

The Glocal Conundrum: Anthropocene, Oil and Globalization in Niger Delta Literature

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Abstract

This paper examines writers from the Niger Delta's responses to the problems caused by humans' activities to the region's natural environment. It identifies some underhand efforts of local individuals and foreign multinationals respectively in extracting its natural resources while also locating interconnections in the actions of both that have glocal implications and continue to pose great danger to environmental sustainability. For textual illustrations, the paper draws on several literary reconfigurations of this conundrum even as it applauds the different writers' activism and advocacy for environmental re-suscitation.

Keywords

Glocal, Conundrum, Anthropocene, Niger Delta Literature, Oil, Environment

1. Introduction

The Niger Delta is a unique region in Nigeria because it is the home of the nation's oil industry which brings in over eighty percent of the federation's revenue. Oil, a natural resource that was first discovered in commercial quantities in this region in the late 1950s is a much sought-after commodity internationally and as such has become one of the forms of contact between local and global communities. An interface between the local and global is what informs the concept of the glocal in this study. We, therefore, posit that operations of both local individuals and foreign oil companies in the region have consistently led to unmitigated consequences of environmental hazards. A number of existential threats such as depletion of biodiversity, coastal and riverbank erosion, oil spillage, soil fertility loss, deforestation, gas flares, and the improper disposal of industrial wastes from the oil industry, especially the local oil refineries are some of the fallouts. All of these pose great challenges to the landscape and life scape

as well as the economic development of the Niger Delta and the world at large, further conceptualizing the looming threat of a glocal problem.

This essay focuses on selected writers' literary responses to the ecological degradation and environmental pollution of the Niger Delta area of Nigeria as a result of local and global interests in the environment and its resources. However, it pays particular attention to these works' expressions of the negative effects of Anthropocene and oil exploitation by multinational corporations and the impact on the lives of the people and the fauna and flora that all coalesce to reveal a glocal conundrum. Writers from the Niger Delta and elsewhere in Nigeria have been at the forefront of an intellectual form of eco-activism by using their written fiction, poetry, and plays to reflect the plight of this region has for some time now been at the centre of globalization and environmental issues.

The local has global (glocal) implications and vice versa and this is what [Jean-Sebastien Guy \(2009\)](#) refers to as "the connexion between the system of society" (11). Hence, [McGrew \(1992\)](#) alludes also to "the multiplicity of linkages and interconnectedness" that makes the world a global village. The world is highly interconnected and there are associated effects to what happens in the locality compounding global problems just as the global also affects the local. For example, the gas emitted in the Niger Delta has effects on the entire world in the attendant global warming debacle. Also whatever happens in the Niger Delta affects the price of oil in the world market. Besides, exploitation is unfair and unjust as in the case of oil multinationals' exploration activities without commensurate remedies for the negative fallouts on the local environment. Worse still is the fact that revenue from the oil resource is largely used to develop other places while the homeland is marginalized, impoverished and underdeveloped.

Within this paper, the idea of a "glocal conundrum" locates the interconnectedness between earlier forms of environmental degradation by indigenes of the region and the more recent consequences of oil exploration and exploitation by foreign oil companies. This predatory relationship has been described by Rob Nixon ([Nixon, 2011](#)) as sustained by "the ongoing romance between unanswerable corporations and unspeakable regimes" (105), while Michael Watts ([Watts, 1999](#)) tags it "the slick alliance of state and capital" (3). Philip [Aghoghovwia \(2017\)](#) acknowledges this relationship between the local and global when he affirms that "In the Niger Delta, the oil enterprise inscribes within its sphere of operations a form of globalism...." (33). Oyeniyi Okunoye's "Alterity, Marginality and the National Question in the Poetry of the Niger Delta" ([Okunoye, 2008](#)) underscores the paradox of the Niger Delta location as producing the oil and yet one of the poorest parts of Nigeria, nay the world. Onyemaechi Udumukwu tidily sums up the task of this paper when he concludes that "It is this interrogation of environmentalism that has paved way for attempts to understand the multi-layered relationship between literary production, environmental justice and the inherent interpretation of the value of nature in the Niger Delta" (158) ([Udumukwu, 2021](#)).

This paper therefore, examines Niger Delta literature's preoccupation with pre-oil and oil era human activities as this substrate environmental degradation at the local and global levels. It operates this theme under the premise that the region's ecosystem is a microcosm of the larger world's ecosystem and the current global environmental realities that continue to drive the advocacy for a "green earth" are applicable to the Niger Delta situation. Our discussion begins with an examination of some literary writers' reflections on the role of local indigenes in the destruction of the natural environment outside and before the onset of oil exploration and then goes on to explore the writers' representations of the effects of unethical oil and gas exploratory activities in the region. It argues that both forms of human-centred activities and not necessarily the latter as often touted are responsible for the global conundrum which continues to exacerbate the conditions of human and non-human elements in the Niger Delta and with global implications. The writers' recourse to projecting the agency of women and youth is part of their recommendations on how best to combat and resolve the problem.

2. Literary Portraits of Human Activities on an Earlier Niger Delta Ecology

To fully understand the literature of the Niger Delta's preoccupation with the condition of the environment and its entire ecosystem, this essay first examines the writers' perception of some pre-oil era human activities that contributed to the decimation of the region's natural ecology. This is in acknowledgement of the fact that the discovery and exploration of crude oil was not necessarily the onset or sole cause of the despoilation of the region's natural environment. Home to about 12 million people and 40 different ethnic groups, the floodplain known as the Niger Delta makes up 7.5% of Nigeria's total landmass. It is the largest wetland in Africa and maintains the third-largest drainage area in the continent. The Niger Delta environment can be broken down into four ecological zones: coastal barrier islands, mangrove swamp forest, freshwater swamps, and lowland rainforest.

According to Tanure Ojaide, "The area provides habitation for different species of plants, reptiles, fish, mammals, birds, other creatures, and minerals" (*Indigeneity* 58) (Ojaide, 2015a). This incredibly well-endowed ecosystem, which contains one of the highest concentrations of biodiversity on the planet, in addition to supporting the abundant flora and fauna, and arable terrain, is presently in danger of being annihilated by anthropocentric efforts at harnessing its natural resources. While much of the available criticism on environmental literature of the Niger Delta blames the discovery and extraction of oil for the ongoing ecocide, this study admits to an earlier strain of environmental degradation as a result of human activities that were not related to oil excavation. Therefore, we bring to the existing body of scholarship on Niger Delta ecocritical studies the perspective that anthropocentrism did some damages to the environment before

the effect of oil and gas exploration. This essay therefore, brings together under one study writers' refraction of these exploitations as well as their responses to intersections of the deleterious consequences of local and global players in the whole scheme.

One of the negative human activities on the ecology is the use of chemicals like pesticides in ponds and lakes to catch fish. In the process of devising new means of drawing in bountiful harvests of fishes, fishermen inadvertently contaminate natural waters as these poisonous chemicals make the water unhealthy for human use and consumption. This is in addition to the fact that the fish population was being depleted recklessly. The selfish interests of the local people also led to the cutting of wood for firewood and furniture without more trees being planted. During the dry season or harmattan there was burning of forests and farmlands by either arsonists or farmers to prepare early rainy season farms. Poachers of timber bribed forest guards to turn a blind eye to the carnage of trees. In "The AT&P, Sapele", Ojaide (1997) recalls a personal experience on a visit to Sapele as a young student and then years later thus:

When I first entered the AT&P
On excursion from St. George's,
It was next to the largest sawmill
On earth....
The planks smelt fresh,
Sardine-packed for export;
They came in raft by water...
When decades later I went home
To the delta of hardwood,
A big clearing welcomes me... (30).

Deforestation through wood-logging is one of the ways humans have tampered with the natural environment of the region. As more trees are felled and processed by sawmills for export, humans and even the environment are left vulnerable with the presence of greenhouse gases in the air adding to global temperatures and adverse climate changes. Also for superstitious reasons, trees and plants in villages and towns are cut down for fear of witches meeting on them at night, leaving bare the entire landscape and with no scientific proof that the conditions they ascribe to presence of such trees and plants are ameliorated or eliminated. Ojaide's short story, "The Cherry Tree Palaver" fictionally recreates such a situation which Ojaruega (2021) identifies as being a result of the people's "lack of scientific knowledge" and unappreciation of such trees' "functions in the ecosystem" thereby leading to the "destruction of the ecosystem of the area" (55). In recent years, pressure for more land for commercial and residential purposes has led to reclaiming areas that used to be either waterways or swamps for new buildings. These human activities affect the fauna and flora as the lush green vegetation has disappeared with its choral ensemble of insects, birds, animals, and other creatures driven out or silenced. Thus, the indigenes of

the Niger Delta communities, through their traditional beliefs and actions, have helped to destroy the ecosystem and damage their own environment. These local actions on the environment could be said to have prepared it for oil spills and blowouts to further ravish.

Consequently, nostalgia for what was the region's primal biodiversity has been mirrored in works of writers from the Niger Delta. For example, the river is a significant part of the region's wetland biodiversity. The proliferation of various images of the river as a life source in literary works explains these writers' reconfiguration of this aspect of the environment as a backdrop or integral setting in their writings. Poems like Gabriel Okara's "The Fisherman's Invocation" (Okara, 1978) and "The Call of the River Nun"; J.P. Clark (Clark, 1965)'s "A Reed in the Tide" and "Streamside Exchange"; and Christian Otobotekere's "A Moving Miracle" and "Daylight Wonder" are replete with the centrality of this element of nature. These poems present the natural waters as possessing a kind of spirit that enchants the humans who live side by side with it. They aver that humans and the environment maintained a symbiotic relationship which was mutually beneficial. Okara personifies the River Nun in a self-titled poem. Clark's poems also portray this marine habitat with spirituality and mystical power that relate to human life. In "The Call of the River Nun", Clark (1965) affirms a spiritual communion with the river, a nonhuman element being animated. The poem is an ode to a resource that according to the poet in an interview "was everything for us." He also nostalgically recalls the "silver surfaced flow," which is an allusion to the river's once-pristine nature before modern encroachments polluted it. Otobotekere describes a vibrant riverine environment in his poems as he projects the river as a life-sustaining force that richly nurtures the people and is resplendent in its glory. This undisturbed nature is a recurrent trope in the poetry of many older Niger Delta poets and captures the nostalgic environment that was first encroached upon by indigenous poachers and later, capitalist oil exploiters.

3. Oil Spills and Gas Flaring as Contemporary Environmental Concerns

However, it is through the operations of the multinational oil companies that the greatest and perhaps, irreparable amount of damage has been done to the ecosystem and the environment of the Niger Delta. Specifically, the pipes carrying crude oil from wells to flow stations, to terminals, and to refineries as well as those carrying refined oil to oil depots run through vast landscapes. Sometimes, they are shoddily laid out and burst as a result of pressure or they leak from age. This reality is fictionally recreated in the opening scene of Kaine Agary's *Yellow-Yellow* (Agary, 2021). Zilayefa, the narrator informs the reader that "...one of the crude oil pipes that ran through my village broke and spilled oil over several hectares of land, my mother's farmland included" (3). Not only has the source of a family's livelihood been destroyed by acrid pollution, but their fate

hangs in the balance as in the case of Zilayefa's and her mother's dream of seeing her through school from proceeds from the farm has been truncated. These frequent blowouts and leakages pose health and economic hazards to the people of the oil-producing region. So frequent are such "accidents" that Shell alone records over 500 spills a year. While Shell drills oil in many other countries, 40% of oil spills occur in Nigeria. The callous neglect of dealing with the causes and incidents of oil spills and leakages in Nigeria can only be said to be the oil company's attempt to maximize profits as it deals with corrupt regimes that do not care about their people's welfare but rather protect and promote their own individual enrichment. Ibiwari *Ikiriko* (2000) paints a predatory and lopsided relationship when he alludes to "Of pipes that/Forever pipe out, never in" (*Evening Already* (iii): 15) to signify that the region gives out its natural resources and gains nothing to replenish it in return.

Also as a result of being impoverished and desperate, locals are sometimes oblivious to the dangers of scrabbling to fetch oil from burst pipelines. The temptation to benefit from a resource that was originally theirs but now above their reach has led to tragic consequences in the history of this region. The Jesse fire that happened near Sapele in 1993 is a classic example. Ogaga *Ifowodo* (2005)'s *The Oil Lamp* devotes a section to this historical tragic event. The poet traces "the damage" to:

...old pipes corroded and cracked
by the heat of their burden-
petrol and paraffin piped away
from rotting dugouts and thatched huts
to float ships and fly planes..." (5).

Again, embedded within this excerpt is a veiled indictment of the disparities in living conditions of those whose land produce the oil wealth yet live in squalor, and those who suffer no debilitating fallout from oil exploration but only live large and in comfort from the product and proceeds. This he says accounts for the naive frenzy:

...like that Gaulish crowd, crazed by cracked
casks of wine on a cobbled street
a siphoning circus danced to the wild
music of deprivation in the low growth,
And they fought for elbow room
To fill their bowls and kegs
With the spilled oil of their land (6).

Oil spills in populated areas often spread out over a wide expanse of land, taking out crops and aquacultures through contamination of the groundwater and soils. Also, the consumption of dissolved oxygen by bacteria feeding on the spilled hydrocarbons contributes to the death of fishes. In agricultural commu-

curities, often a year's supply of food can be destroyed by only a minor leak, debilitating the farmers and their families, who depend on the land for their livelihood. A summary of the above is replicated in the following excerpt from Agary (2021)'s novel thus:

And so it was that, in a single day, my mother lost her main source of sustenance. However, I think she had lost that land a long time ago because each season yielded less than the season before, not unlike the way she and others in the village had gradually lost, year after year, the creatures of the river to oil spills, acid rain, gas flares, and who knows what else... (4).

With the degradation and pollution of the land and water places of their staple sources of living, the youths in the rural areas no longer have gainful means of survival. This has led to migration of youths to the cities and other urban centres where they invariably take up unsavoury professions. Many of the restless ones among them are consequently driven to indulge in negative habits that cause social unrest as also reported in Agary's *Yellow-Yellow* (Agary, 2021). Apart from these immediate effects, the numerous hydrocarbons and chemicals present in the oil are highly carcinogenic and harmful to the people's health. In addition, offshore spills, which are usually much greater in scale, contaminate coastal environments and cause a decline in local fishing production.

Ikiriko's "The Fisherman's Net" (Ikiriko, 2000) speaks of the siege the already impoverished fisherman faces in addition to the pollution of their waters. On the verge of bringing in a catch using a poorly mended net, this fisherman's effort is rudely interrupted by "a Jumbo tanker, /An oil boat.../ bursts into the sea..." (27), which drags the net until the fisherman reluctantly cuts it to avoid losing his life, canoe as well as the net. He is forced to watch helplessly as "...the Jumbo/Sailing gaily away with her crude loot/Of liquid gold and the net/To decorate other lands and lives." (25). Clearly, while the inhabitants and environment suffer all forms of degradation as a result of oil exploration, other people and places enjoy the benefits of this enterprise.

Pipes are laid across groves, villages, and towns, intruding into the private spaces of animals, plants, and human populations. This has also altered greatly the ecosystems as arrays of bird have disappeared. Herbs used as medicines and flowers for aesthetics are no longer part of the natural visages of the environment. The human and non-human population in this region are the direct recipient of the debilitating effects of oil and environmental pollution.

The vicious cycle triggered and sustained by the politics around the oil wealth continues to drive local communities and inhabitants into deeper poverty in lifestyle and intellect. Ikoriko's *Oily Tears*, Ifowodo's *The Oil Lamp* (Ifowodo, 2005), Nnimmo Bassey's *We Thought It Was Oil, But It was Blood* (Bassey, 2002), and others deal with the global impact of oil on the environment. We have earlier on in this essay seen Ifowodo's poetic representation of the historical Jesse oil pipeline explosion. The same conundrum is portrayed in Bassey's title poem where he presents a people's consequent disillusionment after an initial

excitement over what they envisioned was a new found blessing. The strident refrain “We thought it was oil/But it was blood” repeated throughout the poem is quite poignant as it is symbolic. It significantly juxtaposes the discrepancy between the people’s naïve expectation and the brutal attacks from the military at the behest of the oil company. Another poem in the same collection speaks of the indiscriminate manner in which oil is extracted from the earth such that the earth now “bleeds”. By personifying the earth, the poet brings in the concept of medical humanities as the earth is depicted as if a sick patient hence it “bleeds”, has a “sickbed” and it is possible to “bandage the earth” (16-17). He condemns again the substandard operations during oil extraction where “This oil flows” because of “A thousand explosions in the belly of the earth/Bleeding rigs, bursting” (16).

Bassey’s “We Thought it was Oil, but it was Blood” (Bassey, 2002), part of which has been quoted earlier on, tells of the scourge of gas flaring in the Niger Delta. Historically, gas flaring began simultaneously with oil extraction in the late 1950s by Shell-BP. Nigeria flares 2.5 million cubic feet of gas per day. Gas flaring is generally discouraged and condemned by the international community, as it contributes greatly to climate change, which ironically can display its most devastating effects in developing countries like Nigeria. The Niger Delta’s low-lying plains are also quite vulnerable as they lie only a few meters above sea-level. A major problem that gas flaring poses is the release of large amount of methane, which has high global warming potential. The methane is accompanied by the other major greenhouse gas, carbon dioxide, of which Nigeria was estimated to have emitted more than 33.38% metric tons in 2002, accounting for about 50% of all industrial emissions in the country and 30% of the total CO₂ emissions. As flaring in the West has been minimized, in Nigeria it has grown proportionally with oil production. The World Bank reported in 2004 that “Nigeria currently flares 75% of the gas it produces” (6).

Gas flares can have potential harmful effects on the health and livelihood of the communities in their vicinity, as they release a variety of poisonous chemicals. People suffer from a variety of respiratory problems, which have been reported amongst many children in the Niger Delta, but have apparently gone uninvestigated. These chemicals can aggravate asthma and cause breathing difficulties, chronic bronchitis and other respiratory-related illnesses. The chemical benzene, which is known to be emitted from gas flares in undocumented quantities, is well researched as being a causative agent for leukaemia and other blood related diseases. A study done by Climate Justice estimated that exposure to benzene would result in eight new cases of cancer yearly in Bayelsa State alone, not to talk of other states in the Niger Delta.

Apart from diverse effects on human health, animals avoiding thermal pollution and noise from refineries have moved far away into other parts of the forests, thus altering the natural structure of the ecosystem. Another aspect that is also harmful to human health is in the area of rain water. Many of the local

population drink rain water, but cannot do so anymore because the flares cause acidic rain which corrodes their home and other local structures, many of which have zinc and asbestos-based roofing.

Ojaide's *The Activist* (Ojaide, 2006) reflects many of the problems relating to gas flaring, acid rain, and water pollution. The association of women, WODEFOR, in a meeting gives testimony of the various types of ill health resulting from oil exploitation and gas flaring. The female perspective in the novel brings out collectively what individuals have been suffering from in silence. The women count among others intense hot flashes, early menopause, giving birth to malformed babies, sterility, and their men losing potency at an early age.

4. Reflections on Environmental/Human Rights and Globalization

Shell being the first to start oil exploitation in the region in the late 1950s is often blamed for the negative consequences of the oil industry in the Niger Delta. This foreign oil company is the quintessential symbol of globalization. With its multinational might, it often secures the support of the government, military or civilian, in its exploitation of the people. Besides, the government that needs the oil revenues often accedes to Shell's pressure, especially in dealing with community dissent or protest. Often Shell and the Government have brought mobile police to wreak havoc on the local population in their effort to secure their facilities. We again refer the reader to Bassey's second poem cited above. The many massacres in the Ogoni area, Etse, and Odi in Bayelsa State are testimonies of the wicked alliance between the oil companies and the Federal Government of Nigeria. This complicity is maintained because of the need to protect the gains both parties benefit from the uninterrupted exploration of oil from this region.

Ken Saro-Wiwa's struggle for minority and environmental rights condemns the unholy alliance between the oil companies and the federal Nigerian government that works against the interest of the people. Almost all the poets who have written about the series of environmental destruction going on in the course of oil operations in the region have acknowledged the role of Saro-Wiwa in the struggle for liberating the region from the colluding forces of foreign oil companies and the federal government. His death at the hands of the head of a military leader and the void it created remains a subject of lamentation for poets. Ikiriko equates the effect of this loss to "...the eternal tears drilled/On the sorrow-laden land" (38). Although Saro-Wiwa and the other eight Ogoni men's extra-judicial killings on the order of the Head of the military junta was a local affair, it caused global outrage and further brought the plight of the Niger Delta region to international circles.

Some pockets of resistance local youths in the region put up against the authorities are also triggers from the sacking of local communities by soldiers on the order of federal government bent on maintaining a strong hold over the region's oil resource. Ojaide's poem, "For the Egbesu Boys", shows the courage of

this group of local fighters against the exploiters of the land. The poet charges them thus as he validates the reasons for their rebellion:

Egbesu Boys, dismiss with your blood the charge
of robbery by the coalition of global powers.
You cannot even drink water from anywhere—
they pissed down barrels of arsenic into it.
They flare gas to raise demands for the commodity
and in so doing mangle every farmer's harvest;
they spray the airspace with methanol and insidious
chemicals—you cannot breathe clean air anymore
with the particulate matter of fumes breeding
an asthmatic and cancer-prone generation.
They set hunger on the loose after you;
they unleashed diseases to devour youi.
And do they expect you to sit and be enslaved?
Do they expect you to die without fighting back? (Ojaide, 2015b: *The Tale of the Harmattan*, pp. 43-44).

Bassey also poeticizes the attempt to silence the local communities with military might:

We see their Shells
Behind military shields:
Evil, horrible, gallows called oil rigs
Drilling our souls
We thought it was oil
But it was blood (14).

One of the practices of the oil companies, including Shell and Chevron is to keep Nigerians from having work experience of the oil industry. In *The Activist* (Ojaide, 2006), Ishaka's son, Dennis, trained and employed as a petroleum engineer in Bell Oil was never given the opportunity to handle professional operations in his field. That is because the Western expatriates of the company have a policy of keeping indigenous professionals from learning from them how to extract oil. Later when the Activist becomes governor of his state, he appoints Dennis as the Commissioner for Petroleum Resources. They adopt a more environmental friendly approach to oil extraction by avoiding damages to the farmlands and rivers around. Ojaide seems to be saying in his novel that only those who have farmers and fishers as close relatives will have the sensitivity of striking a balance between technology and the traditional way of life during oil extraction. Dennis' running of the oil company is expected to be a model for the local community who can have oil prospecting and traditional farming and fishing side by side. Ikiriko portrays the decimation of the fishing industry in his attention to the despoliation of water that used to breed the fish that enabled the fishing occupation of the people in many of the poems in his collection.

5. Representations of the Agency of Women and Youths

There have been peaceful demonstrations by women and youths of the area to draw attention nationally and internationally to the sorry plight of the people and their environment in order to stay the hands of the despoilers and to provide solutions. Maryse Hilbert's position is that that men and women have been unequally affected by consequences of oil extractive activities in the Niger Delta region (Hilbert, 2021). This accounts for women's more strategic involvement and alternative recourse to mitigating the harmful corollaries of oil mining depicted in literature. In Ojaide's *The Activist* (Ojaide, 2006), the women plan a "nude protest", a form of cultural dissent in which they strip off their clothes while confronting the offender. The women intend to use "this traditional practice of cursing the oppressors" (210) to lay siege to the oil company's facilities and disrupt their activities until their demands are met. Officials of the oil company know the full import of this type of protest and as is their practice, unleash the navy to brutalize and assault the women. But we cannot disregard the weird circumstances of the mysterious deaths of some key players who sabotaged the women's protest as being as a result of the efficacy of these women's activism. Oil multinationals are aware of what obtains as world best practices in oil exploration, yet they undermine the well-being of local communities and use violence to squash any attempt by locals to let them know what is happening in the region. Ojaide's persistency in bringing to global attention the abysmal conditions in the Niger Delta through the agency of his characters is what Dike Okoro (2005) describes as "an indication of the undying spirit of protest inherent in both characters and their commitment to justice and fairness that stretches beyond the confines of their homeland" (n.p.).

The youths of the oil-producing areas have taken it upon themselves to struggle for what they consider to be the unfair and unjust practices of the oil companies and their own Federal Government. They have formed many associations but the best known are the Egbesu Boys, a group of Ijo youths from Bayelsa State, that are dedicated to their war god to restore what they believe is rightly theirs—the economic benefits of oil. Often unemployed, they see people from other parts of the country and outside occupy all the jobs that they themselves need since the oil industry has destroyed their environment and their traditional jobs of farming and fishing. They are depicted as restive and often take radical measures, including kidnapping oil workers, foreign and local, to achieve their objectives of sustaining a livelihood, hence they are labelled with negative tags even as a part of their agitation is for environmental and social justice for the region and the locals. This struggle also gives rise to the many movements in the Niger Delta to regain their land and use its money to develop itself. Ahmed Yerima's *Hard Ground* (Yerima, 2006) is a dramatization of the activist role of the youths.

Global warming resulting from ecological degradation and environmental pollution is inadvertently being stoked in Nigeria by multinational oil compa-

nies, as what happens in one place affects other places too. Creative works of the Niger Delta are primarily devoted to writers' exposing the extent and perils of what the oil companies have been doing in the Niger Delta. They aim to stir both local and global awareness so that immediate and wholesome action can be taken to save the Niger Delta communities, the flora and fauna, and humankind from the glocal scourge.

Nigerian writers play the roles of chroniclers as well as activists sensitizing readers to current problems. Here is Ojaide's "At the Kaiama Bridge" which portrays not only a polluted river but also a spiritually barren society resulting from the polluted environment because "outside forces pillage the inheritance" (34). Other writers and especially Nnimmo Bassey reinforce the brutality of the oil companies towards the environment. The title of his poetry collection speaks of the negative consequences of what the local communities expected to be a boom but turned out to be doom. The poet images underscore the violence-bloodshed and tragedies, rather than gainful development that decimates the region. The value of this natural resource is responsible for the politicizing of the Niger Delta environment as shown by the Federal Government's infamous Land Act decree where all lands are now owned by the government. Ikiriko, Bassey, Ogaga, Ojaide, and other Niger Delta authors relate the oil and environmental degradation to the minority status of the Niger Delta in a country where other groups and regions benefit more than the owners of the land.

6. Conclusion

The writers' essence of drawing attention to the environment is to sensitize people locally, nationally, and internationally to caring for the human and nonhuman elements towards a safe and healthy environment. Their works articulate the Niger Delta condition as a result of the politics and consequences of pre-oil Anthropocene and the oil exploratory era. Globalization and the destruction of the environment make local people more dependent on foreign products, especially imported food whose chemical components make them hazardous for human consumption. The destruction of the land through indigenous and foreign exploitation is responsible for the consequences the writers reflect. These writers lament the detrimental consequences of local and global activities on the Niger Delta as a result of eco-degradation and oil politics.

The damage to the environment promotes activism and an intellectual form of activism is what these writers are engaged in an attempt to tackle the phenomenon of the glocal impasse. They use their respective literary texts to advance their viewpoints on the condition and resolution of the Niger Delta problem. The themes in the literary texts support environmental justice and restoration as the writers propose a stop to the eco-degradation especially through the agency of women and the youth. Similarly, individuals, government, oil multinationals and other groups should recognize the importance of protecting and preserving natural habitats during and after extractive or exploratory activities. Investing in

eco-tourism is one way of properly harnessing natural resources to positively impact the environment as well as yield economic benefits for the region. This will in addition balance modern technology in the form of oil exploitation and ecological and environmental consciousness. It also involves strictly enforcing national and international laws. The writers are able to map the ecology of the region in their respective ways and deploy their artistic creations to ways of remedying a bad environmental situation compounded by local and global factors.

Conflicts of Interest

The author declares no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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