pinpoints significant and enduring connections in this pair of naturally estranged birds— a complex interconnectivity that conceals mutualism under parasitism. The poem might open up metaphorical undertones in the birds’ story given the eagle’s, vulture’s and hawk’s complex associations with images of freedom, selfishness, terror and aggression, and the penguin with connotations of feebleness, peace and love. The poem might have been read as a representation of the poet’s emotive state on life’s situations,

especially if one could take the penguin's logical and coherent thinking abilities into consideration. But the poem's insight on the above close interspecies relationships instead awakens emotions with regards to the detailed sympathetic terms in which the persona positions the penguin within the relationship. The penguin though conscious of its plight cannot help itself— an atmosphere that ignites its call for its suppressor's ethical consideration. This reasoning stems from the fact that animals far from only being observant of the happenings around them are so thought oriented that they register what they experience, and these became the basis for their behaviours (Schusterman & Kastak 1998). This stems from the fact that they have components of brains geared towards solving socio-ecological problems and detecting and avoiding enemies (Emery 2005).

Ngong's penguin demonstrates cognition of its environment; an unfriendly surrounding that necessitates the penguin's wise acts and decisions. The unfair treatment the bird and its kith and kin receive from predators —eagles, hawks, and vultures, troubles its mind. Obviously, experience, memory should have informed the penguin of looming danger while standard training cautioned it into detesting evil not only for its own advantage, but for the sake of it being a hindrance to sustainability. The Penguin's thinking ability messages the idea of a similarity between animals and human for the bird like the human being has a mind which guides its learning and expectations. But the penguin in its more than human status recognizes and accepts its limitations in the face of the other birds. In the opening line of the poem it says it 'cannot fly'. Fly here seemingly connotes a means of except from the terrors and burdens infected by the other birds. It obliged to be hopping around when the other birds fly. This does not cancel the fact that it feels bad about its disabilities and the fact that its offspring is mistreated by the stronger birds. In manifesting that cognitive spirit peculiar to humans, gong's penguin tacitly cries foul to inequalities and advocates the innate unity of everything natural.

There is an apparent complexity surrounding Ngong's poem given the diverse viewpoints embedded in the word brooding. In

one sense the word would define the process of the penguin incubating its young ones. In another dimension it will denote the bird in a traumatizing/troubled situation. However, its usage in the poem seems to convey the dual senses given the penguin's severe consideration for the security of its offspring and their faith in a world lorded by self-centred mighty and aggressive birds. Its days are defined by fear and uncertainty as the 'sky' —the place beyond its reach remains a symbol of terror. The 'clouds' that are 'gathering in the horizon; stanza two, lines 6-7, always remind the penguin of its weakness—its inabilities and inescapable plight. The uncertain future of its kind is its major preoccupation. It remains unsafe and in danger of extinction unless the flying aggressive birds cease being predators and look upon its kind as friends. Accepting and negotiating difference among birds is x-rayed by the poet as strategies for preserving and protecting biodiversity and consequently, keys to a sustainable future.

"The penguin's Brooding" captures the heterogeneous nature of birds and a social categorization that breeds hostility for the feeble members of the family. The penguin broods against this hostile atmosphere in which it and its younger ones are bound by nature to live; a situation in which its family suffers the aggressions of mighty eagles, vultures and hawks but cannot retaliate in the same light. Though the penguin is naturally unfit to do same to its predators, it is neither jealous nor envious of their standing. All it wishes for is that the scavenger birds should understand that their actions are a hindrance to its continuity and that of biodiversity as a whole. The penguin positions environmental sustainability within the premise of one's ability to understand and properly interpret the other's behaviour. The penguin is conscious of how varied rankings in their kinship have rendered some members of the family subjects to others. This behavioural observation speaks of how nature is still able to restore peace in this relation of linear dominance hierarchy. The continuity of the weaker species, as the poet seems to uphold, depends on the understanding and will power of the dominant ranks.

The penguin evidently craves for a stable affectionate social bond between her and the eagle. This would obviously be an enduring relationship as it entails the scavenger bird forgoing its meals for the penguin's survival. This expected reversed attitude of the predators will assure the penguin of the survival of its kind—a renewed spirit that will liberate it from the worries and fears of the subsequent extinction of its race. The penguin presents the dominant bird species the eagle and the hawk. The concept of social dominance- a complex ideology justifying behavioural patterns then begins to give meaning to social attitudes. This concept harbours aggression as the less dominant members of the family submit to the threats of the super dominant figure (Wilson 1975). The struggle and resistance of the lower ranking birds against their superiors in Ngong's poem positively validated Wilson's concept.

The poet goes beyond simply depicting the penguin as a fantastical creation of his imagination into locating it in real life settings—the sea, its habitat and the land its habitual stroll site. The art of thinking in the penguin begins to raise ethical ideas such as the compatibility of humans and animals and therefore the need to treat animals well. It worries over its structural weakness; its featherless state, short life span and small size that have rendered it prey to bigger birds. This unfavourable position he occupies in relation to the eagle make her visualize the extinction of her species. Its thinking ability places it beyond the confines of birds and into the space of human. It harbours emotions of fear and anxiety. Its words are a voice of wisdom to mankind in his inconsistencies—contrasting emotions and irrationalities in its brooding that draws the reader's attention to the reality of biodiversity lose and the danger of its extinction.

The penguin's reflections become a musing over Darwin's (1859) concept of natural selection—an ideology locked around the competition for survival surrounding species; a context in which a species' aptitude to survive is determined by its ability to overpower its competitors and remain reproductive. But the challenge facing biodiversity is that each species needs another for survival, a fact manifested in the

vultures, hawks and eagle's preying on the penguin. The penguin's cry for the survival of its race is an advocacy for biodiversity preservation and protection. Thoughts of a beautiful future become a retrospective call—a call for self-examination, even for the penguin. It needs to understand that the sea fish, the krill and the other aquatic organisms it preys on need to be available for it to survive. Ngong's poem becomes a conscientisation message to individual species- of the individual sacrifices that biodiversity continuity calls for.

#### **Ecocritical commonalities in the Poems**

Ecocritical perceptions capture stories of culture and nature—tales that implicate each other and above all, contain each other in important entanglements that define the life support system. Inyang's "Nature of Nature" positions this entanglement as the interconnections and interdependence that nature shares with life's support system. This complexity surrounding nature, as the poets explicate is implicit in it being an embodiment of the ideologies, activities and forms that constitute planet, what complexly implies nature. This ambiguity functions as nature's imperative for the complexity at times necessitates that acts to its own disadvantage. Alembong's "Green Call" and Ngong's "The Penguin's Brooding" highlight the adverse effects accruing from the putting of nature and culture apart, and logically support a new culture that will arise from a fusion of the two. Alembong might have done it covertly, through his almost all rhetorical statements composed of binary views in which one of them often entails the expected. But Ngong comes out openly through the penguin's hoping for a beautifully future in which its kind will be tolerated and accepted by the almighty bird species that have habitually preyed on them.

Both poems use varied species to characterize habits, settings and traditions that exhibit special cultural roles. Alembong's "Green Call" x-rays four principal settings: the forest, the fields, the sky and traffic. While the first three are concrete natural spaces whose qualities are defined by human habits, the last setting, 'traffic' poise for that modern creation, whose reactions on humans equally depends on humans' usage of it. For living

beings' safety, traffic should flow only when the lights are green the poet insinuates. Alembong's 'forest' and 'sky' are symbolic of ecological units constitutive of complex organism, whose healthy interactions are responsible for the wellbeing of the environment. Alembong however projects man, in his misuse of nature, as a foe to environmental progress. Mankind's burning of the forest destroys the diverse organisms in it to the disruption of the chain for survival. Ngong's "The Penguin's Brooding" focuses on the beautiful animal species, birds and underlines two main habitats- the land and the sea. Placing these animals in spaces void of humans, Ngong highlights most of their habits as exploitative and suppressive to kin- a point that holds non-humans as obstructive elements to ecological sustainability.

Ngong's penguin outshines the normal paradigms for a bird as it transcends into a more than human figure; a frame from where it motivates and guides human attitudes and behaviours. The penguin, with its weak feathers is a flightless bird while on land. Its nature makes it vulnerable to the ploughs of the large, flight oriented and powerful birds. is a comfortable aquatic species as it often flies under water in search for food. Ngong highlights the suffering and pain the penguin undergoes while on land in its broodings. It has become a prey to the powerful birds; an atmosphere that seems to reactivate the penguin's activities and visionary potentials. It will struggle in defence of its offspring, worry about their future and imagine the wonderful outcome of the aggressive birds becoming nice to the penguin folk. Ngong's bird narrative becomes symbolic of the absence of harmony in the animal family— an ambivalent concern given the conflicting relationships of predator and prey that naturally defines this kinship. His invasive bird species- the eagle and the hawk, conjure major threats to wildlife biodiversity. But the poem seems to message the thought that environmental ethics is an individual endeavour.

Again, the poems denounce cultures of difference—ways that enable groups or individuals to stand in contrast to others. In "The Penguin's Brooding" the fractured natures and life

styles of the bird family cement a complex cultural frame in which survival depends on the individual's abilities to subvert the other. Because of this de-fractured culture, the penguin undergoes psychological torture from its kin turned predators and then envisages an end to this unfriendly relation in predator's changed mentality— a mind frame that will move it "to tears" on behalf of its prey. Both poems thus seek to redirect a broad range of ideologies for the sake of planetary sustainability. In "Green Call" it is the poet revolting against a host of unhealthy perspectives working in contrast to the establishment of the universe. His most used word; 'green' signifies a way out of the varied distortions that are wrecking the planet. The destruction of forests and animals, together with the non-respect of traffic lights are highlighted as practices against a sustainable world. The poets thus manifest a leaning on UNESCO's continuous preaching on the importance of valuable cultural entities. These valuable properties are summed not only as cultural and natural elements grounded in historical and ethnological views, but also those that underscore a balance between nature and human activity. This diversity manifests in the varied environments by which the poets visualize and celebrate green thought and a green living.

This essay visibly underlines both anthropogenic and non-anthropogenic impacts on environmental sustainability. Any form of subjection on the forest, animals and humans is seen by Ngong as functioning against greenery. 'Man' is 'green' when the 'fields' are 'green'— Alembong captures the link between human practices and human continued existence on planet. In environmental discourse the forest is a green entity with a multi ideological spectrum It harbours cultural undertones and the housing of fauna and flora. Alembong's forest is obviously a sensible biodiversity site and any attack on it is an attack on greenery; an attack on plants and their produce as on animals and their yield. Even the waste products from animals, "dung" enhances continuity as it 'yields hectares of green' in Alembong's words. With this animal waste produce plant life strives better and yield good fruits echoed in the 'sweet' and 'green' melon that

is a product of 'green'. From Ngong's perspective predation has an impact on biodiversity extinction. The eagle, the hawk and the vulture threaten biodiversity as they feed on the penguin. Who because of its natural weakness cannot escape? Flying could take him beyond the reach of its predators just as a long-life span would give her the opportunity to produce more young ones for posterity. All it can do now is to lament over its ill faith and hope on the understanding of his kin for sustainability effects as it projected in stanza two lines 11-14 below:

Can my weakness crawl to your home  
and be served a seat in your heart?  
Can my siblings be close to you  
and be shown the way to laughter?

The penguin though accepts its feebleness in the face of the flightworthy, sizable and aggressive bird yens for recognition and equitable treatment from them. This thinking ability lifts the penguin's knowledge beyond human wisdom—that intelligence Alembong craves for in "Green Call", that sense which is the key to sustainability. Both poems further function within the premise of affective ecocriticism—highlighting how emotions lift up an organism beyond the restraints of the self into the culture of mediating for the entire social space. The poems x-ray humans and animals as sites where minds reside and implore cognitive abilities to examine the relationship between each organism and the environment in which it is embedded. This restates the theorization that an organism's interaction with the environment can be best evaluated from the perspective of the effects it creates on the mind (Damasio 1999). While in humans this mental affect is generated by "the built-in space and the entire organisms with whom he shares the space" in animals it is activated by their "reactions with each other" (Houser 2014, p.11). This portrays the idea that the affect reaction is the result of the interaction of diverse species, a premise Alembong's persona like Ngong's own demonstrate lots of familiarity with. For the speaker in "Green Call" sustainability will accrue from an understanding of the entwined relations between humans and both their built in and

physical environments. From the perspective of Ngong's speaker the birds' understanding of the natural and social atmospheres surrounding them is route to their continuity and the survival of ecosystems. Consciousness then arises within processes of an individual's connection with their physical and social environments. This hinges not only on the palpable reality of the poems but also on the enlightening effect the poems trigger in their readers.

Both authors expose extinction as a hindrance to biodiversity continuity and a process retarding sustainability. Extinction is a process that steadily reduces species abundance and gradually limits its interactions with others. (Estes et al 1998) While Elembong underlines the complexity in extinction processes from human actions that destroy ecosystems to the disadvantage of species, Ngong underscores it as a natural part of species evolution. According to Alembong, man's deforestation act of forest burning renders animal and plant species homeless, if not out of existence, and destabilizes both earth and air to the further discomfort of living organisms. The grey sky in its hostile environmental frame constitutes a treat to life on the planet. Ngong on his part positions the penguin with a short life expectancy and prey to long life expectancy and mightier birds as a risk category. With this vulnerable status its continuity depends on the understanding and wilful sacrifice of its predators. This goes in line with Alembong's consideration of greenery as a wilful construction of humans.

The authors/poems thus link extinction processes to cultural practices, given that they each connect the survivors and the threatened species. Alembong notes how human cultures of hunting, farming, deforestation function as foe to plants, animals and even humans. Ngong on his part projects the exploitative and scavenging natures of the eagles, hawks and vultures. as reasons for the penguin's endangered existence. These human/non-human relationships and the birds' relations render this article an investigation into the relations between cultures and their environments—with environments complexly underlining the mental factors that inspire cultures and the survival of living organisms. The article

becomes a study of the biological and cultural variables that daunt living beings' continuity and vice versa.

### Conclusion

The article centred on nature/culture relations with the aim of redirecting attitudes and conducts towards positive environmental engagements. It highlighted the need for the permanence of humans and biodiversity — vulnerable and transient beings gifted with the natural abilities to bring about the much-required social change. Alembong's "Green Call" damned as unnatural the human/non-human hierarchy that generates social inequalities to the eventual disadvantage of all species. The poem however projected humans as social beings with the greatest potential to bring about change given their multiple capacities to induce sustainability. Ngong's "The Penguin's Brooding" underpinned as illogical, the natural preying habit among animals and in its ecotopia mentality underlined an

end to preying as key to animal continuity. Both poems implored cognitive science to awaken multiple consciences to the reality of their ecological failings. They x-rayed the impact of ecological frailties on future generations and mapped new ways out of the decadence in balanced associations of culture and nature. The essay noted in these un-settling altitudes suppressive ideologies that undermine the sustainability of living beings. In their eco-centred environmentalism both poems assigned characteristic values to individuals, organisms and even to systems that control them. The article became an investigation into the ongoing global ecological issues—an analysis of the impacts of disconnected cultural and natural landscapes on holistic sustainability, and a redirecting of the nature/culture fracture in route map for an ecological firm planet. Its subject matter became on the upholding and valorising natures' self-worth as the imperative of sustainability.

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