

Eco-narratives as Potent Platforms for Eco-consciousness in Nigeria

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Abstract

*The devastating effects of environmental as well as climate-related issues caused by the unsustainable human activities is of central concern of most Nigerian “eco-narratives. Eco-narratives are aimed not just to raise awareness but to provoke an emotional response, encouraging readers to engage more deeply with climate change and consider their role in driving change towards sustainable practices. Eco-writers as eco-warriors use story telling techniques to highlight the environmental impact and explore the potential consequences of the current ecological issues. They write to call for the urgent need to mitigate the damage caused by the unchecked human activities, like climate change, pollution, habitat destruction, the loss of biodiversity and livelihoods. This negative human impact creates a less stable and potentially inhospitable planet Earth for the present and future generations. Despite these severe potential threats, many Nigerians are still oblivious and apathetic about this impending danger on the “planet Earth”. As such, there is urgent need to educate and change the mind-sets of people who are still unconcerned about this impending environmental danger, if the planet earth is to be preserved. It is against this backdrop that this paper explores eco-narratives as potent platforms for ‘Eco-consciousness’ in Nigeria. It employed socio-ecological literary theory as its theoretical framework to analyse Garrick Chimeka’s *Tomorrow Died Yesterday* (2020), Mary Ifeoma Nwoye’s *Oil Cemetery* (2015), Niyi Osundare’s *The “Eye of the Earth”* and Nnimmo Bassey’s *“Do Watchmen Sleep?”* in order to highlight their Eco-concern and call for ‘collective Eco-nonviolent action’ over the widespread pollution and environmental damage caused by human activities. This is to portray Nigeria’s eco-narratives as potent platforms for “fostering and inspiring eco-justice/eco-activism” to challenge the present anthropocentric worldviews and promote sustainable practices and equitable future.*

Keywords: Eco-writers, Eco-narratives, Eco-consciousness, Eco-activism/ Eco-justice, Anthropocentric worldviews, Sustainable practices, Equitable future

Introduction

The strong critique of the present anthropocentrism is what shaped and preoccupied contemporary Nigeria’s eco-narratives. These views are belief that humans are the central and most significant entities in the world. It is also the present perspective that places human and interests above those of other species and the environment and viewing non-human beings as having only instrumental value rather than intrinsic value. This human-centred worldview where humans are seen as separate from and superior to nature, as well as, resource for human benefit, leading to an instrumental view of non-human life and potentially justifying human-centred actions even at the detriment of the environment are what influenced Nigeria eco-narratives. Emily Brownell and Toyin Falola, also capture the present situation as, “a massive human intervention in landscapes and [...] encroachment of the modern world into [African] nature” (1). Sule Egya adds his voice to this, that, “Before ...the petrodollar capitalism,

consequent upon it, the environmental imaginary realised itself in the cohabitation of human and nonhumans in local communities driven by a system of interdependence..." (26). The fact is there has been a global profound shift in the relationship between man and nature today.

The present unchecked human-centered view leading to ecological degradation and pose severe risk to the nation's security, stability, economy and public health and future generations. Oluseye, Abiodun Babatunde in his work, "Inscribing the Environment: An Eco-Critical Study of Third-generation Nigerian Poetry in English", lends credence to this, when he says, "...Indeed, this endless and reckless damage chain to the ecosystem appears extreme and uncontrollable" (5). Thus, Nigeria is currently grappling with the complex climate crises as a result of humans' anti-ecological activities. Susan Griffin, lends credence to this in her work "Split Culture", when she asserts that, "Individuals who adopt a new culture or civilisation that places human beings above nature ultimately distance themselves from the interconnectedness inherent in the natural order" (11). No doubt, this act or notion of "progress or development" in postcolonial nations like Nigeria, pushes both humans and nonhumans to the brink. Sule Egya in his work titled "*Nature Environment and Activism in Nigerian Literature*," further describes this situation as:

The Nigerian landscape experiences significant strain due to the construction of technological infrastructure, which exerts considerable influence on the natural environment... Nigeria is currently grappling with the consequences of climate change, primarily characterised by an increase in precipitation, resulting in excessive rainfall, flooding, erosion, desertification, and drought, etc. the literary works are concerned with the creation of the modern space, through urbanisation to cater for modern life and how the creation profoundly affects the physical environment... (6)

From the foregoing, it is evident that the state of the intricate relationships between man and nature have been disrupted as a result of the present anthropocentric belief. David Abraham in his work "The Commonwealth of Breath," raises a significant inquiry into the nature of climate change today and lends credence to this, when he observes that, "climate change can be seen as an outcome stemming from our disregard or lack of awareness towards the fundamental medium in which we are deeply immersed. Is global warming or global weirding not a direct outcome resulting from the disregard for the atmosphere?" (291). The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's (IPCC) report, also confirms this. No doubt, this compounds the nation's fragility risk today. It is in line with this that Ehrlich, Paul and Anne Ehrlich, advise that, "Permit many people to gain awareness of the ecosystem services upon which their lives depend" (325).

More so, Heise "...in order to reconnect with the natural world, individuals need to develop a sense of place by getting to know the details of the ecosystems that immediately surround them" (28). Vice-president Al Gore also in his notable work, *Earth in the Balance: Forging a New Common Purpose*, in a sobering statement warns that, "Unless we find a way to dramatically change our civilisation and our way of thinking about the relationship between humankind and the earth, our children will inherit a wasteland" (1992). It is with this mindset, that this paper aims to explore the ecological concerns in Garrick Chimeka's *Tomorrow Died Yesterday* (2020) and Mary Ifeoma Nwoye's *Oil Cemetery* (2015), Niyi Osundare's "The Eye of the Earth" and Nnimmo Bassey's "Do Watchmen Sleep?" to highlight the eco-moral ethics in Nigerian eco-narratives. Nigeria' eco-narrative present environmentalism not just as preservation but as pragmatic pathways to social and eco-justice, fairness as well as cultural preservation in order to promote an earth-centered morality for the future generations.

Theoretical Framework

This study adopts socio-ecological literary theory as its theoretical framework. Socio-ecological literary theory is an approach that integrates principles from social and ecocriticism to examine the complex, intertwined relationship between literature, culture, society and the physical environment. From this perspective it analyses literature by examining the intricate interplay between human societies (social systems) and natural world (ecological systems), viewing environmental issues as products of social hierarchies, power structures and injustice, urging for an integrated understanding, where social change drives ecological sustainability. In fact, it is a framework to understand literature as a reflection of our deeply intertwined social and ecological existence and urging for solutions to environmental problems, hence its adoption as theoretical framework of this study.

Nigerian Eco-fiction and its Role in Eco-consciousness

Eco-fiction, also known as "eco fiction" or "eco-fiction," is a genre of literature that explores the relationships between humans and the natural world through fictional stories. These stories often reflect important connections, dependencies, and interactions between humans and their surrounding environment. Eco-fiction, as a subgenre of environmental literature, aims to explore the ethical dimensions of climate change, particularly its disproportionate impact on vulnerable communities and future generations. Nigerian eco fiction does not only entertain readers but also encourage them to reflect on the relationship between humanity and the physical environment, highlighting the consequences of traditional and industrial practices on the natural world. Through these engaging and insightful stories, eco fiction contributes to the broader goals of environmental literature by fostering awareness, empathy and a sense of responsibility toward our planet and its diverse ecosystems.

The fact is Nigerian history and literature have shown that the issue of ecological despoliation exists from precolonial to date. In the face of the present escalating environmental and climate related issues, contemporary Nigerian eco-writers like Helon Habila, Tanure Ojaide, May Nwoye, Kaine Agary, Isidore Okpemehor, Wale Okediran, Aliyu Kamal among others have begun to use this genre to portray the consequences of 'human's anti-ecological activities and notion of progress'. It is in view of this that William Slaymaker, asserts that, Nigerian literature is a treasure trove for the eco-centric and literary environmentalist" (130). Egya corroborates that:

Nigerian literature, perhaps more than any other national literatures in Africa remains rich resource with which to validate the argument that nature and environment, the abiotic and the biotic life forms and indeed the relationship between the human and the nonhuman, have long been thematised in Africa before the emergence of what we now know as ecocriticism. (3)

The above affirms Slaymaker's view about contemporary Nigerian eco-fiction as a treasure trove for the eco-centric and literary environmentalist. Today, there are so many notable Nigerian evocative eco-narratives that confront our ecological reality, making the environment central to their narratives and the devastating human experience. It is in line with this that Uzoechi Nwagbara observes that "In more recent times, Nigerian writers have used literature to interrogate the goings-on in the Nigerian environment that pose a threat to our environment, Nature and society at large. An essential facet of this interrogation is eco-poetry" (206). This is simply why Wale Okediran, avers that, "Many Nigerian eco-writers and artists are using different forms of powerful and enduring narratives on the vagaries of oil exploration and its attendant ecological problems to enrich the country's environmental literature" (1).

Role of Eco-fiction

Nigerian eco-narratives are aimed at fostering readers' critical understanding of human-driven impacts on the natural environment and its cohabitants. This eco-genre, does not only reflect modern-day society but also helps readers think about their relationships with the ecosystems. According to Denis Vaz:

The emphasis on the environment by eco-writers as an active participant in the narrative allow authors to explore the complex interactions between humans and their surroundings, ultimately contributing to a deeper understanding of environmental issues and human-drive-environment relationships. Environmental literature plays a crucial role in shaping public awareness and attitudes towards environmental issues and social change. (2)

Similarly, Singh, Jun, in his work "Role of Literature to Promote Environmental Awareness" avers that, "One way that literature raises environmental awareness is through nature writing. Nature writing is a genre of literature that celebrates the natural world and encourages readers to appreciate and protect it..." (1828). It is in view of this, that this study critically analysis Garrick Chimeka's *Tomorrow Died Yesterday*, Mary Ifeoma Nwoye's *Oil Cemetery* to justify these claims.

Garricks' *Tomorrow Died Yesterday*, is a good example of Nigerian eco-fiction that portrays environmental issues and narrative techniques that depicts ecological issues and call for collective action. For instance, Garricks uses "eco-moral imperative questioning strategy" in his novel to address issues of gas flaring which is the major driver of climate change in the entire country by using Dr Amaibi Akassa a character in his novel. Akassa I the novel asks Mr Granger one of the oil expatriates, "How about stopping Imperial Oil from gas flaring in Aslama? 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 have made a commitment to end gas flaring in the near future. We hope..." (15). Mr Granger's response is evasive so Akassa continued, "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 Aslama 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).

Again, Amaibi Tubo and other Aslama youths narrate their experiences and describe how deadly 'gas flaring' in the Niger Delta is, 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 Aslama River, but it was visible from everywhere on Aslama 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)

"Hellfire" in the above excerpt is Garricks' symbolic representation of "a place of eternal torment and destruction" of our 'planet Earth' in order to draw our attention and call for action against environmental exploiters and destroyers. After Amaibi the protagonist is release from prison, the journalist asks him, "Are you going to continue to fight to protect the environmental rights of the Niger Delta people in a violent way?" (269). Amaibi finally says that, "...we must

ask ourselves what has violent achieved for our people? ... But I refuse to give up hope. We need to change the way we do things. (270). This eco-moral question reflects Garricks' vision of 'collective nonviolent eco-resistance strategy' and resilience to achieve systemic change in Nigeria.

Again, in Mary Ifeoma Nwoye's *Oil Cemetery*, the oil discovery and industrial development in Ubulu oil community in the Niger Delta eventually results to pollution of their land, water, air as well as, causing frequent premature death and disaster to the community. For instance, the news of the death of Mama Boy's son which the narrator narrates, thus:

...Masses of the people gathered at the village square shouting, wailing and swearing ...The boy had been the only one helping the family. Since the fish business stopped, Mama Boy had tried and failed at several other means of making money- and then the fuel business set in, he had scooped fuel successfully on four occasions, bringing in good money for the family, he'd even been able to pay for his father's drugs. It was his fifth attempt that ended in the disaster that consumed him. (125-126)

The above alludes the negative impact of industrialization in Ubulu and the entire nation. After the painful death of Mama Boy's son, the narrator recounts that, "...Another wave of agony swept the through the community each time more pathetic than before... Both husband and wife were buried near the disaster ground." (126). These incidences resonate with the symbolic title of the novel, as the narrator further explains thus, "The community named the place THE OIL CEMETERY, because it harboured the bodies of their sons and daughters, brought down by the greed for oil..." (126). More so, Rita as the protagonist in the novel reveals the devastating impacts of oil exploration in the Nwoye's novel that:

...Our land has been given out without our consent for oil exploration. No one cared how we felt: no one sought our opinion. That constitutes a great injustice to our people. And as a result, our environment is totally polluted. Our water is contaminated. Go down the creeks and see: the rivers look like rivers of death. The fish are disappearing for lack of oxygen ... Our livestock are dying. Our schools are dilapidated. Our roads are terrible.... Our people are dying in great numbers; there are no hospitals ...there is an urgent need for action. What we are saying is that we are tired! Enough is enough! (142-143)

The above excerpt shows Nwoye's vision of eco-consciousness as she portrays the devastating negative impacts of oil exploration and exploitation to influence the readers' critical understanding of environmental issues caused by human-driven activities in Nigeria, in order to call for an alternative and sustainable ways of minimizing environmental impact and promote long-term planetary health.

The foregoing reveal that Garricks and Nwoye's novels explore the relationship between humans and the natural world to foster ecological consciousness, moving beyond simple nature descriptions to focus on our interconnectedness, environmental crisis and offering alternative ways of living. The two novels are preoccupied with the aim of changing readers' perceptions and behaviours and not just to describe landscape. In fact, they have the ability to immerse readers in vivid, often dystopian, scenarios that underscore the urgency of addressing environmental challenges and catalyse meaningful change from anthropocentric to an eco-centric worldview. Garricks and Nwoye's novels are vivid example of the growing urgency to reimagine environmental ethics in Nigeria through storytelling. They highlight how contemporary authors engage with ecological themes not merely as backdrops but as central

elements shaping character, plot and ideology. These novels may be viewed as synchronous novels that dare to expose the exclusive lives of both the colonisers and the colonised in relation to the environment. Reading the two novels together gives a balanced representation of the impact of fossil fuels, colonialism and globalization and other human activities in order to stop all forms of actions that engender our planet earth. As Rob Nixon would say, “No homeland will be secured if we convert the Mother-Earth into biological weapon that threatens biology itself” (232).

Nigerian Eco-poetry and its Role

Presently, a multitude of environmental poetry are occupying a prominent place in Nigerian and global literary spheres. In recent time, Nigeria has recorded prominent poets like Niyi Osundare', Nnimmo Bassey, Tanure Ojaide, Asonye Tess, Joe Ushie, Iquo Diana Abasi and among others. These eco-poets critique the exploitation of natural resources to draw attention to the ways in which environmental degradation disproportionately affects vulnerable nations like Nigeria in the twenty-first century. They are also renowned for their eco-poetic commitment and style and commitment to defending Nigeria's ecology. It is in view of this that Osundare avers that “... Poetry has become a tool for setting things right ... Genuine poetry raises political songs; political songs directly or indirectly. It tells kings about the corpses which line their way to the throne. It tells the rich about the skulls in their cupboards ...” (100).

Nigeria eco-poets also write to lament the ecological collapse by revealing that the increasing level of environmental degradation by the world's mining industries are unsustainable. This is because the present massive expansions of mineral exploration and exploitation in the country is at the expense of human and non-humans' livelihoods. The fact remains that this Nigeria eco-genre plays an important role in the ongoing ‘global greening campaigns’ of raising awareness about environmental issues and promoting eco-activism. It is in view of this fact that Femi Osofisan, has averred that committed literature (eco-poetry) is about presenting the ugly state of our society, on unmasking the class forces at play within it, revealing the material sources of exploitation and injustices, demonstrating how the masses could liberate themselves.

The Role of Eco-Poetry

Environmental poetry, also known as eco-poetry is another significant aspect of environmental literature that seeks to convey strong ecological consciousness and foster a deeper connection with the natural world. It is often referred to as ‘green poetry’, further highlighting its focus on fostering an appreciation for the complex interplay between humanity and the environment. It offers different perspectives on the human-nature relationship, encouraging readers to reconsider their own attitudes and behaviours toward the environment.

Nigerian Eco-poets' use of “imagery and metaphor” related to ecological balance; natural cycles and its destruction is to evoke a deep emotional response from readers. They speak poignantly about the wanton destruction of our natural neighbours, the flora, fauna, and rivers, by capitalist practice. Olughu corroborates that “Indeed poetry has the potential and the capability to interrogate environmental issues without temporal or spatial limitations and gliding it through multiple points of view into absolute meaningfulness and understanding for all to discern” (11). This shows how Nigerian eco-poetry plays a pivotal role in enhancing readers' awareness of the natural world and its interconnectedness, as justified in Osundare' “The Eye of the Earth” and Bassey's “Do watchmen sleep? and We Thought It Was Oil but It Was Blood”.

Bassey as eco-warrior, in his poem depicts “Nigerian poets” as a “watchman of the planet-earth”. This image is sustained through the use of rhetorical question. He frames his statements, ideas and opinions in the mode of eco-moral questions giving the impression that he is merely asking instead of actually declaring his position, as he asks, “Watchmen on watchtowers, do you sleep? /When the tale bearers come do you/spot their steps and read their runs? /When the dams crack do you announce the deluge? /What do you watch, the retreating moon/or the rising sun?” (19). In the poem, Bassey’s tone of cynicism is subtly deployed to articulate the need for the reader to be alive to his responsibility as the guardian of the environment. The responsibility of the poet as watchman is to “announce the deluge” each time “the dams crack like the crack of Alo Dam in Maiduguri. In a mock tone, the Bassey jolts the watchman out of his reticence remarking that his job is not to “watch” the “retreating moon” nor the “rising sun”. His duty is to be the steward of the planet Earth. The speaker adds: “Watchman, what is your time? /Watchman, what is your task? /To uncover the climate criminal/Or to cover the polluting goon?” (19). The aim of the Eco-moral imperative questions in Bassey’s poem is to warn humanity of the impending danger induced by human-driven actions. The poem is sustained by rhetorical question which enables the poet to reveal certain truth about the human fundamental role in society.

Bassey in his poem, declares that the time has come for the humans not just to “see” the threat to the environment but to “say” what they have seen in order to protect humanity and the environment from further ruin. As part of their responsibility, human must “uncover” those who constitute themselves into “climate criminals”, as well as those who work to pollute the environment. For Bassey, all such individuals (i.e. the exploiter and destroyers of ecosystems) must be exposed as a necessary step towards environmental protection. Finally, he calls for environmental action in the poem that:

Arise
Sound the alarm
Or would you rather
Do you climb down and sleep?
Or will you remain on your watch, watchman? (19)

The above stanza is a strident call from Nigerian eco-poets for humans to “Arise” and defend the environment. This wakeup call involves telling “us” (readers) to “sound the alarm” when the environment is threatened, as a way of preserving the earth and its occupants. Thus, Bassey’s poetic vision is the calls on environmental lovers of the environment to “remain” at their “watch” and ensure that they help keep the planet Earth safe.

In the same vein, Niyi Osundare’s “Ours to Plough, Not to Plunder” in his poetry collection “Eye of the Earth” also expresses the need for environmental protection. The poem opens with a tone of certainty that the earth is humanity’s property which calls for prudent management: “The earth is ours to plough and plant/the hoe is her barber/the dibble her dimple” (48). Two words “plough” and “plant” are important to the discussion of protection.

Here There Everywhere
a lake is killed by the arsenic urine
from the bladder of profit factories
a poisoned stream staggers down the hills
coughing chaos in the sickly sea
the wailing whale, belly up like a frying fish,
crests the chilling swansong of parting waters. (50)

The image of a poisonous chemical in the above excerpt is used to expose the danger of human-driven activities and insensitivity. The “arsenic urine” is deliberately used by the poet as a

“symbol of destruction” to implicate humanity particularly those who own “explorative and exploitative profit factories” in Nigeria from where the arsenic chemicals are released into the planet Earth. To Nwagbara, “The Eye of the Earth is a poetic work devoted to reclamation of our earth that has been laid waste by capitalist practice; it also inheres in the quest for an alternative order for better leadership in Nigeria.” (209). This suggests the poet’s resilient position on how the environment should be protected from chemical poisoning or industrial pollution. Osundare’s eco-poetic sensibility is anchored in the movement to save our earth, which is captured by Ojomo as:

... the environment crisis is one of the most pressing and timely concerns of our planet in the turn of the 21st century. As a global phenomenon, no society is immune totally against the threats and dangers, which the environmental crisis poses to our humanity... But with respect to the African experience, a vast area of land rich in natural resources of all categories, flora and fauna of immense diversities, the dimension of the global environmental crisis in the continent has a peculiar character. (102)

Osundare also uses his poem to also expose the devastation of the environment from particularly the pollution of the aquatic life and resources as well as reveal his resilience about the planet earth. This is underscored by his refrain that, “But our earth will not die” (50). This line crystallizes the whole message in the poem which brings the readers to the eco-conscious nature of the poem. Osundare’s eco-conscious poem bubble with excitement and their resilient by making his position clear that “no matter what threat the earth is facing, it cannot be completely destroyed. This eco-vision of hope and resilience is what flows through this poem and other Nigerian eco-poems. Osundare concludes his poem with eco-sensibility that, “Our earth will see again eyes washed by a new rain the westering sun will rise again resplendent like a new coin” (51). Alu lends credence to this when he observes that:

“The Eye of the Earth” is very special, fashioned on his perception of man in nature. The image of the poet is more than an interpreter of a complex and rich tradition of his people who share a collective philosophy. He celebrates the work nature of his people with special emphasis on their reverence for nature, defending the traditional myth on which the community lives together resisting collision. The volume is seen as one of the fiercest indictments of the modern economic culture of the people and alien destructive forces. It takes a pictorial account of aggression on man and the earth... (70)

From the foregoing, it is crystal clear that Osundare, Bassey and a handful of Nigeria’s eco-poets’ delineation of the confluence between human culture and nature in poetry genre, reveal how Nigerian poetry also responds to its environmental issues and mitigate them through eco-consciousness. More so, Nigerian eco-poets’ radical poetic oeuvre projects environmental concerns and raises ecological consciousness by using its artistic expression to highlight the relationship between humans and nature, inspire environmental action and foster empathy for the environment. It serves as a form of protest and environmental activism and using vivid imagery and emotional language to raise awareness of issues pollution and promoting more sustainable worldviews and behaviours.

Depiction of Environmental Ethics and Justice in Nigerian Eco-narratives

Environmental ethics is a subfield of philosophy that examines the moral relationship between human beings and the natural environment. This discipline seeks to understand the value and moral status of the environment, as well as the ethical responsibilities humans have towards it.

Some key concepts within environmental ethics include the critique of anthropocentrism, which places human beings at the centre of moral consideration and eco-centrism, which extends moral consideration to all living organisms and ecosystems. A study of Nigeria eco-narratives reveal that environmental ethics are well enshrined in its literature to provide a powerful potent framework for understanding the ethical implications of human-driven actions on the environment. In light of this, that Tanure Ojaide as an eco-warrior, advocates for the establishment of an "ecology of justice" that promotes harmonious relationships between humans, nature, and the environment. In the same vein, Julie Sze avers that:

Literature offers a new way of looking at environmental justice, through visual images and metaphors, not solely through the prism of statistics. This new way of looking references the 'real' problems of communities struggling against environmental racism, and is simultaneously liberated from providing a strictly documentary account of the contemporary world. It allows for a more flexible representation of environmental justice, one with a global view and historical roots." (163)

The above is further corroborated by Rachel Stein when she almost echoes Sze's views that:

Expressive arts offer individuals and communities creative media through which to explore the intricate intersections of gender and sexuality with environmental justice...By representing sexed and gendered speakers and protagonists who live inside the issues, the artists give us an honest emotional sense of the complicated costs of environmental ills for those who dwell within affected communities... (13)

The truth is environmental moral ethics in Nigerian literary environmentalism is multifaceted, as it explores the complex relationship between humans and the environment, promoting a greater understanding of ecological issues and call for action towards sustainability. Nigerian Eco-writers often incorporate environmental ethics in their works through the portrayal of the natural world and the examination of human-driven impacts on ecosystems, which is obvious in Garricks and Nwoye, Osundare and Bassey's works in this study, as they provide a powerful potent platform to dry environmental injustices and unbridled materialist pursuit, adversely affecting nature, biodiversity and ecology. Osundare's comments on the earth through his poetry that "everyone, including both the suffering and those who cause the suffering is part of the earth", is to create a vision of a sickened planet that needed of healing and collective action. This environmental ethics influence how people feel, act and make decisions regarding the environment and provide a defensible way of life that addresses anthropocentric worldview today.

Environmental justice in Nigerian eco-genres is a concept that focuses on the equitable distribution of environmental goods and harms. Most Nigerian eco-writers use their works to draw attention to the ways in which environmental degradation disproportionately affect the vulnerable in postcolonial nations like Nigeria. Environmental justice in literature encompasses the equitable distribution of burdens and benefits in the use and exploitation of goods and natural resources that are of common interest. This is essential to restructuring systems of environmental governance and decision-making, ensuring that all members of society have access to the benefits and protections afforded by a healthy environment.

Nigerian eco-narratives wrap up with the ongoing struggle for environmental justice, sustainable development and urgent need to address the human and ecological impact of resource extraction. The role of environmental justice in Nigerian eco-narratives is significant

to this study, as it is heavily linked to marginalization of the local ethnic minority communities, who displaced and disproportionately bears the brunt but with little or no economic benefit. Nigerian eco-writers see social issues like poverty and conflict as rather part of the same complex web. They also see climate issues, environmental imperialism, ecological refugees, poverty, loss of cultural identity, loss of biodiversity and livelihoods as critical issues tied to environmental injustice, thus, focuses on addressing the injustices. They philosophically argue that the powerful who exploit the environment and the poor that reside at the same battered environment, are also part of the earth and call for a united front of writers, activists and policy makers to address the current ecological imbroglio in Nigeria.

Conclusion

Having explored the eco-critical praxes in Garricks, Nwoye, Osundare and Bassey's works, this paper wraps up with the fact that Nigeria's eco-narratives provide a powerful potent platform for eco-consciousness and sustainability. Like Henry David Thoreau, Rachel Carson, Aldo Leopold, Elizabeth Kolbert, Naomi Klein, Robin Wall Kemmerer, John Muir eco-works, Nigerian contemporary eco-works, remain viable and potent powerful evocative narratives that can be used to conscientise people to know the details of the ecosystems around them as well as permit them to gain awareness of ecosystems services which their lives depend on. Indeed, Nigeria's eco-narratives have given rise to the genre of climate justice and explores the impact of climate change across the country. These eco-works do not only shed light on the pressing issues faced by marginalized communities in Nigeria but also inspire humans to respond to the current environmental issues and curb them through the moral eco-ethics copiously embedded in contemporary Nigerian literature.

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