

**Addis Ababa University**  
**School of Graduate Studies**

**A Post-colonial Ecocritical Reading of Ecological Violence and  
Resistance in Selected Anglophone African Novels (2000-2010)**

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**A Post-colonial Ecocritical Reading of Ecological Violence and  
Resistance in Selected Anglophone African Novels (2000-2010)**

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This is to certify that this dissertation prepared by Dagnachew Adefris Gebrehiwot, entitled: “A Post-colonial Ecocritical Reading of Ecological Violence and Resistance in Selected Anglophone African Novels (2000-2010)” is submitted in the fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Literature (English) and complies with regulations of the university and meets the accepted standards with respect to originality and quality.

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## **Abstract**

*African post-colonial environment is defined as a system of human-nonhuman interactions where pressing ecological violence has been intensified, rather than abated, since the end of formal colonialism as the continent is at the heart of the relationships with colonialism and its legacies. Likely, African post-colonial environments are also battlefields where resistances are met with unabated struggles to protect and preserve environments of African natives from colonial and post-colonial destructions. This study examines ecological violence and resistance as reflected in Helon Habila's *Oil on Water*, Zakes Mda's *The Heart of Redness*, Kaine Agary's *Yellow-Yellow* and Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o's *Wizard of the Crow*. In the analyses and interpretations, attention has been paid to the texts' treatment of different forms of ecological violence, resistance strategies used by the writers, interactions of human and the nonhuman in the contexts of those actions and reactions, as well as the writers' articulations in bringing attention to the ongoing ecological violence and resistance. In doing so post-colonial ecocriticism approach has been employed to carry out the critical reading, analysis and interpretation of the selected novels for this study. Employing this approach, in Habila's *Oil on Water*, ecocidal activities, petroviolece and environmental injustices on the ecologies of Niger Delta are found depicted as major forms of ecological violence. Mda's *The Heart of Redness* has found depicting ecological imperialism, geographical colonization and flora and fauna genocides as major forms of ecological violence. In Agary's *Yellow-Yellow*, environmental despoliation, pollution, petrocapiialism, and capitalist patriarchy are found as forms of ecological violence in Niger Delta. In Ngũgĩ's *Wizard of the Crow*, deforestation and loss of natural ecologies have been found as major forms of ecological violence. Regarding post-colonial resistance, the selected novels are found ecologically conscious. Habila's *Oil on Water* offers ecological journalism as a reflective agency to voicing for nature as resistance strategy. Similarly in Agary's *Yellow-Yellow* ecoactivism, interconnectedness and ecological feminism are found as important resistance strategies in fighting against ecological destructions in Niger Delta. In *The Heart of Redness* ecological education and ecofriendly based economic development approach has been found as resistance strategy to the restoration and preservation of the endangered ecology. Ngũgĩ's *Wizard of the Crow* offers perspectives to understand nature through rehabilitation, glorification of nature, and reforestation by equally revealing the anthropocentric limitations. The writers of the respective novels try to articulate the ongoing ecological violence and resistance employing narrative strategies, such as narrative voices, point of view and environmental tropes. The novels are also found showing complex networks of interaction and relation between human and the nonhuman. On the local human side, there is tranquility and strong affliction with natural environment while discordant relations and exploitative kinds of interaction among the locals, the nonnatives and the physical environment.*

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## Definition of Some Key Terms

**Anthropocentrism** is a system of beliefs and practices that argues humans are more important than anything else (Newman, 2011). In this study, it is used to refer to a favor that human beings are more significant than the nonhuman.

**Capitalist Patriarchy** is a system of private production with the side of male privilege that also looks at nature as resource and women as worker in which both function to serve man (Newman, 2011). In this study it refers to ways in which capitalism oppresses women while allowing men to control environmental resources in Niger Delta of Nigeria.

**Deforestation** is the practice of cutting down of trees from the land (Howard, 2011). In this study it is used to refer to the process of clearance of trees and the destruction of its interconnected biodiversities from African native lands by anthropogenic activities mainly global business capitalists.

**Ecoactivism** is a combination of eco and activism to refer to a movement against ecological harms (Bate, 2000). In this study it has been used to refer to a kind of activism dedicated to preserve and protect the right of nature from human destructive activities.

**Ecocide** is the destruction of natural environment, especially when this is deliberate (Manes, 1996). In this study the term refers to the violence of ecological rights of African natural environment due to post-colonial and/or imperialist global business deliberate actions.

**Ecological feminism**, coined by Françoise d'Eaubonne in the 1960s, it is both an activist and academic movement that seeks to explore the interlinkages between nature and women and eradicate all forms of social injustice against women and environment (Warren, 2000). In this study is used to refer to the representation of women's potential to instigate an ecological consciousness revolution and protesting against capitalist patriarchy involves in new relations between women and nature in the name of women survival.

**Ecological Awareness** is an ecological concept adopted from Marten's basic principles of human ecology "looking after the ecology is knowing the ecology itself" (Mukherjee, 2010). For this study it is used as an educational tool, helping indigenous Africans understand the

economic, aesthetic and biological importance of preserving ecologies and reducing or eliminating the harmful impacts of manmade alterations.

**Ecological Consciousness** is humans' gradual recognition of the value of natural ecologies (Newman, 2011). In the context of this study, it refers to a developed habit of African natives' understanding of ecological crisis and the attitude to care for it and towards its restorations.

**Ecological genocide, including animal (zoological) and plant genocide** is a brutal mass murdering or extinction of an ecology, animal or plant or the entire ecosystem (Crosby, 1986). In this study it refers to intentional action to murder a group of animal or extinct plant species in whole or in part.

**Ecological Restoration** is a technique to remediate ecologies that are perceived as having been damaged, typically by human activity (Newman, 2011). In the context of this study, it refers to the processes and practices of indigenous African communities in remediating the damaged ecologies.

**Ecological Imperialism** is conceived by Alfred Crosby (1986) to refer the European colonization, beginning in the 16th century, was facilitated by the ecological damage inflicted due to the transfer of germs, plants, and animals to the New World. In this study it is used to refer to the accidental or deliberate introduction of plants and ecological systems leading to major shifts in the ecology of the colonized areas and the African communities by their former colonizers.

**Ecotourism** is an environment sensitive economic development concept evolved in the 1970s for economic development in the southern hemisphere (Haward,2011). In this study ecotourism is used as alternative tool for protecting ecologies from post-colonial environmental destructions and preserving them ,emphasizing on growing an ecofriendly economy.

**Environmental/Ecological Journalism** is a movement of mass media of covering stories about environmental issues, concerns, consciousness and political activism that also pressures governments for change (Gujarat, 2017). For this study it has been used to refer to writing/reporting to and journalists/reporters' attempts to expose, protest, and transform the often endangered ecologies and destructions of the environments of the Niger Delta, Nigeria.

**Environmental Injustice** is a movement to address the unequal distribution of environmental benefits and hazards across population groups, especially by race and/or class (Newman, 2011). In this study it has been used to refer to unfair and inappropriate distribution of environmental benefits and services with responsible actions to nonhuman and human destruction in Niger Delta of Nigeria.

**Environment/Nature:** environment, according to Newman (2011:5), refers to the surroundings of all organisms, both manmade and the natural while Nature refers to all living organisms and their environments in which they live. In the context of this study, nature refers to the physical world (landscapes, forest, water, animals etc.) and their interaction with human beings while environment is used to refer to everything on earth including the physical world.

**Geographical Colonization** refers to the various ways in which colonial practices have impacted the geographies of indigenous peoples (Newman, 2011). In this study it is used to refer to the practices of displacing the natives from their original lands and settling colonizers on the natives' lands, river sides, landscapes, and changing their geographical imaginations.

**Interconnectedness** is an ecological concept taken from Barry Commoner's first law of ecology "everything is connected to everything else" (Newman, 2011). In this study it has been used to refer to the unbroken web of coexistence between African natives and their natural environment as a strategy of defending colonial and post-colonial human and nonhuman exploitations.

**Petrocapitalism** is conceived by Valdivia (2011) to refer to the capitalism that hinges on the production, exchange, consumption of petroleum and other natural gas resources. In this study it is used to refer to the violence that has inflicted the ecology of Niger Delta as a result of western companies' expansion of extraction and production of oil gas.

**Petroviolence**, according to Newman (2011:66), is an ecological destruction because of the extraction of petroleum and other earth minerals that bring several plagues on the nonhuman and the human life particularly in developing countries. In this study, it refers to the violence, environmental damage and political corruption that often come with the extraction of crude oil in Niger Delta.

**Dedication:**

**To all the victims of any form of ecological injustice,**

**To all champions of ecological and social justice.**

# **Chapter One: Introduction**

## **1.0 Introduction**

In this chapter which is introductory in nature, background of the study, statement of the problem, objectives, research questions, significance, scope and limitation of the study, research methodology and procedures and organization of the dissertation are dealt with.

## **1.1 Background of the Study**

Currently environmental destruction and the threatening of the earth's ecology has become an apprehension of everyone in almost all corners of the world. As a result of this, there are rigorous efforts underway to save the endangered natural environment. The inquiry on this global rise of environmental concern is not left for only a few departments. Rather it has been perceived as environmental crisis lead to diversification of inquiry in many disciplines including literature and the humanities. Regarding the role of literature in saving the natural environment, Glotfelty (1996: xxx) argues: "If we are not part of the solution we are part of the problem." The quote signals a message that literature should play significant role in bringing solutions to the contemporary environmental destructions in elucidating and informing the ways in which we understand environments crisis and responses. Glotfelty also argues that literature, as a storehouse of both cultural and physical environment, is used as a tool for discovering environmental/ecological crisis embodied within a literary text. The argument indirectly shows historical relationship between literature and the natural environment.

Indeed, literature and natural environment have established kinships since time immemorial. Literature has portrayed the nonhuman world entities, such as forests, natural landscapes, animals, air, soil, water, social and built environments etc., even as major characters and subjects since then. A good example is the setting or location which represents environmental landscapes including the time in which the story occurs. The relationship between literature and the natural environment signifies the interactions and relationships between human and the nonhuman in literary works.

The portrayal of natural environment in literary works can be taken as an attribute of long time human-nonhuman relationships and interactions. This has been substantiated by Philips (2003)

who argues that literary works need setting/location as one major element. Setting/location is where and when writers put their stories and present their stories' events. Nature in a literary work has been used as one major character and/or subject. The symbiotic relationship between nature (nonhuman) and the human has been an integral part of writing and literary criticism. Besides, human beings are "culturally correlated with the nonhuman world" (Phillips, 2003: vii). That means all human activities are dependent on the gifts of natural environment. Within this human and physical environment interactions and interrelationships, language comes here to be used as a means through which cultural relation is discursively constructed.

In addition to cultural interactions and relations, literary works are socio-culturally created products. This indirectly infers that literary works are storehouses of human beings' relationships and the daily interactions with nature along with the cultural and social dimensions in which society is grouped. Literary texts are windows on which the human and the physical world are exhibited through the formation of language in a text. Bate (2000) remarks that this human-nonhuman interaction creates facilities for studies on how texts depict the interactions and interrelationships whether humankind as part of nature or apart from nature. Bate (2000) also suggests that investigations on how the interactions and interrelations are exhibited are needed. In African societies the interaction and interrelation between human and the nonhuman is as high as cultural relation. Hence Bate suggests that such investigations are expected to be conducted.

Literary texts are also dialogically created products regarding the environmental concerns. They display environmental crisis and concerns that are attuned to both the human and physical worlds. The environmental concerns are also created from and influenced by the human world as cultural and anthropogenic forces. This human-nonhuman communication between the human cultural and physical world is explained in Hekman's (2010) statement that "the social is not separated from the natural, but rather they continually interpenetrate each other" (p.15). This statement provides a hint that the social (human) and the nonhuman (natural) worlds are not separated. Rather they always influence and influenced each other. However, history tells that the human agent dominates and oppresses the natural environment. The anthropogenic activities are tremendously altering the entire rhythm of nature as represented in literary works.

Literary texts in general and texts produced in African contexts in particular are read and approached through different perspectives as products of human and nonhuman interactions and

interrelationships. Literary texts written in African contexts can also be seen with various perspectives as they are products of descriptions of African colonial and environmental histories. African environments have been destructed during the colonial, post-colonial and the contemporary global business times. These historical periods one way or the other are reflected in African natural and cultural environmental dominations. In these periods African natural environments have been damaged (Fondo, 2014). These environmental destructions have oppressed not only the environment but also yoked African societies. The environmental domination which is most catastrophic has direct and indirect consequence on both the human and the nonhuman. This environmental domination has also affected both African communities and their natural ecosystem one way or the other, differently with other part of the world. The major reason for this as Fondo (2014) argues, is because Africans have long time kinships and attachments with the natural environment and the continent itself is at the heart of colonial, post-colonial and/or neocolonial human and nonhuman plagues.

African societies have tied correlation with natural environment. There is also a linkage between cultural values and nature in Africa. Furthermore, the indigenous African perspectives on how humanity is related to the natural environment are thought to differ from the Western (Maren, 2001). As a result, literary works written in these different contexts can have different contextualization and understandings. But still due to the historical meeting of the two perspectives through colonialism, and the current business globalization, one might expect that there could be interferences between two perspectives. As Maren (2001) argues in the eyes of the colonizers, African natural environment has been seen as geographically isolated, less significant, jungle, and blindly discriminated as 'other' compared to the West.

A considerable difference between Africans and the Western world about the conception of natural environment has been observed more during colonial and the current post-colonial times. The difference can be moral and philosophical attitudes towards nature. According to Western view, nature is seen as an external or objective reality and impersonal system. It is not a moral object, and it is not necessary for humans to morally respect it. Thus, human beings can and should exploit it solely for their own interests (Dixon, 1976). Philosophically too, environment for Europeans is considered as a source of inputs for capitalistic insatiable economic needs for profiteering. So they consider African forests and ecologies something that should be

overproduced for timber and other inputs (Gregory, 1999). They perceive that wetlands should be exploited for irrigation farms and fishing, and solid and oil minerals should be devastatingly exploited for global markets.

Colonial historical documents testify that during the colonial times, Western colonizers have imbued the natural resources of Africa and its inhabitants with cultural stereotypes. For Europeans, African rain forests and jungles can be destroyed. They believe that lumber should be harvested for homes, and furniture. The land and forests are to be converted into industrial and real estate complexes or into farms and plantations to produce cash crops for export to industrial Europe (Hekman, 2010). The mountains are to be mined discriminately for minerals resources. The rivers must be dammed for electricity. The swamps are supposed to be drilled for oil. These assumptions and practices destroyed various habitats for plants and animals, caused massive erosion, and led to the pollution of the air and rivers.

Contrary to continuous destruction of African's natural ecologies by colonizers' economic activities, Africans have developed long term indigenous ecological preservation methods. They are known by their ecological protectionism strategies before colonialism came to Africa. They still have environmental protection strategies and techniques, which were then ignored when colonialism came and expanded its networks. Different African literary and nonliterary texts have inscribed and documented all these instances for historical evidence. Different scholars also provide testimonies. Senghor (1995) for example argues that Africans have developed indigenous environmental conservation and protection strategies mentioning Bantu's environmental conservation philosophy as a unique case. Bantu's environmental philosophy according to Senghor (1995) looks at nature as a sacred creature and it is difficult to separate Nature from human. Senghor also remarks that in the later ages of the 20th century, Africans have joined environmentalism, which was involved in the 1970s as a global concern. Following the evolution of environmentalism, many African writers and activists have joined the practice and a lot of literary works have been produced.

Environmentalism as a movement in Africa was intended to mirror the continent's situation during colonialism and in its later legacies. It was later used to show the intersections among African literature and post-colonial criticism. Global environmental justice and political ecology can be brought to bear on framing African environmental writing exploring its significance for

the conceptualization of resistance to colonial shaping. In Africa, environmental history, the study of how human societies and the natural world shape each other over time, has been developed recently as a distinct field of historical inquiry (Hants, 2001; Ikuenobe (2014). It emerged in the 1980s at about the same time as the modern academic study of African history, and the two fields influenced each other from the beginning. This environmental concern was mainly propagandized through activists, writers and environmentalists. In the later days, African writers used environmentalism as ingredient for the initiation of their literary writing development.

There are reasons why African environmental concerns gain peculiar attention. The first reason is that, as Ikuenobe (2014) argues; African communities are living closer to nature. This closer contact with nature offers a route towards the intimacy and understanding that attends it. Ikuenobe also argues that African colonial societies have a culture of ecological restoration skills to saving their natural environment. However, as Ikuenobe (2014) states histories of colonialism and its legacies have continually threatened not only indigenous populations around the world, but also environmental biodiversities through forms of economic, cultural, and geographical conquest. The biodiversities of Africa have been violated during these times (Ikuenobe, 2014).The diversities and complexities of these disbanding eras indeed left the African natural environment plundered and threatened. It has destructed the whole socio-environmental system as exhibited in many literary and nonliterary texts produced during the times.

More than ever, today the positive correlation between human and the nonhuman in the world in general and in Africa in particular has been broken. The first driving factor for these detachments can be the Industrial Revolution. The Industrial Revolution has thought to have intensified facilitates the destruction of the environment. In the West, it has led to the ‘othering’ of nature by giving high regard to humanity while throwing nature out of concern. Following that the idea of human superiority over nature has been propagated to the orient through imperialism. In their exploration of the colonized world, as Said (1978) argues the European travellers have depicted the ‘new’ lands they meet as a wilderness devoid of natural values. That environmental discrimination and othering nature continues in today’s post-colonial times. The major triggering factor is the advent of colonialism and its legacies, which have brought with the western dichotomous delineation of the human and nonhuman. This resulted in the vulgarization of the

indigenous ecological system and allowed legitimization of their exploitative tendency to the colonized environments.

Significantly, the decades of the 20th and the late 21st century are beset by a more grievous challenge that is universal violation of our kinship with nature and a possible extinction of the ecosystem. Nixon (2011) succinctly puts this: “we are living beyond our means. As people, we have developed a life-style that is draining the earth of its priceless and irreplaceable resources without regard for the future of children and people all around the world” (p.59). Because of this it is undeniable that the impact of ecological violence today is knocking at every door. That is Africa cannot be, and indeed is not, out of the impact as the continent has passed and is still passing through colonial environmental exploitative periods. Indeed, as the contemporary politics of environment reveals, it is continents like Africa that are suffering the consequence of the crisis for which they have contributed little or nothing. This is due to the fact that the African environment has been degrading since the slave trade. Hence, the concern with ecological crisis is not an issue of amenity but of survival for Africa.

African post-colonial environments and ecologies are being violated and destroyed as scripted in many literary and nonliterary works. Ecological violence has been prevailed in both colonial and post-colonial African contexts, as irrevocably intertwined with social and political injustices of colonialism and/or post-colonialism. This ecological violence has also been witnessed in many environmental activists’ movements, resistances, societal struggles and works of African writers. The Nigerian writer and environmental activist, Ken Saro-Wiwa’s case is a good example to mention here. Ken Saro-Wiwa, a prolific and environmental activist, was executed by the Nigerian government with the conspiracy of Western oil extraction companies in Niger Delta of Nigeria, in 1995 while he was voicing for the ecologically victimized minorities of the Ogoni people in the region (Slaymaker, 2001). According to Slaymaker (2001:321) Saro-Wiwa’s *A Month and A Day*, (1982) discloses ethnic and environmental politics promoted by imperialist oil companies and supported by indigenous military leaders result in ecocide in the Niger Delta region. Saro-Wiwa’s *Nigeria Genocide* (1981), nonfiction, is a dedicated autobiographical work for his long time resistances against the injustices inflicted on the ecologies of the Niger Delta because of the direct and indirect intrusions of colonizers and the present global business empires. Caminero-Santangelo and Meyers (2011) also argue that Saro-Wiwa’s commitment and

endurance of voicing for ecological degradation as well as advocating human right is regarded as an important concern for the dying ecological conditions of Africa. They also state that “MOSOP [Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People] and Saro-Wiwa had tied their nonviolent advocacy for human rights in Ogoniland to highlighting the oil industry’s [Shell Oil Corporation] devastating impacts on the ecosystem of their Niger Delta Homeland” (p.11). Saro-Wiwa a strategy of nonviolent resistance to resist post-colonial business empires, save the violating ecology of Niger Delta ecoregion and the people of Ogoni in Niger Delta of Nigeria. He also used this strategy to resist the crisis through his literary works. Jailed in 1993 under the Treason and Treasonable Offenses Decree promulgated by the then President Ibrahim Babangida, Saro-Wiwa wrote from prison the following poem that addresses the ecological and social injustices made on the ecology and the community of Ogoni in Niger Delta:

Ogoni is the land

The people, Ogoni

The agony of trees dying

In ancestral farmlands

Streams polluted weeping

Filth into murky rivers

It is the poisoned air

Coursing the luckless lungs

Of dying children

Ogoni is the dream

Breaking the looping chain

Around the drooping neck

Of a Shell-shocked land

(Sourced from Environmental Justice, PEACEPOWER Fall 2007. [www.calpeacepower.org](http://www.calpeacepower.org))

After he wrote the above poem, Ken-Saro Wiwa was finally hanged along with a dozen of Ogoni people by the government of Nigeria in 1995 on account of his resistance against the destruction of the ecology of Niger Delta by the petroleum and oil gas extracting companies.

A similar perspective of activism that blends ecological and social justice was held in East Africa. Wangari Maathai was a Kenyan 2004 Noble Peace Prize winner for her forest preservation efforts in Kenya. She devoted her full time to social movement and ecoactivism by establishing an environmental and social campaign called 'Green Belt Movement'. According to Caminero-Santangelo and Meyers (2011:120) Wangari Maathai believes that the continuous deforestation and frequent draught that Africa has experienced directly or indirectly comes from environmental injustice practices by socio-cultural dominations of colonizers and inability to manage the indigenous ecologies of Africa. Wangari Maathai, as an alternative solution, provides that fighting the alarming ecological destruction through local ecological consciousness and reforestation should be the duty of every citizen especially those who are constantly victimized by the contemporary post-colonial and global ecological catastrophes. As Caminero-Santangelo and Meyers (2011) attest, the priceless sacrificial end of Saro-Wiwa and the celebratory ascension of Wangari Maathai and other writers and activists of Africa reveals the connection between "the literary and ecological"(p.77) concerns in Africa, and the devotion to the blending of "environmental activism and social justice." (p. 88) .They have provided an alternative way of "understanding nature, conservation, and development, in contrast with dominant ideas of the environment" (p.2).This alternative can be contextualized and interpreted through post-colonial ecocriticism to African post-colonial literatures.

Crosby (1986) argues that the history of ecological concern in Africa is not only characterized by violence, displacement and dispossession of indigenous people, but also associated with European mastery over natural resources of the colonies. That ecological violence is followed by the coming of colonialism and its contemporary legacies aimed at extracting natural resources without replenishments. The double burden of social and environmental impositions on the post-colonial African ecologies and citizens can lead to the study of African literary texts using post-colonial ecocriticism. As a result it is the failure to recognize such human concerns that made the first form of ecocriticism vulnerable to the criticisms from Africa about its appearance as a

“hegemonic discourse” (Slaymaker 2001:132). One might argue, here, as also reflected by Slayamker (2001) and Martin (1993), that it is lack of social commitment in the first form of ecocriticism that has led to the reluctance of critics to openly welcome the perspective advanced in it. Explaining the case in South Africa, Mane (2015), stresses that there is “historical justification for seeing ecological issues as irrelevant, and even inimical, to the struggle for social and political justice” (p.76). It is this pressure of ecological crisis, even at continental level, that has led to the relevance of ecological literary studies. This pressure, according to Love (2003:1) forces “any literary criticism” to embrace “ecological concern.” Love also asserts that, “teaching and studying literature without reference to natural conditions of the world and basic ecological principles that underlie all life seem increasingly short-sighted, incongruous” (p.16). Understood from such a context, it becomes inevitable to see the application of post-colonial ecocriticism in the context of post-colonial African literature.

Post-colonial ecocriticism is an evolving discipline in post-colonial Africa with a number of scholars committing themselves to environmental literary studies in African contexts. Nixon (2011) argues that African literature should be reinterpreted as it experiences both sociocultural and ecological damages because of the continent’s long time colonial and post-colonial history of interactions. He also points to the general presence of post-colonial ecocriticism and literature of the environment as noteworthy and attractive topics for the research and creative writing. In many African literary studies so far, ecocritical evaluation of literary works seems less significant as it provides no or little attention to race, class and gender etc. as significant post-colonial issues of Africa. Obviously, literature should be studied comprehensively as it is a complete body of human and the nonhuman world. Besides, the theory originates in the West and has been used to analyze the relationship between human and nonhuman. The post-colonial African environment is described as the most socially and environmentally violated zone of contention.

Mane (2015) argues the combination of post-colonialism and ecocriticism is a further step to fully examine the human and the nonhuman aspects as depicted in the post-colonial African literary texts. Similarly, Vital (2005) also recognizes the entanglement between the concerns and envisages a “postcolonial environmentalism,” which productively negotiates the “friction between the tendency of the value human need and the recognition that the natural world has its

value” (p.299). He takes the environmental justice movement as a model to approach environmentalism in ecocriticism. He also points out that post-colonial ecocriticism as a model will be a needed tool for further investigation in literatures of the Global South. Vital (2005) argues that the model develops an environmentalism that could be called post-colonial, asserting the need for a people-centered interest in the environment. He also adds that the model keeps an eye on the impacts of “the colonial legacies” and the marginal position of Africa “within the globalized economy” (p.299).

Complementarily, Vital (2005) suggests that “ecology can serve as a rallying point for local resistance to the encroaching forces of global capital” (p.299). A cautionary attitude towards the flow of economic and cultural power from “metropolitan centers” could be taken if the post-colonial perspective is followed as it allows the subversion of “what is perceived as damaging while engaging with what can be strategically useful in defense” (p.299). The possibility to entertain both without subjecting one to the other makes this approach inclusive in its project of dealing with mistreatment and marginalization. Vital (2008) suggests that there is a possibility of applying both ecological concerns and post-colonial issues in the nonwestern literatures blending them together. This is the fact that post-colonial ecocriticism offers important new perspectives on how environmental change is entwined in the narratives, histories and material practices of colonialism and globalization. He presents his arguments by describing the post-colonial issues as “attuned to the histories of unequal development and varieties of discrimination, including racism and sexism” (p.90). Vital also recommends an approach which is socially aware in dealing with environmentalism in Africa. A similar perspective is suggested by O’Brien (2007) who argues that post-colonial ecocriticism is worth investigating as a critical movement that has the potential to contribute to the understanding of the ways in which cultures and environments shape each other and emphasizes that such an understanding is pressing in the period of “environmental crisis” (p.179). The arguments of the two scholars about the practicability of post-colonial ecocriticism to African post-colonial literatures ignites researchers for investigation.

The useful correspondence between the tasks of ecocriticism and those of post-colonial criticism is also suggested by Huggan (2004:701) who claims that the latter has adjusted itself to a “commitment to the environment” resolutely echoing “the inseparability of current crisis of ecological mismanagement from historical legacies of imperialistic exploitation and authoritarian

abuse”(p.702).Such amalgamation between the social and environmental concerns addresses the suspicions about the reductive feature of the prototype post-colonial ecocriticism. Huggan (2004) expands the issue of blending between ecocriticism and post-colonial criticism in another essay in which he claims that the two fields “have more in common than is usually acknowledged”(p.6).He enumerates the commonalities among which the “critique of current globalizing practices”, the concern with the practice of “representational mechanisms” legitimizing the practices, and the ethical commitment to “ideas of social transformation” to improve the marginalized groups (p.6).Therefore, as African post-colonial ecologies have been violated and there are restive resistances from the Africans, it is imperative to make an inquiry into how ecological violence and resistance are reflected in post-colonial African environments. Hence this study examines ecological violence and resistance as reflected in selected post-colonial Anglophone African novels employing post-colonial ecocriticism.

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

Today the urgency for environmental crisis has become the concern of all human beings as it is the outcome of the attitudes and actions enshrined in the human centered valuations of nature. The greedy and reckless behavior of humans towards environment has been putting nature at risk. As stated by Nixon (2011), the twenty first century is the century of Anthropocene where human beings emerge as the primary geological force acting upon the planet and for its current continuous depletions. According to Glotfelty (1996:xx ) human beings have reached a period of critical “environmental limit” due to their unconscious rush for self-destruction in their carelessness towards and abuse of nature for self-benefits. Glotfelty then suggests that raising consciousness about the extent of the crisis is believed to be a way of halting the ecology.

The anxiety over ongoing ecological violence and environmental crisis has to be curbed with changing humanbeings’ environmental comportment and raising ecological awareness to save Mother Nature. The goal of achieving such strategies with ecological consciousness has led many humanity scholars including literary critics to exploring ways of adding “an environmental dimension” (Nixon,2011:23) to their various disciplines in an attempt to come to the terms with and assess “the root causes of ecological violence and to formulate an alternative view of existence” (Glotfelty 1996:xxi).Recently, literary critics and ecologists, upon realizing the urgency of the need to find solutions to the current ecological crisis, have joined the debate on

finding the root causes of ecological violence and response mechanisms. It is within range of this theoretical framework that this study attempts on to investigate ecological violence and resistance in the post-colonial Anglophone African novels selected for this study. In short, five main reasons have led to undertaking the reading of ecological violence and resistance in selected novels for this study. The first rationale to undertake the post-colonial ecocritical reading of ecological violence and resistance as represented in the post-colonial Anglophone African novels in this study is to contribute to the efforts made so far.

The second reason is the presence of limited inquires in the area. Slaymaker (2001) has indicated that “the global ecological responses to what is happening to the earth have had an almost imperceptible African response” (p.247).The imperceptibility is the result of the so far anthropocentric centered study of literary texts rather than the earth centered approach that looks both human and the nonhuman. Realizing what has been called the “ecocritical turn” (Krishnan, 2019:16) in literary studies in ecocriticism and, to an extent, “the spatial turn” (Slaymaker, 2001) in post-colonial criticism, this study seeks to investigate hallmark characteristics of these two emerging sub disciplines with a focus on the ecological violence and the local ecological responses for these ecological crises. In Addition, in their work, Caminero-Santangelo and Myers (2011) also assert that in the context of Africa, there has not been as much explicitly post-colonial ecocritical research works conducted as there has been on some other theories.

The next source of motivation came from the perceived difference in the interactions and interrelationships between Western and Africa worldviews which some scholars put forward. It is argued that there is a tendency to “other” the non-human nature in the general culture of the west as human beings are thought to be superior to nature (Marten 2001).Contrary to this, the African worldview is thought to have the tendency to view natural environment in its totality (society in environment, and vice versa).The moralistic and ethical differences between western colonizers and Africans create instantaneous relations between humans and the nonhuman within the environment.

The third reason is the curiosity about the violence of the global environmental dynamics on the ecologies of Africa as reflected in African literature. The violence in African post-colonial environments influenced by post-colonial and global imperial businesses should be given attention. As stated by Marten (2001), for instance, the imperial attitudes and practices have

resulted in intractable ecological destructions and called for new forms of ecological restorations. Besides, literary texts are considered to be one of the sites where these attitudes are fostered. As a result, such a practice of inscribing the texts with discourses needs to be construed. Moreover, Krishnan (2019) describes the current status of African post-colonial natural environment as sacrifice zones for discarded discontents of globalization, with a particular emphasis on how oil pollution, deforestation, and conflict that arise as a result of power struggle and resource extraction. Krishnan's argument implies African post-colonial environment is under critical condition so that it is pertinent to inquire what has been going on. The inquiry demands investigations about the different forms of ecological violence and environmental destructions aggravated by anthropogenic forces.

The fourth reason is that the convergence of post-colonialism with ecocriticism that is justified from the point that colonial exploitation of nature was inspired by European Enlightenment philosophy, knowledge of nature, and conservation policy. And therefore "to deny colonial and environmental histories as mutually constitutive misses the central role the exploitation of natural resources play in any imperial project" (DeLoughery and Handley, 2011:10). Besides, literary critics have engaged in ecological replenishments and study of literary texts employing post-colonial ecocriticism. Though post-colonialism has been anthropocentric from the beginning, the devastating impact of neocolonialism over the ecosystem of non-European nations has made post-colonial studies discover its commitment to the environment. The current environmental crisis is caused by exploitative nature of post-colonial and neocolonial global business empires. This inseparability of current ecological crisis mainly resulted from post-colonial practices as well as mismanagement from the historical legacies of imperialistic exploitation and authoritarian abuse. So, ecocriticism without post-colonial perspective would mean to stay only the tip of the iceberg while the history of colonialism has hidden inside it the genesis of the problem. Hence, investigation of African post-colonial ecologies through post-colonial ecocriticism approach is a right time to overhaul the ecological violence in post-colonial Anglophone African novels.

Fifthly, in the contemporary dire conditions of African ecologies, post-colonial writers from Africa have realized the ills of post-colonialism and globalization on African natural and social environments. As Marten (2001) pointed out, "African writers have often been seen as key

spokespeople regarding their environmental repercussions, as has been the case in so many areas of political action” (p.2). Marten then argues that the discursive or counter discursive voices need to get a detailed investigation of the kind this study in attempting to accomplish. Besides, African writers have also been voices for their continent’s ecological plagues using different mechanisms to resisting, protesting, and changing colonial/post-colonial ecological destructions. In Africa, a number of writers and critics have traditionally engaged in nature writing highlighting land issues, revitalizing resistance against environmental evils etc., and studying them as the result of the long time history of colonialism and its legacies. William Slaymaker, for example, in his essay *Ecoing the Other (s): The Call of Global Green and Black African Responses* (2001) perceives that many African writers’ resistance or avoidance of ecocritical paradigm is caused by their suspicion about a Western theory which “appears as one more hegemonic discourse from the metropolitan west” (p.132). And because of this, Slaymaker, (2001) argues that African writers do not expect any western theory to solve their environmental problems. Without being called ecocritics, African writers are conscious of nature and their environment. Slaymaker (2001) also states that African writers, in their works, emphasize ecological damages and resistances of indigenous societies against the hegemonic system of their colonizers and imperialists on their natural environments. Today’s environmental literature and the study of humans and ecosystem is fast spreading in Africa and finding expressions in many literary works of the continent’s post-colonial writers. Slaymaker (2001) remarks this as follows:

*Black African writers and critics have traditionally embraced nature writing, and land issues and landscape themes that are pertinent to national and local cultural claims and that also functions as pastoral reminiscences or even projections of a golden age when many of environmental evils resulting from colonialism and the exploitation of indigenous resources have been remediated (p.28).*

Revitalizing Slaymaker’s instances, Byron Caminero Santangelo (2011) appraises those African writers who are committed to displaying the continent’s environmental concerns and their ecological awareness in their literary works. He also acclaims that post-colonial ecocriticism can define and redefine African environmental views as the continent is in the heart of a long time relation with colonialism and the present post-colonialism. He also expresses African writers’ engagement and concern with their environment, environmental activism and the efforts they

exert in addressing ecological damages caused by colonial and post-colonial environmental policies and practices as follows:

*In the past fifteen years, African environmental activism has been brought to the world's attention through the martyrdom of Ken Saro Wiwa and more recently, by the awarding of the Nobel Peace prize to Wangari Maathai. These figures point not only to the ways that Africans have mobilized against environmental degradation, but also, to the grave environmental problems faced by Africa which have become, especially in conjunction with social problems, a significant threat to its present and future-well-being. Ken Saro-Wiwa's leadership also suggests that African writers can play a significant role in environmental causes. Just as they have in other forms of social activism... (p. 698).*

Thus, the study of ecology and the interaction of human with it in African literature has become the concern of those writers in Africa overtime as writers and literary critics have continued to see the need to use the medium of writing and literature to project the impact of post-colonialism on their environment. This study attempts to fill the gaps indicated above in its focus on critical reading of ecological violence and resistance in selected post-colonial Anglophone African novels through a post-colonial ecocritical approach.

### **1.3 Objectives of the Study**

#### **1.3.1 General Objective**

The general objective of this study is to examine ecological violence and resistance in the post-colonial African environments as reflected in selected post-colonial Anglophone African novels employing post-colonial ecocritical approach.

#### **1.3.2 Specific Objectives**

Specifically, this study is designed to:

- 1) find out forms of ecological violence in the selected post-colonial Anglophone African novels;
- 2) explore post-colonial ecological resistance strategies as reflected in the selected post-colonial Anglophone African novels;
- 3) articulate the role of the writer in bringing attention to the ongoing ecological violence and resistance, and;

4) investigate the interaction of humans with their environment in the selected novels

## **1.4 Research Questions**

In its effort to address the gaps indicated in the statement of the problem above, the study attempts to answer the following research questions:

- 1) What are the different forms of ecological violence reflected in the selected post-colonial Anglophone African novels.
- 2) What are post-colonial ecological resistance strategies employed in the selected post-colonial Anglophone African novels.
- 3) How does the writer articulate the ongoing ecological violence and resistance.
- 4) How the interactions of humans with their environments are depicted in the selected novels.

## **1.5 Significance of the Study**

This study is intended to bring various outcomes. It firstly reinforces the need for a paradigm shift from anthropocentric post-colonial approach to earth-centered approach to literary study. The study extends the domain of African literary studies from one primarily focused on human being to the one that explores the complexities of human-nonhuman relations and interactions in the different literary texts under consideration. Such paradigm shift enables to have a broad understanding on the human and the nonhuman interactions and relations in literary texts. It can also scale up skill of imagination to literary texts as are composed of complete body of human and the physical world. The study also introduces a newly emerged socio-cultural and environmental driven literary approach called post-colonial ecocriticism. Post-colonial ecocriticism evaluates the relation and interactions of human and the nonhuman in post-colonial non-western literary works and environmental contexts.

Secondly, this study enlightens the pathways for the nonwestern peculiar ecological and societal characteristics by applying post-colonial ecocritical approaches to the study of literary and nonliterary texts. The nonwestern ecological and societal characteristics can be defined on the basis of post-colonial environmental conditions. The study also directs inquisitive literary and nonliterary researchers to stipulate further investigations to the Global South in general using post-colonial ecocritical approach.

Thirdly, this study can broaden perspectives on ecological violence and resistances against it by the nonwestern natives and its complexities in post-colonial Africa's continuous ecological crisis. The study also provides insights into the perspectives and perceptions of Africans towards environmental restorations against colonial and post-colonial ecological destructions. This ecological consciousness also reopens the question of violence that earlier marked the struggle for political liberation in demanding the independence of African countries. This again broadens insights into the African ecological/environmental concerns and can be used to develop a comprehensive understanding to overhaul African physical and human interactions and interrelationships in the post-colonial times.

Fourthly, the study can introduce environment based literature teaching and learning trends in higher learning institutions that further pushes us to give due care to our Mother Nature. Such kind of environmental based school syllabus also fosters multiethnic and multicultural movements. The environmental approach to the study of literature can expand the burgeoning corpus of ecological investigations in African literary studies further. Finally, this study can serve as springboard to initiate further inquiries on this area as there has been limited or no conducted research work(s) so far, in applying post-colonial ecocritical perspective to the analysis of literary works at Addis Ababa University. Furthermore, the study is expected to provoke constructive scholarly arguments and counter arguments on the interconnections between literature and environment by profoundly engaging students of literature and literary critics with literary and ecological/environmental concerns in the post-colonial nonwestern world.

### **1.6 Scope and Limitation of the Study**

This research revolves around four novels. All novels were selected purposely to unearth the destruction of the African post-colonial ecologies and the restive resistances of African people against ecological crisis caused by the direct and indirect intrusions of their former colonizers. The colonial and/or post-colonial political impact on African natural ecologies and African resistance against this practice on the post-colonial African ecologies has been considered in this analysis. These narratives (texts) also enable the researcher cover the major geographical regions of Sub-Saharan Africa, which is plagued with disillusioned environmental injustices even after formal colonialism is ceased. The primary texts under this scrutiny here spanning a broad range

of geographic spaces are: *Oil on Water* (2010) by Helon Habila, *The Heart of Redness* (2000) by Zakes Mda, *Yellow-Yellow* (2006) by Kaine Agary, and *Wizard of the Crow* (2006) by Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o.

The study is also delimited to post-colonial ecocritical analysis, and focused on exploring how ecological violence and resistances against this practice are represented. Hence, all the selected novels spotlight the progressive African ecological violence and post-colonial resistances made by the native colonies in post-colonial Africa as reflected in the novels selected for this study. All the novels are recent and produced after post-colonial ecocriticism got an established ground in academia and literary studies. The novels view African post-colonial ecological violence in relation the effect of western colonial expansion to the African environments in the last centuries and resistance efforts made by colonies against those ecological crises. The novels selected for this study also overwhelmingly serve as important ingredients to track the complexities of the ecological crisis plaguing the African post-colonial continent and the resistances as local environmental responses by the colonies under post-colonial contexts. The selection of these novels for analysis is also informed by the fact that there is a dearth of scholarly research on the novels selected for this study regarding ecological violence and resistance against this practice using post-colonial ecocritical approach. So, the scope of the content of this study mainly extends to ecological violence and resistance strategies used for discarding ecological destructions and upholding environmental protections as reflected in the texts selected for analysis.

The selected texts, set in a considerably destructed post-colonial Africa, enable merging post-colonial and ecocritical approaches in order to examine ecological violence on both human and nonhuman. On the nonhuman level, the study particularly analyzes the irreparable violence upon the ecology by taking into account the harms to the nonhuman. The nonhuman includes animals, plants, oil minerals, water bodies, natural/physical landscapes etc. In analyzing and interpreting the selected texts, both human and nonhuman entities are used to examine the ecological violence and resistance. Consequently, this study on these selected novels aims to discover various ecological forms of violence, resistance strategies, and writers' articulation in bringing attention to the ongoing situations along with the interactions of humans and nonhumans in the post-colonial African ecologies.

This study is restricted to four novels only for the sake of manageability that makes its generalizability also limited. The limitation then lies on the number of texts selected for the study. In order to make selection seemingly representative, the researcher tried to take into account the settings of the novels, and as much as possible made it fall under different regions in Sub-Saharan Africa under post-colonial Anglophone African literary canonization. The challenges the researcher encountered were limited publications and updates on post-colonial ecocriticism as it is a newly evolving literary approach. But with determined efforts, and thanks to friends abroad and a few scholars on post-colonial ecocriticism who either bought books or sent articles freely, the researcher has met the challenges and completed this dissertation.

## **1.7 Methodology and Procedures**

### **1.7.1 Method**

As the objective of this study is to examine the pressing ecological violence and restive resistances in selected post-colonial Anglophone African novels, the method of textual analysis has been employed. This method is used as a way to gather evidence from the selected novels. It deals with how characters are made to make sense of the physical world in the narratives. In addition, settings and scenery events with their particular observations and experiences by characters and writer's articulations on what is going on the natural ecology have been identified for analysis. To explore this, the study focuses on behaviors, interactions, interconnections and feelings of the characters, environmental tropes, ecological landscape crises etc., are used in the natural ecology to uncover the meanings embedded in the texts selected for this study.

Textual analysis as a method of this study is employed in the study is not realistic or structuralism perspectives which end up a conclusive form of reading. It rather follows the post-structuralist perspective which believes in multiplicity of readings. As McKee (2003) puts, this perspective advances the idea that all cultures make sense of the world differently, and it is impossible to say that one is right and the others are wrong. Consequently the textual analysis in this study is not aimed at providing an absolute interpretation of representations. As a result, a range of textual features have been considered in undertaking the analysis of the ecological violence and resistances in the novels selected for analysis.

Regarding writers' articulation of the ongoing ecological violence and resistance, attention has been given to narrative strategies employed in each selected novel. Among the different narrative strategies, the study focused on the contribution of narrative voice, point of view, and figurative languages (metaphors, metonymy, irony etc.) have been used in each selected novel for this study. Narrative voice as a narrative strategy offers clues on the personal telling of the story. It emphasizes who tells and how and from whose perspectives he/she/it speaks about himself/herself/itself and others. This narrative voice provides an important indication about whom and by whom the ecology is being violated and the resistances being made. That represents the position of individual characters and things in the narrative story and their relationship with the ecology and ecosystem in the larger environment. Furthermore, in order to understand the emphasis given to the interconnections and interactions between the human and the nonhuman, it is important to look at whether there are multiple voices or a single voice in the novel. According to Holquist (1981:188), for Bakhtin, a novel as a genre has many voices. Dealing with narrative voices in the texts, then, would help in answering questions like: does the voice include that of the nonhuman or is it a single anthropocentric voice of the human that the story tries to present? What ideological imprints can be deconstructed from the voices in the novel? Is there any voice given to nature? Based on these questions, narrative voices are used for analysis and are aimed at emphasis on the ecological violence and resistances.

Point of view on the other hand is a term that goes hand-in-glove with narrative voice. In understanding what angle the story is being told, narrated or even observed, point of view is used as another narrative strategy. Point of view, the angle in which the story is being told, is selected from the chosen texts as it helps to synthesize writers', characters' and protagonist's emphasis on the issue being told. The ecological violence and resistance is viewed based on the points of views of the characters and the writer/narrator who tells the story of ecological destructions and resistances as observed in the novels.

Another source of narrative strategy used in the analysis is figurative languages. Figurative languages are potential narrative strategies that can be used as points of entry for analyzing the symbolic representation of the interaction between human and nonhuman subjects as they influence subject formation. In ecological/environmental language, figurative languages are termed as environmental tropes, words or phrases that are used in a way that is different from its

usual meaning in order to create a particular mental image or effect. Metaphors, similes, personification, etc. therefore can be termed as environmental/ecological tropes. Environmental/ecological tropes show the representation of physical worlds including the forest, the animals, dead-earth, the country side, the soils, minerals soil etc., as they really look, seem, or act. As Howarth (1996) indicates, one of the goals of environmental criticism is “to examine how metaphors of nature and land are used and abused” (p.81).The research examines these environmental tropes recurrent in the selected novels in order to show the protest, resistance and continuous ecological violence on the one hand and the promise, uniqueness, and complexity of African post-colonial ecological resistance on the other.

### **1.7.2 Nature and Type of Information**

As a desktop study and based on published literary texts, the primary information for this research is the four regional representative post-colonial Anglophone African novels. However, for the purpose of specificity and manageability, the study does not include all issues embedded in all four novels selected for analysis and interpretation. It rather draws excerpts from each selected novels, from which those excerpts reveal different forms of ecological violence and resistance strategies against ecological violence. For deeper investigation of ecological violence as well as resistances, the major characters and positions accorded to them have been taken as significant in extracting inputs (or data) from the novels selected for study. More specifically, the novels have been critically examined from the point of view of the depiction of protagonists’, other characters’ observations, scenery descriptions on forms of ecological violence and the novels’ writers’ positions with regard to the continuous ecological violation and their struggles in resisting the statuesque and recommendations in restoring the depleted natives’ ecologies, and interactions between the human and the nonhuman. This includes characters’ regular interactions with their ecology and post-colonial atmospheres, how the ongoing ecological crisis affects both the nonhuman and the human, and their responses.

### **1.7.3 Criteria for Text Selection**

This study has focused on the works of selected authors and an authoress though there are many novels in the post-colonial African literary canonization. The selection criteria, however, took into consideration of authors with their novels’ diversified ecological thematic issues, writers’ positions on the ecological issues and concerns, post-colonial resistance strategies set out by the

writers, identity (national) of the writers and setting of their works, and regional representations of texts so as to increase the livelihood of entertaining different perspectives about the ongoing ecological violence and resistances. Focus has been given to these novels which address forms of ecological violence, post-colonial resistance strategies, the interaction of characters with their ecological environments, and writers' articulations to address the issues going on post-colonial African environments. The novels have been selected on account of their explicit depiction of ecological violence and the resistance of the colonized people in order to restore their natural environment. In this regard, all the four novels in addition to the above mentioned qualities are chosen based on their explicit depiction of pressing ecological violence and ecoactivist tendencies towards protecting natural ecologies. In addition Helon Habila's *Oil on Water* and Kaine Agary's *Yellow-Yellow* have been selected from Niger Delta of Nigeria with the same setting but the writers' writing style has been taken into consideration. While Habila views Niger Delta's environmental situation through journalistic principles, Agary reveals the impacts of Western driven environmental destruction on rural poor women. Stylistically, Agary uses first person point of view while Habila narrates the story with third person and individual efforts of probing challenging cases.

In the section focus has also been given to the novels which address the issue of African natural ecology in post-colonial Africa. The selection criteria also consider what Buell (1995) calls "environmentally oriented literary texts and those that do not appear so" (p.195). The criteria Buell puts forward are: "(1) the nonhuman environment is presented not merely as a framing device,(2) the human interest is not understood to be the only legitimate interest, (3) human accountability towards the environments is part of the text's ethical orientation, and (4) some sense of the environment as a process rather than as a constant or a given is at least implicit in the text"(p.72).As a result, the selection, to some extent, took into account the presence of the four elements forwarded by Buell.

#### **1.7.4 Analytical Procedures**

As stated, the general objective of this study is to examine ecological violence and resistance as reflected in selected post-colonial Anglophone African novels. To materialize this objective, a new window of literary analysis called post-colonial ecocritical perspective has been applied. To

reach the desired ends (goal), the researcher has followed certain procedures that led him to results (findings of the study).

The first procedure consists of a series step of analysis to be followed. In that respect close reading of the chosen four novels and identification of excerpts dealing with different forms of ecological violence, ecological resistance strategies, ecological themes, symbols, writers' articulations on the ongoing ecological violence and resistances, and depictions of human-nonhuman interactions have been made. In identifying the extracts, emphasis has been made on ecological violence, characters, tones, and ecological resistances strategies used by characters and narrative techniques. The identified extracts have been then categorized based on the objectives set for the study. Then based on the thematic classifications used for the selected novels in the study, the extracts collected from each novel were analyzed through post-colonial ecocritical framework designed for the study.

A textual analysis of extracts from textual sources has been undertaken carefully. In particular, the analytical tool (content analysis) developed for textual analysis by McKee (2003), has been adopted as a guiding tool for literary analyses and interpretation in this study. Then, interpretations of various dimensions have been applied. In each stage, interpretative activities have been undertaken in such a way that the new version accounts for details included under it.

The post-colonial ecocritical framework used in analyzing the texts selected for this study is situated in the post-colonial and ecocritical dimensions. Through post-colonial ecocritical perspective, the way ecology is represented as being violated, the post-colonial resistance strategies writers used in the depicting ecological crisis, interactions between the human and the nonhuman and writers' attitudes and articulations in bringing attention to the ongoing ecological violence and resistance have been presented in detail.

## **1.8 Organization of the Dissertation**

This thesis is organized into eight chapters. Chapter one, introductory in nature, deals with the background, articulating the gap the study intends to fill, describing the objectives, research questions, significance, scope and limitation of the study, and research methodology and procedures. The second chapter is devoted to reviewing previous research works conducted on the novels selected for this research work to show the gaps this study aims to fill. In the third chapter, a brief description of post-colonial ecocriticism, theoretical framework, has been presented. Underpinning this theoretical framework, detailed description of post-colonial ecocriticism and its applicability to the study of post-colonial Anglophone African literature has

been presented. The fourth chapter deals with analysis and interpretation of ecological violence and resistance in Helon Habila's *Oil on Water*. The fifth chapter deals with analysis and interpretation of ecological violence and resistance in Zakes Mda's *The Heart of Redness*. The sixth chapter presents analysis and interpretation of ecological violence and resistance in Kaine Agary's *Yellow-Yellow*. Similarly, chapter seven deals with analysis and interpretation of ecological violence and resistance in Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o's *Wizard of the Crow*. The last chapter (chapter eight) presents conclusions and implications of the study.

## Chapter Two: Review of Related Literature

### 2.0 Introduction

This chapter is devoted to a brief review of related literature. In this review, both local and global research studies relevant to the present study are briefly referred to. The review has been made on research studies conducted on the selected novels for this study only.

### 2.1 A Review of Research Works

Different literary researchers have conducted literary studies on the selected novels for the present study so far by taking one literary theory as a means of exploring insights of the four novels. These research works are local and international. In Addis Ababa University, the first locally conducted research and reviewed here in depth is Ashenafi Belay's dissertation entitled: "An Ecocritical Reading of Representation of Human-Nature Relations in Selected Novels set in Africa, 2015". In this dissertation, Ashenafi tried to examine the representation of human-nature relationships in selected novels set in Africa at various periods of times. In this dissertation work, Ashenafi used and analyzed Zakes Mda's *The Heart of Redness* (2000) and Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o's *Wizard of the Crow* (2006) with other four Anglophone African colonial novels and explored how nature is contextualized and the ways human beings place themselves in relation to nature using ecocriticism as an approach of modern literary study.

The present study, unlike Ashenafi's, is deviated with thematic issues. The research tries to examine ecological violence and resistances in the post-colonial Africa novels while Ashenafi's tries to examine the representation of human and nonhuman relations as reflected in African colonial and post-colonial novels. It also deviates from the Ashenafi's research the fact that the present research employs post-colonial ecocritical approach and addresses the current ecological concerns and restive resistances of African former colonies in protecting and preserving their natural environment from all colonial/post-colonial destructions in post-colonial Africa. While Ashenafi's findings imply that there are cordial kinships between Africans and nature in colonial and post-colonial novels selected for his analysis, the present research discovers post-colonial Anglophone African novels are battlefields of pressing ecological violence and restive resistance against the ecological destructions due to the political intrusions of the colonial and its contemporary manifestations.

In addition to the local, global research works conducted on the novels selected for this study have been reviewed to capitalize the validity and newness of the area of this research in post-colonial African literary study. The first global literary research work reviewed in-depth is Njogu Waita's article "Identity, Politics and Gender Dimensions in Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o's, *Wizard of the Crow* (2013)". In this article Waita has critically examined the treatment of the questions of identity, politics and gender issues in Ngũgĩ's *Wizard of the Crow* using the post-colonial approach. The explored issues of identity according to the article are of the experiences of slavery, colonialism, neocolonialism and globalization in Africa and discuss *Wizard of the Crow* as a post-colonial political satirical novel. The critical questions raised in the article are why the disease of contradicting identities continues to afflict the African social system. The article concludes that the African renaissance can never be achieved under a condition of alienation.

Unlike Njogu Waita's, the present research focuses on the dire conditions African post-colonial environment in relation to colonial and/or post-colonial perspectives as reflected in post-colonial Anglophone African novels. Furthermore, it tries, unlike Waita's, to examine the ecological violence and post-colonial resistances using post-colonial ecocritical perspectives. The present research mainly probes the destruction of ecological forests. It also deals with mechanism of replenishing and reforestation in order to protect the natural environment in the case Ngũgĩ's *Wizard of the Crow* other than only socio-cultural issues of post-independent Kenya.

The other global research work reviewed on the same novel is Youssoupha Mane's "Postcolonial Ecocriticism in the Narratives Strategies of Ngugi Wa Thiong'o's *Wizard of the Crow*" (2015). In this article Mane has examined how Ngũgĩ's Wa Thiong'o has used ecocriticism to handle the labyrinth of narrative techniques in his *Wizard of the Crow*. In this study Mane has found out that Ngũgĩ's has appeared as one of the most prominent post-colonial activist and has written his *Wizard of the Crow* with a post-colonial awareness jampacked with an overdose of ecocriticism, and used animal character, natural rhetoric and ecofeminism as anchor of his narrative techniques in the novel. Employing these narrative techniques, the article examines how the writer, in this post-colonial novel, displays his position of political and environmental activist to post-colonial Kenya.

Unlike Youssoupha Mane's work, the present study explores the representation of ecological violence and resistance in *Wizard of the Crow* instead of mainly focusing on the writer's position of political and environmental resistances against Aburiria's authoritarian ruling system in the in his work of art. It also employs post-colonial ecocriticism as an approach and examines various forms of ecological violence inflicted on the natural ecology of Aburiria and post-colonial resistance strategies devised along with the interaction of human and the nonhuman as represented in *Wizard of the Crow*.

Similarly, Zhang's "An Ecocritical Reading of Zake Mda's *The Heart of Redness* (2014) has been reviewed. In this article Zhang examines the relationship between the physical environment and the human. He also investigates the influences of green ecology on the human agencies by providing detailed descriptions and causations among natural environment elements. Zhang uses ecocritical reading as an investigative approach and sought rational relations between the human and the nonhuman. Unlike Zhang's research work, the present research looks into explorations of ecological violence and resistance in selected Anglophone African novels including Zakes Mda's *The Heart of Redness*. Besides, it applies post-colonial ecocriticism as an approach and ecological violence and resistance as thematic concerns.

Another global research work reviewed is Dalleo's article as "Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o's *Wizard of the Crow* and Post-colonial Pedagogy" (2013). In this article Dalleo examined the novel and his argument explicitly positions itself as a break from what came before by rethinking the anticolonial ideologies contained in the earlier work in light of what *Wizard of the Crow* references as an expanding post-colonialism. Dalleo explores, unlike the radical oppositionality of the anticolonial stance, post-colonial pedagogy as depicted in a contingent and conflicted ways. Employing a post-colonial approach, Delleo finally found out that a decolonizing form of education stands against post-colonial practices without replicating patriarchy and colonial hierarchy. The present study is different from Dalleo's as it employs a post-colonial ecocritical approach which overhauls both environment and post-colonial issues in post-colonial states of former colonized countries. It also focuses on examining the level and incidence of ecological violence and resistance strategies the writer has put as response to the violence meted on the ecology.

Thirdly, Edebor's article "Rape of a Nation: An Eco-critical Reading of Helon Habila's *Oil on Water* (2017)" is another global research work reviewed in-depth. The article examines Helon Habila's *Oil on Water* (2010) as a testament to the environmental mindfulness of the Nigerian novelist using the sociological approach and adopting a content analysis method. In this study, Edebor found out that Habila's *Oil on Water* describes the appropriation of social resources in the Niger Delta of Nigeria and notices that environment, society and other living things are exhaustively isolated. The present study, though similar in novel selection, tries to examine the impact of western business oriented oil companies on Niger Delta's ecology and ecosystem. It also examines ecological resistance efforts attuned to the environment by the citizens there. Unlike Edebor's, the present study also employs the post-colonial ecocritical perspective as a method in order to highlight the ecological crisis prevalent in the ecology of the area and the local communities (human) and the resistances of local citizens in defending and protecting their natural ecologies from the colonial/post-colonial calamities.

Next, Simon's "Environmental Degradation, Militancy/Kidnapping and Oil Theft in Helon Habila's *Oil on Water* (2014)" is reviewed in-depth in order to shed light on the question of validity and reliability of the present research. In his article, Simon found out that degradation of the whole Niger Delta environment through pollution has constituted challenges and concern for the people of that particular region. Simon's work goes deep into the impact of pollution on both the human and the nonhuman as a major cause of the destruction of the larger environment using an ecological approach. Finally, Simon found out that there are various causes of environmental damages through pollution and including soil erosion, and sudden flooding, powerful winds, social crisis such as youth restiveness, militancy, oil theft, and signs of drought.

The present research, unlike, Simon's, investigates the various forms of ecological violence that have cause the infliction of the Niger Delta. The natural resource has been exploitation for profit business makings rather than the natural geological forces of Niger Delta of Nigeria. It also identifies the different ecological resistance strategies used to restoring the ongoing damaged natural resource in the novel. Moreover, the present research work follows the post-colonial ecocritical approach which examines the political influence of neocolonial/post-colonial power on the marginalized ecologies and poor communities of Niger Delta, Nigeria.

Similarly Akung and Iloeje's article on Kaine Agary's *Yellow-Yellow* as "*Yellow-Yellow: A Study in Ecocriticism* (2018)" was reviewed in-depth. The article examines the relationship between ecology and literature by analyzing the novel using ecocriticism as a contemporary literary approach. In this article, Akung and Iloeje's go further to explore the socio-cultural effects of environmental degradation on society and the effects of coastal communities in contact with the sea in Niger-Delta of Nigeria. They have also slightly dealt with the political ecology of Nigeria and examined the place of women within that political environment and how women are sexually polluted. Much of the focus of the study rounds on the impacts of social evils on the environment, culture and women.

Finally, the researchers have found out that the environmental crisis has brought about severe challenges and violations of the rights of women and cultural misappropriations. My research, unlike Akung and Iloeje's, differs as it applies post-colonial ecocritical approach to investigate forms of ecological violence and resistance strategies used by the local communities in Agary's *Yellow-Yellow*. The study also looks and analyses the novel through the political angle of the neoliberal economic exploitation of Niger Delta ecoregion.

The other article reviewed is Ignatius Chukwumah's "The displaced Male-Image in Kaine Agary's *Yellow-Yellow*" (2013). The article recounts deprivation of the protagonist's subsistence livelihood by oil despoilment using the post-colonial approach. It also investigates the provocations, corollaries, and correlations of the displaced male-image through its absence and presence and examines how the various offshoots of this image, whether as a father, lover, friend, autocrat or deliverer, are posited by the work's major characters.

According to the article the manifestation of the varied shades of the male-image is vital for the destiny of the major character and a few others, accounting for their sexual behaviors, consequent torture and the work's tragic form. The present research work deviates from the above as it focuses on the pressing ecological violence on both the nonhuman and the human using post-colonial ecocritical approach. It also deals with the post-colonial resistance strategies used by the writer of the novel against the practices. It mainly explores the causal factors for the violation on the environment that has also brought about drastic effects on poor women of Niger Delta and possible environmental restoration strategies as crafted by the writer for replenishments.

The other reviewed recent article relates to the present study is Olubunmi and Ashaolu's "The Ensnaring Oil: an Ecofeminist Critique of Kaine Agary's *Yellow-Yellow*" (2019). In this study, applying the ecofeminist reading approach, Olubunmi and Ashaolu have examined the impact of environmental destruction on Niger Delta's rural poor women. It also reveals the bondage between woman and Niger Delta's nature and the considerable and cordial connection that links female oppression to the abuse of nature in the region. They have also critically evaluated *Yellow-Yellow* to advance a critical discourse on the variables of the closeness between the joint exploitation/degradation of African women and their environment.

Contrary to Olubunmi and Ashaolu's study, the present research examines different forms of ecological violence on the post-colonial environments of Niger Delta where women are also parts and parcel of it. Unlike Olubunmi and Ashaolu's work, the present study looks into an investigation of ecological violence and post-colonial resistance employing a post-colonial ecocritical literary approach. Furthermore, the study explores the post-colonial resistance strategies used in the novel to defend and protect ecologies which are harmed and continuously attacked by the current global business empires.

## **Chapter Three: Theoretical Framework**

### **3.0 Introduction**

A theoretical framework based the approach of post-colonial ecocriticism is presented in this chapter. To begin with, the concepts and emergence of post-colonial ecocriticism as theoretical approach are discussed. This discussion is followed by an account of analytical framework employed in the study, based on post-colonial ecocriticism. After providing the emergence and synchronizations of post-colonialism and ecocriticism, the role of post-colonial ecocriticism in African post-colonial environmental literature is examined. Then ecological violence and resistance in the context of African post-colonial environment are discussed.

### **3.1 Understanding Post-Colonial Ecocriticism**

In order to capture the full image of the theory of post-colonial ecocriticism, it is important to look at the meaning and concept of post-colonialism and ecocriticism as separate individual theories. Post-colonialism is a literary theory developed for the study of the cultures of former colonies, who are affected by the imperial process from the moment of colonial contact to the present day in these former colonies particularly in Africa. Edward Said's *Orientalism* (1978) gave birth to and helped develop a whole range of writings called post-colonial studies. Post-colonialism analyses how the historical fact of European colonialism continues to shape the relationship between the west and the non-west even after former colonies have gained their political independence. It also describes the continuing process of resistance and reconstruction by the former colonies. Post-colonialism explores the experience of suppression, resistance, race, gender, representation, difference, displacement, and migration in relation to the west. We use post-colonialism even today in literary studies because there is a continuity of preoccupations throughout the historical process initiated by European imperial aggression on African culture, political organization, and social structures and so on.

Ecocriticism (can be called as environmental criticism), on the other hand, is an invention of Northern environmentalism. According to Ramachandra (2014:22), it targets "the [modern] materialistic civilization [that] makes man the butcher of Earth" seeks to restore the Edenic nature and curb the over-exploitation of the natural environment and plays an important role in saving the endangered earth. Clark (2011) argues that ecocriticism, a western outgrowth literary approach investigates relationships between literature and the physical environment. It provides

an earth-centered approach to the analysis and interpretation of literary texts produced during colonialism or its aftermath.

The term ecocriticism was first coined by William Rueckert in his article written in 1978. Twenty century American writers, such as Ralph Waldo Emerson, Henry David Thoreau and Margaret Fuller call it ecocriticism while the British scholars, such as Jonathan Bate call it green studies. American scholars' works celebrate nature, life, force, and wilderness. American writing is celebratory in tone; British variant tends to be more minimatory. That is it seeks to warn us of environmental threats that emanate from governmental, industrial, commercial, and neocolonial forces (Barry, 2007). Ecocriticism, as a literary theory, examines the relationship between human and the physical environment.

During its revolutionary course of development, ecocriticism was propounded by other ecocritics in the 1980s and full boom and reached its zenith in the 1990s with a predominant purpose of a microscopic view of a cultural text in the context to its dealing with nature. The purpose of ecocriticism, as Rueckert, (1978) argues, is landmarking the role of literature in saving our common planet from the calamities of manmade practices. It has also been used as an alarming tool to writers and critics on creating awareness about the beauty of nature in the earlier centuries and environmental catastrophes in the 20th century. As the 21st century is the century of the pursuit of material profits human beings have directed their moral and ethical responsibilities towards their environment and introducing the concept of ecocriticism has become one of the required tasks of western writers and critics. The most widely known western ecocritics are Lawrence Buell, Cheryll Glotfelty, William Howarth, William Rueckert, Suellen Campbell, Michael P. Branch and Glen A. Love (Huggan, 2009; Ramachandra, 2014). The main focus of ecocriticism is to investigate the representations and relations between Nature and the human being assuming the human and nature are interwoven.

### **3.2 The Emergence of Post-colonial Ecocriticism.**

The publication of *Orientalism* by Edward Seid in 1978 was considered as a landmark for post-colonial studies and criticism. In the same year, William Rueckert introduced the term ecocriticism that made a little mark at the time and, aside from its coinage has been rarely cited since. The arbitrary synchronization of these two popular literary theories serves as a starting point from which to consider not just the eventual cross-fertilization. With this cross-fertilization

effect on both the environment and the human aspects, post-colonial ecocriticism was born out of the two independent theories called post-colonialism and ecocriticism in the 2000s. As a new breed of post-colonialism and ecocriticism, post-colonial ecocriticism as Graham Huggan and Hellen Tiffin in their *Postcolonial Ecocriticism* (2010:55) stated, emphasizes “the need to bring postcolonial and ecological issues together as a means of challenging the continuing imperialist modes of social and environmental dominance...” Post-colonial ecocriticism examines how the western idea of conservation in third world nations ignores the ancient indigenous cultures of the local people and their environment. It has often focused on the impact of colonialism, post-colonialism, and more recently globalized environmental dominations of former colonized states, all of which, however, are understood as part of colonial legacies from the west (Ramachandra, 2014; Nixon, 2011; Parry, 2016; Huggan, 2004; Huggan and Tiffin, 2010). According to these scholars, the application of post-colonial ecocritical theory to the study of post-colonial African literatures has become a major concern these days.

Post-colonial ecocriticism emerges from the realization that Western-centrism and anthropocentrism consolidate one another (Huggan, 2009). Through consolidation, it is believed that both human and the nonhuman can be studied together. This newly emerged literary approach draws attention to the principles of social ecology and the question of environmental justice. It also expresses the concerns about the fact that subaltern humans are denied access to the resources of the land they inhabit and emphasizing the sustainability of their cultural practices especially in the former colonized states of Africa. Colonization has involved the anthropocentric view of the land as property and the treatment of the colonized environment as empty space. In the colonial assumptions, places in Africa have been erased and turned into space, which makes these two concepts a valuable intersection point between the two literary approaches (Ramachandra, 2014). The combination of post-colonialism and ecocriticism later is helpful in overhauling human and nonhuman interactions and treatments especially in the post-colonial societies.

The joint consideration of environmental and post-colonial social issues pertaining to post-colonialism and/or the age of neo-imperialism are advantageous to both perspectives. The combination of the two theories can assist in the struggle to resist political systems of environmental and social dominations. Nixon (2005) asserts that the ideological opposition

between humans and nonhumans has served as the basis for treating the subaltern as less than human and justifying westerners' subjugation of the nonhuman world in the non-western world. The study of the environment with human as a major anthropogenic force of nature can lead researchers to realize the either side effects of socio-cultural and environmental concerns in a literary work. Post-colonial ecocriticism can help evaluate African post-colonial environments as Africa has exhibited both human and nonhuman subjugation at the same times of histories by the western colonizers and neo-imperialists.

One of the good qualities of post-colonial ecocriticism, in the evaluation of African post-colonial literary texts, is that it pays due attention to both micro and macro levels of the colonizers' impact on African post-colonial ecologies/environments. It looks at the impacts of colonialism and its legacies on all entities of the human as well as the nonhuman. Instead of examining the post-colonial impacts on the former colonized states of Africa with a focus on human parameters, it redirects researchers and literary critics to inquire into the environmental concerns at both macro and microorganisms within a literary text as the literary text itself is a product of human and nonhuman including the larger ecosphere.

Blended together with post-colonialism and ecocriticism, post-colonial ecocriticism is independently served as calling actions for environmental crisis as well as global and local responses. Nixon (2011) assures that the alternative method of examining colonial and post-colonial literatures should be using post-colonial ecocriticism as former colonized states have considerable experiences with colonialism, neocolonialism and the present day of ecological crisis. Nixon further remarks that post-colonial studies aimed at responding to the end of post-war boom, long downturn, and new imperialist offensives in the 1970s and sometimes in the present. Ecocriticism on the other hand responds to shifts in environmental consciousness signaled by, e.g., Earth Day, 1970; Stockholm, 1972; Club of Rome report, 1972; 'Blue Marble' earth shot, 1972; The Good Life, Tokyo Protocols, 1991, 1975/ Survivors, 1975 and other environmental movements and international environmental protection agreements. Nixon (2011) finally concludes that post-colonial ecocriticism offers responses for human and the nonhuman factors while studying a literary text as if it is a complete body of human and nonhuman elements.

However ecocriticism cannot clearly define post-colonial African literary studies. Its stands as second wave of ecocriticism, deep ecology etc. also cannot define African post-colonial literature. By highlighting the different concerns of post-colonialism and ecocritical critics, Nixon (2005) buttresses the reasons for the late entry of environmental studies into post-colonial studies despite the environmental consciousness of blacks in the pre-colonial context. Nixon extensively shows the difference between post-colonialism and the first wave ecocriticism known as deep ecology. Deep ecology evolved to become ecocriticism and is an American-based environmental movement and an ecological/environmental ideology that asserts the intrinsic value of all living organisms is dependent on the existence of others within the ecology. It was popularized by American environmentalists without recourse to other ecologies in the former colonies. For Naess (1995) deep ecology's core principle is to promote respect for nature and acknowledge nonhuman's right to exist. Naess convinces ecological/environmental critics that deep ecology advocates love for nature and argues that nature is a structure of existence where living organisms are dependent on the existence of others within the natural ecology.

Deep ecology insists on only nature preservation. However, the adoption of this theory to ecocriticism, as Nixon (2011) argues, does not fit as ecological/environmental studies accommodate social aspects. This makes the theory to be rejected by ecocritics and post-colonial critics as it does not work in former colonies' contexts. For Caminero-Santangelo and Myers (2011), the first wave of ecocriticism does not consider the impacts of colonialism and racism in the degradation, displacement, disruption and exploitation of ecosystem as it only focuses on Edenic nature. This Northern driven theory ignores human and nonhuman conditions of Africa. Ramachandra (2014) argues that deep ecology ignores cultural difference or peculiarities of other ecologies. He also believes that deep ecologies endorsed the "orientalist methodologies" which ignore the destructions of Africans by multinational companies' industrial activities like the explorations for oil in many African countries.

Considering the above peculiarities and the strict nature-culture difference, ecocriticism and post-colonialism has become a minority position in recent environmental studies. Most literary critics are beginning to consider the social implications of the natural environment. As a result of this there is a growing interest in literary criticism in finding points of intersection between post-colonialism and ecocriticism. Byron Caminero-Santangelo (2011) argues that a growing number

of “...articles, edited collections, special issues of journals, and monographs” (p.2011) have focused on the intersection of ecocriticism with post-colonial cultural studies. Such works have been termed post-colonial ecocriticism and emphasizes the similarities between the two theories in terms of political commitment, interdisciplinarity, and the interrogation of capitalist development and progress. Hence post-colonial ecocriticism is an appropriate approach to the study of African literary texts produced in post-colonial times.

Other prominent scholars of post-colonial ecocriticism, such as Huggan (2004), Huggan and Tiffin (2010) add major reasons for the combination and emergence of post-colonial ecocriticism to the study of the literature of post-colonial states. These critics argue that the so-called ecological turn in the humanities and social sciences has inevitably informed recent developments in postcolonial ecocriticism. The emergence of this theory helps to increasingly engage in the planetary dimensions of ecological crises that have been evident in almost parts of our world. They urgently argue that the degree of the ecological crisis has been even worse in Africa. This could be the fact that the African continent has been center of colonial, post-colonial and the present day global business interactions and relationships. In their foundational work *Postcolonial Ecocriticism* (2010), Huggan and Tiffin argue that the African colonial and post-colonial environments have exhibited considerable damages and displacements caused mainly by the external environmental interferences from western colonizers and contemporary global capitalists. They have also presented these environments as battlefields where environmental crisis and resource wars as well as restive resistances have been confronted.

The other reason for the combination and emergence of post-colonial ecocriticism is that ecocriticism fails to address issues of colonialism, post-colonialism, and contemporary global concerns in Africa. According to Nixon (2011:124), colonialism, post-colonialism and contemporary global businesses are pertinent issues in African modern literature, and post-colonialism also by itself fails to define African environmental concerns, as it focuses on socio-cultural issues of post-colonial states ( p.110).From this realization, one can understand that post-colonial ecocriticism, which offers a complete body of valuation of human and nonhuman in a complete text can be applied to the study of post-colonial African literary texts. This theoretical framework can be contextually informed by the political, social and environmental

perspective which sees all forms of environmental destructions and social crisis as linked together.

Nixon (2011) also gives another reason for merging the two independent theories into one single theory (model). He argues that today's global world is a time to study the environment as a complete body of human and nonhuman elements including the biotic, abiotic components, and cultural factors and the artifacts. Post-colonial ecocriticism takes the challenge to respond to these two separate fields by studying the environment as a complete body composed of humans, animals, and land. Nixon (2011) also remarks that a literary text, hence, is supposed to be a complete body of four elements. These elements are the writer, the reader, the society and the ecosphere. The society here represents the human social universe including characters, their socio-cultural interactions, attitudes etc., and the ecosphere represents the planetary ecosystem, consisting of all living organisms, nonliving components, and their environment. The study of a literary text using post-colonial ecocriticism is what makes a complete study as it combines both the human and the nonhuman equally.

Other post-colonial ecocritics, such as Slaymaker (2001), Huggan (2009), and Huggan and Tiffin (2010) admire the role of post-colonial ecocritical theory in defining former colonized states' socio-cultural and environmental concerns, issues and crisis. They also argue that post-colonial ecocriticism answers the basic questions of African environmentalists, ecological activists and writers as they always ask why the African natural environment is always at risk. In the introduction of their book *Postcolonial Ecocriticism* (2010), Huggan and Tiffin argue that the answer for the question lies on overviewing the continuing capitalist modes of social and environmental dominance. They state that western colonizers, since the beginning of colonialism, do not have a positive attitude to African environments, blaming it as evil, a jungle and cruel to civilization. Colonizers have suppressed the natural environments of Africa through different forms of dominance as "ecological imperialism", "biopiracy" and "environmental racism" (p.4). At the end of their work, Huggan and Tiffin (2010), advise African literary critics, writers and researchers to recognize that the current ecological crisis requires urgent practical action rather than just a re-articulation of theoretical concerns. They also remark that post-colonial ecocriticism is a tool of analysis that attempts to find the relations and the interactions among literature, human and the nonhuman. Articulating the significance of post-colonial

ecocriticism to the study of African post-colonial texts, Huggan and Tiffin (2010) direct literary writers and researchers to employ this theory in their writings and further investigations. Significantly post-colonial ecocriticism responds and directs literary researchers to the application of post-colonial ecocriticism equally emphasizing both environmental concerns and the role of social activism.

Ramachandra, (2014) on his part, states that post-colonial ecocriticism is an alternative literary approach to the study of literature of post-colonial states in Africa, Asia, the Caribbean, and Latin America etc. He urges that ecology, the physical environment and the state of natural resources are the ever present concern. Ramachandra also suggests that any individual living in the 21st century, including the writers, should worry about the planet and make his or her utmost contributions. Writers, he argues, play a great role in informing and elucidating ecological/environmental concerns in their works. One of the techniques Ramachandra (2014) advises for the study of the post-colonial literatures is by applying a post-colonial ecocriticism that finds the interconnectedness, interactions and representations between/among the human and the nonhuman in Africa. Post-colonial ecocriticism redirects critical thinking towards the relationships and interactions between humans (indigenous and foreign) and the nonhumans. It treats both human and the nonhuman in the microscopic view of their reactions and interactions.

Post-colonial ecocritical studies incorporate an ecocritical perspective by acknowledging the nonhuman victims of colonialism and post-colonialism. It is also used as a tool to analyze the power relationships between Africa and colonizers and global actors, especially in the questions of representation of the post-colonial African ecology by the former colonizers. The current pressing ecological violence and restive resistances by indigenous communities against the western hegemony over their abundant natural resources and ecological damages can be taken into consideration of the application of post-colonial ecocriticism. Post-colonial ecocriticism has become an armed tool of literary analysis to uncover post-colonial ecological realities as well as the restive resistances of African colonies to save their natural environments/ecologies from both colonial and post-colonial destructions.

In supporting the above notion, Frantz Fanon in his *The Wretched of the Earth* (1961) provides evidences for the significance of post-colonial ecocriticism in the study of African colonial and post-colonial literary contexts. Even though Fanon's book is written in colonial context, when

interrogated, is found to be applicable in a post-colonial ecocritical context too. It deals with ecological crisis and natural resource exploitations of former colonies which is similar to colonial and racial discrimination of Africans. Fanon states, the concept of post-colonialism has stretched to the more encompassing and controversial sphere referring to the status of land that ceases to be colonized and has gained its political independence. This slow but painful experience, Fanon argues, stretches to land and touches the environment as the new form of oppression that has been changing the natural environments in Africa. The post-colonial ecocritical literary approach to African post-colonial environments can be seen as a way of thinking that seeks to explicate how colonialism, post-colonialism and the current business globalization are connected to the spaces in which people live and act. This fact is particular in Africa as part of the Global South where land and natural resources are seen and considered as key parts of the process of peoples' struggle, resistance, survival and liberation.

According to Mukherjee (2014) post-colonial studies cannot be considered without taking due note of the environmental elements like water, land, energy, migration etc. as the human and the nonhuman entities are interdependent. Mukherjee also points out those African post-colonial contexts that are approached through post-colonial ecocriticism as it addresses the environment, the umbrella of all human and nonhuman entities. The testimony for this is that African societies and their contexts one way or the other are highly associated and interconnected with their natural environment since ancient to the present unlike their western colonizers.

Post-colonial ecocriticism has been used for this study. Scholars, such as Guha and Martinez (1997) and Nixon (2011) proof that post-colonial ecocriticism fits to examine African post-colonial environments. It also examines the myriad of life experiences of post-colonial societies living in a continuously destructed environment. The environment is also operationalized as both where humans live; work, as well as the faraway wilderness. The framework also relies on the eco-socialist perspectives of Mukherjee (2010), Wright (2010), Huggan (2009), Caminero-Santangelo and Myers (2011) and revisited versions of post-colonial ecocriticism put forward by Huggan and Tiffin (2010) and DeLoughery and Handley (2011).

Post-colonial ecocriticism, like many other literary theories, has apparent proposed tenets that it follows. These tenets can be taken as guiding principles that a literary critic always follows while examining post-colonial literary and nonliterary texts through post-colonial ecocriticism literary

approach. For Huggan and Tiffin (2010), these tenets are:(1) resisting western anthropogenic based treatment and promotion of earth centered literary evaluation;(2) integrating local and global environmental responses for examination of environmental degradation as well as protection of the earth and (3) studying post-colonial literary and nonliterary texts as composed of a complete body of both human and the nonhuman.

### **3.3 Conceptual Framework**

#### **3.3.1 Ecological Violence**

The term ecology was first coined by Ernst Haeckel in 1866 and defined it as the total science of the connections of the organism to the surrounding environment (Newman, 2011).In its modern connotation, ecology refers to the study of interactions and relationships of living things with each other and their physical environment. Ecological violence on the other hand is a harm or attack directly inflicted on the ecology or the larger ecological system including its organisms. According to Absler (2012) ecological violence is intentional or unintentional action committed on the natural ecology for profit gains that also causes measurable harms to biodiversity. He further explains that violence against the natural ecology and violence against people are not separate issues; but they are one and the same things. Ecological violence, either intentionally or unintentionally, is the destruction of the interactions, interconnections, and interrelationships of living things that directly or indirectly harms humans as well as the physical environment. In its strict sense, ecological violence is the process of damaging the nonhuman forms, such as air, water, fauna and flora, soil etc., through creating pollutions, deforestations, human displacements, chemicals and other substances or direct/indirect political/ideological interventions for a certain purpose.

Ecological violence is one of the evil attributes of post-colonial practices especially on the natural environments of former colonies (Nixon, 2011).It implicates the destruction and over exploitation of the entities of the larger ecosystem through different modes and forms. For instance, the African natural ecology has experienced diverse forms violence, especially with the coming of the colonizers into the continent (Ikeunobe, 2014). Some examples of forms of ecological violence according to Ikeunobe (p.211) include ecocidal activities, such as deforestation, pollution of water and air, farmlands crisis, loss of pastoral and landscape beauty, drought and desertification, poverty and diverse health problems etc., which were not pressing

problems before now in Africa. These forms of ecological violence have had devastating effects on environments in Africa. A heightened definition of ecological violence is also provided by Rob Nixon (2011). According to Nixon “ecological violence is a violence that occurs gradually and out of sight, a violence of delayed destruction of the ecosystem that disappeared across time and space leaving the whole environment vulnerable and aesthetically degraded” (p.44). Ecological violence is a violence that attacks the natural ecology through human forces.

The environmental and literary critic Rob Nixon calls ecological violence as ‘slow violence’ because it is so gradual and out of sight. He also argues that slow violence is like domestic violence, and the poor refers those who are harmed by the ecological destruction and environmental injustices as a result of externalities mainly colonialism and its recent legacies in the case for Africa. The violence wrought by climate change, toxic drift, deforestation, oil spills, and the environmental aftermath of war take place gradually and often invisibly. It is also slow violence because it is so readily ignored by a hard charging capitalism, exacerbates the vulnerability of indigenous ecosystems and of people who are poor, disempowered, and often involuntarily displaced.

Nixon (2011) lists some of the forms of ecological violence as air pollution, water and food contamination, forest destruction, overhunting wild animals, domestic and wildfires, prevalence of different types of pollution (air, water, oil), industrial toxins, and bad environmental smells. Nixon also pinpoints marginalization of local communities and their natural environments in the name of resource extraction or infrastructural development as tools of African environmental resource appropriations during and after colonialism in the history of Africa. He argues that the world’s most vulnerable environmental resources are at risk because of those “runaway capitalists’ resource appropriations especially in the global south” (p.77). Nixon also explains how western environmentalists have at times inadvertently harmed native ecosystems through preservation efforts intended to repair original harm done by colonialism. Nixon’s pinpoint is that the natural environment is the only medium for the infliction of much slow violence which can be caused by climate change, toxic drift, deforestation, oil spills etc. Such kind of violence is considered, as Nixon argues, a new form of environmental injustice that pushes natives to their restive resistances. Since then, the world, including Africa has seen different environmental activism and resistances in response to the ecological/ environmental violence. Ecological

violence also points to social practices in which the environment is disclosed as aggregate of entities available for calculable ordering.

Violence, specifically, is ecological because it consists of the killing of living and nonliving things, and destabilization of the whole ecosystem. Ecological violence can also happen as ecological massacre and genocide, directly and indirectly through anthropogenic activities. It generally is the process of harming and destroying the ecology knowingly or unknowingly and mainly as a consequence of human activities. Violent actions against nature and fellow humans are a commonplace of the capitalist mode of development (Nixon, 2011). Activities such as over exploitation of mines, loss of biodiversity, illegal animal hunting and poaching, soil erosions, unprecedented flooding, and overfishing etc. are rampant ecological evils across the global landscape and reflect the extent of the unsustainable development that threatens nature and humans. Violence in natural ecology can be found where those processes are disrupted by an external agent. That agent is supposed to be anthropogenic force or the human agent. This agent is also external to the nonhuman world. This external agent has existed in the form of colonialism, and/or post-colonialism, contemporary global capitalist policy practices, capitalist patriarchy etc. The processes of these agents are violating the natural ecological processes.

The African colonial environment especially the crisis of its ecology has been succinctly stated by Fanon in his *Wretched of the Earth* (1961). Fanon argues that colonial projects in Africa are major causes of ecological violence and natural resource exploitation, human degradation, economics of the colonies in relation to the mother countries, and neo-colonization beyond their sociocultural evils. He argues that the economics of resource plundering, and what he calls the “magical superstructure” (p.171) of the African colonial societies open up spaces for theorizing environmental destruction that has brought loss of biodiversity in colonized Africa.

The colonies for Fanon (1961) are described in zoological terms and references as “...to the slithery movements of the yellow race, the odors from the native quarters, to the hordes, the stink, the swarming, the seething, and the gesticulations. The colonists refer constantly to the bestiary” (p.66). In questioning the materialist systematic exploitation of blacks, Fanon also noticed the environmental racism and its impact in the colonies. The colonist’s quarters are Edenic and reflect the affluence of materialism while the native quarters are unhygienic slums. Fanon describes the local’s’ environment as a place of death and colonialism usually introduces

environmental racism. Fanon decries exploitation of nonhuman resources which were used in enriching the colonialist's mother countries. He observes that the years of colonialism and its legacies are considered as plundering times of African natural resources. Colonizers in those times exported African resources and raw materials for the development of America and Europe and for the emerging American and European industries respectively. He describes the natural environments as extremely violated.

### **3.3.2 Ecological Resistance**

Resistance, in general, can be defined as any kind of political, public and organized struggle to resist the colonizers of other countries. Harlow (1987) defines resistance as any act or complex of acts designed to rid a people of their oppressors. She further classifies resistance into three categories. The first category is defined as motive of resistance from the beliefs, mores or indigenous ways of life, is expressed in religion or the arts. The second classification is social economic resistance which can be expressed by suicide, abortion, and work sabotage and withholding. The third type of resistance is political resistance which can be stated in the form of revolts, rebellions or revolutions. However, Harlow asserts that these three categories of resistance are dynamic and they can occur at the same time and one may precede the other. The definition of resistance by Harlow shows that the natives might be able to oppose the colonization in various ways and they are not passive towards the colonizers. Harlow also asserts that literature, not less than the armed struggle, is vital to the attempt to wrest back the cultural history expropriated by the forces of colonialism and imperialism. At each turn, she argues that writers of the new resistance literature, in attempting to plant the seeds of a new social order, are developing a new aesthetic, shattering the very categories that define literature in the west.

The post-colonial theorists following Harlow expand this perception of resistance. Among the post-colonialists who pay great attention to the colonial resistance is Slemon (1995) who attempts to develop what Harlow discussed regarding the colonial resistance. He argues that:

*The first concept of resistance is most clearly put forward by Barbara Harlow in her book Resistance Literature. For Harlow, resistance is an act or a set of acts that is designed to rid a people of its oppressors, and it so thoroughly infuses the experience of living under oppression that it becomes an almost autonomous aesthetic principle. Literary resistance, under these*

*considerations, can be seen as a form of contractual understanding between the text and the reader, one that is embedded in an experiential dimension and buttressed by a political and cultural aesthetic at work in culture (p. 7).*

Selmon's argument reveals that post-colonial theorists focus on the literary form of resistance. It describes the form of resistance used in defending oppressions.

With this vein, post-colonial ecological resistance can be defined as resistance against environmental destructions including land lootings by any external anthropogenic forces. As Nixon (2011) argues this kind of resistance emanates from the needs of people who do not want their own environmental resource and/or natural capitals including land, clean water, minerals etc., and environmental identities to be taken away. People in Africa, from the colonial to the present times, have resisted and protested against the destruction of their natural environments. Natural environment and its entities are assumed to be manifestations and rights people are gifted from their creator. Appropriating these natural gifts is what makes people angry and resistant. In African human history, all the direct and indirect struggles, resistances, and efforts have targeted freeing their natural ecologies/environments from the oppressive colonial and/or post-colonial impositions.

African post-colonial ecological resistance also targets saving the natural environment from colonial and/or post-colonial exploitations. As Nixon (2011) argues such restless resistances and struggles in Africa has physical and psychological features. The physical forms of resistances, for example, include bombing western corporations' development-driven projects, breaking oil pipelines, kidnapping human and environmental resources, infrastructure damage, fire mass deforestation, cutting of trees aimlessly, or for illegal timber production export which all one way or the other wrecks the African natives' local ecosystem. Post-colonial ecological resistance aims not only at resisting environmental destructions but also draws efforts to save the endangered African natural environment against manmade practices. It tries to seek to restore the endangered ecologies through replanting, gardening, afforestation practices, providing ecofriendly social services, environmental activism through various campaigns and other agricultural green farming activities. All these efforts were steered to challenge the hegemonic, patriarchal capitalist-driven practices and other oppressive structures of colonial legacies to the environments of the native colonies in Africa (Nixon, 2011).Nixon further explains that

Africans, since the slave trade, have resisted colonialism, post-colonialism and the present global business empires.

African societies have passed challenges and protesting movements in the last 400 years of colonization including today's post-colonialism. They fight and resist against human and nonhuman degradations by their masters. The struggles, protests and resistances entertain successes and failures at various times and places. Historian Alfred Crosby (1986) has argued that African colonies were successful, in part, but fail in many ways. This is because they were unable to have alternative ecosystem managements and strategies during the colonial times. As a result of this, colonialists exposed native African societies to foreign markets as well as exotic invasive species, restricting indigenous peoples' abilities to defend themselves against both economic and biological invaders. Recovery from the damage done to native ecosystems proved difficult for native populations. Colonial powers exacerbated the problem by creating a global infrastructure that encouraged wealthier countries to extract natural resources from poorer peripheral countries, while simultaneously destabilizing what were often sustainable native cultures in the contemporary times.

In resisting the environmental destructions, not only ordinary African natives, but also writers and activists protest, resist and transform it through their works of arts and ecological activisms. In his *Slow Violence and the Environmentalism of the Poor* (2011), Nixon states that in post-colonial Africa, writers who have testified to the environmental struggles that are intensifying across the global south are struggling for access to water, land, food, energy, and sustainable hope through their works of arts. Some of the writers and activists he mentions from Africa are Wangari Maathai and Ken Saro-Wiwa who put foundational tools of ecological resistance in Africa. They urge others to rethink the condition and concerns of African natural ecologies. These writers and activists use a rhetorical resistance strategy they develop to gain an audience, against ecological violence ongoing on the African post-colonial ecologies. They have helped instigate movements for environmental justice. Saro-Wiwa, for example, was one of the founders of Nigeria's Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People and Maathai won the Nobel Peace Prize for her work starting the Green Belt Movement.

Furthermore, Fanon (1961:129) recommends that colonies always strive to replenish their respective environments that have been continuously damaged by the evil practices of both the

former colonizers and the present growth of ecological empires by profit oriented conglomerate western companies. Environmental restoration according to Fanon is seen as remedial to ecological violence. Fanon also remarks that African ecological colonization by the west is one of contemporary threatening challenges to African natural environments. He also urges writers and literary researchers of Africa to galvanize contemporary African literary study centering on an African literary approach which examines the contemporary African ecological and social crises that have exacerbated the continent's environmental dynamics.

### **3.3.3 Post-Colonial Ecologies and African Literature**

African ecological worldview is a dominant outlook that rests on the principle of interconnectedness between human and the nonhuman. The interconnectedness between human and the nonhuman is ensnared from the perception that Africans are highly interrelated with natural environments. Jameson (1986) looks at African ecologies not only as its literary sense, but also as denoting a branch of biological science. The science of ecology according to Jameson, with its representation of the living world as a system of relationships, is in itself neutral with respect to its deeper metaphysical implications. However, this science serves as appropriate theoretical and epistemological interdependencies. From this ecological perspective, the African world is not seen as divided into mutually independent parts and mutually exclusive attributes. Jameson (1986) argues that everything is seen as implicated, and being implicated. The identities of other things, realities and relational systems of shared and interpenetrating values are essential attributes to African ecological system. For Jameson, the properties of a given individual are a function of its relations with individuals, and within the ecosystem, individual ecotones, systems and counter other kinds. All these attributes do not belong exclusively to it. Each individual owes its nature to others in the network. This indicates that, African communities are integrated with the natural ecology/environment as sources of life and survival, unlike the western world.

The African ecological worldview also follows the meaning of giving and valuing endowing qualities such as mind or subjectivity or soul. According to Senghor (1995), this value that accompanies them, cannot be monopolized by human beings. But rather Senghor argues that it must be diffused throughout the systems of the natural world. The indirect interpretation of the view is that in restoring to reality its intrinsic interconnectedness, the ecological perspective

implies that since nonhuman others are implicated in African identities, they are also implicated in their ends and interests. This spiritual interconnection between human and the nonhuman in Africa is attributed to the literatures too.

For Jameson (1986), the third world literature particularly the African has its own characteristics of stemming from tumultuous history of nations and their respective writers. In those nations there has been slavery in colonized, repeated plundering of natural resources, and suppression of the colonizer's freedom, among others. He further suggests that African literary texts are products of all these interactions and complexities. He also recommends that awareness about these ecological conditions of Africa and implication in African literature is imperative to establish ecological pedagogy, which benefits the African people on the ecological literacy, for it substantiates African ecological facts, information, realities, disparities, and other ecological issues across the post-colonial Africa.

The other significant manifestation of African post-colonial ecology is the great consideration of the flora and fauna within the contexts of African natural environments. The animal appreciation and treatment and the value given to them as part and parcel of the human life is indeed considerably valued. Many narrative stories of Africa are told with animal characters to give moralistic attributes in the dignities of African societies. Including the animals, the nonhuman world is usually considered as sacred and that "environment must be seen as a mutually sustaining network in which humans and nonhumans are always already linked with each other, and on whose collective action and prosperity the functioning of the network depends" (Mukherjee, 2010: 147). In Africa, nature and human beings cooperatively serve the coexistence of human-nonhuman interactions and interrelationships. This interactions and interconnectedness between human and the nonhuman continues even today under dreadful conditions of post-colonial African ecologies. The interplay between the human and nonhuman world as reflected through animals in many narrative stories and oral literature emphasize the vitality of ecological literacy. Curtin (2005) argues that taking into account the cultural and natural history in traditional life with the ecological lands is an essential value of African manifestations.

The ecological values in African countries are regarded as philosophical and moralistic existences for African societies. Africans pay due attention to their natural environment. Colonial historical documents show that in the past three centuries, African natural environment

entertained destructive ecological crisis as well as restive resistance. Danac (2012) argues that post-colonial countries, such as India, Latin America and the Caribbean nations, South Asia, and particularly Africa have a history of environmental activism and movements even before environmental criticism or the present name ecocriticism emerged as an academic discipline and literary approach in the western world. This is indicative of the fact that environmental consciousness in the post-colonial world in terms of activism precedes the formation of ecocriticism as a literary approach.

The relations and interactions between Africans and their natural ecologies have been documented as evidence in many literary and nonliterary works. Taylor in his *Respect for Nature: A Theory of Environmental Ethics* (1989) for example has documented the African human-nonhuman relations with detailed narrations and vivid elaborations. Taylor emphasizes that the natural ecologies of Africa before and after colonialism are interdependent. African cultural products and social systems, Taylor argues, are highly interwoven and cannot be separated one from the other. Africans believe that the natural environment is a sacred entity and provides everything for the human as well as the nonhuman survival. It is difficult to separate the natural environment from humans in Africa.

A Kenyan environmental activist and writer, Wangari Maathai in her *Unbowed: Memories* (2006) argues that natural environments are integral parts of human life in Africa. Natural environments provide humans with water, oxygen, and most importantly bread for life in Africa. Hence Africans value nature and their surrounding environment more than the Westerners do. Maathi argues that the long time struggle of colonized Africans was not for anything but for their natural environment that gives them land. Land for Africans is usually considered as life as it provides food, shelter, water, oxygen, dignity and respect. According to Wangari Maathai (2006) land for African is not only for economical and human benefits, but it goes beyond that. Land for many African societies is a symbol of connection to their sacred freedom. Since the beginning of colonialism and the earlier slave trade, Africans devoted their souls and life to their natural environment and sacrificed their lives for their lands.

Regarding these cordial connections between Africans and their environment, African writers, both in colonial and post-colonial times, have scripted this in their works of arts at various times and places in Africa starting from narrating their stories through animals, water bodies etc. For

example, as stated in Danac's (2012) work, in Africa, Chinua Achebe wrote *Things Fall Apart* (1958) and *Arrow of God* (1964). Both novels portray the African ideal of a harmonious relationship between humans and the natural ecologies. Achebe, in both novels, set out to capture a serene and tranquil traditional society full of love for one another and showcasing people living peacefully with natural elements. This is seen as what encapsulates the overall effect of Achebe's perspective on the African's links with the ecological land, so as to make his African readers realize what it was to dwell in a harmonious relationship with the physical environment and harmonious ecosystem. Achebe's works for Danac (2012) are storehouses of natural ecologies of Nigeria. This has therefore heightened what would now to be termed as ecological consciousness. This is also a direct implication that the African sensitivities about the importance of preserving nature and the intimate link between the land and the people themselves as depicted in their works of art.

African ecology is known for its dense vegetation and vast green landscapes (Taylor, 1989). The ecologies of Africa were one of the most mega biodiversities in the world, Taylor remarks. The continent has always tempted foreigners to explore the fascinating culture of flora and fauna (Gerhardt, 2002). Western writers however, provide different perceptions towards to African ecologies. For example, Joseph Conrad in his *Heart of Darkness* (1899) sees African ecology rich in material resources but inhabited by species of savaged, humanity, a little above humanity with neither culture nor intelligible communication which justified the colonial exploitation of African ecologies. He also described African forests as jungle, evil, and dark to disrespect the edenic nature of African geographies. The African ecological world view, unlike the western writers, still sees the natural ecological landscape as a prominent part of the African indigenous culture, which echoes the indigenous history and points towards the genesis of human relations with the land.

Similarly, African post-colonial ecology is an important landmark in the expanding field of post-colonial ecocriticism used for analysis and interpretation of African post-colonial texts. As has been presented in Frantz Fanon's *The Wretched of the Earth* (1961), post-colonial and ecocritical studies can help to discover African human and nonhuman crisis as reflected in post-colonial African literature. Edward Said's *Orientalism* (1978) also demonstrates this phenomenon. Opening with epigraphs from the book, there is a demonstration that signifies the "primacy of the

geographical” (1978:134) in anti-imperialist imagination. Both Fanon and Said argue that post-colonial writing has been framed ecologically from the start, countering capitalist definitions of land with ideas of land as a “site of post-colonial recuperation, sustainability, and dignity” (Fanon, 1961:306; Said, 1978:400). Post-colonial ecocritical methodologies, Fanon and Said suggest, are ideally suited to represent global aspects of ecological crisis without ignoring local differences. The reason why this is that these methodologies have been constituted in the context of articulating otherness without reproducing structural hierarchies. Also post-colonial ecocriticism, they argue, should reflect a complex epistemology that recuperates the alteration of both history and nature, without reducing either to the other.

When colonialism was introduced to Africa, Africans were not only oppressed by social-cultural dominations, but also through ecological destructions. Through the passage of times western colonizers and the late business conglomerates have dismantled the harmonious relations of African with their natural ecology. The colonizers’ life was contrary to the African natives that resulted in the denial and destruction of any alternative understanding of such crucial relationship and interactions between humans and Nature. The colonial view of nature is limited to their idea of the marketability of Nature as they allow in what Arturo Escobar calls “developmentalization of the environment” (cited in Huggan and Tiffin: 2010:33). Strengthening the above motion, Christopher Manes argues:

*Nature is silent in our culture (and in literate societies in general) in the sense that the status of a speaking subject is jealously guarded as an exclusively human prerogative...The language we speak today, the idiom of Renaissance and Enlightenment humanism, veils the processes of nature with its own cultural obsessions, directionalities, and motifs that have no analogies in the natural world. As Manes (2003) puts it, “we are people who presumably must think of the world in terms of the learned categorical scheme of Modernism. “It is as if we have compressed the entire buzzing, howling, gurgling biosphere into the narrow vocabulary of epistemology” (p.15).*

Post-colonial ecocriticism speaks for Africa’s post-colonial ecologies. It also takes considerations to other forms of life, human minorities whose exploitation is often closely interlinked with exploitation of ecologies. Post-colonial ecocriticism attempts to discover nature as silent in literary texts, and interpret ecological violence and resistance as a relevant category of literary, aesthetic, and political analysis. Post-colonial ecocriticism often treats post-colonial issues like gender, class and race and ecological/environmental concerns in literary texts

together. It also calls for a homogeneous approach to the study of “what is happening to the earth including the humans and the nonhumans” (Slaymaker, 2001:132). In this regard, post-colonial ecocriticism looks into various ways human beings across the world experience and their interactions and interdependences with the nonhuman world. Currently the post-colonial ecocritical approach has appeared as recent research area. This also opens opportunities to the inclusive study of the natural entities of the world including animals which have been active agents in African cultural forms. This is because the natural environment and animals fundamentally constitute the African worldviews and life ways that have created these cultural texts. Hence African literary texts produced in the contemporary times can be examined through post-colonial ecocritical approaches.

Nature in general and the animals in particular are so fundamentally constitutive of African culture. Both nature and African culture form an invisible backdrop that has required the frequent and prolonged droughts of the 20th century in the Sahara. The environmental ravages caused by oil and petroleum gas extraction in West Africa, the threatened destruction of the rain forests of west Africa, the massive forest destruction in East Africa and abuses of animal rights in South Africa has been documented many African contemporary writers. All these environmental plagues have brought about several human and nonhuman consequences including extinction and extermination of forest mammals; severe pollution and other ecological resources crises. Because of these catastrophes, the relationship between natural ecology and African culture has been altered. Olaniyan and Quayson (2007) remark that African contemporary ecologies, including the animals are now seen “in ecology, man’s tragic flaw is his anthropocentric vision, and his compulsion to conquer, humanize, domesticate, violate, and exploit every natural thing”(p.113). This ecological situation implies there should be considerable attention to the ecology. Caminero-Santagelo in his *Different Shades of Green: Ecocriticism African Literature* (2011) shows that Africa has indeed produced ecological literary aesthetics to analyze how African literature can challenge capitalist assumptions regarding African environments through powerful counter narratives. He also questions widely accepted definitions of environmental writing and the undercurrent constructions of nature and scientific conservation therein inscribed.

### **3.3.4 The Abuses of Animal Rights in African Post-colonial Ecologies**

African post-colonial ecologies are usually mentioned as tensions where animal rights are extremely violated. Their habitats have been seen destructed. They are illegally hunted, and poached. Their niche is forcefully changed and there is a high animal extinction because of human activities. According to Woodward (2008:19) animals in post-colonial Africa are represented as the most violated species on earth than any other times in African environmental history. She also remarks that African post-colonial ecologies are described as one of the most highly threatened areas owing to animal hunting, poaching and trafficking. The factors responsible for the extinction of animals in post-colonial Africa are linked to colonial, post-colonial and the emergence of global environmental resource needs. Nixon (2011) recommends that post-colonial ecocriticism is an important microscopic tool to overhaul the animal-human (with both native and foreign) relations in post-colonial literary texts in Africa. He argues that animal study is an untouched area of focus in African literary studies. A number of African writers have incorporated animals in their stories. The animals are treated as if they are connected to African social lives. Even post-colonial ecocritics highlight the ways in which human societies systematically, even if unintentionally damage habitats and species ranging from microorganisms and plants to insects and amphibians.

Huggan and Tiffin (2010) argue that animals are directly and indirectly attacked by human agents. They also argue that animals in the post-colonial times of Africa are considered as other (not treated as creatures) so that colonial masters collaborating with local hunter-gatherers overexploited them. Huggan and Tiffin (2010) find that any direct violence inflicted on animals is unacceptable. Environmentalists and ecocritics accept such violence in the interest of ensuring the survival of crucial ecosystems. Huggan and Tiffin (2010) condemn overexploitation and cruel animal genocide on earth simply for fulfilling the unlimited wants of the humans. Wright (2008) in her book *Wilderness into Civilized Shapes: Reading the Postcolonial Environment* (2010) rearticulates questions about the role of the writer of the fiction as an environmental activist and spokesperson for the silent animals, the connectedness between animal ethics and environmental responsibility. She also emphasizes the potential perpetuation of imperialist framework founded on western commodification and resource based imperialism.

From natural resource extraction, deforestation, trade in animal products, such as meat, furs, ivory or silk, and species extinction due to overhunting and habitat destruction, colonization has left its mark on the natural world especially in Africa (Huggan and Tiffin, 2010). They also suggest that animals in both folk and modern literatures in Africa are frequent protagonists and subjects. Africans tell their stories to their children through animal characters and motifs (Huggan and Tiffin, 2010:66). They argue that the value of animals in Africa is over emphasized and linked to the dignity, wealth, and respect for nature. However, everyday Africa is told as the continent where millions of wild animals are illegally hunted and even exterminated for economic benefits as indication of zoological damage in the continent. Due to long time history of colonization and its contemporary legacies, Africa has experienced animal extermination since the 20th century. As Huggan and Tiffin (2010) argues, analysis of the representation and treatment of animals in post-colonial literary texts, as essential parts of an ecosystem in African literature has become concern of African writers. In both colonial and post-colonial times, different African writers have documented this scenario in their literary artifacts. The study of post-colonial African animals as reflected in post-colonial African literary works should answer at least the following questions according to Huggan and Tiffin (2010:173-75). These basic questions are:

- 1) How do post-colonial texts represent the role of animals and environment in colonialism and post-colonialism?
- 2) How has colonization influenced the relationship between post-colonial subjects and animals?
- 3) How do post-colonial authors envision a particular relationship to animals and engage with the ongoing effects of environmental degradation?
- 4) Who is the postcolonial animal?

Wendy Woodward's *The Animal Gaze: Animal Subjectivities in Southern African Narratives* (2008) is the most cited zoocritical reference book in African post-colonial context. In this book, Woodward provides a panoramic view of the representation of animals across a wide range of Southern African prose, through a consideration of African indigenous knowledge and current theoretical debates in human-animal studies. Woodward also widens her own geographical gaze in the present volume to analyze the use of animal narrators in two francophone novels set in

central and West Africa. For Woodward, African post-colonial animal-human relation can be studied using post-colonial ecocriticism. Post-colonial ecocriticism shares with critical animal studies, an interest in redefining humans' relationship to other species including the human. But whereas animal studies have privileged the social, cognitive and emotive abilities of higher animals and humans' consciously perpetrated violence against them, post-colonial ecocritics have tended to focus on systematic and often unintentional damages to other species, including a wide range of both animals and plants.

### **3.3.5 Environmental Injustices and Resistance against the Matrix of Ecological Violence**

Indigenous people and their longstanding resistance to environmental devastations are clear signposts of local ecological responses and an aesthetic demand for environmental justice (Dhillon, 2017). Dhillon argues that fighting for environmental injustice must be framed, first and foremost, as a struggle for indigenous sovereignty. Embedded within this struggle is a conversation about the link between colonial violence and gender. Dhillon (2017) asserts that while violence against women is often sidelined within environmental discussions, indigenous resistance to extractive projects reveals that these forms work in tandem with one another. Resistance efforts offer a glimpse into worldwide struggles to protect local ecologies and demonstrate how environmental justice is founded in indigenous political strategies advancing decolonization.

African history is full of resistance against colonialism and its legacies. Like slavery, colonialism and other suppressive systems, Africans also fight against environmental injustices. All resistances have exhibited successes and failures as they did in the confrontations and fighting against colonialism. Africans have struggled for environmental justice and require an end to structural colonial violence more broadly, and colonial gender violence against indigenous women and girls. More importantly they have resisted environmental injustices that have harmed natural ecologies of the African world. Environmental injustices have brought about ecological destructions, pollution, water contamination, and unequal resource utilizations, climate change etc. The resistance is based on the environment because African environmental history connects the dots of their identity with their land, stories, histories, languages and son on. Fighting against

environmental injustices in Africa later led to the evolution of environmental/ecological activism in Africa.

Environmental activism against nonhuman destructions started in Africa in the 1980s. According to Nixon (2011), environmental activism exhibits a neocolonial character in Africa. Environmental injustice movement has held in many African countries by activists and writers in the 1990s. Connecting this concerns with, in the early 1990s, investigative journalism, conservation of ecological parks and natural protections and wildlife management, African themselves have developed different resistance strategies in many African countries especially after World War II. In addition to resisting pollution, ecological degradation, Africans have established different institutions to save environmental destructions. Some of institutions are wildlife preservations, environmental protection agencies, ecological zones, etc. all emphasize saving nature from external human made activities (Nixon, 2011). The efforts of such African conservationists, however, have often been undermined by their European and American counterparts, lack of finance, inefficient management and lack of commitments.

In fighting against ecological crisis in Africa, activists and writers play an important role. Writers symbolically use wholesome social environment to indicate spiritual and moral vivacity of a society while the unhealthy natural environment shows exploitation, pollution, extreme materialism and moral decay of a society. They also have showed interest in developing African ecological/environmental criticism to probe their literary products (Nixon, 2011). African writers then realize that the study of African literature should reflect human and nonhuman elements. Following that, the engagement of ecocriticism with post-colonial perspective began with the expansion of the application of the theory to nonwestern texts, and with an inquiry into the political land and cultural implications of such practices. Critics Like Gerhardt (2002) who studied African-American literature following the theory of ecocriticism have experimented with post-colonial dimensions, and suggested that it provides “very specific critical tools that help to explore the ways in which black literatures address racial oppression and exploitation of nature” (p.516). African writers have realized the differences between African and Western environmental perceptions and attitudes. Guha and Martinez (1997) show this difference between the perceptions of African and western environmental activism. They argue that environmentalism of the poor originates in social conflicts over access to and control over

natural resources. They say that the conflicts between peasants and industry owners over forest produce, for example, or between rural and urban populations over water and energy are signs of environmental injustices in Africa. African writers and activists drew this distinction in order to raise attention about the different sources and priorities of the many varieties of environmentalism. Guha and Martinez (1997) claim a space for post-colonial environmental activism as an alternative solution to save natural environment in Africa.

Guha and Martinez (1997) demonstrate instances of solidarity in which people organized to protect their land rights or access to land or water ways. In defining environmental activism as a struggle against environmental degradation that takes advantage of certain populations, Guha and Martinez (1997) prove that “to be poor is very often good reason to be green” (1997: xxii). So, depending on where the emphasis of the definition given to environmentalism is placed, the poor or the rich can be associated with the movement of environmentalism. The environmentalism of the poor, however, essentially differs from that of the rich in its focus and approach.

African writers and activists seek to establish African indigenous agencies and internal African dynamics to expose, resist, and protest the dire conditions of African natural environments. They also were guarantors for their people to develop restive efforts in defending all environmental challenges against western colonization which created a Eurocentric world system and peripherized Africa. Challenging the unjust and ecologically destructive forms of imperial development, African writers bring together insights from political ecology, social and environmental activism. For instance, holding onto the memory of resistance and of hope, poets and novelists like Ken Saro-Wiwa, Tanure Ojaide and Ogaga Ifowodo keep alive forms of representation challenging colonial official lies and maintain the ground for a different future (Danac, 2012). Writers and activities struggle for saving the Africa’s ecological regions from destructions by creating environmental awareness in the times of post-colonialism.

## **Chapter Four: Ecological Violence and Resistance in Helon Habila's *Oil on Water***

### **4.0 Introduction**

In this chapter an attempt is made to analyze and interpret Helon Habila's *Oil on Water* employing the post-colonial ecocritical approach. To begin with, a synopsis (or plot) of the novel is given and this synopsis is followed by an analysis of forms of ecological violence, resistance strategies, the writer's articulation in bringing attention to the ongoing ecological violence and resistance and the interaction between human and the nonhuman in the novel. The different forms of ecological violence and resistance strategies relevant thematically to the novel are considered in the analysis. The main objective of the analysis is to demonstrate how the novel portrays pressing ecological violence and restive resistance.

### **4.1 Synopsis**

*Oil on Water* is a 2010 novel by Helon Habila. Set in the oil-rich but ecologically devastated land of Ogoni community of Niger Delta region, Nigeria, the story of the novel begins when a young journalist, Rufus, travels into the Niger Delta along with his famous reporter named Zaq. Both were sent by James Floode, a white petroleum Engineer working with one of the oil companies in the Niger Delta. The journalists aim to find out, interview and confirm whether or not Isabel, a kidnapped British wife of James Floode is still alive so that he can pay money demanded by her militant abductors. Isabel herself made a bargaining chip in the war between the Federal Government of Nigeria and its people over oil. On the side of the oil industry, the government and its military defend the profits and the machines of production against the militant forces who wish to liberate their people from the tyranny of the industrial complex. Those militants want to stop the environmental pollution and destruction that results from the oil company and its interests. However, they bring their own brand of terror to the region through their violent acts. Rufus, a young and experienced journalist in Lagos, is eager to discover the social and environmental maze of Niger Delta.

Moving deep into the area, as investigative journalists, Rufu and Zaq, navigate polluted rivers flanked by exploded and dormant oil wells. They encounter dead oxygen and a dysfunctional ecosystem. When they get closer the waters of the region, Rufus and Zaq meet many people on

both sides of the conflict. But they focus on the poor people who are victims because of the massacre of their ecological environment. During all this destructions, while reporting, Zaq suffers from the diseases of both alcoholism and an infection that spread over the area. At the same time, though challenging, Rufus is courageous to find the result of the investigation as he also cares for and pays the rent of his sister, who still suffers from the scars of an accident involving a terrible oil fire. They are determined to reveal the brutality of both government soldiers and militants. The novel reveals issues, such as corruption, human dignity and environment, journalistic objectivity and capitalist ecological resource exploitation as major thematic preoccupations.

## **4.2 Ecological Violence**

Habila's *Oil on Water* is one of a few African novels of the 21st century that deals with two timely topics. These are the deadly politics of oil and environmental degradation in the Niger Delta of Nigeria. With its environmental apprehensions, it tackles the plights of ecocide and ecological/environmental injustices. Habila's best quality of crafting this novel is that Western oil extracting companies are buying up Niger Delta environmental resource and destroying the ecology. Another most important quality of the work is that Habila has displayed the destructive impact of western business conglomerates on today's Niger Delta's ecology. The title of the novel indirectly signifies the continuous impact of colonialism with its present various forms and existences on the natural ecologies of Niger Delta of Nigeria. The oil domination over water (nature) shows ecological colonialism/imperialism is still over on the natural landscapes of Africa. With its structure, the novel interrogates complicated ecological violence plaguing the Niger Delta of Nigeria, especially with respect to the issues of reckless nature of the military regime, ecocide, petroviolece, and environmental injustices. The novel also deals with other social and ecological injustices, such as kidnapping, environmental corruption, poor infrastructure, and resource war which all exhibit ecological genocides. Major forms of ecological violence are explained as follows:

### **4.2.1 Ecocide and Environmental Injustices**

*Oil on Water* is written embodying different forms of ecological violence that are significant causes of the destruction of the natural environments in Niger Delta. Among the various forms of ecological violence reflected in the novel ecocide and environmental injustices are major ones.

Ecocidal activities such as “scorching landscapes” (p.64), “water contamination, oil pollution...” (p.190) are vividly portrayed in the novel. The writer uses the term ‘scorching the landscapes’ to show how much the landscape has been burnt because of the flaming of oil gas flares on the surface of the land, which consists of living and the nonliving organisms. Water has been contaminated and the oil gas flare has produced pollution that harms the environment by producing carbon dioxide and other pollution emission gases into the atmosphere. All these pollutions and contaminations despoil the environment that destroys the larger ecosystem. Furthermore, other ecocidal events have been seen in the novel as the narrator tells : “It is in the light of this grand design of scorch-earth” (p.29).This describes the destruction of the earth surface as a result of oil flares that come out of the oil and petroleum gas extraction company. The ecology is violated through over exploitation and wanton ecocides by oil extracting companies. These companies are in need of their insatiable need for economic gains at the expense of voiceless nature and innocent natives in Niger Delta.

The evil practice of post-colonialism is that it affects not only the human but also physical environment (Nixon, 2011) .The extraction of crude oil and petroleum gas companies of former colonizers of Africa have damaged both the ecology of Niger Delta and the human communities living there for ages. The extensive destruction of the ecology of Niger Delta by these companies further affects the natives of Niger Delta also. The following extract shows how the natives in Niger Delta are victimized because of the oil gas flares on the ecology of their lands as Rufus and Zad report:

*The realization of the extent of the damage caused by the pollution of the environment through the activities of the oil companies, makes the old man that serves as a guide to Rufus and Zaq plead that they should take his son back with them to Port Harcourt as a way of securing his future and not to waste away, joining the militants: ‘He no get good future here... see, wet in he go do here? Nothing. No fish for river, nothing. I fear say soon him go join the militants, and I no wan that’ (p.36).*

The excerpt describes the impacts of ecocide that has befallen on the villagers as a result of the burning of the surface of the earth and the contamination of water bodies. The old man is distressed that he is unable to decide whether he sends his son to a city or the military because his livelihood has vanished as his livelihood has been destabilized. He feels bad as he is isolated from them. Rufus laments the over exploitation of the ecosystem that also damages the means of

both human and nonhuman entities of the ecosystem. The rivers and land ecologies have been contaminated beyond measure. Life is difficult as water bodies are dried due to oil gas flares and the pollution that has been emitted from. Nature and human are disconnected because the oil extracting companies have damaged the ecology of Niger Delta. The former sources of livelihood of the area have now become poisonous due to oil spills and toxic waste contamination and damage of the beautiful ecology of the community. The indirect and immeasurable impact of ecological violence on the natural environment has also impoverished communities.

*Oil on Water* also portrays the pervasiveness of the oil pollution of Niger Delta. It also refers to ecocidal activities, mainly air pollution that affects the surrounding environment including “the evil smelling, oil-fecund earth” (p.34), “the oil-scorched earth” (p.175). ‘The evil smelling’ indicates the degree to which the ecosystem dysfunctions, while ‘oil-fecund earth’ alludes to the infertility of the lands of the area as the soil has been polluted and contaminated with toxic substances that are inserted to the soil through pollution and the burning of oil flares on the surface of the lands. ‘The oil-scorched earth’ can also produce a flammable kind of atmosphere that could damage the surface of the surrounding environment by burning. Moreover, Rufu describes the situation of the area as “The bubbly film of oil on the wood of the boat Rufus travels on” (p.73) to show the burning of the gas on the natural landscape. ‘The bubbly film of oil’ is a metaphor that describes, cheerful the burning of the land by the flammable oil gas. Habila describes the natural ecosystem as dead, burnt and the interaction between the human and the nonhuman is over exploitative. The human agent (oil exploiting companies of the west) immeasurably damages Nature.

Habila also describes the pollution of water bodies in the region. Rufu says as: “the water under us had turned foul and sulphurous” (p.9) to tell the destructive consequences of the oil pollution on the water ecosystem. The pollution causes sickness and death as well as dryness of ecology by killing and burning organisms, creating flammable atmosphere that aggravate burnings of the surface of the land. Because of contamination, the drinking water, fishing ,keeping the water ecosystem clean and aquaculture has now turned into poisonous smell that can also infertile the lands of the poor. Pollution has brought about water impurity and toxic substances that cause death and destruction to human and nonhuman entities. The sulphur dioxide that has been

emitted from oil gas pollution creates strange smell and later causes for air pollution. The interconnected ecosystems like biosphere, ecosphere, and hydrosphere are affected. This impoverishes and displaces the indigenous people.

The novel deals with ecological violence not only of the water bodies but also the fauna of the Niger Delta. After a few of his observations, turning to east of his side, Rufu, the reporter, encounters and then reports the ecocide on the side of the Niger Delta's wildlife, as: "dead livestock" (p.80). The death of animals is a result of the gas flares and the rising level of toxins in the water as essential parts of the ecosystem. The death of animals also infers the dryness and desertification of the area for there is lack of fodder to graze and water to drink. The ecological collapse is a sign of ecological violence which has been a subsequent cause for extermination of the fauna and flora of Niger Delta. Scientifically, polluted and toxic water can damage both macro and microorganisms including bigger animals which together constitute the larger ecosystem. Accordingly, during his time on the boat, Rufus notices "dead birds draped over tree branches, their outstretched wings black and slick with oil; dead fishes bobbed white-bellied between tree roots" (p.9); he sees "a dead fish on the oil-polluted water" (p.5). These ecocides are simple indications of the violations of the ecology due to the anthropogenic forces. Other evidence ecocide include: "a piece of cloth, a rolling log, a dead fowl, a bloated dog belly up with black birds perching on it" (p.33), and there are "carcasses of the fish and crabs and water birds that floated on the deserted beaches of these tiny towns and villages and islands every morning, killed by the oil" (p.175). This shows the whole ecosystem has been damaged by the crude oil exploitation by neocolonial business oriented companies. All these ecological damages and crisis signal a message that post-colonial exploitation of natural resources is a causal factor for ecological violence in the Niger Delta region.

Moving along the side of hills, Rufu again sees "numerous deaths on the plane lands of the scorch earth" (p.122). The terms 'numerous death of animals' and 'scorch earths' show the destruction of the flora and fauna of the region. Rufu describes his observations on the deaths as "the weight of the oil tight like a hangman's noose round the neck of whatever life form lay underneath" (p.215). There is communication interruption between natives and nonnatives. The writer uses figurative expressions such as personification in explaining these ecocidal events. The observations made by Rufu signify the personification of the ecology of Niger Delta. The

hangman's noose lies around the neck of a person about to be hanged is a personification to indicate the oil is about to suffocate the natural ecology of Niger Delta of Nigeria. The quotation above also infers the effects of the imagery in *Oil on Water*.

Habila also presents ecological tropes (images) to compare and contrast or visualize seriousness of the ecocidal activities in the region. He compares, for example, the "oil-polluted landscape" (p.151) to "a sick earth" (p.44) to refer to how much the ecology is dysfunctioning as it has been turned into decay. It can also personify the dying or dead person. Other personification evidences include the grass "suffocated by a film of oil, each blade covered with blotches like the liver spots on a smoker's hand" (p.9), "the stumps of pipes from exhausted wells with their heads capped" (p.175) and the pipelines "crises-crossing the landscape ... like diseased veins on the back of an old shriveled hand" (p.175). In Habila's descriptions, the physical entities of the dying ecology of Niger Delta are given the qualities of human beings in order to show how much the ecology is being recurrently violated by the human agent. Habila also describes the destructed ecology of the region that affects not only the function of the ecosystems but also human kind. Zaq, the younger reporter who was sent to the locale with Rufu has been seen sick because of pollution. Rufu has described this much polluted area as follows:

*Rufus therefore learns about the social consequences of the oil extraction in his conversations with the various characters. At the same time, on his trips through the Delta he witnesses first-hand much of the damage to the natural environment. The narrative constantly provides indicators of the state of an ecosystem polluted by oil and destroyed by the unceasing gas flares. For example, Rufus notices the thick smoke the gas flares produce: "I went and sat on the hill to stare at the water and the faraway gas flares that emerged suddenly from pillar-like pipes, holding up their roof of odious black smoke (p.139).*

As seen in the lines above, the smoke produced from oil gas flares affect not only the ecology but also the native people. Rufu's firsthand information collected from the victims' interviews testified to this. From this it is possible to suggest that *Oil on Water* is a representative novel of ecocatastrophe, a massive deterioration of the environment which has threatened Nature. Ecocide events take place suddenly. For example, "following an oil tanker shipwreck" (p.88) reflects the cumulative effects of ecological damage over a long period of time. It also shows the deterioration of the visual quality of the total ecological system. Pollutants such as "smoke and soot particles emitted into the atmosphere and sewage" (p.122) released into rivers have an

obvious impact on the visual quality of the environment. This creates both ecological and natural aesthetic degradation.

The novel deals with the hidden cost of destruction of hydrosphere in Niger Delta. The extraction of crude oil has been a cause for the destruction of water bodies including micro and macro aquatic lives embodied in it. The narrator points out these destructions as: “The seas and rivers” (p.88) “the lands and the inhabitants of Ogoni people in Niger Delta have been displayed as devastative polluted” (p.89). Rufus, a major character and the narrator of events in the novel tells the contamination and degradation of the Niger Delta due to oil spillage and gas flaring that has been threatening the whole hydrosphere ecology of the region. Rufu also describes the situation as: “a dark picture of a nation trapped in irredeemable ruins” (p.29).The quote details the extreme damages made on the ecosystem. The description of the environmental situation shows the roles played by the transnational companies and the militants in the line of the damages. It can also be interpreted as depressing effects of the reckless actions and inactions of these forces on the natural environment, the society, and other living things (animals, fishes, etc.).

The novel also embodies the locus of contaminated conditions of polluted land in the Niger Delta. Complete destruction of arboriculture, mariculture, and apiculture has been depicted in the novel. Rufu remarks: “drying aquaculture life; swamps, domestic creatures and contagious diseases due to oil spills” (p.51).The complete extermination of biodiversity indicates the devastative ecological violence in the region. The destructiveness of the region is because of the exploration of oil by foreign business companies as factors of the human and business agent over the natural environment. The exploration process, extraction and consumption has damaged the ecosystem and displaced local people and caused them to be starved. All these manifestations of ecological violence in the form of human interference over nature have detached the whole ecological system of the Niger Delta from its organisms rather than revamping it.

The human agent over Nature has produced incalculable consequences on the natives too. The two journalists, Rufus and Zaq have observed some villages which have been victimized by the oil extraction. The oil exploration has not only damaged the biodiversity of the area but also left the villagers vagrant. The investigative journalists report their observation about the situation as follows:

*The next village was almost a replica of the last: the same empty squat dwellings, the same ripe and flagrant stench, the barrenness, the oil slick, and the same indefinable sadness in the air, as if a community of ghosts were suspended above the punctured zinc roofs, unwilling to depart, yet powerless to return (p.9).*

This is a description of the living areas of the village where the oil extracting companies have made life cruel. The villagers are left with a ruined environment. The environment has been presented with distressed atmosphere. This indicates the fact that the Niger Delta has become one of the most threatened human environments. Villagers seem powerless and starved as a result of ecological destructions. There is infertility as the ecology does not function well. The writer uses the term barrenness to symbolize the lands' infertility and unproductivity as the land has been polluted with toxic substances. Such kinds of land cannot grow seeds or plants and fruits for life of the poor villagers. "Sadness in the air" (p.9) also shows the pollution of the area by oil gas flares that have turned the atmosphere into distress and hopelessness. According to Opperman (2016) ecological violence is one of the 20th and the 21st centuries' grievous challenges. It is the violation of human being's kinship with nature and a possible extinction of the ecosystem as observed in Ogoni village.

#### **4.2.2 Petroviolence**

Another form of ecological violence exhibited in Habila's *Oil on Water* is petroviolence. The Niger Delta region's physical environment has suffered from hardships due to wanton exploitations of its natural ecosystem. It has also been damaged by ecological pollution of the area, particularly in the coastal living areas of the Ogonis' community. The pipeline ways, the road networks, and swamp and mangrove farmlands, among others have been deliberately damaged by the oil extracting companies. The embarrassing social and ecological situation of the area has been restated by the investigative journalist, the major observant character, and narrator Rufus as follows:

*... the creeks and coastal areas are noted for oil pollution hazard resulting from exploration, transportation, dead create... fresh water areas, rivers... are polluted through waste disposal generated from oil and industrial affluent (sic). Also, the pipeline way and road network are polluted during transportation of petroleum products as well as crude (p.77).*

The extract above describes the deliberate destructive actions of the oil exploring companies over the natural ecology of Niger Delta. The destruction is caused by the oil gas flares that have

generated harmful that have also turned the area into bad smell. The smoke that has been emitted from the burnings slowly produces pollution that destroys the ecosystem. In his *Slow Violence and the Environmentalism of the Poor* (2011), Nixon clearly cites a type of violence “that occurs gradually and out of sight, a violence of delayed destruction that is dispersed across time and space” (p.2). The kind of violence presented in the story is petroviolence, a form of slow ecological violence. As seen in many lines of the novel petroviolence has gradually damaged the Niger Delta’s ecology and victimized the Ogonis community starting from the oil exploration project launching up to the execution stages. The air, water and soil pollution due to the dissemination of various toxic pollutants have been violent factors slowly exterminating the wellbeing of human and nonhuman world including plants, animals, organisms as well as biogeochemical processes. The deadly impact of the gases on creatures of air, earth, and sea as presented in the lines of the extract reveal the dangers that biodiversity faces because of the disaster.

Habila’s *Oil on Water*, by vividly displaying the ecological destructions of the Niger Delta of Nigeria, also traces the consequences of the “vicious ecological war” (p.45) that has been happening in the region for ages. ‘The vicious ecological war’ is a reference to the aggressive and cyclical ecological destruction of the physical landscape in Niger Delta of Nigeria. The prolonged war has brought about uninterrupted ecological crisis. The war is the struggle among the unfortunate victims of Niger Delta region’s Ogoni people for ages. Their struggle and resistance against the destruction of their ecology; however, was not an easy task.

Petroviolence also causes the death of animals and plants. Quotes from Rufus and Zaq attest to this: “we followed a bend in the river and in front of us we saw dead birds draped over tree branches, their outstretched wings black and slick with oil; dead fish... blobbed white. Bellied between tree roots” (p.9). This expression indicates the biodiversified ecology and the ecosystem has been totally slaughtered because of the oil conglomerate company’s illegal oil and gas exploration. An ecosystem does not continue its harmonious relation and interdependency between and/or among the various organisms including the abiotic factors in the chained web ecosystem if it has been once violated. However, here, the dead creatures’ biting smell has disturbed the smooth ecological relations. They are producing bad smells that are the symptom of ecological sickness, incapability of carrying out the proper functioning of the whole

ecosystem functions. Bad smells around indicates the death of biotic creatures and worthlessness of the abiotic factors, no longer living and interacting in the larger ecosystem.

The interruption of the function of the macro and micro ecosystem indicates the disconnection of human from the nonhuman as a result of prevalence of petroviolence. Devastatingly, as the narrator of the story reminds, this situation is also further replicated in the other village as displayed in the following extract:

*In the village center, we found the communal well. Eager for a drink, I bent under the wet, mossy pivoted beam and peered into the well's blackness, but a rank smell wafted from its hot depth and slapped my face. I reeled away, my head aching from the encounter. Something organic perhaps human lay dead and decomposing down there, its starch mixed with that unmistakable smell of oil. At the other end of the village a little where we had towards the big river where we had left our boat. The patch of grass growing by the water was suffocated by a film of oil, each blade covered with blotches like the liver spots on a smoker's hand (p.29).*

The excerpt above describes ecological genocide committed on the ecology of the region because of the pervasiveness of petroviolence. The inhabitants of the ecosystem are often forced to be demolished. Plants have been deprived of the right to grow or process green sunlight for survival and growth by suffocating them with oil film. The lives in the river have been spoiled. The whole environment smells bad. Aquatic life has been damaged. Curtin (2005) claims that a self-perceived 'center' of power and civilization exploited 'distant' places and peoples for its economic benefit. The argument indirectly indicates the parallel between the oppression of races and environments. The post-colonial environment according to Curtin (2005) is an environment of highly vulnerable and victimized. Such devastation of environmental life in Niger Delta has been figuratively depicted.

Opperman (2016) describes this kind of ecological violence as the most devastating evils of post-colonialism. He calls it with a new concept as 'ecological other' to refer to the disabled bodies, who are socially and environmentally excluded. This description also indicates the post-colonial ecologies are victims of the destruction by the north-south dichotomy of resource exploitation. The presence and over exploitation of western (north) companies over an African natural environment (south) testifies to this fact. The petroviolence that has prevailed in Habila's *Oil on Water* because of the colonial business conglomerates has immediately effect on the ecology

of the natives. The pollution of the water that causes it separates the environment from the people and is one of the growing serious global environmental indictments between the north and the south. Furthermore, as Oppermann's recent article *Toxic Bodies and Alien Agencies: Ecocritical Perspectives on Ecological Others* (2016) avers the toxic bodies are taken as ecological others. The ecological other is another westerners' division of binaries as nature/culture, human-nonhuman. This kind of division between the human and the nonhuman is underestimated by the colonizers of Africa. That is why Africans resist it. In this case, *Oil on Water* implicates ecological alienation of the toxic and disabled bodies of the Niger Delta region based upon the unnatural relationship between these bodies and their environment at large.

With its several parameters, Habila's *Oil on Water* can also be stated as a novel of ecological tragedy. The narrator of the story says "tragedy on the environment" (p.19). The tragedy is played on the natural environment by the destroyer of the human agent. The ecological tragedy in the novel is the direct cause of the colonialists' destructive natural resource exploitation in the lands of their former colonies. DeLoughrey & Handley (2011: 216) argue that "the spatial politics of environmental toxicity" to highlight the current environmental toxicity is exacerbated and being exacerbated by the global business oriented European companies over the natural ecology of the south. The oil exploration company in the Niger Delta has exacerbated the depletion of the ecology. The coming of business oil corporations from the North to the South refer to movement of toxicity from the global north to the global south. The "toxicity is the position that has been produced by the oil exploration companies deliberately" (2010:66) to damage the natives' ecology and that is what petroviolence means. This is a tragedy of commons that has irresponsibly damage African natural environments.

Petroviolent practices have disconnected the functioning ecosystems and damaged flora and fauna. It has created dirt and violated the natural rule of the ecoregion's niche in the region. Crude oil and gas pollution have suffocated the ecology and produced hazardous and harmful effects on the biotic and abiotic entities of the natural and cultural environment. In addition, Rufu says: "roofs of houses are affected by gas flares, acid rain" (p.82) blends "with the free quality of the area" (p.82). As the environment is violated, it is difficult to differentiate the pure from the impure. There are also incidents of oil spillage caused by vandals and multinationals. What follows from this point is "an unflinching expose of the horrors inflicted on the Delta from the

plunder of its oil” (p.53).The quote indicates extreme violation and looting of the ecology of the Niger Delta. Besides, as Rufus and Zaq boat through the waters, they witness the victims of the seeping crude: “dead fish, dead birds, and abandoned villages. Pipelines despoil the once lush landscape; towering gas flares emit toxins into the air. Arriving at the itinerant village of Chief Ibiram, whose people have lost their land to oil” (p.55).All these crises show the reporters experience about the routine violence of the region when the major’s soldiers attack and capture them on suspicion of associating with militants. That action has produced harmful effects on the health of the community. The military and the militants also wantonly storm the villages.

Habila also uses petroviolece as a form of ecological violence that harms the health of the indigenous community and the natural environment as a result of the gas flare directly inflicted on the natural ecology. For instance, Doctor Dagogo-Mark, in one of his discussions with Rufus, the reporter, concisely captures the health hazards faced by local people. He laments how he daily helplessly watches the unfortunate villagers unable to attack different forms of diseases which ultimately result in termination of lives as:

*I’ve been in these waters five years now and I tell you this place is a dead place.... The villagers... got... quenched flare... then... the livestock began to die and the plants ... wither on their stalks.... I took samples of the drinking water and in my lab I measured the level of toxins in it... In one year it had grown almost twice the safe level.... So... people started dying... More people died.... More fell sick, a lot died.... Almost overnight I watched the whole village disappear.... A man suddenly comes down with a mild headache, becomes feverish... develops rashes... a vital organ shuts down... those whom disease doesn’t kill... violence does (p.144-146).*

The impact of petroviolece both on the ecology and the community is immeasurable. In addition, the novel reveals the terrible effects of ecological holocaust on animals, fishes, birds, grass, and rivers, etc. It allows some of the dire consequences of the activities of the oil companies on the host communities. The ecological holocaust as a form of environmental destruction has exterminated everything ecological. Everything turns toxic and useless. There is dead oxygen indicating that life is impossible to survive as the ecological services are broken. Indeed, petroviolece as a form of ecological violence unexpectedly brings ecological genocide on both the plants and animals. The slow disappearance of plant habitats is an indication of the high degree of prevalence of ecological violence.

*Oil on Water* deals petroviolence that causes the breakdown of the wave of the ecosystem in the Niger Delta. Natural ecosystems such as aquatic ecosystems (rivers, wetlands, lakes, and swamps), terrestrial ecosystems such as trees (forest), grasslands, agricultural crops, and the social system have been amputated off because of petroviolence. Not only the natural ecosystem but also socio-natural wave of the interaction of human beings with other living organisms has been severely violated. Besides, people are sadly disconnected from their environment. Toxic “wastes kill plants and small microorganisms’ life” (p.19). The nutrients in the toxic waste “break off waterways” (p. 151) to encourage the super growth of water inside plants. Water that human and the organisms of the surrounding ecology drink has been poisoned, or toxic. The complete ecological damage is caused by the direct intervention of the colonial and imperial powers over the African socio-environments.

The displacement of people and the mistrust built in them remain another consequence of oil activities that has been brought about by petroviolence in the Niger Delta. For instance, due to the enticing offers by the oil companies many communities of the Niger Delta sell their land to the oil companies, while “those who refuse are conspired against” (p.91) and then charged with terrible acts that often result in their deaths- like the case of Chief Malabo in a village. The villagers later bear the brunt of their action as they now daily flee to where they consider a safer zone. “They were forced to displace” (p.71) indicates the sufferings and pain the villagers’ suffers. They were deprived of living in their safer and ancestral lands. The reality of villagers’ condition makes “Chief Ibiram to be pessimistic” (p.32). Displacement which is facilitated by the ecological destructions later harms the people living there for ages.

The Niger Delta’s ecological violence shows the damage made at the cost of the whole natural ecosystem services as follows:

*Midriver water was clear and mobile, but towards the banks it turned brackish and still... a bat flying overhead, a dead fish on the oil-polluted water.... We drifted almost aimlessly on the opaque misty water. The water took on various forms.... Sometimes, it was a snake, twisting and fast and slippery, poisonous.... Their rivers were already polluted and useless for fishing, and the land grew only gas flares and pipelines (p.34- 40).*

Rufus presents the actual observation about the state of the physical environment of the community. While observing, he notices the past, how unrewarding the villagers' efforts at seas are as they merely succeed in catching "a handful of thin wiggling fish" (p.25). Gloria later adds her voice, stating that many islands around her used to be a big habitat for bats, but now have a few dozen due to "the gas flares that kill them" (p.120).The environmental damages can change the functions of the ecosystem as the ecology of the island has been changed to bats' habitat. The reporter says in every direction now, one sees "...dead birds draped over tree branches, their outstretched wings black and slick with oil; dead fish bobbed white-bellied between tree roots... The patch of grass growing by the water was suffocated by a film of oil..." (p.8-9).This shows that the ecological change happens as a result of anthropogenic forces. The anthropogenic activity as human agent has diverged the normal ecological function and further aggravates ecological violence as the whole ecosystem is collapsed.

*Oil on Water* not only deals the violation of the rights of nature but also the native people of Niger Delta. As depicted in the novel, Chief Ibiram's village was one of the places where oil was found. In this village, as Rufu says: "for the drilling rights they were offered a lot of money, more money than any of them had ever imagined" (p.38).The villagers were not earning fair money for the labor services they offered during oil drilling or exploitation.They are treated as lack of rights, and the environment in post- colonial times of Africa is just treated, silent, or totally ignored. Nature as silent entity has been exploited over and over. Post-colonial ecologies of Africa is one of the most violated and continuously damaged places even during this post-colonial times.

### **4.3 Ecological Resistance**

*Oil on Water indirectly* deals with the writer's concerns about the protection and preservation of the Niger Delta's pristine ecology. The novel can be critiqued as one of the most important pieces of ecological voices emerged from the Niger Delta ecoregion of Nigeria. In doing so, Habila seems to craft his novel to be a fiction of post-colonial resistance as well. In the novel, Habila is seen as both ecological writer and ecoactivist in creating ecological awareness/ecoconsciousness/ to his readers through his characters in order to provide voices for the constantly dying ecology of Niger Delta. For that effect, he introduces various ecological resistance strategies in defending and protecting the natural ecologies of Ogoni people who are

subjects of ecological crisis since western oil extracting companies appear. He portrays all these through his characters, ecological landscape descriptions, interaction and interdependencies between/among human and the nonhuman entities. For Habila, ecological resistance is used as a manuscript for fighting against the depletion of the ecology that has been deteriorated because of colonial/post-colonial intrusions. The resistance strategy Habila mainly used and analyzed in this study is ecological journalism which is devoted to speak for the voiceless nature. The detailed explanation of this strategy has been presented as follows.

### **4.3.1 Ecological Journalism and Longing for an Endangered Nature**

*Oil on Water* uses journalistic figures to represent searches for the truth within contemporary Niger Delta's ecological crises. He has employed the adoption of official "journalistic voice" (p.161) and it is called parody. Habila for this effect combines literature and journalism to cross-fertilize one another. He has created his major characters as investigative journalists who have devoted their life and time to investigate what is happening there, and how the ecology of the area is being violated. Habila's presentation of environmental journalism as a strategy to be the voice for the ecology of the Niger Delta also shows his eagerness to save the dying ecology of Niger Delta. According to Gujarat (2017), environmental journalism is a significant tool in exposing environmental degradations and raising public awareness about today's endangered environmental resources. Habila's major characters observe the Niger Delta's ecological situation and then report it to the public through both broadcasting and print media outlets. The purpose of using investigative journalists as major characters, sending them, with armed skills of investigation to the area where ecological war and depletion takes place, is Habila wants the ecological crisis of the Niger Delta ecorigion to be revealed not only to the local but also to the international community. Journalists then look at the situation, interview the victims in the actual settings, and the destructed ecology and narrated the stories.

The narrator of the story begins by presenting the interview with a local key chief, Chief Ibiram (group of village community in Niger Delta). Chief Ibrahim tells their story of ecological tragedy and their displacements because they were forcefully evacuated by oil company managers. Chief Ibiram says in his interview with Rufu: "Once upon a time they [Corrupt Nigerian Government Officials, who are also in collaboration with the whites for Niger Delta's natural resources] lived

in paradise, he said, in a small village close to Yellow Island. They lacked for nothing, fishing and hunting and farming and watching their children growing up before them, happy” (p.38). The interview with situational observation helps expose the reality inside the story. Rufu and his comrade try to reveal this ecological genocide. The use of ecological oriented journalism, a fast track investigation scheme of the 21st century and as a tool of resistance strategy by the novel indicates how much the ecology is being exterminated and Habila’s emphasis on how to save it by alerting the international community. Interviews with the local victims and situational observation are also journalistic principles of voicing for voiceless and the endangered nature.

The investigative journalists observe the situation during the local resistance against the destruction of their environment. Habila’s investigative environmental journalists situate Niger Delta’s environmental condition and report it by reinscribing the human activities over there. They interview Mrs. Felicia Itsero, a protester and protest organizer in August 2000 and report this:

*Chevron has neglected us; they’ve neglected us for a long time. No good drinking water, they intimidate us with soldiers, police, and navy and tell us that cases of spills are caused by us. We’ve protested against the pollution of our rivers and creeks, destruction of our forest and mangroves and the gas flaring and the noise from it. We’ve complained and protested. All our complaints and protest fell on Chevron’s deaf ears (p.39).*

The first lines of the above excerpt describe natives’ grievances on how they are neglected by their local leaders. They revolted against forest destruction, pollution of water, and rivers because of the gas flaring but there was no response from Chevron, chief of the locals and his associates. The grievances from the protesters do not elicit positive responses from the local administrators as well as the oil company managers. The revolt, by any means, is sourced from the life survival and deep connection between human and the nonhuman entities among Niger Delta’s people. The presentation of the protester’s grievances shows his care for the poor, innocent and preserving the ecology of the region.

Habila’s investigative journalists have also uncovered the kidnappings and exposed the crisis of ecology of Niger Delta on the one hand and the harms on the poor natives on the other. Habila’s use of investigative journalism, the 21st century’s scientific discovery and investigation tool, also shows the indictment of the ecology so that attention must be paid to rehabilitate it soon. The

novel also looks into the capability of journalism to effect change as a window to world stories. The narrator says that the Ogoni people of Niger Delta “struggle against Nigerian political corruption fueled by Shell’s ecological genocide” (p.45) on their own land. The struggle of the natives against the political system of their country and the destruction of their natural ecology shows Habila’s care towards the victims.

The Ogoni people’s “nonviolent resistance” (p.76) against what Habila termed “ecological war” (p.90) indicates the powerful always defeat the powerless. The nonviolent resistance against post-colonial ecological injustices shows by the native villagers’ being less resistive and ecologically interconnected. The natives’ restless resistance against ecological disturbance though remains invisible to those who benefit from oil mineral resource consumption, indicates sacrifices given to today’s planetary crisis. Exposing petroculturalism as a major threat and the destruction of the natural ecology of Niger Delta seems Habila’s major objective. It seems that Habila wrote *Oil on Water* purposely to draw attention to the grim effects of illegal oil extraction and environmental pollution on the voiceless Ogoni people. He thereby rouses the consciousness of his readers, with the intent to compel them to contribute their quota towards making the society safe for all.

The campaign against petroculturalism is informed through location situational observation and interviewing the victims actually. For example, the state of Rufus’ father, later revealed in the novel, is a testament to the degeneration of souls that many villagers have experienced. Soon, after losing his job with the ABZ Oil Company, “Rufus’ father throws away all his religious beliefs in an attempt to keep body and soul together. He now freely engages in oil theft, bribes the policemen so as to remain in business, drinks and, of course, smokes heavily” (p.88). Rufus’ father engagement in criminal activities shows how much the community of the area is victimized as their environment is totally damaged. Rufus presents his notices as: “...I saw how much my father had changed. He had turned his back on his religion and now smoked and drank Oogoro almost nonstop” (p.65). This fact registers the moral implications of oil activities in the region, indirectly calling on all concerned individuals to swing into action so as to preserve every sense of dignity remaining.

The novel also creates and uses mature and intellectual characters to emphasize the seriousness of the situation of region’s ecology. He uses characters such as the Professor who resists the

coming of oil extracting companies from the beginning arguing that the Niger Delta is one of the highly “ethnic tensioned areas in the world as the region is one of the most fertile too” (p.103). The professor is believed to have worked “for an oil company, and one day he gets disgusted with the environmental abuse and he became a militant to fight for change” (p.98). Here, the professor’s resistance is up to joining the militancy to be a voice for the voiceless ecoregion. He has started fighting the Nigerian National Federal Government and the conglomerate oil extraction monopolies with his pen. The professor tries to expose the stressful situation of the Niger Delta ecology to the rest of the world through writing media and campaigns:

*Along with extorting money, the Professor aims to broadcast his protest against the ecological crisis created by big oil, thus the reporters (Enter Rufus and Zaq. Joining a team of reporters assembled by James Floode, they set out for Agbuki Island. When they reach the Island, fires are burning and bodies are strewn about. The military, under the ruthless leadership of the Major, has ambushed the operation. Because the military protects the profiteering collusion between the Nigerian government and the global oil industry, the Major, as the military’s representative, mercilessly hunts and exterminates militants (p.199).*

Broadcasting the deteriorating ecology of the Niger Delta ecoregion by Rufus along with the professor exposed to international community is another strategy of resistance Habila develops in his novel. Here Habila depicts the professor as an ecoactivist who espouses the environmental truth with the existing political situation of the country. The presence of the professor across the story is international respectability and adds weight to the gravity the bad environmental situation.

Throughout observations and reporting, Rufus is keen to expose the ecological crisis by emphasizing the perspective of those who actually live in the Niger Delta, and outlines reasons for resistance by the local community:

*I don’t blame them for wanting to vandalize the pipelines that have brought nothing but suffering to their lives, leaking into the rivers and wells, killing the fish and poisoning the farmlands. And all they are told by the oil companies and the government is that the pipelines are there for their own good, that they hold great potential for their country, their future... And you think the people are corrupt? No. they are just hungry, and tired (p.88).*

In this passage, Rufus wholeheartedly condemns the destruction of the Niger Delta ecology, following the suffering of the inhabitants of the area and the callous attitude of the oil companies

and politicians towards them. Rufus's being on the side of the victimized poor community shows the intent to expose the impact of environmental destruction on the local people. The leaking of crude oil gas into the rivers has damaged the aquaculture and smashed farmlands of the villagers that left them impoverished. The narrative firmly supports the resistance of the victim villagers reasoning that it is the only option to save and survive their lives. Though Rufus rarely voices his own opinion explicitly, it is clear that he tends to befriend and side with the people in the region, especially with the displaced villagers living in poverty under depressing environment.

### **4.3.2 The Healing Power of Nature and the Ecology of Looking**

Another resisting strategy Habila uses is the glorifying of the healing power of nature of Niger Delta. Consistently, the novel celebrates nature and foregrounds the ecological wisdom in ensuring that the earth's ecology is not damaged in any way. In doing so, he has devised a strategy of ecological and ecosystem weaves protection system against any destructive violence on Nature. The natural ecosystem is considered as alternative means to save and preserve the contemporary natural ecologies of the Niger Delta region. Rufus says: "The air on Irikefe Island where the worshippers lived and worshipped in their shrine was relatively free from pollution, at least until the clash between militants and soldiers" (p.85). The writer appreciates and glorifies nature to inculcate the value of nature to his characters against the destructive behavior of human beings. What makes nature impure is the human activities including the instabilities created by militants and government soldiers fighting for Niger Delta's oil and petroleum resources. Natural environment is a source of everything so that it must be protected and preserved. Understanding nature is a significant way to move in rehabilitating the earth according to the writer.

On the other hand the writer condemns polluting industries pollution that harms the natural ecology. Zag, one of the experienced journalists says that: "I like the air here, it's pure. Who knows, I might even get some sort of religion" (p.85).Zag here appreciates the purity and silence of nature than the one that produces pollution. He is in a way making the readers have an in-depth understanding of his pity for the unsympathetic actions of human beings against nature. On the one hand, he wishes and presents the clean and pure state of the Niger Delta physical environment before the coming of the whites for oil extraction. Similarly, the writer foregrounds the natural synergy that humankind receives from nature and asks why human beings are

reluctant to preserve and protect nature. He, in this context, glorifies nature and foregrounds the ecological wisdom in ensuring that the earth must always be rehabilitated and protected. The teaching and informing instrument he uses for this effect is ecological writing and informing the mass about nature.

With this quality of the Niger Delta's natural environment, Habila wants to reveal the air as it has powers to cure all manners of diseases. The writer's intention here seems to glorify African natural forests than the Westerners. This is evident in the speech of Naaman, the Chief priest of the shrine at Irikefe village as: "nature's healing power" (p.77). The writer brings the scene here to show this African life is linked to the natural divines and the natural ecology is always appreciated and never be violated by any external intrusion. When Rufus expresses a misgivings regarding Zaq's decision to stay back at the shrine in spite of his failing health, Naaman interrupts as: "We have a nurse here and she will attend to you (Zaq). But perhaps you won't need her. The air alone will heal you."(p.44).This signifies nature has no substitute. The air by itself has the power of healing than modern European health technology.

Again, during the conversation that ensues between Rufus and Gloria, Gloria emphasizes the healing powers of the uncontaminated sea, which, as a consequence, has drawn the attention of many worshippers. The Irikefe villagers are keen to believe in the powers of nature that they worship the sun. Rufus's sister, Boma, also finds in the village's nature. Following her ordeals in life and in marriage, "she decides to stay with other worshippers at the shrine in Irikefe" (p.81).The narrative here condemns industrialization and appreciates nature in Africa. Although Rufus, at first, has some reservation, he acknowledges the changes in Boma, which she confirms:

*Boma was with the group of women at the hearth... She was laughing as she bustled about.... She looked really happy.... She had joined the worshippers, walking with them in a procession every morning and every evening to immerse her in the sea and sing a hymn to the rising and the setting of the sun..... I (Boma)'ve made up my mind to stay.... I like it here, I like the people and can feel myself relaxing in a way I haven't in a long time. My spirit feels settled (p.226- 227).*

Habila's portrayal of the good quality of the air and the sea, and how people worship nature (the sun) in this context is very revealing. The locals' worshipping of the sun signifies the reverence that people have for it, their love, admiration and belief in nature. The implicit interpretation of Habila's presentation of the healing power of nature can be seen as preservation of the nature and

seeking its power for saving human life is unique way of defending ecological crisis over the African post-colonial world. The narrator also recommends: “protecting our environment is protecting our lives” (p.65). This seems that Habila is implicitly directing our attention to how industrialization is gradually destroying our environment so that creating green environment is alternative solution for environmental hazards. Regarding the hazardous impacts of industrialization to the human and nonhuman, the narrator warns as “poisonous technology”(p.55) to indicate the daily emission of poisonous gas into the atmosphere resulting in air pollution, and also the release of harmful waste substances into the seas, leading to the destruction of ecology, and the extermination of countless fellow species. That is the evil practices of post-colonialism on Africa natural environments. The destructive role of industrialization that is imported through colonialism/neocolonialism on the natives’ ecology is what the novel criticizes and as it glorifies nature (sun, water forests etc.). The human and nonhuman are meant to be hallowed, not desecrated.

We are also reminded that there is a strongly established interconnection between African and their natural environment as is also explained in documented literatures. He demonstrates how it, together with all the living things therein, sustains and helps in achieving their numerous goals. Niger Delta people, who are fishermen, mostly make “their living on the river that poured its water into the sea” (p.108).Here, the reader is urged to care and protect the ecology as a unique way of freeing themselves from ecological imperialism and economic impoverishment. Ogonis’s environment is usually taken as moral and communal duty of every member of the earth. Ontological worldviews and epistemological formation of understanding the natural and social world are integral parts of the African coexistence with their natural environments. The representation of the pristine qualities of African nature against the western is typical evidence for this.

Another post-colonial ecological resistance used is ecological nostalgization, a concept of feeling of sadness mixed with pleasure and affection when we think of happy times in the past. Habila has created his characters to remind themselves of their natural environment of the past and compare it with the present. He uses this strategy to glorify the Africans’ past communal attachment to ecology and the general environment and to denounce the present African situation and finding paths to options for restoration. The narrative argues that the only way of defending

the global imperial environmental destruction is through appreciating the past African ecological connections and interactions with the generations to come, protection techniques and doing in that effect right now, i.e., restoring the threatened natural world of Africa. To achieve that, the story has used a technique called ecological nostalgization, recalling the past ecological beauty and appreciating it for that effect as introduced in his the novel in order to reveal characters' level of flashback ecoconsciousness towards their Niger Delta's present ecologically threatening situation. A good example is Rufus's recollections of his childhood at Chief Ibiram's house:

*... my childhood (was) in a village... the sea was just outside our door, constantly bringing surprises, suggesting a certain possibility to our lives. Boma (his sister) and I used to spend the whole night by the water, catching crabs, armed with sticks and basket.... We usually sold our catch to the market women, but sometimes, to make more money, we took the ferry to Port Harcourt to sell to the restaurants by the waterfront. That was how we paid our school fees... (p.26).*

From the excerpt, it can be inferred that Habila has introduced a strategy of ecological nostalgization on the ecological landscape of Niger Delta of Nigeria. The intention is that when people go back to their former identities, they start to discover that their back identities are reflected as discovery of their own selves for the present and the future. Past identities are connected to the present in the novel. Major characters like Rufus are deployed to reveal the situation and the violated ecology of the Niger Delta region to compare the past with the present by bringing the narration to a flashback. The past is nostalgized as full of glory and joy over the abandoned natural existence that always brought positive spillover effects to humans. Such natural glory generally represents the pre-colonial ecological existence of many African countries particularly the Niger Delta of Nigeria. The narration by Rufus indicates that the present is described as "horrific actions of human beings over nature" (p.66). The present natural environment, unlike the past, is adversely affected by anthropogenic activities. Hence Habila foregrounds the past ecological beauty for the moral building of his characters to properly care with ecoconsciousness towards the devastated ecology of the region as a strategy for defending post-colonial ecological damages.

## **Chapter Five: Ecological Violence and Resistance in Zake Mda's *The Heart of Redness***

### **5.0 Introduction**

In this chapter an attempt is made to analyze and interpret Zake Mda's *The Heart of Redness* employing the post-colonial ecocritical approach. To begin with, a synopsis (or plot) of the novel is given and this synopsis is followed by an analysis of forms of ecological violence, resistance strategies, the writer's articulation in bringing attention to the ongoing ecological violence and resistance and the interaction between human and the nonhuman in the novel. The different forms of ecological violence and resistance strategies relevant thematically to the novel are considered in the analysis. The main objective of the analysis is to demonstrate how the novel portrays pressing ecological violence and restive resistance.

### **5.1 Synopsis**

*The Heart of Redness* (2000) by Zake Mda is set in a village of Xhosa people of Qolorha-by-sea, Eastern Cape of South Africa. The story of the novel begins with a cattle killing episode in the 1856/1857 as flashback. A teenage prophetess Nongquawuse recommended to the Xhosa people to kill their cattle and burn their crops so that the spirit of their ancestors would arise and drive oppressors (the English colonizers) into the ocean. The cattle killing and crop destruction had brought destructive environmental consequences. The failed prophecy split the people into two opposing groups. The two groups were the Believers and the Unbelievers who continue to be at logger head with each other to the present. One hundred and fifty years later, the two groups' descendants are at odds over plans to build a vast casino and tourist resort. In the middle of the disagreements between the two opposing groups, the development project is introduced to the village of Qolorha-by-sea. The believers support the idea of the project arguing that it would help to develop their village with some fruits of modernization and thus remove their uncivilized state or "redness". The Unbelievers to the contrary are of the opinion that this external interference would only succeed in damaging pristine land and they therefore oppose the project. They resist the project for they assume that it will destroy their natural environments. This conflict is still very much present in modern times as represented by Zim and Bhonco respectively in the novel.

While the hot debate is going on between the Believers and Unbelievers over the proposed project, Camagu, the protagonist of the novel, immediately appear.

Camagu is a South African who has lived in the United States of America for over 30 years. He then immediately decides to return home with a Doctorate Degree in Development Economics in the wake of the South Africa's independence from Apartheid in hoping to build the new country. Even though he has moldered for years in Johannesburg, he cannot find jobs appropriate to his skills and he is disillusioned. While he is landing up in Qolorha- by- Sea in search of a girl called NomaRussia, whom he had met at a stranger's wake in Johannesburg, he comes across the conflict between the Believers and the Unbelievers over the unresolved issue. Then Camagu takes on the role of mediation to help them solve their differences. In order to support himself during his stay in the village, Camagu then forms a cooperative society along with the help of two women who are on opposite sides of the Believer-Unbeliever debate in the village. Later on in the novel, Camagu, along with Dalton, the white man, tries to reach a middle ground by proposing a new ecological project called ecotourism. Camagu believes that the ecotourism project would not only empower the people of the village by making them economically independent, but also help them in protecting their indigenous plants and trees. Camagu then offers a pragmatic approach that allows the villagers to participate in the global economy while also enabling them to preserve their natural environment and culture.

## **5.2 Ecological Violence**

Mda's *The Heart of Redness* can be critiqued as a novel of ecological violence. In it Mda reveals how South Africa's natural environments have been exploited in coercive manner through various strategies of former colonizers. The first strategy as represented by Mda is exterminating African environmental landscapes and resources. The second form of ecological violence is geographical colonization. The novel also reveals flora and fauna genocides committed on the natural ecologies of South Africa.

### **5.2.1 Ecological Imperialism**

Mda's *The Heart of Redness* can be read as ecological imperialism. Colonizers have used different strategies to colonize the people and the land (natural gifts) of Africa. Among these, the novel reveals planting nonnative trees on the indigenous soils of South Africa as one strategy. This kind of project is called invasion of nonnative species or exotic species invasion that is

replacing plant trees of South Africa with the foreign ones which according to Crosby (1986:55) is known as ecological imperialism. This has been reflected as an important and often overlooked cause of species extinctions in Mda's novel. Nonnative plant species, introduced by British colonizers themselves cause extinction of Qolorha-by-Sea native plants as seen in Mda's *The Heart of Redness*. Mda depicts ecological imperialism as a form ecological violence as a process of depicting and destroying the ecology of Qolorha-by-Sea, South Africa. Planting foreign invasive trees on the soils of indigenous South Africans has negative impacts on the ecology of the village of Qolorha-by-Sea. One of the effects is suffocation. The term suffocation is a socio-cultural post-colonial concept that can affect former colonies in various oppressive and hierarchical means. In terms of ecological context, suffocation in Mda's *The Heart of Redness* is used to refer to suppressing the native's plants by disallowing them from oxygen, soil, water, sunshine, other minerals and nutrients. As portrayed in the novel, suffocation makes trees grow weak and develop "poor draught resistance" (p.91) capacity, and to be vulnerable to "climate intolerances" (p.98). Foreign invasive trees on the other hand are "unadoptable to the soils of Qolorha-by-Sea" (p.65), according to Qukezwa, a woman character in *The Heart of Redness*. For example, she bitterly recites "the wattle trees needed a lot of water to grow, thus drawing all the water of the land and not leaving enough for the other plants. The country is as it is short of water" (p.99). Trees which needs much water and unnaturalized genealogy can cause dryness/desertification. The wattle trees need much space so that they do not allow other indigenous plants to grow and also consume much water with their large leaves that do not let little precipitations. This much water consumption and space coverage directly affects the ecology by bringing dryness and suffocation to the local plant ecology of the natives.

Mda also condemns the plantation of foreign trees on the local soils arguing that this is ecological imperialism. The narrator of the story says that the "wattle trees"(p.96) are foreign trees "imported from abroad" (p.97). This indicates the replacement of the indigenous plants with the foreign ones and hence the legacies of colonialism continues to expropriate the ecologies of the present day of Africa natural environment. The replacement of native plants by the invasive ones can also be seen as a cultural metaphor that is used to signify the continuance of colonial expansion even after the end of formal colonialism. This aims to break down the human and nonhuman cordial interconnection by destabilizing the natural ecosystem.

The replacement of native trees with foreign ones, which is called exotic species invasion, can also be seen as a form of ecological genocide, exterminating others species and germinating one's own. Ecological imperialism represents one of the ugly faces of global capitalism today (Crosby, 1986). Mda's presentation of ecological invasion of African natural environment by foreign trees is the fact that the post in post- colonialism does not signify an end to colonialism. Rather it stands for its continuation in the form of ecological colonialism and the present neoliberal capitalist resource exploitations. Indeed, the narrator condemns the potentially negative effects of a capitalistic driven development of land. Just like, the foreign trees were leading to the "suffocation of the indigenous plants" (p.88); the invasion of western companies would ultimately lead to demolition of local cultures and traditions. *The Heart of Redness* highlights how post-colonialism has had both ecological and cultural effects on the local lands of South Africa.

Significantly, the story links the psychological and ideological effect of colonialism on the colonized people. The deep rooted inferiority complex can be seen in the natives even in present day South Africa. The narrator tells the reader that some villagers believe that "even the trees and plants in the forest of Nogqoloza were civilized as they were from across the seas" (p.33). The villagers in Nogqoloza admire the forest of Nogqoloza and reason that the trees were planted in straight lines several years ago by the white men who came from "British as colonial settlers" (p.32).The appreciation of the foreign trees other than the local ones shows how much colonialism has conquered African minds with its different forms of colonization. It also shows still the civilization of the West is planted as dogmatic values for Africans. This is ecological colonization.

Furthermore, some villagers still rely on the foreign trees and plantation instead of conserving the indigenous. For example from the Unbeliever, like Bhonco argue for clearing of the bush, and replacing them with plants imported from England. Bhonco says: "it is foolish to talk of conserving indigenous trees. After all, we can always plant civilized trees. Trees that come from across the seas, trees that have no thorns like some of the ugly ones you want to protect" (p.146).That kind of mental colonization is called eco- psychological colonization. The portrayal of the African ecological landscape as a sign of backwardness by the British colonialists and writers like Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* have led them to the importation of foreign

plants which are symbols of civilization. Colonialism has not only deterred African cultural system but also changed the ecological thinking of African themselves. This also shows how colonialism involved not only colonizing the minds of the people but also their land and natural environments.

For some characters like Bhonco, conserving native plants in the soils of South Africa is being foolish and uneducated. In Bhonco view; behaving and engaging in such activities indicates remaining backward. Bhonco argues that trees imported from abroad are “civilized” like the culture of the whites, and the ones that are indigenous are “ugly” in his evaluation. Zim, later describes Bhonco as “a tool of white people” (p.147). Zim declares that the goal of white development planners is to “plant trees from England” (p.200) and they are determined to “uproot” the native “shrubs” and “wild bushes” to plant “English garden” (p.203) which will become a retirement place for the rich. This is pure ecological imperialism aimed at colonizing the plants of the landscape which Mda aims to show in *Qolorha-by-sea*.

Ecological imperialism is a major cause of the loss of the indigenous’s’ biodiversity that also leads to the threatening the Mother Nature. The association of indigenous plants to the people’s uncivilized state of being, which the unbelievers are made to believe, as could be understood from Bhonco’s statement: “we want to get rid of this bush which is a sign of uncivilized state” (p.92). This statement leads to the destruction of the locals’ ecology. Upon the claim of taming the wilderness into an English garden by importing plants from abroad the locals land is colonized by foreign plants. This kind of environmental domination is a kind of colonization. The ecology of *Qolorha-by-sea* suffers so much. The dominance of the whites, dehumanization of groups and nonhuman environment is represented as the underlying reason behind the ecological disasters in post-colonial South Africa. The environmental domination of the west to the former colonies has ended up with fatal consequences both for human and nonhuman beings living in these areas.

### **5.2.2 Zoological Genocide and Geographical Colonization**

Mda’s novel can also be critiqued as a tale of zoological genocide and geographical colonization as other forms of ecological violence. The “cattle killing episode” (p.92) in *South African* is also apparently described as a “devastative and slaughtering” (p. 92) of animals by the anthropogenic agent. The purpose of mass cattle-killing was to enable access to “fertile lands of the Xhosa tribe

to the British newly entrant settlers” (p.106) simply by creating conflict among some of the Xhosa clans and disintegrating their unions and economic autonomies. This kind of settler colonization has brought about complete ecological damage and dehumanization. As Wright (2010) argues, the massacre of animals in the colonial and post-colonial times by the human intentional actions is considered as one of the evil practices of the extension of colonialism in African environmental history. The mass killing of animals indicates the brutal and cruel nature of the anthropogenic force for the violence of animal world. The cruel killing of the animals testifies the ultimate extermination of the animal nature. The author has brought this historical episode to revitalize the colonial legacies that are still linked with the contemporary neocolonial African flora and fauna appropriation.

The recommendation of the teenage prophetess Nongquawuse to the Xhosa people to kill their cattle and destroy their cropping lands is the colonizers’ strategy to exterminate South Africa’s indigenous ecologies. The prophecies that resulted in the mass killings of cattle and destruction of crops in the past is viewed by Mda as part of the governor, Sir George Greys colonizing scheme that created a rift amongst the people of the village. The narrator says that the governor addresses the issue as: “The Man Who Named Ten Rivers' dexterously works towards destroying the Xhosa laws and customs” (p.258). The laws and customs are traditional ecological and cultural preservations that have been kept for ages among the Xhosa. The Unbelievers view the entire cattle killing movement as a strategy of the British government to create a rift amongst the amaXhosa's and divide them in order to reduce their strength and increase the hold of the colonial government over the amaXhosa lands for more resettlements. With this strategy the colonial agent has destroyed not only the cattle but also the crop ecology of amaXhosa people in Qolorha-by-sea, South Africa.

The European colonizers came to Africa with the purpose of grabbing the lands of the indigenous first and then exploited human and nonhuman resources. This is geographical colonization which was purposely intended during the Berlin conference. Taking advantage of the defenselessness of indigenous communities, they gradually appropriated their lands and made them work as slaves in white settlements. Nixito, the chief voices the plight of the local people when he says, "What can we do? We are a conquered people." (p.259). Making the them less resistant, the British colonizers have damaged the flora and fauna of the natives. Then they settle

their citizens over the “fertile lands” (p.91). By linking the cattle killing movement and Nonqawuse's prophecies to the colonization of South Africa, Zakes Mda imbues his novel with these ecological and social crises.

The mass cattle-killing movement has also been seen as the exchange of property. The replacement of the old by the new represents the colonial and capitalist motive of commodification of the African natural resources and ecosystem services for money. The commodification of nature which is against the moralistic principle of African is taken as a considerable value in capitalist market economy. The mass cattle-killing movement has also instantiated a social and material death. That is what is most important about that moment between the death of the nation's environmental resources and the replenishing there of by the natives, the substitution of the new for the old, which is tantamount to an act of grace of plenitude, of agape, “love as charity.”(p.8).In the time of decision, a moment filled with political danger, madness so the cattle-killing is operated for the purpose of political will.

The narrator of the story also remarks that “all the amaXhosa would have been equally lacked, equally vulnerable, and, potentially, equally felicitous, all equally true in their belief that Nonqawuse's promises could, and would, be fulfilled” (p.11).This indicates that they were incapable of opposing the crime. This is because they are politically and environmentally dominated by the colonizers and new settlers who occupied fertile soils. In the act of social death, before the “entire amaXhosa nation tasted the sweet fruits of the resurrection,” (p.13) shows there was the potential for a brief equality of life. The cattle killing action represents the colonial motive of replacing the old (traditional life of South Africans with their indigenous environmental managements and practices) with the new as a damaging ecological catastrophes in the South African Environmental history. Regarding the issue being raised, the narrator also opines:

*The new people who will arise from the dead will come with new cattle, horses, goats, sheep, dogs, fowl and other animals that the people may want. But the new animals of the new people cannot mix with your polluted ones. Destroy everything. Destroy the corn in your fields and in your granaries. Nonqawuse has told us that when the new people come here there will be a new world of contentment and no one will lead a troubled life again (p.155).*

As described, the extract shows the Anthropocene where human beings emerge as the primary geological force acting upon the planet and the major responsible agent for its complete destruction. In order to create a new world, the old world must be totally destroyed. The old world can represent the African indigenous life and the new ones stand for the period that followed after colonization of Africa. Neither crop nor livestock of the old world can be vanished. Not only the animal species but also the crop ecology has been damaged. The old should be eliminated. Replacing the traditional environmental system including the natural ecosystem by the modern one is a political and economic ideology that emerged in the 1950s and in the 1960s which was considered a brutal machine for deterioration of African sociocultural values (Curtin, 2005). The assumption of this economic model is that since traditional life has not brought economic change, its values and institutions have to be demolished and replaced by the so called modern western economic thought that also pursues environment after development.

The massacre of the cattle, including the crop lands is considered as Anthropocene. The replacement of natives' traditional economic activities by the whites' imaginative development plans has left the environment varished. The practice is also linked to economic and developmental model introduced for former colonized countries in the global south in the 1970s. As Buell and others (2011) state, the modern developmental model has demolished not only the human values and culture but also the ecology of Africa at large. This huge human made catastrophe implicates developmental projects by western colonialists and imperialists have brought negative effect on the African ecology, shifting from the human calamities to the nonhuman. The European colonizers came to Africa for the sole purpose of dividing and exploiting the African lands which is an essential asset and survival of Africans. Fanon (1961:9) argues: "for a colonized people the most essential value, because the most concrete, is first and foremost the land: the land which will bring them bread and, above all, dignity." Fanon also argues that it is for this purpose colonizers came to Africa after they had solved their disputes over colonized nations' lands and natural resources at the Berlin conference held in the 1884/85.

Coming to African countries, colonizers have manipulated the geographies of the African natives just by displacing them and destroying the indigenous ecology (Fanon (1961). Mda portrays this

evil practice against the destruction and loss of animal resources. This is an act of geographical colonization and replacement:

*The 'new people' will replenish the cattle and refill the granaries, but only after all – the prophecy refuses the distinction that has emerged between the Believers and the Unbelievers – the amaXhosa have sacrificed their possessions. In addition to replacing what has been sacrificed with that which is uncontaminated, there is a further guarantee, a guarantee constitutive of the anti-colonial imaginary: “the spirits would arise from the dead and drive the white people into the sea. Who werkwinkel would not want to see the world as it was before the white conquerors?” (p.77). However, not even a return to the pre-lapsarian – pre-colonial – condition is something every Believer, to say nothing of the Unbelievers, is willing to risk his property for; because of this intra-political ‘disobedience’ and dissent, the promised land cannot, per force, be achieved. The unfaithful Believers found themselves exposed to the felicitous wrath of the (overly) zealous Twin: “But chiefs who were Believers continued to cultivate their land. Their territories became targets of Twin’s marauding destroyers” (p.112).*

The above lines depict the Believers and the Unbelievers’ ownership of property. These properties are owned by both private and public, and do not require its total renunciation as a precondition for their faith as in Nonqawuse’s case where it demands, at most, a temporary sacrifice after which full restitution is promised. The modern economic model that has been introduced to the African economy not only created two contrasting ideological views on killing or not killing dichotomy over cattle but also the massacre of Mother Earth to South African former colonies. The massacre is used to refer to the anthropocene of human actions in the late 20th century.

Mda’s *The Heart of Redness* also deals with the intimate relation and exploitation of land and the local ecology between neocolonial, and or the growing global capitalism and the indigenous inhabitants in the village of Qolorha-by-Sea, Eastern Cape of South Africa. The following excerpt reveals as a testimony of this fact that the land division by the colonizers by their own land policy interest in Qolorha-by-Sea, Eastern Cape of South Africa:

*The land was eventually divided into villages, towns, cities and counties bearing English names, and Smith declared himself the Great Chief of the Xhosa people and the 'Xhosa were his dogs' (p.6). Furthermore 'chiefs and people were bossed about by alien officials whose decisions they were unable to question' (p.7). They were 'dogs' cramped and restricted in strange territories,*

*'while their fertile land across the Keiskamma was occupied and desecrated by the white intruders' (p.7).*

The land decomodification with the geographical violence is implicated in the distinction between the world of the settler and that of the people on whose land the alluring European quarters sit. One of the projects of Europeans to Africa was expropriating African geographical lands for the benefits of themselves by displacing local people and replacing their lands with the white settlers. Land for Africans provides trees, water bodies, and generates a variety of crops needed as inputs for consumption and processing industries. But it has been deprived by the colonizers even by changing names and attributes of indigenous lands. This practice is what (Crosby, 1986) calls as geographical colonization. Land deprivation and expropriation including expelling indigenous people's entitlements of the fauna and flora in which the land provides subsistence livelihoods is geographical violence. Fertile cash crop lands have been forcefully taken by white colonial settlers. The European settlers are allowed to produce cash crops on the Fertile Crescent lands of the Xhosa people as seen in the extract "while their fertile land across the Keiskamma was occupied and desecrated by the white intruders" (p.7). The general description of the extract reveal the fact that geographical colonization is a common attribute to not only to South Africa but also the entire African in the colonial and post-colonial times. The changing names of indigenous places and discrimination of Xhosa people shows the brutal nature of colonial/post-colonial systems. Colonialism and its legacies have separated the human from the nonhuman.

The division and brutalization of land and its properties for the benefit of colonizers is also regarded as a serious land right violation and stereotypical attitude to the African environment in general. As Crosby (1986) states, in the colonial history of Africa the Europeans have moved humans, animals, and plants to the colonies replacing the wilderness over these lands. Inevitably, such practices have changed the landscapes to be fertile for farming and thus permanently damaged indigenous ecologies. Crosby (1986) considers these unbalanced environmental 'exchanges' within the context of British imperial power and colonial rule. The colonizers control over the locals' environment leads the destruction of the natural environment.

*The Heart of Redness* can also be read as a critique of plant genocide that is another form of ecological violence. Several plant species have been exterminated. The remaining plant species

are diminishing. In one of their meetings, Qukezwa, for instance, shows her friend the Valley of Nongqawuse and describes the historical episode as if she had witnessed it:

*We stood here with the multitudes,” she says, her voice full of nostalgia. “Visions appeared in the water. Nongqawuse herself stood here. Across the river the valley was full of ikhamanga. There were reeds too. They are no longer there. Only ikhamanga remains. And a few aloes. Aloes used to cover the whole area. Mist often covers this whole ridge right up to the lagoon where we come from. It was like that too in the days of Nongqawuse. We stood here and saw the wonders. The whole ridge was covered with people who came to see the wonders. Many things have changed. The reeds are gone. What remains now is that bush over there where Nongqawuse and Nombanda first met the strangers. The bush. Ityholo-lika-Nongqawuse (p.105).*

Qukezwa regrettably narrates the slow disappearance of the pleasant natural values of Nongqawuse Valley, where human beings and Nature equally served and people enjoyed over wonders of the River Valley. The valley through which a river flows was so fresh for joy, full of native plant species, and reeds. Now reeds and many more plant species are threatened with extinction. The Edenic replica of Nongqawuse Valley now replaced by scattered bushes and when Nongqawuse and Nombanda came to enjoy on, it has been so deteriorated and aesthetically degraded.

The slow disappearance of plant species like the reeds is an indication of the gradual extinction of the flora of the area which is the replica of the destruction of Xhosa’s natural resources after the coming of the colonizers to South Africa. With colonization and irresponsible human actions, ecology has come to dramatic increases in the rate of extinctions. Colonization with its contemporary legacies has not only affected the socio-cultural system but also the natural ecosystem of the area in various ways. The overall situation has happened as a result of the direct violence to the flora ecology of Xhosa people. The slow disappearance of such ecology is a simple example of ecological catastrophe on the indigenous plant species over the years.

### **5.3 Ecological Resistance**

*The Heart of Redness* can also be read as a novel of post-colonial resistance in addition to its nature of pressing ecological violence. The novel is full of anti-colonial themes and motifs that resist ecological injustices and is also described as a counter discourse against ecological

imperialism. For that matter, the narrative has used post-colonial resistance strategies for the purpose of resisting, protesting and changing the ongoing ecological destruction into the way that can be protected and preserved for long. For this purpose, as depicted in the novel, the story employs various resistance strategies that help him achieve his goal. Among these, the most important post-colonial ecological resistance strategies employed in the novel are creating ecological/environmental awareness among/between the characters through mass environmental education campaign, equip and arm them with pragmatic ecological thinking and finally develop an ecotourism based village economy resources that ecofriendly and sustainably benefit both the people and the larger environment. These important resistance strategies are explained further.

### **5.3.1 Environmental Education, the Rise of Pragmatic Ecological Thinking and Ecotourism Based Development**

In resisting the ecological destruction by post-colonial and capitalist global business empires, the writer has devised environmental education campaigns to resist the status quo. This strategy is used to resist and then tends to change the dire conditions of the environment by first educating the villagers about the natural environment. Mda tries to educate villagers and creates awareness about the indigenous cultures and impacts of colonialism and its legacies, land and ecology throughout his educational campaigns. He seems to believe that these are very important elements to protect nature and then the ecology can be rehabilitated and developed if creating awareness is made first. Upon realizing his goals; the novel first has modeled characters develop a sense of environmental/ecological awareness. Among them, Camagu, the major character, takes initiatives to launch the environmental education campaign. In his first meeting with Delton, friend of Camagu, he argues for “education for ecoconsciousness” (p.44). Camagu and Delton reaches a consensus that educating people about environmental protection should come first to save the threatening natural environment in post-colonial South Africa.

Similarly, Mda seems that empowering the poor by educating them about the natural ecology and environmental system is first achieved by educating and sensitizing them towards their environment. He also asserts that the alternative mechanism of lifting the local poor out of poverty and backwardness is through initiating them to look into their local environment and turning their back “towards their descendant ecology” (p.109). To strengthening this, Camagu, the initiator of the environmental education program, after he comes back from many years stay

abroad, brings an important fact to emphasize when he tells Dalton about the significance of education. Camagu is convinced that environmental knowledge is the best mechanism to protect and save Nature from colonial/post-colonial evil practices and illegal ecological utilization. He tries to address the destruction of natural environment and condemns it. He then formulates an ecological awareness campaign as a solution. Camagu starts teaching a group of villagers as follows:

*I warned them against it. I told them that the African black oystercatcher is an endangered bird and they must never kill it again. It is just ignorance, John. I think we all need some education on these matters. All of us. Even you, John. Then we will understand why Qukezwa chopped down those trees (p.223).*

Camagu informs Dalton and John about the role of education to bring changes to the protection and preservation of African fauna and flora. He speaks about the destruction of nature because of ignorance. Relating to this, the novel seems to refer Wangari Maathai's environmental campaign called 'Green Belt Movement' as a principal tool of defending colonial and global ecological catastrophes that has been held on the onslaught of colonialism as the main reason for disrupting the role of the natural environment which is echoed through the female figure character Qukezwa. Wangari Maathai's method aimed at educating women, the poor and the marginalized section of the society to rehabilitate Kenya's forest from destruction. Similarly, Mda first tries to persuade people of the generation to be ecologically aware. He says "Then we will understand why Qukezwa [women character who later becomes ecologically informed and ecoactivist] chopped down those trees" (p.223) means people have no or little knowhow their natural environment so that they mistreat Mother Nature. The solution, according to Camagu is educating them and urges them to value their natural environment.

Camagu's education about ecology (ecoconsciousness) has become successful through a thoughtful strategy called indigenous ecological participation. In this regard the writer seems to be environmental justice or simply eco-justice. His major character, Camagu believes that ecological colonialism can be curbed through community engagement and commitment as formal colonialism was defeated through united movements and cooperative guerilla fights. Today's distressed natural environment, Camagu argues, can be rehabilitated first by "fostering ecological understanding" (p.126) among local communities and then "reforesting domestic plants" (p.169) instead of the invasive foreign trees.

Camagu encourages the villagers, who have good communication among themselves, to participate in the discussions regarding the process of development while conducting the education. He tries to aware villagers that the natural environment is an integral part of African life. During the discussions, a lot of questions raised by the participants on the clarity of the environmental education campaign and the later project called ecotourism that can be launched soon in their village. Among the participants, Qukezwa, for example asks Camagu: "The Sea would be used by the white tourists for their water sports and the local women, who harvest these waters for mussels and oysters, would no longer be able to do so with such independence?"(p.97).Camagu then responds by highlighting the importance of the environmental education program and the development of the future ecoproject. Even though villagers are informed about the benefits they obtain from the projects they are not clear what casino means. For example, Qukezwa feels that "it would be of no use to the natives. Casino helps whites as it gives money for them only" (p.98).Clarifying all these doubts and illusions, Camagu finds himself agreeing with Qukezwa. He then immediately realizes that the small number of jobs that would be available to the villagers would come at a very high price and reconsidered this. The other participant complains:"...But if they are at the expense of the freedom to enjoy the sea and its bountiful harvests and the woods and the birds and the monkeys . . . then those few jobs are not really worth it" (p.103). Camagu then understands this question and and costs bear on the villagers by responding: "sociocultural" (p.106) so the jobs to be created from "the investments would enhance the development of the economy" (p.106). It also allows the villagers to live without restrictions on their own land if awareness is created.

During the debates on deciding whether the ecotourism project benefits the natives or not, a history teacher, more aware of ecology, argues: "our resources are limited" (p.42) and "Qolorha-by- Sea is a sensitive to these changes around them" (p.43).While the participation is going on, this secondary school teacher also comments: "Chiefs cannot just issue orders. That is what democracy is all about. Citizens must first debate these matters, matters of trees. There must be consensus before a decision is taken" (p.95). Again the history teacher raises his hand and appreciates Camagu by saying Camagu and Xoliswa Ximiya: "These are difficult issues, Miss Ximiya, Sometimes I find myself tilting more to the position of the Believers. I think it is important to conserve nature . . . our forests . . . our rivers" (p.95).Stage by stage, villagers begin to understand the value of education and the positive spillover effects of the new project on their

local economy and ecosystem. Through this gradual realization and understanding among the villagers about the significance of their voices, in achieving ecological/environmental justice is what Mda tries to connect human and the nonhuman world in his novel.

In his education, Camagu uses different strategies to inform and convince the villagers about natural ecology, remind them of the connection between human and the nonhuman communications. He says that “people of Qolorha- by- Sea, their trees, birds, and the lagoon are a way of communicating with their ancestors” (p.100).Camagu says that there is a line of communication between Nature and human beings that is the pride the natives that they receive from their forefathers and he recommends them to respect that ancestral heritage. During the education, one of the participants, Zim, who finds solace under the giant fig tree in front of his hexagon, reassures that all his ancestors visit this tree regularly. He says: “The wild fig tree knows all his secrets. It is his confessional” (p.38) to encourage Camagu on enlightening people more about the protection and conservation of their natural environment.

In his teachings, Camagu also plans to bring the disordered and neglected ecology of the past South Africa into tourist attraction that would both enhance ecological awareness and fade the colonial illusions about Africa’s environmental protection. Zim, who is already convinced of the education campaign and the ecoproject during the middle of the discussion, says the future happiness of the village depends on the return to the pure Xhosa traditions that existed before the arrival of the European settlers. He raises his hand to appreciate Camagu’s initiation and asks: “This son of Ximiya talks of progress. Yet he wants to destroy the bush that has been here since the days of our forefathers. What kind of progress is that?” (p.92).Camagu later responds that he wants to help the inhabitants of Qolorha for the ecotourism project. He believes that the project will have potential of redefining villagers’ identities by challenging the post-colonial ecological crisis. The narrator further explains the reasons why Camagu plans to launch the ecoprojectas soon as possible:

*For Camagu, and the project of ecological tourism, the past is to be remembered, not ossified and revered, while the present must be redefined and reinvented to provide people with the dignity of self-determination, forged within the confines and prospects of their present situation. The vision of ecological tourism can provide this, as it offers the people of Qolorhaby-Sea respectful and conservatory control over their own environment, enables them and others to reflect on the passage of history, with all of its turmoil, conflict and tragedy,*

*through which the region and its inhabitants have passed, and permits them some independence in the construction of a new identity in a time of social transformation (p.22).*

The extract explains the reason for Camagu to educate the villagers first and then establish an ecological friendly development project. The project will make them be self-determined and proud of their past historical glorifications. In addition as the extract reveals, the connection between human and non-human demands to preserve nature as against the threat of modernity.

However there is resistance from the participants during the lessons. The text presents the resistance against the ecotourism. The resistances come from the locals' refusal to accept the new proposed ecoproject. Wisely Camagu joins the resistance against the project that has a repercussion on the ecology of the village. For example he asks the following rhetorical questions:

*You talk of all these rides and all these wonderful things” he says, “but for whose benefit are they? What will these villagers who are sitting here get from all these things? While their children ride on those merry-go-rounds and roller coasters. On those cable cars and boats? Of course not! (p.34).*

Camagu asks the participants questions in order to convince them about the ecoproject. His insistence on convincing the villagers about the significance of the project shows the novelist's commitment toward environmental and social changes to the locals. Eventually, Camagu's ecological awareness campaign comes is realized. The narrator presents Camagu's emotions and momentary feelings:

*He feels fortunate that he lives in Qolorha. Those who want to preserve indigenous plants and birds have won the day here. The people at Qolorha have finally won the battle to save the indigenous plants and birds. But Camagu is haunted by a fear. For how long will this victory last? "The whole country is ruled by greed. Everyone wants to have his or her snout in the trough. Sooner or later the powers that be may decide, in the name of the people, that it is good for the people to have a gambling complex at Qolorha-by-Sea" (p.177).*

Camagu is joyful over the attitudinal behavioral change of participants after the educational campaigns. His education about environment aims to protect and preserve the degraded ecology at the local level by the historical colonial, post-colonial and contemporary capitalist global business interests over African environmental resources. By creating a counter narrative, Zakes Mda has given voices to the indigenous communities. He, for example, sends out a message that

empowerment, environmental education and community involvement are essential tools for achieving environmental justice in a post-colonial South Africa. He is an environmentalist as he saves the villages' ecology from further destructions by creating ecological awareness and educating the villages about environment, culture and contemporary global development. Even though Camagu feels proud of the success he has achieved in his education with the villagers, he is well aware that the village is not completely safe from the threat posed by greedies. Still local corrupts may shadow his achievements and hinder the success of the project.

After villagers are convinced of the importance of environmental education for protection and preservation of their ecology and the newly proposed ecoproject, Mda develops the second stage. This for Camagu, is called the stage of paradigm shift to ecological thinking. In this stage, many of the characters have realized that ecological imperialism has been destroying their environment so that they become keen to preserve it. For example, Zim and his daughter Qukezwa who are now in the believers group are acting to resist environmental destructions. Significantly, Qukezwa aggressively starts to clear the foreign trees planted over the soils of the South African. Discussing with Camagu and with his recognition to her actions, Qukezwa bitterly shouts at the trees "stupid plants" (p.90) in contrast to Bhonco's description of native plants as "ugly" (p.146), and the imported ones as "civilized" (p.146). For Qukezwa the foreign plants are poisonous. She prefers the native plant trees than the imported ones. That is why she resists the growing of foreign trees on her village's lands. In these her actions and reactions to the natives' ecology, Mda has depicted her as an ecowarrior who fights against ecological imperialism in South Africa.

Qukezwa is also seen chopping another imported tree for which she was brought before court by the unbelievers. She is seen to defend the nonnatives' trees from being poisoned by the imported ones. She claims that the trees she destroyed are harmful. She says: "They are the lantana and wattle trees. They came from other countries...from Central America; from Australia...to suffocate our trees.They are dangerous trees that need to be destroyed" (p.216). The imported ones that "suffocate" the native trees, Qukezwa argues, "need to be destroyed". She also argues that it is the laws itself that "must be changed" (p.16) than the indigenous ecosystem being destroyed with the invasive and poisonous foreign trees. The resistance by the people indicates they are now more ecoaware of their ecologies or rise of ecological awareness that Mad has

intended to achieve after his massive ecological awareness education campaign he envisioned through his major character Camagu. Qukezwa resists not only the ecological imperialism but also the weak and ineffective environmental law of the country regarding environmental management and conservation policy. Camagu has succeeded in bringing change on environmental consciousness among the characters.

Zim's resistance against the destruction of indigenous trees is another example of resistance to the ecological imperialist tendency of the ecotourism development project. In supporting Camagu against water sports project, Zim reflects "They will destroy our trees and the plants of our forefathers" (p.200). In addition to highlighting the destructive impact of the ecological imperialism, the novel also presents another form of ecological imperialism in which local flora and fauna are looted by the "so-called tourists" (p.197) which the development is aiming to bring. Significantly, a lot of resistances come from the characters of the novel. For example, the narrator of the story says what is happening to the ecology with the coming of tourists in the village:

*Yes ,Those Peopl!"scoffs Zim. "Those so-called tourists! They come here to steal our lizards and our birds."...They come to steal our aloes and our cycards and our usundu palms and our ikhamanga wild banana trees," insists Zim (p.93).*

Zim understands that the tourists have come to the village to rob and loot the indigenous fauna and flora of the local village. Yet, Bhonco, from the unbelievable group, never understands such matters as he believes the "lizards and birds are not significant" (p.66). He rhetorically asks whether Zim eats lizards or not. The looting of the flora and fauna of the Qolorha-by-Sea by the former British colonizers of South Africa here can be explained by the concept of ecological imperialism introduced by Crosby (1986). In connection with this, Zim says, "robing the periphery of its natural wealth" (p.189). Zim is represented as a passionate resister of the practice as he is eco conscious and ecological activist against the destruction of the natural environment.

The natives of Qolorha-by-Sea exhibit a strong ecological consciousness and act to that effect in their village life. They start valuing their indigenous forests over foreign ones. They realize that cutting down trees is considered a serious offence in the Qolorha village like their forefathers before colonialism came to the lands of their ancestors. The only trees they are allowed to cut down, without permission, are the "mimosa trees" (p.111) as such trees are in "abundance and

grow easily” (p.66). One day while Camagu is wandering in Nongqawuse’s Valley, he gets Qukezwa cutting down the beautiful plants with purple flowers. When he angrily asks her why , Qukezwa replies:

*Nice plants, eh? Nice for you, maybe. But not nice for indigenous plants. This is the lantana. It comes from across the Kei River. It kills other plants. These flowers that you like so much will eventually become berries. Each berry is a prospective plant that will kill the plants of my forefathers. And this plant is poisonous to animals too, although its berries are not. Birds eat the berries without any harm, and spread these terrible plants with their droppings (p.90).*

It is through Qukezwa that Camagu learns about the destructive effect of foreign trees on the native plants. Planting foreign trees on the colonized lands is seen as a form of subjugation for Qukezwa. This is attitudinal change and paradigm shift. By this way Camagu has scored impressive successes in bringing attitudinal change towards the local natural environments. When Qukezwa is summoned to the court of Chief Xikixato explain why she deliberately has cut trees, she says “the trees I had cut down were the foreign trees; the lantana and wattle trees that had been brought from Central America and Australia.” (p.190). Qukezwa has changed her mind for she has always spoken about preserving the indigenous forests. She also opposes the native trees planting on the soils of the village which is a cause for the destruction of the indigenous forests. Qukezwa understands that trees imported from other countries are poisonous and can damage the original ones.

Mda’s characters also resist illegal buildings for tourist destinations within a kilometer of the coast in their village. Characters condemn these actions. The narrator says: “the cottage owners have built their cottages right on the seashore altering the landscape of the village and putting it under a possible threat of an environmental catastrophe” (p.200). This condemnation indicates the land and the sea have now been considered as a significant part of the amaXhosa's lives, and any threat to it could have a significant impact on their lives. The land and sea are synecdoche used by Mda to represent the threat of such unmindful developmental projects on the entire ecosphere of the village.

Mda’s characters have later become transcendentalists regarding their indigenous natural environment. They become aware of their cosmological views of Nature and ways of preserving it. The characters realize the propounding interconnections between human and the nonhuman.

That is there is unbroken connection between the human and the nonhuman creatures in Africa. Zim reinforces this stance:

*The wild fig tree knows all his secrets. It is his confessional. Under it he finds solace, for it is directly linked to the ancestors-all of Twin's progeny who planted it more than a hundred years ago. Now the trunk is as big as his main hut. As soon as it leaves the ground it branches twist and turn in all directions, spreading wide like an umbrella over his whole homestead. Some branches reach as far as the top of the umsintsi trees-the coral tree that used to be called kaffirboom during the Middle Generations-and the aloes that surround his yard (p.38).*

This captures the cordial connections between Nature and human beings. The narration is represented here by Zim, who later in the novel becomes the leader of the believers group. The believers are the supporters of Qolora- by-sea ecology preservation. Insightful quotes such as the tree “knows all his secrets” (p.45) shows the interconnection between human and the nonhuman. It is where consolidation could find its instrumentality of linking to the past generation.

Zim practically resists outsiders' stealing of local lizards and plants. Bhonco, on the other hand responds that they cannot penalize someone for stealing something that is wild and belongs to no one in particular. Zim asks: “Do we have the right to exploit the natural resources of the earth just because they belong to no one in particular?” (p.23).Mda raises such ethical questions like these through the conflict that exists between the Zim and Bhonco's antagonist groups for the purpose of reinforcing the rising awareness about the ecological injustices in Africa. Zim and Bhonco's disagreement over the ecology in South Africa indicates the presence of colonialism with different forms and giving rise to several ethical and ecological concerns between the Africans and westerners.

The novel also depicts the struggle of the ecologically marginalized community of Qolorha-by-Sea against the threat of ecological apocalypse posed by a tourist development project. The narrator says: “....a project of this magnitude cannot be built without cutting down the forest of indigenous trees, without disturbing the bird life, and without polluting the rivers, the sea, and its great lagoon.” (p.119).In this quote the writer demands the project to be executed without ecological distresses. On the other hand he presents the doubts on the impossibility of execution of the project without ecological disturbances.

Finally, Camagu develops and presents an ecotourism based development to the villagers as a strategy to protect the constantly violated ecology. The project is supposed to have both economic and ecological benefits. It is a development project strategy while preserving the natural environment. He first brings two opposing groups. These are called believers and the unbelievers who are the residents of Qolorha-by-Sea (South Africa) with different visions of their villages' destiny. He then tries to negotiate them through his major character Camagu. Some of the group members' call for a Casino and water park while others are strongly opposed to such ventures for fear of extinction of the local ecosystems that they eventually agree to promote tourism. The project is believed by the groups to benefit both their economy as well as the environment. In this regard Mda is a responsible person in building sustainable development and resilience in *The Heart of Redness*.

Camagu's ecotourism development project provides the people of Qolorha-by-Sea with an alternative view that not only supports economic development, but at the same time promotes conservation of natural resources along with preservation of cultural values. Wangari Maathai in *Unbowed: A memoir* (2006) argues that "You cannot protect the environment unless you empower people, you inform them, and you help them understand that these resources are their own, that they must protect them and benefit them from the environment" (p.55). Similarly, Mda tries to educate the people ,convince them ,finally develop ecological oriented development economy as a strategy for resisting and protesting against global environmental crisis over the natural ecologies of Africa and changing the attitudes of indigenous people towards their environment.

Camagu's ecovillage based development project is finally realized. As an development economist, Camagu has brought this approach to development. Mda has created Camagu in the way that global environmental crisis can be curbed by establishing such kind of development. His vision brings thoughtful acceptance and developmental benefits to the local people. Ecotourism based development is one of today's environmental destruction resistance strategy and resilience techniques as stated in many literatures of economics, environment and agriculture. With this global and multidimensional perspective, Mda has incorporated this dual benefiting project to the local villagers:

*The promotion of the kind of tourism that will benefit the people, that will not destroy indigenous forests, that will not bring hordes of people who will pollute the rivers and drive away the birds . . . There are many people out there who enjoy communing with unspoiled nature" (p.201).*

Mda has put ecological/environmental friendly project. It is smart and resilient oriented type of environmental protection strategy with equilibrium of economic development with sustainable environmental management. Mda's presentation of wilderness, ecological situation with environmental friendly development approach is considered as an essential initiation in shaping the spiritual, cultural and psychological identity of individual and society. In this regard he has been successful as writer and ecologist/environmentalist. The concept of ecotourism can go a long way with sustainable environmental friendly development. While keeping in mind the developmental needs of people and promoting and developing conservation of the natural resources, it is possible to encourage sustainable development, alleviate poverty and raise environmental awareness for future generation:.

## **Chapter Six: Ecological Violence and Resistance in Kaine Agary's *Yellow-Yellow***

### **6.0 Introduction**

In this chapter an attempt is made to analyze and interpret Kaine Agary's *Yellow-Yellow* employing the post-colonial ecocritical approach. To begin with, a synopsis (or plot) of the novel is given and this synopsis is followed by an analysis of forms of ecological violence, resistance strategies, the writer's articulation in bringing attention to the ongoing ecological violence and resistance and the interaction between human and the nonhuman in the novel. The different forms of ecological violence and resistance strategies relevant thematically to the novel are considered in the analysis. The main objective of the analysis is to demonstrate how the novel portrays pressing ecological violence and restive resistance.

### **6.1 Synopsis**

Set in the most environmentally degraded Niger Delta of Nigeria, Agary's *Yellow-Yellow* (2006) recounts, in first person narration, the story of a young girl, called Zilayefa, affectionately referred to as *Yellow Yellow*. Zilayefa, as a product of two different soils, was born to a Greek father and a Nigerian mother called Binaebi or simply Bibi who is from Ijaw ethnic group in Niger Delta, Nigeria. During the passage of time, Binaebi has struggled with a challenging life to raise her child, Zilayefa after her Greek sailor husband has left her alone. Everyday Binaebi works very hard to support and make her child's future life bright through good care and education. However, her life struggle and survival has been seen unmeet because of her subsistence farming and the surrounding environment has been damaged by international oil and natural gas exploration companies in the area.

Environmental destruction has brought about several consequences to Zilayefa's mother and her surrounding community. The oil and natural gas extraction process has destroyed the farming lands of the area. Many poor farmers especially women were exposed to ecological and economic violence. Life was turned to desperation. Not only the farming lands but also the water bodies, natural landscapes and other ecologies have deteriorated. Then mass movements and migrations were followed from the rural of Niger Delta to the major cities in Nigeria. The major

impact of all these; however, was relied on women. Poor women, such as Binaebi were faced with multiple oppressions.

Upon completion of her secondary education, Zilayefa was not able to move for further education as she could not pass the Nigerian Secondary Educational Examinations. Then, instead of living with her poor mother, whose land has already been plundered by oil flares in the Ijaw village, she feels a strong yearning to leave the village of her childhood in order to seek better life in a city Port Harcourt, Nigeria. Growing up as a young girl in the village, she has no idea of who her father is except the fact that he was a white man that had an affair with her mother and then disappeared. With the help of her church Pastor in the village, Zilayefa has moved to Port Harcourt to live with an elderly woman named Sisi and her young friend Lolo. In the city of Port Harcourt, Zilayefa is introduced to the world of rich and wealthy people in the city.

Port Harcourt was a city of diversity. In this city, Zilayefa comes of age as she gains exposure to urban life and the life of the rich. In times, Zilayefa discovers herself as a woman. Then she enters into a relationship with Admiral, old enough to be her father, hoping to have some sought of father-daughter connection so as to fill the void of not having a father in her life. With the knowledge that Sisi and Lolo would never approve of the relationship between herself and the Admiral, she keeps the affair a secret from them and instead confides in her friend Emem. Immediately her relationship comes to fail. As a result of this failure and unfaithful sexual relationship, Zilayefa finds herself in a very difficult situation and soon learns to understand herself and her society, and tries to refocus her objectives and goals all by herself. By the time she also becomes a victim of a failed romantic relationship with an older man, a senior officer in the military. The novel ends with Zilayefa's broken love relationship but determined to struggle the impact of environmental destruction and social hierarchy on poor women in her growing community.

## **6.2 Ecological Violence**

Like Habila's *Oil on Water* and Mda's *The Heart of Redness*, Agary's *Yellow-Yellow* (2006) can rightly be read as a novel of ecological violence. This is because the novel paints the plights and perils of ecological violence and the economy of Niger Delta region. The novel also provides essential pictures about the impact of crude oil and petroleum gas extraction on the natural panorama of the region and the marginalization of women in a poor community of Niger Delta.

These direct and indirect inflictions of the oil gas flares on the natural ecology and the ecosystem of Niger Delta shows the existence of acute ecological violence. The novel deals with ecological plights of Niger Delta where both national governmental and transnational oil extraction business corporations continue to engage in environmental imperialism and natural resource appropriations. Agary's *Yellow-Yellow* can therefore be critiqued as a novel of ecological violence. Let us see major forms of ecological violence that the writer has displayed in her novel.

### **6.2.1 Environmental Despoliation and Pollution**

Kaine Agary's *Yellow-Yellow* can be read as environmental violence. The major dashing feature of the novel is its description of the setting area where oil politics is based as a major tension and environmental despoliation. In that regard, the novel can be interpreted as ecological despoliation and pollution. Ecological pollution as Crosby puts in his book, *Ecological Imperialism: The Biological Expansion of Europe* (1986) is an ecological violence that inflicts the ecology. In this regard, Agary's *Yellow-Yellow* explores these environmental injustices practiced by western crude oil and petroleum gas extracting companies, in connivance with Nigerian Corrupt Government Officials. These international companies are found at liberty to use the Niger Delta abundant oil and natural gas resources. They loot environmental resources of the Niger Delta of Nigeria. As the narrator comments, these international oil extracting companies are privileged and "seem licensed to abuse it" (2006:91). They illegally and irresponsibly butchering of the locals' ecological resources by these companies can be thought as the ecological violence that has been made and being made on the natural ecology of Niger Delta.

The pressing ecological violence that has been depicted in Agary's *Yellow-Yellow* can also be seen as a slow violence. This kind of violence is linked with the various day-to-day experiences of the native people (Nixon, 2011). Agary's description in her *Yellow-Yellow* as narrating the oil encounter via "a metaphoric trope of rape" (p.77) points to the violence that has been violating the natural ecologies in Niger Delta. The ecological violence is described as rape to magnify the destructiveness of the environment. The novel also recounts the concurrent interest in the ecological pollution of the land by the oil with slow expansion of oil extraction which also shows the extension of colonialism in Africa for centuries. In other words, the novel complicates the oil encounter in a way that links the people to their land and its exploitations inseparably. Opening

the first chapter of novel, a reader comes across the ecological destruction as he/she watches it through a window. Zilayefa, the narrator of the story, tells this dramatic watch outs:

*One of the crude oil pipes that ran through my village broke and spilled oil over several hectares of land, my mother's farm included" (2006:3). She further relates: I [...] ran to my mother's farm. It was the first time I saw what crude oil looked like. I watched as the thick liquid spread out, covering more land and drowning small animals in its path. It just kept spreading and I wondered if it would stop, when it would stop, how far it would spread. Then there was the smell. I can't describe it but it was strong - so strong it made my head hurt and turned my stomach. I bent over, and retched so hard I became dizzy. I felt like everything had turned to black and was spinning around me. There was so much oil, and we could do nothing with it - viscous oil that would not dry out, black oil that was knee-deep (p.4).*

Zilayefa tells her shocking childhood experience with the ugliness of the contact of the community's crop land with crude oil. As stated, it is possible to point out the authoress's particular interest in the actuality of the physical environment's encounter with the threats of the oil industry. Zilayefa's experience of seeing an overflow of crude oil on the land, swallowing surrounding animals shows the violence of nature's right. The description of bad smells emitted from pollution which also brings pollution of water, air, and soils show the ecological violence that has been made because of anthropogenic agents. Also, based on the idea of the natural environment as embodying a narrative, the land is described as being covered by the spilled crude oil shows a literal process of inscription on the land. The despoliation and dispossession of the land's surface by the oil economy can refer the ecological hegemony of the former colonizers over their former colonies' natural and environmental resources.

Agary's *Yellow-Yellow* is also a story that is not primarily allegorical but one in which the entities of the environment such as the land, the cropping farmlands, the animals, and the oil pipes and the crude oil are as important actors in the narrative as a human narrator. The novel narrates the social crisis in the poor social environments of Niger Delta along with the depleting nature of oil industry in the region. This means the poverty of the Niger Delta begins not as a social condition but with the impoverishment of the earth itself and the creation of an imbalance in the relationship between human community and the natural environment. The story indicates that the destruction of the entire earth is sign of cruel violation of man on earth. That is the

anthropogenic domination over nature. This can also be called as the ultimate turn of ecological violence.

At the end of the first chapter of the novel, the narrator portrays her community's farming land in the following way:

*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, according to the voices on radio (p.4).*

As stated in the extract above, the entire environment has been destructed. The rivers and streams ecosystems have been polluted due to the crude oil spills. This has harmed the ecology and the local people. As the ecology is damaged, people in the village have been starved. Life is being threatening because of sudden incidents of oil spillages with lack of social amenities and infrastructure in the community. The aquatic and the water ecosystems have been polluted and because of this water violence, community members are harmed. Rivers have been polluted, everything is producing pollution because of this life is almost dead. At the center of everything, it is the ecology that bears the costs. At the center of everything, it is the environment that bears witness to the condition. The community is so marginalized that even radio service does not concern the poor.

The authoress of the novel also presents the impact of slow violence on personal, societal and environmental experiences through her characters. The destitute life of the poor in Agary's *Yellow-Yellow* of one major character, Zilayefa's community is evidence of the impact of slow violence on the Niger Delta's ecoregion as Agary has portrayed. The imperial-profiteering oriented development has deprived of the community access to clean water and personal healthcare. The oil spillage and gas flares has uncompensated negative spill-over effects on the area that has been extended to the community living there by slowly violating the sustenance of socio-economic and healthcare lives. Zilayefa puts her personal observation bitterly:

*My ears still rang from maternal wails piercing the foggy days when mothers mourned a child lost to sickness or to the deceptively calm waters that lay hungry below the stilt latrines, waiting to swallow the children whose unsteady feet betrayed them before they had learnt to*

*swim. How many more times could I bear the pain like a hundred razor blades slashing my private part because the river water that washed it was the same water that received the waste rejected by my body in its attempt to cleanse itself? The water that flowed with streaks of blue, purple, and red, as drops of oil escaped from the pipelines that moved the wealth from beneath my land and into the pockets of the select few who ruled Nigeria was the same water I drank (p.39).*

The above extract describes dystopic state of the rural farming community. The description of this rural community reveals the former pristine nature of the area. There is a complete destruction so that villagers are unable to communicate each other as the nonnatives have created discordant connection with the physical environment. However, the surrounding natural ecosystem has been damaged in the eye of the narrator after the coming of oil extraction companies of the west. Pollution has been the manifestation of the village. Live seems dead. Water has been totally polluted with toxic substances and elements. Children suffer as they drink and swim over the contaminated water.

The oil gas emitted from the vandalized pipeline provokes uproar throughout the host community. This situation is made possible when the oil companies have failed in their commitment to community and the environmentally friendly exploration. Pollution destroyed several hectares of farmland including those of Zilayefa's mother who loses her "main source of sustenance resulting in impoverishment" (p.4). The oil companies are considered as despoilers. They manipulate both the ecology and the poor women in the area. Because of the destruction of the cropping land of the poor there is displacement pushed by impoverishments and lack of food accesses for existence. These environmental and social catastrophes are a result of the oil and natural oil gas improper extraction. The anthropogenic force is a driving factor for all this crises. The environmental destructions made on the natural ecology by this international business oriented companies shows the drastic ecological violence on the Niger Delta ecoregion. The following extract shows Zilayefa's observable experience of the ecological crisis made on both the natural ecoregion and the poor natives living there for ages. Let us see these crises.

*The spillage destroys farm lands as well as the aquatic life of the people, thereby causing villagers to lose their source of livelihood. There is also the strong smell from crude: "I can't describe it but it was strong, so strong it made my head hurt and turned my stomach" (p.4). Zilayefa (Yellow) recalls that "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... ” (p.4).*

The companies first despoil the valuable natural resources and then pollute the environment surrounding there. Despoilment creates both looting the resources and make the area aesthetically degraded. Pollution that comes out of these practices turns rivers dirty. The fish have died as a result of pollution of the oil gas that has been emitted into water bodies. Once the single ecosystem is affected the whole web starts to be dysfunction so that life interrupts. Productivity has been declined from time to time as more the natural ecology has been affected by the oil gas flares. The excerpt also demonstrates there is violence committed at two levels. The first is done at the level of entire ecology, and the second indirectly at the level of the lives of the indigenous people.

In another dimension, pollution as a form of ecological violence comes as a recurrent theme in Agary's *Yellow-Yellow*. The novel is set in a rural Ijaw village that has been polluted by the crude oil extractions. Besides, it depicts the lives of the protagonist and narrator Zilayefa, who reveals the struggles of rural Ijaw women with complications arising from “crude-oil-polluted barren land and waters” (p.23). The pollution that has been depicted in the novel prevails in two special places. The first is in Ijaw village, where Zilayefa was born and grown up, which is also known by “den of poverty, hunger, filth, polluted water” (p.23). The village is represented as the place where land has been deeply despoiled and aesthetically degraded. The second place is the Port Harcourt, where Zilayefa exiles in the later days and forced to various subjections

The effect of present day of destruction on the Niger Delta's ecology is the consequence of Western multinational oil companies that has ruined the ecosystem of the Niger Delta. The colonial/post-colonial projects have brought about consequent ecological catastrophes. With the replica of the above recurrent events, Zilayefa laments the unfortunate costs of the crisis of the activities on the ecology as described below:

*Farming and fishing, the occupations that had sustained my mother, her mother and her mother's mother no longer provided gain. I had witnessed lands claimed by massive floods during the rainy season, the earth slowly melting into rivers. Women rowed their canoes farther and farther away to find land for farming. In addition, every year it was hard to catch fish... (p.40).*

The ecology has been submerged and claimed by the massive floods of the oil. Rivers have been polluted. There is no oxygen. Fish production declines from time to time as the aquatic ecology has been damaged. Zilayefa's mother and other women in the village were groaned under the burden of ecological violence. The complete damage of the ecology and impoverishment of the people is because of the impact of inconsiderable oil exploitation on the environment of the Niger Delta of Nigeria.

### **6.2.2 Petrocapitalism and Capitalist Patriarchy**

Agary narrates the painful story of the Niger Delta's ecological destruction and women's suppression through the voice of a young girl protagonist called Zilayefa. Zilayefa, a victimized girl but who is aware of the negative effects of the oil exploration companies on her villagers' environment, narrates the story of the novel with her soft but sorrowful lamentation. She narrates the story in her own point of view. The narration immerses readers in sorrowful and enthusiastic feelings. Here are Zilayefa's lamentations about the continuous violation of the ecology and eventual loss of her community's main source of livelihood in her own childhood imaginative memories:

*The community took the matter up with the oil company that owned the pipes, but they said they suspected sabotage by the youths and were not going to pay compensation for all the destruction that the burst pipes had caused. 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 creations of the river to oil spills, acid rain, gas flares... (p.4).*

One can apprehend Zilayefa's lamentations for the communal environmental woes. The international business conglomerates (oil exploration companies) deplete and destroy the subsistent farming and livelihood of Zilayefa's community including her mother's without any compensation. These international business companies are represented as capitalist patriarchy in Agary's novel. They push rural women to leave their habitat by letting the capitalists' profit making. Zilayefa's white father has left her and her mother alone. The cyclical year to year ecological depletion as the narrator argues: "year after year, the creations of the river to oil spills..." (p.4) indicates the violence committed on the natural environment puts not only the people but also the ecology of the area under severe threatening. Besides, the year to year

cyclical ecological violence allures the continuity of colonialism with its different forms in Nigeria in particular and Africa in general. The oil spills on the rivers and other water bodies create acid rain that produces toxic substances which are dangerous to the aquatic ecosystem. Furthermore, the disturbance of the whole ecosystem in the village creates extreme poverty, displacement of the natives from their farm lands, destruction and theft on both the human and the nonhuman sides as the narrator mourns.

Furthermore, the gradual loss of the ecology along with severe impoverishment of the community is a sign of the continuity of ecological colonial exploitation, as a form of ecological violence. The slow socio-environmental process has led the natives to be impoverished and buried their hopes and aspirations to be realized. These ecological crises have put the poor at a greater risk of other kinds of violence, such as migration to the urban and other social woes.

The novel portrays the environment that lacks the most basic things in life like drinking water in Niger Delta. The villagers are forced to drink polluted water from the river. Zilayefa narrate what has happened with her own experiences on her life, and the indigenous community. She recounts the sufferings of these poor people and the silent nature with several untold stories. Zilayefa captures the sufferings with a sorrowful tone:

*How many more times could I bear the pain like a hundred razor blades slashing my private part because the water that washed it was the same water that received the waste rejected by my body in its attempt to cleanse itself? The water that flowed with streaks of blue, purple, and red, as drops of oil escaped from the pipeline that moved the wealth from beneath my land and into the pockets of the selected few who ruled Nigeria was the same water I drank...As petrol prices went up, bus fares went up, the price of bread went up, school fees went up, but salaries remained the same...One could get a licence without driving test, because there is so much palm greasing because of how things are in the country. You grease palms to get anywhere. Prostitutes grease palms of gatemen with crisp notes in order to get into hotels in their search for affluent men. In offices, you have to grease palms, from the front desk person to the secretary to loose her lips about Oga's availability (p.110).*

The narrator of the story reveals the ecological violence that is directly and indirectly inflicted upon the natural environment. The oil extracting companies have damaged the environments of the poor. Because of this price of commodities have risen unexpectedly as there is no to be produced for consumption. Also life gets difficult to survive. Prostitution and other social

economic activities have been expanded in the country. Mainly rural women and girls are affected by the situation. In addition, the color, taste and state of the natural environment have been changed.

The poor indigenous natives in Niger Delta are often displaced when oil and petroleum gas extraction trumps human rights. When these companies gain the right to exploit oil, deforest, drill or build on non-reserve land, the poor are always victimized. The poor women and innocent child girls are forced to leave and often find themselves with no place to go but to large cities like Port Harcourt as Zilayefa did. Agary tells us that young girls and women who are displaced into these urban centers tend to be limited to finding work in informal or survival economies like “prostitution and street living, both of which are marked by high levels of violence” (p.96). Such activities which have been brought from environmental destructions force rural poor women to be subjected to various patriarchal dominations.

In addition, Zilayefa also sorrows about the destruction of her mother’s cropping farm:

*The day my mother’s farmland was overrun by crude oil was the day her dream for me started to wither...the black oil that spilled that day swallowed my mother’s crops and unravelled the threads that held together her fantasies for me (p.10).*

Zilayefa narrates the destruction of her mother’s cropping farmland, which was a source of subsistence living. She sadly regrets the damages of farmland of the village community because of the immediate spread of crude oil over the farming crops. The immersion of the crop land with crude oil also dries up the hopes of her mother from her interconnected farmland ecology. The ‘thread,’ which symbolizes the connection between the farmers with the soil that always feeds, has been broken due to the capitalists’ oil extraction projects. The petroleum based international trading system has not only destructed the environment but also facilitates male dominated patriarchies. “The day her dream for me started to wither...the black...” (p.10) also signals a message that the connectedness of nature and human being has been broken. The world ‘wither’ here may refer to the dryness of hope of the women but indirectly symbolizes the dryness of the living organisms on the soils of the land because of the oil gas flares have damaged the ecology of the farming land. The breakdown of the network between human and nature shows the complete failure of natural ecosystem. The dream of Zilayefa’s mother dries up when her

subsistence cropping farm has been totally collapsed. In Zilayefa's words the driving factor for this destruction is the oil extraction company's greedy and inconsiderable to the environment.

Zilayefa compares the pre-catastrophe period of her village with the present ecological violence of oil extracting companies on the natural ecology and communities across the surrounding village. In this regard, she tells that she is filled with utopian memories in the past especially when nature flourished before the oil extraction comes to prevail. She reminds that time as: "Ijaw women cooked a fresh pot of soup every day because the rivers were teeming with fish. Their farms held plantain trees so fertile that there was more plantain than anyone knew what to do with... the possibilities were endless" (p.40). According to Zilayefa in the past times, nature provides human being with sustainably and self-sufficiently. Her villagers' life was sustainable for they were linked with nature that offers everything. In addition women and nature were eco-friendly. The whole village seemed green that nature and human beings were interwoven interdependently and ecofriendly. In her child's memory, Zilayefa immerses herself into the glorious memory of the past and doubts the present. The present which represents the time after the coming of colonizers for oil extraction aimed at making more marginal profits in Africa and but turned the ecology damaged.

Another ecological/environmental despoliation and violence recurrent in Agary's *Yellow-Yellow* is deforestation. Deforestation can be seen as another form of ecological violence. These ecological evil practices are exhibited in some lines of the Agary's novel. For example, Sergio, one of the characters in the novel, is not only a sexual predator of Ijaw girls of Niger Delta, Nigeria, but his roles demonstrate deforestation activities as seen in the rural settings in the novel. Zilayefa says that "he and his Ijaw friend Tarilabo, white merchant, were interested in logging timber from the forests in our village and wanted to discuss that possibility with Amananaowei (p.22). Here it is significant to note that deforestation, another form of environmental despoliation and contamination, is sustained by Sergio, a local villager, Amananaowei, community leader of Ijaw village and Tarilabo, a foreigner who engaged in forest productions for timber exports. This kind of engagement can be called environmental corruption that has been global business manifestations especially in Africa after political independence. The ecological violence recurrent in *Yellow-Yellow* is also a reflection of environmental injustices. The oil extraction companies of the west destroy the ecosystem of the Niger Delta.

These are environmental injustices because of the destructive companies in the region indicate the complete destruction of the nonhuman world. Strengthening the above motion, Zilayefa describes the environmental injustices because of the oil companies' devastating impact on the Niger Delta of Nigeria.

### **6.3 Ecological Resistance**

Though Agary's *Yellow-Yellow* is a novel of ecological violence, when read in-depth, it also embodies locals' resistance against environmental destructions and women's' over exploitation. The writer has designed effective post-colonial resistance strategies to protest the ecological violence and protect the natural environment from colonial/post-colonial over exploitations of nature in Niger Delta. With equally narrating the pressing ecological violence, the novel deals with struggles and resistances of its characters against the ongoing environmental destruction and the oppression of poor women. The authoress used these strategies to save the Mother Nature from the imperial crude oil production companies' exploitation at the cost of natural ecology and the poor women in Niger Delta of Nigeria. With the portrayal of strong and resistant women characters, the writer tries to show how the over exploitation of nature has been defended aimed at preserving and protecting the environment means protecting women. These resistance strategies seemed carefully wheeled to steer. In this manner, Agary has portrayed ecologically aware of characters that are armed with environmentalism, especially through the female characters who are firmly concerned for the depletion of natural ecology of Niger Delta and socioeconomic impacts of the ecological crisis in their locales. Hence Agary presents ecoactivism, ecofeminism, and interconnectedness as post-colonial resistance strategies thereby protecting and preserving the voiceless Niger Delta's natural ecology condemning post-colonial and global environmental entanglements. The detail presentations about these resistance strategies are explained as follows.

#### **6.3.1 Ecoactivism**

The novel portrays ecoactivist characters that struggle and resist ecological woes as reflected in the novel. The resistance against these practices is informed by the fact that ecological crisis committed by imperial global business agents should be curbed so as to save nature and balance social and environmental tranquilities. In doing so, Agary begins with the portrayal of female protagonists who resist ecological violence and ecoactivize for the silent nature and poor women

in Niger Delta of Nigeria. The major character, who is also narrator of the story of the novel, is a teenager but she is represented as vividly demonstrating the dreadful condition of her childhood environment in her village found in Niger Delta. Throughout the novel, she blames and condemns western based oil extracting international business companies along with local allies for the continuous destruction of the natural environment of Niger Delta where she was born and grown up. For example, at the beginning of the opening chapter of the novel, Zilayefa, says: “during my second to my last year in secondary school, one of the crude oil pipes that ran through my village, broke and spilled oil over several hectares of land, my mother’s farm included, it was painful experience” (p.3). Here Zilayefa recollects the destructive impacts of the crude oil on the crop ecology of her mother and the community. Her recollection on the past ecological crisis infers the fact that she is ecoactivist who awakes others about the impacts of the destruction over the ecology. Since her day of recognition of the senses to the final leaving day of the school, she reminds the spillage of oil over many lands of poor farmers. Here she indirectly condemns that her people are bound to suffer environmentally as well as economically. The suffer comes from the irresponsible practices of crude oil exploitation by the white global business conglomerates. The emphasis Agary gives on her novel about ecological crisis of the past seems that the writer wants to create ecological consciousness to the major characters as a remedy to save the contemporary dire conditions of her natural environment.

In resisting the status quo, Agary has also developed two generations within the chain of the plot of her novel. These two generations are the older and the new generations. The older generation is represented by Bibaebi, Sisi and others who have witnessed and experienced the rots of their environment in Niger Delta for a long time. The new generation is represented by Zilayefa, Lolo and others. The new generation is born to condemn the oil extraction and ecological destructions in Niger Delta of Nigeria. For this understanding Agary’s old generation characters are created to be calm and innocent but highly victimized by the continuous destruction of their environment. Agary says: “Bibaebi is silent, motherhood but bears on challenges” (p.80) to substantiate the above reflections. On the contrary Agary has created new generation characters, such as Zilayefa and Lolo as thoughtful, assertive, ecoactivist, ecoalarmist, and ecofeminist. These characters are engaged to strive in resisting and overcoming the difficulties hurled to them and their environment.

Agary also provides instantaneous examples of ecoactivism practices. For example she portrays Binaebi, Zilayefa's biological mother as a mother who is always "careful when it comes to taking care of her daughter" (p.51) and "her endurance in bearing the challenges" (p.97). Binaebi here can be represented as nature that gifts everything to its children (creatures) bearing the daily greedy practices of man. Zilayefa is the child, in this context, representing one of the creatures of Nature. Buell in his *The Future of Environmental Criticism: Environmental Crisis and Literary Imagination* (p.33) notices "Human beings are children of nature; man is a child of nature." The mother-child relationship in this repressive environment of the Niger Delta and the restless endurance and resistance of Binaebi towards raising her child indicates nature's everlasting strive to save her creatures by defending the oppressive anthropogenic activities. The above expression is also substantiated by Zilayefa's remark as: "Binaebi meets all the challenges of life through silence and endurance" (p.18).The presentation of Binaebi's strength and the endurance implicates and urges us to learn lessons and revive sense of belongingness and care towards nature. Binaebi makes what every good for her child is to ensure that she did not end up like her, which shows nature's last long scarifications to its creatures. Agary's presentation of such character is an indication of women's resistance against the capitalist and hierarchical dominations and oppressions.

Zilayefa's mother has lost her farm crop. Because of this Binaebi's cropping farm, Zilayefa says that "by the time I finished school, my mother did not have enough money for university. I could not even take the qualifying examinations because she did not have the registration fee" (p.10-11).Here Zilayefa blames the capitalists for the destruction of her mother's farm which was source of everything. Her experience also indicates the plight and unpromised fate of many young school leavers of Niger Delta after completion of Nigerian Federal High School Examinations on the one hand and the double burdens women discharges in an environmentally destructive region of Niger Delta. In this ecological peril, Agary is acting as an ecoactivist who loudly voices for Nature and young innocent children and poor women in suppressive post-colonial Nigeria. In her narration, hence, she portrays the experienced young girl called Zilayefa to reveal out the plundering situation of the Niger Delta ecoregion.

Another ecological resistant group Agary has portrayed is the youth who, in Agary's novel, are used as tools for the pattern of resistance against environmental injustices. Zilayefa says that

resistance has become common practice among the youth in the entire Niger Delta. She says: “the villagers are restless; the youths are taking up odd jobs from other cities and states even as the wealth generated from their region is used to feed other people” (p.54). In this quotation, Zilayefa ecoactivizes by condemning the ecological injustices and unbalanced resource distributions in the region. Agary believes that unequal resource distribution can create social and environmental tranquilities. Even though Niger Delta reign is one of the most fertile regions in Nigeria, the youth have become “benefactors of charities” (p.66) from the people they are supposed to be feeding. The resource appropriation by the imperialists facilitates severe grievances and strikes that can also be cause for destruction of environment through theft, corruption, kidnapping etc. Zilalefa in this oppressive environment once said a: “the only way for these restive youth is to resist, protest and change the social and ecological injustice burdened to them” (p.21). Because of this Zilalefa says that her native village’s people have reacted to this devastation and burden to youth by the international oil exploiting companies:

*Some boys from my village joined the others from other villages to kidnap oil company executives or oil bar company workers from doing their work. Mostly they were successful, but sometimes one or two of the boys failed to return from a mission. The word around the village was that the police had caught and killed them, but we would not hear about this on the radio (p.10).*

Agary has designed group/community fighting and kidnapping as a strategy of resisting the imperial oil companies’ operation factors and then to evacuate the companies from their ecological areas. Although this kind of ecological resistance strategy seems restive and forceful, it is used in many protesting scenarios during colonial times of Africa (Nixon, 2011). Unfortunately this resistance strategy was not effective and efficient that much as also hindered by local leaders and lack of coordination. These obstacles steadily fail it. When this failure happened again and again, the victim native of the areas were eager to seek helps from their local leaders and aids from the oil companies to provide them with compensations. However, the response from both the local aligns and the colonial driven company owners were merciless. They have even refused to pay for the damage they have done to the environment and the web of natives’ natural ecosystem. Rather they claim that the youth of the natives have damaged the infrastructures of their company and they do not want to provide any aid to the natives. They claim that “they suspected sabotage by the youths and were not going to pay for compensation for all the destruction that the pipelines have caused” (p.4). Agary argues, for this

silly excuse by the oil companies, the victim natives are subjected to several untold hardships and destitutions. For example their “farmlands were taken to the oil company extension projects without compensations, buried with dead fishes in the belly of the greenish rivers” (p.23). The merciless response from the company owners as well as the representatives from the local government upset the natives as Zilalefa sorrowfully narrates. She argues as: “the villagers became involved in kidnapping resources, theft and corruption was prevalent” (p.55). Because of these engagements, ecologies turned to damages, and the river ecosystem has been dysfunctional.

As an aesthetician ecoactivist, Zilalefa resists petrocapiatalism that has been a cause for the destruction of ecological and social amenities in Niger Delta. When she leaves for the city of Port Harcourt, she immediately encounters pregnancy with a failed marriage relationship. Upon the birth of her child, Zilalefa has been in the dilemma of either growing up the child without father or breaking the family bondages through abortion. She finally resolves it by herself and decides “abortion as the only solution” (p.69) to liberate her from the dilemma. The abortion was executed with the help of Doctor George who must have done countless abortions for girls brought to him by Admiral. With her decision, Zilalefa then decides to focus on her education. She asserts herself to “become resistant and rejects the standards set by the society” (p.51). Then she decides to think about what has happened in her childhood village environment. “She considers the degraded environment of her community in Ijaw” (p.43) village of Niger Delta, Niger Delta. Her resistances against the loss of the ecology of her community show her ecoactivism instances. Her ecoactivism strategy of resisting what is groining on the village’s environment is used to ignite what the characters need to bring remedy for the problem of ecological degradation. The narrator’s regrettable remarks on the destruction of the environment show how much the oil company has damaged the area. The situation was made possible when the oil companies failed in their commitment to the community and ecofriendly oil extraction. Zilayefa asks rhetorical questions like: “why this much destruction?”(p.3) and “why my mother’s main source of sustenance” (p.4).With this vein, Zilayefa shouts out over the loss of the environment and the impoverishments followed on the poor women.

Another resistance relies on the ecoactivizing on the environment by comparing the past and the present situation of Niger Delta’s ecological existence. The ecoactivist informs that the past is

assumed to be glorious where everyone meets in the Garden of Eden while the present is the hell where everything is dreadfully buried. The narrator remarks this as: “she is mammy-water the water spirit” like the pre-crude oil exploration of African rivers sustains productivity of sea animals” (p.98).The comparison made is clear that the past represents fertility, everlasting green and beautiful while the present is the opposite. Agary glorifies the natural ecology of Niger Delta before the coming of western oil extracting companies. Glorification of the past is used to indicate appreciating the pre-colonial natural pristine of Africa and to show how much African natural environment is damaged after the coming of colonialism. It also indicates the penetration of capitalism into each soils of Africa for profit makings. The metaphorical implication is that pre-colonial Africa was green and productive.

Agary also presents other restive resistances from community members for their environment has been destructed. As seen in the following extract, Agary documents this the aftermath of oil spillage in the environment as follows:

*A group of people, painted in the same black as my mother, some covered from head to toe, were marching to see the Amananowei, the head of the village. I joined them to find out what had happened. It turned out some had lost their farmland that day...some were crying; others were talking about compensation (p.4).*

In the extract above Zilayefa has joined the victims to marching to the local leader to request compensation for what the western oil company has damaged the communities’ natural environment. Her direct involvement shows her ecoactivism stand against the evil practice. Ecological activism demands both direct involvement and indirectly exposing the situation through various means as Zilayefa did. Zilayefa shares the pains, emotions, and feelings of the victim natives. That is what ecological/environmental activism means. The villagers after their farming lands have been taken by the oil spillages resist the local chief against the destruction. Resisting this status quo, Agary’s narratives, as the extract above reveals, are crafted in the way that the Niger Delta region of Nigeria is ripe for a revolution. The people of the area are agitated and one day they need they will get ecological justice they deserve.

### 6.3.2 Interconnectedness

Another resistance strategy Agary developed to voicing for the engendered nature and poor women is the unbroken human and nonhuman relationships and interdependency which is usually termed as interconnectedness. The human and the nonhuman interconnectedness indicate in Africa human beings can no longer exist isolated from nature unlike the western world. Both human and the nonhuman are supposed to be interdependent and coexisted. Especially in agricultural societies like African, as Agary depicts in her *Yellow-Yellow*, it is difficult to separate nature from human and vice versa. Agary condemns post-colonial system for it suppresses not only the human but also the African nonhuman and argues this as: “breaking interconnections” (p.159) the nonhuman and its values from the human. In many African societies in general and Niger Delta’s of Nigera, in particular, agricultural soils are backbones of life. Zilayefa’s mother and the agrarian villagers of the rural of Ijaw of Niger Delta are farmers whose “life depends on agricultural soils...but there is continuous disintegrations, it is another suppression” (p.98). Zilayefa voices that working on the soils of lands for living brings her into close contact with nature suggesting an ecological interdependence between Ijaw woman and Nature is like “a spider’s web” (p.31). Agary also condemns imperialists’ direct and indirect impact on Nature and poor women farmers in her rural village as: “alienation from their lands” (p.86).According to the writer, oil extracting companies try to alienate natives from their natural ecology which can be termed as ecological alienation. Agary’s emphasis on the nonhuman (soil) and the web of interconnectedness that binds human and the nonhuman species together puts her novel at the forefront of a new turn in African interconnectedness and ecological activism literary studies. In addition the narrator says that: “fertile of soils of Niger Delta provide life connecting the human and the nonhuman” (p.78).This quote shows the impossibility of alienating the human from the physical environment and strong condemnation against this practice. In this web of connections, the interactions and interrelationships between the human (poor farmers in Ijaw village) and the nonhuman (lands of Ijaw village) are determined by sacred linkages and the inseparability of the two concepts.

Agary has also portrayed the soils of Niger Delta as sources of energy for life survival and continuation. The soils of Ijaw village help to sustain Zilayefa’s mother and the surrounding community. The struggles and survival of these poor farmers is determined by the natural

resources products gained from the local environments of the villagers. For Zilayefa's mother and her neighboring farmers, soil is used as uncompensated option to livelihood in the absence of Zilayefa's Greek origin father. Zilayefa tells this scenario:

*Bibi proudly hopes that: I [Zilayefa] would go to the university and study a subject that will get me a good job with enough to take care of myself, then I could take care of her. ... I knew that if I did not take care of her when I could finally take care of myself, the spirits of the water and my ancestors' soils would tie my womb and make sure that, for my ungratefulness, I never experience the joy of motherhood. (p.10).*

As stated above motherhood is represented as supreme attribute and never be discriminated and isolated from nature. Motherhood is sacred value, commitment, trust and fertility that has interwoven with nature. Zilayefa's mother vows that her hope of educating her child would be determined through her symbiotic relationship with her child under the control of 'the spirits of the water'. This cordial symbiotic relation between the mother and child is also interwoven through nature than the escapist Zilayefa's white father who can also be seen as capitalist patriarchy. The interconnection of nature, life, time and space are integral parts of Ijaw's life that never be broken down each other as Agary positions. More than this motherhood is used as a metaphor to nature to show nature (soils, lands etc.) and women represent the same side of coin. The spirits of the water is used as a bridge that connects human and the nonhuman on the one hand and the impossibility of isolating the human from the soils on the other. It is also used to restoring the motherhood to reward. The soils of Niger Delta also provide Zilayefa' mother with economic provisions and are sources of finance to educate her child in the absence of her Greek father. Soil is used as a web of connection that determines life survival in the village. Agary condemns the breaking down of the interconnection between human and nonhuman in Niger Delta of Nigeria after the coming of western based oil extracting companies as form of post-colonial capitalist patriarchy.

### **6.3.3 Ecofeminism/Ecological Feminism**

Another resistance strategy Agary has developed is ecological feminism or simply ecofeminism. She employs this strategy as tool of fighting against women's oppression through ecological degradation. As Maathai (2006) argues, ecological feminism links environmentalism with feminism. Also, with a focus on the interconnected spheres of feminism, development, and community, ecofeminism has become a popular grassroots activism movement over the last three

decades. With this vein, Agary's novel deals with the unethical domination of women as associated with the domination of nature. Using ecological feminism as weapon of resistance, Agary resists the crisis of Niger Delta's natural environment because of western based oil and petroleum gas extracting companies' resources appropriations that has brought incalculable destructive impacts on human and the nonhuman. She presents the rural settings, proactive young girls, and poor women of Ijaw village as perceived as victims of the environmental destructions. This is typical of ecofeminists' condemnation of the plight of nature and suppression of women in a degraded environment.

Agary has created her characters equipped with ecoconscious tools, such as ecological feminism that will help them restore their natural environment to normalcy as well as fighting against ecological crisis. In order to bring ecological restoration, Agary depicted her characters stand for environmental advocating as an ecological feminist and ecoalarmist do. The plot has been built in the way that the need to adopt eco-friendly practices in order to mitigate or resolve these crises in the Niger Delta. The narrator believes as: "protecting nature is protecting women from capitalist patriarchy and male dominated oppressions" (p.28). The idea is that nature should be protected and preserved first in order to keep women from violence and oppression. The story of the novel also rejects the violent resistance as means to addressing the miseries on the Niger Delta ecology and the people of the area. Rather it follows the strategy of making a case for commitment and "peaceful resolution of these ecological damages by all stakeholders" (p.76). This tool of resistance shows the application of motherness as generous, kind, fertile, motherhood etc. Agary tries to associate the resistance against ecological violence in Niger Delta with these motherhood qualities.

Agary condemns the coming of whites to Africa for the sole purpose of resource exploitation and creating spaces for suppressions especially to the poor rural women. The narrator of the story tells the origin of biracial mammy water children to their European fathers as: "entry by sea into African coast to ensnare local women" (p.98). 'The entry to the African seas' is used to refer to the coming and penetration of white colonizers later called by various names as imperialists, neocolonialists etc. to African lands crossing over the rivers and oceans. In Zilayefa's perception, white colonizers males' role is to sow seeds of difference on African natural lands and finally leave women hopeless. Zilayefa argues in her words and finds out that the Greek "was just gone,

leaving his planted seed in my mother's belly" (p.3). Here the narrator expresses her irritations for distresses and broken pledges her Greek father has left to her poor mother. Zilayefa's biological Greek father, a sailor, portrays the capitalist west whose role is to explore the best out of Africa leaving behind what they have left. Zilayefa condemns the coming of colonial based campiness to Niger Delta for resource exploitation that has also left rural women poor and pushes them to migrate to other areas. She argues that the coming of her biological Greek father has brought nothing but contributes to biracial fatherless children. This kind of relation brings subjugation of women and ecological domination of African rivers representative of the "Greek sailor's ship to Africa" (p.120). Zilayefa's biological father sailing on African rivers to connect on its shores clearly shows the colonizers' domination of African waters ways as Agary condemns the coming of "whites to African soils for resource butchering" (p.125). The coming of the white man (the Greek man who later became biological father of Zilayefa) into Nigeria, crossing rivers and oceans, can be taken as another way of neocolonial penetration into the lands of Africa.

Zilayefa has acted her resistance by averting patriarchy in the city of Port Harcourt. She is aware of the destructive effects of capitalists' action on her community's environment as a 21st century modern ecoconscious and ecofeminist young women. She realizes the impacts and implications of ecological degradation. That is a way she decides not to repeat the evils of capitalism. Realizing her stray away from nature, Zilayefa relentlessly "begged God for forgiveness, and called on my mother spirits for comfort" (p.178). This is a kind of nonviolent resistance. Agary realizes that Ijaw women are likely connected to the soils of the land of Niger Delta with ecofeminism. She presents Zilayefa as ecological feminist and/or ecoactivist to loudly speak about the voiceless nature and poor Nigerian women. Zilayefa follows a new rebirth strategy and orientation just like her fellow villagers become hopeful as "jubilating over the death of the land's leader..." who died with two prostitutes" (p.176) at the end of the story.

Another ecofeminist resistance technique portrayed in Agary's novel is displaying the beautiful physical body of Zilayefa like nature. In many lines of her novel, Agary uses this technique to reveal the beauty of nature (to emphasize Nature never be severely violated) through the physical appearances of Zilayefa. Zilayefa's physical beauty is represented as water spirit. A water spirit is a kind of supernatural being found in the myth and folklore of many African cultures including Nigeria (Huggan, 2004). Here Agary brings water spirit as a tool of ecofeminist resistance

strategy for a center of ecology and spirituality that informs, inspires, and enables her characters to deepen their consciousness of the sacredness and interdependence of all creation with a focus on water as critical in sustaining all life. The narrator herself says “I was used to being referred to as a Mammy –water.... I was a follower of water’s mother spirit...I had one of the qualifying characteristics– my complexion” (p.29). Zilayefa is given the quality of embodiment to signify the beauty of her body which is comparable to water spirit. Because of this, Zilayefa’s physical appearance makes her to be one and the same with nature. So, discriminating nature is discriminating women. Zilayefa’s association with nature is also presented in the novel as :“her delicate and light skin, black wavy hair which makes her stand out among crowd” (p.19).The physical body of Zilayefa is used to personify the beauty of nature in order to emphasize the fact that Agary voices for the silent nature. The narrator’s continuous remark on the beautifulness of the human body as clean as nature is to imply that the writer is trying to reveal out the fact that nature is always beautiful and that can never violated and discriminated.

Agary also presents the migration of young girls from rural to urban cities and towns in search of greener pastures. They also migrate in search of better life than the one they left behind in their villages which are wrecked and scarred by degradation and exploitation. The narrator of the story remarks:

*girls did anything to get a white. If it meant travelling deep into the bushes of Isoko land to get a love potion, then it had to be so. If it meant putting a scar on another girls face for daring to swoon in on the whitey they discovered and laid claims to first, then they were prepared for the battle. Whatever it took, they did (p.37).*

This indicates the rural sides of Niger Delta have been degraded and people migrate to urban. The girls’ migration shows the oppression of women at the cost of nature. Most of the girls in the village migrate from the village to Port Harcourt and other cities of white people and the riches. That indicates the loss and aesthetic degradation of the rural Nigeria.

Within this rural setting of Niger Delta, the ecofeminist implication of the positional inferiority of the Niger Delta woman becomes obvious. Zilayefa’s mother and other poor women farmers were under oppression by both the capitalists’ hegemony and local patriarchies. These practices have muted the voices of these innocent women. Being voiceless is a manifestation of subaltern

African environment and poor women as Agary's novel exhibits. Agary, hence, tries to reveal this dreadful practice through ecological feminism. This has been presented:

*...when she got to the house, she knocked on the door and said very coldly, Zilayefa, bring me bathing soap and sponge. .... "Oil, Zilayefa she said and turned away from me walking toward the river...Oil, from where? ...people were marching to see the Amananaowei, the head of the village.Mother turned to the river than Amananaowei (p.3-4).*

The extract above describes the stands of Zilayefa's mother as ecological feminist against the loss of the environment that has also made the women inferior, poor and isolated from the socio-environmental system. Within this scenario, Agary describes Zilayefa's mother position as opposing the capitalist patriarchal exploiting system. As seen in the extract, Zilayefa's mother approaches to nature than human elements to be free from her environmental and physiological impediments. She turns to river (nature) rather than following the marching mass to ask with Amananaowei, the local community leader. Binaebi and her daughter turn to the river to pleasure readers to the significance of ecology and woman's suffering. By choosing not to go to the community head, a male and local align of the petroleum and crude oil extracting companies that exploit her environment; Zilayefa's mother shows her loss of confidence in the local leaders, capitalists and other local oppressive anthropogenic agents. Binaebi's shift from human to nature shows Agary's resistance to the exploitation of the environmental and social oppressions. Binaebi's move towards the river also indicates a connection between her and nature. She moves towards the river for purification, in order to rid herself of the entanglement produced by crude oil patriarchal capitalists and the local aligns. The shift from human to the nonhuman also indicates ecological feminists stand towards women and environments against oppressions.

It is expected that washing in the river will bring up a cleaner and purified as the narrator argues as: "Binaebi cleansed from the black stain" (p.12). Thus Binaebi is only left with purification in the metaphorical realm. She abstains herself from Amananaowei, the patriarchal local oppressor. She returns to the river, Mother Nature, her partner in suffering for metaphorical healing and cleansing. If Zilayefa wonders "what could have happened that left her (Binaebi) void of words... when she was upset, she got very quiet" (p.3). Binaebi's voiceless stance is metonymic as it shows a stark reality of unending frustration, abandonment, and powerlessness to which both the woman and the natural environment of Ijaw villages are subjected.

Agary has also characterized Zilayefa in the way that she should be protected from men's oppressions and controls. Agary says Zilayefa's initial meeting with Sergio, a young male character, was under her mother's "watchful eyes" (p.7). Zilayefa's mother is conscious of not only environmental woes but also social hierarchies produced in the male dominated societies of her village who have been products of destructive environment. With this ecological feminist outlook, she always protects her child as the Agary says: "to restrain her from falling victim of Sergio's sexual prowess" (p.182). Zilayefa's mother closeness to nature and serious looking after of her child makes Binaebi to be ecofeminist who is devoted to both the rights of women and nature as not separated but interconnected entities. She always warns Zilayefa as: "Don't go and get carried away and spoil you. My back is not ready for grandchildren" (p.23). The mother is careful in keeping her child to be grown with wisdom of life in defending environmental and social challenges after her environment has become deteriorated .

Agary's Zilayefa also resists the degradation and deforestation of natural environment and women's suffering in the rural settings. Zilayefa resists Sergio's cutting off forests for "timber production" (p.90). She resists this practice by saying "damaging the forest for loggings... Sergio despoils the village in allegiance with timber exporters" (p.181). Here Zilayefa is an ecological feminist who believes that losing the natural forest is losing innocent women so that she prioritizes fighting capitalists axe and forest despoliation in her village.

Agary also resists the ecological violence committed by imperialists through her female characters especially Zilayefa. At the end the novel Zilayefa gets pregnant from a white man but she is very afraid of having a baby that will put her in the same line of failure of her mother. The consequence of her own accepting to the exploitation of city patriarchal capitalists causes her to regret her roles. But Zilayefa breaks the chain of continuous white capitalists' unwanted children. She decides to abort the baby by vouching not to reproduce "more and more of my kind- African profits, born-throws', ashawo-pickins, father-unknowns, running around the slums of Port Harcourt" (p.171). From this quotation, it is possible to understand that Zilayefa reconsiders matricide as a means of protest against un-ecofriendly ecology and patriarchal capitalists who devastated the environment of her mother and her village at large which also later left her hopeless. Zilayefa resists the imperial system by rejecting profit driven imperialist ideologies which also creates devastative natural and social environments in her origin village.

Her determination not to contribute fatherless babies on the soils of Niger Delta can be seen as she is aware of the continuous exploitation between nature, society, and herself. Agary also says: “She uses certain fresh leaves to abort her pregnancy” (p.190). In this situational irony, Zilayefa is returning to her origins, that is nature (leaves), a nonhuman victim of patriarchy, as a tool for removing the burden of patriarchal capitalists in order to rid herself of capitalists subjugation. This legendary action makes Zilayefa as a modern ecofeminist who defends the rights of nature and women from the capitalist and patriarchal woes. Zilayefa’s action is also seen as twenty-first century drama demanding action as the ultimate solution to save the subaltern nature from today’s capitalist driven environmental entanglements. What makes her action unique also is that she demonstrates her acts rather than only speaking about nature.

## **Chapter Seven: Ecological Violence and Resistance in Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o's *Wizard of the Crow***

### **7.0 Introduction**

In this chapter an attempt is made to analyze and interpret Zake Mda's Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o's *Wizard of the Crow* employing the post-colonial ecocritical approach. To begin with, a synopsis (or plot) of the novel is given and this synopsis is followed by an analysis of forms of ecological violence, resistance strategies, the writer's articulation in bringing attention to the ongoing ecological violence and resistance and the interaction between human and the nonhuman in the novel. The different forms of ecological violence and resistance strategies relevant thematically to the novel are considered in the analysis. The main objective of the analysis is to demonstrate how the novel portrays pressing ecological violence and restive resistance.

### **7.1 Synopsis**

Ngũgĩ's *Wizard of the Crow* (2006), a realistic novel and is set in a fictional country, free republic of Aburiria in Kenya, ruled by one man called the Ruler. The ruler of the Aburiria, the imagin state has been in power for so long that no one can remember how long he has been governing the state. Since the ruler has come to power, the state has been in devastation that most average people are starving. In the midst of this poverty, the ruler decides to build a testimony to his legacy. This testimony was building a massive skyscraper called 'Marching to Heaven' that will be high to reach spaces. But the Aburiria ruler and the people have no money to build this monumental. Having run out of Aburiria people's national currency, the ruler resolves to approach The Global Bank and ask for a loan to pay for the building.

During the occasion of the visit from the personalities from the Global Bank, Kamiti, a jobless graduate of Masters of Business Administration, and Nyawira, later become Aburiria's activist especially for Movement for the Voice of Nature, meet in the beggars clothing in front of an exclusive restaurant where the guests were served. As soon as they meet, two policemen immediately chase them. Attempting the ward them off, Kamiti creates a sign to Nyawira as: "enter at your risk" and ties his chicken bones and strings to the sign. To protect himself, Kamiti is forced to adopt the new identity he created for the sign. The police are frightened away, but they return soon after, seeking advice from the one who calls himself the *Wizard of the Crow*.

Kamiti and Nyawira, while both were playing the role of the wizard, have strengthened their relationship and passed through different challenges which force them to abandon the city for some time and dwell in the forest. Kamiti considers Nature in the forest as a place of rejuvenation and a site to escape from dirty, slumming and corrupting environment of Santalucia, another city located in Aburiria. At the end of the novel, both characters have come to aware of the value of Nature and its suffers under illegitimate human activities. The novel deeply deals with the abuses of power by political leaders in Africa, deforestation and global business penetration, reforestation, poverty, corruption etc. The writer calls out the African people for a better government and demands the voices to be heard.

## **7.2 Ecological Violence**

Ngũgĩ's *Wizard of the Crow* could be read as fiction of ecological violence so that it can be critiqued in that regard. The imaginary Aburiria, a prototype of post-colonial Africa is represented as a fictional state where ecological resources have been coercively exploited. The characters in the state live in economic inequality, massive deforestation, corruption, and largely in depleting natural environments. The natural ecology of the area has been seen continuously degraded and huge deforestation takes place. The snapshot of the Aburiria's ecology is being violated by the external as a well as internal anthropogenic force has been explained in the following sections.

### **7.2.1 Deforestation and the Loss of Natural Ecologies**

*Wizard of the Crow* can be understood as a novel of ecological violence. It is written with runaway deforestation and loss of biodiversity as major threatening factors for ecological destruction in Aburiria fictional state. The writer offers an extensive reading of this post-colonial fictional Republic of Aburiria with "extinction of its forests" (p.701) due to mainly dislocation and ramification, the two major socio-political manifestations of the post-independent Africa. Coincidentally, the novel inspects the internal as well as the external influences on African post-colonial ecologies. It portrays the daily destruction of natural forest ecosystem in Kenya.

*Wizard of the Crow* deals with the ecological depletion that throughout Aburiria and is caused by the continuous degradation of natural forests. The animals and plants are represented as victims through the ecological violence. The omniscient narrator of the story says: "in Aburiria wild animals were becoming rare because of the dwindling forest and poaching." (p.35).The gradual

extinction of the wild animals from the forest is due to two pushing factors. The first factor is dwindling and the second is poaching. The illegitimate practices of deforestation and hunting can be major causes of the extinction of the wild animals as stated “poaching and destruction” (p.691). The extermination of animals and destruction of their chained natural ecology is the continuous mistreatment of nature as a result of the direct intervention and influence of colonial and capitalist economical desires and authoritarian ruling of the Aburiria state.

*Wizard of the Crow* extensively explores deforestation at the Aburirias’ ecology. The following excerpt from the novel deals with how and why the forests of Aburiria state have become destructed and the scenery of human and nonhuman dislocations in the forest ecology. Let us see the descriptions of the violence on the natural environment.

*When it comes to forests, indeed to any natural resource, the Aburian State and big American, European, and Japanese companies, in alliance with the local African, Indian, and European rich, were all united by one slogan: A loot-a continua. They know how to take but not how to give back to the soil. The unregulated clearing of forests affected the rhythm of the rains, and a semi desert was beginning to creep from the prairie to the hills (p.201).*

The lines explain the over destruction and exploitation of natural forest of the Aburiria imaginary state in the times of post-colonial Africa. As Nixon (2011) states that post-colonial ecocritical theory explains that post-colonial environments along with their habitats, throughout history, have been over exploited and deteriorated. Apparently, this reality is clearly reflected in the above extract. Nixon also states that the twentieth and twenty-first centuries witness an increasing level of ecological violence and over exploitation due to the discrimination of the socially and economically disadvantaged communities and their indigenous lands. The above extract evidences that by dislocating indigenous people and collaborating with environmental butcheries of capitalists, the Aburiria state ruling system has looted the natural gifts of the state without any replenishment. The writer has linked the exploitations of the ecology with former Western colonizers with contemporary global business empires. The means of linkages are local aligns and economic and political dominations.

“The unregulated clearing of forests affected the rhythm of the rains” (p.201) infers two meanings. The first is Aburiria forests have been destroyed and are not protected by law or there is no authority that regulates who cuts and cares the forests. The second is that Aburiria forests

are being damaged without any sense of practice of restorations. The day to day deforestation practices interrupts the cyclical nature of raining and causes the Aburiria to be turned to semi-desert. The direct violence of the ecology by cutting forests for timber export production has brought about catastrophes to both human and the nonhuman. As seen in the extract, the environmental resource looting is one of the evils of post-colonialism in Aburiria, just a replica of post-colonial Africa. The practice of resources looting brings natural resource destruction and ecological esthetic degradation. In the novel, the narrator also explicitly comments that the members of the exploitative alliance in Aburiria “knew how to take but not how to give back to the soil” (p.201).The comment indicates post-colonial Western business empires only know how to loot African natural forests for their business profiteering. But they never care about the Aburiria forests. They know nothing to care or replenish or save it. The comment by the narrator also reminds the seriousness of the ecological situation in general in Africa and Kenya in particular. The Aburiria’s forest has been destructed to make Aburiria ruler to be famous, applaud his associates and the external forces of capitalist networks. This practice brings continuous depletion of the forest. Ngũgĩ articulates Aburiria’s authoritarian ruling system that has separated the economic accumulation from the ecology of Aburiria to which it is tied.

Ngũgĩ’s novel also deals with the writer’s lamentations about the continuous deforestation of the Aburiria natural forest. The sorrowful event that happened on the Eldares forest ecosystem is amply described:

*There was a time when the vast prairie surrounding Eldares was the domain of wild animals: rhinos, elephants, and hippos. In those days the traveller was likely to find leopards and lions lying in the grass, waiting for their prey among the grazing herds of zebras, dikdiks, duickers, bushbucks, gazelles, impalas, kudus, elands, warthogs, har tebeests, and buffalo. A most common sight was that of giraffes loping along or simply towering over the thorn-trees of the prairie. Occasionally an ostrich would scuttle across the prairie, and if a traveller was lucky he might find a newly laid ostrich egg inside a sand nest [...]. The prairie ended abruptly at the foot of ridges forming a gigantic semicircle. The ridges were often covered in mist so that from a distance they looked like a continuous one, and it was only after reaching the foot that one could marvel at their natural formation of ascending steps to the misty sky. Each ridge was a series of hilltops, which against the light of the setting sun, looked like undulating silhouettes of cows humps. But there were a few times when the wind swept the mist away, and the ridges, the hills, and mountains would reveal their lowing leaves of green,*

*yellow, and orange. Sometimes when the sun is rising or sinking one can glimpse arched over the hills (p.202).*

This describes the narrator's lamentation about the destruction of the forest ecology which has been a living house of many animals and plants. Due to the destruction of the forest human and non-human have been dislocated. Comparing the past abundant natural existence in the prairie with the present one, the writer tries to reveal out the deterioration of the bountiful natural zoo habitat by the present manmade practices against ecological violence. The narrator argues that there is a big difference between the past and the present in terms of natural existence and reservation. The past represents the plenitude and harmonious ecology rebounded to the peace and prosperity of humans and harmonious relationships the prairie forest zoo has established with such diversified eco-habitat.

The time gap between the past and the present indicates the forest ecology has been under threat as the narrator begins his narration with time frame. The past time has been portrayed as time of nature (both fauna and flora) when the kingdom of animals and plants have been protected and reserved. All animals enjoyed the beautiful nature of earth. All birds lived in the bountiful earth. The past for such kind of natural habitat of prairie is peace and prosperity where Edenic life is cohabited. The past indicates natural environment of pre-colonial Africa as so magnificently Edenic as human and Nature were harmoniously interconnected and interacted. Dislocation and displacement, the two major features of post-colonial ecological Africa respectively are implicitly highlighted to show the coming of colonialism and its present legacies as major devastating factors for the destruction of African ecology.

The narrator of the story is disillusioned with the ecological fade as a result of the capitalist intervention without care of the surrounding ecosystem. The neocolonialists and colonialists' endless motivation for money by all means comes here to be the unique plague that makes worse for the degradation of the natural world of Aburiria. They extract money from overexploitation of the resources of the natural environment and restrain themselves from taking care of it. The violence of the ecology is caused by these greedy and carefree people. This reckless behavior of human towards Aburiria's nature has also been substantiated by the industrial wastes smoked from deforestation which also have the same harmful role as the poachers. The writer also shows the ruler's disinterest towards to care for the natural environment. He indirectly describes

African governments through the metonymical use of the fictional Republic of Aburiria as responsible for the looting of the African natural resources with the seizure and the complicity of western capitalists.

*But things had now changed. The wild animals had now abandoned the prairie, leaving it to the emaciated cows and goats whose ribs protruded in times of drought when the grass completely dried up [...] The forest was now threatened by charcoal, papers and timber merchants who cut down trees hundreds of years old (p.207).*

*Wizard of the Crow* demonstrates fauna and flora genocides. The former green forest has been left as plants scorched and charred and animals decimated. This serious indictment of the integrity of human and the forest ecology is because of the direct intervention of human over nature. The beautiful and pleasurable sights of the prairie ecosystem has been aesthetically degraded and demolished over time. The ecosystem of prairie has been damaged. Prairie has been left empty that is no longer able to sustain plants or animals as the whole ecosystem is harmed. The violence of the ecosystem allows the extension of desertification on the prairie ecology and forests disappearance. The area has smokes that generate toxic substances from the environment as a result of the burning of the forest products illegally for only the benefit of human without restoration to nature. The animals' relocation to other distance place shows the shifting of the ecosystem under the search of survival. This considerable loss of biodiversity and dislocation of the habitats is mainly through intervention of anthropogenic agents is the manifestation of the vulnerability and violence of the ecology and environment at large. The emaciation of the animals indicates the expansion of the dryness and desertification, lack of food for those animals. The dryness of grasses and leaves though caused by multiple factors, human intervention can be a major one that totally violates the ecology.

The expansion of western capitalist economic system has been the direct and/or indirect cause for the destruction of the forest ecology. "The forest was now threatened by charcoal, papers and timber merchants who cut down trees hundreds of years old" (p.207) indicates merchants trade timber products for exportation. Local charcoal production has been practiced illegally. The forest is the main input for those products that also created the terrible sight of emaciated domestic animals that is the sign of threatened rich diversity of prairie habitant. The ecological crisis has been instigation for the violation of ecologies in the novel. The disappearance of

prairies' forests and losses and dislocation of the locals has been cause for the loss of wild life and exposes the deplorable culture of disregard for ecology and the ethics of environmental replenishment. The expansion of imperialist demands on looting the ecological services of the state as well as the commodification of forest values with money is displayed below:

*Tajirika thought he was seeing things. The leaves of the three bushes in front of him were not ordinary leaves, but, so he could not believe his eyes, and he tried to cry out the others. He could not find words to tell them what he was seeing so he just pointed, whispering hoarsely, Look, please look, and tell me if this not more trickery by the Wizard of the Crow. Tell me if those are not American dollars growing on those bushes? 'None of us could believe what we were hearing. We looked at one another with the same thought: Money growing on trees? Tajirika had gone mad. On closer inspection we had to agree that those leaves did not look like Americans dollars. Yet we harbored doubts, which disappeared when Tajirika took money from his pocket and, with hands shaking, approached the bushes to compare what he had in his hands with what was there. True, Haki ya Mungu, from where we sat, nobody could tell the difference between the two ; if anything, those that grew on the bushes seemed smothered and greener, a little less wrinkled, than the bills from Tajirika's pocket. Some of the leaves had tiny holes in them and others were frayed at the edges, but Tajirika, our leader, explained that this was the work of worms and other insects who did not understand the value of a dollar.' (p.547-548).*

The extract explains the commodification of nature as adogmatic principle of capitalist western world that has been evolutionary adopted. The greedy money collectors, who are careless for nature, are depriving of all rights of the survival of human and the nonhuman. They only look after the money at the costs of silent nature and minorities of human societies. Money is represented as important value than nature as the narrator argues. The comparison between money (material) and bushes (nature) shows the use of the material value is opted rather than nature.

*Wizard of the Crow* can also be read insightfully as the damnation of Aburiria's ecological damage. What *Wizard of the Crow* recognizes is that equal access to resources is no longer guaranteed by people's revolutionary government or even multiparty democracy, since politics has been kidnapped by global capitalism. Aburiria's natural forest has been threatened because of the expansion of global businesses. Hence the novel views this phenomenon in a global rather than a nation state context by identifying transnational economic systems as the key players in constraining local and national development.

The novel also deals with the destruction of the natural ecology with the expansion of western based industrialization. In the following extract, the writer has demonstrated how the western industrialization has brought about the continuous forest destructions and several woes to the environment. Let us look the scenario in the extract follow:

*But then he started sneezing as a whiff of gases from the factories below reached him. Is there no place on earth or in the sky where a person might escape this poison? A bit confused, he thought that before making any decision about the form in which he would lead the rest of his life then should return to his body lying in the sun to recover and review the shocks of the day. But what if his body had been completely scorched by the sun? At the thought he flapped his wings and hurried back to Eldares (p.44)*

In addition to the destruction of the forest, Western industrialization has brought causal consequences on both the human and the surrounding environment. The issues of ecological violence, poor waste management in cities and pollution in the Aburiria state are depicted as significant themes in the novel. Ngũgĩ's novel also presents some of the characters as the cause of these ecological violence and environmental destruction. For instance "Nyawria's father, whose Business Empire and wealth depend on timber productions" (p.98) takes his place among characters like the ruler of the state. Ngũgĩ's also presents the illegitimate monopoly of lands which is common property and sources of everything to the people as an evil practice in post-colonial Aburiria, Kenya. The ruler of the Aburiria imaginary state and all his ministers "mortgage the people's lands for foreign loans" (p.239) with the presentation of such nature polluting and degrading forces. With this vein, Ngũgĩ puts the blame of ecological violence on both the imperialists as well as the native local government who in one way or the other have collaborated with the western capitalists in exploiting and degrading the environment. Besides, failed environmental management from the local system to manage the waste and the environment adds to the pollution of the land water and air.

In short, Ngũgĩ's novel presents an account of the endangerment of the natural environment in Africa by the world business empires that are backed by the African corrupting local government system. He shows that the breathtaking Aburiria's natural forest landscape he portrays is turned into desert by the neocolonialists. In addition, the intensification of industrialization has created pollution that also produces health harms to both human and nonhuman. From a place teeming

with all kinds of beautiful and interesting wild animals, the prairie has become “abandoned...leaving it to the emaciated cows and goats whose ribs protruded in terms of drought when the grass completely dried up” (p.201). This form of ecological violence is attributed not only to the western capitalists but also to the native representatives of the imperialists who are worried about their profits.

### **7.3 Ecological Resistance**

*Wizard of the Crow* portrays the natural forest ecology of Aburiria as one of the significant determinant factors for sustainability and harmonization between nature and human beings. The novel deals with human rehabilitations and promotion of indigenous afforestation against the daily deforestation practices. In this novel, Ngũgĩ presents the natural landscape of Santalucia and Eldares, two adjacent places in the fictional state of Aburiria as a means to advance the narrative of the novel. To achieve ecological restorations, he has crafted his novel to capture numerous post-colonial resistance strategies through his characters, setting and techniques of plot developments. The novel also reveals the ecology/ecosystem as a site of healing and rejuvenation against the neocolonial destructions. In that effort, Ngũgĩ has shown a remarkable attachment and devotion of the natural ecology of Aburiria with the natives as depicted in the novel. The novel also offers the Movement of the Voice of the People as a source of a popular environmental politics rooted in the unpleasant aesthetics of the metropolis in which the novel is set. Major resistance strategies developed by Ngũgĩ in his *Wizard of the Crow* have been presented as follows.

#### **7.3.1 Rehabilitating the Human and Ecological Redemptions**

Ngũgĩ's *Wizard of the Crow* explores the development of human ecological consciousness and redemptions. The novel narrates that ecological consciousness has always been an integral part of an African ecological life. With this perception, Ngũgĩ seems to realize that human rehabilitation and redemptions of nature with a developing sense of human consciousness to the natural environment are significant steps to curb post-colonial and global environmental crisis over the African ecologies. For this effect he has developed the plot of his novel to rehearse fundamental themes of human connectedness to Nature at large. He presents nature as a constant reminder of the beauty of consistence, the utility of patience and persistence, the vanity of arrogance, and the necessity of impermanence. With these efforts Ngũgĩ portrays wilderness, an

area which naturally exists that is not affected by the human activities yet, as a site of recuperation in contrast to the description of western novels about African wilderness. Ngũgĩ depicts wilderness as a place of rejuvenations where nature and human beings are interconnected and interdependence. He also immerses human (characters) with the healing power of nature. The description of wilderness and its natural presentation by the writer makes characters to turn to realize their sense of self by coming out of confusions of their detachment from nature. The narrator's description of Kamiti's experience in the Aburiria's wilderness presented in the following extract also reveals a challenge to the colonial dislocation of human and nonhuman:

*This was not the first time that he had felt himself at ease but out of his own body: he had had this sensation at night in the wilderness...He would think of the prophets of old, Confucius, Guatama Buddha, Moses, John the Baptist, Mugo waKibiru, who had all retreated into the wilderness to commune, in total science, with the law that held the universe together. Were their lives not enhanced by what they had picked up during their pilgrimage? He would roam free in the universe the whole night, endlessly fascinated by the being of things, and when he returned to his body in the morning he would feel his spirit imbued with fresh energy ready to face another day of walking about the streets of Eldares, knocking at every door, hoppinh for something that would improve his life. Thus he had retained hope and even looked forward to his free fights into the universe as relief from the wounds of fruitless quests (p.47).*

The wilderness (nature) is used to serve as a site of refuge. The site is used for humankind to get energy through forming a reunion with nature. The writer has also used allusion to emphasize the similarity of the wildernesses with the prophets who are supposed to be peacemakers at various time histories. The writer centers African wilderness against western ideology of African environmental devaluations. The unionization symbolizes the web of connection between human and the physical environment. This connection also symbolizes African totality of human and nonhuman embodiment. The extract reveals that Kamiti appears in his bird form to reconnection with the natural ecology. What can be inferred from this is that unlike the human African nature has such capacity. This appears to suggest that the flaw of humanity lies in its claim of detachment from nature, and that man has to abandon his isolated body in order to commune with nature. That is what Kamiti is doing as stated in this extract. Reconnection with goodness and life's essence comes only when a retreatment is made to nature for Kamiti.

The writer wants to show how Aburiria's wilderness saves Kamiti from being consumed by the corruption, dirt and noise of the city and energizes him to move forward. The truth of the

expression “the law that held the universe together” (p.47) which is an ecological concept indicates the link of all forms of life in the physical world is recognized only in the wilderness where the corrupt human ways are avoided. The wilderness, which is most importantly magnified by the writer, is used as a place of freedom where human and nonhumans are coexisted and independently serve the larger ecosystem. In response to Nyawira, request on why he fled to the wilderness, Kamiti responds: “I just want to stay in the wilderness to find myself. I want to know what I really want from my life. May be the loud of the hunters in me is calling” (p.208) indicating that the trouble caused by the rot in the city led him to decide to abandon “human community for the wilderness” (p.209). This shows the wilderness is a place to revive oneself and the writer resists against the destruction of the ecology by reasserting the ecology. Complete recognition of one’s identity is located in the connections one makes with nature.

The novel is mostly written in dialogue than description. There are multiple narratives and points of views. In his novel, as a political activist who calls out every Kenyan should demand for better government, Ngũgĩ, side by side, also created Nyawira, female character to lead ‘The Movement for the Voice of the People, which is an environmental preservation campaign as the narrator argues: “Nyawira is committed to lead the environmental campaign” (p.612). The plot is nonlinear so that it explains everything. All these attributes show the writer’s articulation in revealing resistances of ecological exploitations. During the dialogues between Kamiti and Nyawira, the following comments are revealed as explained in the extract below:

*“...We cannot run away and leave the affairs of the land to ogres and scorpions. This land is mine. That land is yours. This land is ours. Besides, in Aburriari, there is nowhere to run. As you’ve said, even the forests are threatened by the greed of those in power (p.209).*

As leader of the movement, Nyawira believes that nature is property of everyone. This common property unites all so that nature should be treated well. In the narrator’s perspective such properties and treatments with self-recognition are good provided that they are not meant to escape from the reality. The perspective forwarded by Nyawira in this extract also involves putting into effect the environmental activism targeted at saving the Aburiria nature. Nyawira is therefore ecoactivist in this regard. She is likely to insist on convincing others about the common property of natural environment and demands to discharge responsibilities in considering nature. Her beliefs seem that there is no other planet than what we have now. She suggests that the

responsibility of fighting for the ecology lies on everyone who belongs to our common earth. Nyawira also acknowledges even the forests that have been “threatened by the greed of those in power” (p.209) are part and parcel of common property. According to the narrator, the ‘greedy human power’ refers to capitalists, local collaborators and global business empires as they only need the chopping Aburiria timber for foreign export without redemption of the ecology.

In addition to its portrayals of sanctuary of Aburiria, the writer shows wilderness as a place for enjoying simplicity and balance in life. This is to emphasize the value of African nature, decentering the western ideologies towards African environment. For Kamiti and Nyawira, the wilderness is displayed as a place where they enjoy life to the fullest out of the rubbishes of the town. The abundance of nature and its purity has become the source of their enjoyment and rejuvenation. The natural existence there provides fresh outwards to the human community. The narrator remarks this natural ecosystem services for enjoyment and rejuvenation as presented below:

*Having gathered goods from the earth still in abundance around them, they prepared a single meal and conversed like in old times, cheerful talk that massaged their souls and kept them laughing. Kamaiti thanked Nyawira and the abundant nature for the meal (p.204).*

The natural scenery conceptualizes wilderness as connected with the countryside. The narrator romanticizes the ecological landscape of Aburiria and describes life in the wilderness as full of joy and complete for Kamiti and Nyawira as ‘the earth is still in abundance’ in contrast to hunger, scarcity, famine than the security of the town. The writer tries to decenter the western environmental ideology of wilderness to African natural environment. With his description, wilderness has been articulated as source of refreshment, fertility and rejuvenation for Kamiti and Nyawira rather than evil and discrimination. With this intention of introducing the values of African wilderness natural attributes, Ngũgĩ condemns the destruction and ‘othering’ of Aburirian natural geographies by the global business conglomerates and applauds for regermination of ecological consciousness to African contemporary environments. *In Wizard of the Crow*, wilderness is also articulated as a school for humanity to learn simplicity of life. After Nyawira’s return from her fight for the land in the town to the forest, and when she becomes “town on the most wanted list” (p.215) to be taken “dead or alive”, Kamiti thought herself what

Nyawira has learnt in the wild after a lot of refreshments in the forest. He tells his impressions in the following extract:

*I want you to learn what nature and solitude can teach us. Simplicity and balance, the way. Call it the Forest School of Medicine and Herbology. I shall offer you such medicine that will make your eyes see what I see. Only then you will be able to say, I used to see as in a mirror darkly but now I see clearly...Nature is the source of cures. But we have to be humble and willing to learn from (p.266-267).*

As seen in the extract above, the writer has portrayed the Aburiria forest as school of learning for his characters. The forest is used for sources of knowledge, medicine or cure so that he condemns its destructions. Nature is represented as school of learning as mirror to magnify the limitations of nonhuman qualities as well. It is represented as source of understanding and survival. The writer centers nature to the human existence and African natural existence with minimal human superiority. This challenges the anthropocentric point of view which works from superiority over nature than living in the balance with nature.

Ngũgĩ makes himself in the fight for the balance of human life with nature. Kamiti, for example, during the conversation with Nyawira, says: “My mother tells me that even when I was a child I showed a great interest in plants and in all living things” (p.57). The implication is that Kamiti is grown up with a sense of environmental care that he has taken from his descendants who believe that human and the nonhuman entities are interconnected. Kamiti’s ancestors posed super human qualities which he shares with them as the narrator says: “not only were they healers, but some had the gift of seeing things hidden from ordinary eyes. Some could even “fly like birds” (p.294). The narrator’s description shows the ancestors were interconnected with nature and nature provides the power of understanding. According to the writer the ancestors of the past generation compared to the present one, were firm to believe in the power of nonhuman for sacred life and eternity. That human and the nonhuman cordial attachment is what makes Ngũgĩ keen to seek to develop resistance strategy against ecological destructions.

Ngũgĩ has also devised strategies to preserving the depleting ecology of Aburiria by preparing a simple ecological pilgrimage to the places of the locals where forest was highly destroyed. The two characters Kamiti and Nyawira undertake one of their early pilgrimages from their local city to the former Eden symbol of prairie. The pilgrimage for them was to find peace and search their

souls for the different causes to which they are each committed. Arriving there, they observed that the ecology was highly threatening. Kamiti is first “committed to natural healing” (p.492), Nyawira then is primarily concerned with leading the “Movement for the voice of the local people” (p.512). Here Ngũgĩ presents ‘The Movement of the Voice of the People’ as a popular environmental politics to bring the destructed ecology back. The movement articulated by the writer as political movement requires the restoration of the Aburiria forest which has been completely damaged under the authoritarian rule.

Characters in Ngũgĩ’s *Wizard of the Crow* are seen reacting to their environment in remarkable ways. Other characters like Wariara goes to the village to die in peace; and others like Kamiti go there to be rejuvenated. It may therefore be argued that in general, people interact differently with the environment. Away from Aburiria’s socio-political crisis, Kamiti and Nyawira, the two main resistant characters find peace in the prairie as lovers of nature after they have finalized their pilgrimage to prairie. Their feelings are echoed in the surrounding flora and fauna of prairie that also provides the needed assurance for their emotional and psychological state of being. Let us see the snapshot:

*They felt good and at peace amid nature’s bounty...Love was everywhere: in the trees branches where the nests of weaverbirds hung; in the fern where the widowbird had left two long black tail fathers; in the murmuring of the Elddres River as it flowed eastward before turning into roaring waterfall; in the sun’s rays, which pierced through the waterfall, splitting into the seven colors of the rainbow; in the still waters of a small lake made by the river where Kamiti and Nyawira now swam and bathed and chased each other...Love was everywhere in this forest, but neither Nyawira nor Kamiti mentioned the word (p.205-206).*

Ngũgĩ tries to portray his characters’ pleasure they receive from the cheerful natural atmosphere of Eldares’s ecology. Revealing this healing power of nature to humans seems one of Ngũgĩ’s messages to be conveyed to readers. The presentation of such ecology to the narrations assists Ngũgĩ to frame the ecological restoration as mechanical campaign to the preservation of the threatening ecology of Africa by the colonial/post-colonial exploitative legacies.

The harmonious connection between humans and nature is also described vividly. Characters are represented as connected with the spirits of natural existence. They have developed sense of belongness and made nature as friend and life. For example, Kamiti says to Nyawira as: ‘I am going to take you on a tour to meet my friends, all the natives of the forest’ (p.204). Beyond the

appreciation of the values of nature and the natives coexistence with their environment, for the emotional fulfillment of humans as seen in the quotation, the ecological worth of the nonhuman other is also evident in the couple's communication. The narrator appreciates the value of nature to make human cure from diseases as "there was not a single bodily ill he could not heal" (p.274). The narrator also remarks that the "seven suggestions of healthy living" (p.275) to indicate the quality and usefulness of nature for human and ecosystem health. This also shows the role of fauna and flora to eternity of natural existence. In addition, the Aburiria ecology is represented by the metaphor of a "common stream from which plant, animal, and humans draw" (p.275). This healthy ecosystem existence among the environmental factors suggests the implication of human peace in the harmony of nature in Aburiria.

In his *Wizard of the Crow* Ngũgĩ seems to suggest that the best way that leads to the conservation of Aburiria's forest against post-colonial environmental destructions is through rehabilitating nature and its creatures. In his writing Ngũgĩ had deeply referred to Kenyan political, ecological, and historical issues to weave this consideration into his narratives. In the presentation and protection of Aburiria's forest against colonial and neocolonial practices, Ngũgĩ tries to present female environmental fighting character called Nyawira in just alluring Wangari Maathai who tried to stop desertification in Kenya. Ngũgĩ's novel likes Wangari Maathai's afforestation strategy through the female protagonist called Nyawira who also "fights for deforestation" (p.322). Both Nyawira and Wangari Maathai have made a lot of afforestation and environmental reservation campaigns to their native natural environments so as to fight for democracy, gender discrimination, and restorations respectively. Bringing Nyawira as an ecoconscious and environmental campaigner as Wangari Maathai did in the last three decades in the Kenya, Ngũgĩ seems to stand with ecofeminists and affirm that the unique way to defend ecological damage is through planting trees and preserving them as strategy of environmental protection from colonial and contemporary global calamities on the African natural environments.

Ngũgĩ's *Wizard of the Crow* also deals with the maturity of the novelist's ecofeminist vision. In the presentation of the character Nyawira, one can see to articulate women who are ready to confront the social, cultural and political challenges of post-colonial Africa in the 21st century. The importance of afforestation and conservation is apparently understood by Nyawira as she has also become "A self-appointed advocate for the rights of animals and plants" (p.204).

Nyawira is ecofeminist who devotes her life for the most vulnerable parts of nature like animals and plants. She convinces that nature, unlike the human, is voiceless and she affirms that she stands with nature. Nyawira's choice is based on the fact that "animals and plants have no tongues with which to lawyer for themselves" (p.204). This quote shows nature is silent and has guarantee to save if human is likely deserve it. It also shows Nyawira's ecological level of consciousness has reached as high as a modern environmentalist. She reasons out that the vanishing of ecology of prairie and the loss of forests at Eldares and Aburiria are indicative of ecological crisis.

### **7.3.2 Afforestation and the Healing Power of Nature**

Other resistance strategies Ngũgĩ has incorporated in his novel are afforestation and reassertion of the healing power of Nature in Africa. Afforestation as depicted in the novel refers to a tree planting on the soils of the natives Aburiria state to replace what has been deforested by capitalist and global business conglomerates collaborating with the state's local rulers. Ngũgĩ in his *Wizard of the Crow* has used afforestation as an alternative strategy to replenish the loss of Aburiria's natural forest. He argues that if afforestation and replenishment campaigns are used to be the culture of the indigenous community as the narrator tells: "dislocated ecology to be relocated" (p.200), the benefits gaining to the natural ecology of Aburiria state can also be suitable to "the sustenance of humanity" (p.209). Here the assumption is to show the connection between human and nonhuman as basic principle of ecology and to reassert the value of replantation. The writer assures that the ecology of Aburiria has been deforested and restoration is highly in need of. For Ngũgĩ the destruction of the forests of Aburirian state is caused by the global business capitalists who have little considerations towards the loss of the natives' natural forests. The narrator argues this as the attitude of those who "knew how to take but not now to give back to the soil" (p.201). The emphasize here by Ngũgĩ is that capitalists have destroyed the forest for their own benefits without proper care and restoration. For this reason, Ngũgĩ thus strongly advocates "tree planting as the sustenance of giving back to the soil" (p.28). In order to recover the lost soil, tree planting is an essential ingredient and can be used to life survivals.

For Ngũgĩ, reforestation is alternative technique of returning the lost forest and its natural ecosystem. The mass death of animals in the deforested areas of prairie, one of formerly beautiful ecological niches in Aburiria state shows the loss of nature's proper functions. It is just

like disconnecting human from nonhuman. The sight of “emaciated livestock” (p.344) on prairie at Eldares forest brings elongated famine, hunger and death for the humans in Aburiria state. The mass evocations of animals from their habitat and their sudden shifts from their niches and deforestation of the area entails a profound grief over the ecological violence that humans have committed against nature, to which nature has responded by withdrawing its plenitude. Therefore, the writer argues that reforestation should become the measure of replenishment aimed at reversing the condition of ecological dislocation by “relocating the vanishing forests” (p.466) and biodiversity through a process of restoration and replantation on the destructed and eroded areas to bring the soil (life) back.

Ngũgĩ in his *Wizard of the Crow* also specifically uses the phrase “an environmentally conscious witch doctor” (p.361) to describe the sensitivity of the practice of traditional medicine by Kamiti and Nyawira, the two major characters that constitute the persona of the *Wizard of the Crow*. Environmentally consciousness here is used by the writer to show his articulation towards environmental care and sensitivity. Ngũgĩ’s characters are also developed in a way that the Aburiria natural ecology should be restored and preserved for eternity and harmonious relation between human and nonhuman. Towards the end of the novel when Kamiti is introduced to members of the Movement for the Voice for the People, their activities are highlighted as poised to “rescue Aburiria from the abyss” (p.675) of ecological violence and endless deforestation. Kamiti and Nyawira do this by carrying out various afforestation activities aimed at saving the endangered nature of the state.

Ngũgĩ uses flashback as a technique of revealing the past beautiful natural ecologies of Aburiria in revealing the healing power of nature in Africa. He advises that human and nonhuman are interconnected so that preserving nature and maintaining the balance is a required task of today’s natives. The narrator describes this connection between human and the Aburiria forest. Here is the snapshot below:

*Elsewhere Aburiria soil was dying from being doused with pollutants, imported fertilizers. Here they were working with nature, not against it. The forest was a school to which they often came to hear what it had to tell them: You take, you give, for if you only take without giving back, you will leave the giver exhausted unto death...the healing of the land had to start somewhere (p.758).*

In this extract above, Ngũgĩ directs his readers to focus on the revelation about the utility of forest and revelation against ecological loss and the way for saving it. Here Ngũgĩ illustrates the possibility of the extension of the frontiers of ecological damages through a focus on the implications of ecological loss and dislocation. Understanding the close interrelation between human and the nonhuman could inform a new attitude towards a restoration process of replenishment in the state. If this is achieved, Ngũgĩ argues that both ecology and humanity will be co-beneficiaries.

Another resistance strategy developed in Ngũgĩ's *Wizard of the Crow* is ecotourism. Ecotourism has been used as a strategy of resistance against ecological destruction. The writer claims ecotourism as another method of curbing the expansion and penetration into economic and environmental resources exploitations and dominations. The narrator says: "tourists prized for the authenticity of Aburiria. If there were no beggars in the streets, tourists might start doubting whether Aburiria was an authentic African country" (p.88). This indicates the panorama of Aburiria's environmental landscape can be a resource generation if natural protection is made. Africa is geographically one of the most biodiversified and beautiful continent. Africa to be seen by tourist as its "landscape roaming with animals and beggars" (p.76). Here the writer presents Africa as mosaic, panoramic and a continent of panacea. The presentation of ecotourism in the novel by the writer is to message ecotourism is another option to run ecofriendly sustainable development against exploitation and economically benefiting the community.

Through portraying nature friendly characters like Kamiti, the author also presents resistance against anthropocentric valuation of nature. As seen in the first section, Kamiti has developed the love for nature early from his childhood and the magical possession he inherited from his ancestors has also contributed towards his becoming of a friend of nature. In his conversation with Nyawira, presented below, Kamiti depicts himself as advocate to the rights of nature.

*And me? A self-appointed advocate for the rights of animals and plants", Kamiti said, laughing. "But you will agree with me that my laughing is more selfless, because animals and plants have no tongues with which to lawyer for themselves (p.204-205).*

Kamiti is represented as Nature right activist who voices for the voiceless nature. He stands against violation of the rights of nature. He is a friend to all nature, fight for the right of animals, plants, and the valleys which in anthropocentric attitudes are subaltern. Kamiti demands to

become selfless to stand for the right of nature, tree and animal as his friends. The attitude here is a resistance against the mistreatment of nature by humans, in the context of the novel, by foreign and local companies that risk the degradation of forest ecology for the simple reason of capital accumulation.

The other form of resistance appears in the form of a protest against the destruction of the environmental. Ngũgĩ has developed this strategy of resistance against pollution of air and soil due to the industrialization and mismanagement of chemicals and waste. Regarding pollution, the first resistance comes from Kamiti as he condemns: “Is there no place on earth or in the sky where a person might scape this poison?” (p.39). Kamiti demands response from all those who concerns the ecology of Aburiria and to take care of it. The interrogative question Kamiti asks indicates industrialization which has been introduced in the west and imported to Africa brings lots of health and environmental destructions as well as distressing social costs. Similar resistances were held when the narrator of the story claims as when the “gasses from factories forced Kamiti to sneeze while he was flying on the sky land in his bird form leaving, his human form at the foot of the mountain of uncollected garbage” (p.40). This is a resistance to the poisoning of the air by industries, currently a major global concern.

The continuously ecological depletion that has been observed in the forms of deforestation is the catastrophe that uncaring human intervention has brought about to the ecosystem. The novel exposes the Aburirian ruling system and its collaboration with the “big America, European and Japanese companies in alliance with the local African, Indian, and European rich,” (p.43) destructive actions on the local forests. This is what the writer undertakes as another point of resistance. Ngũgĩ presents, here, that both the international capitalists and the local irresponsible Aburirian state ruling officers are threatening the forest only aimed at maximizing their profit at the expense of the ecology, land and indigenous people. The land is being changed into a desert gradually as “the unregulated clearing forests affected the rhythm of rains” (p.201) indicates the writer’s lamentation towards the destruction of the forest. He indirectly condemns the massive loss of the forest. Voicing for such ecological destruction makes the writer concerned with ecological issues. The protest against the capitalist exploitation of African nature and its long lasting impacts appears in this novel as Ngũgĩ has depicted.

Similarly, Nyawria's response seems to spot the voice of nature when she says "in Aburiria, there is nowhere to run. As you've said, even the forests are threatened by the greed of those in power" (p.209). Here the objective of Nyawria seems to convince Kamiti to go to the town and face the oppressors and exploiters of the natural ecology of Aburiria state. Both Nyawira and Kamiti have recognized the destruction enforced on the environment, and are representing an irresponsible voice of resistance. Nyawira insists that the land belongs to all, and all should work against its mismanagement at the hands of the greedy rulers. Besides, the demands of protestors who are lining in opposition to the environment crisis are purely addressing the resistance against pollution. The narrator of the novel says, "They want a clean atmosphere so that people can have clean air to breathe, clean water to drink, and clean spaces to live and enjoy" (p.747). The demand to lead a life in a pollution free environment is an ecoactivist agenda that resists the poisoning of nature which is key to the survival of humanity itself.

Besides, the comparison made between how indigenous and western oriented ways of farming impact on the ecology presents another voice of resistance against ecological degradation caused by chemical fertilizers and addition of pollutants. Mostly the soil of Aburiria dies as a result of the application of "pollutants" and "imported fertilizers" (p.758), in the parts where indigenous ways are followed, Nature is treated with care. The narrator says in the parts where nature is treated as friendly, "the forest was a school to which they often came to hear what it had to tell them: you take; you give, for if you only take without giving back, you will leave the giver exhausted, unto death" (p.758). Through his appeal "the healing of the land had to start somewhere," (p.759) the narrator is envisioning an attitude that works towards the recovering of the lost nature.

## **Chapter Eight: Conclusions and Implications**

### **8.1 Conclusions**

Literary texts, with their pluralistic nature, have been battlefields of ecological violence and restive resistances for readers for ages. This is for they are storehouses of natural environments as well as mirror of particular social, economic, political interactions among societies, similar or different. Since the dawn of human civilization in arts, literature and the humanities, human beings have developed a habit of writing literature making nature a major character and even subject.

Since immemorial, literature has established cordial relations and kinships with nature. Since then it has depicted the natural environment as portrayals of its entities like biotic and abiotic components. Even though there are cordial relations and kinships between environment and literature, there is little or no study conducted on the interactions and representations between the human and nature particularly on the post-colonial African literature. On the other hand, the rise of environmentalism and ecological concerns in the late 1970s globally has pushed literary researchers, critics and writers to look into the ways that literature contributes and should be examined within the context of depressing human driven environmental crises. Despite the global widespread responses to environmentalism in literary studies in the west and the escalating ecological degradation on the African continent, the output of critical investigation and writing on the ecology of post-colonial Africa has been faint. Hence, this study tries to intervene and investigate this silence by considering how post-colonial Anglophone African novels have been engaged in diverse ecological violence and at the same time how post-colonial resistance with strategies is represented against these practices in the post-colonial African ecologies. The study takes into account the authors' textual choices that span a decade (2000-2010) and genres (historical and realistic) as they cover ecological violence and social environmental injustices along with resistances in different African countries.

The general objective of this research has been to examine ecological violence and resistance in post-colonial African environment as reflected in selected post-colonial Anglophone African novels applying a post-colonial ecocritical approach.

African colonial and more recently post-colonial times are usually considered as times of pressing environmental destructions in African human history. According to Fondo (2014) African history has been significantly characterized by the issue of domination. This has resulted in some of the most scarring abuses recorded in history of colonialism and post-colonialism. Based on varying degrees of imagined and perceived differences, western colonizers have engaged in acts of domination of Africans that has produced painful episodes in history like the Slave Trade and colonialism and the present day of neocolonial and imperial business orientations. One major system of domination which has affected majority of the people living in the entire African continent is colonialism followed by its contemporary legacies. From the beginning, colonialism in Africa has been defined by the seizure of indigenous lands and other natural gifts, the subjugation of indigenes, and the disruption of long established traditions and the distortions of cultures. This form of domination in Africa is environmental.

The continuous environmental crisis and threatening of the ecologies of Africa is mainly caused by anthropogenic activities and direct and indirect linkages of Africa with colonialism, post-colonialism and the present global business orientations. All these different systems of domination are backed by ideologies of western colonizers that consider the African environmental universe as functioning for profiteering. For example, European colonialism in Africa was guided by anthropocentrism and the domination of the nonhuman elements of nature springs from the notion of anthropocentrism. This extended stereotypical assumptions and attitudes on African environment have brought about ideological contradictions to the treatment and preservation of African natural environments.

Western colonialists and the contemporary global business empires believe that anthropogenic considers humans to be the essence of the environment and every other element of nature in Africa exist basically to serve human needs of profit makings. That is what the western colonizers consider the African natural environment. On the other hand, Africans are highly associated with their natural environment considering it as sources of a sacred life of human society and the generations to come. It is however interesting to note that colonial and post-colonial domination have witnessed a collusion of these two concepts, where Western colonizers and contemporary global business merchants have subjugated not only the Africans themselves but took over control of their lands and environmental resources. Not only were these lands made

to serve mainly colonial and post-colonial interests but also saw a distortion of the culture-specific relationship between Africans and their natural ecologies

Through colonialism, post-colonialism and contemporary global business orientations, Africans have been disconnected from sacred ties they had with their natural ecologies, which ties usually involved a deep respect for these other nonhuman elements of nature. Western colonizers and global business conglomerates' incursion in Africa first of all saw the subjugation of Africans who were considered as sub-humans, and animals which occupied a very low position in western discourse and also the fauna, flora, soil and water. They assume that the environment also provided raw materials for their industrial growth and whose unthinkable exploitation has left the African natural environment depleted and unhealthy. It is this consideration that this study roots to investigate the impact of colonial, post-colonial and contemporary global business interferences on African post-colonial ecologies selecting post-colonial Anglophone African novels from East, South and West Africa is using post-colonial ecocriticism approach.

Post-colonial ecocriticism is a theory that looks at both the post-colonial environment and the impacts of colonization on the former colonies and their living natural environment, how both are interconnected, reflect and define each other. As a newly emerged theory of literary study, post-colonial ecocriticism overhauls the colonial and its contemporary legacies' impact on African post-colonial ecologies and also can be used as ecoregional response to global environmental crisis that have occluded the issue of colonial/post-colonialism and displacement. The intersections between post-colonialism and ecocriticism studies that began to be explored in the early 2000s also marked a further stage in the integration of discourses about the relationships and interactions between human and the environment under the larger ecosphere.

Post-colonial ecocriticism, which has detached itself from orthodox western ecocriticism focus and the post-colonial anthropocentric limit, is concerned with the textual interpretation, where invention is essential to finding hidden alternative meanings in the texts, has brought considerable changes in the study of literature. It is also worth mentioning the fact that post-colonial ecocriticism is not a mere ecological/environmental concern. It has human concern. It believes that a textual analysis should be complete enough if it incorporates both human and the nonhuman world. This is because in the present day, the issue of environment has been a question of human survival so that the issue is seriously challenging everyone. Natural ecologies

such as forest, water bodies, wetlands, wildlife etc., have been seriously threatened mainly anthropogenic forces.

Consistently, African post-colonial ecologies in particular have been scripted as deteriorating from time to time the continent has long time colonial and post-colonial relationships. The key colonial periods, such as post-colonialism, neocolonialism and the present globalized business empires have left the continent's natural environment aesthetically degraded. This has been prevalent in many areas of Africa where its people have yoked the burdens of colonization and its contemporary legacies. The most important challenge as this research deals with is environmental colonization. That is African natural resources have been damaged, exploited without replenishments etc. because of the coming of colonization with its present day different development brand names.

Post-colonial literary works in post-colonial Africa address the colonial, post-colonial and the environmental concerns and questions. Such post-colonial ecological texts portray and interrogate the manner in which western colonizers interacted and continue to interact with African natural environments, their cultures and lands, and how this in turn lead to the ways the subjugated Africans relate with both their culture and the larger ecosphere of Africa.

As African post-colonial ecological texts have been written in these dreadful times, these texts have been found as battlefields of ecological violence and resistances against this practice. Ecological violence forms and thoughtful ecological resistance strategies have been included in those texts. Hence, this research is carried through post-colonial ecocriticism approach to uncover the ecological violence and resistance as reflected in selected post-colonial Anglophone African novels of Habila's *Oil on Water*, Mda's *The Heart of Redness*, Agary's *Yellow-Yellow*, and Ngũgĩ's *Wizard of the Crow*.

This research study is based on the theoretical assumptions and practices of post-colonial ecocriticism. Habila's *Oil on Water*, Mda's *The Heart of Redness*, Agary's *Yellow-Yellow*, and Ngũgĩ's *Wizard of the Crow* have been selected for a post-colonial ecocritical reading, analysis and interpretation of this study. Ecological violence and resistance as dominant issues are firstly identified in this study. The main themes analyzed in these texts are different forms of ecological violence, resistance strategies developed in each text, interactions between the human (native or

foreign) and the nonhuman, and writers' articulations in bringing attentions to the ecological violence and resistance. These texts have been chosen to show post-colonial ecocriticism's notion of reflecting ecological violence and resistance along with other themes attuned to the issues in their contents. The findings extracted from the analysis and interpretations lay on the four specific objectives answering the basic research questions that follow. The major findings on forms of ecological violence, resistance strategies, writer's articulation on the ongoing ecological violence and resistance as well as the representation of the interaction of the human and the nonhuman in each selected novels using post-colonial ecocritical approach is presented as follows.

### **8.1. 1 Forms of Ecological Violence in the Selected Novels**

Based on the analysis and interpretation of the study, here are detailed presentations of what has been found out from the study on forms of ecological violence in each selected novels for this study. As indicated in chapter one and other sections of this research, one of the specific objectives of this study was to find out forms of ecological violence in selected post-colonial Anglophone African novels employing post-colonial ecocritical approach. Pursuing this, the novels selected for this study have been found portraying different forms of ecological violence. Habila in his *Oil on Water*, for example, has depicted his personal observation of the continuous destruction and crisis of the natural ecologies of Niger Delta. In the course of analysis and detail examination of the novel, it has been discovered that petroviolece, environmental injustices, ecocidal activities as major forms of pressing ecological violence have been identified. All these forms of ecological violence are depicted in the novel as loss of the Niger Delta of Nigeria. The oil spill and gas flare have constantly exploited the ecology as a result of western oil extracting companies' ecological and social ill practices. They have also been found out that they have deprived of and displaced natives and degraded the living and non-living creatures of the area by alienating the ecosystem from the human world.

The oil spill has brought two major impacts to the ecology. The first is the direct impact. That is the natural ecology of Niger Delta has been violated. Fauna and flora has been slaughtered. Oxygen has been spoiled. Life is totally dead. And the second impact is indirect one. That is the destruction of ecology has brought about displacement of the human entity and longer impoverishments and political instability in the region.

Similarly environmental despoliation and pollution with other various attributes, such as contamination, petrocapiatalism, displacement, capitalist patriarchy and aesthetic degradation of Niger Delta ecology has been found as a major form of ecological violence in Agary's *Yellow-Yellow*. In *Yellow-Yellow*, ecological violence has been fondly prevailed through ecological despoliation and contamination. Ecological despoliation is depicted in the novel mainly in two ways. The first on is through environmental despoliation. This has been found existing in the form of ecocide, looting natural resources of Niger Delta and social crisis in the local communities, such as women discrimination. Ecocide is followed by the sudden flow of crude oil and gas flares on the surface of the earth that has left the green surface of land biting and damaged that is also followed by displacing many poor farmers in the area. The second form of ecological despoliation and pollution is aesthetic degradation on the lands of the ecology of Niger Delta. As the crude oil spills over the surface of the land including the villagers' crop farming and water bodies, suddenly, flaring gas has turned the surface of the earth into ugly, biting and colorless ashes. The direct impact has also brought catastrophes, such as dryness, desertification, and migration of many young girls from their rural farming homes to cities. The indirect one is the impoverishment of the local community and women discrimination. The major aim of global business conglomerates to come to Africa was to exploit African natural resources as they did on the human and psychological makeup during the last colonial times.

Both *Oil on Water* and *Yellow-Yellow* are written in the contexts of colonialism, post-colonialism and in contemporary global environmental exploitations. The writers of these selected novels have linked the ecological and social crisis with these above disbanding times in order to show still colonialism, with its different forms, is overexploiting Africa environments. In both novels ecological violence is linked to the motive of exploiting much natural resource aimed at making more profit without considering the loss the ecology. In Habila's *Oil on Water* and Agary's *Yellow-Yellow*, Western global business profiteering companies came to Nigera and engaged in extracting crude oil and petroleum gas in Niger Delta. In the course of their extractions, they further displace and alienate the natives of Niger Delta from their natural environment. The oil spills resulted from the extractions that have impacted on the ecology directly and indirectly. During the oil extractions, countless destruction has been made both to the ecology the native people of Niger Delta. Local officials also have established networks with the imperialists and business companies so that they together loot the abundant ecological resources.

In Mda's post-colonial novel, *The Heart of Redness*, ecological imperialism, zoological and geographical colonization, and flora and fauna genocide have been found out as major forms of ecological violence. The novel reveals ecological violence on both the flora and fauna of South Africa. Written as historical novel, *The Heart of Redness* has incorporated memories of ecological violence and the destruction in the 19th century colonial encounters and continued to the present day of South Africa. Mda in this novel has displayed the mass killing of the cattle and, by replacing the old by the new, and the cropping ecology as the violent action that has been happened on the natural ecology of South Africa. Mda has linked all these catastrophes with colonial history of South Africa. In Mda's *The Heart of Redness*, British colonizers came to South Africa to get land and looted its natural gifts. The land they wanted was intended for two purposes. One is to settle their citizens and the other is establishing environmental domination especially for fertile lands for cash crops and settlements. In doing so, they tried to demolish the native livestock rearing and cropping system, mold it and replace their citizens in place of the displaced native South Africans. The mass cattle killing as exhibited in the novel signifies a message that ecological ideologies of colonialism are also manifested in South African natural environment. The extermination of plant species is also caused by the expansion of modern technology and global business that has mostly been associated with colonialism and the present neocolonialism. That is the replica of the colonial ideology of ethnicity, race and discrimination in South Africa. The attempts to replace native plant species with foreign invasive one shows the how colonial thinking and practices are linked to the destruction of contemporary ecology of Africa in general and in South Africa in particular. Other forms of ecological violence in the novel are the suffocation of indigenous plants by planting invasive foreign plants while replacing the indigenous plants as a representation of ecological colonialism.

In the analysis and examination of Ngũgĩ, wa Thiong'o's *Wizard of the Crow*, deforestation and the loss of natural ecologies have been found portrayed as a major form of ecological violence in Aburiria imaginary state. The massive ecological loss of the Eldares forest has been seen as indicative of fauna and flora of the environment has been devastated and the ecosystem has been disintegrated as a result of internal and external intervention without preservation and replenishment. Besides, the loss of the forest ecosystem has been cause for decimating animals and slowly disappearance of native plant species. In Ngũgĩ, wa Thiong'o's *Wizard of the Crow*, loss of forest and reduction of species, ecological marginalization, and wide spread destructions

is associated with colonial and post-colonial ideologies of over resources extractions. As depicted in the novel the Aburiria state has direct link with western global business networks which is represented as system of dismantling the natural resources of Aburiria including climate change. The state's ruler, in alliance with western business profiting companies, is seen exploiting the forest timber to western markets in the name of export gains. The forest destruction, another form of colonialism, has damaged the biodiversity of the area. For this effect Ngũgĩ,wa Thiong'o's *Wizard of the Crow* has been crafted in the way that there is exploitative association between contemporary business globalization and the African natural environments. There is direct marketing network between the global business owners and the local leaders on the ecological forest in Aburiria state. This hierarchical linkage manifests really ecological crisis is linked with colonial and neocolonial thinking.

In the course of analysis of ecological violence and examination, all four novels selected for scrutiny are generally found as battlefields of pressing ecological violence. Writers are aware of the ecological crisis happening in the post-colonial Africa and have depicted this entire ecological crisis through their pens. The writers in all novels used oppressive/exploitative words and expressions in describing the ongoing ecological violence as reflected in the novels selected for this study. Common violent and powerful words and expressions include harmful, overhunting, ecocide, deforestation, destruction, scorched earth, genocide, ecological war, ecological violence etc. The novels selected for analysis are also found as tools to critique the violent practices of human society on nature as they are written during the environmental movement reached peak after the 1990s and considered as genocidal literature.

### **8.1.2 Ecological Resistances in the Selected Novels**

Writers of the selected novels used different strategies in revealing natives' restive efforts in struggling, protesting, and resisting against the post-colonial environmental destructions. Agary and Habila used a strategy of fighting against petrocapiatalism in Niger Delta. Both writers produced their works in revealing ecological resistance strategies set by them to save and preserve nature. *In his Oil on Water*, Habila major characters are investigative journalists who observed and reported from the actual site where the natural environment is highly violated by petroleum and gas exploiters in Niger Delta. Habila used, combining literature and journalism as both cross-fertilize each other, international media outlets both broadcasting and newsletters.

Habila focuses on the ongoing ecological violence of the region and his journalists are allowed to dig out and reveal the issue to the international community is an indication of which the writer and his characters really resist the crises. Habila also used different techniques, such as ecological nostalgization, revealing the healing power of nature in Africa and glorification of the pre-colonial environmental history of Africa. Agary in her *Yellow-Yellow* has crafted her ecological resistance strategies into three ways. The first one is through ecoactivising and the second is through creating interconnectedness between African nature and the human, and the third one is presenting ecological feminism as a tool of environmental resistance.

In her novel, Agary used ecoactivism as a movement of voicing for nature through mobilizing the mass about the concerns of environment in general and Niger Delta's ecology in particular. In this ecological form of resistance, she has created major characters like poor women farmers who are highly victimized by the expropriators' business projects or western oil extracting companies, and youth to resist, protest and change the fast dynamics of the destruction of the local ecology of Niger Delta in her novel. With these characters, Agary has exposed the evils of colonialism and post-colonialism on the poor African women's life and the blissful nature of the Niger Delta. With this its qualities, Agary's *Yellow-Yellow*, can be described as a counter-discourse against ecological imperialism in Niger Delta. The second strategy of resistance used by Agary is ecofeminism, simply called ecological feminism. Agary used this strategy to reveal suppression of women through patriarchal human domination. She voices for women, indirectly voicing for Nature as she believes women carry double burdens as nature does.

The story of Agary's *Yellow-Yellow* is narrated by young girl to represent the freshness, innocent and fertility of nature on one hand and to urge her readers about the destruction of natural ecologies of Niger Delta and the suppression of poor and innocent women. In addition, people may hear and listen the fascinating story as it is being narrated by young girl as a section of society including the international community. Moreover, Agary seems to reveal the deprived natural right of African children to live in clean and conducive natural environment. This strategy is also more reinforced as women and nature are interconnected each other.

Similarly Zakes Mda in his *The Heart of Redness* has devised an ecological resistance strategy. Mda's resistance strategy is environmental education. He devised this strategy through his major character called Camagu. Camagu has developed this ecological educational campaign and taught

villagers to have ecological awareness and consciousness using democratic participatory approach. Then Camagu has resisted ecological crisis, resolved conflicts and maintain global environmental challenges by developing sustainable and ecofriendly development. In addition, in Mda's *The Heart of Redness*, ecological ills of capitalists' development projects are resisted and added a new perspective to understanding of natural environment through revealing colonial anthropocentric limitations and devising an ecoconscious attitude and ecofriendly induced development. In *The Heart of Redness*, Mda's major characters fight against invasive species imported from abroad by colonialists. Mda's characters also fight for development projects launched into their villages that will bring ecological damages.

Ecological conservation and protection is connected with African indigenous communities as evidenced in Mda's *The Heart of Redness* and Ngũgĩ's *Wizard of The Crow*. Ngũgĩ's characters resist the current deforestation practices in their imaginative state of Aburiria. They use a strategy of ecological restoration in addition to resisting the imperial practices. In their strives to protest, expose and transform this often dire conditions of the ecology, Ngũgĩ has used almost similar ecological resistance strategy as Wangari Meathai applied in her 'Green Belt Movement' in, Kenya. Ngũgĩ has developed afforestation campaign in order to replenish the runaway deforestation of the ecology of Aburiria state, the setting of the novel. In addition, healing the power of nature is identified as the major resistance strategies. Ngũgĩ, wa Thiong'o has devised against these ecological violence by the imperial and colonial dominations over the environments of Niger Delta. Conservation, tree reforestation, and ecological consciousness are revealed as the major ecological resistance against the destructions. In his magical realistic novel, *Wizard of the Crow*, Ngũgĩ's exposes forest destructions over the years in Kenya in the global business times of the 21st century.

All the four writers employ nonviolent ecological resistance strategy to resist and protest against the ongoing ecological crisis that has been reflected in the each selected novels for this study. Some of nonviolent ecological resistance words and expressions crafted by the writers include, ecological journalism, ecological awareness and ecotourism based development, eco- activism and ecological feminism, reforestation and ecological restoration and understanding nature.

### **8.1.3 Role of the Writer to articulate Ecological Violence and Resistance in the Selected Novels**

Writers of the selected novels for this study use different narrative strategies (narrative voices, point of views and ecological/environmental tropes) to articulate the ongoing ecological violence and resistances on the post-colonial African ecologies as reflected in each novel. Habila and Agary have expressed their angers about the complete destruction of the ecology of Niger Delta through various environmental tropes like simile, personification and irony. In both texts the two writers try to show the severity of the ecological situation as a result of penetration of global business over territories in this century. Both writers try to portray natural resource wars in Niger Delta as critique of western forms of state run environmentalism which can be termed as a colonial legacy. Similarly, Mda in his *The Heart of Redness* articulates the mass cattle killing as illegitimate practice against the international act of earth's biodiversity. Mda also strongly condemns species invasion as major violence on the natural ecology against the international law of preservation and protection of plant species in their native places. His major concern is that expropriators have displaced the natives by replacing their natural ecology on which displacement is a continuous challenge in Africa. He links all these causal factors with the coming of colonialism and the present day form of economical and natural resources exploitation in former colonized states.

In *Wizard of the Crow*, Ngũgĩ' articulates the drastic deforestation in Aburiria state. He has created characters that fight for nature by organizing movements. The massive deforestation and animal poaching has been given attention by the writer to tone out the impact of expansion of global business at the expense of Kenyan natural environment.

Agary's *Yellow-Yellow* suggests a metaphor of loss of freedom for poor women in a degraded ecology of Niger Delta. Agary's presentation of poor and victimized women, girls and the rape of the ecology of Niger Delta of Nigeria in her novel is simply to give global attention to the degradation of the environment. She also narrates her story with first person point of view to directly reflect the experiences of poor displaced women in the degraded environments of Niger Delta. Agary also loudly voices for nature by portraying a little innocent poor rural girl who laments and speaks about the impacts of environmental degradation on nature and innocent children of Africa. She also connects lack of way forward for the Niger Delta women with

environmental destruction by the colonial, post-colonial and global business conglomerates of the west. The writers also used different recurrent environmental tropes in order to show emphasis on the continuous dreadful conditions of the post-colonial ecologies of Africa in each novel selected for this study. Personification, metaphor, symbolism, metonymy, imagery etc. are some of the figurative languages writers used to tone out their ideologies on the situations of disrespecting of nature by the western colonizers and local native collaborators.

All the four writers also used different narrative strategies to articulate natives' uninterrupted struggles and endeavors in resisting, protesting and changing their local ecology against the colonial and/or post-colonial environmental destructions. One of the narrative strategies they used is environmental tropes to show the promise, uniqueness, and complexity of African environment. They also articulate the issue being spokespersons as well as ecological activists. Habila used ecological journalism in his novel; major characters are portrayed to exposing the degradation of the respective environments by reporting from the actual site to the international community. Mda in his *The Heart of Redness* used the strategy of mainstreaming ecological tourism as the contemporary environmental resilience strategy in saving both the human and the nonhuman. Agary's practically uses ecological feminism and ecoactivism to give emphasis to natural environment. She also tries to connect nature with women.

#### **8.1.4 Interactions between Human and the Nonhuman in the Selected Novels**

The novels selected for this study have been found portraying the interactions between human and the nonhuman as influencing and influenced each other. The communication between the human (both natives and colonizers) and the nonhuman (physical environment) has been depicted as having negative and positive spillover effects on either side of the interactions. The interaction has been made among natural ecology, natives and the expropriators have been presented below in-depth.

In Habila's *Oil on Water* ecological alienation that clearly defined the isolation of human and the nonhuman. The novel presents and offers a critical insight into the human and the nonhuman divide by reflecting upon the distorted connection and interaction between the local people and their ecology and its services after the whole environment is damaged. The post-colonial expropriators came with their own profit driven global project. They then over exploited the

natural ecology of Niger Delta of Nigeria. They displaced the natives without compensation. There is exploitative kind of interaction between the natives and the expropriators. However, the natives are found having strong affiliation with their ecology as they believe that it is a source of everything. However, they have contradictory relations with the colonizers. The novel describes the human influence on the ecology of Niger Delta by violating Nature. Nature is presented as subaltern, violated, and discriminated on the side of foreigners.

Similarly Mda's *The Heart of Redness* displays unpleasant interaction between the natives and nonnatives. Even in some natives, there are arrogant relations with the natives' ecology. Mostly; Mda has depicted nature as victim, subaltern, violated with the side of the nonnatives but appreciated, understanding and spiritual communication with the sides of natives. The colonial and post-colonial relations with the local ecology and the community have been represented as overexploited and suffering on the side of the nonnatives.

In Agary's *Yellow-Yellow*, dynamic interactions between the human and the nonhuman have been represented. The agents (independent actors) show complex network of relations. The ecology, the African human and the nonnatives have been isolated. Ecological alienation in the novel offers the human and nonhuman divide by reflecting upon the distorted communication between the local people of Niger Delta and the oil exploiting expropriators. However, there is still interconnection and kinship between the natives and the natural ecology of Niger Delta, Nigeria. Agary also tries to reveal the discordant relations and interactions between Niger Delta poor women and their environmental resource masters. Women in Agary's *Yellow-Yellow* have been depicted with terseness expressions and attitudes towards both the local leaders who are supposed to be suppressive to women and the foreign oil exploiting company owners. On the contrary Agary's female characters have developed flexible network of relations and interactions with Nature. Nature and women are represented as not separated and but always related and interwoven.

Similarly, in Ngũgĩ, wa Thiong'o's *Wizard of the Crow*, the interaction among the natives, the nonnatives and the physical environment has been represented as not reciprocal. In the novel, the nonnatives are represented deforesting the dense natural forest of Aburiria state for timber production without any endeavor to restore it. They evaluate the natural forest to satisfy human wants so that they carelessly exploit it in collaboration with the local environmental corruptors.

The natives on the other hand always strive to be ecologically aware so that the only way to save nature they believe is to protect and preserve the natural environment. However, there are discordant relationships and interactions between the nonhuman and the natural resource expropriators but affiliated interaction between the natives and the ecology. There is weird relationship between the natives and western imperialists. Ngũgĩ's presentation of such contradictory interactions shows there is difference between human and the nonhuman of Africa and the west in the evaluation of natural environment. The novel significantly addresses the fact that the natives are highly connected with nature, unlike the imperialists.

## **8.2 Implications**

The current concern for the dire condition of environment has been an apprehension of everyone in every corner of the globe as environmental crises are transboundary by nature. In the endeavors of protecting and conserving the natural environment from this century's crises, the role of literature is not only left from the west as this research has found out. African literary and nonliterary works are also found embodying natural environmental issues and concerns. The writers of the novels selected for this study have been found engaged in revealing various forms of pressing ecological violence prevailed in the environments of post-colonial Africa and protesting, resisting and changing the situation against it by designing certain resistance strategies. These various forms of ecological violence are found directly and/or indirectly linked to colonialism and its legacies. The resistance strategies developed in the selected literary texts is also attuned to post-colonial African human-nonhuman interactions, with custodial relationships for their natural environment. Hence, based on the findings of this study, the following implications have been forwarded:

1) From the results of this study, it is possible to understand that ecological concerns, issues and ways of preserving it has been one of the major concerns of African post-colonial writers at different ecological regions of the continent. An ecological region in this context refers to the three Sub-Saharan African regions in which the study has taken sample study novels out of the five larger ecological regions. Yet as the study's theoretical framework (post-colonial ecocriticism) shows, the African writers' perspectives has to be followed in addressing African voices with the respective ecological regions and environmental contexts. That could be addressed through employing post-colonial ecocriticism approach which looks at both the

African environment contexts and the people at the same time, how both are interconnected, reflect and define each other. The debate over the involvement of the African writers in ecological concerns and issues, and ways of conserving it could also be recognized well if the frameworks to be followed are well developed and contextualized to the realities of the continent with both colonial and post-colonial contexts, particularly the indigenous and environmental justice perspective.

2) The study also implies the urgent need for ecological/environmental consciousness, sustainable preservation, and the internationalization of the African perspective as alternative towards curbing of ecological crisis. In this regard the results imply for the concern to be paid to contemporary ecological crisis and threats to African humanity and environment from African perspective. Implementing ecotourism, ecofriendly environmental treatment, reforestation, environmental justice along with environmental education etc. are important resistance strategies used to forge the outside-the-box and to curb ecological crisis. Moreover, a holistic approach of ecological movements to addressing interconnected webs of dominion and embarking on inter-period dialogism are needed.

3) As indicated in the findings of the study, post-colonial ecocritical approach is found aligned with the defining features of post-colonial African literature. Besides it is used to rescue African environment from devastating ecological crisis and embodies strategies of resistance against to post-colonial environmental destructions. This is a paradigm shift to ecocentric approach to the reading and analysis of African literature. Hence, the following suggestions have been delivered with regard to the endeavors to make benefit out of the commitment of literature and literary studies to ecological/environmental concerns.

As post-colonial ecocriticism is a young literary approach recently launched to the study of the relationship between human and the nonhuman, and the study of literary works as a complete body human and the nonhuman, it is pertinent to examine its all-round role of valuation of the literary works in the Global South. The incorporation of post-colonial ecocriticism in the study and literary criticism as one perspective to the analysis of literary works will ignite writers and readers towards African literary analysis and development into further distances. In addition, the approach is useful if it is employed not only to literary works but also nonliterary works, expressive media, including visual, musical, and cinematic as well as more purely instrumental

forms of expression such as scholarly articles and conventions of legislative documents, reports from nongovernmental organizations and the like.

Besides, based on the findings of this research study, the researcher has also suggested that though post-colonial ecocriticism is a critical method of evaluation that reveals many interesting facts about post-colonial literary texts, it should be remembered that it is only one method of analysis among the various methods and approaches in literary study. So, other interested researchers in the future may come out with different interpretation of the same texts, employing other critical methods of analysis.

This study has only centered on selected post-colonial Anglophone African novels written from 2000-2010. The selected novels are drawn from west, south and east Africa. Further study on other genres, regions, and/or authors from different ecological regions of the continent or on all works of a single author or authoress could be studied. Issues regarding ecological violence, resistance, interactions and interrelationships between human (foreign and African) and the nonhuman can be explored applying the same or related theories, models and thoughts. Further investigations may also be conducted to explore ecological crisis and resistance patterns and other African environmental destructions over span of times. Also an intensive comparative study of works by women and men within or outside of the continent, differences in ecological/environmental perceptions and imaginations between women and men, colonizers and colonized, natives and settlers etc., would become significant area for literary studies. Another ongoing theme to be explored will be study on literary and other aesthetic imagination of cross-species relations like literature for children as well as for adults.

Moreover, as this study dealt with Anglophone African novels only, similar studies on Ethiopian oral and written texts can be reconsidered even though Ethiopia has no historical connection with colonialism. Investigations and explorations of Ethiopian ecological/environmental concerns and issues as reflected in both literary and nonliterary works can be considered as further area of study employing ecological oriented approaches. Finally, it should be noted that this research is only a small attempt to demonstrate the application of post-colonial ecocriticism as a critical practice and as such the study is neither absolute nor comprehensive in any sense of these terms.

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## **Declaration**

I, the undersigned declare that “A Post-colonial Ecocritical Reading of Ecological Violence and Resistance in Selected Anglophone African Novels (2000-2010)” is the result of my own effort and has not been presented to any university in the same or different form to merit a PhD Degree other than that for which I am now a candidate, and that all sources used for the dissertation have been duly acknowledged.

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Dagnachew Adefris Gebrehiwot

June 2020