

A Cultural Model of Nature in the Philippines.

Humans, animals, weather, climate and the earth are linked by shared characteristics. The notion of a human steward role is found mostly among people who have been exposed to conservation education. It is stronger in Lobo where more people have attended conservation seminars. The changes in weather patterns and the local natural environment people are experiencing seem to be understood in various ways:

- *The earth, like a human, has a natural life cycle and is entering the end of it.*
- *The earth is returning to a previous phase in a continuous cycle.*
- *In both cases, humans can do nothing about changes in weather patterns and climate (and by extension do not cause them); humans can only adjust to these changes.*
- *There will come a time when the environment is “broken” beyond repair and humans won’t be able to adjust.*
- *Human activities in the immediate vicinity are responsible for local environmental degradation, the depletion of fish supply, and the rise in sea level.*
- *These changes (above) are mostly inevitable.*
- *For the most part, people cannot hold other people accountable for environmental degradation because people, corporations, and governments are just performing their roles.*
- *Filipino national character (hard-headedness) is partially to blame for local environmental degradation but it cannot be changed.*
- *Humans, animals, weather, climate and the earth are linked by shared characteristics.*
- *Supernatural entities, the weather, the physical environment, people, plants, and animals are reciprocally related.*

This list of propositions suggests that the major components of Nature (humans, plants, animals, weather, physical environment, and the supernatural) are related to each other holistically. In this approach or model humans are the source of a personification metaphor that explains how Nature in general and the earth (holistically) works—through cycles of life moving naturally from young to old (to death), or cycles of life that involve continuous regeneration. God may act through nature (especially the weather and the earth in general) or the weather and the earth may have a ‘life’ of their own; either way they have moods and emotions that parallel those of humans. Furthermore, humans, God, and other supernatural entities are connected reciprocally in a variety of ways to the physical environment (geographical features, plants, and weather), and animals (including fish). Even global concepts such as ‘the earth’ and ‘the climate’ are at times conceived in human terms.