

The Aesthetics of Eco-Destruction in Nigerian Literature: A Postcolonial Ecocritical Study of Chiemeka Garricks' *Tomorrow Died Yesterday*

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ABSTRACT

The paper focuses on Eco-destruction in oil-producing communities mainly in south-south Nigeria and its negative impacts on the nation's natural world, as well as, its threat to the nation's climate and biodiversity. The continuous flagrant disregard for the natural habitat and organic unity of all that exist in the ecosphere by the illegal oil bunkers and double standards in the nation's oil region is a serious threat to the nation's ecosystems. This paper employs the convergence of postcolonial theory and ecocriticism in the study of the Aesthetics of Eco-destruction in Chiemeka Garrick's Tomorrow Died Yesterday to provide insights into the activities of the illegal oil bunkers through diverse mechanisms and its domino socio-economic implications in Nigeria. Consequently, it pays closer attention to devastating impacts of Ecosystem destruction by illegal oil bunkers and other eco-unfriendly activities the nation's oil region. To this end, the study contends that postcolonial eco-literature should be analysed beyond mainstream ecocritical lens as postcolonial ecocritical study it adequately respond to all the issues that influenced African environmental issues. Thus, the study ascribes to how the destructive activities of the illegal oil bunkers and attitudes of oil producers affect nature, human and vice versa in the Niger Delta with a view to remedy this menace. The paper calls for the need to denounce ecoterrorism and other harmful activities that threatens our climate, biodiversity, as well as, convincingly reminds us of the environmental peril that awaits humanity, if it continues to wage war against nature and also suggests Eco-consciousness and the adoption of nonviolent action as viable environmental ethics for reclamation, environmental remediation and social justice, in order to mitigate Nigeria's present socio-cultural and environmental issues.

Keywords: Eco-Destruction, Illegal Oil Bunkering, Ecosystem, Eco-consciousness, Nonviolence Resistance

Introduction

The resurgence of interest in the attack on oil facilities which replaced agitations in the Niger Delta region against perceived poor governance and neglect of the area has its roots in Ken Saro-Wiwa's proclamation made during the Justice Oputa-led tribunal just before his execution by the Abacha administration in Nigeria on 10th November 1995. In his statement, Saro-Wiwa warned the Nigerian authorities that if the oil corporations and the government persisted in stifling the nonviolent protests of organizations like the Movement for the Emancipation of the Ogoni People (MOSOP), they might face more intense resistance from the Ogoni and other ethnic minorities in the Niger Delta. True to his words, the area saw the rise of various militant factions in just a few years.

The situation seemed promising when, in 2009, the then Nigerian president, Umaru Musa Yaradua, introduced and executed the Amnesty Programme for these militants. While many believed this would ease tensions, it hasn't significantly boosted foreign direct investment in the region. Niger Delta oil communities felt ignored and discontented despite this improvement. The residents of oil-producing towns, according to Cajetan Iheka, "...continue to claim that there is no substantial development of their region or change in the operational procedures of the oil companies for environmental sustainability." (98). Consequently, the resurgence and emergence of various armed groups in the Niger Delta region to resist the political

system of domination, as well as, the operations of the oil companies from the damage of their ancestral land. While speaking on this issue Joseph England says:

These groups act with tremendous force striking oil installations with the intent of kidnapping oil employees and ciphering oil for sale on the black market. The stolen oil is referred to as blood oil and the profit from this theft funds these militant groups' acquisition of weapons and ammunitions. Since an overwhelming number of these acts of sabotage happen in remote areas beyond the capability of surveillance equipment, untold damage has occurred to the complex land and water systems of the Niger Delta. Sabotage adds a new and multifaceted dynamic to the study of environmental degradation in Nigeria's oil-bearing ... (73)

In the same vein, Fidelis A.E. Paki, and Kimiebi Ebienna, in their article "Militant Oil Agitations in Nigeria's Niger Delta and the Economy" add that:

The untold hardship and sufferings meted out to the entire Ogoni ethnic nationality in the 1990s which culminated in the execution of the amiable minority rights activist Ken Saro-Wiwa and other eight Ogoni kinsmen, and the invasion and destruction of innocent lives and property in communities such as Odi, Odioma, Ayakoroma, Gbaramatu kingdom, Oporoza just to mention but a few by government forces are pointers. Therefore, it is not surprising that the consciousness of exploitation, marginalization and disempowerment has made the Niger Delta a region of deep rooted frustration, hence the escalating oil agitations in the region wrapped in militancy. (141)

It is pertinent to say that while it is true that oil companies as non-state actors and the Nigerian government as state actors, lose revenue if they are unable to meet their production quota due to militants' activities of illegal bunkering and pipelines vandalism. However, the loss is negligible in comparison to the problem it poses to the Niger Deltans climate and bio-diversity. To Nigerian contemporary writers like Chiemeka Garricks the sabotaging the operations of the oil companies via illegal oil bunkering and kidnapping is a wrong approach to solving the Niger Delta ecological issues. Instead, it compounds the problems and gives the oil companies reasons not to curtail oil spills which eventually result in fires, as well as, create perpetual fear, ecological refugees and death. This is evident in the Amnesty International investigation on oil spill problem in the Niger Delta region which reveals that, "Shell now claims that seventy-five percent or more of the oil spilt from its activities in the Niger Delta is due to sabotage and theft..." (11). In fact, in the summary of its findings, Amnesty International also notes that, "Sabotage and theft of oil are serious problems in the Niger Delta and the international oil companies are overstating the case in an effort to deflect attention away from the oil spills that are due to corrosion and equipment failure..." (6)

More so, the double standards of multinational oil companies, operations of restive militants, nonchalant attitudes of some Niger Delta elite, as well as, the laxity of the security agencies have compounded the environmental issues in the Niger Delta. This aggravated the problems as it created a veritable ground for illegal oil bunkering and other criminal activities to thrive in the region. It is reported that a day worth of illegal oil bunkering in the Niger Delta will buy quality weapons for and sustain a group of 1, 500 youths for two months. From the foregoing, the Niger Delta militants' cartel's direct action of ecological sabotage/illegal bunkering as a defensible means of environmental protection is completely against environmental ethics and unjustifiable. It is a desperate action that led to the destruction of habitats and also release of greenhouse gasses and the disruption of natural carbon. The impacts of vandalism of oil facilities have not only caused pollution but had consequences on the local people, the economy and the nation's security. The mitigation measures put in by the Ministry of Environment in her Environmental Impact Assessment Act (EIA) has not yield the desired result. It is against this

background that this study looks at how Chimeka Garricks represents humans' irrational actions and its domino effects in his *Tomorrow Died Yesterday*.

Conceptual Clarification

Eco-sabotage is a moral concern for the environment, as well as, the sabotage of critical infrastructure such as oil pipelines to prevent the damage of the environment while illegal oil bunkering" is a euphemism for oil theft. It involves the theft of crude oil and its products through diverse mechanisms by the militants which results in serious socio-political and economic implications. In fact, oil theft in Nigeria's Niger Delta has led to grave economic social, environmental and security implications. It is believed that it has become a major source of funding for the operations of the militants which Garricks' portrayed as Asiamma Freedom Army (AFA) in his novel. Like other militants the AFA's action is associated with the utilization of the violent resistance and hostile purposes. Soni Daniel, in describing the militants' actions says:

Between 2006 and 2008, "the militants had through a combination of strategies-bombing oil facilities, bunkering, kidnapping and harassment of oil workers cut /Nigeria's oil supply by over one million barrels per day and caused significant setback to the industry and the nation's economy. (30)

Michael Watts also adds that, "The resistance movements generated by the trade of blood oil differ starkly from those which began with the formation of MOSOP in the early 1990s; however, the collective message is similar." (189-212), which is the ultimate concern in this study. Edward Abbey, in his essay "Anarchism and Environment" describes such action as, "The maximum possible dispersal of power: political power, economic power and military power. An anarchist society would consist of a voluntary association of self-reliant, self-supporting, autonomous communities..." (43). Anarchism has recently become increasingly popular as a philosophical gateway to eco-sabotage, especially among younger radicals as demonstrated by the Niger Delta restive youths. Notably, anarchist environmental activists made their presence known in the 1999 World Trade Organization WTO riots in Seattle where the protesters protest against unethical practices, however, anarchism is against eco-ethics as such it is immoral and unacceptable approach in this study.

Textual Analysis

The resurgence of militants known as AFA and violent resistance in Garricks' *Tomorrow Died Yesterday* sparked off with the issuing certificate of operation and the 2004 flare-out deadline to multinational oil company known as Imperial Oil in Asiamma by the federal government. Dr Akassa in the novel and as a concerned native, asks Mr Granger one of the oil expatriates, "How About if Imperial Oil stops gas flaring in Asiamma? Mr Granger smiled sadly, His voice went softer, soothing and he replied, "I appreciate your frustration over this issue. As you know, the federal government has issued a 2004 flare-out deadline to oil companies...All I can say is that Imperial Oil and other major oil companies has made a commitment to end gas flaring in the near future. We hope..." (15). Dr Akassa continued:

Please forgive me Mr Granger, but that is nonsense. Why isn't Imperial flaring gas in Venezuela or Libya? ... I asked Mr McCulloch your predecessor if Imperial Oil has a ministerial certificate to flare gas in the Asiamma Field. I recalled he refused to give me an answer. So, I will appreciate if you could answer the question for me Mr Granger. Does Imperial Oil have a ministerial certificate to flare gas in the Asiamma Field? There was an uncomfortable silence in the car. Granger looked away and concentrated on the road. After a few seconds, he exhaled slowly. (15-16)

The above conversation exposes how the multinational oil cooperation in the Niger Delta region operates without any law to restrict their mode of operations. They operate without adherence to international environmental standard. The militants AFA group of militants see this as an affront and gross injustice. In fact, the militants perceived marginalized and robbed of their natural resources as such resort to Eco-sabotage, illegal oil bunkering, crude oil theft, pipeline vandalism which are harmful to the natural habitats. Although, one can understand their frustration but Eco-violence by the militants can never be justified because of its devastating impacts on both the oil communities and biodiversity in the Niger Delta region.

The AFA group of militants in the novel is credited with oil bunkering, kidnapping and bombing of oil installations, which forms the basis of Garricks' storyline and this study. In the novel Garricks unveils the rationale behind the resurgence of AFA militant group's interest through Doye the "Doughboy,". As Doye boastfully declares:

We are the "Asiama Freedom Army". I was rewarded with the gaps from the Imperial oil boat. We, the AFA, were the most feared of all the ethnic militia in the Niger Delta. We are credited with oil bunkery, kidnapping and bombing of oil installations..." I am the leader of the Asiama Freedom Army...People call me Doughboy... Mopol, Navy, you can try to stop us. Or, you can throw your guns in the river and let us take the white man. But I warn you -if you try to stop us, your bullets can not harm us because we are the children of this river." ... After you have wasted your bullets, we will kill you. And I promise you, your people will not find your bodies to bury. If you wish to stop us, I advise you to start shooting now...
 (2-3)

The above excerpt shows how daring these extremist groups of young men could be to anybody that tries to stop them from their nefarious actions. In the novel, Doye also asserts that, "Our people are left with menial jobs... so since I cannot work as an engineer with my useless two-one. I would rather be a militant." (151). Again, Amaibi Tubo and other Asiama youths narrate their experiences of gas flaring in the novel as they cried out:

That is hellfire. Tubo said it emphatically. He stood and pointed at the distance to the fire-raging unending, emitting black smoke, and sprouting from what looked like a vertical pipe. The fire was far away, somewhere up on the Asiama River, but it was visible from everywhere on Asiama Island... of course It's hellfire. Has any of you seen that fire stop burning? Tell me, have you?... See the pipelines that the fire is coming out from? ...The pipeline leads straight to hell. If not for the fire coming out of the pipeline you can go down, go really deep and you will see the devil himself ... (63)

To Garricks, the Niger Delta militants' illegal strategy of violent resistance and its aftermath effects on the socio-political, economic, ecological and ethos of the region is a worrisome problem. For example, Soboye in the novel has the intension to engaged in the business of oil theft but reveals to Doye that he is "afraid of being killed by the people who own the oil" (72). Doye now asks who owns the oil?" Soboye says, "A few powerful people in the country, I'm not sure of who they are but the rumour is that they generals in the army and some mainly Hausa civilians in government and business...Afonya and others merely work for them..." Doye now asks again that, "... if they own the oil, why are they stealing it..." (72). In the novel Soboye gives his own knowledge of illegal oil bunkering:

Oil bunkery is not like stealing meat from somebody's pot. The government has a hand it. The friend replies that: "I know this because Afonya says the navy turns aside as they sail away with the oil, it is the biggest business in Nigeria. Except this people approve of you cannot enter the business. (72)

In the novel, Doye like Bubaraye Dakolo's narrative *The Riddle of the Oil Thief*, secretly reveals those involved in oil bunkery in the Niger Delta when he reveals to Soboye that:

What I am telling you is a secret. You shouldn't tell anybody." ...there is underground pipeline, a very long pipeline. It carried crude oil from Port Harcourt to Bonny for export...Every night some people go up the river to that swamp island. From there, they open the pipeline and divert the oil from it. I don't know how they do it, but they load the oil on boats, come back down the river and sail into the ocean. There is ship waiting on the ocean to buy the oil.... Isn't that stealing? "Oil bunkery... (71-72)

He further says; "... it's a never-ending gang rape... I decide that since it's my oil, my land that's being raped. I might as well join in..." (152). Unfortunately, for Doye and his Asiamas Freedom Army in the novel 'violence and attack on oil facilities' is the only justified action for dealing with the injustice in the Niger Delta. He knows he cannot win the war against the oil companies and the Nigerian government, but the only way to make them uncomfortable is through the use of arms to kidnap oil workers and vandalize the oil pipelines. This is act of front-line direct action in protecting the environment is what Garricks denounced in his novel because to him it has rather worsen the ecological issues and suffering in the Niger Delta.

Doye as the leader one of the militants known as Asiamas Freedom Army (AFA) in the novel is born under the harsh realities of the Niger Deltans' condition has been frustrated in his whole life. This begins from his tyrannical father, Mpaka's constant beating and desertion of his mother and the death of Soboye his only brother as a result of those harmful activities of oil. This prevented Doye from attending a scholarship examination. More so, the intimidation he got from the soldiers that came to Asiamas and his father's cold murder, as well as, denial of a job opportunity in the Imperial Oil Company even when he emerged the best in the interview made him frustrated, aggressive and stoic. This makes him an epitome of the Niger Delta restive youths who are depressed and dispossessed of their ancestral land.

Doye like other Niger Delta youths, becomes vicious because of his harsh experiences. Thus, this is seen in his interaction with his friend, Amaibi Akassa when he asks him, "...You know your problem Amaibi? You were always too soft and too sensitive about other people's feelings. You can never lead people like that..." (24). To Doye, the government activities with the oil companies is a slap on their faces and a rape of their land because the natives were not compensated and were given the least job in the companies to do. Consequently, Doye took it upon himself to fight the government and formed a group called the "Asiamas Freedom Army," which metamorphosed into militancy. More so, in the bid to justify his frustration and violent resistance, he says:

The politicians and military boys share the oil blocks among themselves. The companies use cheap and outdated drilling methods which pollute the environment. Their refineries never work because it is profitable for some people to import petroleum products. The marketers cause artificial scarcity so they can make a killing. It is "a never-ending gang rape. I didn't start it, Kaniye. I can't stop it either. I decided it since it is my oil, my river and my land that is being raped... (152)

The above passage reveals the rationale behind the militants' actions and exposes Doye as one of those restive youths who are determined to be a bunker as a result of his frustration. He strongly believes that since his "land and river" that have been the source of his economic power and livelihood have been destroyed and taken by the few strangers. He then feels there is need to do everything possible to rescue it by his usual illegal activity. In a conversation with his friend, Doye's reveals his reasons of criminality that, "...I am just taking my share of oil money..." (152). Doye concludes that, "There is no future for our children of the Niger Delta. Their tomorrow is already dead. It died yesterday..." (153). To Doye having being raised in such depraved environments his actions are justifiable. He gives his reasons for engaging in Eco-sabotage/illegal bunkering as, "Everyone else is milking our oil. The government has sold the oil

that will be drilled in the next decades. The politicians and the military boys have shared oil block among themselves...” (235). No doubt, one would reason with Doye’s predicaments as a frustrated Niger Delta jobless youth but truly his reasons for forming the AFA group cannot be said to be for the common good of the oil communities and the already battered environment.

To Garricks the militants’ violent activities of illegal bunkering, kidnapping and bombing of oil installations unleashed on the ecosystem is unjustified and self-injurious behaviours. No doubt, the militants’ actions are as a result of frustration and outburst of disenchantment, environmental refugees and alienation from the body politic and the inability to benefit from their natural endowment. However, the militants’ agitation in the Niger Delta for their resources has a snowball effect on everything in the region. This also calls for pertinent moral eco-questions like: Does illegal bunkering and kidnapping significantly affect only the oil company and the government? Then what are the consequences of oil bunkering to the Niger Delta bio-diversity? To Hassan Tai Ejibunu, “The crises of Niger Delta region arising from the activities of different militant groups operating in the region has brought about negative implications, not only on oil production and other economic activities but also on governance in general...” (16). It is evident that the scandalous oil theft through the act of illegal bunkery in Nigeria has worsened the nation’s monolithic economic, biodiversity and climate crises.

The Socio-environmental Consequences of Eco-sabotage/Illegal Oil Bunkery

The militant activities, which include illegal oil siphoning and tampering with pipelines, often lead to oil spills and the destruction of everything. These spills gravely affect the physical, ecological, mental, and social health of the Niger Delta inhabitants and the nation at large. Additionally, oil spills severely harm marine ecosystems, decimating fish populations and contaminating soil and crops. Fish, poisoned by the oil spill components, die off. These Oil spills can cause mutations or lasting harm to species, posing a significant threat to our planet. The World Bank's Sendai Report lists the major challenges faced by humanity: war, famine, disease, environmental degradation, and death. Due to the militants' activities, the Niger Delta is at risk of becoming the nation's primary source of hydrocarbon pollution. From constant oil spills to relentless gas flaring and industrial waste, the Niger Delta's delicate ecosystem is under relentless strain.

Ike Okonta and Douglas Oronto, highlighted the environmental havoc from oil spills that has made life tremendously challenging for the local communities. The degradation of farms, fish habitats, and water sources has profoundly disrupted the region's traditionally self-sufficient ecosystems. Benjamin Okaba, leader of the Ijaw National Congress, also emphasizes the damage to aquatic life, stating that oil spills adversely affect water organisms and the creatures living at the bottom of water bodies. In essence, the oil spills resulting from militant activities in Nigeria's Niger Delta have led to land loss, changes in soil quality, disruption of aquatic ecosystems, and air pollution. The amount of oil leaked, the type of oil, and the weight of oil are just a few of the variables that determine the severity of environmental harm caused by militant actions in the Niger Delta environment. Indeed, oil spills have devastating effects on marine ecosystems and have far-reaching consequences for the Niger Delta's flora. Eloamaka Carol Okonkwo, in her article, "Oil Spills in Nigeria: Are there Social and Economic Impacts?" Reveals that, “An oil spill might destroy economic and social activities on a massive scale. Many lives have been lost, crops and fisheries have been ruined, and cultural sites and tourist attractions have been wiped out as a result of oil spills in the Niger Delta” (1). Devastation from multiple spills, including one that they experienced firsthand, was also documented in the United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP):

The UNEP team witnessed one such incident in 2006 during aerial reconnaissance of Ogoniland. A massive fire was raging at the Yorla 13 oil well and apparently continued burning for over a month. Such fires cause damage to the vegetation immediately around the well site and can produce partly burned

hydrocarbons that may be carried for considerable distances before falling on farmland or housing. (100)

The above passage suggests the aftermaths of oil spill as the militants bunkered oil seeps into the land eroding it for plant and animal use. The resultant of oil spill from Eco-sabotage /illegal oil bunkering wrought heavy contamination of land and underground water courses, sometimes more than forty years after oil spilled. Patrick Bond in his foreword to *Criminal Resistance? The Politics of Kidnapping Oil Workers*, authored by Oriola Temitope, shares a similar view, that, "Oil bunkering and pipeline sabotage, for example, are similarly fraught given the collateral damage including explosions and ecological devastation" (x). Doye, the Doughboy in the novel, lends credence to this:

This year, there was something that happened upon Asiam River. We woke up one morning to see oil, thick and black floating on top of the brown water of the river. The river became sluggish in its flow, as the oil gradually choked its life away. After school, I sat on the banks and watched dead fish, turned on their sides, slowly drift by. The river stank. Papa called it an oil spill ... (76)

Obviously, illegal bunkering activities of the militants ironically endanger the environment they are fighting to protect. This is also seen in one of the incidences in Garricks' novel, as Doye narrates:

Soboye's brother, Papa returns home and calls him out to join in the search. At the scene of the fire outbreak they witness: A roaring fire, about ten feet high... there were deep-roasted corpses which littered the shore. The corpses were contorted into violently grotesque position/s in death. Death, from the pipeline explosion, had been immediate. We smelled the heady aroma of burnt flesh (79).

The above snippet provided clearly illustrates the evident consequences of attack on oil facilities on both human and nonhuman entities in the oil communities. The consequences of oil spills in the Niger Delta environment have significant detrimental effects on the region's biodiversity and its associated ecosystems. Numerous studies have demonstrated that the presence of oil spills on terrestrial environments exerts a detrimental impact on the optimal growth conditions of plants. This is mostly attributed to the oil's ability to render crucial elements, such as nitrogen and oxygen, inaccessible to plants, hence impeding their ability to thrive. Consequently, this disruption in soil fertility subsequently manifests as a decline in crop output. This process has the potential to result in a scarcity of food, hence exacerbating the prevalence of malnutrition in the oil-communities.

Socio-economic Consequences of Eco-sabotage/Illegal Oil Bunkering

The Militants' attack on oil facilities in the novel under the guise of eco-defense in Niger Delta has not only plunged the entire region into its present ecological mess and tension but has as well, thrown the nation into a very difficult economic situation. Dialoke and Marshall S. Edeja in their article, "Effects of Militancy on the Development of Nigeria", lend their voices when they assert that, "Nigeria's economy is an oil driven and a blow on the installations will be a blow on the economy" (1). The Minister of Environment Mohammed Abubakar also disclosed that, "the effect of the destruction of oil and gas facilities had caused huge economic losses...Nigeria record 4,919 oil spills between 2015 to March 2021 and lost 4.5 trillion barrels of oil to theft in four years" (1). The fact is, the scandalous oil theft through the act of illegal oil bunkering and the destruction of oil installations in the Niger Delta region have worsened the Nigeria's economy. As a matter of fact, Nigeria loses so much from oil theft, as well as, oil spills and the environment remains degraded.

Garricks as committed eco-writer, writes and subtly state his position towards the unending menace of illegal oil bunkering. Indeed, for Garricks, it is really mind boggling as no

one is immune from the brutal domino effect of ecological disaster caused by the blow on oil installations. Garricks gives credence to this in his author's note, when he states that:

When I started writing this story in 2005, it was still fashionable to kidnap foreigners in the guise of the Niger Delta Struggle. By the time I finished some times in November 2008 ... Recently, I heard the rumour about the kidnap of a "vulcanizer" (an artisan tyre-minder) for a ransom of 30000 (about \$197). The Niger Delta Struggle has become a tragedy so bizarre that one has to search for comedy in it just to remain sane. I know now that I wrote this story as a form of catharsis, to try to make sense out of all the madness, and to tell some of the truth, as I understand it. Besides, I was fed up with the fact that the only "voices" of the people of Niger-Delta was either the political class or the self-styled "militants," (two equally appalling choices in my view). I was also tired of the hypocrisy of the people of the Niger-Delta, my people, who are the real victims but have refused to take the lead responsibility of their own roles in the calamity that has befallen them. (283)

The above excerpt reveals Garricks' concern and stance towards the militants' tactics of resistance and the complacency of "the Niger Delta elites". No doubt, this defiant practice in the Niger Delta region continues to unsettle the Nigerian government and destabilize its national polity. In fact, it draws the world's attention to the fact that all is not well with oil- communities in Nigeria. Nixon's *Slow Violence and Environmentalism of the Poor*, is now visible in the Delta, as manifested in acts of illegal oil bunkering and the militant's sabotage in the region. According to Nixon, "The poor or those who live in vernacular landscapes are usually the casualties of slow violence..." (4). This is because the subalterns affected in the Niger Delta lacks the means or voice to call attention to their plight, as such, resort to physical violence and attack on oil facilities. To this end, Garricks sees the violence perpetrated by the militants as being irrational unjustifiable.

Invariably, while the oil companies are accused of overuse of the natural resources, the restive militants are accused of misuse of the natural resources and self-induced pains, since it often leads to oil spill, as well as, fire outbreak that destroys everything. Elizabeth Chalecki, in her article "New Vigilance: Identifying and Reducing the Risk of Environmental Terrorism", affirms this, when she says that, "The purposeful destruction of a natural resources can now cause far more deaths, property damage, political chaos and other adverse effects than it would have been in any previous decade..." (1). The UNEP report also reveals that, "There is a high risk of self-harm from a large number of accidents, fires and explosions on refining sites claim dozens of lives every year, quite apart from the longer-term health effects of ingestion, absorption and inhalation of hydrocarbons" (104). No doubt, the adversarial attitudes of these groups have generated serious socio-economic consequences for the oil communities, as well as, the monolithic Nigerian economy.

The militants wholeheartedly adopt the use of violence and attack on oil facilities as their sole recourse, devoid of any alternative. Once they acquire weaponry and the ability to exert force, they become committed to their cause until their objectives are realized. The individuals hold the belief that regardless of the direction in which the pendulum oscillates, they possess no potential drawbacks and stand to acquire substantial benefits. Furthermore, they assert that acts of violence exclusively yield favourable outcomes and effectively capture attention. Doye affirms this in the novel, when he says, "Violence is the only thing the government and the oil companies respond to" (155). Violence now becomes the justify option for dealing with injustice in the Niger Delta. In fact, in recent times it compelled the NUPPENG workers to protest as the criminal activities of oil theft is becoming a national embarrassment. Eboh Michael in his article reveals that, "Nigeria lost N1.6 trillion in 2016 and N995 billion in 2017 to crude oil theft, translating to loss of about \$8.9 million daily and a combined loss of n2.6 trillion over two-year." (21). More

so, the former Minister of State for Petroleum Resources, Timipre Sylva in an interview report that:

Nigeria loses 400,000 barrels per day to oil theft. He further state that oil theft is a national emergency adding that Nigeria had fallen short of OPEC daily quota, from 1.8 million barrels to 1.4 million barrels due to crude theft and also expressed concern that the menace had persisted, in spite of the efforts by government to arrest it. It is a national emergency because it has grown wings and reached a very bad crescendo. This is because the thefts are taking place in the communities that host oil pipelines. (2)

National Oil Spill Detection and Response Agency (NOSDRA) in her recent report on oil theft and oil spills also submits that, “As a nation, we lose revenue, individuals lose livelihood because the oil impact on area where they either fish or farm and then it is also a loss to the oil communities and the environment” (1). The recent case of oil theft to also cite is the vessel MT. TURA II a Nigerian registered company Holab Maritime Services Limited with registration Number RC 813311 among others which was caught by Tantita Security Services with 800,000 liters of stolen crude oil. It was reported that same vessel has been operating in stealth mode for the last twelve (12) years. These and many other cases of oil theft in recent times in Nigeria made oil theft a malignant cancer to the nation’s economy for years with unimaginable value of oil being lifted by some cabals.

The moral and rhetorical question in this study, is how would the AFA group of militants who frown at the destruction of the land they cherish and value so much have the propensity of destroying the same? This portrays Doye, other Niger Delta youths who engaged in such act as ignorant and confused people. For Doye and other Niger Delta youths, the idea of land ownership by the federal government is great injustice as they are the ones directly suffering from the oil and gas activities. Kaniye tries to condemn Doye’s action but he tries to justify their actions and perceptions that, “...I believe our people have a right to partake in the spoils from the on-going plunder of their land. I believe it so much that I’ve chosen to live by example...” (152-153). The narrator further narrates, “...All Mr. President does, is shit and drill oil from my river. And questioned, “Does he eat the rotten fish from Asiam River? Does his wife drink the contaminated water? Do his grandchildren play next to gas flares and pipelines? So how the hell can he own my river? At the end Doye asks, “What about the future of our children? Their tomorrow?” and conclude that, “There is no future for the children of Niger Delta. Their tomorrow is dead. It died yesterday.” (152-153)

Conclusion

From the foregoing, the main causes of the militants’ act of ecotage and pipeline vandalism is the exploration and exploitation of their natural resources but it has not provided success stories. In fact, it is rather a destructive and obstructive activities that justify only human interest. As a matter of fact, it does not in any way seem to pay attention to the larger socio-economic and ecological issues it poses in the Nigeria’s oil region. Garricks’ novel is a decisive representative and narratives in environmental postcolonialism that subtly capture and denounced the myriads of violence which Nixon describes in his “Slow Violence”. As concerned eco-activist, Garricks feels the destructive and obstructive actions designed to publicize or harass the Nigerian government and the multinational oil companies by the militants or illegal bunkers only conforms to Dave Foreman’s earlier idea of “Earth First” and Rob Nixon description of the militant form of resistance as, slow violence. Additionally, Nixon’s insights into the gradual harm of slow violence are particularly pertinent to this analysis, as it examines the lasting effects of militarism and activism that persist in harming the environment long after conflicts have ended. Thus, Garricks novels attempt to imbibe Nixon’s views and as such condemn any form of attritional violence of the Niger Delta militants and illegal bunkers. This is because even the

radical movement between 1997 and 2000 by Earth First (EF!) and the Earth Liberation Front (ELF) in the Western world like Canada and United States only inflicted more pains on both humans and the nonhuman elements. Craig Rosebraugh lends credence to this when he reveals that, “ELF alone was responsible for inflicting one hundred and forty million damages...” (257). David Foreman also reports that, “Earth First, acts of ecotage in America National Forest cost industries and government twenty to twenty-five million dollars annually...” (134). Liddick Donald also reports that, “... damages worth millions of dollars are credited to eco-terrorist activities since the late 1980s...” (66). This justifies Garricks’ stance in this study because if we cannot protect our environment now what are going to replace it with in the future?

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