

**THE INTERCONNECTION BETWEEN SELECTED MYTHS AND  
GEOGRAPHICAL FEATURES IN WESTERN UGANDA**

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## DECLARATION

I Kakkera Lizz, hereby declare that this dissertation is a result of my own research work and has never been submitted to any other institution of learning for any award.

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## APPROVAL

This research dissertation has been submitted with my approval as a University Supervisor.

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

DECLARATION .....	i
APPROVAL .....	ii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS .....	iii
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	iv
ABSTRACT .....	vii

## CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

1.1	Introduction .....	1
1.2	Background to the study .....	1
1.3	Statement of the problem .....	5
1.4	Purpose of the study .....	5
1.5	Objectives of the study .....	5
1.6	Research questions .....	6
1.7	Scope of the study .....	6
1.8	Significance of the study .....	6
1.9	Justification of the study .....	7
1.10	Theoretical Framework .....	8
1.11	Definition of Key terms .....	9

## CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1	Introduction .....	12
2.2	Myth .....	12
2.3	Myth and Literature .....	13
2.4	Geographical features, a literary perspective .....	16
2.6	Conclusion .....	22

## CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

3.1	Introduction .....	24
3.2	Research Design .....	24
3.3	Study Area .....	24

3.4	Fieldwork .....	25
3.5	Textual Analysis .....	25
3.6	Sampling Strategy and technique .....	25
3.7	Data Collection Methods .....	26
3.8	Data Collection Instruments .....	27
3.9	Quality Control .....	28
3.10	Data Analysis .....	29
3.11	Ethical Considerations .....	29
3.12	Limitations of the Study .....	29

#### **CHAPTER FOUR: PRESENTATION AND INTERPRETATION OF FINDINGS**

4.1	Introduction .....	31
4.2	Amabeere ga Nyinamwiru myth.....	31
4.3	Nyakahondogoro myth.....	34
4.4	Nyabihoko .....	36
4.5	Isaza and Nyamiyonga myth.....	38
4.6	Conclusion .....	41

#### **CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS**

5.1	Introduction .....	42
5.2	Themes, elements of structure and motifs portrayed in the selected myths .....	42
5.3	How themes and elements of structure reflect the natural environment .....	44
5.4	Interconnections between selected myths and geographical features .....	45
5.5	Conclusion .....	46

#### **CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

6.1	Introduction .....	47
6.2	Conclusions .....	47
6.3	Recommendations .....	49
6.4	Areas for further research .....	50

REFERENCE LIST .....	52
APPENDICES.....	56

## **ABSTRACT**

In this study I explore the interconnection between selected myths from Western Uganda and selected geographical features in that region. Specifically, I examine the relationships that relate to themes, geographical features and motifs in the selected myths. By analysing the selected myths from especially the Banyankole, Banyoro and Batooro communities, the study highlights how myths and their embedded mythemes are a powerful lens through which we can appreciate the interpret and assign meaning to their physical environment. The study adopted an ecocritical approach and drew perceptions from the myths themselves and related geographical settings to demonstrate that myths and geography are not isolated constructs but are interconnected in the narrative frameworks. Using an ethnographical research design to examine specific myths, mythemes and geographical features, the study uncovered patterns that reveal an interdependent relationship between the geography and human imagination through mythic stories. This interconnectedness underscores the importance of understanding myths merely as stories but as dynamic reflections of human interaction with their environment, showing that myths and their related mythemes are more than myth. Rather, myth connects people to their environment, heritage and to each other. The study recommends multidisciplinary and activist approaches to the study of myth in order to exploit the potential of such narratives, especially in the context of cultural tourism.

# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

### 1.1 Introduction

In this study I explore the interconnection between selected myths from Western Uganda and selected geographical features in that region. I do so while aware that myths are a sub-genre of what in literary studies has come to be termed as oral literature. Through an ecocritical lense, I explore various ways in which the content in the selected myths are closely tied to and with specific geographical features in the region. Overall, I observe that the interconnections are akin to what I view as myth interacting with geography. Using ecocriticism as my major theoretical perspective, I focus on the following mythic stories: “Amabeere ga Nyinamwiru” (translatable in English as ‘The Breasts of Nyinamwiru’ and hereafter referred to as ‘Amabeere’), “Isaza and Nyamiyonga” (an eponymous oral narrative, hereafter referred to as simply ‘Isaza’), “Nyakahondogoro” and, finally, the myth that explains the origins of Lake Nyabihoko. Hereafter, I will refer to the latter as Nyabihoko. I explore the meeting points of these mythic stories in respect of what each of them educates us about the identities of specific physical and seismic features in western Uganda and how these identities in turn are reflected in the practices and values of the surrounding communities. The key geographical features that I explore include stalactites and stalagmites in their physical environments (Amabeere), earthquakes (in the Isaza story), caves (Nyakahondogoro) and one lake (Nyabihoko).

### 1.2 Background to the study

This study is motivated by, among others, some enduring content I have been encountering since my secondary school learning days. I was taught that the subject of geography could tackle five major areas: location, place, region, movement, and human environment interaction. In this study, I am more inclined towards the theme of human environment interaction as I explore some specific ways in which geography and myth do really meet in significant ways, if one takes care to examine this interaction. I do so because it is the human beings that compose mythic narratives in relation with the environment that specific communities inhabit, physical or otherwise, in time and space.

the word Geography is derived from the Greek word “geo” to mean the Earth. “graph” also has to do with representing something by use of a symbol, especially in some form of writing. Geography could therefore entail the instance, practice or idea of writing something about some aspect of the earth. Moreover, sometimes geography is understood as the study of the earth’s surface. I wish to point out on the outset that in this dissertation I do not attempt to present a study of geography per say. My interest lies in how the selected mythic narratives from Western Uganda demonstrate intimate meeting-points between specific myths and specific geographical features in the areas traditionally inhabited by the communities I sampled.

Looking at geographical features via a lense of myth helps me to re-centre the community’s concern with its life-enhancing forms of nature. I therefore consider refocusing on the relationship between geography, as micro as it may appear, as a significant contribution towards our renewed commitment and preservation of the beneficial nature around us. This I do so by extending the conversation about myth beyond the fashionable and almost exclusive concern with founding ancestors of ethnic communities. Grand mythic narratives in Western Uganda include the perhaps well-known myth about the Chwezi dynasty from Western Uganda that features heroic characters such as Isaza, Isimbwa, Nyinamwiru, Bukuku and Ndahura.

Human beings inevitably interact with nature. In turn, nature affects people and the people also affect nature. Moreover, what we call human geography is really a concern with how the earth affects and is affected by the people in time, place and space. When it comes to how people can and really do harm or protect specific aspects of the environment, it becomes a concern for environmental geography. From the foregoing, I can make a claim that ecocriticism is a helpful heuristic tool for productively exploring the meeting-point between myth and geography. Ecocriticism, alternatively and variously called ecological criticism, ecopoetics, environmental literary criticism or green cultural studies, is the study of the relationship between literature and the physical environment (Glotfelty and Fromm, 1996).

Ecocriticism is a socially conscious theoretical perspective on the interconnections between nature and the dynamics of living in the physical world at a given time and pace. One may argue that the said interconnection can actually be taken as a given because it is hardly conceivable that any human community can exist outside of its physical environment anyway. That is one thing. It is another thing when we consider this relationship through the community's myths that engage specific aspects of the physical environment in relation to how people actually view them. This is where the oral narratives called myths come in.

Balachandran (2014, Web) says that "myths are stories that can guide us as individuals and societies in order that we may become better. They are symbolic and should not be taken literally!". Balachandran adds that "one way of understanding this is to look at them [myths] from the point of view of our poetic ancestors. They saw the geographical landscape as symbols also, not just physical landscapes". Sinding (2009:1-10) provides an interesting perspective on myth which runs counter to a popular tendency of presenting myth as the other side of truth or reality. Jensen (2005) says that "the traditional and stubborn concept of myth as being antonymic to what is true or real has undergone some rehabilitation in two major ways". One of these ways is that myths are regarded as actual pathways to the sacred, the metaphysical world beyond. For Lincoln (1989:24) myths are those kinds of narratives that possess credibility and authority in which a narrative possessing authority is "one for which successful claims are made not only to the status of truth, but what is more, to the status of paradigmatic truth". From the preceding definitions, I derive a thinking that myth assists a collective spirit of the community to define and redefine their relationship with the environment they inhabit. So, myth, as I use the term in this study, does not refer to the opposite of truth as the word is usually used.

There are two views about myth that I point out. One is by the African oral literature scholar Okpewho (1992:183) who clarifies that myth is not really a tale against a legend, or any other form of community's traditional narrative. Okpewho argues that myth is that quality of fancy which informs the creative or configurative powers of the human mind in varying degrees of intensity but which has authority on the collective thinking of its source

community. The second one is by Stuart Sillars (1996:13) who defines myth as “a pattern of events, discerned or constructed, expressed in verbal or visual symbols, which presents a sequence that imposes order on some aspects of our individual or corporate lives”. Sillars’ (ibid.) definition helps me most as it fits in well with how the selected communities in Western Uganda interact with their physical environment through myths.

Some explanation is handy at this moment. The physical location and identity of Nyinamwiru are the stalactites and stalagmites found in Nyakasura village, approximately ten kilometres from Fort-Portal town. Nyakahandogoro caves are located in Ibanda district, before Ibanda Town while Nyabihoko is a lake located in Ntungamo district. All the three geographical features are located in the western region of Uganda which is traditionally inhabited by Banyoro, Batooro and Banyankole communities. The myth of Isaza is different for it bears no tangible evidence of its having “existed” apart from earthquakes that are sometimes experienced there. The Isaza myth features a mythic character named Isaza, who is believed to have been a great King of the Banyoro-Batooro ethnic community in the times before time. Be that as it may, how each of these myths through its narration interacts with the geographical features found in the source communities is the essence of this study.

From this point onwards, I’ll use the term “mytheme” to refer to those irreducible units of a longer myth. Mytheme is a term and concept that was introduced by the French structuralist theorist Claude Lévi-Strauss (1955), a French anthropologist. In his structuralist analysis of myth, Lévi-Strauss argued that mythemes serve as the basic units or components that make up a mythical narrative. We may remember that central myths of a community tend to be long, composed of sections that can sometimes sound as if they are stand-alone units. Indeed, many a time, what Lévi-Strauss calls mytheme is performed as a myth in its own right by various stories.

In the case of the central myth of the Chwezi dynasty in Western Uganda, the sections that deal with Isaza’s disappearance, Nyinamwiru’s pregnancy and related events as well as the creation of “The Breasts of Nyinamwiru” and the emergence of the Nyakahondogoro caves can be taken as mythemes of a much larger and epic-like myth. It is the story of

Lake Nyabihoko that seems to function as a stand-alone myth. Be that as it may, what is vital about mythemes are the essential events, characters and relationships that can be combined and recombined to create a longer myth. I am aware that any part of a longer myth can be told as a mythic story in its own right. Therefore, whether myth or mytheme, for the mythic stories that I focus on in this study I will use the term myth or myths as the case will be. Let me point out that most myths from the area of study somehow relate to the Bachwezi grand narrative. That is one reason I prefer to have both terms: myth and mytheme, for some myths are performed as offshoots of the Chwezi grand narrative which sometimes functions as a prototype.

### **1.3 Statement of the problem**

While Western Uganda is rich in cultural heritage and mythology, there exists a gap in scholarly research that comprehensively investigates the intricate relationship between local myths and the geographical features of the region from a literary point of view. This study aims to contribute to this gap by delving into how selected myths are intricately intertwined with the geographical features, landmarks and natural phenomena of Western Uganda. Through an ecocritical exploration, the study seeks to shed light on the profound ways in which mythological narratives shape the geographical context in which they originate. By analysing the multifaceted connections between selected myths and related geographical features, this study aims to contribute to a fresher understanding of the cultural, social, and significance of these myths as they mediate their inherent content and the interpretation the communities give to the physical features around them.

### **1.4 Purpose of the study**

The purpose of this study is to explore the interconnections between geographical features and selected myths from Western Uganda from a literary perspective.

### **1.5 Objectives of the study**

This study was guided by the following objectives:

1. To investigate the themes, elements of structure and motifs portrayed in the selected myths.

2. To analyse how each of the themes and elements of structure reflect the natural environment
3. To evaluate the interconnections between selected myth and geographical features

### **1.6 Research questions**

This study was guided by the following research questions:

1. What are the main themes, elements of structure and motifs portrayed in the selected myths?
2. How does each of the themes and elements of structure reflect the natural environment?
3. In which ways do the themes and elements of structure demonstrate interconnections between selected myths and geographical features?

### **1.7 Scope of the study**

I examine four (4) myths and explore the diverse and specific ways in which each of them demonstrates interconnections with geographical features in Western Uganda. Here are the myths: “Amabeere ga Nyinamwiru” (The Breasts of Nyinamwiru), “Nyakahandogoro” (relates to the caves I Ibanda), the myth of “Isaza” and the one about Lake Nyabihoko. Correspondingly, I explore these myths as they relate to the following geographical features: stalactites and stalagmites in Nyakasura village, Nyakahandogoro caves in Ibanda and Lake Nyabihoko in Ntungamo. Isaza relates to the incidences of earthquakes that occur in western Uganda. The cultural communities I focus on are the Banyoro, Batooro (Nyakasura, Fort Portal) and Banyankole (Ibanda and Ntungamo). The study employs an ecocritical literary approach which seeks to explore how literature through myth responds to human interactions and reflects, influences and interacts with the natural world.

### **1.8 Significance of the study**

This study is significant for various reasons. First, by investigating the relationship between specific myths and related geographical features of in specific communities can shed more light on how specific people in Western Uganda view and relate to their natural environment. The investigation can reveal how geography has influenced the creation of myths and vice versa, deepening our understanding of the cultural identity of the region.

I show that geography and myth can intersect in meaningful ways when it comes to environmental and ecological knowledge. Indeed, some myths contain valuable information about natural phenomena as well as the relationship between humans and their environment. It is not far-fetched to argue that understanding these confluences can have practical implications for environmentally sustainable practices and conservation efforts beyond the confines of literary study.

I also believe that the study, in addition to its own literary merit, has educational and local relevance as it enlightens us more on the relationship between myth and the natural environment in a culturally defined region. In consequence, the study is a step towards ensuring that these myths are not lost to time and modernisation. A study such as this, therefore, provides insights into the universal aspects of myths and how they interact within specific geographical and human contexts.

Finally, this study has a potential of playing a great role in the activism of tourism and cultural promotion engagements. For instance, since the study reveals unique and compelling aspects of mythology and its connection to the landscape, it can be used to create more awareness about tourism and cultural tourism that is already a serious socioeconomic reality in the region. This, in turn, would supplement awareness efforts that can culminate in enhancing economic benefits for the local communities, literary as this study is. After all, Fort Portal has already been designated as a tourist city in Uganda. This study is therefore a step towards providing additional stamina in the tourism efforts in Fort Portal and its surroundings.

### **1.9 Justification of the study**

Western Uganda is a region known for its diverse and unique geography, including the Rwenzori Mountains, Lake Albert and the Rift Valley. Studying the interactions between myths and geography in this region can open an alternative window through which we can appreciate and shed more light on the significant impact of myths on the communities in the region as well as the people who visit those sites. In a way, this study is an attempt to

contribute to the geographic understanding with ecocritical literary practice as the pipeline for that attempt.

### 1.10 Theoretical Framework

In this study, I employ three tenets or assumptions of ecocriticism that Nasrullah Mambrol summarises in her “Ecocriticism: An Essay” published in 2016 (op. cit.). Here are the tenets and how I apply them in this study:

- a) Ecocritics believe that human culture is related to the physical world. In this study, I take myth as part of the verbal artistic arm of culture with regard to the selection of myths that I explore. Therefore, I explore the themes, elements of structure and motifs portrayed in the selected myths as they relate to the geographical features in the area of study.
- b) Ecocriticism assumes that all life forms are interlinked, thus expanding the notion of the world to include the entire ecosphere. My position is that the people’s composition and performance of myth is a way of expanding the community’s world to include the interconnectivity between myth and geography. This is a tenet that aids me to demonstrate the interconnectedness between myth and geography. I therefore analyse how each of the themes and elements of structure reflect the natural environment in the selected myths.
- c) There is a definite link between nature and culture, where the literary treatment, representation and “thematization” of land and nature influence actions on the land. This third tenet enables me to interpretively analyse the relevance of the selected myths in contemporary times. In this case, I analyse how each of the themes and elements of structure reflect the natural environment

Although ecocriticism is a subject that has engaged various earlier scholars such as Cheryll Glotfelty and Harold Fromm in *The Ecocriticism Reader: Landmarks in Literary Ecology* (1996) and Lawrence Buell’s *The Environmental Imagination* (1996), I have based my theoretical framework on Mambrol’s postulations because she has provided a summarised

overview of the tenets that I have found most helpful in my exploration of the interconnectedness of myth and geography in selected myths from Western Uganda.

Overall, ecocriticism investigates the relation between humans and the natural world in literature. It is a literary theory that deals with how environmental issues, cultural issues concerning the environment and attitudes towards nature are presented and analysed. My concern here is with the way ecocriticism opens a window through which I can view a community's concern with their environment through myth, concurring with Mambrol (op. cit.) who argues that ecocriticism is a fresh way of analysing and interpreting literary texts, which brings new dimensions to the field of literary and theoretical studies.

Since an ecocritical reader examines the relationship between literature, culture, and the environment, its framework provides new and alternative insights into how an interest in studying myths can influence attitudes and behaviours towards the environment, as well as how the geographical features within the myths are connected to ecological concerns. In a bigger picture, this study attempts to cause a literary marriage between oral literature and geography. In the next chapter I delve into the literature that has helped me to conceptualise this study and given it the shape it has.

### **1.11 Definition of Key terms**

The following are the key terms I use in this study.

#### **Ecocriticism**

This is a literary critical approach which explains the relationship between literature and the physical environment. Ecocriticism is alternatively and variously called ecological criticism, ecopoetics, environmental literary criticism or green cultural studies. In this study I apply the brand of ecocriticism espoused Mambrol (2016).

#### **Geographical features**

In this study, geographical features are the landscapes and vegetations that include hills, lakes, caves, waterfalls, rocks, stalactites and stalagmites. For example, myth believers interpret these stalactites and stalagmites as “Nyinamwiru’s breasts”.

## **Geography**

Geography is usually understood as the study of the earth's surface. In this study, geography refers the sum total of the interaction involving landscapes and vegetation. Geography also entails the instance, practice or idea of writing or narrating something about some aspect of these landscapes and vegetation and the imagined landscapes of the underground that are directly referenced in the selected myths.

## **Motif**

I use the term motif to refer to those repeated structural patterns in the selected myths. A motif is an element or idea that recurs in a patterned way throughout a work of literature. It may be in the form of action, sound, image or a story-within-a-story. Although motif is related to theme, there is a difference between the two. A theme is an abstract entity, usually an idea, lesson, or message that is explored throughout a work of literature while a motif is directly perceivable in a work of art. However, a motif helps us to understand the theme at hand.

## **Myth**

I use the term myth as suggested by Stuart (op. cit.). So, myth in this study is a pattern of events, discerned or constructed, expressed in verbal or visual symbols, which presents a sequence that imposes order on some aspects of our individual or corporate lives. I add Lincoln's claim (1989) that myths are kinds of narratives or stories that possess credibility and authority and that narrative possessing authority is one for which successful claims are made not only to the status of truth, but what is more, to the status of paradigmatic truth.

## **Mytheme**

Mytheme is the basic unit or component or segment that makes up a mythical narrative. They are the irreducible units of a longer myth (Lévi-Strauss, op. cit.). Central myths of a community tend to be long, composed of sections that can sometimes sound as if they are stand-alone units. What Lévi-Strauss calls mytheme is sometimes told as a story in its own right.

## **Narrative**

A narrative is a story. Whether the myth is rendered verbally, in writing or in a three-dimensional format, it remains basically a story. Therefore, in this study, the terms narrative/narratives and story/stories are used to refer to the myth or mytheme being explored.

## **Western Uganda**

The districts of Fort Portal, Ibanda and Ntungamo comprise the most immediate geographical scope of this study. These are the respective districts in which the actual sites of geographical features I reference in the selected myths are located.

## CHAPTER TWO

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### 2.1 Introduction

In this chapter I review selected works by various scholars on myth, literary perspectives on geographical feature and ecocriticism as a critical lense. Though there have been studies conducted in all these three areas, I did not come across one who has married the three in relation to specific myths and specific geographical features. I review the literature in three parts. First, I present a review on myth, followed by a discussion on myth in relation to literature. Second, I discuss the notion of geographical features from a literary perspective. Then I deal with ecocriticism as it relates to both myth and geographical features. My conclusion is that ecocriticism is a productive critical lense through which the interconnectedness between selected myths and geographical features can be realised.

#### 2.2 Myth

I find it necessary to talk about myth once again for the purpose of clarifying that myth as understood in this study does not refer to what is not true. It may be that the concern with myth is perhaps as old as humankind. Yet, in ordinary usage the term “myth” denotes an untruth, the antonym of reality or something unverifiable. Even in academic discourse, it is sometimes fashionable for some scholars of myth to claim, insistently, that myth is antonymous to fact or reality, and therefore, those who invest time in studying myth are guilty of misrepresenting factual life. Let me point out right here that in literary research and scholarship, myth refers to a subgenre of oral literature. Some scholars such as Okpewho (1983a; 1992b) and Miruka (1999) generically classify myth as part of what has come to be called oral narratives - sometimes called prose narratives when they appear in written form. Therefore, I would advise that first understanding the context of usage of the term “myth” is crucial.

To scholars who insist on viewing myth as the antonym of fact, I say: you are just myth-bashers who appear to think and would want others to think that engaging in myth should go no further than providing low-rate make-believe entertainment. Like Drakakis (Sillars,

1996) I would ask rhetorically that “if myths are just ‘false stories’, why do we keep telling them?” I can add another question: why do myths hold such power in their source communities even in modern times? It is here that Sillars comes in to enlighten us more about these seemingly false stories, the myths. According to Sillars (Ibid.), myth “may be produced by volition in a dominant group, or may be the instinctual result of shared beliefs or common longings, but whatever its origin, it is a pattern that transcends barriers of time”. The question that remains for me is how specifically myths and geography meet in a way that offers communities certain world views about their natural surroundings.

It is not an overstatement to say that myths are a part of every culture and are used to explain natural phenomena, where people came from and how their civilization developed, and why things happen as they do. At their most basic level, myths play the role of comforting their home communities by providing a sense of order and meaning to a world that can sometimes seem chaotic. Therefore, mythology enables humans’ harmony and relation with nature. At a time when natural phenomena cannot not be explained by science, such as is the case in predominantly orate cultures, mythology becomes a means of explaining obscurities as they interact with other forms of nature. People are able to explain the events in nature by establishing similarities with their own actions. One way is by composing stories of origins, hence the emergence and significance of myth.

### **2.3 Myth and Literature**

John Drakakis, the series editor of The New Critical Idiom Books series, has succinctly argued that “from Dante and Shakespeare to James Joyce and Margaret Atwood, writers have felt the need to draw on archaic narrative patterns” (Coupe 1997, Preface). And I can add that from time immemorial, African communities - inclusive of those in Western Uganda - have narrated myths across generations, and continue to do so. Thus, cultural and literary criticism - such as this study - may involve mythography or the interpretation of myth, given that the mythic is an important dimension of cultural and literary experience. I realized that there are so many definitions of myth that it is least misleading to list a number of typical features and then act on the assumption that a narrative is a mythic if it has most, but not necessarily all, of these features. I also discovered that not all myths are linked with ritual as it is likely to be assumed by many who read about myths.

Neither are all myths about gods. Such is my position with regards to selected myths from Western Uganda.

Myths according to Kipury as cited by Miruka (1994, op. cit.) are narratives that explain the origin of various phenomena and mankind. Finnegan (1970) cited by Aaron Mushengyezi (2004) says that myths are sacred embodiment of dogma. Mushengyezi adds that everything in myth is usually supernatural and surpasses the knowledge of man and not even legendary figures can comprehend. This is true with the myth under study in this research. No one can comprehend or challenge the powers by which they occurred. Just as Kipury puts it that they explain the origin of various phenomena, the myths here explain the occurrence of stalactites and stalagmites, the earthquakes, caves and lakes. Chandra Shekhar Balachandran (op. cit., Web) defines myths as stories that can guide us as individuals and societies in order that we may become better. They are symbolic and should not be taken literally. Balachandran adds that one way of understanding this is to look at myths from the point of view of our poetic ancestors who saw the geographical landscape as symbols also, not just physical landscapes, for instance.

There is a perspective on myth as it relates to literature which Sinding (op. cit.) provides, that there is a traditional and stubborn way of seeing myth as antonymic to what is true or real. Jensen argues that this way of seeing myth has undergone some rehabilitation in two major ways. One of the forms of rehabilitation is where myths are regarded as actual pathways to the sacred or the metaphysical world of a community and beyond. The second way is one which shows that the natives of the country where individual or collective myths originate consider those myths as modes of thought, and that there is logic in myths. In this direction I sought to find what the selected myths could afford us as a gateway into the thoughts of communities that are conditioned, in a way, to associate specific geographical features with myth narratives and vice versa.

Okpewho (1992:183) thinks of myth as constantly changing narrative, but having an impact on its owners. As I have pointed out earlier, Stuart Sillars' definition of myth as a pattern of events, discerned or constructed, expressed in verbal or visual symbols, which presents a sequence that imposes order on some aspects of our individual or corporate lives

captured my interest in this study. Sillars' definition fits in well with the accounts that surround the myths in this study in the sense that, these myths - Nyinamwiru, Nyakahondogoro, Isaza, Nyabihoko - are artistically verbal symbols.

On his part, Sorel (1975:7) says that, for instance, when it comes to explaining typically modern phenomena such as major social movements, the fact that the people participating in them present their action in the form of grand narratives that depict their success, becomes so evident that there seems to be little need to insist on the role of myth. Myths provide names through which the unknown first becomes masterable, such as the geographical features in Western Uganda, as I will demonstrate in Chapter Four. A distinction between myth, as I use the term and concept in this study, and legend is necessary at this point. William Bascom (1965:9), long ago, provided some working definitions for both myth and legend thus:

Definitions: *myths* are prose narratives which, in the society in which they are told, are considered to be truthful accounts of what happened in the remote past. *legends* are prose narratives which, like myths, are regarded as true by the narrator and his audience, but they are set in a period considered less remote, when the world was much as it is today.

Then comes Okpewho (op cit.) who says:

...we are retaining the word *legend* because here we are dealing with accounts of personalities and events that are considered so memorable that they deserve to be talked about or recounted (Latin *legenda*) again and again. The events may be as recent as this morning, perhaps just an hour ago, or they may be so far back in the past that the memory of them is now very vague and the details are subject to all kinds of manipulations. This is why we may safely talk about two kinds of legend: the historic legend and the romantic (or *mythic*) legend.

I think what Okpewho means by “romantic” is that in myth events, characters and themes tend to be romanticized since myth tends to entail a community’s collective aspirations, fears and fantasies. The thought that legend is closer to the historic while myth is closer to the romantic is perhaps why Jessica Evans and Stuart Hall (1999:51) contend that “myth is a system of communication”, that “it is a message”. This observation allows one to perceive that “myth cannot possibly be an object, a concept or an idea; it is a mode of signification, a form”. If I combine Okpewho’s romantic with Evans’ and Hall’s “system of communication” I can safely establish that myth communicates in a unique way. But we need a reminder from Lévi-Strauss (op. cit.) who has advised that there are mythemes in a long myth. To him, mythemes are the essential events, characters, or relationships that are combined and recombined to create different myths. He adds that mythemes are the fundamental building blocks that make up the structure of a myth and carry its core meaning. Basing on what I have said earlier, whether it is myth or mytheme, what remains for me to show is how myth and geography do indeed meet, both in general and in specific contexts.

#### **2.4 Geographical features, a literary perspective**

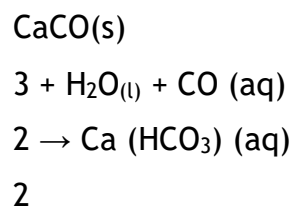
When a literary study such as this invokes the notion of geography, the reader may be taken aback, in some measure. But my study reveals that the very being, functioning and value of selected geographical features in Western Uganda are embedded within a body of myths, as I will show as I discuss my findings.

From an ecocritical perspective, we can take note that there is an intimate interconnection between nature and the dynamics of actual-lived lives of communities in the physical world at a given time and pace. This dynamism embraces the mythic narratives - among other verbal arts - that communities compose in their search for meaning and identity as they interact with the physical world. Though one may argue that such an interaction could be taken as a given anyway, it is hardly believable that any human community can exist outside of its physical environment. It is another thing when we consider this relationship through the narratives that surround these aspects of the physical world. Earlier examples of this interaction available in literary studies include the grand narratives that relate the founding ancestors of ethnic communities: the Chwezi

dynasty in Western Uganda, the Kintu myth among the Baganda of central Uganda and the Gikuyu-Mumbi among the Agikuyu of Kenya, for instance. Then arise the rather dominant mythic legends that narrate the dynamics of, once again, some dominant geographical features: the Lwanda Magere rock of the Jalu of Western Kenya and the Walumbe (Death) seemingly bottomless pits of Ttanda village in Mityana district in Uganda, for example.

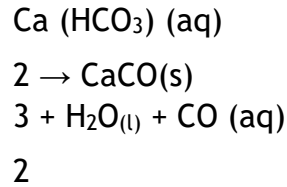
It is perhaps in such a context as the foregoing that Dorothy B. Vitaliano (2007), as early as 2007, had to assert that some myths are the result of man's attempts to explain noteworthy features of his environment, such as striking landforms or unusual smaller features, whereas others try to account for conspicuous natural processes such as earthquakes, volcanic phenomena and floods. Vitaliano added that local myths have sometimes proved helpful in solving geological problems, and even the geological nomenclature is indebted to mythology. It remains to be seen how selected myths from Western Uganda demonstrate this intimacy between myth and geography. It is interesting to me, for instance, how the Isaza myth is closely linked to the fact that earthquakes are a frequent occurrence in the Albertine section of the great East African Rift valley in Western Uganda.

One significant feature of the Nyinamwiru myth, for instance, are the stalactites and stalagmites which the community around them interpret as mythic products. Forthergil, A. (et al) in *Planet Earth* (2006) asserts that stalactites are formed by the deposition of calcium carbonate and other minerals, which are precipitated from mineralized water solutions. Limestone is the chief form of calcium carbonate rock which is dissolved by water that contains carbon dioxide, forming a calcium bicarbonate solution in underground caverns. The chemical formula for this reaction is:



This solution travels through the rock until it reaches an edge and if this is on the roof of a cave it will drip down. When the solution comes into contact with air the chemical

reaction that created it is reversed and particles of calcium carbonate are deposited. The reversed reaction is:



An average growth rate is 0.13 mm (0.0051 inches) a year. The quickest growing stalactites are those formed by fast-flowing water rich in calcium carbonate and carbon dioxide, these can grow at 3 mm (0.12 inches) per year.

Michael Hogan (2006) adds that every stalactite begins with a single mineral-laden drop of water. When the drop falls, it deposits the thinnest ring of calcite. Each subsequent drop that forms and falls deposits another calcite ring. Eventually, these rings form a very narrow (0.5 mm), hollow tube commonly known as a "soda straw" stalactite. Soda straws can grow quite long, but are very fragile. If they become plugged by debris, water begins flowing over the outside, depositing more calcite and creating the more familiar cone shaped stalactite. The same water drops that fall from the tip of a stalactite deposit more calcite on the floor below, eventually resulting in a rounded or cone-shaped stalagmite. Unlike stalactites, stalagmites never start out as hollow "soda straws." Given enough time, these formations can meet and fuse to create *columns* of calcium carbonate. It is these geological dynamics that lie at the centre of the Amabeere narrative.

## 2.5 Ecocriticism and Literature

Sule Egya (2020: 67) in phrasing one of his critical works on ecocriticism as "Out of Africa: Ecocriticism beyond Environmental Justice" energises my critical outlook in this review. The key note for me lies in the words "beyond environmental justice". Of course, one cannot dismiss the notion of environmental justice if one respects the fact that all humans inhabit one kind of environment or another. However, I concur with Egya in spirit. Ecocriticism can be and is a productive critical tool when dealing with literary topics such as myth. Egya argues that emphasis on environmental justice fails to "foreground natural worlds and their role in shaping thoughts and ways of living, as well as in the preservation and conservation of diverse life-forms". He, instead, advocates for an ecocriticism that

“considers the depiction of nonhuman worlds and their nuanced agency in human society, and asks how studies of such writing can enrich African ecocriticism”.

Although what Egya seems to have in mind are creative works, I argue that reading works, even outside Egya’s frame, from an ecocritical perspective helps us enter the world of alternative readings. Myths, as mythic as such narratives are, are essentially about “nonhuman worlds and their nuanced agency in human society” (Egya, op. cit.). And it is the humans who actually compose and perform mythic narratives. I therefore find ecocriticism helpful in exploring the interconnection between myth and geography.

At the Western Literature Association meeting that took place on 6<sup>th</sup> October 1994 (Web), the major theme was “Defining Ecocritical Theory and Practice”. Scholars discussed a variety of topics. At the meeting, in whatever phrasing it appeared, each of the presentations was an attempt at answering the question “what is ecocriticism?”. In the introduction to the collection of papers that were published later, Sean O’Grady and Michael P. Branch observe that “the word “ecocriticism” traces back to William Rueckert’s 1978 essay “Literature and Ecology: An Experiment in Ecocriticism”. Later on, Cheryll Glotfelty revived the term and urged its adoption to refer to the diffuse critical field that heretofore had been known as “the study of nature writing.” Although O’Grady and Branch’s views are based on western cultural perspectives, I find the both Egya’s and O’Grady and Branch’s views helpful as I explore the interconnectedness between myth and related geographical features in the myths I selected for this study.

At that same meeting Ralph W. Black, at some point, said:

William Cronon has recently written about his work as an environmental historian, saying that “human acts occur within a network of relationships, processes, and systems that are as ecological as they are cultural”. He is speaking of histories of the Great Plains, but we, invested as we are in the natural world and its literary representation, might use it to talk about Colonel Sutpen, Natty Bumppo, or King Lear... Ecocriticism gives us a vocabulary to find a common ground among books that might otherwise seem to have very little in common.

Black is thinking of books. But myths have appeared in book form also, in different recreations. One may think of examples such as Jennifer Nansubuga's novel, *Kintu*. *Kintu* mainly a re-creation of the Kintu origination myth among the Baganda people, mingling myth, history and popular belief. Or *Oedipus the King*, a play based on the mythic legend of the Theban people, which is actually a re-creed narrative from the ancient Greek culture. Ecocriticism in relation to the study myth as it interconnects with geography is therefore well-placed, and has had a history.

One ecocritic scholar that has had a powerful imprint on ecocriticism is Cheryll Glotfelty (1996). To Glotfelty, "simply defined, ecocriticism as the study of the relationship between literature and the physical environment" and "ecocriticism takes an earth-centred approach to literary studies". Glotfelty further suggests for us some of the questions ecocritics and theorists should ask. The key question is how our metaphors about the land do influence the way we treat it. If one follows Glotfelty's critical path, one will most likely find an intersection between ecocriticism and myth because myths, in essence, attempt to interpret the land as a world. Myth relate to whatever takes place on, above and beneath the land we live on. That is why one will find both terrestrial and celestial characters in many myths.

Glotfelty further argues that "ecocriticism takes as its subject the interconnections between nature and culture, specifically the cultural artifacts of language and literature. As a critical stance, it has one foot in literature and the other on land; as a theoretical discourse, it negotiates between the human and the nonhuman". He adds, "an ecologically focused criticism is a worthy enterprise primarily because it directs our attention to matters about which we need to be thinking". In my view myth's interconnectedness with geography - the land, the earth and related elements is something we need to rethink continuously, especially in view of modern thought that tends to relegate people's narratives such as myths to areas of primitivity.

For Harry Crockett (1994) "ecocriticism elucidates relationships between human and nonhuman nature, privileging literary inscriptions of those relationships for all the usual

reasons why we in this profession privilege literature”. In a way Crockett seems to agree with Thomas K. Dean (1994) who argues that eco-criticism is a study of culture and cultural products - art works, writings, scientific theories and so on. In some way, these works are connected with the human relationship to the natural world and that “one must reconnect the disciplines that have become sundered through over-specialization”. He advises that

eco-criticism must remain "a big tent"--comprehensiveness of perspectives must be encouraged and honoured. All eco-critical efforts are pieces of a comprehensive continuum. Eco-critical approaches, thus, can be theoretical, historical, pedagogical, analytical, psychological, rhetorical, and on and on, including combinations of the above.

From the foregoing, in ecocriticism I find a big tent to accommodate a meeting-point of myth and geography, with unlimited room for numerous critical enterprises especially with regard interconnectedness between matters of the earth or land and matters of culture. What I do here is what Ian Marshal would call “literary criticism informed by ecological awareness”.

In their *The Ecocriticism Reader: Landmarks in Literary Ecology*, Cheryll Glotfelty and Fromm Harold (Eds. 1996, xix-xx) caution us:

But nature per se is not the only focus of ecocritical studies of representation. Other topics include the frontier, animals, cities, specific geographical regions, rivers, mountains, deserts, Indians, technology, garbage, and the body (p. xxiii).

In a manner of corroborating Glotfelty and Harold’s views on ecocriticism, William Howarth (1996, 69) tutors us further:

Eco and critic both derive from Greek, oikos and kritis, and in tandem they mean "house judge," which may surprise many lovers of green, outdoor writing. A long-winded gloss on ecocritic might run as follows: "a

person who judges the merits and faults of writings that depict the effects of culture upon nature, with a view toward celebrating nature, berating its despoilers, and reversing their harm through political action."

Howarth (op. cit.) further argues that "all writers and their critics are stuck with language, and although we cast nature and culture as opposites, in fact they constantly mingle, like water and soil in a flowing stream". From the foregoing accounts from Glotfelty, Harold and Howarth, I construct an ecocritic framework within which I operate to explore the interconnectedness between myth and geography in myths from western Uganda. I generally agree with Emmanuel Adeniyi and Paul Ayodele Onanuga (2023, 264) who suggest that "ecocriticism, in broad terms, is concerned with the exploration of diverse ways in which human societies and cultures have lived with nature". To me, one of the ways we can explore human societies is through studying their myths. In that connection, there is a need to further explore the interaction between mythic narratives and geographical features in order to understand human-geography interactivity more.

## **2.6 Conclusion**

I have benefited from different varieties of interpreting and working with myth in order to throw light on my own variety of interpreting myths. More specifically, I have benefited from Mambrol's (op. cit.) scholarship, part of which I quote here in some detail. For Mambrol:

Ecocriticism investigates the relation between humans and the natural world in literature. It deals with how environmental issues, cultural issues concerning the environment and attitudes towards nature are presented and analysed. One of the main goals in ecocriticism is to study how individuals in society behave and react in relation to nature and ecological aspects. This form of criticism has gained a lot of attention during recent years due to higher social emphasis on environmental destruction and increased technology. It is hence a fresh way of analysing and interpreting literary texts, which brings new dimensions to the field of literary and theoretical studies. Ecocriticism is an intentionally broad approach that

is known by a number of other designations, including “green (cultural) studies”, “ecopoetics”, and “environmental literary criticism.”

It is Mambrol’s postulations that have been the most immediate aids in formulating my theoretical framework which framework in turn influence my methodology that I present in the next chapter.

## CHAPTER THREE

### METHODOLOGY

#### 3.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I present the methodology that I used during the study. The chapter includes the research design, study area, sources of data, sampling techniques, data collection methods and data analysis, limitations of the study and how I mitigated against the limitations.

#### 3.2 Research Design

I applied a qualitative research design to carry out this study. Specifically, I used an ethnographic research design whereby I examined the interconnection between myth -and geographical features Through immersive observation, exploration, interpretation and other forms of interaction with the individuals and communities concerned I sought an understanding of the meanings, experiences, themes and motifs in the selected myths as they relate to particular geographical features. I focused on four (4) myths from Western Uganda related to Amabeere ga Nyinamwiru, Nyakahandogoro caves, origins of Lake Nyabihoko and the myth of Isaza and Nyamiyonga respectively. In so doing, the selected myths -- offered me an avenue to provide an in-depth exploration of the specific cultural and geographical intersections that are involved in the selected myths. Since myths are collective property of their source communities, they therefore embody the worldviews of those communities. Focusing on these few myths aided me to get a sample, that could represent related myths in connection with specific geographical features. Overall, I explored the rich contextual details of each of the selected myths and the geographical features therein, focusing on interpretation and contextualised cultural analysis.

#### 3.3 Study Area

I conducted the research in the districts of Fort Portal, Ibanda and Ntungamo. These are the districts which are traditionally inhabited by the Banyoro, Batooro and Banyankole people. I focused on the areas of Fort Portal city and its hinterlands - specifically Nyakasura where the stalactites and stalagmites culturally interpreted as Amabeere ga Nyinamwiru are located, Nyakahondogoro caves and Lake Nyabihoko and its environs. As

for the myth of Isaza and Nyamiyonga, I accessed the narrative from wherever I would like to do so. I deemed it important to have an on-site field experience so that I could yield credible and reliable data as to how each of the myths was interpreted by the people in terms of the interconnectedness between myth and geography in specific contexts.

### **3.4 Fieldwork**

I visited all the physical sites that I refer to in this dissertation and conducted interviews with local storytellers and other stakeholders around each of the myths. I also interacted with and interviewed elders, youths and cultural custodians in order to collect various versions of the myths I selected. I therefore gained insights into the meanings and significance of the myths. Overall, I used participant observation to document how myths are narrated and performed in the context of their interconnectedness with the nearby geographical features. Overall, I used fieldwork and textual analysis to supplement my mainly ethnographic research.

### **3.5 Textual Analysis**

By text I mean the very myths that I selected for the study, both oral and written. I analysed the available versions of verbal and written texts of the selected myths in order to identify and interpret the connections involving geographical features, themes and motifs in each of the myths. The major focus was on myths that involve physical landscapes, cultural practices and indigenous beliefs. In particular, I considered the myth connected to caves culturally called “Amabeere ga Nyinamwiru” (the Breasts of Nyinamwiru) located in Nyakasura in Fort Portal, the one about caves at Nyakahandogoro along the Fort Portal-Ibanda road and the one that attempts to explain the origins of Lake Nyabihoko found in present-day Ntungamo district. Then there is the myth of Isaza and Nyamiyonga that is directly linked, in the narration of it, to the seismic features of earthquakes that regularly occur in the western part of Uganda covering the last strip of the great East African Rift valley. Then I used a thematic interpretation to uncover patterns that link myths and geography in mutual representation.

### **3.6 Sampling Strategy and technique**

I did purposive sampling and made a selection of myths - some of which Lévi-Strauss would call mythemes - which, according to me, explicitly reference specific geographical

features found in the region traditionally inhabited by the communities that own those myths. I randomly chose eight (8) people of varying age groups, 36-90 years old as one group of respondents. These are mainly storytellers and community members whom I deemed knowledgeable about oral traditions and local geography. These storytellers included the now famous Fort Portal city walkers, a group of people who guide tourists around the tourist sites within and outside Fort Portal city. By this purposive sampling, I intended to ensure that I get credible and fair representation from various cultural perspectives about the selected myths of the Batooro, Banyoro and Banyankole.

Thus, I was able to achieve a thorough probe in the engagement with the interconnection of myth and geography in each of the myths. The number of respondents was dictated by the resources available to me. The responses from the chosen number of respondents ably answered to the research questions of the study. Choosing respondents from across age groups provided me with information that demonstrated the power of myth in society, whether one is young or an adult or an elder.

### **3.7 Data Collection Methods**

In order to establish the interconnectedness between myth and geographical features, I used various data collection methods as I present them in the subsequent pages. I accessed both primary and secondary sources of information. Data was collected through reading the selected myths in line with the ecocriticism theory. This served as the guideline for analysing the myths.

#### **3.7.1 Primary Sources**

The primary sources were the very myths I selected and the physical locations of the geographical features that are involved in each of the myths. I collected the myths through reading of written texts, through listening to oral accounts of especially the official narrators at the physical sites and through interviews and field recordings from knowledgeable people, elders and others alike, in the local communities. I also recorded observations of arranged storytelling sessions and their environmental settings. So, the primary sources comprised the various texts of myth, the recordings and interviews. Select images and lists of informants and participants appear in the appendices section of this dissertation.

### **3.7.2 Secondary Sources**

Documentary reviews was one of the secondary sources. I reviewed existing literature on myths from western Uganda, on the theoretical perspectives of ecocriticism in relation to the topic at hand. I also made use of geographical maps and other documents related to the region for the purpose of contextualisation. These reviews appear in the background and literature sections of this dissertation.

### **3.8 Data Collection Instruments**

I used instruments and tools that included the interview schedule and the questionnaire. I also used a smart phone as a device for capturing images and recording information.

#### **3.8.1 Interview schedule**

The instrument that I mostly used to collect data was the interview schedule, whereby I interviewed respondents. The list of the interviewees appears in appendix 2. As Fisher, Buglear, Lowry, Mutch and Tansley (2007) advise, “it is useful to write an interview schedule that contains all the main points you want to raise” (p.167). I used interview schedules to conduct interviews which, in turn, helped me capture specific and detailed information from the respondents’ suggestions, views, opinions and comments. Prior to meeting any respondent, I drew a list of issues which I would investigate. Mostly, it was the open-ended interview format that enabled me to listen to the respondents’ views, interpret them and come up with a valid conclusion. In this case I was following the advice by Miles, Huberman and Saldana (2014) quoting Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) who observe that:

During an open-ended interview much interpretation occurs along the way. The person describing his or her “life world” discovers new relationships and patterns during the interview; the researcher who occasionally summarizes or reflects what has been heard, in fact, condensing and interpreting the flow of meaning (p.38).

### **3.8.2 Questionnaires**

I also used questionnaires. These I administered the questionnaires to my respondents face-to-face in order to avoid nonresponses and also to aim at getting first-hand information from respondents. Administering a questionnaire is another form of interviewing, anyway. So, as Hlophe (2005) advises, during a face-to-face interview, I noted down words that were spoken as well as non-verbal communication. Both of these modes of communication added value to the information that I needed for the study. Let me add that I found the information derived from face-to-face interviews very helpful. I was able to get not only the key points arising from the questionnaires but also that extra meaning which non-verbal language always affords us. Hence, I was able to test and ensure the authenticity of the information I was gathering.

### **3.8.3 Smartphone Camera**

Finally, I used my smartphone camera to capture some relevant images and make recordings, of course with permission from each respondent as the case would dictate. For the images, I later compared with those that appear on the internet for purposes of comparison. Select images appear in the Appendices section.

## **3.9 Quality Control**

For the purpose of ensuring reliability and validity of my research instruments, I used simple straight forward language in both written and verbal interaction with the respondents. Thus, I was able to communicate with them effectively. My knowledge of Rutooro which is the language spoken around Fort Portal but mutually intelligible with Runyoro, Runyankole and Rukiga was an added advantage. I was able to correct some structural errors in the myths along the way. For the texts of the myths, I checked various versions and extracted commonalities, all of which led to a demonstration that elements in the selected myths and related geographical features are indeed interconnected. Finally, I did a brief pilot study involving a few respondents with whom I went through each item in the instruments to ensure clarity of questions. At all times I was conscious to seek a logical connection between the interview questions in the instruments, research objectives as well as the research questions.

### **3.10 Data Analysis**

I did thematic, contextual and interpretative analysis. First, I identified and categorised the following: recurring geographical features of two caves and one lake, themes and motifs of human-nature interaction, moral lessons, ecological knowledge in accordance with ecocriticism that link geographical features to each of the myths. Since it is an ethnographic study, I examined the socio-cultural and environmental contexts in which the myths are embedded. Finally, I explored the representational meanings of the geographical elements within each of the myths. All these analyses were in line with my purpose, objectives and research questions.

### **3.11 Ethical Considerations**

I made sure that I adhered to acceptable ethical standards while carrying out research. First, I ensured that the communities I would visit would appreciate that I was a well-meaning student doing research. Therefore, I sought recognition and permission from local leaders and opinion leaders before I went deep into my research activities while in the field. This step helped to ensure my safety lest I could be mistaken for an unwanted visitor. In the field, I always obtained informed consent from each of the participants before collecting myths, making recordings or conducting interviews. I also made sure that I respected cultural norms of the groups and individuals I interacted with in the course of carrying out research. I also preserved the confidentiality of participants at all times.

### **3.12 Limitations of the Study**

The most significant limitation to this study was its own scope. There are various factors that determine the community's interpretation of their natural environment. Looking at myths exclusively could have provided a biased analysis. Moreover, the selected myths seem to have a common prototype that relates to the Bacwezi, as already pointed out.

Secondly, I conducted the study in three districts in Western Uganda: Fort Portal, Ibanda and Ntungamo. This is a vast geographical area to cover during the short period available to a privately-sponsored Masters student at Uganda Christian University. I had to take small short-term loans from colleagues in order to facilitate my research work. And there was the limitation of the main respondents themselves. Four (4) respondents and an

already prescribed team of “city walkers” could have yielded biased information. To mitigate against this limitation, I had to cross-check the information I got from the respondents with other sources such as books, consulting elderly people who know much about some of the myths as well as with selected internet sources that were current at the time of doing the research. It is possible that some of the respondents actually had little knowledge about particular myths. However, having mitigated against those limitations and having used the research design and research methods I have presented, I yielded the results which I present in the next chapter.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### PRESENTATION AND INTERPRETATION OF FINDINGS

#### 4.1 Introduction

In this chapter I present and interpret the findings which the study yielded. Using the ecocritical lens, especially as summarised by Mambrol (op. cit.) I used three (3) tenets of what this scholar presents as “the essential assumptions, ideas and methods of ecocritics”. These are, first, that human culture is related to the physical world. Second is that all life forms are interlinked and so ecocriticism expands the notion of “the world” to include the entire ecosphere. Third, there is a definite link between nature and culture, where the literary treatment, representation and “thematization” of land and nature influence actions on the land.

Correspondingly, for a systematic presentation and interpretation, I categorised the findings using three (3) yardsticks for each myth or mytheme: geographical features, themes, and motifs. Where similarities are applicable, I mention them. Later, I will discuss and analyse how the information I present in this chapter provides insights in exploring the interconnectedness between geography and myth in the selected myths. The myths are: Amabeere, Nyakahondogoro, Nyabihoko (Mutumo and Nyabwangu) and Isaza (and Nyamiyonga). Overall, the findings show that there is a strong relationship between the myths and the geographical features entailed. I present the findings basing on the study objectives: to investigate the themes and elements of structure portrayed in the selected myths, to analyse how each of the themes and elements of structure reflect the natural environment and to evaluate the interconnections between selected myths and geographical features from Western Uganda.

#### 4.2 Amabeere ga Nyinamwiru myth

I found out that the story of “Amabeere” is rich in geographical features, themes and motifs. This is a story which is told to explain the mythical formation and appearance of the stalactites and stalagmites. The natives who believe the Amabere myth argue that these features are as a result of Nyinamwiru’s breasts which were thrown around this area

and they supernaturally transformed into the features we see today. According to mythic interpretation, the dropping white substance is Nyinamwiru's breast milk. It is further believed that when her breasts were thrown into this valley, they did not stop producing milk. This is the same milk that Rubumbi, another mythic character, always collected to feed Nyinamwiru's son Ndahura. The story elements intertwine myth with the natural landscape and cultural values of the region. However, geographers inform us that what the myth believers take as "breasts" are stalactites and stalagmites formed by the deposition of calcium carbonate and other minerals (Fothergill 2006).

#### **4.2.1 Geographical Features**

The Amabeere myth conspicuously integrates substantial geographical landmarks that include caves, waterfalls, crater lakes, forests and hills. It is the caves which seem to be best known, so much so that people who do not know their mythic identity refer to them as simply Nyakasura caves. This, as I said earlier, these caves are located at a place called Nyakasura. It is these caves that are most central to the entire myth because they house the stalactites and stalagmites which according to the myth, are representations of Nyinamwiru's breasts that were severed by her father in punishment for her disobedience. The local community usually interprets the waterfalls as Nyinamwiru's tears. At times the waterfalls are interpreted as supernatural milk, godly gifts of sustenance that sustain the people in the face of adversity.

Of note, also, is that the immediate environs of Amabeere caves bear attractive scenic and crater lakes. These lakes are believed to have spiritual significance, representing transformation and beauty tied to the myth. One may note that in the myth, Nyinamwiru is a very beautiful and attractive girl. Surrounding the caves are dense vegetations characterised by hills that create an almost-supernatural atmosphere. It is this atmosphere that serves as the framework for the events in the myth. It is believed that these landscapes are linked to isolation and reflective of Nyinamwiru's exile.

#### **4.2.2 Themes**

The Amabeere myth explores several cultural, moral and spiritual themes that include family and betrayal, punishment and redemption and human-nature interaction. Others are the ambivalence of beauty and power of woman. We remind ourselves that there was

a strained relationship between Nyinamwiru and her usurper father King Bukuku. For her father to have caused the cutting off of her breasts was extreme. He also had her banished for his realm, although he was a usurper himself. Bukuku's behaviour is counter to conventional father-daughter relationship.

Ironically, perhaps because of godly intervention, the extreme punishment and banishment comes out as occasioning her own journey toward redemption and mystical survival even beyond the timeframe of the myth. The journey enables her to get immortalized in the transformation of the physical landscape of stalactites, stalagmites and related features. The journey highlights the inseparable bond between human life and natural phenomena, hence the interconnection between geography and myth.

Interestingly, Nyinamwiru's beauty is at the same time a source of conflict and a harbinger of suffering, at least in the short term. She undergoes a symbolic disfigurement and exile.

#### **4.2.3 Motifs**

Here I focus on two (2) significant motifs: I have transformation and rehabilitation; and exile and isolation. As is common with myths, Amabeere is characterised with the motif of exile and isolation, transformation and rehabilitation, so to speak. Nyinamwiru's breasts are transformed into natural formations in form of the milk-like appearance of the stalactites, stalagmites and water bodies. This transformation may be seen as symbolic of how human experiences can leave an enduring mark on the natural world. And they often do. One can add that her breasts that produce "everlasting milk" through water falls can be treated as symbolic of fertility and life-sustenance or nurturing. The Nyinamwiru who was disfigured and banished becomes a nurturer in another world.

The motif of exile and isolation are also significant in the myth, for her forced exile through banishment to the caves further enforces the motif of transformation through adversity and trials that is common in myths across cultures. The conflict between Nyinamwiru and her father reflects those universal tensions between authority and autonomy sought by the individual. One may even invoke the reverse of the Oedipus complex in this seemingly unnatural situation of father-daughter hostility.

### **4.3 Nyakahondogoro myth**

Part of the Chwezi myth of origins, in the context of what Lévi-Strauss would call a mytheme. The story partly goes that when Nyinamwiru could no longer stay in Nyakasura, she relocated southwards towards the territory of the Banyankole. According to Kogere (60 years old interviewed on 21<sup>st</sup> November, 2024) the founder and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Kogere Foundation, an organisation that has committed itself to preserving the Tooro Culture through music, dance, drama and storytelling, the Nyakahondogoro caves were created by Nyinamwiru in her attempt to flee from Nyakasura.

Part of this narrative has it that after Ndahura had killed Bukuku - Nyinamwiru's father - Nyinamwiru remarked that “Kibi Kirungi Ndahura naita Bukuku” (literally translated “Ndahura's killing of Bukuku was good and bad at the same time”). Distraught about her father's death, yet happy for the son who had ascended the throne, Nyinamwiru became torn apart, and decided to run away from the kingdom, and start her own reign in Ibanda. It is also believed that by that time, she had completely turned into a divine being, a deity, who could accomplish anything supernatural or otherwise. She therefore placed one foot in Nyakasura creating the famous Lake Kigere (literally translated as “Foot”) which is shaped as a human foot. She placed the other foot in present-day Ibanda creating the Nyakahondogoro caves. When the caves were created, they formed a house-like structure with rooms, a floor and a ceiling. This place has since been recognised as a divine place with divine powers. It also explains why it is run by a female who is believed to be sacred since it originated from Nyinamwiru who was also a female.

#### **4.3.1 Geographical features**

The Nyakahondogoro caves are not ordinary rocks. These rocks are structured like a real house, in the conventional sense of the concept of house. At their entrance, there is a shape of a door which ushers one into three different rooms which are well demarcated. The first room is a large one commonly known as the sitting room. This room has a high ceiling and can accommodate about fifty people. The other two rooms are called the Salongo (father of twins) and Nalongo (mother of twins) respectively. The paths to these rooms are very narrow and require one to crawl there. The ceilings to these rooms are very low, such that one would be required to sit or kneel while there. All these rooms are believed to possess the presence of the Bacwezi demi-gods, of course in spirit. It should

also be made clear that visitors are required to leave their shoes at the entrance of the caves as assign of respect to the gods.

The first room is what is commonly interpreted as the sitting room, with a very high ceiling so that people can stand around here. The other two rooms are considered more sacred. The path to these rooms is very narrow, requiring one to almost crawl while going there. Similarly, the ceilings of these two other rooms are very low, making it hard for one to stand while in there. The natives believe that this is due to the fact that these rooms have spirits of the Bachwezi roaming around within the rooms and, therefore, people are not expected to stand while there. People are forced to respect those spirits. Ironically, Nyakahondogoro caves is the largest and biggest cave site in the Ankole region that is still less visited and one which remains unknown to many travellers. Yet, according to the local community, this site is the source of super-healing powers. The community also believes that all the Bachwezi in the world came from this cave and later split to other parts of world.

Inside the caves you will be able to see a young girl aged about twenty-five (25) who grew up in the same cave, and it is where she stays. It is said that she is one of the Bachwezi daughters and that she possesses supernatural healing powers and people always gather around her to pray and get healed every Wednesday and Friday night. However, it should also be noted that not everyone can see this woman. Her presence can be seen only by those she chooses to reveal herself to. She has powers to see whoever is coming towards and inside the cave even when she is not near the entrance to the cave because the cave is too big as it covers both Ibanda district and Buhweju District. It is said that she can interact with you in all languages except English because Bachwezi did not communicate in English.

#### **4.3.2 Themes**

Three (3) themes stand out for me in this Nyakahondogoro cave site and related myth: the myth-nature connection, moral integrity and spirituality. The geographical features in the Nyakahondogoro mytheme (Lévi-Strauss' word) can be seen to highlight the intimate connection between humans and their natural environment. Secondary, Nyakahondogoro

is representative of moral values of honesty and responsibility. We note, for instance, that one is not expected to enter the caves when one is not morally clean, otherwise the Bachwezi would punish the transgressor. So the belief goes. Thirdly, Nyakahondogoro is characterised with the presence of spiritual powers, otherwise called supernatural forces. So the community around are bound by the belief - and actions - in a world where the physical and metaphysical are interconnected

### **4.3.3 Motifs**

One of the significant motifs in the Nyakahondogoro mytheme is what scholars such as Joseph Campbell (1973:30-1) and Christopher Vogler (2007:8-9) call the hero's journey. According to the two scholars, mythic narratives involve a departure, a form of initiation, and a return. If we take it that Nyinamwiru had to depart from Nyakasura and travel southwards, we can infer initiation and a return to a new status as the custodians of the Nyakahondogoro caves. There is a kind of return to a less wrathful condition like it was as she lived with her father, Bukuku. The second motif is that of duality' where the geographical features carry the duality of nature and spirituality at the same time. This duality is a hallmark of many a myth across cultures.

### **4.4 Nyabihoko**

The myth goes that there once lived a very wealthy man called Mutumo who had been entrusted by the gods with the care of a divine cow called Kajeru (very white cow). Mutumo had three wives: Ndinga, Butungyi and Nyabwangu on top of several slaves. One day, Mutumo decided to go visit his blood-friend Mwamba. Before he left, he assembled all his family members and gave them intense instructions regarding the divine cow Kajeru. He warned that Kajeru should be given special attention, but should she die before his return, she should be given a human burial. Kajeru's meat was not to be eaten. He ordered that it should be wrapped in a backcloth and buried like a human being. But the moment Mutumo left, his third wife Nyabwangu quickly usurped Ndinga's powers and started running the family affairs. As fate might have it, Kajeru died shortly after Mutumo's departure.

The servant informed Ndinga who cautioned them to follow her husband's instructions regarding Kajeru, but Nyabwangu was quick to challenge her. Nyabwangu convinced everyone that Mutumo was very selfish and the only reason he did not want them to eat Kajeru's meat was so that they might not partake of his wisdom which was believed to have been drawn from the divine cow. Nyabwangu bribed the women with jewellery and anklelets, men with bark cloths and children with fruits. In the end Nyabwangu won and it was agreed that they should eat Kajeru's meat. A quick celebration was organised and everyone but Ndinga feasted on Kajeru. But the celebration was short-lived. It so happened that the sacred cow belonged to Nyabingi, the goddess of plenty but who could at the same time withhold anything from those who offended her. So, Nyabingi, the all-powerful goddess of abundance, got offended by the act of the humans eating the sacred cow. To punish the humans, she unleashed a deluge which swallowed everything in Mutumo's household, leading to the creation of Lake Nyabihoko

#### **4.4.1 Geographical features**

The key features of concern here are the lake itself, the surrounding hills, rivers and streams. The narrative of Nyabihoko - Mutumo and Nyabwangu - is closely interconnected with cultural and spiritual relationship between people and their environment. The lake itself as part and parcel of the myth comes out as having symbolic value that seems rather obvious: fertility, mystery and the duality of sustenance and danger at the same time. One does not need much effort in order to infer that a lake can sustain life through providing water, fish and transport means but can also destroy life any time.

The hills, it was revealed, in the areas of Nyabihoko are associated with physical strength, permanence and sacredness. The same hills are often seen as a place of refuge and spiritual connection of the surrounding community and some others from the Banyankole ethnic group. One would interpret rivers and streams that surrounding Lake Nyabihoko as symbolic of purification, transition and the continuity of life. After all, in an ordinary sense, crossing rivers is normally associated with positive change and transformation. Sometimes crossing a river may symbolically signify a rite of passage, especially in a religious or cultural context.

#### **4.4.2 Themes**

The key themes which I focus on here are nature-human interconnectedness, legacy and resilience. The Nyabihoko mythic story highlights the inevitable two-way interconnectedness between the natural environment and human activity and thought. Through the envisaged sustenance that the lake, the streams, the rivers and hills that surround it, one may not overemphasise the importance of such an environment to the people. But the story ties these geographical features to issues of cultural heritage and communal identity. It was revealed that the lake highlights the collective memory of not only the community that lives around the lake but other members of the Banyankole ethnic community that know the myth. That life continues after the punitive deluge unleashed by the gods onto the people highlights the fact that life continues, there is survival after disaster, disaster or no disaster. The human will, resident in the inherent resilience that human beings possess will finally prevail. So, Nyabihoko is in a way a story that encourages its listeners or readers to feel empowered in terms of continuity and survival.

#### **4.4.3 Motifs**

Like Nyakahondogoro, Nyabihoko has a running motif of the mythic hero's journey. Mutumo has to go away from his household for the myth plot to be fulfilled. His absence means the absence of patriarchal authority. Therefore, Nyabwangu gets the space to dictate the rhythm of the household, since she is the youngest wife and presumably the favourite. There is also the duality of nature: the lake is for sustenance but it can be destructive as well. The motif of renewal also appears significant. After the flood, life is renewed or reborn, a new form of sustenance away from the cow Kajeru comes in the form of a lake and its surrounding rivers and hills.

#### **4.5 Isaza and Nyamiyonga myth**

The Isaza narrative recounts that there once lived the Earth, the Heavens and the Underworld in the times before time. Ruhanga (God) ruled over the Heavens while Nyamiyonga ruled the Underworld. The Underworld was inhabited by outcasts who had been thrown out of Heaven. In between the Heavens and the Underworld was Earth. One day, Ruhanga's son Isaza who was a great King decided to explore the Underworld out of curiosity. He was fascinated with the different lifestyles which the people of the

Underworld lived and he stayed over there for a long time. One day, Isaza met a beautiful girl and fell in love with her. He did not know that the girl was a princess of the Underworld and daughter to Nyamiyonga. Well, he followed her into the Underworld. He ended up staying long in the Underworld and forgot his way back to Earth. He got stuck in Nyamiyonga's Underworld kingdom where he got permanently trapped. To this day, Isaza causes tremors and earthquakes as he tries to free himself from Nyamiyonga's Underworld.

The myth of Isaza and Nyamiyonga was like house-hold property among the respondents I interacted with. Generally, it is a mythic story that interweaves geographical features, cultural themes and motifs which reveal a significant interaction between myth and geography. Geographers will come up with explanations about the occurrences of earthquakes. Most earthquakes are associated to tectonic plates. Tectonic plates are always moving, but they get stuck at the edges due to friction. When the stress on the edge overcomes the friction, there is an earth quake that releases energy in waves that travel through the earth's crust and result in the shakings.

#### **4.5.1 Geographical features**

The Isaza myth attempts to explain the occurrence of earthquakes in the Albertian region of Western Uganda. Every time there is an earthquake, people who believe in this myth claim that it is Isaza fighting to free himself from Nyamiyonga's underground kingdom. The myth interweaves various geographical features within itself. However, the setting of the underworld and the topography are my main focus. Of course, the underworld can only be accessed conceptually, comparing it with what is accessible to us here on the earth's surface. In this way, for one to appreciate the underworld, one has to enter into the world of the myth and deconstruct what it is like as a physical setting, beyond the fact that it should be below the earth's surface.

Mythically speaking, the underworld in this myth can be the equivalent of Hades that we read about in ancient Greek civilisation. Here this underground is the realm in which Nyamiyonga reigns. He is the absolute ruler there, surrounded with lots of mystery, power and the unknown, perhaps, the unknowable. Geographically we can visualise caves, rivers, dense forests, hidden places and labyrinths. Perhaps these geographical features are

meant to mark the boundaries between the world of earthly humans and the ghostlike world of the underworld. In such a case, the instances of Isaza crossing these boundaries marks him as having been undergoing a process of transition and transformation. It is a process that was necessary for his entry into a supernatural realm. No wonder, the myth would seem to imply, Isaza would not return to earth as a normal human being any longer.

The topography of Isaza's kingdom on earth is characterised with what we can identify as a savannah landscape. It is in this landscape that Nyamiyonga's daughter Nyamata ensnares the king when she appeared to him in the form of an utmost attractive cow. Isaza was a fan of cattle. Isaza follows the cow in order to possess it, not knowing that he was following Nyamata while the former was enraptured in a spell. And it was a spell, the myth says, that made Isaza follow Nyamata into the Underworld, a place of no return. The savannah grassland with its ups and downs as he followed "the cow" represent Isaza's trials and a torturous journey of the hero towards entrapment in Nyamiyonga's kingdom.

#### **4.5.2 Themes**

The themes that I found most relevant to this study are human-supernatural interaction and that of transformation. The myth pointedly demonstrates the interconnectedness between the human world and the supernatural which sometimes involve some form of the pressures. It also stresses the impact of supernatural forces in the lives of human beings. Third is that when Isaza travels and crosses boundaries into Nyamiyonga's kingdom, he symbolically undertakes a journey of transformation. Henceforth, he will remain a member of the underworld, in spite of his attempts to return to earth.

#### **4.5.3 Motifs**

Corresponding to the themes of human-supernatural interaction, transition and transformation is the motif of journeying or travelling both physically and conceptually, which is common in mythic narratives - as I have already pointed out. This motif is largely through the journey and the boundaries that Isaza crosses. Interestingly, the journey is intertwined with the motif of crossing borders. First it is the many landscapes that Isaza crosses. Second, and most significant, is his crossing the border between the world of the earth and that of the underworld from which he cannot return. Perhaps the myth reminds

us that pursuing certain earthly things will lead us into crossing boundaries to worlds from which we cannot extricate ourselves, however much we try.

#### **4.6 Conclusion**

In this chapter, I have presented the key findings of my study. I have specifically focused on the physical features, themes and motifs in the selected myths. I have treated each myth according to its own significance depending on the circumstances surrounding its performance. After presenting the findings, one question unanswered remains: so, what? In order to respond to this question, in the next chapter, I present a discussion of the findings basing on the objectives and embedded research questions.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS

#### 5.1 Introduction

Like I do in the previous chapter, I focus on what I deem the most significant aspects of the findings. I do the discussion and analysis bearing in mind the interconnectedness of myth and geography. For a systematic presentation, I base the discussion and analysis of the findings on the objectives and embedded research questions of this study.

#### 5.2 Objective 1: To investigate the themes, elements of structure and motifs portrayed in the selected myths

5.2.1 The structuring of myths in terms of plotting and referents all rotate around specific geographical features. The geographical features in the myths, as we have seen in the previous chapter include stalactites and stalagmites, water falls, streams, rivers, lakes, hills, caves and seismic features of earthquakes. All these are featured in the selected myths. Indeed, some of these geographical features have become synonymous with the labels of certain myths. Hence, stalactites and stalagmites are known alternatively known as “Amabeere ga Nyinamwiru” - breasts of Nyinamwiru. Others such as Nyabihoko and Nyakahondogoro are implicatures of the myths and mythemes behind them.

5.2.2 The study reveals that the selected myths and mythemes introduce us to other important geographical features that are usually not mentioned. The start of the Amabeere cave, for instance, is endowed with beautiful waterfalls that are believed to be streaming from the mountains. Believers of the myth testify that a swim in these waters will take away any form of bad luck. Thus, the thematic link between myth and geographical features is ensured through this motif of ever-flowing waters and their use by the people. This link further emphasises the interdependence between human beings and their environment. By implication, we should protect that part

of the ecology. The same observation applies to Lake Nyabihoko because it is perhaps obvious that the ecology that involves lake should be preserved as it serves to satisfy a variety of human needs.

**5.2.3** We have also seen that the Amabeere caves are surrounded by hills which up to now people believe are still occupied by the Bacwezi. A beautiful view of the hilltops, will also feed your eyes with the three crater lakes that equally surround the caves. Among them, is the famous Lake Kigere. This lake is in the shape of a human foot believed to have been left behind by Nyinamwiru. Other narrators said that Lake Kigere was left behind by King Ndahura, son of Nyinamwiru. Either way, what is important is that the referents and plot of the myth remains tied to the geographical feature at hand.

**5.2.4** During the research, I discovered that whereas many people hike the hilly areas around Amabeere for physical fitness, others look at the hills as a place for meditation and connection to the world beyond. In that way, myth offers significant insights into the interplay between myths, physical landscapes and the people.

**5.2.5** These Amabeere caves are surrounded by hills which up to now the believers of the myth think are still occupied by the Bacwezi. A beautiful view of the hilltops, will also feed your eyes with the three crater lakes that equally surround the caves. Among them, is the famous Lake Kigere. This lake is in the shape of a human foot believed to have been left behind by Nyinamwiru. Whereas many people hike these mountains for physical fitness, others look at them as a place for meditation and connection to the world beyond.

**5.2.6** It is not always plain sailing, though. The Isaza narrative also illustrates the interconnectedness between the human world and the supernatural through irreconcilable tension and pressure in Isaza's experiences. We note that the deities - symbolised by the underworld forces - sometimes influence and control the destiny of human beings as the latter inhabit the earth. Similarly, the Nyakahondogoro caves serve to show the interconnection between and geography in the sense that

worshippers who visit the cave view it as a gate-way to the supernatural world. A world inhabited by Nyinamwiru.

### **5.3 Objective 2: To analyse how each of the themes and elements of structure reflect the natural environment**

**5.3.1** It has come out that the content of geographical features in the selected myths exist in the real lived-in world of the people. These features are considered sacred and significant in terms of contributing to the thriving of cultural life among the people. The features, in addition, highlight the close though not always friendly relationship between human beings and their environment. In this way we are called upon to respect and conserve our natural environment. This call is evidenced in the way people respect and revere the Amabeere and Nyakahondogoro caves, for instance.

**5.3.2** For the case of Nyakahondogoro in particular, it can be seen that the caves and the beliefs and practices that go with the site help in transmitting valuable ecological knowledge. In a way this specific geographical feature serves as a reminder that we need to manage our physical ecological with care. When we witness visitors to the cave being prohibited from entering with shoes on, from speaking no foreign language especially English and literally crawling while there, it becomes clear that this a site not to tamper with - anyhow.

**5.3.3** Furthermore, the study established that certain sites tied to the various myths and mythemes are considered sacred, thereby contributing to cultural heritage and environmental conservation in the long run. This point is exemplified in all the tangible locations in the selected myths: Amabeere and Nyakahondogoro caves and Lake Nyabihoko. By extension, these sites can be interpreted as spaces in which human beings and the world of supernatural experience what I may call conceptual bonding.

**5.3.4** Perhaps the situation that Lake Nyabihoko plays a dynamic part in day-to-day lives of the community may be taken for granted. The lake is source of water for

domestic and livestock use because, anyway, the Banyankole are known for livestock keeping. So, the lake is a source of livelihood for the local communities. The lake is therefore a factor of production and an important factor in the economic life of the local community while the Isaza narrative is a reminder to the community about the regular seismic features of earthquake that trouble the western region of Uganda.

#### **5.4 Objective 3: To evaluate the interconnections between selected myth and geographical features**

**5.4.1** Perhaps the most obvious evidence that myths remain relevant in the context of environmental concerns and cultural identity in contemporary times is that the physical features on which the selected myths and mythemes revolve have become key tourist attractions in Western Uganda. Amabeere and Nyakahondogoro caves have become focal points for tourism, a form of tourism that blends storytelling with environmental preservation concerns. For instance, we have the Portal City walkers, a group of people who provide guided tours at a small fee, to tourists around Nyakasura which is the site of Amabeere ga Nyinamwiru. We also have another group called the Hill Trekkers. The latter group takes tourists around the Nyakahondogoro caves. To me all this is evidence that tourism in Western Uganda is booming partly because of the insights provided by myth in relation to geographical features in the area. For instance, in Ntungamo district, Lake Nyabihoko also attracts visitors. One may not need to labour much explaining that all these aspects of tourism help in creating more awareness of the region's heritage and thereby creating more potential for economic growth at both the local and national levels.

**5.4.2** The Amabeere caves, in a more specific way, are a source of pride and joy to the native people, especially the Bachwezi who view these caves as a connection to their ancestors and origin. The caves often offer the Bachwezi a sense of identity. In so doing, the myth surrounding the caves aids in legitimising the Chwezi dynasty, connecting their rule to divine or supernatural origins even in contemporary times. In addition, we should note that Isaza's legacy in the development of the narratives

around Chwezi dynasty is significant. So, myth blends mythological and historical accounts to legitimize the cultural heritage of people that connect their origins to the Chwezi dynasty. For instance, General Muhoozi Kainerugaba who is the eldest son of Uganda's President Yoweri Museveni is on record on his Twitter (renamed X) platform claiming that it is actually the Chwezi that should win and therefore rule Uganda.

**5.4.3** Finally, in terms of a much broader perspective of culture, one can verify that the Nyabihoko (Mutumo and Nyabwangu) has had its impact on the Ugandan literary scene. This mythic story has been the basic mediator in Mary Karoro Okurut's literary imagination, creativity and composition of the play, *The Curse of the Sacred Cow*. Interestingly, although the play is in English, Karoro Okurut deploys main characters in the names of Mutumo and Nyabwangu. The play's plot follows that of the Nyabihoko story and it closes at the coming of floods that end up creating Lake Nyabihoko. It is a play that brings to mind Jennifer Makumbi Nansubuga's novel *Kintu* whose mainstay are significant re-creations of mythemes in the Baganda creation myth involving the mythic characters Kintu and Nambi.

## **5.5 Conclusion**

Overall, the study has demonstrated that myths and their related mythemes are more than a myth. Rather, myth connects people to their environment, heritage and to each other. Myth ensures that the values and wisdom of the past remain relevant for future generations. Therefore, myth aids people as a cornerstone for understanding our local values, history and spiritual beliefs. One important illustration of the power of the selected myths I studied is that creative writers have reconfigured some of them into modern written literature. A case in point is Mary Karoro Okurut's play *The Curse of the Sacred Cow*. It is a play in English in which the central characters actually bear the names of Mutumo, Ndiinga and Nyabwangu.

## CHAPTER SIX

### CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 6.1 Introduction

This study set out to explore the interconnections between geographical features and selected myths from Western Uganda from a literary perspective, with objectives of investigating the themes, elements of structure and motifs as portrayed in the selected myths. to analyse how each of the themes and elements of structure reflect the natural environment and to evaluate the interconnections between selected myth and geographical features. The study has shown that myth connects people to their environment, heritage and to each other. Myth ensures that the values and wisdom of the past remain relevant for the present and future generations. One can say that myth functions as a cornerstone for understanding our local values, history and spiritual beliefs.

#### 6.2 Conclusions

This study on the interconnection between selected myth and geography in western Uganda, through an ecocritical perspective especially as espoused by Mambrol, has revealed a close relationship between selected myths and the geographical features involved. Overall, the study has demonstrated that myths and their related mythemes are more than a myth. We have seen that myths and their embedded mythemes are a powerful lens through which we can appreciate the way communities interpret and assign meaning to their physical environment. Communities can anchor their beliefs and practices on as aspect of myth and transform what may appear as God-given natural features into codes of cultural identity, historical memory and spiritual worth. The examples of Amabeere, Nyakahondogoro and Lake Nyabihoko are a case in point as we saw in Chapters Four and Five. Geographical features such as caves, rocks, hills, lakes, rivers and forests are not merely physical objects but are profoundly surrounded by mythic belief and faith.

I also find that, through the myths and mythemes I studied, myth is an important repository and custodian of indigenous knowledge that entails environmental awareness and historical continuity without any pretence to sophistication. For example, one can say

without doubt that the taboos which surround Amabeere and Nyakahondogoro are significant in the way the communities around those sites conserve and preserve the physical environment they live in. I can therefore claim that the relationship between myth and geography prioritises the need to preserve these very myths because they are critical to our understanding the worldview and heritage of the people who believe in those myths, western Uganda and elsewhere by extension.

The study revealed that the tourist industry in western Uganda is closely related to the interconnection between myth and geographical features in the region. Tourists flock to the areas of Nyakasura - home of Nyinamwiru's breasts in Fort Portal, Nyakahondogoro caves and Lake Nyabihoko. One can infer that the interconnection is significant in influencing the economic life of the region. The Walkers of Fort Portal and the Trekkers of Nyakahondogoro, for instance, earn a living by talking tourists around. Individuals who supply goods and services to the tourists earn from this interconnection. We can also infer that the local authorities earn from the fees payable by tourists.

A point about vulnerability of myths in our modern world should be made at this point. Although I did not cover the aspect of myth's vulnerability in the discussion of findings, I think that, overall, myths are and have been in a constant state of contestation. For some, as I pointed out in Chapter One, myth is the opposite of truth or reality. Some people believe that myth belongs exclusively in the realm of the thought-about world and not the lived-in world. But this study has demonstrated the contrary, namely that the thought-about world of myth and the lived-in world on the physical earth are intimately related. For all the aspects of Amabeere, Nyakahondogoro, Isaza and Nyabihoko that I have engaged in this study, one major conclusion can be made: the interconnection between myth and geography is indelible. The two function on close interaction with each other. One only has to take the initiative to find out his interconnection actually works. This study followed that direction

Finally, this study has established that the interconnection between myth and geography is two-way. Myth draw its sustenance from the physical environment of concerned communities and it also facilitates the manner in which communities perceive, make use

of and appropriately, according to them, their immediate landscapes. Each of the conclusions I have made should highlight the importance of this study on the interconnection between myth and geography. I therefore provide some recommendations in line with the conclusions.

### **6.3 Recommendations**

First, I recommend that literary critics should engage more of multidisciplinary approaches to literary study such as ecocriticism. It is through such multidisciplinary approaches such as ecocriticism which transgress the traditional areas of purely language-based approaches to literature that we can yield more insights from a study of such a complex topic as myth. At the risk of being accused of activism, the ecocritic who studies a given aspect of verbal creative arts such as myth will inevitably contribute to the growth of cultural and ecotourism. This a call to disabuse ourselves of the art-for-art's sake tempers as we interpret verbal arts such as myths. Moreover, the interconnection between myth and geography is two-way and therefore inherently multidisciplinary in itself.

I also recommend that tertiary institutions that are in the business of critical analysis to mainstream indigenous knowledge systems in their curricula beyond the inclusion such general but isolated courses such as Oral Literature. For long, indigenous knowledge systems have been maligned. Yet, as this study partly establishes, myths and related traditional oral narratives, are a critical source of indigenous knowledge and collective memory. Myths are serious custodians of indigenous knowledge that entails environmental awareness and historical continuity without any pretence to sophistication. One can sense a sense of pride with which some communities that trace their ancestry to the Chwezi dynasty. Their cultural heritage, their clan histories and identity are all derived from the power of myth. Relatedly, how myth continues to mediate in the contemporary socio-economic and socio-political discourse in Uganda is a potent topic in literary criticism.

There is a recommendation that arose incidentally during the research process. It is that studies as relate to myth should be integrated with modern media. In this way, we shall be able to guard against the perceived and actual vulnerability of traditional verbal arts such as myths in our modern world. At this moment, I am compelled to hail Rev Sr Prof

Dominica Dipio of Makerere University who has popularised animations of traditional folktales from Uganda under the broader theme of traditional wisdom. However, Dipio's efforts are solitary and are largely sustained by specialised funders. It would be a milestone if institutions and Universities that manage iconic literary spaces in their studies about verbal arts institutionalized the use of modern media. Such media will enable us to preserve our cultural heritage in oral literature in a form that is not only sustainable but also interesting. Such media also has the advantage of retrieval. Where a narrative can be lost due to the death of the storyteller - death is a fact of life - an item recorded in modern media can be retrieved whenever the need arises.

#### **6.4 Areas for further research**

First, I suggest further multidisciplinary research be carried out on myth. In my case, based ecocriticism has been very productive in aiding me to achieve broader perspectives on myths as they relate to geographical features. This means that there should be more research on the actual potential of myth on such areas as tourism and other economic activities not only in western Uganda but in other areas of Uganda as well.

Secondly, I suggest comparative studies on myth in other geographical and cultural areas. For instance, the Chwezi myth can be compared to Kintu and Nambi of the Baganda, Mundu and Sera of the Bamasaba and Gipiir and Labong in northern Uganda. On the other hand, it might interest scholars to explore the impact myths in global and modern contexts, especially those myths which we can access via internet-led sources. For instance, a scholar may research on the mediatory power of myth in global or regional geo-political arrangements in the twenty-first century. Or, the place and status of myth in the ongoing debate on rural-urban relations.

I recommend that institutions that manage literary studies should make the theory and practice of literary criticism be made more activist and action-inspired. That way, even creative writers can be more interested in exploring how an intentional engagement with myths, for example, can help in mitigating against the rampant environmental degradation we are experiencing in the country. I am aware that scholars such as Eve Nwabulya and Austin Bukenya of Makerere, once again, are already in the business of literary inquiry as

regards the interconnection between literature and the physical environment. Bukenya's play, *A Hole in the Sky* is a play towards this direction.

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## APPENDICES

### APPENDIX 1: RESPONDENTS DURING THE STUDY

SN	NAME	AGE	CONTACT
1.	Karamagi Erikanjeru	89	0789030932
2.	Kasaija John	52	0785120429
3.	Kasuku Kelay	89	0774806008
4.	Kogere Florence	64	0779492425
5.	Mabiho Keith	87	0789265724
6.	Mwangushya Bashil (one of the walkers)	37	0785116212
7.	Rukwebe Ruth	68	0772898010
8.	Sabiiti Fennehansi (one of the walkers)	54	0772888149

## APPENDIX 2: QUESTIONNAIRE

Dear Respondent,

Thank you so much for accepting to participate in this questionnaire. I appreciate your sacrifice in terms of time and insights. Your responses will play an important role in helping me explore the interconnectedness between myths and geographical features in Western Uganda.

Sincerely,  
Lizz Kakkera  
Uganda Christian University

Please tick or fill in accordingly. Thank you.

1. Your particulars
  - (a) Name (Optional) \_\_\_\_\_
  - (b) Age: below 18            19-35   36-55   56 and above
  - (c) Gender: Male/ Female
  - (d) Occupation \_\_\_\_\_
  - (e) Ethnicity (optional) \_\_\_\_\_
2. Are you familiar with any myths or parts of myths from Western Uganda?  
**Yes/No/Not sure**
3. If yes, which ones are they? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. How did you learn about these myths or parts of myths?
  - (a) Storytelling
  - (b) From books
  - (c) Mass media such as Radio, TV or film
  - (d) Social media

(e) School activities

(f) Others (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

5. Do you believe that the myths from are connected to specific geographical in Western Uganda?  
**Yes/No/Not sure**

6. If yes, please describe how you think these myths are interconnected with geographical features

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Which specific geographical features are commonly mentioned in the myths or parts of myths that you know?

(a) \_\_\_\_\_ (b) \_\_\_\_\_ (c) \_\_\_\_\_

7. Do you believe that myths contribute to the cultural implication of specific geographical features?  
**Yes/No/Not sure**

If yes, briefly explain how myths or parts of contribute to the cultural implication of specific geographical features

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

8. Are there any ways in which these myths influence the cultural practices of communities in Western Uganda? **Yes/No/Not sure**

9. If yes, briefly explain how myths or parts of contribute to the cultural practices related to specific geographical features

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Are there any festivals or rituals associated with these myths and geographical features?

**Yes/No/Not sure**

10. If yes, please specify the festivals or rituals and their connection to specific geographical features

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Do you think these myths are still relevant in the contemporary societies?

**Yes/No/Not sure**

11. If yes, please explain how and why

---

12. What do you think can be done to preserve these myths and their geographical significance?

---

Do you see any roles that these myths can play in environmental conservation in Western Uganda? **Yes/No/Not sure**

13. If so, please explain the roles and how the myths can play those roles

---

---

Do you see any value in the connection between myths and geography in Western Uganda?

**Yes/No/Not sure**

14. If yes, please share your thoughts with me

---

---

---

Thank you very much.

### APPENDIX 3: INTERVIEW GUIDE

1. Arrange schedules with respondents, either individuals or groups
2. Go through the questionnaire to remind myself of the vital questions and points for discussion
3. While with the respondents:
  - (a) Greet the participant(s)
  - (b) Thank them for agreeing to the interview and for their time
  - (c) Explain the purpose of the interview in relation to the study: to explore the interconnection between myths and geography in Western Uganda
  - (d) Assure the respondent(s) of confidentiality
  - (e) Request for and obtain informed consent to record or take notes where applicable
4. Ask the respondent(s)
  - (a) for their connection to the myths and culture of Western Uganda?
  - (b) about the most famous myths or parts of myths that are well-known in the area (c) to narrate one or two myths of their choice, if they can.
5. Find out if
  - (a) the respondent thinks myths play a significant role in shaping the identity of people in the community
  - (b) the known myths are connected to the region's geographical features
6. Ask
  - (a) for examples of myths that feature specific geographical features and how these myths explain or describe the origin of certain geographical features
  - (b) if there are specific places in Western Uganda that are considered sacred or significant because of myths?
  - (c) the respondent(s) to describe any rituals or activities tied to these geographical features
  - (d) how these myths influence cultural practices, beliefs, or traditions in the communities around them
7. Discuss
  - (a) the festivals, rituals or ceremonies that celebrate the myths in relation to their associated geographical features
  - (b) how these myths shape community values, such as respect for nature or conservation
  - (c) whether these myths are still relevant today, especially for younger generations
  - (d) any challenges to the preservations of these myths and their connection to geography
  - (e) what steps can be taken to document and preserve these myths for future generations
8. Ask
  - (a) if the respondent(s) think the connection between myths and geography can play a role in

promoting tourism or environmental conservation in the region

(b) if there anything else the respondent(s) would like to share about the myths or their relationship with specific geographical features

9. (a) Thank the participant(s) for their time and insights

(a) Highlight how their responses will contribute to the study

10. Say bye to them

APPENDIX 4: SELECTED IMAGES FROM AMABEERE CAVES



The researcher at the Nyinamwiru Waterfalls  
December 2024



The “breasts”

Source: <https://www.google.com/search?q=images+of+amabeere+ga+Nyina>

13.01.2025



The “breasts”

Source: <https://www.google.com/search?q=images+of+amabeere+ga+Nyina>

13.01.2025



Entrance to Nyinamwiru's cave

Source: <https://www.google.com/search?q=images+of+amabeere+ga+Nyina>  
13.01.2025



Waterfalls in Nyinamwiru's cave

Source: <https://www.google.com/search?q=images+of+amabeere+ga+Nyina>  
13.01.2025



Source: <https://www.google.com/search?q=images+of+amabeere+ga+Nyina>  
13.01.2025



Stalactites believed to be Nyinamwiru's breasts  
Uganda Heritage Tales and Trails on WordPress.com  
<https://ugandapeopleandculture.wordpress.com/>. Accessed 12.01.2024

## APPENDIX 5: SELECTED IMAGES FROM NYAKAHONDOGORO CAVES

All from Kitara Foundation Regional Tourism

<https://www.google.com/search?q=images+of+nyakahondogoro+caves>

13.01.2025



Nyakahondogoro cave



Hike to Nyakahondogoro Caves on Mabanga Hill in Ibanda



Prayer session in the seating room of the Nyakahondogoro Caves on Mabanga Hill in Ibanda

## APPENDIX 6: SELECTED IMAGES OF LAKE NYABIHOKO



Source: <https://abundadiscoveriesuganda.com/blogs/lake-nyabihoko/>. Accessed 13.01.2025



Source: <https://www.adventureugandasafaris.com/lake-nyabihoko/>



Source: <https://www.adventureugandasafaris.com/lake-nyabihoko/>



Source: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4pFufHICyZ0>. Accessed 13.01.2025

## APPENDIX 7: MYTHS AND MYTHEMES REFERRED TO IN THE DISSERTATION

### (a) AMABERE GA NYINAMWIRU

Situated ten kilometres from Fort Portal town, the “Amabere ga Nyinamwiru” is a limestone site with an incredible legendary narrative behind its existence. The myth surrounding the cave-like stalagmites is that it was named after Nyinamwiru a daughter of Bukuku one of the ancient rulers of the Chwezi Dynasty who was overthrown by the current Babiito Kings of Toro and Bunyoro Kingdoms. She was a strikingly beautiful girl who went against her father’s rule that she was not supposed to marry any man but she got herself one who made her pregnant. As a result, she was punished by cutting off her breast which was later assumed to have grown into these scenic rocks with a dripping white liquid assumed to be Nyinamwiru’s breast milk.

It is said that two Kingdoms existed; the earthly kingdom and the underground kingdom. The king of the earthly kingdom was called Isaza and the underground king was called Nyamiyonga. King Nyamiyonga wanted to overthrow King Isaza and take up his kingdom. He made a trick where he sent his daughter Nyamata and servants to go and visit him with a lot of gifts. However, on their way, King Nyamiyonga used magic that made all the other servants disappear and Nyamata continued alone.

When she reached Isaza’s palace, he did not resist her being so beautiful and attractive. It is said that he loved two things; women and cows. He married her but later returned to her home while pregnant. Her secret mission was to discover what Isaza loved most which made him declare that “I love you as I love my cow”

After Nyamiyonga discovering what King Isaza loved most, he sent another trick. He sent him cows and four questions through his servants. They were as follows:

1. What is the rope that ties water?
2. What announces time?
3. Who is a careless person in this world?
4. Who does not accomplish a job?

On a sad note, Isaza failed to answer these questions even after consulting his chiefs and the elders of the kingdom. There was however a neglected woman servant who Isaza called and she answered these questions respectively. She asked for boiling water in a pot, poured flour and started mingling. As she was mingling, she was tying water. She expressed something that calculates time as a crowing cock. She got another servant’s baby and gave it to king. The baby urinated on the king which made the king annoyed and she deduced that the baby was a careless person. A smoking pipe was lit and given to a dog which bothered not to smoke it. So that was a person who does not accomplish a job. The servant was promoted to look after the beautiful daughter of Bukuku the gate keeper.

After some time, the cows which were given to Isaza got into a season of mating and escaped to look for a bull. Being so much in love with cows, Isaza was forced leave his kingdom and went to look for his cows. While going, he made an agreement with Bukuku to remain the acting

king until he came back. Not knowing where he was going, Isaza found himself in Nyamiyonga's kingdom that pretended to be happy to see him. He allowed him to go and find his cows among his. Isaza on top of his own was added many other cows and went back with his wife Nyamata who then had a son called Isimbwa as she had gone pregnant.

On their way home, Nyamiyonga blocked the way where they all disappeared to underground. This is why when people experience earth quake, they equate it to Isaza trying to come out. It was by chance that only his son Isimbwa survived.

During that period Bukuku got a chance to declare himself king. He had a very beautiful daughter called Nyinamwiru. It is said that all men wanted to marry her; even the lame and the blind. Bukuku did not want to marry her off because the fore tellers had told him that if she got married, she would produce a son who would kill him and take up his kingdom. As a result, Nyinamwiru was locked up in the kingdom without seeing any man. As she grew up, she felt discontented and expressed her discomfort to the servants that took care of her and they decided to sneak in a very handsome man Isimbwa the son of Isaza and Nyamata for her. Isimbwa's intension was not to marry Nyinamwiru but he was told about the loss of his father's kingdom and wanted to recover it.

They made a ladder for him and he reached where the girl was kept. He stayed with her for three months without the king's notice. Later on, Bukuku discovered that Nyinamwiru was pregnant. He was so furious and chopped off one of her breasts. This act was to make her ugly and unacceptable to men. He made an order that once she produced a baby boy he would be thrown away in the wild bush and if she produced a baby girl she would be left to grow.

When time came, Nyinamwiru gave birth to a baby boy and king Bukuku ordered that he should be thrown away to the bush because the wise men had warned him against killing him. This baby was thrown around this cave where he was picked by Rubumbi a royal potter. Because he used to exchange his products with the people in the palace, Rubumbi happened to tell the servants how he had picked a baby and they ran and told Nyinamwiru about it. She was so happy and convinced his father to give Rubumbi a cow because he did not have what to feed the baby on. The cow was given to Rubumbi but Bukuku had no idea that the latter had picked the thrown baby.

It is however said that the baby who was later named Ndahura did not feed on the cow's milk but Rubumbi used to carry him to the caves where the mother's breast was thrown and he would feed on its milk.

This kid (Ndahura) grew up to be very stubborn and started to attend the grazing yards of the king to rear Rubumbi's cattle. So, the servants reported to king Bukuku who decided to come himself one time. He came closer to Ndahura with a spear but missed his target. Ndahura picked it and threw it at him and he died.

Ndahura took up and became a king of the Chwezi. Nyinamwiru remarked that it was a good bad situation. It was good because she had become a queen mother and bad because she had

lost her father. Ndahura ruled until he was fought and overthrown by the Bito dynasty and later disappeared which is locally called Kwegoromora and they were not seen again.

#### **(b) NYAKAHANDOGORO CAVES**

Nyakahondogoro caves is the largest and biggest cave in Ankole that is still less visited and unknown to many travellers. It is located along Mbarara-Fort Portal Road via Ibanda, before Ibanda Town. According to the locals, they believe it is the source of super-healing powers and that all the Bachwezi in the world came from this cave and later split to other parts of world.

The narrative of this mytheme partly goes that after Ndahura had killed Bukuku - Nyinamwiru's father - Nyinamwiru remarked that "Kibi Kirungi Ndahura naita Bukuku" (literally translated as "Ndahura's killing of Bukuku was good and bad at the same time". Distraught about her father's death, yet happy for the son who had ascended the throne, Nyinamwiru became torn apart, and decided to run away from the kingdom, and start her own reign in Ibanda.

It is also believed that by that time, she had completely turned into a divine being, a deity, who could accomplish anything supernatural or otherwise. She therefore placed one foot in Nyakasura creating the famous Lake Kigere (literally "Foot") which is shaped as a human foot. She placed the other foot in present-day Ibanda creating the Nyakahondogoro caves. When the caves were created, they formed a house-like structure with rooms, a floor and a ceiling.

#### **(c) ISAZA AND NYAMIYONGA**

Isaza was a great King of the Banyoro-Batooro. At that time, there lived the Earth, the Heavens and the Underworld. Ruhanga (God) ruled over the Heavens while Nyamiyonga, literally Dispenser of Ash, and therefore Dispenser of Death, ruled the Underworld. The Underworld was inhabited by outcasts who had been thrown out of Heaven. In between the Heavens, Ruhanga's realm, and the Underworld of Nyamiyonga was Earth.

Nyamiyonga was a stubborn king of the underworld who enjoyed disrupting the peace of the people on earth. One day, he sent his beautiful daughter Nyamata together with his servants to visit king Isaza of the Earth. On their way however, Nyamiyonga performed some magic which made the servants disappear and Nyamata continued alone. On reaching the earth, Isaza found her so irresistible and married her right away. It is said that Isaza loved two things: women and cows. After sometime, Nyamata went back to her father's kingdom in the underground although she was already pregnant with Isaza' son. Her task was done. Her father had sent her to find out what Isaza loved the most and she had found out when he professed his love to her declaring that "I love you as I love my Cow". This helped Nyamiyonga move to his next step of destroying Isaza.

In his next step, Nyamiyonga sent Isaza a number of beautiful cows, a gesture that Isaza deeply appreciated. However, when the cows were due for mating, they disappeared. Isaza's love for cows forced him to leave his kingdom, and go to find his lost cows. The desperate king kept on moving until he found himself in Nyamiyonga' kingdom (underground). On seeing him, Nyamiyonga put on his hypocritical face and pretended to be very happy to see King Isaza. He allowed him to go find his cows and added him more on his return. Isaza excited about seeing

his son with Nyamata, he decided to return home together with his wife and son. Once again, Nyamiyonga was ahead of him. While they were on their way heading to earth, Nyamiyonga performed another magic that blocked the path. Isaza and Nyamata were locked underground while Isimbwa their son managed to escape.

This story explains the occurrence of earthquakes in the Albertian region. Every time there is an earthquake, people believe it is Isaza fighting to free himself from Nyamiyonga's underground kingdom.

#### **(d) LAKE NYABIHOKO**

There once lived a very wealthy man called Mutumo who had been entrusted by the gods with the care of a divine cow called Kajeru (very white cow). Mutumo had three wives: Ndinga, Butungyi and Nyabwangu on top of several slaves.

One day, Mutumo had a premonition that he was nearing his death, and decided to go visit his blood-friend Mwamba. Upon his departure he assembled all his family members and gave them intense instructions regarding the divine cow Kajeru. He warned that Kajeru should be given special attention, but should she die before his return, she should be given a human burial. Kajeru's meat was not to be eaten. He ordered that it should be wrapped in a backcloth and buried like a human being. He left for his long journey leaving his first wife Ndinga in charge of the homestead. However, the moment Mutumo left, his third wife Nyabwangu quickly usurped Ndinga's powers and started running the family affairs.

As fate might have it, Kajeru died shortly after Mutumo's departure. The servant informed Ndinga who cautioned them to follow her husband's instructions, but Nyabwangu was quick to challenge her. The issue was put to a vote. Nyabwangu convinced everyone that Mutumo was very selfish and the only reason he did not want them to eat Kajeru's meat was so that they might not share on his wisdom which was believed to have been drawn from the divine cow. On top of that she bribed the women with jewellery and anklelets, men with bark cloths and children with fruits. In the end Nyabwangu won and it was agreed that they should eat Kajeru's meat. A quick celebration was organised and everyone but Ndinga feasted on Kajeru.

Amidst their celebrations, a panic-stricken servant arrived to announce a heavy storm heading their way. Before they could put two and two together, their home was flooding in water and everything including all humans were drowning along. Mutumo returned home after his long visit but was welcomed by a lake in the place of what used to be his home. He could only see the tree that used to be in his compound in the middle of the lake.

The devastated Mutumo went back to his friend Mwamba but this time disguised as an old man looking for a job. Mwamba at first had reservations about hiring the old man, but after seeing his desperate need for a job, he reluctantly offered him the job. Mutumo worked diligently but could not hide his pain. Very soon the children caught him crying and reminiscing about the Mwamba's cows' resemblance to his own and reported the incident to their mother who in turn shared with her husband.

Mwamba called the old man and questioned him about his disturbing behaviour. Mutumo could not hide his identity anymore and broke down before his friend. Mwamba was so heartbroken that he had stayed with his friend but failed to recognise him. He was all along wondering why Mutumo had not sent a white goat to him after his safe return home as the custom was. He had gone ahead to send his servant to find out if his friend had reached his home safely, but the servant was yet to return. Mutumo related his pain regarding what had befallen his home leaving his friend completely shattered.

The two friends walked back to Mutumo's former home now turned lake. Mutumo told his friend that he could not live with the pain of his loss and wanted to drown himself in the lake. His blood friend assured him that he would never let him walk that journey alone and offered to drown himself too with him. The two men held their hands and walked into the lake which swallowed them up. That is the present-day lake Nyabihoko located in Ntungamo district Rukungiri road in western Uganda.



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**DISSERTATION CORRECTION COMPLIANCE REPORT BY THE CANDIDATE (POST VIVA FORM)**

Date: 16/09/2025

Name of Candidate: KAKKERA LIZZ

Reg. No: RJ18M07/046

Title of Dissertation: THE INTERCONNECTION BETWEEN SELECTED MYTHS AND GEOGRAPHICAL FEATURES IN WESTERN UGANDA

SN	COMMENTS BY EXTERNAL EXAMINER	ACTION TAKEN	INDICATOR
1	Does not clearly delineate how she will actualize the tenets of Nasrullah Mambrol, Cheryl Glotfelty and Harold Fromm	Done as required, application of the tenets pointed out	pp. 8-9
2	I suggest that she develops themes out of her three objectives when revising this section	Themes and motifs developed and presented in accordance with objectives	pp. 31-46
3	The presentation on "Nyabihoko - Mutumo and Nyabwangu" does not refer to other scholars or artists that have used this myth in their texts.	Addressed: the case of Mary Karoro Okurut's reconfiguration of the myth into her play The Curse of the Sacred Cow is give as an example.	p.46
4	Considering creating 3 core chapters in which she thematises chapters 4 and 5 around mythical spatiality, thematic and literary motifs.	Followed UCU recommended guidelines in MA dissertation writing	Entire dissertation, pp 1-51

5	Areas for further research are not clear	Improved and pointed out clearly	Pp 50-51
<b>SN</b>	<b>COMMENTS BY VIVA VOCE PANNEL</b>	<b>ACTION TAKEN</b>	<b>INDICATOR</b>
6	Lake Nyabihoko should be tagged to Nyabingi	This was done	p.37
7	Asked if the research was based on the Chwezi dynasty	Clarified that most myths from the area of study somehow relates to the Bachwezi grand narrative	p.5
8	Adjust the title to "Interaction between myth and Geography from Western Uganda"	Adjusted to read: THE INTERCONNECTION BETWEEN SELECTED MYTHS AND GEOGRAPHICAL FEATURES IN WESTERN UGANDA	See title page
9	The objectives were not tallying with data presented and deeper analysis	Revised and data tallies with objectives	pp. 31-46
10	Did not state the justification of the study	Justification of the study is available	p.7
11	Advised that research should not be based on one's emotions	Emotions were cut out	Entire dissertation
12	Suggested to adjust the statement of the problem, advised to find out more about the gap	Revised and the gap is now indicated	p.5
15			

Kakkera hizz

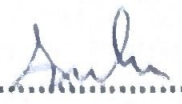
Candidate's Name



Signature

James Teabul Bwamba

Supervisor's Name



Signature