



Petro-Fiction and Pseudo-Environmental Activism: The Defining Moments in Chimeka Garricks' *Tomorrow Died Yesterday*

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Abstract

This study asserts that Chimeka Garricks' *Tomorrow Died Yesterday* illustrates pseudo-environmentalism, which exemplifies the need to pay attention to the various social issues marauding postcolonial societies mostly because of the indiscriminate plundering of humans and the environment. There is the need to consider the implication of neo-colonialism prevalent in the narrative, to discuss the factors stamping the choices of those advocating for an ecologically minded society. It is pertinent to identify what Olaoluwa Senayon calls the “tripartite system of ruination”—the oil companies in the region, the government’s agencies and the militants though there is a fourth identified and that is a group of individuals who enhances corruption in the region and the need to protect the environment alongside other social justice environmentalists seek. Garricks proves in the narrative the inconsistencies that surround the struggle or advocacy for ecological issues in Africa—the continent has some other socio-political and economic concerns and not until Africa gets to that level where corruption is curbed and there is a working system, many who desire to be environmentalists like those in the western societies will still be caught in the web of trouble with “the powers that be”, just as in the case of Amaibi. Therefore, the narrative falls short in its portrayal of an ideal ecocritical or eco-activist writing, using western ecocritical fundamentals. Arguably, the Niger Delta is already experiencing the apocalypse caused by the destruction of the natural habitat while western environmentalists are theorizing about it.

Subject Areas

Literature

Keywords

Eco-Activism, The Tripartite System of Ruination, Slow Violence, Deep Ecology, Pseudo-Environmentalism

1. Introduction

Chimeka Garricks' *Tomorrow Died Yesterday* (2010) explores another perspective on ecological discourse, thematically deviating from conventional environmental or nature writing—understandably so [1]. Having used various existing ecocritical paradigms, this study explicates certain themes and symbols in the narrative which are indicative of pseudo-environmental activism, *i.e.*, half-hearted concerns for environmental problems in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. Pseudo-environmental activism is reflected in a situational irony through the characters' approaches to environmental issues vis-à-vis the various problems plaguing the Niger Delta region, because of the dystopian-like government's affairs. The despicable condition, which is the aftermath of oil drilling in the region, has impacted *Tomorrow's* thematic preoccupation as it tilts towards activism against humans' unpleasant social milieus and characters are more concerned about their mental, physical and financial states than the condition of the natural world. This study finds that the anthropocentric¹ or anthroparchic² tone suggests that the text is rather socio-centric rather than ecocentric [2]. *Tomorrow* is an environmental fiction that views human interests as intrinsically linked with their surrounding environment.

2. Theoretical Approach

The critical lens used in this study is ecocriticism and its subset, postcolonial ecocriticism. Cheryll Glotfelty and Harold Fromm, discussing what conventional ecocriticism should be, maintain that it should, as a matter of necessity, take its stand on an earth-centred approach to literary studies. Glotfelty highlights the questions expected to be answered using ecocriticism. It should answer the question relating to the depiction of nature in a literary work. How spatial setting of a story impacts its overall effect? To what extent are the values expressed in the story of any value to ecology? How has our metaphoric treatment of the land influenced the way we treat it? Is there any categorization of nature writing as a genre of literature? Are men depicting nature in their writing the same way women would? Has literature influenced our understanding of nature? Is the climate crisis influencing our acceptance of "Green Literature" into existing forms of literature? Is there a point of convergence between the critical study of nature with other related fields such as history, psychology, philosophy, art, his-

¹It is "a philosophy or perspective that places intrinsic value on all living organisms and their natural environment, regardless of their perceived usefulness or importance to human beings".

²This refers to "a social system of attitudes, practices, and institutions through which the natural world is dominated to the benefit of humans".

tory, and ethics? Ecocriticism is different from other critical theories as other schools of literary criticism are limited to specific areas of human interactions, Ecocriticism encompasses the natural world in its entirety (Glotfelty, 1996) [3]. These questions are expected to be answered in any writing that is ecologically focused. However, there are evolving terms and concepts in ecocriticism and some of them will be deployed in this study.

Kate Rigby, a pioneer of environmental humanities, in her paper presentation on paradigm shifts in ecocriticism, discourses anthroparchy and some other evolving terms. Anthroparchy is like anthropocentrism and human chauvinism—a concept coined by Val Plumwood. Plumwood posits that human chauvinism infers that humans and other species are not the same because while humans have minds and spirits, non-humans do not. To Rigby, the consciousness that humans are a separate entity will continue to cause the “great divide”. This great divide is not recognised by societies that support the division between humans and other creatures and which is a factor in how humans treat non-humans. It is imperative, she suggests, to cross this “divide” to have a world that has respect for all creatures. It also means that humans should stop being hypocrites and understand that the manner they treat the environment will play a vital role in their desire to live peaceably.

Writing on environmental criticism, Lawrence Buell’s *The Future of Environmental Criticism: Environmental Crisis and Literary Imagination* (2006) explains the root cause of anthroparchy. He terms it “technodominationalism” and links it to the Bible and specifically in Genesis where it is written that God commands mankind to take dominion over all other creatures and to subdue them. Buell suggests that there has been an argument that the right word is “nurture” and not “dominion”. He uses this illustration to demonstrate the human-nature relationship that has existed since antiquity, calling attention to one of the causes of environmental problems in the world. Going further, he reveals:

Mayan mythography represents the gods as fashioning human beings after several false starts from corn gathered with the help of already-created animals, thereby symbolising the collective survival must exist between humans, plants and animals. (Buell, 2006) [4]

Unlike the Christian myth, Mayan tends to be *ecocentric* and it is what is expected of any writer of works on ecosystems and human society, but modern humanity seems to live in denial.

If Western fundamentals for environmental writing are factored into the consideration of *Tomorrow*, it would be heartily disappointing as it would not measure up to the standard set by Western ecocritics, as suggested by the lack of concrete depiction of the environment and its landscape before and after being despoiled by the oil companies. However, in his *Post-Structuralist Geography: A Guide to Relational Space* (2005), Jonathan Murdoch discusses the need to think of the dual relationship between nature and human society rather than just focusing on the environment alone (Murdoch, 2006: p. 456) [5]. Murdoch’s posi-

tion is supported by Julia Martin in her review of *Natures of Africa: Ecocriticism and Animal Studies in Contemporary Cultural Forms* (2016), written by Byron Caminero-Santangelo and edited by Moola Fiona. She maintains that: “African ecocriticism *is not a thing*. It cannot be. But what the collection does and quite insistently asks: how do we write ecocriticism in Africa, and/or about African texts?” (Martin, 2017) [6]. To her, it is not a thing because it is impossible to find one form of writing to be the unified basics for African ecocriticism. The book offers no definite response as to what African ecocriticism should be, but she suggests that by reading the nature of writings coming from various parts of the continent on the environment, one may be able to suggest it.

Huggan and Tiffin also explore the basis for some peculiarities to demand an African angle to ecological issues. It began with the western definition of humanity. At some point, it was considered that wherever non-European land or people are found, the colonisers believed in the not-human concept, and they took them to be a “space: unused, underused or empty.” (Huggan, 2010: p. 6) [7]. Therefore, they must use them all.

The above presupposition underpins colonising the people and their lands by the west and this same is linked with how the natural world is also treated. They explain this link further:

The very ideology of colonisation is thus one where anthropocentrism and Eurocentrism are inseparable, with the anthropocentrism underlying Eurocentrism being used to justify those forms of European colonialism that see indigenous cultures as “primitive”, less rational, and closer to children, animals and nature. (Huggan, 2010: p. 6) [7]

Ecocritical concerns have been categorized using the feminist nomenclatures of waves and hence there are first, second, third and fourth waves of ecocriticism. The first wave of ecocriticism is also termed deep ecology—a movement that advocates bilateral relationships between humans and non-humans. The ecocritics of the first wave believed that if humans took care of the natural world, all societal problems would be solved. Hence, you find the likes of Thoreau and Wordsworth re-emerging in twentieth-century writing. They romanticized the wilderness and mountains and made nature the providence of the earth. Buell explains that Norwegian philosopher Arne Naess coined the term “deep ecology and in his words, human being and human consciousness are thought to be grounded in intimate interdependence with the nonhuman living world.” (Buell, 2011: p. 90) [8]. Scholars, he asserts, who have been associated with this frame of mind and their works are Robert Pogue Harrison with his 1993 book *Forests: The Shadows of Civilization*, and Jonathan Bate, who in 1991 wrote *Romantic Ecology*, which launched the British ecocriticism and introduces Heideggerian ecocriticism in *The Song of the Earth* (2000).

In addition, he makes it succinctly clear that interest in “deep ecology” and inadvertently, what first-wave ecocriticism stands for has waned because of the growing scepticism about the “adequacy if not the inherent legitimacy of lines of

analysis that privilege subjective perception/experience as against social context/human collectivities.” (Buell, 2011: p. 91) [8]. This does not mean, according to Buell, that it is abandoned outright. The spiritual connection between humans and the non-human world cannot be jettisoned, especially with the perspective that he and Scott Slovic termed “narrative scholarship” in ecocritical practice—that is, critical work constructed as a cross-pollination of autobiographical and/or reported witnessing to personal experience and academic analysis (Buell, 2011: p. 91) [8]. One notable characteristic of the first wave of ecocriticism was “to try to make literary theory and criticism more scientifically informed, meaning especially by ecology, environmental biology, and geology.” (Buell, 2011: p. 91) [8].

However, the second wave emerged to reassert certain corrective measures to the existing literary tradition, as “revisionists” so desire. Contrary to the first wave’s beliefs, the second wave of ecocriticism emerged to postulate that there is a need to direct their attention to the sites of environmental devastation as depicted by Rachel Carson’s *Silent Spring*. The ecocritics of this second wave rejected Thoreau-Wordsworth’s influence on the first wave, though they understood the need sometimes to portray the pristine landscape as an implicit means to encourage readers to support the struggle against the despoliation of the environment, as Carson used in the pastoral opening of *Silent Spring*. Gerrard notes that Carson suggests in this fable that the catastrophe experienced is caused by humans. But then the fable concludes: “No witchcraft, no enemy action had silenced the rebirth of new life in this stricken world. The people had done it themselves.” (Gerrard, 2004) [9]. It is seemingly clearer to understand that at that point when Carson wrote *Silent Spring*, things had begun to take a drastic and unpleasant turn. The use of pesticides was blamed for the environmental problems in America with scientifically proven knowledge and since then, modern technology and economic factors have devastated more natural environments.

There have been several issues raised by environmentalists and one of them is environmental justice. This agenda has inspired interest in issues like gender, race, class and sexual preference. For instance, Kent Hiltner cites Bullard’s *Dumping in Dixie: Race, Class and Environmental Quality* (1990) on how “poor black communities in the Southern U.S., suffered more damage from air and water pollution, for example, as their communities were more often home to industrial operations and toxic dump.” (Hiltner, 2015) [10]

Two other waves have emerged lately to add to the body of knowledge already existing in ecocriticism. The third and fourth waves are interrelated in their approaches to environmental problems. The third wave’s ecocritics is more particular about seeing environmental issues as global issues rather than seeing them as national or racial problems. This phase, which began in 2000 though it was not named until the year 2009, posits, as does Patrick D. Murphy in his *Farther Afield in the Study of Nature-Oriented Literature*, (Patrick, 2000) [11] that ecocritics should place their national literary outputs “in an internationally rela-

tive and comparative framework”. The fourth wave is called material ecocriticism because it is used to focus on the corporeal aspect of all species. It considers the effect of the environment on the human body. It should be noted that material ecocriticism emanated recently from ecofeminism because of the fear of the negative impact the environment may be having on the human body. Stacy Alaimo, in her work entitled “Trans-corporeality”, discourses on trans-corporeality as a “posthumanist mode of new materialism and material feminism”. (Alaimo, 2008: p. 237) [12]. She explains further:

Trans-corporeality means that all creatures, as embodied beings, are intermeshed with the dynamic, material world, which crosses through them, transforms them and is transformed by them. While trans-corporeality as an ontology does not exclude any living creature, it does begin with the human, in order—paradoxically perhaps—to disrupt Western human exceptionalism. The figure/ground relation between the human and the environment dissolves as the outline of the human is traversed by substantial material interchange. (Alaimo, 2008: p. 237) [12]

In essence, the fourth wave, just like the third wave, relates largely to the generality of the world’s problems without leaving one section or species out. It is all-encompassing and that is the way material ecocriticism explores shared materiality rather than ecofeminist materiality alone.

From the above, it is evident that this study takes its clue from the first and second waves of ecocriticism for two reasons. The first reason is the fact that it intends to explore different factors in *Tomorrow* that indicate that it is pseudo-environmental activism as opposed to the preconceived perception about the Niger -Delta literature. The second is the one that succeeds more about it is about depicting the site of devastation taking place as second-wave ecocritics suggest.

Another important concept that is pertinent to this study is petrofiction as conceived by Amitav Ghosh and expounded by both Imre Szeman and Michael Rubenstein. Ghosh illuminates what petrofiction is and what was responsible for the dearth of fiction about petroleum in the existing literary canon. In his work “Petro-fiction: The Oil Encounter and the Novel” (1992), he highlights that petrofiction is a narrative about petroleum and the victims of oil. Petrofiction is activism for the environment and the people living in oil-producing communities. He speculates that one reason petrol-related themes have not been extensively portrayed has to do with the embarrassment it would cause those involved. Also, he identifies the fact that most places where oil is drilled did not have an early writing system and the majority were intricately communicating in their local languages, which is virtually verbal (Ghosh, 2002) [13].

Imre Szeman opts for oil fiction instead of petrofiction. And he believes that there is no way oil can be taken out of the world economic context as it contributes to the advancement the world is enjoying (Szeman, 2012) [14]. Commenting further, Graeme McDonalds posits that petrofiction is a wide literary spec-

trum that the intention of Ghosh may not be fully captured in a narrative. He is concerned about the ability of a narrative to warp both time and space together to capture the nitty-gritty of oil-related events. He asks relevant but sceptic questions on the viability and reliability of oil fiction to not become excessive hyperbolic or even “unreal” (Graeme, 2017) [15]. McDonald’s concern is reasonable, especially among people who have not seen firsthand the level of degradation writers of oil fiction endeavour to depict. It is the same instance that will make this type of fiction read like a dystopic novel. Lastly, Michael Rubenstein discusses some fundamental issues as he strives to deliver a broader and well-explained meaning of petrofiction. One of his key expressions is “profoundly uneven distribution of oil’s benefit”, (Michael Rubenstein, 2014) [16] and it comes to show the degree of frustration that comes with knowing the kind of marginalization of people living in oil communities like the Niger Delta of Nigeria. This avoidable quagmire has consequences for both the people and the natural world. In the subsequent paragraphs, this study considers how Garricks uses *Tomorrow* to project an anthroparchic narrative that than a more ecocentric one.

Huggan and Tiffin also explore the basis for the imperialist exploitation of the non-European “world”. It began with the western definition of humanity. At some point, it was considered that whatever non-European land or people are found, they believed in the “not-human concept”, and they took them to be a “space: unused, underused or empty.” (Huggan, 2010: p. 5) [7]. Therefore, they must use them all.

The above presupposition underpins colonising the people and their lands by the west and this same is linked with how the natural world is also treated. They explain this link further.

3. Synopsis and Backdrop to *Tomorrow Died Yesterday*

It is imperative to consider the backdrop to the narrative’s spatial and temporal settings as it will enhance our understanding of our how Garricks came about his contextualised approach to eco-discourse. Crude oil is present in commercial quantities in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. The history of oil in Nigeria is traced to 1956, but by the year 1958, it was already generating revenue for the country. According to Ibaba Samuel Ibaba:

The country moved away from agriculture, which hitherto provided the revenue base, and to dependency mainly on oil for revenue and foreign exchange (Usman, 2008). Notably, oil and gas contribute 40 per cent of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP), 90 per cent of total earnings, and 87 per cent of gross national income (Akinola, 2010). The country earned \$500 billion from oil between 1960 and 2006 (Nafziger, 2008). Other estimates indicate that the country also generates \$4 billion annually from the export of natural gas (Obi, 2009; Ibaba *et al.*, 2012: p. 219) [17].

They further reinforce the concern that is the most relevant to this study by saying that despite the large amount of money generated, the country and espe-

cially the region (which generates the revenue for the country) is still one of the poorest places to live in Africa.

Poverty is not a strong enough term to describe the prevailing problems in the Delta region. The people can barely survive on their main source of livelihood: fishing and farming. The mismanagement and lack of sustainable programmes to keep the habitat safe for the people and other creatures led to the uprising experienced in the region. It became more persistent with the murder of Ken Saro Wiwa and eight others on 10 November 1995 (Peel, 2009) [18]³. It suggests therefore that the lack of government interest and political will to listen to the plea of the people whose lives have been threatened by the incessant oil leakage led to environmental militancy in the region.

The volatile situation in the region has influenced the genre of African literature called Petro-fiction and a few authors have made their voices known on the issues of ecological degradation and dehumanisation at varying degrees. JP Clark is one of the forerunners of writers in Nigeria and has crafted his position in *All for Oil* (2000), Tanure Ojaide, a poet and a novelist also wrote *The Activist* (2010), and Kaine Agary considers eco-feminism in *Yellow Yellow* (2010). Other writers of plays, poems and novels include Ahmed Yerima's *Hard Ground* (2006), Ibiwari Ikiriko's "Oily Tears of the Delta" (1999), Nnimmo Bassey's "We Thought It Was Oil But It Was Blood" (2002), and Helon Habila's *Oil on Water* (2010) as well as Garricks' *Tomorrow Died Yesterday*. Regrettably, none of them can be discussed here because of the limited space available. *Tomorrow*, among others, has been chosen because of the temporality of the events in the novel, which should afford the study rarity of academic contribution.

The novel, *Tomorrow Died Yesterday*, discusses the lives of four friends and gives each of them a platform to narrate their perspectives. The narrative focuses on the prevalent socio-economic and socio-political concerns in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria, where it is set. Garricks paints pictures of the devastating effects of mismanaged oil drilling in Asiamma and its environs and how corruption aids it to flourish unchecked. These friends are Tubo who works for Imperial Oil, Kaniye who is trained as a lawyer but decides to be a cook, Doye who is also known as Doughboy and who is the leader of one of the militants' groups, and lastly, Amaibi, the protagonist who is a lecturer and the said environmentalist. He is asked to help deliver the ransom demanded by Doughboy for the release of a kidnapped white expatriate, but the unexpected death of Brian Manning (the kidnapped victim) puts him in trouble with "the powers that be". He manages to escape being sentenced as Kaniye defends him in court. Doughboy is also eventually killed. Three characters: Amaibi, Tubo and Doye are x-rayed in the analysis section to identify pseudo-environmental activism and anthroparchy, respec-

³Michael Peel, *A Swamp Full of Dollars: Pipeline and Paramilitaries at Nigeria's Oil Frontiers*, (Illinois: Lawrence Hill Books, 2009) discusses the genesis of the crisis in the Niger Delta region: "The Saro-Wiwa executions marked the start of an era of deepening problems for the oil industry in the Delta, during which its legitimacy has come more and more under attack. Other larger ethnic groups—able to mobilize far more people than Saro-Wiwa—saw how effective the Ogoni protest had been in grabbing world attention". p. 7.

tively.

4. Literature Review

There are very few critical works on *Tomorrow*, especially those that probe why Garricks chose to explore human-focused petrofiction. Ijenebe Anwuri and Adebua Babatunde Olanrewaju write on eco-activism in the novel, explicating the text as a crusader against the destructive ramifications on the natural habitat of the oil industry's activities in the region and their negative impact on the local population (Anwuri, 2020) [19]. They use the second-wave ecocritical purview which says that ecocriticism should not only pay attention to the ruins caused on nature but should explore the effects on human lives. This, in a way, supports the reasoning of Garricks' *Tomorrow*.

On *Tomorrow* being an anthroparchic text, Tarkpegher Henry Terngu, in his article, explores two of the dominant issues in the novel: illegal oil bunkering and kidnapping and the reasons behind them. He cites the instance when Soboye tutors Doye that bunkering is not stealing because you cannot steal *what belongs to you*. Such expression shows Soboye's impressionistic view on nature's product (oil)– how humans consciously dominate nature for their benefit. Again, he points out that the hopelessness of the lives of the people of Asiamas leads to the issue of oil bunkering and kidnapping (Terngu, 2020) [20]. Like Terngu's work, Cornel Onyemauche Ujowundu's work also analyses *Tomorrow* from the perspective of the impacts of human desperation and insensitivity on their fellow humans (Ujowundu, 2015) [21]. He mentions that it is not only the government that should be faulted for their woes because people like Chief Ikaki and the king who are representatives of the people are not having their interests at heart. Ujowundu's work buttresses humans' insensitivity towards other creatures.

Oyebanji Ayodele, in his review, explains the title of the novel as it connotes the hopelessness the people face in the region. What he fails to do is to link such a dearth of a good life for the people to the hopelessness of the environment that is malignantly destroyed through human greed (Oyebanji, 2021) [22]. Arguably, there is no critique yet on Garricks' tendency to write on the ecological matter in Africa through a perspective different from the well-established ecocritical conventions.

Uchenna Ohagwam argues that *Tomorrow* serves its intended purpose as a political novel. This is apt based on his reasons which included the fact that most of the literature churned out from the Niger Delta is political. Ohagwam indicates that three political issues are at the burning bonnets of writers from this region and these issues he explored in both *Tomorrow* and *Yellow Yellow* by Kaine Agary. They include: "the agitation for resource control, environmental degradation and the problem of militancy." (Ohagwam, 2022) [23]. The position maintained by Ohagwam, like many other writers who have critiqued *Tomorrow*, argues against the position this study is based on. As will be later observed, the argument of this study is to expunge the "environmentalist tag" on the novel.

It is rather taken as a political commentary than being grouped among works which discourse environmental activism.

5. Textual Analysis of *Tomorrow*

Evaluating *Tomorrow* can help us to understand the undefined definition of African ecocriticism. How is nature portrayed in the novel? Unsurprisingly, Garrick has depicted nature (the ocean) in the narrative as a harbinger of misfortune to the people of the Niger Delta. Nature (ocean) becomes the channel deployed by the Portuguese explorers who come to impregnate the women in Ofirima (or Snake Island) and leave them with half-cast children who neither belong to the society nor have fathers to call theirs, as in the case of Tubo. Later, through the same Island, the British come to trade in human flesh:

Time passed. A century later, five British ships set out from Liverpool and Bristol with a cargo of muskets, alcohol and cloth. They stopped by the scenic Asiama Island, and the people, ever forgetful of their history, elected to meet the British in Amafi Village. Like the Portuguese before them, the British were also interested in the commerce of flesh, but in flesh commerce that did not mean sex. ([1]: p. 56)

Also, nature, in the form of “oil”, instead of being a source of blessing to the people, brings a curse— the “resource curse” discussed in Rob Nixon’s *Slow Violence and Environmentalism of the Poor* (2011). He discourses the prevalent problems associated with fossil fuels and hence postulates the concept of “doubleness” linked to the “resource curse” and the concept of “denial”. “Resource curse” is the “fortunes and misfortunes” attached to the discovery of natural resources. He poignantly asserts:

Moreover, the “resource curse” compresses huge, fraught questions about ownership: what does it mean to be possessed or dispossessed, politically, economically, and spiritually? What are the repercussions of having mineral belongings that undermine a community or society’s capacity to belong? And what forces turn belongings—those goods, in a material and an ethical sense—into evil powers that alienate people from the very elements that have sustained them, environmentally and culturally, as all that seemed solid melts into liquid tailings, oil spills, and plumes of toxic air? (Nixon, 2022) [24]

Still, in Nixon’s work, the expected 1997 scene that leads to the killing of Doye’s father and the raping of Dise can also be referenced. The soldiers arrive in their boats, which are transported on water. Nature (the ocean) has not been a source of blessing to the people. There is irony in this narrative’s portrayal of the socio-political and ecological realities in the Niger Delta region.

Discussing further how Garricks portray the supposed African ecocriticism takes us to the next level of considering the realities presented, which are complex. Nature itself is pristine and innocuous. Hence, the African society before

the incursion of the Europeans could be likened to the unfettered natural world. As Jared Angira evinces in the first verse of his poem entitled “Expelled”, everything is fine before the intrusion: (Angira, 2021) [25]⁴

We had traded in this market *competitively perfect*. Till *you* came, in the *boat*, and polished goodwill approval from high order all pepper differentials denied flag-bearers and cut out our ribs, dried our cows the vaccine from the lake burst the cowshed, the draught you bought planted on the marketplace, the tree of memory⁵.

Nature cannot be blamed for the consequences of exploiting it to the detriment of humans since the scramble for development or civilisation has been on the front burner of the North. Secondly, oil is supposed to be a blessing from nature to humankind but the inability to support it and the greediness of the leaders of the people make it a curse to the Asiana people.

As mentioned earlier, metaphors are important tools of writing in literature and this study will take a step further to discuss the various probable metaphors in the narrative and how they contribute to the argument raised that humans are still very much anthropomorphic but pretend to be doing what deep ecology (a movement or a body of concepts that considers humans no more important than other species and that advocates a corresponding radical readjustment of the relationships between humans and nature) advocates and that Garricks has taken it upon himself to write about the environment in a peculiar manner of discussing ecocriticism in Africa and it fits his social-cultural entity. Garricks’ focus here is on the connection between people and nature, the community and their environment, and conveys his point about the destructive nature of oil drilling in the delta by exploring its effects on his characters rather than elaborate descriptions of the environment itself. This imagery (arranged in order of importance) includes the title of the novel—*Tomorrow Died Yesterday*, Amaibi’s leg amputation, the raping of Dise, Amaibi’s violent protest at the killing of a small crab, Tubo calling gas flare hellfire and, later, ironically becoming a worker in one of the companies that bring hell to his people, and Amaibi regaining his lost sexual potency comes last.

Firstly, the title of the novel suggests different instances of the lack of precaution and the hypocrisy of man towards the environment. Let us begin with the 1997 gruesome incident in Asiana, it metaphorically represents the yesterday of Doye and Amaibi. Doye loses his tomorrow in the aftermath of his father’s death caused by the soldiers and Amaibi likewise, inadvertently, loses his wife and po-

⁴Angira’s poem appears in different anthologies but for easy access.

⁵“Expelled” expresses one of the concerns of Postcolonial literature and we can perceive the same tone needed in African ecocritical discourse in it. It demonstrates the cause-and-effect order of the incursion of the Europeans into Africa—exploitation leads to hopelessness and more significantly, the goodwill they bring do not bring any good to Africans and if this is juxtaposed with postcolonial ecocriticism, we can see how neo-colonialism continues where colonialism stopped. This time, the goodwill brought is called “development” and “economic growth” but ironically it is not just exploiting the total wellbeing of the people through oil drilling, it is also not given them any hope of a tomorrow by despoiling their mean if survival-nature.

tency because of the same unfortunate and avoidable military attack. One can guess that the only difference between Amaibi's and Doye's reactions after the incident is that one is educated but the other is not. Youths in the region who are like Doye and Amaibi suffer untold hardship and certain emotional conflict, which result in them becoming militants as their final resort. The insensitivity of government agencies like the military causes this and their tomorrow keeps dying yesterday in the hands of those who should protect them. The ecocritical angle of the same metaphor could suggest the discovery of oil in the 1950s, which means the "yesterday" of the people. Unfortunately, the inability of the government to do what is needed in the region about oil leakage and gas flaring cannot give the natural world and invariably the people any hope of a better tomorrow. Nature should come first in this instance because it determines so much about the survival of the people but humans, as demonstrated by Doye's and Amaibi's reactions to the 1997's incident, fight for themselves to their detriment, ignorant of the recursive repercussions of their actions.

Secondly, the loss of Amaibi's leg is not by accident and it suggests that the human body is a system and functions well when every defining part is intact. Such a body system could represent the state of things in the socio-political and economic systems in the Niger Delta and their bilateral relationship with the environment. It suggests that just as Amaibi has a "phantom limb", the sensational feeling that his amputated leg is still there, so will the collapsed system in Nigeria be believed to be working and so will the world at large feel nature is unaffected by their anthropogenic activities. They feel everything is normal and functioning well, but they have forgotten that according to deep ecology, the natural world is an integral part of society and therefore if you damage it, you will cause great damage to humanity. Not until there is a snap out of such phantom limb experience will it not be known the degree of damage done to nature and its implications. It also buttresses the fact that humans have not embraced deep ecology (a relatively radical approach against the belief that humans are superior to nature) because they have not felt the great consequences of their neglect of nature.

Amaibi retorts: "I can't believe I'm going to lose my leg. No matter how hard I try, my mind can't seem to accept the fact. Perhaps after the surgery, I'll come to terms with it". ([1]: p. 15). It may also be too late before the Government of Nigeria realises the ruins caused by the lack of a functional system in the oil drilling in the Niger Delta. Amaibi regains his freedom but may never recover from the trauma of losing a leg. How lovely would it have been if losing his leg was for the cause of the environmental struggle and not because he supports Doye's enterprise!? Garricks uses this as a punishment for his insensitivity. But he claims to be an environmentalist, a claim which evidence suggests that he, not the author, is a pseudo-environmental activist. Garricks uses him to illustrate his point that the suffering of the people of the Delta region would constantly make them take a human-centred approach to deal with their problems since environmental justice is too abstract.

Thirdly, one of the narrative's grisly scenes is the rape of Amaibi's pregnant

wife, Dise, who is Kaniye's half-sister. Dise, here, stands for nature: she is the environment despoiled by humans. The soldiers triumph over her helpless body in the same manner as humans out of lust for more, have triumphed over nature. Amaibi agonizingly reports: "His face was contorted with a vicious snarl of triumph." (284). This, in a way, is a demonstration of what anthroparchy ("an institution through which the natural world is dominated to the benefit of humans") represents. The natural world is Dise who has been dominated by the soldiers (humankind) to the benefit of their sexual lust (scramble for development). The scene and its aftermath also evoke another metaphor—Amaibi becomes radical from that very day. It suggests that when you damage the environment, you inadvertently damage something in human existence.

Fourthly, the case against Amaibi in this study is not the same as he faces in the narrative but centres on this hypocrisy. This is understandable as mentioned above. When he is a child, playing alongside his friends, he gets angry to the extent of almost hitting Doye with a stick for killing a small crab. The question is this: is that reaction a form of innate reflex action, a show of his love for non-human creatures? The response will be "no" because obviously, it does not hurt his feelings in any way whatsoever. Would he have responded to Doye in the same manner if he had cut down a tree or a sprouting flower? If the answer to this is "no", then it means Amaibi is thinking of the benefits he will get from such a crab should it be allowed to be matured. This suggests the contradictory practices in Africa where they keep and fight for what serves their stomach and emotion but care less about other natural components. It should be expected of a people whose survival is dependent on what nature provides them, in form of fish and other sea animals.

Fifthly, in one of the four friends' childhood playtime, Tubo calls gas flare "hell fire". He declares and further ignorantly describes it:

"Of course, it's hellfire, Amaibi!" Then he threw a challenge, "Has anyone seen that fire stop burning? Tell me, have you?" See the pipe that the fire is coming out from? Well, let me tell you something that you don't know. The pipe leads straight down to hell. If not for the fire that is coming out of the pipe, you can go down, go really deep and you will see the devil himself. ([1]: p. 72)

The above statement is evidence of the ignorance of the child it comes from. However, taking this statement literarily, one may opine that the use of "hellfire" in this context is significant. The image of hellfire is that of unpleasantness, ruin, destruction, of tration, and endless suffering. Just as Dante declares in *Inferno*—"Abandon all hope, ye who enter here", everyone, other than the chiefs, living in Asiamia is distraught and constantly dismayed (Dante, 1970) [26]. Nature has been exploited and the result is that it has brought hell down upon the people. It is probably the reason Garricks has chosen to write about the people's survival from the hell they live in.

Sixthly, Tubo's employment opportunity at Imperial Oil is symbolic. As a

child, he suggests to his friends that gas flaring is hellfire, and this means, symbolically, the state of things in the Niger Delta community especially, the condition of the natural world, as well. Ironically, among his friends, he is the one who finds a “lucrative job” in one of the companies that bring hell to his people. Interpreting his act suggests that most people are selfish and think of only themselves without any consideration of the greater harm their incessant contamination of the environment is causing humans. Tubo’s childhood is ignorant but his adulthood, like that of Amaibi’s, is selfish. They want a good life at the expense of other species.

Lastly, Amaibi regains his lost sexual drive while in prison. He puts it this way: “I was struck with the symbolism in my body. The first was a mark of death and defeat. The other was a symbol of life and defiance” (p. 35). He has given up in life before, but this sudden turn of events invigorates him and by then he is ready to fight for his life. He hopes to continue the fight after he has rested enough and then makes it clear that he will never support violence again.

In conclusion, we consider the African ecocritical stance in the narrative and though we may empathise with Amaibi for the many tragedies that befall him, he lacks the same energy and conscious effort needed to defend his environment. In the same spirit, he becomes untamed twice because people have done things that affect his physical and emotional needs: crab is food for his body while Dise provides emotional comfort. Garricks has portrayed him as one who wishes to be an eco-activist because of the knowledge he has, unfortunately, he is not emotionally fit. He supports violence that he is sure will not decrease environmental degradation but worsen it.

Despite all the tragic experiences of the different characters, Garricks ends the narrative on a good note. It may be a deliberate effort to give a sense of hope to the hopelessness symbolised by Amaibi regaining his lost potency and being reunited with his wife, Dise. If there is such hope for humankind, there should be for the environment because the former’s survival is dependent on the survival of the latter. This is what Garricks sermonises in the narrative though indirectly. His work is eco-focused but he decides to concentrate on the impact despoiling the natural world is having on the people.

6. Conclusion

Garricks focuses indirectly on postcolonial ecocriticism, which exemplifies the need to pay attention to the various social issues marauding postcolonial societies. There is the need to consider the implication of neo-colonialism prevalent in the narrative, to discuss the factors stamping the choices of those advocating for an ecologically minded society and to identify what Senayon calls the tripartite system of ruination—the oil companies in the region, the government’s agencies and the militants and the need to protect the environment alongside other social justices we seek [27]. Garricks proves in the narrative the inconsistencies that surround the struggle or advocacy for ecological issues in Afri-

ca—the continent has some other social concerns and not until Africa gets to that level where corruption is curbed and there is a working system, many who desire to be environmentalists like those in the western societies will still be caught in the web of trouble with “the powers that be”, just as in the case of Amaibi. Arguably, Africa is already experiencing the apocalypse caused by the destruction of the natural habitat while western environmentalists are theorising it.

Conflicts of Interest

The author declares no conflicts of interest.

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