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Development Meets Degradation: Encountering Colonial Legacies and Environmental Realities

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Abstract: The establishment of industrial and trade development commissioned by multinationals and international trade networks is a recipe for African environmental inferiorisation and marginalization. This situation has motivated resistance by the local people and consequently pitting the foreigners against the local populace. Therefore, this study investigated how Habila (2010), Chipanta (2016), and Ole Kulet (2016) portray contradictions inherent in industrial and trade development as well as environmental sustainability. The study adopted analytical research design to interpret data collected. Primary data were collected by conducting a close reading of the texts while the secondary data were obtained from relevant journals, articles, books, theses and internet materials. Purposive sampling technique was employed with the inclusion criteria being millennium texts themed resource exploitation by the global capitalists and uniqueness of the resources exploited in the Anglophone regions. Data analysis was conducted with the principles of postcolonial ecocriticism theoretical framework. The data was categorized in line with units of analysis, namely oriental imperialism and copper mining in Zambia, western imperialism and oil mining in Nigeria, and conditional economies and the case of wildlife trade in Kenya. The study established that the extractive activities of multinational companies and the associated global trade networks as commercial ventures driven by profits and not the interests of the local communities who serve as mere pawns in the game. The so called development driven by foreign companies intensifies and restructures marginalization and exploitation of the locals. These challenges cause further environmental degradation and threats to human and animal existence. The study contributes to the existing knowledge on environmental imperialismin literature and art.

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I. INTRODUCTION

This paper focuses on the phenomenon of industrial and trade development and environmental sustainability based on a literary analysis of the selected Anglophone novels. By rolling out development, the global capitalists consciously present an emblematic situation of environmental despoilment. For example, while the indigene communities in *The Elephant Dance* (2016) culturally treat wildlife and land in a manner that ensures preservation, sustainability, and fertility of the resources, the introduction of international trade in animal tusks and horns as well as tourism initiated by the capitalists gives rise to wildlife extinction and land sterilization. Moreover, mining and setting up of refineries in *A Casualty of Power* (2016) and *Oil on Water* (2010) are primarily viewed as developmental initiatives, yet to a large extent, they widely contribute to the destruction of the very ecologies they claim to be developing. These examples project cases of the ecological cost of development.

Thus, the capitalists' development with its promises of delivering prosperity and economic independence fails. It is clear that tourism and industrialism are clothed as development, yet they institutionalize environmental loss and recalibrate the locals' social and economic struggles. The situation, therefore, presents a contradiction. This study, while exploring the works of Chipanta (2016) *A Casualty of Power*, Ole Kulet (2016) *The ElephantDance*, and Habila (2010) *Oil on Water,* portrays contradictions that characterize the exploitation of Africa's resources by multinational companies and international trade networks in the name of development. By focusing on mining and industrial processing of copper and oil and international trade such as tourism and trade in animals' tusks and horns as development in the texts, this chapter discusses the disastrous ecological implications of such initiatives in the African context.

Whereas *A Casualty of Power* (2016) and *Oil on Water* (2016) explore copper and oil extraction, processing, and marketing in Zambia and Nigeria, respectively, *The Elephant Dance* (2016) problematizes environmental issues by shining the light on the trade of animal tusks and horns, and tourism as commercial interests of multinationals in Kenya. The authors expose the thickly veiled capitalists' schemes to grab African

resources without paying attention to the ecological challenges occasioned by exploiting the resources. While doing so, the authors bring to the fore ambiguities that surround the so-called developmental projects and environmental sustainability.

What is glaring from these works is that the multinationals' gracious gestures of establishing the developmental projects are a strategy for getting an ample opportunity to exploit African resources to benefit the empire. Hence, the narratives demonstrate that the exploitation of resources in Africa is laced with pretense, lures, and lies. All these are deployed to blind Africans and push them into believing that the exploitation of resources is honestly supposed to benefit them. Thus, this paper analyzes how the authors reveal the darker side of the intentions of the multinational companies and international organizations as they champion their development agenda in Africa.

It is a fact that the discovery and exploitation of resources such as oil, timber, precious minerals, wildlife, and others by foreigners resulted in industrialization and, by extension, development on the African continent. However, this paper engages in a critical reading of the current global capitalists' driven resource exploitation practices on the continent, intending to reveal their hidden faces. The analysis of the selected texts offers an opportunity to show that the much-talked-about development is a choreographed scheme by global capitalists to impose and sustain their grip on Africa's resources.

While on the one hand, the global capitalists are seen to institute developmental projects, they, on the other hand, blindfold Africans with enticements as they impoverish them. Long after the commissioning of the projects, fundamental questions persist. For example, Why would African countries still languish in poverty despite the many years of vicious exploitation of the diverse resources on the continent by foreign agents? Why is it that African resource-rich countries are plagued with ecological problems prompted by resource exploitation despite the numerous efforts to curb the problem? The answers to these questions and many more cannot be exhaustively discussed in this paper. Still, the study argues that part of the reasons reside in the multinationals' real intentions as they exploit Africa's resources. In an attempt to answer these questions, the paper deconstructs the capitalists' mischievous mission of development. It is evident that in the course of their development ventures, the capitalists have largely been unable to deliver environmental and human dignity in their countries of operation. This paper, therefore, accounts for the failed mission by showing how the environment, humans, and animals suffer more than ever before.

II. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Oriental Imperialism and Copper Mining in*A Casualty of Power*

The privatization of the mines and the attendant disruptive ecological, socio-political, and economic issues of mining are the focus of Chipanta's (2016) *A Casualty of Power*. The novel presents Hamoonga as its protagonist, and through his physical and psychological journey motifs, the author shows environmental intricacies and political intrigues surrounding Chinese mining activities in Zambia. The story begins with a protest lodged by black mineworkers against China Metals and Mining Company (CMMC), supervised by Jinan Hu and others. Among the grievances raised by the workers are poor working conditions, delayed payments of wages, and resource control. Hamoonga, a college dropout, gets a job in the company and rises to the position of an overseer. Kalala and his fellow workers prod him to face the Chinese company owners and supervisors and present the people's dehumanization and environmental degradation realities. Fired by his past nasty experience in the hands of the police coupled with the current frustrations of his fellow workers, Hamoonga, together with three other workers, face the company's management and government officials for a negotiation. Unfortunately, the actors turn a deaf ear to their grievances and instead make them victims of the circumstances.

The mines established by CMMC in Zambia are a classic case of the cost of development on the environment. The depth and breadth of the mines epitomize environmental ruination engendered by the exploration of copper ore. The land is excavated to a depth of more than 6,500 feet below the surface of the earth. The writer praises this mine as "one of the deepest in the world" (p. 139). The place is dark and life-threatening. At about nine hundred feet, the men have to "shuffle in darkness guided by their torches" (p.140). It is needless to say that the depth and breadth of the mines suggest a huge land loss to the locals and adverse environmental despoilment. This sets the stage for the increased vulnerability of humans and animals whose lives entirely depend on the land. Also implied is that people's livelihoods and dreams have been shattered. The land that provided food and shelter is famished in the name of mines.

The mines, which the Zambian government argues are supposed to uplift the people economically, only make them poorer. The over-reliance on mining to sustain the economy has messed up other forms of livelihood, leading to the impoverishment of the local populations. This is discernable from Hamoonga's nostalgic tone when he contrasts the present state of food security in town with what was previously the case in Kitwe:

Yes, home again! His nostrils absorbed the smells coming from the charcoal fire: steaming nshima-the thick maize porridge that was his daily staple-and fried kapenta fish sizzling with fresh onions and tomatoes all

engulfed in one textured and flavourful aroma. This is what he had missed for so long. The feeling took him back to the good old days when life demanded little; a time when he had not yet grasped the finality of life itself, how each moment lived was lost, never to be regained (p.5)

The scenario shows that the community has become a victim of development. The people's change of lifestyle is irrecoverable. Fishing and farming that had been the source of food during the pre-mining period have been made redundant. They are presently forced to provide cheap labour in the mines to survive on one lousy meal a day despite the energy-sapping work. This is evident in the harassment they go through during mealtime. Jinan orders, "Get buns one-one, quickry, quickry no time waste! (p.138).

Given their depths, the mines are accessed by automobiles that pose a threat to the environment and people. The shafts hang precariously and are overloaded with "full ballast of workers" (p.152), causing accidents from time to time. Once "the steel cable hoist attached to the main cage suddenly frayed. The overloaded cage had then tilted abruptly, violently jolting the framework of the elevator tower." Workers were "thumped hard against the walls and sustained flesh wounds (p.152). To the environment, the shaft-related accidents are known to have triggered earth's "tremor" (p.152), which posed a severe threat. It is intriguing to realize that the shaft that aids the exploitation of resources underground is the same one that causes injuries to the workers. Ironically, the affected are not provided with medical care nor compensation.

When the workers protest over the company's negligence in maintaining the shaft, the company's supervisors mete out unwarranted violence on them, causing further injuries. After a shaft failure which causes panic as well as injuries to the workers, the narrator notes, "It all happened so quickly. The young miner lay sprawled on the dusty ground bleeding profusely. Fearing for their lives, the Chinese supervisors made a run for it" (p.154). The scenario expresses helplessness and heightened levels of subjugation of the locals. Although the people are relegated to over-reliance on the Chines mines to eke out a living while sustaining the Chinese's economy, the companies degrade them in all aspects.

The imagery of the cage is used in describing the mines. The mines are compared to a "cage" emerging out of the "cavernous earth, spitting out men" (p.139). The choice of the word "cage" conjures up psychological feelings of depression, suppression, confinement, and physical limitation, as well as congestion of the people. The workers' discomfort and physical suffering are implied. The narrator corroborates this when he says, "Jinan's crew promptly took their places, packing themselves tightly into the cage" (p.139). The congestion of the workers brings about health-related complications, for example, breathing difficulties, and aids the spread of air-borne diseases. Most notably is the fact that the cage symbolically represents the economic imprisonment of the people. Hamoonga's speech to the crowd speaks volumes about the economic and social plight of the mineworkers:

They come to our land to pillage our natural resources, where is umuntungumuuntungabantu in that? They come to our land and work us like slaves, where is umuntungamuuntungabantu in that? They come to our land, to connive with our corrupt politicians to strip us of our inheritance, where is umuntungummuntungabantu in that?

The "umuntungumuuntungabantu" phrase means " a person is a person through others." It means the same as "Ubuntu" which espouses the need for humanity among the people. Therefore, the passage reveals the cultural crisis and the economic enslavement of the local populace. Conclusively, the situation is so dire that it has turned the mineworkers into some caged animals with no one and nothing to provide hopes.

Industrial development has had far-reaching impacts on the existing cultures of the people as their humanity has been reconfigured by commercial interests fueled by the mining economy. The people have to contend with painful conditions since "copper mines are the lifeblood" (p.21) of their country. Whereas people are down-trodden because of copper-related activities, the Chinese are in real business at the expense of the locals. Temwani, speaking on behalf of the Chinese investors, rhetorically asks, "Who would pass up a good money-making opportunity?" (p.21). Kalala echoes this when he refers to the Chinese as blood-sucking vampires who are out pillage the nation (p.146). This is perhaps the reason the country has been converted to copper mine dependent space whereas the locals make no meaning out of the copper mining related activities.

Moreover, the cage referred to foregrounds the fact that the mineworkers are exploited and oppressed by the mining companies. The narrative voice reveals this when it states that "the miners' working conditions were deplorable and they were growing worse by the day" (p.144). Surprisingly, even the government does not come to the people's rescue. It is a pity that "the system was rigged in favour of the wealthy and their cronies" (p.144). The greedy politicians neglect the plight of their people by "selling off the country's heritage to foreigners" (p.144). To conclude, the Chinese and the powerful politicians in the country call the shots in the mining sector.

Aside from being cage-like, the mines are also described as "cavernous earth" (p.139). This implies that the place is dark and deep. Despite this state, the workers have to endure twelve hours of working on finishing a shift. In the end, they come out looking "grim" and with "dirt smudged faces" (p.139). The situation shows that the miners and dirt are inseparable, which suggests bodily contamination and environmental degradation. This enhances the readers' understanding of the correlation between environmental degradation

and human dehumanization. It shows that environmental contamination directly impacts humans. The miners cannot completely free themselves from the bruising effect of mining by simply washing away the "smudges" but by enforcing the best environmental conservation practices.

While tracing the family of Mama Bupe, the narrator concludes, "shortly afterward, her husband, Hakainde, died from a lung infection, no doubt exacerbated by his many years working in the copper smelter at Nkana mine. A horrid place to work" (p.7). The quotation which is the narrator's ecological account of the mines, expresses the narrator' sympathy for the people. He graphically paints a picture of how the environment of the mine is highly compromised, thereby making the mineworkers exposed and vulnerable. Clearly, one cannot fail to appreciate the workers' dilemma and plight.

It is ironical that whereas the workers are prone to persistent respiratory infections resulting from the dangerous chemicals released in the air, they cannot survive without the mines. The narrator aptly captures this when he says:

To say that mining is the lifeblood of the country would be an understatement; it is the lifeblood, the heart, the liver, the kidneys, and the brain of Zambia. Life begins and ends with copper, the red gold, the chalice that holds the dreams of a nation (p.140).

The passage divulges a 'placenta-embryo' relationship between the locals and the mines. In Zambia, people's lives are conceived and sustained by the mines. What is implied in the passage is that when the mines are terminated, then life will stop—the country dreams and lives through mining. In essence, the mines and people are inseparable. This explains why even though working in the mines adversely affects their health conditions, the locals obstinately hang on them with the single objective of eking out a living. All other things are secondary and would not kill the workers' spirit. Kibongo's reminder to Kalala evidently show the reality of the situation. When Kalala proposes resistance to the oppressive structures of the CMMC, Kibongo quickly cuts in and reminds him that:

Eh, iwe, come on now, stop your political freedom fighter nonsense. Nobody wants to hear it so early in the morning!..if you want to do your politics, go join those corrupt politicians; me, I want to eat, I have no time for your nonsense…Kalala, must you always see things in terms of slave and slave master, subjects and their imperialist masters? Can't you see that we are working to put food on the table for our families? (p.138-40)

The extract demonstrates that the people have been accustomed to the cliché about putting food on the table despite the prevailing circumstances. The focus is survival which interestingly only comes from the mines. From the voices and actions of the mineworkers, the readers decipher a dilemma; the urge to accept slavery and work to earn a living and the resolve to keep off the mines and die of hunger. The people resolve to keep to the mines despite the harsh conditions.

The smelting of copper introduces toxicity into the air. The narrator paints a grim picture of the effects on smelting copper on the people:

It was here that copper ore was melted down into a molten sludge as it made its way through the harsh chemical extraction process to produce the pure metal, many men suffered curious respiratory ailment in their years working there, but safety procedures never seemed to improve (p.7).

The excerpt is an indictment against the company for failing to execute environmental guidelines on copper processing. There is no gainsaying that the company is more interested in profits than the plight of workers. It baffles the readers to realize that safety procedures are peripheral, yet working in the mines is comparable to signing one's death certificate. The questions that beg are: Why would people choose to blatantly face death? Why would the government fail to protect people from such deaths?

Interestingly, Zambia has relevant ministries and departments responsible for ensuring the safety and protection of the environment and mine workers. There is, for example, the Ministry of Land, Natural Resources and Environmental Protection (MLNREP), Department of Environment and Natural Resources Management (DENRAM), Zambia Environment Management Agency (ZEMA), just to mention a few. Zambia's Sixth National Development Plan, 2011-2015, includes the environment as a cross-cutting issue. The plan gives the Ministry of Tourism, Environment, and Natural Resources the full mandate of caring for the earth.

These departments, ministries, and agencies have let down the citizens of the country. They are weak and lack political power as well as the human capacity to enforce environmental law. Like the Chinese, they are entangled by the capitalists' notion of profiteering hence compromised and degenerated to revenue collecting agencies. Therefore, it is not a surprise that they do not focus on environmental sustainability by enforcing policies, conducting environmental impact assessment, valuation, and restoration of the environment, among other responsibilities but on the deals offered by the Chinese government. Kalala confirms that when he observes that "What Chinese are doing today in this country and across the continent is to lure political leaders into a state of passivity by buying them off with deals" (p.140).

Deep underground pits are achieved after digging "holes in the bedrock" (p.121) using "pickaxe" and "shovel" as well as "excavation machinery such as jackhammers and drilling machines" (p.121). It is worth noting that these machinery impose environmental damage. The excavations rip off rocks from the soil leaving in its wake pebbles and unproductive loose soil, thus compromising agricultural activities. Due to the resulting

infertility of the land, the people turn to mine as the only means of survival. What is paradoxical is that reliance on copper mining impoverishes them more than ever before.

Furthermore, the noise, tremors, and vibrations precipitated by drilling and excavation machines degrade the environment. Additionally, the turning over of the soil by the mining machines kills living organisms in the soil hence creating ecological imbalance. The use of machinery makes the land unproductive for agriculture which essentially supports livelihoods.

The blasted mines leave behind deplorable conditions with disastrous implications on both the environment and humans. The violence meted by the blasts can affect land, air, and water resulting in pollution and physical injuries. The company unilaterally blasts the mines, and many people are killed in the process. Kalala rhetorically asks, "How many of our colleagues have died on the job just within the past year?" (p.143). Later in the novel, Kalala concludes, "we want good health care services for our families; ever since the mines were sold to foreigners, we've not been able to get affordable health care" (p.143). This is a testimony that environmental health has not been attended to, leaving in its wake a chronically ill populace and deaths. As mentioned before, the government and its agencies have failed to enact the safety guidelines and guarantee environmental safety and sanity. The visionary Kalala feels that people should fight to restore their lost environmental and economic freedom.

Consequently, Kalala organizes a successful protest to draw the attention of the government and CMMC. Over three hundred mineworkers participate, but unfortunately, he gets killed in cold blood by Jinan Hu, a Chinese mine supervisor. The Chinese who kills Kalala is aided by the local police, who are acting on behalf of the government and foreigners. The conspiracy to kill Kalala indicates how the African governments collude with the foreigners to exploit and oppress the people and environment. Furthermore, the scenario demonstrates that environmental imperialism has local and foreign players that help bolster its operations.

To counter the murder, Hamoonga and his colleagues meet to organize another protest against CMMC, but they are rounded up and detained by the same local police. The media has highlighted the double marginalization where the people and environment are oppressed and dissenting voices silenced. The ubiquitous *National Post* writes, "How can our people be worked like slaves in appalling conditions within their own country and murdered in cold blood for merely voicing their God-given right to fair wage?" (p.155). These cases are not new in the continent. Protests against the oppressive foreign entities that recklessly exploit African resources and assault the environment have been witnessed in Nigeria, Angola, and Zimbabwe, among others. Winning such wars has been intricate, given that African governments have always thrown their weights behind foreign organizations. The narrator confirms this when he poses, "What happened to government for the people, by the people? In whose interest is their government working? Certainly not ours!" (p.155). Clearly, the governments are driven by the greed of wanting to share in the loot amassed by the multinationals. As a result they pay no attention to environmental damages caused by the companies but the money they receive from cutting deals.

Perhaps best captures the effects of dust in the environment when the narrator describes people's reactions after the elevator shaft collapsed and pandemonium broke out in the mines. The narrators say, "As they emerged they were accosted by a huge plume of dust obscuring what would have been a clear line of sight to the control tower of the underground elevator shaft" (p.151). The quote suggests the toxicity and vitality of dust by using words like "accosted," "a huge plume of dust," and "obscuring." These words connote the smothering and choking effect of dust. Farther away, the narrator notes, "it took several minutes before the cloud of dust began to subside…were dusting themselves off from the thick soot covering them" (p.151). The author's deployment of the "cloud of dust" suggests invisibility, while the "thick soot" highlights the possibility of lung-related effects from the dust. At a symbolic level, the clouds of dust represent the ominously bleak future of the mineworkers.

The widespread mining intoxicates through gas flares across the country. Minister Zulu discusses increased gas flares in the Kitwe copper belt with stakeholders, which has left many people dead. Minister Zulu's mood is said to be foul because it is "only three months before, he had been called to meet with civic leaders concerned about the apparent increase in cases of respiratory ailments due to air pollution (p.164). Surprisingly, no solution is reached, and the gas continues to flare unabated. That is an indication of the government's failure to regulate and oversight the activities of the mining companies. The debates of journalism students echo the fact that the Zambian government has turned a blind eye to violations of the labour laws and safety requirements. Most ridiculous is that the Mines Workers Union (MWU) has equally abdicated its role. The union leaders like the government "are in the pockets of the Chinese" (p.143).

From the foregoing, it is evident that the Chinese companies that operate the Zambian mines are premised on the principles of global capitalism, which emphasize the maximization of profits. Kalala reads the hidden agenda of the capitalists and states that the Chinese deals with local politicians are meant to enslave blacks "into a life of poverty." In contrast, the Chinese enrich themselves (p.140). Interestingly, even as the government is bought into a state of passivity, the locals are left to bear the disastrous consequences of mining. The ceaseless gas flares, chronic illness, deaths, and loss of livelihoods leading to abject poverty are some of the

disruptions resulting from mining. CMMC strategically deploys pretense and enticements to persuade the locals into accepting their indiscriminate destruction of resources, all in the name of development. The Chinese philanthropic gestures beg more questions than answers. For instance: Of what use is a stadium to hunger-stricken people? What is the value of a mall to people whose purchasing power is dripping to zero? The Chinese framework of resource exploitation is not conscious of such genuine concerns.

It is undoubtedly clear that China's model of resource exploitation is in tandem with the hegemonic western world. In both cases, resources are over-exploited while the host communities are offered consolation prizes while systematically dispossessed. The host communities are relegated to wretchedness as their resources feed the insatiable appetites of the capitalists. That is the idea Kalala broaches up in his proposition that, "this country has been hijacked …. They are nothing for the local people, all they want is to make money, pillage the nation, and then run away fast when they're done!" (Chipanta 2016, p.146).

Western Imperialism and Oil Mining in *Oil on Water*

Oil on Water (2010) is about oil exploration in the Niger Delta and how this has caused environmental degradation in the region. Rufus, the protagonist, sets out to get 'a great story' and comes face to face with the desecrated environment in the process. The villages, for instance, Chief Ibiram'sIkerefe Island, are adversely affected. In an attempt to call the attention of the companies and the compromised government, the militia groups advance layers of violence in this region causing further environmental destruction. Paradoxically, the groups have failed in combatting the force of the military. This reality has made it difficult for the local and groups to achieve environmental sanity or worse still resource control.

From the business' perspective, the oil economy is viewed as a gateway to the empowerment and sovereignty of the indigenes. The commissioning of factories brings about employment as well as opening up opportunities for businesses. Habila (2010), for instance, reveals that with the oil-processing companies in place, money circulation intensified, "more money than any of them had ever imagined" (p.38). Sadly, soon the whole place was consumed in pollution, and the money disappeared, leaving misery in its wake. Rufus' town, for example, that was "once awash in oil money" (p.61) is left to watch in astonishment "as the streets daily fill up with fleeing families, some returning to their hometowns and villages, some going to Port Harcourt in the hope of picking up something in the big city" (p.61). Although people are migrating to Port Harcourt, it is not spared either. People in Port Harcourt are said to be "worse off than before" (p.39). They had to contend with broken-down cars, dysfunctional DVD players, and televisions. Besides, the whole place is soon consumed in pollution.

In an attempt to show the long-term 'venomous' harm inflicted by the multinational oil companies, Habila (2010) alludes to the Biblical story of the Garden of Eden. Chief Ibiram sentiments cast the picture:

How could they not be tempted, with the flare in the next village burning over them every night, its flame long and coiled like a snake, whispering, winking, hissing?..But the snake in the garden wouldn't rest, it kept on hissing and the apple only grew larger and more alluring each day" (p.38-39).

The quote draws a parallel between the gas flare and a snake on the one hand and an apple which is represented by development on the other hand. Taking cognizance of the harm caused by the gas flare, the author compares it to the danger residing in a "whispering," "winking," and "hissing" snake. On a different plane, the guises and lures deployed by the multinationals are comparable to the "alluring apple" in the garden. The contextualization of the "garden" is seen in the light of the biblical Garden of Eden, which implied a paradise. The Biblical garden was full of trees of life and was a site that God had intended Adam and Eve to enjoy life forever. They would live there peacefully as they effortlessly exploited the abundance of nature for their satisfaction. They had the liberty to tend the fruits and exploit all except the one in the middle of the garden. This was the tree of knowledge of good and evil, which, although forbidden, had the most alluring apple fruits. Unfortunately, Adam and Eve were deceived by the serpent, and they ate the forbidden fruit.

As a consequence, God declared misery and death upon them. In a quick turn of events, the garden, which was previously a source of bliss and innocence, turned into a site of low self-esteem, sorrow, pain, suffering, and death. The biblical story evoked by Habila (2010) resonates with the ecological issues in the Niger Delta brought about by the mining activities of the multinational companies.

Like the biblical garden, the garden in Habila's (2010) society is the primary source of livelihood. Land in this society is a source of production as well as a sense of belonging. However, the advent and establishment of multinational companies redistribute land, causing alienation and dispossession of the locals. The set-up refineries compromise the quality and productivity of the garden. The oil economy overrides all other traditional means of survival. Ironically, the industries marginalize, impoverish, and degrade the people and the environment. The dangers posed by the industries are likened to that of a coiled snake in the garden. Essentially, a coiled snake is a harmful animal, and its comparison to industrial activities of the multinationals insinuates concealed danger that the industries visit on the environment, humans, and animals. Of pertinence is that while the locals are circumstantially attracted to the apple in the garden, they are equally prone to the risk of being bitten by the snake. Sadly, they have no avenue out of the situation since their lives depend on the oil economy generated by the industries. They aspire for the alluring apple even as they suffer snake bites in the process. The

exploitation of the resources in most African countries frequently results in inherent sorrow, suffering, and death, just as it was in the biblical Garden of Eden.

Marginalized, ill, hopeless, and hungry, the society in *Oil on Water* (2010) sees industries and their associated businesses as the only way out of their situation. They respectfully refer to the industry as the "orange flame." They regard the "orange flame" as a concoction that treats poverty. In a story of the village that Dr. Dagogo Mark shares with Rufus, an older man disdainfully confronts the doctor. He declares that the villagers are not ill as portrayed by the federal government but are simply poor. He goes ahead to prescribe medicine for the villagers as "fire that burns day and night" (p.91) like it is in the neighbouring villages. This statement by the elder alludes to the gas flares bellowing and consuming the villages.

Two years down the line, it turned out that the elder had prophesied the discovery of oil in the village in commercial quantities, and "the villagers feasted for weeks" (p.91). The celebrations were in anticipation of the economic and social benefits of oil mining to the villagers. They would, for example, have no need for candles or lamps, hold village meetings at night under the orange fire, and develop a night market (p.91-92). The package would be a recipe for changing the villagers' lifestyle and delivering 'development.' They do not understand that the celebrations are as temporary as the benefits from the industries. The truth is that the actualization of the projects would present unimaginable ecological aftermaths.

Scientifically, gas flaring contributes to the release of methane and carbon dioxide into the atmosphere. The "orange flame" results from the imbalanced combustion of the fuel-oxygen mixture. According to Temper (2013), the gas flare has effects on human health and climate change. For humans, it causes chest and skin problems (p.39). This is the case for the community portrayed in Habila (2010), where health complications due to gas flares are commonplace. From the onset, Dr. Dagogo Mark warns the villagers of the "dangers that accompany that quenchless flare, but they wouldn't listen" (p.92). He further accentuates, "those damned flares. There weren't that many of them when I first came here. Sometimes I feel like I've been here all my life" (p.90).

Regrettably, a year after establishing the mining industry, its impact was seen when "livestock began to die, and plants withered on their stalks" (p.92). This is corroborated by the narrator's revelation about Gloria's astonishment, "She wordlessly turned and pointed at the faraway sky, towards the oil fields.-Gas flares. They kill them. Not only the bats, other flying creatures as well" (p129). Intimated here is that animals are dying en masse due to the effects of the gas flares. The atmosphere is highly intoxicated with industrial wastes; hence no living thing is spared. This causes a change in the environment which in turn leads to serious ecological imbalance.

Of importance is that the gas flares do not spare even human beings from the industries. The first disruption that the people have to grapple with is land dispossession which leads to displacement. The foreign companies grab the land from the locals to put up industries and other developmental projects. People are therefore forced to vacate and move to other areas. Chief Ibiram narrates to the journalists how he and his fellow villagers were affected by the company's encroachment:

The rigs went up, and the gas flares, and the workers came and set up camp in our midst, we saw our village change, right from our eyes. And that was why we decided to leave, ten families…we left, we headed northwards, we've lived in five different places now, but we've had to move. We are looking for a place where we can live in peace (p.40).

The passage brings out the challenges of displacement. They have to move from one place to the other in search of peace and safety. In an interview with Chief Ibiram, Rufus asks him whether or not they are happy where they are currently staying. He sadly responds that they cannot find peace in a foreign space where the land is not theirs. The Chief poses, "I say how can we be happy when we are mere wanderers without a home?" (p. 41). The response speaks volumes about the people's dissatisfaction as well as cultural and identity loss following their displacement. It is laughable that people face forced eviction from their land without compensation. The government that should have rescued them is instead acting on behalf of the companies. The partnership is confirmed in the narrative voice, "It turned out to be the excuse the oil companies and the politicians who worked for them needed to make their next move" (p.39).

The health implications of gas flares on the people are disastrous. The moment that captures a grim consequence of the "orange flame" is when Dr. Dagogo Mark summarizes it:

They all share the same story, the same diseases…I've seen this happen many times in this area. A man suddenly comes down with mild headache, becomes feverish, then develops rashes, and suddenly a vital organ shuts down. And those whom the disease doesn't kill, the violence does (p.93)

The above excerpt is a description of how gas flares claim people's lives. The situation is pathetic since people are rendered vulnerable to either the diseases arising from the polluted environment or the violence associated with the mining industry. The doctor makes a painful conclusion, "I tell you there's more need for gravediggers than for a doctor" (p.93).

Out of the realization that the gas flares are taking a toll on the people, the doctor immediately takes samples of the drinking water to confirm the toxin levels in the laboratories. The laboratory results reveal that toxicity was rising steadily. In fact, "in one year it had grown to almost twice the safe level" (p.92). With

urgency, the doctor brings this to the knowledge of the villagers, but surprisingly they would not listen because "they were still in thrall to the glare" (p.92). Unknown to them, the more they continue to buy time, the more graver the adverse effects of the gas flares become.

Armed with the laboratory results, Dr.Dagogo approaches the oil company in question anticipating emergency interventions, but he is bribed with a cheque and put on the company's payroll immediately. The company's manager, an Italian, employ bribery to silencing the doctor and many others who wish to table the ecological impact of the industries' operations on the ecosystem. It is true to say that the company has no regard for the lives of the locals. It is driven by the desire for profits generated from the industries. Therefore, it is not ready to lose production hours in the name of acceptable environmental management standards. It is ridiculous that the company-like all other multinationals- is willing to undertake anything, including illegalities, to sustain the flow of profits. As shown in the example above, the companies are owned and run by foreign entrepreneurs and manufacturers whose interests are to satisfy their mother countries at the expense of host communities in Africa. They are propelled by the present principles of global capitalism, whose preoccupation is to make more profits in favour of the powerful elites and global powers.

The irony hits the readers to realize that the ugly situation does not trigger a response from the organs and persons constitutionally and socially mandated to protect the environment and people. They have abdicated their responsibilities. This is the case with the doctor who puts his selfish interests ahead of his ethical responsibility to save lives. The question begs: Why does the doctor perform the tests when the company only silences him? Is he also motivated by the desire to get a job and money from the company but not protect people's health? Why does he accept the bribes when he knows it is a way of silencing him? This evidence shows that Doctor has compromised his professional ethics and is ready to oppress the people through environmental rot. He later confesses to Rufus, "I feel angry at the oil company, and I also feel angry at myself" (p.93).

The government, too, fails to prioritize the welfare of the people and instead holds brief for the multinational oil companies. Its response exemplifies this after it received results from the doctor showing toxins in people's blood. The government should have conducted due diligence by investigating the allegations to take the necessary action to save the environment and people. Instead, it "dumped the results in some filing cabinet" (p.93). It is worrying that even NGOs and international organizations in their humanitarian attire have unsuccessfully attempted to make the government answerable in vain. To draw the government's attention, they published the air and water toxicity results in international journals and urged the government to do something about gas flares, but "nothing happened" (P.93). Instead, "more people fell sick, a lot died" (p.93).

People perish as the government watches helplessly. This is a mockery as it is against global best practices. A serious threat such as this should have been handled not only professionally but also urgently by a government worth its salt. However, in this case, the commercial interests supersede the welfare of the people, and sadly at the end of the day, the people perish. The Doctor captures this when he notes that "I watched the whole village disappear, just like that" (p.93). What is not doubted is that the government is held captive by the capitalists' economic and political interests championed by the global economy. It has immensely gained from the extractive activities of the companies hence is willing to sacrifice the citizens' health and comfort at the altar of commercial interests. It is a wonder that the economic gains from the companies blindfold government agents and officials.

While the governments, doctors, and multinational companies renege on their duty to protect the ecosystem against the effects of gas flares, communities get wiped out by the heavy industrial toxins released into the air. In an interview with Rufus, Professor Ani points out the unstoppable violence of flares and urges Rufus to report the same in the media. Professor directs Rufus, "tell them about the flares you see at night (p.20). The unrelenting spirit of the gas flares is seen at the end of the novel. The writer invokes the imagery of the hangman's noose to summarize the situation. He posits that:

Far away on the horizon the flares were still sending up smoke into the air…giant escarpments of orange fire rising into the atmosphere…like a hangman's noose round the neck of whatever life form lay underneath (P.215)

The excerpt shows the intense and ceaseless effects of gas flaring. Noticeably, it spares nothing with life, just like the hangman's noose around one's neck. The installation of industries conversely turns out to be a far cry from the original expectations of the locals about it. The purported development brought about by the refineries, therefore, remains a mirage.

Although Dr. Dagogo and Gloria work tirelessly to save lives on the Island, they are overwhelmed by the number of patients they have to attend. Since the air is laden with flares, people's health is completely compromised. Zaq, a journalist sent to negotiate a ransom for the kidnapped Mrs. Floode, is diagnosed with dengue fever, a disease with neither cure nor vaccine. Zaq's health deteriorates day by day, and he eventually succumbs before he is transported back to Port Harcourt for treatment as advised by Dr. Dagogo. His remains are interred in the Island, " A wooden cross stood at the head of the grave and attached to the cross was a simple inscription: ZAQ JOURNALIST. AUGUST 2009. R.I.P" (P.225). Notably, Zaq, a local journalist, comes to the

Island a healthy person but dies in the creeks due to the polluted air. The narrator confirms that Zaq's death emanates from the foul air on the Island. He notes, "What's wrong with him? Is it serious? He needs rest. The air out there is not good for him" (p.106). Sadly, Zaq dies prematurely due to gas flares. His death illustrates Nixon's (2010) principle of "slow violence." A scourged environment causes slow but sure death. Zaq's case represents many more in the continent.

The roofs are smoked and turned black as a result of gas flares. The whole atmosphere is depressed, and people have to contend with the gross impact. The narrator says, "I went and sat on the hill to stare at the water and faraway gas flares that emerged suddenly from pillar-like pipes, holding up their roof of odious smoke" (p.139). The image of the smoke paints a grim situation. The companies have failed in lessening the rate of pollution occasioned by gas flares. They are more interested in the profits generated by the factories but not the environmental damage that the factories cause.

Oil on Water (2010) concisely captures the hidden calamitous effects of laying and usage of pipelines. The narrator intimates the symbolic representation of the pipelines when he notes that:

The meagre landscape was covered in pipelines flying in all directions, sprouting from the evil-smelling, oil-fecund earth. The pipes criss-crossed and interconnected endlessly all over the eerie field…the stumps of pipes from exhausted wells their heads capped and left jutting out of the oil-scorched earth, and ever-present pipelines, crossing the landscapes, sometimes like tree roots surfacing far away from the parent tree, sometimes like diseased veins on the back of an old shriveled hand, and sometimes in squiggles like ominous writing on the wall (p.34,175)

The omnipresent pipes symbolically construe exploitation and suppression of the people. They join, in subjugation, the "evil-smelling, oil-fecund earth." The pipes suck oil out of the depths and on every inch of the surface. Besides, they are networked and webbed, assaulting the earth's surface, making it 'scary' and wretched. The oil from the 'belly' of the earth is transported to reservoirs controlled by multinationals. After processing, the oil is distributed to countries abroad. Ultimately, the Euro-American and some Asian economies benefit from the oil while the host communities languish in poverty. Donned in exploitative regalia, the pipelines mean nothing to the locals, yet they matter to the companies. To exterminate exploitation, the locals resort to vandalism of the pipelines and bombing of the oil bunkers.

Studies on the Niger Delta region have shown that vandalism and subsequent oil spillages are rampantly contributing to massive loss of livelihoods. For instance, farming and fishing, which were initially the mainstays of the communities living in the Niger Delta, have been affected. Yet, there are no efforts put in place to salvage the situation. The government and international companies are working together to maximize profits generated from oil exploration, yet the environmental crisis continues to escalate. Ironically, an oil spillage in the Gulf of Mexico in 2010 gained a lot of international attention. In the Delta region, the spillages have been going on for years at peak levels with scanty considerations or even compensations to the affected people.

The Niger Delta communities mostly sabotage oil spillages in *Oil on Water* (2010). They do this for two reasons. One is to obtain oil that they can sell to salvage themselves from poverty. Two to draw the attention of the multinational oil companies and the compromised government towards environmental degradation and effects on human life. In an interview with Rufus, Mr. Floode decries the frequent vandalism of pipelines. He says, "our pipelines are vandalized daily, losing us millions…and millions for the country" (p.107). It baffles that even as the destruction of the environment and humans is hazardously contaminating the lives of people and the environment, Mr. Floode is only preoccupied with the financial losses of his company and the government and not the welfare of the locals.

The desperation of the locals is evident in the activities of organizations such as Movement for the Survival of Ogoni People (MOSOP) and Movement for the Emancipation of Niger Delta (MEND), among others. Like the militants in *Oil on Water* (2010), such groups resorted to 'criminal' attempts in the hope of catching the attention of the multinationals and the government. MEND, for instance, claimed responsibility for setting ablaze crude oil platform at Forcados Terminal and NNPC Esacravos pipeline. They also hoped to get justice and equitable sharing of resources obtained from their environment, all of which go to the government and foreign companies. This explains why Rufus sides with the people. He posits that:

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 potential for their future. And you think the people are corrupt? No. they are just hungry and tired (p107-108)

The passage depicts the significant loss that people have suffered due to the laying and usage of pipelines. With the arable farmlands and fishing waters polluted by leakages from the oil pipes, the villagers are compelled to migrate to urban areas searching for jobs.

Interestingly, the villagers end up providing cheap labour to the whites and their companies. It is the same system, resources, and individuals that control the economy in the cities as well. Port Harcourt, for instance, is deeply steeped in the consuming oil economy. Chief Ibiram uses the imagery of the whale to conjure up the situation thus:

And Brother Jonah came back from the city, or, as he describes it, from the belly of the big whale, after being away for three years, it was under the orange glow that his congregation met every Sunday night (p.92).

Being the largest mammal, the enormous size of the whale makes it capable of consuming and digesting large amounts of food daily with ease. Similarly, the complexity of the city and its demanding economy make the inhabitants invisible within its labyrinthine networks.

The destructive quagmire of oil spills is seen in the water. Spillages of crude oil cause thin immiscible layers on water surfaces that can deprive the water of oxygen necessary for marine life. The narrator describes the water as "suffocated by a film of oil film, each blade covered with blotches like spots on a smoker's hands" (p.9). Drawing from the imagery of "liver spots on a smoker's hands," the author brings to the fore the lurking danger which, like a time bomb, is only waiting to erupt. Just like a smoker with liver spots on the hands runs a severe health risk, the water quality under oil is extremely compromised hence unfit for human, plant, and animal consumption.

The discolouration on the water expressively indicates danger. Scientifically, water is a clear substance, and any form of colouration portends toxins or foreign particles in it. These make it unsafe for use. The immiscible oil layer turns the water black and, other than toxifying it, also causes the death of aquatic life. Rufus is astonished at their "ghostly"(p.10) journey on water and notes, "over the expressionless black water there were no birds or fishes, or other sea-creatures-we were alone" (p.10). Besides, oil changes the smell of water, making it unhealthy for human and animal use. The oil in the village well, for example, makes it foul. The narrator explains his experience, "I bent under the wet, mossy pivotal beam and peered into the well's blackness, but a rank smell wafted from its hot depths and slapped my face…its stench mixed with that unmistakable smell of oil" (p.9). The quote reveals how the discoloured well water is no longer drinkable.

The oil-contaminated water does not support aquatic life. There are media reports about a severe reduction of fish stocks in the community attributed to oil spillage. Rufus and Chief Ibiram listen to a radio report on "the dwindling stocks of fish in the river, the rising toxicity of the water, and how soon they might have to move to a place where fishing was still fairly good" (p.17). The oil companies have succeeded in destroying livelihoods and consequently impoverishing, forcing them to over-rely on oil. Ironically, the complex oil economy has also kept the people at bay.

From the foregoing, it is true to state that the global capitalists working closely with the African governments have no regard for the people's lives. This is evident in their reckless extractive activities and their preoccupation with the generation of profits. The host communities are mere pawns in the game. They, for instance, are exposed to health risks and conditions that force them to interact with death as the only way of surviving. The companies strategically and mischievously use the refineries as instruments of dispossession, disempowerment, and subjugation. Thus, the infrastructures of the oil industry are characterized by inherent contradictions that point towards its ulterior motives.

Conditional Economies and the Case of Wildlife Trade in Kenya in *The Elephant Dance*

The *Elephant Dance* (2016) describes the contradictions of the tourism industry in Kenya with accuracy. The book is a protracted struggle between the locals occupying Konini land and touristic developers represented by a white man, Dick Jones, and three powerful locals, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. The center of interest for the two groups is Konini land, a hundred and fifty thousand acres of "undeveloped and unoccupied land" (p.14). The first half of the land, occupied by the Okiek, is "an expansive land teeming with all kinds of wildlife…undulating hills, rivers and a perfect climate for livestock" (p.14), while the second half, inhabited by the Maasinta, is "covered with mature trees which needed to be cleared to give way for the establishment of tea plantation" (p.14).

Although the descriptions of the land above point to its untapped potentials, the land has been widely used to sustain the livelihoods of the Maasinta and Okiek over the years. According to these two communities, the land is comparable to the biblical Garden of Eden, where like Adam and Eve, they were given divine powers to control but conserve the land with all its contents. Therefore, communities are keen on ensuring the purity and sustainability of the land at all costs. This is evident in the authorial intrusion, "the forest was not only their home but their inalienable birthright and heritage for which they would rather die than forfeit" (p.8).

Attracted by the richness of the land, Dick Jones and his team display a rare determination to acquire the land and set up a tourist "paradise," which will enable reap them optimally from the tourists. This is the genesis of conflict between the locals and the company. The land on which the Konini forest lies is the source of livelihood for the communities and their ancestral home. Taking away the land and controlling the resources therein means cutting off the people's livelihoods and uprooting them from their cultural cradle. The proliferation of conflict in Africa spurred by international agencies keen on acquiring and exploiting the continent's resources is not new. There have been wars between the foreigners and the local witnessed in the Democratic Republic of Congo over diamond, timber, and ivory, Sudan over oil, and Nigeria over oil among others.

Dick Jones is an Italian national who has a distinguished track record of environmental issues in Africa. Born in Namibia and brought up in Zimbabwe, he seems to have picked cue from his late father. He has an irresistible urge to develop "undeveloped" lands and "to move to new and wilder places and begin the process of development all over again" (p.15). Impressed by his 'development' track record, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego seek Dick Jones to help establish a company in Kenya. Together, they set up Konini L.t.d. with Dick Jones owning the largest share. Notably, the company earns a local name to endear itself to the local community.

The callous trio brand themselves "selfless patriots" whose sole purpose for acquiring the land and forming the company is "to turn it into a viable utility that would create employment for the local youth and wealth for all" (p.12). Regrettably, this is a case of the carrot and stick. The inclusion of the three Kenyans is strategically meant to hoodwink the locals into believing that the company would serve their interests and needs while the reality is the contrary. Dick Jones's presence boosts foreign confidence and creates a perfect link between the company and the Far East countries that serve as the market for their illegal merchandise.

The government's commercial interest pushes it to award a fake land lease document to Konini Company. Sadly, the document indicates that the company acquires the land for ninety-nine years. As a result, the communities that have lived on it for eternity have to be evicted. This scheme shows conflicts of interest and paints the government negatively but enables it to deal with lucrative business deals. This is why despite the community's vehement resistance, the land is finally handed over to the company. The company immediately fashions an investment blueprint that turns part of the forest into a booming tourist destination. With touristic development in place, wildlife and land are transformed into commodities that earn profits and benefit a few people. The narrator confirms this when he observes that the land "offered splendid opportunities to create wealth through agriculture and tourism" (p.28).

With the land in the company's hands, the most immediate step is to banish the host communities to the peripheral spaces to give room for wealth generation from tourism-related amenities and services. In tourism, the people are deprived of their birthright, resulting in alienation and loss of identity. Besides, the unsympathetic character of the capitalist East is exposed. The company uses Ilmorisho lo Supuko gang to guise as conservationists and persuade the community by offering training and giving out "lesos" and weapons to the youths. The trio and Dick Jone's love for animals is a delusion to sustain exploitation. The intention of giving out powerful weapons is to ease the killing of wild animals. This philanthropy model extended by the Kenyan company's representatives aims to achieve the 'approval' of the community to exploit the environment wantonly. Eventually, the trio takes over from the community and controls the land and wildlife. Thus, the community largely depends on the land, wildlife, and forest for survival is relegated to a poverty-stricken site.

Deaf to the protests of the locals, Konini L.t.d manages to carve out an area for the construction of the Konini Tourist Lodge. The objective is to put up elaborate infrastructure exclusively for tourism. The construction of cottages, restaurants, lounges, and a warehouse in the name of "tourists' paradise" raises ecological issues. For instance, the clearance of the forest to create space and provide raw materials for the construction of the Konini Tourists Lodge affects the quality of land and weather patterns. During building, masons, carpenters, and other workers hired from Nakuru cut down trees to construct "several round huts out of unshaped tree trunks" which had "no ceiling except rafter and thatch" (p.97). This is a clear case of deforestation, which leaves the land bare and susceptible to soil erosion. Soon after installing the "tourists' paradise," the community begins to experience weather changes. The piercing impact of drought on plants, humans, and water sources is glaring. Ponds and rivers dry up while plants fade due to the prolonged drought.

Consequently, water becomes scarce, and that which is available is too filthy to be used. Reson and Sena, for example, in their long-distance expedition across the forest, have difficulty finding water points. Still, when they finally spot one, they realize that "the drying pond's water had turned into a disgusting smelly thick yellowish liquid that was covered with green algae" (p.204). This demonstrates that it is not only the quality of water that is affected but also its availability. Although Reson is desperately thirsty, he cannot drink the pond water due to its present state. As a community of pastoralists, hunters, and gatherers, the people fancy water for their animals' survival as well as the production of honey. The prolonged drought afflicts their sources of livelihood. The result is disastrous; with desperation and health complications creeping in, poverty takes center stage.

Aside from animals and humans, plants equally get disfigured and face extinction because of the variations in weather patterns. The narrator reveals, "there were pale leafless grey oleleshua bushes and the thin flat-topped acacia trees of dull, smoked-green, and wide tracts of level grass, dried by the then prevailing drought to a faded sandy yellow" (p.186). As plants bear the brunt of drought, the environment becomes discomforting and inhabitable. Wild animals experience the consequences of homelessness and loss of grazing land while humans lose agricultural lands and livelihoods.

The grazing lands have been "parched" making it difficult for the animals to fend for themselves. Interestingly, total silence from the Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS), charged with taking care of the animals. The animals are threatened with extinction, yet there are no structured methods to salvage the situation. Instead,

the poachers, funded by the foreign company, are allowed to further threaten the existence of wildlife by indiscriminately killing them. Reson, for instance, talks about a massacre in which "about five hundred elephants that included the beloved old bull, Oltasat to the villagers" (p.209). This results in an ecological imbalance, loss of livelihoods, and heritage of the people.

Konini Tourists' Lodge offers negligible economic and cultural values to the community with its self-proclaimed developmental pronouncements. In the first place, the people are displaced and their livelihoods destroyed in the name of setting up a 'paradise' to accommodate visitors. To make matters worse, the culture of communities around the park has been commoditized, resulting in exploiting the people. The people's cultural performances have been reduced to entertainment pieces for the tourists, hence losing the original meaning and value. For instance, the community initially performed the elephant dance after killing errant elephants that caused havoc to the community. It was a celebration of victory over destruction. However, its performance and meaning have since changed with the emergence of 'tourism'. It is presently performed to celebrate the successful poaching of elephants and rhinos.

The tourism-related activities in Konini Lodge pose contradictions. The premises serve as a base for the operations of merchants from the East interested in smuggling ivory and other illegal animal products from the country. Ironically, such a facility founded on environmental conservation would serve as the headquarters of activities contrary to its objectives. Who would have imagined that Konini Lodge would be the perfect rendezvous for international smugglers to strike deals on ivory and rhino horns before carting their hauls away from the country undetected? The lodge has an enormous secret warehouse where the illegal merchandise is stacked, awaiting customers who come disguised as guests.

The newly constructed roads within the Konini forest are used as a cover for illegal poaching deals. Strong road networks connect Konini Tourists' Lodge, game reserve, and other forest parts. The roads are constructed through the woods and on steep slopes. The narrator describes one as such, "the road to the lodge went through a wooded, bushy crest of a hill, and then dropped down immediately to a flat plateau where tourist lodge was built" (p.99). Whereas the roads directly impact people's lives, they are meant to open up business opportunities for foreign investors. There is no gainsaying that tourists who visit the lodge in the cover of seeing wildlife come for illegal poaching deals.

The development of the Konini Game Reserve commercializes wild animals in the forest. Part of the forest teeming with animals is turned into a reserve exclusively managed by the company committed to preserving the animals. The animals earn the company billions of shillings as several tourists access one elephant. The tourists stop to see the animals and handsomely pay the directors of Konini Company. Whereas the company attaches commercial value to animals, the community finds a sense of identity and heritage in them. To preserve their heritage and identity, the community has, over the years, collectively and jealously protected the animals, with the elders being their trustees. The animals, especially the elephants, symbolize a cultural fabric for the people and therefore occupy a central place in their existence.

The oldest elephant, Oltasat, for instance, is a sign of cultural resilience. It is as old as the society with all its cultural practices and flavours. The elephants are anthropomorphized and share common cultural interests with human beings. For example, like the community members, elephants are given names, known by their ages, visit people, and even share a common language of communication with the community. The narrator says, "no matter how long we stayed without visiting them when we, at last, went to see them, Oltasat, Olmoruo and Olodo-ala, and their herds were always there to welcome us with their trumpets!" (p.113). By commoditizing the elephants, the foreigners are deliberately eroding people's culture.

The revenues accrued from tourism go solely to the Konini Company with little, if any, indications of real benefits to the local communities. Thus, the Konini ranch, which is supposed to be a conservancy, is usually implicated in the exploitation of animals. This validates Mbaria's Et al (2017) argument that the reserves only give a logistical advantage of closeness and confinement to the exploiters of animals (p.120).

Of pertinence is that Ole Kulet (2016) demonstrates that poaching and terrorism in Kenya are intimately linked. The bourgeois who deal in ivory and tusks also finance terrorism. An example of a terrorist attack funded by proceeds from illegal trade is Garissa University, which left "more than hundred and fifty innocent students killed in cold blood" (p.337). Outside the novel's world, there were media reports that Al-Shabaab claimed responsibility, a confession that angered Kenyans as many families were affected. The violence perpetrated against the students suggests violence on the ecology as well. Firstly, the ecological consequences of terrorism are unimaginable especially considering the weaponry used. The chemicals from weapons find their way into the land and air, causing climatic changes and endangering the lives of organisms in or on land in the long term. Secondly, the blasts cause noise and other air-related pollution.

The layers of violence that accompany poaching cannot go unmentioned. There is violence on the wild animals that are killed for their body parts. The money obtained from the related sales is used in acquiring weaponry that kindles violence on humans and the environment. The circular wave of violence is destructive and ceaseless. The cycle of killings has to continue to feed terrorism which endlessly seeks to gain international

attention and political influence. This makes poaching a double-edged engagement that cannot be fought effectively from a single front.

The generation of wealth owing to the astronomic prices of ivory in the international markets is the motivation behind the illegal trade. The principle of huge profits propels poachers. Consequently, they want only to kill the animals to maximize profits without minding the ecological implications. This ugly situation is presented in the epic killing of animals, as represented in Ole Kulet (2016). The narrator puts it that:

By the time the hackers completed hacking off tusks from the elephants' heads, Shadrach counted them and found that they had accumulated three hundred and twenty six pairs of huge tusks. And the biggest pair of them all was that which was hacked off the old bull that Shadrach personally killed…when the one hundred and fifty hunters gathered around the heap of over six hundred pieces of tusks, they heaped praises on Shadrach and his two look-alike men for their leadership and boldness that they said enabled them achieve the unprecedented success that lay before them (p126).

Furthermore, it is revealed that:

When Shadrach and his men converged at the killing site, they counted eighty-five buffaloes that they had killed. They set up a butchering camp and for hours all the one hundred and fifty men worked together tirelessly, butchering, skinning and extracting sinew from flesh and flesh and marrow from bones (p.121).

The content of this excerpt brings to consciousness systematic and organized structures put in place by Konini L.t.d with a view to harvesting as many tusks as possible. It is indeed true that the more the number of animals killed, the bigger the returns. The decimation of the animal populations by the cartel has reached epic proportions. At this rate, it is just a matter of time before the targeted ones are eradicated in the area.

The several dead bodies strewed everywhere project a heightened level of environmental destruction. Ironically, the bodies are commoditized even at death. They are used as food for the overwhelmingly high number of poachers who have raided the area. The situation contravenes the traditional practices and measures of wildlife protection and conservation. For instance, the rhinos were traditionally not a source of meat. The traditions prescribed which animals could be killed and which ones to be spared. These were indigenous ways of ensuring environmental sustainability. Thus, commercializing poaching results in the endangerment of animals. The narrator assesses the situation and concludes that the environmental destruction witnessed could easily make entry into the Guinness Book of Records (p127).

Metian tearfully contrasts the present state of the forest with what it used to be to contextualize environmental and animal destruction. He recounts how the valley that was previously teeming with all kinds of game that included elephants, rhinos, buffaloes, giraffes, and many others is currently covered with carcasses of animals recently killed (p.290). In a regretful tone, he reveals that he cannot estimate the "hundreds of elephants and thousands of buffaloes that had been killed" (p.290). Similarly, Reson appeared "numb and devoid of emotion as he stared dumbfounded at the hundreds of elephants slain, not for having wronged anyone but for possessing their god-given tusks" (p.146). The Konini Company has succeeded in a near-total decimation of the animals within the local ecosystem.

The company's success with the links to the global East in killing animals and carrying out the illegal trade abroad is bolstered by the commercialization of the cultures of the local communities. When the Far East visit, they are entertained by the traditional performance called "elephant dance." The original intention of the dance was steeped in tradition and was informed by the principles of necessity. Traditionally, it was only a destructive and dangerous elephant that would be killed. This was a confirmed case of culling. Presently, the dance is being performed in front of animal poachers and moguls of the illegal trade in animal parts. These are people whose intention is to kill any of those targeted animals indiscriminately. The performance of the Elephant Dance in this context is like celebrating poaching. The commercialization of culture thus renders local cultures nearly meaningless.

Ironically, the performers are not aware that the so-called tourists are on a mission to collect elephant tusks. This symbolizes the sudden threat to the local culture as perpetuated by the foreigners whose major preoccupation is the commercialization of the same for their benefit. In an unexpected turn of events, the celebrations are cut short by the tyrant KWS officer-in-charge of Konini station, Regina Naitore.

Regina, unlike her compromised game warden predecessors, deploys community intelligence and policing to nab the perpetrators. Regina is comparable to the Kenyan Dr. Richard Leakey, a former boss of KWS, who was perceived to have won the war against poaching during his reign. Leakey laid down plans and put deliberate efforts to reduce poaching in the country significantly. Regina, like Leakey, works closely with the communities, motivates her staff's morale, and displays honesty at all times.

Other than animals, poaching spells doom to the Konini environment. Land, for example, is heavily assaulted with wastes that make pastures unavailable for livestock and make them toxic. The narrator graphically paints the picture:

By the time they left that location the forest was littered with enormous tanglings of huge elephants' bones and curved by buffalo horns that protruded haphazardly from the scrub growth (p.130)

The word "litter" connotes toxicity, while haphazard protrusion is an indication of imminent danger. As a site of wretchedness, the land remains unsuitable for human and animal survival. The narrator further explains that:

By the look of its decomposing carcass and its disfigured head whose tusks had been hacked off, the motive of the killers, and the killers of so many other elephants whose decomposing carcasses were strewn all over a large area around the dam, became obvious to the three hunters (p146)

The decomposing carcasses all over the land indicate the contempt with which the environment is handled. Environmental hygiene and sanitation are peripheral. Besides, the poachers use sophisticated weapons which emit dangerous chemicals onto the land. These chemicals ultimately affect living organisms in the soil.

Like land and water, the air is equally contaminated with poaching activities. The foulness that engulfs the environment is a nuisance. The narrator captures it thus:

A cold wind blew from the valley below, carrying with it the smell of stagnant water, of dust and curiously of stinking rotten flesh. The foul smell that reached them the previous night increased and became worse as they descended the cliff, even more so as the sunlight warmed the forest (p.144-5).

The pungent smell both in the air and water endangers the lives of the people living in the forest. The dead animals decompose, sending the stench in every direction in the forest. The discomfort that people suffer as a result of the stench is unhygienic to unimaginable. Furthermore, the state of the air makes the people vulnerable and hygienically exposed.

To say that poaching affects the environment and its content is an understatement. Konini people have lost virtually everything ranging from livelihoods, sovereignty to self-esteem but importantly, culture and heritage. This sense of loss is accounted for in Pesi's lamentations, "We have eaten the bird together with its eggs. The future is bleak (p. 147). The quote shows a symbiotic web of relationships between the community members and the elephants. The complex relationship between the two parties disobeys the law of the jungle where the fittest survives and the weakest are eliminated. In this, the survival of members of the community is directly proportional to that of the elephants and vice versa. Pesi's deployment of the imagery of the bird and its eggs expressively captures not just the death of heritage but also the end of a generation.

There is an intricate connection between the elephants and the community. In Konini, elephants are the lifeblood of the community. This is evident in Metian's uncle's observation that they will also be gone when the last elephant is gone (p.111). Metian becomes emotionally drained with the realization that even the most revered elephant, Oltasat, is gone; thus, "tears welled in his eyes" (p.290). The deliberate killing of the heritage of the forest communities by the poachers is a move intended to end cultural dictates of environmental sustainability. Like most African traditional societies, this community depends on strict cultural prescriptions to conserve the environment and protect the wild animals and forests. It has myths that protect the animals from becoming extinct as well as protecting food sources. The forest is revered, and its depletion poses serious environmental challenges.

However, the capitalists have changed the pattern by introducing ordinances of globalization and exploitative economic orders. The animals are commoditized, and a much more appealing economic side is presented. This attracts the attention of the youth who are supposed to take over the community from the elders. It baffles that even with the killing of the community's heritage, the youth are being indoctrinated with the false idea that the resources are being exploited for their benefit. The Ilmorisho Lo Supuko gang undertakes to train and equip the youths with sophisticated firearms in the guise of maintaining the security of animals. The militants are acting on behalf of the perpetrators and earn a fortune from their activities. The narrator reveals this when he says:

Simon Labuto would finally ensure that at the end of it all, those who participated in the illegal hunt, all those who facilitated it, and of course Ilmorisho Lo Supuko, who did the donkey work, had all something to smile about (p.96).

The training aims to motivate them later to use the provided lethal weapons of destruction against the animals. At that time, the community will have become vulnerable with no one to protect it. Furthermore, the narrator exposes the scheme:

The real intention, as they learnt, was to impart essential skills to them and eventually recruit and assimilate them into Ilmirisho Lo Supuko gang. They further learnt that after the youths were recruited, a more sinister plan awaited them (p.206).

From the discussion above, it is clear that the illegal wildlife trade is a venture that adversely affects the environment, humans, and animals. The capitalists have a well-thought-out game plan for exploiting the local resources. The organs that are supposed to conserve and protect the animals and the environment have seemingly renounced their duties and responsibilities. Mbaria et al. (2017) posits, "Elephant conservation groups, or any group which styles themselves as such, appear to hold extraordinary sway in Kenya" (p.120). KWS is mandated to manage Kenya's megafauna, of which wildlife is a portion. Still, it has failed to address itself adequately to the hitches and intrigues of wildlife conservation and protection.

The story portrays KWS officials as unprofessional and incompetent. The narrator says, "before, Regina was posted there, the station was not only notorious for being most corrupt workplace but was known to be hell-bent on working hard to defeat any mechanism put in place to dismantle known poaching gangs" (p.234). This description is not surprising because several questions arise in how the officers discharge their duties. For instance, How would the perpetrators clandestinely operate in the forest, killing animals without being caught? Why would the wardens be the ones fighting Regina and her team? How could any warden worth their salt takes orders from agents of poaching cartels? KWS is acting on behalf of the company and the government. The officials serve their interests as they regularly receive bribes from the perpetrators of poaching and even hire out their weapons to kill the animals.

The government, as the overall oversight authority, has also joined the league. There are glaring intelligence and statutory gaps. For instance, Konini L.t.d operates with a fake license given by the government. Furthermore, there are no scientific tests and approvals by the government that sanctions the industrial use and processing of 'sandalwood.' Also, there are no records of quality assurance and standards on the 'sandalwood' and the other company products. Additionally, there are lapses from the intelligence, security, and safety departments. Some pertinent questions beg: How do the tusks and horns escape all the security checkpoints to find their way out of the country to the far East? How would the tusks and horns be transported as sandalwood without being detected? How would procurement and shipment of tons of tusks and horns be made without the knowledge of the government?

There is no doubt that the perpetrators and exporters are well connected to the government and shipping agencies. It is a clear case of corruption at border check and cargo clearance points. What remains is that the KWS and other government agencies have breached constitutional and statutory contracts between them and the people. Instead of enforcing counter-poaching policies and strategies, they have acted unprofessionally and in the interest of the capitalists hence fostering violence against the very animals they are paid to protect. They have turned into caricatures of foreign forces and the associated companies by aiding them to sustain the illegal trade. This earns KWS officials a new title as "officers in-charge of poachers affairs" (p.235).

The police and judiciary are equally guilty, as evident in how they are paid to help the perpetrators escape the full force of the law. The authorial voice says, "[m]oney brought them freedom from arrest, from prosecution and even being questioned about their questionable hubris" (p.244). This is a mockery of the police commission as well as the judiciary. The failure to bring the criminals to book is a strategy to sustain the menace. Therefore, the game reserves are capitalists' periodic structures to logistically advantage the perpetrators while harming the environment, humans, and animals.

III. CONCLUSION

The paper demonstrates the need to conceptualize 'development' and environmental sustainability in a postcolonial context from the foregoing. The study concludes that the single narrative that industrial and trade development in Africa serves as a basis for environmental sustainability may not capture the entire picture on the ground and, as such, needs to be debunked. The reality is that industrial and trade development often exhibit inherent contradiction due to the foreign agencies' capitalistic motives and the relevant national governments. This often results in environmental degradation. Industrial and trade developments thus have the potentials to be counterproductive in the African ecological spaces and therefore should not be uncritically perceived.

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