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# **Revue Internationale de Langue, Littérature, Culture et Civilisation**

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de la paix »**

*“Creative Justice, Human Rights and Responsibility as Passes to Peace”*

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## Editorial

La *Revue Internationale de Langue, Littérature, Culture et Civilisation* (RILLiCC) est une revue à comité de lecture en phase d'indexation recommandée par le Conseil Africain et Malgache pour l'Enseignement Supérieur (CAMES). Elle est la revue du Laboratoire de Recherche en Langues, Littérature, Culture et Civilisation Anglophones (LaReLLiCCA) dont elle publie les résultats des recherches en lien avec la recherche et la pédagogie sur des orientations innovantes et stimulantes à la vie et vision améliorées de l'académie et de la société. La revue accepte les textes qui cadrent avec des enjeux épistémologiques et des problématiques actuels pour être au rendez-vous de la contribution à la résolution des problèmes contemporains.

RILLiCC met en éveil son lectorat par rapport aux défis académiques et sociaux qui se posent en Afrique et dans le monde en matière de science littéraire et des crises éthiques. Il est établi que les difficultés du vivre-ensemble sont fondées sur le radicalisme et l'extrémisme violents. En effet, ces crises et manifestations ne sont que des effets des causes cachées dans l'imaginaire qu'il faut (re)modeler au grand bonheur collectif. Comme il convient de le noter ici, un grand défi se pose aux chercheurs qui se doivent aujourd'hui d'être conscients que la science littéraire n'est pas rétribuée à sa juste valeur quand elle se voit habillée sous leurs yeux du mythe d'Albatros ou d'un cymbale sonore. L'idée qui se cache malheureusement derrière cette mythologie est que la littérature ne semble pas contribuer efficacement à la résolution des problèmes de société comme les sciences exactes. Dire que la recherche a une valeur est une chose, le prouver en est une autre. La *Revue Internationale de Langue, Littérature, Culture et Civilisation* à travers les activités du LaReLLiCCA entend faire bénéficier à son lectorat et à sa société cible, les retombées d'une recherche appliquée.

Le comité spécialisé « Lettres et Sciences Humaines » du Conseil Africain et Malgache pour l'Enseignement Supérieur (CAMES) recommande l'utilisation harmonisée des styles de rédaction et la présente revue s'inscrit dans cette logique directrice en adoptant le style APA.

L'orientation éditoriale de cette revue inscrit les résultats pragmatiques et novateurs des recherches sur fond social de médiation, d'inclusion et de réciprocité qui permettent de maîtriser les racines du mal et réaliser les objectifs du développement durable déclencheurs de paix partagée.

Lomé, le 20 octobre 2020.

Le directeur de publication,

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### ***Ligne éditoriale***

**Volume :** La taille du manuscrit est comprise entre 4500 et 6000 mots.  
Format: papier A4, Police: Times New Roman, Taille: 11,5, Interligne 1,15.

### ***Ordre logique du texte***

Un article doit être un tout cohérent. Les différents éléments de la structure doivent faire un tout cohérent avec le titre. Ainsi, tout texte soumis pour publication doit comporter:

- un titre en caractère d'imprimerie ; il doit être expressif et d'actualité, et ne doit pas excéder 24 mots ;
- un résumé en anglais-français, anglais-allemand, ou anglais-espagnol selon la langue utilisée pour rédiger l'article. Se limiter exclusivement à objectif/problématique, cadre théorique et méthodologique, et résultats. Aucun de ces résumés ne devra dépasser 150 mots ;
- des mots clés en français, en anglais, en allemand et en espagnol : entre 5 et 7 mots clés ;
- une introduction (un aperçu historique sur le sujet ou revue de la littérature en bref, une problématique, un cadre théorique et méthodologique, et une structure du travail) en 600 mots au maximum ;
- un développement dont les différents axes sont titrés. Il n'est autorisé que trois niveaux de titres. Pour le titrage, il est vivement recommandé d'utiliser les chiffres arabes ; les titres alphanumériques et alphanumériques ne sont pas acceptés ;
- une conclusion (rappel de la problématique, résumé très bref du travail réalisé, résultats obtenus, implémentation) en 400 mots au maximum ;
- liste des références : par ordre alphabétique des noms de familles des auteurs cités.

### **Références**

Il n'est fait mention dans la liste de références que des sources effectivement utilisées (citées, paraphrasées, résumées) dans le texte de l'auteur. Pour leur présentation, la norme American Psychological Association (APA) ou références intégrées est exigée de tous les auteurs qui veulent faire publier leur texte dans la revue. Il est fait exigence aux auteurs de n'utiliser que la seule norme dans leur texte. Pour en savoir

plus, consultez ces normes sur Internet.

### **Présentation des notes référencées**

Le comité de rédaction exige APA (Auteur, année : page). L'utilisation des notes de bas de pages n'intervient qu'à des fins d'explication complémentaire. La présentation des références en style métissé est formellement interdite.

### **La gestion des citations :**

**Longues citations :** Les citations de plus de quarante (40) mots sont considérées comme longues ; elles doivent être mises en retrait dans le texte en interligne simple.

**Les citations courtes :** les citations d'un (1) à quarante (40) mots sont considérées comme courtes ; elles sont mises entre guillemets et intégrées au texte de l'auteur.

### **Résumé :**

- ✓ Pour Pewissi (2017), le Womanisme transcende les cloisons du genre.
- ✓ Ourso (2013:12) trouve les voyelles qui débordent le cadre circonscrit comme des voyelles récalcitrantes.

### **Résumé ou paraphrase :**

- ✓ Ourso (2013:12) trouve les voyelles qui débordent le cadre circonscrit comme des voyelles récalcitrantes.

### **Exemple de référence**

#### **Pour un livre**

Collin, H. P. (1988). *Dictionary of Government and Politics*. UK: Peter Collin Publishing.

#### **Pour un article tiré d'un ouvrage collectif**

Gill, W. (1998/1990). "Writing and Language: Making the Silence Speak." In Sheila Ruth, *Issues in Feminism: An Introduction to Women's Studies*. London: Mayfield Publishing Company, Fourth Edition. Pp. 151-176.

#### **Utilisation de Ibid., op. cit, sic entre autres**

**Ibidem (Ibid.)** intervient à partir de la deuxième note d'une référence source citée. Ibid. est suivi du numéro de page si elle est différente de

référence mère dont elle est consécutive. Exemple : *ibid.*, ou *ibidem*, p. x.

**Op. cit.** signifie ‘la source pré-citée’. Il est utilisé quand, au lieu de deux références consécutives, une ou plusieurs sources sont intercalées. En ce moment, la deuxième des références consécutives exige l’usage de *op. cit.* suivi de la page si cette dernière diffère de la précédente.

### **Typographie**

-La *Revue Internationale de Langue, Littérature, Culture et Civilisation* interdit tout soulignement et toute mise en gras des caractères ou des portions de textes.

-Les auteurs doivent respecter la typographie choisie concernant la ponctuation, les abréviations...

### **Tableaux, schémas et illustrations**

Pour les textes contenant les tableaux, il est demandé aux auteurs de les numéroter en chiffres romains selon l’ordre de leur apparition dans le texte. Chaque tableau devra comporter un titre précis et une source propre. Par contre, les schémas et illustrations devront être numérotés en chiffres arabes et dans l’ordre d’apparition dans le texte.

La largeur des tableaux intégrés au travail doit être 10 cm maximum, format A4, orientation portrait.

### **Instruction et acceptation d’article**

A partir du volume 2 de la présente édition, les dates de réception et d’acceptation des textes sont marquées, au niveau de chaque article. Deux (02) à trois (03) instructions sont obligatoires pour plus d’assurance de qualité.

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## **LITTERATURE**

## Ecocritical Reading of Justice in Kaine Agary's *Yellow Yellow*

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### Abstract:

This study aims at analyzing the literary articulations of Agary's deconstruction of social peace in *Yellow Yellow* through the denial of human responsibility to nature and landscape. The emphasis is put on the respect of human rights and justice in land exploitation in the novel. Justice is hardly come by when personal interests are prioritized. This truncated form of justice leads to frustration and violence. Thus, social peace calls for responsibility, justice and respect of human rights. Ecocritical theory exposes the injustice done to characters in the exploitation of their land.

**Key words:** Justice, responsibility, human rights, peace.

### Résumé :

Cette étude vise à analyser les articulations littéraires de Agary dans la déconstruction de la paix sociale dans *Yellow Yellow* à travers le refus de la responsabilité humaine vis-à-vis de la nature et du paysage. L'accent est mis sur le respect des droits de l'homme et de la justice dans l'exploitation de la terre dans le roman. La justice est difficilement obtenue lorsque les intérêts personnels sont prioritaires. Cette forme tronquée de la justice crée la frustration et la violence. Ainsi, la paix sociale appelle à la responsabilité, à la justice et au respect des droits de l'homme. La théorie éco critique expose l'injustice faite aux personnages dans l'exploitation de leur terre.

**Mots clés :** Justice, responsabilité, droits de l'homme, paix.

### Introduction

Shepard, in *Nature and Madness*, wonders:

Why do men persist in destroying their habitat? I have, at different times, believed the answer was a lack of

information, faulty technique, or insensibility [...]. At mid-twentieth century there was a widely shared feeling that we only needed to bring businessmen, cab drivers, housewives, and politicians together with the right mix of oceanographers, soils experts, or foresters in order to set things right. In time, even with the attention of the media and a windfall of synthesizers, popularizers, gurus of ecophilosophy, and other champions of ecology, in spite of some new laws and indications that environmentalism is taking its place as a new turtle on the political log, nothing much has changed (Shepard, 1982: 1).

**Toynbee**, on the first worldwide recognition of the possibility of environmental disaster, writes that:

Mankind now has the power to make the biosphere uninhabitable, and that it will, in fact, produce this suicidal result within a foreseeable period of time if the human population of the globe does not now take prompt and vigorous concerted action to check the pollution and the spoliation that are being inflicted upon the biosphere by short-sighted human greed (**Love**, 1996: 225).

These critics seem unheeded and little was done in the way of prompt and vigorous concerted action which they call for. Their concerns explain the interdependence between nature and human beings since the creation of earth. This interdependence is seen in life sustaining activities such as farming, fishing, hunting etc, offered by nature. In this line, ecologists agree “to find ways of keeping the human community from destroying the natural community, and with it the human community” (Rueckert, 1996: 107).

The destruction of the natural community that endangers life sustaining activities and the uneven distribution of natural resources cause violence in Agary’s invented world. Ibaba, Ukaga, and Ukiwo (2012: 1) affirm that: “At the roots of these violent conflicts are the genuine quest of the people for sustainable development that is based on social justice, equity, fairness, and environmental protection. Although richly endowed, the region (the fictional region, the Niger Delta, in the novel) is hopelessly poor.” In the exploitation of these resources, the environment and the

people are rudely sacrificed on the altar of personal and vaulting ambitions energized by inhuman ideology that beds with unbelievable injustice. In this line, the prevailing peace is shattered by human thoughtlessness since the people's source of livelihood is affected and hunger becomes the order of the day.

My purpose in this study is to analyze the literary articulations of Agary's deconstruction of social peace in *Yellow Yellow* through the denial of human responsibility to nature and landscape. As human life is basically sustained by nature, it is "moral right to defend the environment against a corrupt land grab" (Nixon, 2007: 720). To separate nature from human life is tantamount to eliminating life. This interdependence between nature and human beings is observed when living in the Niger Delta in the fictional Nigeria becomes impossible subsequent to the installation of petrol exploiting companies in the area. This installation has triggered violence among the hitherto peaceful people which results into the desertion of the area. The oil exploitation is viewed as "anti-people exploitation" (Simon, et al., 2010: 156) since it deprives the people of their breadwinning source, thus making life unbearable. In this perspective, Ibaba et al. (2012: 2) contend that

inadequate compensation for properties destroyed by oil production activities, the destruction of livelihoods without the provision of viable alternatives, and the environmental destruction caused by oil spills and gas flare. The OPCs (oil producing communities) demanded the payment of adequate compensation for their destroyed properties, basic social amenities such as water and health facilities, environmental protection, employment opportunities, and the award of contracts to indigenes.

From the foregoing, torture is inflicted on the people, the destruction of their properties and environment leaves them hopeless and they find solace in rural exodus. The injustice in the Niger Delta explains Ken Saro Wiwa's "commitment for social justice for the Ogoni people, who have been marginalised, deprived and exploited" (Simon, 2010: 156) by the oil companies in cahoots with the governing authorities. Kaine Agary's novel understudy is in the framework of Saro Wiwa's commitment to

helping redress the deterioration of the land and helping “ground our sense of environmental responsibility” (Nixon, 2007: 717). Destroying the environment and people’s lives for the sake of untold interests should question one’s sense of responsibility towards the sacred value of human life.

My approach in this study is sustained by postcolonial ecocriticism under the angle of environmental ethics which, according to Huggan and Tiffin (2010: 21), “preserves the aesthetic function of the literary text while drawing attention to its social and political usefulness, its capacity to set out symbolic guidelines for the material transformation of the world. Postcolonial ecocritical theory lays emphasis on responsibility and classes in connection to the environment. It is precisely the absence of the sense of responsibility in the leaders who lack humanism towards the population that the novelist highlights. This brings Glotfelty and Fromm (1996: xviii) to admit that ecocriticism is “a study of the relationship between literature and the physical environment.” In other words, this study tries to reconceptualise environmental ethics by pointing out the sharing of responsibilities between the leaders and the masses in the management of the nation’s asset that should be profitable to all. This raises moral questions about how we interact with nature. In this vein, Bahaguna regrets that “modern materialistic civilisation makes man the butcher of Earth” (Huggan et al., op. cit.: 8). The scramble for material possession has made man apathetic to the suffering of his/her fellow-human beings and to the destruction of the environment as well. Hence, ecocriticism “entreats us to participate in practices that will change our environment and our material world, encouraging us to become guardians of our planet not only for ourselves but also for future generations” (Bressler, 2011: 232). This study deals, in the first part, with the deconstruction of social peace in the novel and the second part deals with the necessity to save the environment for harmonious living.

### **1. Deconstruction of Social Peace in *Yellow Yellow***

Peace, according to the *Encarta World English Dictionary*, is “a state of mental calm and serenity, with no anxiety ... or the absence of violence or other disturbances within a state” (Rooney, 1999: 1387). The mental calm is enjoyed and guaranteed in the Niger Delta due to the interaction

with the environment through activities such as farming and fishing. In this line, “all ecological criticism shares the fundamental premise that human culture is connected to the physical world, affecting it and affected by it” (Glotfelty et al., op. cit.: xix). Human culture and the physical world are closely interrelated in the sense that the physical world dictates activities affordable in a given area. In the fictional Niger Delta environment in Agary’s novel, prior to the oil mining activities, the people were able to feed themselves and take a good care of their families through the affordable activities in the region, farming and fishing among others. The narrator reminds the reader of

the days when the Ijaw woman could ignore the nature of the Ijaw man because she had a means of earning a living and providing the needs of her children. Those were the days when Ijaw women cooked a fresh pot of soup every day because the rivers teeming with fish. Their farms held plantain trees so fertile that there was more plantain than anyone knew what to do with – roasted, boiled, mashed, green, and yellow, the possibilities were endless (Agary, 2006: 40).

This lays the basis of a peaceful and harmonious living in the area. The harmony, beyond any reasonable doubt, is brought by the naturally conducive environment where livelihood is derived. In this perspective, the main objective pursued by postcolonial ecocriticism, affirm Huggan and Tiffin, is to examine relationships between humans, animals and the environment in postcolonial literary texts. Indeed, the relationship with the environment in the Niger Delta is a peaceful one from which the people find satisfaction to their daily needs. The narrator rightly substantiates that “she (the protagonist’s mother) had inherited a small piece of land from her family, which she farmed, and sometimes she would go fishing (Niger River Delta). With the proceeds, she was able to feed us and pay my school fees. She took care of all my needs...” (Ibid.: 8). The protagonist Zilayefa’s mother, whose husband has abandoned her to fend for herself after impregnating her, finds solace and love from the environment through her farming and fishing activities. The latter truly constitute a substitute for her ‘husband’ because they provide for her needs like a husband would have done it. And this situation of sustenance

through the environment is the same for every person in the region. Simon et al., op. Cit.: 156) tallies with the foregoing that “land in the Niger Delta, like in other parts of Nigeria and Africa is regarded as a sacred entity as well as symbol of life and status.” Land symbolizes life in every aspect of the narrative developed by the novelist. The symbolism shows up since humans and non-human living creatures feed on and are sheltered on land to the extent that the desecration of such land undeniably jeopardizes their living. In a word, life is indeed in land! Saro-Wiwa sheds light on the Ogoni (Niger Delta) people’s perception of land: “To the Ogoni, rivers and streams do not only provide water for life – for bathing, drinking, etc.; they do not only provide fish for food, they are also sacred and are bound up intricately with the life of the community, of the entire Ogoni nation” (Huggan et al., op. cit.: 50). Life being linked with land makes postcolonial ecocriticism a crucial weapon to fight and sensitize people against its devastation. How is the natural peace in the Niger Delta threatened in the novel?

Deconstruction, in the view of Harris (1992: 57), is

A mode of reading first defined by Jacques Derrida and based on the principle that linguistic signs cannot be linked to extralinguistic reality but are instead components of the ultimately self-contradictory structure of language. A deconstructive reading of a text is then a search for (concealed) contradictions within a text that necessarily undercut its apparent unity.

The apparent peace in the novel based on the symbiotic coexistence with the environment has seriously been endangered by the greed fuelling the wheels of oil exploiting companies in the Niger Delta. The oil exploitation has unfortunately resulted in “human rights tragedy” (Osondu, 2012: 132). The tragedy follows the degradation of the lands by the oil spillage. The protagonist, Zilayefa, confirms that: “During my second to 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” (Agary, op. cit.: 3). It is clear that the villagers’ source of livelihood has been destroyed and wiped off. Human beings are at peace when they feed, clothe and educate themselves and get treated

during sickness. This is possible when people have a regular source of income. But when for secret interests some people find it normal to destroy that source of income and tread underfoot the dignity of their fellowship citizens then peace and justice would suffer. The tragedy is also perceived in the narrator's account of the situation: "the oil companies had destroyed our Niger Delta with impunity. They (the youth) would discuss how the Ijaws and other ethnic groups were suffering and even dying while the wealth of their soil fed others" (Ibid.: 9).

Watts, quoted by Obi (2012: 24), dubs the foregoing state of affairs as the "worst forms of frontier capitalism." These deadly forms of capitalism blatantly devalue human life. The author's logic invites a reading which evidences that sensible person who sees the wealth of his/her home being exploited and enjoyed by unknown persons, would surely question the utility of such an exploitation and stand against it. With this narrative view, it is therefore unfortunate that instead of helping alleviate the plight of the population in the region, the government connives with the oil companies to inflict suffering to the people of Niger Delta who wear the shoe and know where it pinches. The writer has the narrator agree: "the government that should be enforcing the laws to protect us in the Niger Delta is in fact putting our heads on the chopping block for the oil companies to finish the job" (Agary, op. cit.: 137). I am not against the principle of creating oil companies in the region but has the discovery of the oil been serving the first beneficiaries? It is the question that needs to be reflected upon. When the beneficiaries feel side-lined, then the critic Cyril Obi's remark of the oil discovery seems justified. For him, the abject living conditions of the people amount to "oil curse" that spells inevitable doom for those postcolonial countries endowed with its riches" (Obi, op. cit.: 24). In the same vein, Obi aptly writes "because of oil, and the greed that it has bred – globally as well as locally – violence and its production as a means of livelihood has mingled with the multiple inequalities and inequities and contradictions that mark daily existence in the villages, creeks, and cities of the region" (Ibid.). This explains the glaring impunity underlined by the narrator. Simon and Raji have hit on the nail that: "Land, streams, creeks etc have been polluted, roofs of

buildings in the area have been perforated while “the vapour when it settles on the skin turns into a charred surface in the form of an unsightly skin disease” (Simon et al., op. cit.: 156). They further explain that “there is also the effect of consistent explosions which cause many of the buildings to shake and the wall to crack. Because of this, many of the villagers have had to abandon their houses, migrating to other villages in search of refuge” (Ibid.).

The depiction of the critics appeals to the reader’s sense of humanism and of the protection of the environment. Slaymaker (2007: 687) expresses Wole Soyinka’s accusation of the oil companies of “violating virgin spaces and wreaking ecological devastation.” The outcry made by Soyinka expresses the inner feeling of the Ogoni people who hardly provide food for their families. Regrettably the protagonist confirms that “farming and fishing, the occupations that had sustained my mother, her mother, and her mother’s mother no longer provided gain” (Agary, op. cit.: 39). It is obvious that the hitherto peaceful harmony with the environment is disappearing making room for environmental hostility due to human exaggerated sense of greed and self-aggrandizement. The Niger Delta people see their lives turn unbearably bitter as they become jobless due to the ecological devastation that brings to halt their farming and fishing activities. In this perspective, Ibaba et al. ( op. cit.: 118) write: “the general level of poverty in the Niger Delta region has continued to rise, as people lose their means of livelihood due to pollution of the environment”. The protagonist recounts the ordeal they go through as her mother’s farm was overrun by the crude oil: “The day my mother’s farm was overrun by crude oil was the day her dream for me started to wither, but she carried on watering it with hope. The black oil that spilled that day swallowed my mother’s crops and unravelled the threads that held together her fantasies for me. She was able to find new farmland in another village, but it was not the same” (Agary, op. cit.: 10).

Decency and humanism sustain that people who find their lives blown out unexpectedly should be accorded assistance. From the above quotation, it is an eyesore that the beneficiaries are left to fend for themselves whereas greedy people extract huge amounts of money from the victims’ lands. The race for self-interest eclipses the existence of the

other. Had the protagonist's mother not been a hardworking woman, she would have fallen into depression. Her daughter who seems to be her last hope energizes her to move forward. Her determination is an appeal to the reader that the best way out is resistance. 'The black oil that spilled that day swallowed my mother's crops' translates the environmental drama which jeopardizes the life in the Niger Delta. Thus,

the depth of oil in some areas [...] was as deep as five meters. This destroys soil nutrients and makes farmlands useless for agricultural activities, in addition to destroying crops, and trees. Similarly, oil spills pollute water (rivers, creeks, and streams) and destroy marine life such as fish. As a result, farmers and fishermen are displaced from their activities for as long it takes for the polluted land or river/creek to be remedied and restored to its original state, which in most cases is forever (Ibaba et al.; op. cit.: 7-8).

There is a clear indication that the state-planned industrialisation of the Niger Delta through the oil companies has only succeeded in pauperizing millions of people in the agrarian sector and diminishing the stock of plant, water and soil resources at a terrifying rate. How could the people live if their source of income is deliberately destroyed? 'Deliberately' because maintenance services on the pipelines are neglected. Ibaba et al. affirm that "oil spills are caused by a combination of factors such as equipment failure, corrosion, ..., and human error" (Ibid.: 7). The land, being the dwelling place of the population in the Niger Delta, visibly seems to be seeping oil and endangering life making it precarious in the process. A hope of a bright future dwindles away. Life can no longer be sustained by oil seeping land. This signals the end of any life sustaining activities. The narrator reports that "she (the protagonist's mother) was still farming but looking for some other work, as farming was getting less and less profitable (Agary, op. cit.: 78). In this deplorable situation, the people resolutely stand against this injustice and take into their hands their destiny rather than trusting their government. The narrator expounds the situation: "Young boys threatened to rough up the Amananaowei (the chief) and his elders because rumours, probably true, had reached their ears that the Amananaowei (the chief) and his elders had received monetary compensation, meant for the village, from the oil company and

shared it amongst themselves” (Ibid.: 40). As the land becomes more and more barren, the rivers being polluted, the people begin to claim ownership of the land due to the oil exploitation. This creates conflict among the different ethnic groups that were living in peace. Agary writes:

Communities were fighting over who legitimately owned what land after more local government areas were created, after local government boundaries were reviewed, and after local government headquarters were relocated [...]. The Ijaws and the Itsekiris were fighting each other, as were the Ifes and the Modakekes, the Kutepts and the Jukun-Chambas, and the Bassas and Ebiras. Thus, there was fighting in the North and the South. Nigeria no longer appeared able to contain her two hundred and fifty ethnic groups. Everywhere, communities that had lived together in peace for hundreds of years were taking up arms against each other over land and even personal insults (Ibid.: 109).

The above exposes an urgent situation that calls for a keen sense of responsibility in managing the environment for a harmonious living since the search for peace and justice is the ultimate aim of any literary piece in society.

## **2. Protection Strategy of the Environment in the Novel**

The narrative realism endorses our sense of logic when, as readers, we consider the key role played by environment in sustaining human and animal lives. Agary’s novel immensely shows this interaction by making the environment part and parcel of the daily life to the extent that its neglect could endanger human life. Postcolonial ecocriticism thrives in a literary tradition whereby little attention has been paid to the environment in postcolonial literary texts. To bend history to my critical purpose, a quick glance at Africa’s history shows that Africans were enjoying their environment before the arrival of the colonisers. It is arguable that there existed an intimate relation devoid of any harmful intention from Africans towards their environment. Its benefits are magnified by some African writers such as Achebe, Ngugi and Neshani through life sustaining activities like farming and fishing. Neshani (2001: 1) writes:

It is that time of the year again. The season when our village, Oshaantu, camouflages itself in a rich green carpet and provides a breath-taking sight [...]. We had good rains this year and are promised plenty to eat. My heart is full of gratitude as I look at all the omahangu, sorghum, spinach, beans, pumpkins, watermelons, nuts, corn and cabbage. Those of us who worked the extra mile will not have to buy tomatoes, onions, sweet potatoes and guavas for a good while. I gently stroke the rough surface of the omahangu millet in appreciation of the abundance of Mother Nature. God is good, I think.

Mother nature is glorified and held in high esteem in the foregoing quotation. It is the hyphen that links humans to life. God being so good to humanity created the environment to make existence enjoyable. In the above quotation, the narrator expresses her feeling of gratitude and joy because nature gives her what to feed herself and her family. It is in this line that postcolonial ecocriticism positions itself to redeem what desperately seems to be disappearing. That is why the 1989 *Time* magazine's person of the year award went to "The Endangered Earth" (Glotfelty et al., op. cit.: xvi) to draw attention to human self-destruction. It is true that the earth is in constant degradation but how is literature contributing to environmental restoration? In the view of Worster (year: page),

We are facing a global crisis today, not because of how ecosystems function but rather because of how our ethical systems function. Getting through the crisis requires understanding our impact on nature as precisely as possible, but even more' it requires understanding those ethical systems and using that understanding to reform them. Historians, along with literary scholars, anthropologists, and philosophers, cannot do the reforming, of course, but they can help with the understanding.

Worster's assertion is urging people to understand the ways their various societies interact with their environments and this understanding could help in obstructing any attempt to damage them. The help of literature is to denounce any attempt to degrade the environments. As literature sensitizes, people are aware of what should be done to have durable and

healthy environment. In the same perspective, Environmentalists like Saro-Wiwa, Maathai respectively from Nigeria and Kenya set the pace taken up by Agary and others. Agary's depiction of the environment in the novel questions and raises the reader's consciousness towards his/her immediate natural partner, the environment, so that something can drastically be done to protect it. The narrator substantiates that:

These broadcasts drove the boys in my village to violence. If we had to suffer amidst such plenty, then these boys would cause as much havoc as possible until someone took interest in our plight and until justice, as they saw it, prevailed. Some of them joined the boys from other villages to kidnap oil company executives or bar oil company workers from doing their work. Mostly they were successful, but sometimes one or two of our 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 (Agary, op. cit.: 9-10).

In support of Agary, Agye (1986: 29) rightly puts it thus:

Literature as a means of intellectual and imaginative communication, is itself a form of social consciousness: an important weapon in the ideological struggles of classes. The vivid images that the writer evokes, affect the consciousness of the reader. In this regard, literature could serve to defend class oppression or it could contribute to the education and development of the consciousness of the toiling masses. In the course of history, revolutionary literature has been a powerful weapon of liberation from oppressive social relations.

Agary, believing in the conviction that the natural resources should benefit the people of the Niger Delta, has concentrated his narrative energy to expose environmental injustice as a way of constructing a new social awareness in the reader. This indicates her conviction that creative writers must not turn their back on the realities of their societies. They must help give direction to their societies. In the view of Mitchell (2012: 58), "... human and natural realms were inextricably linked. Exclusion from familiar parts of the landscape—which included forced separation

from game animals and livestock—provoked both subsistence and spiritual crises.” The crises make the boys take actions to inform the world of their predicament since the leaders are reluctant to come to their aid. Making the boys ‘kidnap oil companies executives or bar oil company workers from doing their work’ is a strategy created by the writer to sensitize the leaders that if nothing is done to save both the victims and the environment, chaos will be the order of the day. Osondu rightly writes that “the sentiment expressed by the people of Niger Delta is that previous successive governments sold them away to be exploited by oil companies; and the hope that the democratically elected government would be different was dashed” (Osondu, op. cit.: 133). This shows “how the oil companies were using the Nigerian armed forces as their private security details to terrorise and sometimes kill innocent villagers who questioned the inequity of their situation – living in squalor while barrels of oil pumped out of their land provided the luxury that surrounded the oil workers and the elite of Nigeria” (Agary, op. cit.: 158). This is a scandal when the beneficiaries are denied the right of enjoying their naturally endowed wealth and are instead killed. For the critic, Ambily Etekpe, this state of affairs has “plunged the entire kingdom into “darkness” and bitter acrimony. ‘Dumped’ described it as the “sunset in Ogoni Kingdom” (Etekpe, 2012: 97). The retaliation strategy draws national and international attentions and highlights self-defence as a means of protecting the environment which provides life sustaining activities.

## **Conclusion**

This study has examined the literary articulations of Agary’s deconstruction of social peace in *Yellow Yellow* through the denial of human responsibility to nature and landscape, in the context of environmental exploitation and how the environment can be handled for a harmonious and peaceful living in Agary’s novel.

Two key ideas emerge from this analysis. First, this study has revealed that development projects in African societies should have the interests of the people at heart and this would impact and have meaning for all the parties concerned. In this vein, natural resources discovered in a given

area should benefit the area first, so as to avoid fertilizing the ground for violence. Second, it is important that personal interests should be reduced to its barest minimum to avoid triggering animosity among the people. The creation of vital alternatives for the people before destroying their source of income is a must. To protect the environment and ensure harmonious living, the governing authorities have to boldly take up their responsibilities vis-à-vis the governed.

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