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Research Article



## An Ecological (Re)presentation of Depravity and Environmental Depletion in Adamu Kyuka's *The Death of Eternity*

**Obinna Kalu**

Consultant at Flames Tutors Abuja,

Nigeria

Email: [majestykalu32@gmail.com](mailto:majestykalu32@gmail.com)

 <https://orcid.org/0009-0006-9924-0873>

**Jesse Bijimi**

Lecturer II,

Department of English

Kaduna State College of Education

Gidan-Waya, Kaduna,

Nigeria

Email: [jessebijimi@gmail.com](mailto:jessebijimi@gmail.com)

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8846-1685>

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**Abstract**

The notion that the environment has always served as a thematic and aesthetic base for the production of texts in the literary enterprise, globally is inarguable. In attestation, of the afore claim, this paper draws cogent data from Adamu Kyuka's *The Death of Eternity* to closely examine the natural world and the environment as underscoring the relationship between man and his environment. The paper is exponential in its portrayal of man's symphonic interaction with the environment as a blessing or a curse. Going forward, this paper builds a composite philosophy around the intersection between literature and environment. Where it argues that Nigerian literature has become more conscious of issues arising from resource control, as it especially relates to the devastating effect it melts on the environment. In concretizing these arguments, the paper deploys Ecocriticism as its analytical/investigative mechanism to explore the selected text as a fair representation of the environmental degradation Nigeria suffers at large. Seemingly, the choice of Ecocriticism as the investigative tool identifies the selected author as keenly aware of the devastating effect of industrial pollution as portrayed in the text under study as an expression of the commitment of the course of environmental preservation. The paper therefore finds that, Kyuka's *The Death of Eternity* is critical in its examination of the social injustices, greed, corruption, political crisis and economic setbacks as social ills which are inspired by the scramble for natural resources.

**Keywords:** Thematic, Aesthetic, Enterprise, Attestation, Environment, Exponential, Portrayal, Interaction, Composite Philosophy, Intersection, Ecocriticism, Investigative Devastating, Industrial Pollution, Environmental Preservation, Social ills, Scramble, Natural Resources

**Introduction**

The concerns of Literature the world over, are more often than not, inspired by issues and events that characterize human existence. These issues and events are shaped by human interactions with nature all through the course of history, thus situating nature as a vital part of human existence and survival. The physical environment, beginning with the interest in land and all that it brings forth, plays a seemingly, pivotal role in the development and the ensuing conflicts peculiar to different regions of the world, in that regards. In the 21st century however, a major threat to our humanity stems from the abuse and or depletion of our physical environment, as it particularly connects to "industrialization" or "modernization" and "civilization". These demands have in turn threatened nature, and by implication the safety of humanity in general. In view of the foregoing, the choice of Ecocriticism as the theory for this

paper is in a bid to through literature join the deliberate attempts across different fields of endeavor to salvage the situation by drawing attention to every possible threat to nature and the environment. With Ecocriticism, standing out as the nexus that harmonizes these numerous interests, this paper therefore proceeds on the basis of establishing the interest of the contemporary Nigerian writer within the literary circle, especially in the face of the environmental challenges or eco-degradation that confronts him and humanity in general in the twenty first century.

Accordingly, Lawrence Buell, Ursula K. Heise and Karen Thornber aver that:

Since prehistory, literature and the arts have been drawn to portrayals of physical environments and human-environment interactions. The modern environmentalist movement as it emerged first in the late nineteenth century and, in its more recent incarnation, in the 1960s, gave rise to a rich array of fictional and nonfictional writings concerned with humans' changing relationship to the natural world. (417)

This implies that the physical environment has often served an aesthetic and mimetic purpose as far as creating a virtual space is concerned. It has also established the relationship between man and his environment by examining how man negotiates and responds to the wealth of natural resources around him. Clark observes that "concern with the environment in the broad sense is necessarily as old as human culture" (13). In the same vein, Helmut J. Schneider explains that, "during the Romantic period, nature in its physical appearance emerged as the privileged material for expressing a human subject emancipated from the traditional restrictions of religion and society and experiencing the unfathomable depth of the soul" (92). More recently, however, with the adverse effect of civilization and the hazards posed by industrialization to the natural environment, writers are becoming more concerned about the implication of these hazards to human existence. To this end, issues of environmental degradation are fast becoming prevalent thematic preoccupations across literatures of the world. It is against this backdrop that Eco-criticism has emerged as an analytical tool that understudies man in tandem with how he relates to his environment. In this light, Glotfelty and Fromm's submission on Ecocriticism reaffirms it is, 'the study of the relationship between literature and the physical environment' (1996: xviii). At a deeper level, however, Lawrence Buell's initial argument is suggestive of both the nonhuman environment and human history as 'implicated in natural history'. Thus, he argues further that, "human accountability to the environment is part of the text's ethical orientation" (1995: 7-8). This implies that, there is a strong connection between man and his environment, and that, as a matter of ethical function, it is necessary for a text to account for human attitude to environment.

By and large, Ecocriticism offers us with diverse responses to the symbiotic relationship between humans and the Eco-space. Thus, the environmental crisis/revolt it offers in volcanic eruptions, earthquakes amongst others are a clear-cut discontentment and disconnection from nature to man, thereby, increasingly keeping man at bay. Most importantly, however, Ecocriticism stands out its interdisciplinary perspectives, by his, it harmonizes human relationship to the universe, its philosophies and understanding against all odds. And despite Ecocriticism's openness in terms of discipline, it holds firm its home ground-the human relationship with the earth.

### **Literature and the Environment**

The relationship between literature and nature cannot be shoved aside, due to its long-standing position. This suggests therefore that, debates and arguments on this erstwhile relationship have been ongoing as well. In the same breath, Cohen's question, as to whether "literature and environment" are a sub-discipline of literary studies or an extension of environmental sciences or a practice within the paradigms of the humanities and social sciences, becomes focal. It captures the dichotomy that exists as to whether, the knowledge base of the discourse belongs to the science domain or the cultural domain. According to Flower: "the Augustan writers had been fond of invoking nature as a value. However, he explains that the Romantics revalued nature in a manner that had no precedence. Throughout the Romantic Movement, nature was the watch word but in a different, altogether more organic way" (1987:202). Similarly, Hall is of the view that, William Wordsworth's and Ralph Waldo Emerson's emergence towards the end of the nineteenth century did not only defend the trees and open space, but played a key and influential role in early environmentalist like Octavia Hill and John Muir" (2014:1). He argues further that, all of these environmentalists' commitment to the preservation of nature was not coincidental, as the seeds were already sown through the works of Wordsworth, Emerson and even Gilbert White. Hill further straightens arguments surrounding the validity of linking cultural movements like Romanticism to the advancement of the ecological space as flawed. Opinionatedly, he debunks these assumptions, noting that, despite the influence of Wordsworth and Emerson on these early Romantic Naturalists, their shared interest in White's works culminates into the scientific rather than cultural, consequently, enhancing their understanding of meteorology, ornithology, and botany. This explains why, Cohen's observation about crumbled boundaries between the natural sciences, social sciences and the humanities in many environmental issues stands valid. Beyond the demarcations that the interest in literature and environment incites, there is also an interest in the connection between man and his environment: a connection between that which is right and wrong. It's in this regard that Clark avers that:

Questions about preservation of the natural environment are not just technical questions; they are also about what defines the good and moral life, and about the essence and the meaning of our existence. Hence, these are not just academic or technical matters, to be settled in elite dialogues between experts. These are fundamental questions of defining what our human community is and how it should exist” (2011:1).

Coming from the above perspective therefore, the concern is basically on how, the activities of man constitute a threat to his environment and by implication humanity as a whole. Thus, it is from following these attempts to express the concerns for the environment beyond the Romanticization of nature, that the term “Eco-criticism” was coined by William Rueckert in 1978. Cherryll Glotfelty, a pioneer eco-critic defines ecocriticism as “the study of the relationship between literature and the physical environment”. Significantly, eco-critics throughout history have studied and analyzed literature in relation to the environment as exemplified in British and American literatures from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. For example, Wardi describes water as; potent to African American literary and historical tradition” (92). Her portrayal of water transcends the theory of its survival and trauma. She in clear terms captures a diasporic and regional connections as well as physical and psychological dislocations when she explains thus:

Beginning with the transatlantic trade voyage, in which Africans were taken from their homelands and placed in the holds of slaving vessels—and where, estimates suggest, one-third of the captives died en route to the Americas and the Caribbean—this project reveals the confluence of water, loss, and migration in African American culture. Not only did the waters of the Atlantic Ocean bring captives to the shores of America, the current of the Mississippi River carried the enslaved “down river” to new and often harsher plantations and worksites, and, before the passage of the Fugitive Slave Law of 1850, crossing the Ohio River signaled a deliverance from slavery”. (2011:92)

This connection between water and the African American History and experience shares so much in common with the Oil as a major trope that accounts for a great percentage of the world’s environmental problem. “These tropes” whether water, land, oil or natural resources in general are major catalysts that have informed and shaped human actions over the years. Thus, they have served as useful environmental markers that help the artist to express their environmental concerns.

In tandem with the above submission, Betjeman (1906-1984), a master painter, in his poem “Inexpensive Progress” makes a satirical attack on the obsession of the modern man with so called progress at the expense of nature. In his submissions, he exposes how, increased industrialization and urbanization has both destroyed nature and defaces it daily. What this

suggests going forward is that, the decadence of the environment as a result, poses a heinous threat to future generations; thus, leaving us with the options of managing, controlling and preserving our environment or perish with its devastation. Worthy of mention is the fact that, like literature, environmental concerns cannot be estranged from the writer, due to its magnificent imperatives. Pointedly, the writer gleans from his/her environment to produce what defines literature for him/her. In balancing the above arguments, literature can be regarded as a powerful form of cultural ecology, which has in no small means staged and explored in every new scenario, the complex feedback relationship(s) of existing cultural systems with the needs and manifestations of human and nonhuman nature. In the same spirit, drawing from Literature's cognitive and creative potential, is a tripartite dynamic relationship, that stretches to the larger cultural system as; a cultural critical meta-discourse, an imaginative counter-discourse, and a reintegrative inter-discourse. From this textual form, emanates social structures and ideologies, which symbolically empowers the marginalized, and reconnects what is culturally separated. In the same manner, Literature counteracts economic, political or pragmatic forms of interpreting and instrumentalizing human life, and breaks up one dimensional view of the world and the self, opening them up towards their repressed or excluded other. Thus, literatures multi-dimensional phase, first fixes, what goes wrong in the society by awakening a form of consciousness and balancing cultural uniformity and on the other hand serves as a medium of constant cultural self-renewal, in which the neglected biophilic energies can find a symbolic space of expression and reintegration into the larger ecological cultural discourse. Yet again, the interrelatedness between literature and nature poses a special attention to literary culture from its archaic beginnings in myth, oral story-telling, legends and fairy tales in pastoral literature and stories of mutual co-existence between humans and nature (nonhuman). Indeed, the mutual opening and symbolic reconnection of culture and nature, mind and body, human and nonhuman life is holistic and pluralistic in ways that, captures significant modes in which literature functions and produces knowledge. Meanwhile, within a broader framework of Cultural Ecology, a substantial amount of research has been produced, such that recent contributions on the relationship between literature, culture, environment and nature have been inspired to meet a broadly cultural ecological approach. By this submission, the interrelationship between culture and nature, forms a precultural, pretextual essences, as well as takes the central focus and maintains a fundamental dimension of the study of language, culture and texts. In a similar sense, the works of pioneer Eco-critics like; *Avant La Lattre* by Ursula Brumm, *History and Wilderness in American Literature*, by Gunter Ahrends, *English America Nature Poetry in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century* by Hans Ulrich Seeber, *An Ecological Aesthetics of Nature* by Gernot Bohme and

Heinz Tschachler on *Ecology and Arcadia: Nature and American Culture of 1970s*, have all played key roles in ensuring an ecological paradigm as well as, the development and emergence of Ecocriticism. Imperatively, the 21<sup>st</sup> century ushered a new beginning by the first ecocritical conference held in 2004 in Munster, Germany. The conference ensured the foundation of the European Association for the Studies of Literature, Culture and the Environment. And in the same breath emphasizes on the textual and cultural mediated-ness of all natural phenomena that characterizes the important aspects of ecocriticism. Herein, nature is not reduced to a mere cultural construct, rather it posits that nature is only accessible to us via culture, that is both linguistic and textual in form. Thereby, analyzing and reflecting the ways in which nature is discursively represented, manipulated, repressed, empowered or creatively used in symbolic practices. Eminently, the above submissions, are insinuating of the close relationship that has always been between literature and environment, which captures the writers' experiences throughout different cultures and history across the globe.

### **Theoretical Framework**

To corroborate this work's adoption of eco-criticism as its analytical framework, the following submissions on what the theory enshrines suffices. According to Westling (2006), Eco-criticism emerged from traditional scholarship on literary treatments of the natural world, which anchors on European pastoral studies as well as the American nature writing genre put forward by such authors as Jefferson and Bartram to Thoreau and Muir. In the same vein, Barry (2002), holds ecocriticism as firm in environmental revisions of the U.S.A. nature writing and 19th century Transcendentalism (with focus on Emerson, Thoreau and Fuller), as well as of the British tradition of late 18th century Romanticism (focus on Wordsworth). Contrary to Barry's position, Gersdorf and Mayer hold the concept "as a theoretical and methodological force that focuses on real and imagined boundaries between nature and culture without denying nature's physical existence" (2006:9-10). From their submission, they hold sway with Barry's assertions on ecocriticism and remarkably "turn[s] away from the 'social constructivism' and 'linguistic determinism' of dominant literary theories" (Barry 264). Thus, in affirming their stands they aver that:

We hope to push eco-criticism's theoretical and conceptual limits towards a more rigorous investigation of nature, not as a concept that reinforces but one that challenges established cultural, political and ethical normativity's. In other words: We strongly support the further development of ecocriticism as a methodology that re-examines the history of ideologically, aesthetically, and ethically motivated conceptualizations of nature, of the function of its constructions and metaphorizations in literary and other cultural practices, and of the

potential effects these discursive, imaginative constructions have on our bodies as well as our natural and cultural environments. (Gersdorf and Mayer, 10)

This difference in approach only points to the counter-intuitive nature of eco-criticism as a viable literary analytical framework which Murphy describes as, “is a critical method that both evokes the responsibility of the critic and reinstates referentiality as a crucial and primary activity of literature” (2009:1). Additionally, that “it is a movement with multiple aspects and theories delimiting it, particularly a drive toward multidisciplinary that bridges the humanities and the sciences” (1).

Though, the arguments on Ecocriticism are progressive and sufficing, worthy of mention is that, it is an emergent movement of the '90s, still at an unfolding state. And despite the term's coinage, more than twenty years ago, critical readings of literary texts and movements projecting the ideas of nature, wilderness, natural science and spatial environment have enjoyed pursuance for the better part of a century. Only in the last decade, has the study of literature in relation to the environment begun to assume the look of major critical insurgency (Buell, 1999: 699). The text understudy is characterized by militant issues that are an off shoot of the environmental degradation caused by the environment. Most of such struggles are being justified by the need to protect the environment from industrial activities that constitute a threat not just to the environment but also to its inhabitants. McCarthy explains that:

Methodologically, early ecocriticism defined itself by its commitment to the political project of environmental rescue, much more than any unifying theory. From the outset, ecocriticism was linked to direct political action on behalf of the environment and still proudly identifies with activist approaches like Feminist Criticism and African American Studies more than text centered methods like New Criticism or Deconstruction. Invigorating the preface to many an eco-critical monograph is the trope of environmental crisis—images of the natural world in flames while society fiddles—granting urgency to both author and topic” (2012: 279).

This implies that though the issue of environment which Ecocriticism champions, is somewhat central in socio-political issues yet it has always received little or no attention compared to the text-centered approach. Yet again, McCarthy describes Ecocriticism as a movement in literary studies that focuses on nature's role in the texts we read” (278). In practice, eco-critics engage the long-overlooked aesthetic, ethical, and political relations reciprocating between books and the world around them. In Cheryll Glotfelty's view, one of the key proponents of the theory; ecocriticism studies the relationship between literature and the physical environment. In tandem with feminist criticisms examination of language and literature from gender perspective, and Marxist criticisms awareness of modes of production



and economic class to reading a text, ecocriticism employs an earth-centered approach to literary studies. Worthy of mention is the symbiotic relationship between nature and culture, with special regards on the cultural artifacts of language and literature. In the same breath, a closer look, presents it as having a foot on literature and the other on land (nature); while negotiating between human and nonhuman as its theoretical discourse posits. Given, ecocriticisms attention to different things, it is first important to reexamine its construction and presentation of nature in literary and non-literary texts, films, television series amongst other aspects. While it also examines the representation of landscapes and nature in its realest form, Ecocriticism may also examine the representation of nature in government reports, developers' plans, ecological studies, philosophical treaties, wild life documentaries as well as texts and films in which nature play some key roles.

Buell (1995), one of eco-criticism leading figures, reaffirms that:

1. Non-human environment presents itself, not just as a framing device, but as a presence that suggests human history as being implicated in natural history.
2. Human interest is not understood as the only legitimate interest.
3. Human accountability to the environment is part of the text ethical orientation
4. Some sense of the environment as a process rather than a constant or a given is at least implicit in the text.

From the forgoing, ecocriticism corroborates on the divergent ways in which the natural world, including; wild and domestic animals, landscapes and others, occupy co-relational spaces in our cultural representation. Yet again, ecocriticism rereads canonical texts from an earth-centered approach to aid teaching and research of environmental nonfiction. Pointedly, ecocriticism as theory, is interested in discursive conventions and how they enable and constrain our contact with the environment/place, to how place informs representations to how the means of representations informs our sense of place. Hence, the argument examines significant trope and myth that shape our environmental imagination and action. The object analyzes the discourse that governs the representation of nature and how hidden assumptions have contributed and still are to our environmental woes. By this, the most damaging of these assumptions is the widespread belief that, the human specie has the right to use and exploit nature owing to its supposed divine sanction/natural hierarchy. Like most works on contemporary literary and cultural studies, ecocriticism has strong moral and political undertones, that makes it differ in approaches, following its rejection of a more radical form of constructionism. To most eco-critics, the knowledge of our environment and the damage done to it, is both conscious and inevitably a product of our subjectivities. Similarly, they are firm about how reliably sufficient the knowledge we have to preserve our environment is.

Imperatively, despite the resistance put forward by theorists entrapped in cultural studies, poststructuralism and postmodernism. Ecocriticism has gained increasing recognition as an important new field of research and teachings, thus, opening up newer perspectives that can help reaffirm the relevance ascribed to the humanities and literary studies, with a clear-cut global interpretation of economic and technological terms. This offers eco-critics the space to be an exception in the world of contemporary literary and cultural studies, one that is not hostile to the world of sciences on the one hand and on the other, the most visible and productive in offering new directives to literary and cultural studies. Given, the spread of ecocriticism through the departments of literature and faculties of humanities the world over. Ecocriticism, has discovered nature as relevant to literary aesthetics and political analysis, often in conjunction with gender, class and race issues; yet absent and silent in texts that construe environmental representation. This, gap and more is what this paper seeks to cover up.

### **Corruption and Environmental Depletion: The Balance**

The earth's ecosystem is under increasing pressure from human activities, because of rising levels of greenhouse gases, habitats, species extinction, pollution, global climate change, and water scarcity. Resultantly, issues of resource depletion and environmental stress abound from inadequate institutions to deal with issues as well as, a lack of knowledge and awareness amongst the people concerned. Inarguably, corruption surges up these conditions, while, increasing the potential for abuse and maximum damage inflicted. Worthy of mention is the heinous role, it cheers in practically all environmental problems, that connects to the natural system and their dependent communities. Thus, Kyuka's *The Death of Eternity* unrepentantly, presents corruption as one of the frontiers of environmental degradation. This is evident in the behavior of the Pollution Control Manager who would divert the money meant for controlling pollution into his pocket for his personal aggrandizement, thereby enriching himself at the expense of the surrounding communities. The narrative voice explains that:

He was the chair of the Pollution Control Task Force of the refinery, which was given the lump sum of money allocated to the refinery by the Cockden government's annual budget for pollution control. He has compromised all members of the Task Force, and indeed the management of the refinery with bribes from money allocated to the Task Force. Instead of applying the money to treat and properly dispose of the refinery wastes, he siphoned the money and passed the wastes into River Kodewa. (146)

The Pollution Control Manager is like many office holders who use their office to perpetuate evil in order to satisfy their greed. He goes on with this mischievous attitude even when he

knows the consequence of his action and what it may lead to when he is found out by the parent company:

If by any means it comes to the ear of the Cockde Petroleum Company (C.P.C) that he was not treating wastes before discharge, he was on his way out of the company. If it gets to the parent company that the refinery treatment plant was not working, despite monthly allocations for its maintenance, he will not only lose his job, he would be prosecuted for criminal misappropriation. (147)

This illustrates the extent to which his conscience is deadened by corruption. Corruption has blinded his sense of rational judgment, he thinks the strange white man was as ignorant as the poor village people who think that the cause of their problem is as a result of what they had done, so the gods are getting angry with them by bringing death into the land. As he would suggest to the strange white man “Perhaps they have offended some gods. You know we Africans have so many gods. Jotu is one of them. I trust you have never heard of Jotu-the god of nemesis? He asked and laughed” (148). But the strange white man knew his tricks and was going to get him to pay for the damage he has done to the community. Thus:

Inside the toilet, the manager kept repeating to himself, ‘A hundred million koba? It was damn, damn crazy. He should have known the strange white man was a crazy man. There could be no deal with such a crazy man. His plan had been that, if the money was such that he could pay, he would pay out of the last environmental pollution prevention allocation which he was yet to exhaust. But this plan was now up in flames with the crazy demand Tibor was exerting. (243)

The Pollution Control Manager has found himself in a cross road, and would have to choose one, either to face the mother company or pay the hundred million koba compensation to the community. But he chose neither, and decided to take the assassination plan on the strange white man. As he embarked on this journey of no return, he meets his likes on the road. The ordeal recounts thus:

The road between Chinaka and Maratori was a long winding one. There were many police checkpoints, particularly in the forest between Kacha and Bonkami, infested with armed robbers. At all the police check point he was stopped; he dropped a twenty koba note. He did not want to be delayed in a trip so important. As soon as he dropped a twenty-koba note on the ground, he was waved on. But he has not bargain on so many checkpoints. Soon he was out of koba notes to drop. (244)

This reveals that like the manager, the police on the road are corrupt, instead of carrying out their duty as entrusted to them by the government, they choose to take bribe from the road users without doing the right thing. This inability of the law enforcement agencies like the

police to stay true to their duties is what has made people like the pollution control manager to thrive in their corrupt practices and go unpunished. Haven escaped the check points; he was yet to meet killers like him on the road who use the uniform power like he uses the office power to kill. This time around the twenty koba note will not save him as the checkpoint has a notorious set of policemen who would kill at any slight of noncompliance. Thus:

At the next checkpoint, he was flagged down by a band of policemen who were using their long rusty rifles to dance a canary on the road. He tried to swerve and drive past. A policeman shot into the air. It was a clear message. Next time he would fire into the car if he does not stop. He gradually pulled the car to a stop by the roadside. (245)

This group of policemen were out of a business, and were not ready for a cheap bargain as they kept making demands of what they know he already has. It was obvious from the way the Police Corporal flipped through his document that he was not educated. This is to show that the corruption that has taken over the Cockden government was beyond office holders of high ranks even the ones at the base seem to be more corrupt, because for them opportunity comes but once, so, at the sight of it, it must be grabbed with both hands. Thus:

The Corporal who asked him to produce the particulars did not even bother to flip through them, and the manager doubted if he could read anything. He was an illiterate policeman who the Managing Director of Cockde Petroleum Company had once described as bloody armed robber. ‘Your I.D. card, sir!’ The particulars of the car seemed to irritate him by the way he was holding them.

He gave him his I.D card.

‘Your driving licence, sir!’

He brought out his driving licence.

‘Your motor vehicle insurance, sir!’

‘It is among the particulars I gave you.’

‘Are you contradicting me?’

‘No, sir,’ he replied submissively. This was an insane youth wielding a gun. He had to be careful. ‘Fine. I can’t see a rubbish bin inside your car. It is a serious offence to drive without one.’

...Your booth sir. The command he had most has finally come. ‘But I don’t have anything in the booth,’ he protested, lamely. Please take this 500 koba and allow me go. You have wasted my time too much already. ...He opened the booth. The *tembi* sack containing the one million koba was lying inside. ‘Open this sack. I want to see what is inside it.’ ‘There is nothing inside. It is only yams I was given in the village.’ Before the manager could say anything, the policeman jerked the *tembi* sack open and the 200-koba notes inside spread out in the both of

the car. The corporal exclaimed. 'Ahh!' he wrapped his hand around his head while his gun hung limply on his left shoulder where it was strung. Two other policemen at the checkpoint on hearing his exclamation hurried over. Each policeman on seeing so much money, let out shouts of surprise and happiness. (246)

The lengthy exchange illustrates the antics deployed by corrupt police men victimize unsuspecting road users. However, the complication that followed was an expression of the dangers that results in the face of heated corrupt transaction. Apparently, the happiness that follows the discovery of the money by the police, is that happiness that comes with money one did not work for, happiness enshrines in greed and avaricious wickedness to suppress others even if it means killing them in cold blood and taking what belongs to them. The manager himself has been a leader in such nefarious act, by dumping untreated refinery waste into the river that sustains a whole community and beyond, not only killing them in cold blood but indirectly by rendering their land useless and poisoning the atmosphere. Here, he meets his own reward by corrupt greed service men like himself who will not take 500 koba for a bribe but the whole sack of the one million koba he has set out to give to an assassin who will help him clear the threat in his way to embezzling the refinery's money, unknown to him was simply armed with the right resources to stair up the greed in the policemen and to pay his way into his grave. Thus, the policemen:

Looked up and down the road and could see only a lorry loaded with baskets of tomatoes coming. The driver of the lorry slowed down when he got to the checkpoint, but was surprised nobody paid him attention. He accelerated and drove past the checkpoint. He had made a fifty-koba saving. As soon as the lorry driver drove past, the policemen looked up and down the road again. When they did not see any vehicle coming, the corporal emptied his gun into the pollution control manager. Quickly they carried his dead body into the bush and dumped it in a hole. (247)

Unfortunately, the death of the Pollution Control Manager could have been an act of nemesis, but it was also a setback to the fight the strange white man was already winning. The people of Nunsa could have been saved from the cancer within but are now pushed farther away from solution. "With the death of the manager, he knew his struggle to enforce a claim on the refinery on behalf of Nunsa community had suffered a setback." (258)

Tibor will not relent in his pursuit for justice for the people of Numsa, as he decided to sue the refinery. The court being the final place for achieving justice is ridden with greedy lawyers who pervert justice for their personal gains, even when the truth is glaring. The situation of the Nunsa community with the refinery is a typical example of the corruption and the failure of the judicial system. The case has been filed in the Federal High Court, bus as the lawyer

would bring to their notice and the position of the law “The law unfortunately thinks harm from the refinery can be far from the people though the refinery is close to them” (page.267). The procedure of the law seems to be very strange to Mmanya, on their first day in the court says:

‘All this is very strange,’...‘At a time I am supposed to be weeding my farm, I am here among strange people trying to prove that my land can no longer grow crops, when they could simply go to the land and see that it cannot grow crops. (268)

The poor peasants did not understand what the lawyers in the court room were saying as the evidence to the devastation of their community is there for all to see, yet they were keeping them waiting and arguing on what was not necessary.

Mmanya, Bhouku and other elders of Nunsa representing the community had been sitting in the court for three hours now without news of whether the court would sit or not. The court was supposed to sit by nine o’clock, but since this case started, there had not been a day the court sat at nine o’clock. Indeed, on no day had the court sat at ten o’clock. It was either eleven, eleven thirty or twelve, if it sat at all. Today was their seventh appearance in court, but the case was yet to get off from the ground in terms of the court taking evidence of their witnesses. The refinery lawyer had filed a preliminary objection because he had not served it on the counsel for the community. On the third and fourth day, the court did not sit. On the fifth and sixth day, the refinery lawyer did not come to court because he was indisposed. Today, he was yet to show up, and there was no certainty he would eventually. (291)

This rigorous process of the law has made justice so difficult to the people that deserve it, but easy for those who have the means of purchasing it. The refinery no doubt has the means of purchasing justice from the law to keep disposing their toxic waste into the river and poisoning the farmland, wiping out both man and animal and still claim it is not the refinery that is causing the problems the community is faced with. All these are possible because justice is now for sale and he who bids well is served it. In Mmanya’s opinion:

It is very bad. Government buys justice and gives it to the judges to share among the people. The judges collect the money from the government then go on to sell justice to the highest bidder. Sometimes it is the same government that buys the justice it has bought at a ransom price. (293)

As far as Nunsa community is concerned, they have no place in the law because they do not have the money to buy it. The condition of their land has to be left in the hands of fate or they must seek other methods as they have concluded that “A lawyer is the meanest masquerade around. You have to pay him for every word he speaks, whether he is divining your future or

simply speaking bunkum” (299). After five years of pursuing a case with no result and losing more people from the effect of the refinery, people like Chitima and his family members lament thus:

Look at it, strange white man; our men are dying. Chitima is sick; his wife is sick; their newly born child is also sick. We would not be surprised if we get home today and find the entire Chitima family dead. Look at its strange white man (page.311)

The devastation of the environment could have been less if the institutions that are saddled with the responsibility of checkmating the perpetrators were not taken over by corruption. Corruption has become a legalized institution in Cockde, and is found in every sector of the government. The police will not protect the poor and vulnerable neither will the law. The strong and mighty have the law and a convoy of police trail behind them in their thievery. As Mmanya wandered “deception everywhere” and one of the elders would say to the Lawyers:

Corruption has washed away the fertility of the court, another elder interposed. ‘Even the Kelink weed that does not need manure cannot grow on the soil of the court.’ ‘If somebody removed your eye, don’t complain to the court. If you do, the court will remove the other,’ said one of the elders. We went to court with tears only in our eyes...’ ‘Now we are also crying in our noses, another elder said. (332)

The quote, using the metaphor plant and land, illustrates the relationship between an infertile land and the effect of corruption on the judicial system. Obviously, the case of the judicial system is even worse, that why one of the elders says: ‘Even the Kelink weed that does not need manure cannot grow on the soil of the court’. Corruption which is basically known to be the abuse of public office for private gains for the benefit of the holder of the office or some third party has swept Cockde and has left the ordinary man with pain and sadness.

As a result of corruption and the abuse of office by both the refinery staff and the lawyers to finding a lasting solution to the deteriorating environment, Tobor resorts to terrorism as another way of fighting environment destruction and as well as its perpetrators. This method seems to be only what Tibor could come up with at last, since the legal and every other institution have failed. He felt indebted to the community that has reposed so much confidence in him, and his inability not to have been able to bring any solution to them hunts him so bad. He feels like a total failure, thus, he says: “I have failed and disappointed many people in my life in my pursuit of these people’s happiness, he thought. If the people for whom I have lived also consider me a failure, it is bad indeed.” (350). But he would also not blame the people for maltreating him in spite of all his effort, because all he puts-in, in bringing back wholeness to Nunsa community amounted to nothing. Nothing to show for it, other than the shame and

jeering he gets from the people. But Tibor being an honest man finds a way to justify these reactions.

But can I really blame these people? Like every human being, they appreciate help only from the benefit they obtained from it and not the mere act of help. What benefit has the community enjoyed from my help? None...These people were hungry. They sent for me and I came and set a big pot full of water on the hearth they cook their ceremonial meals. They sat round the fire in expectation that food was coming. They listened to the song of the boiling water and smiled at the noise made by the working of my ladle inside the pot as I stirred and steered the meal towards eating. When they thought they had a meal, they put their hands into the pot to start eating, and behold, there was nothing in the pot. No, these people have been very fair to me. It is fortune that has been unfair to me. (350)

In order for Tibor to compensate these people and himself, he chooses terrorism as a way of bringing wholeness to the community that the corrupt Pollution Control Managers and the lawyers have failed to bring. Therefore, he sets out to his first attack. Thus:

His first act of terrorism against the refinery was successful. The refinery had been told in a language it understood that somebody was not happy with it. For now, it did not know who hit it. It was still looking around and trying to figure out who among its various victims had the guts to hit back. (351)

The refinery has now been thrown into panics of who the culprit can be. They simply think it was an act of “sabotage by some disgruntled elements” but these elements they do not know. After the attack, the village terror group *the Hoturunbe Leopard Skin* also started some kind of gorilla killings of every corrupt person they know. The refinery lawyer would be the first to be killed. After they have caught and beaten him to death in their hideout in the bush. The leader of the group would want him to feel the pain he has caused the community by conniving with the refinery in corruption. They questioned him thus:

Now lawyer, here you are with us in this bush, you a dying man and we your victims watching you die. Don't you think it is strange for the prey to be the one looking on while the predator dies? How much did the refinery pay you to frustrate our case? Why did you choose to live like a rat? You would still have had a lot of meat to eat if you had lived like a lion. I am surprised to find blood in your body. I thought you had petrol in your vein. So, you can feel pain? I thought when our machetes clashed inside you, a big fire would start that would consume you and us. I thought from your paunch, we would find the petrol to burn you...soon, several machetes descended on the lawyer with severity that did not forget a single grievance Nunsa community nursed against him. They cut off his head and put it



in a black polythene bag, then poured petrol on the body. A match was struck and the body was swallowed by flames. (372)

This group acts with crudeness to their pains and the desire to see nemesis meted out to everyone involved in their pain. As the promised the refinery lawyer “as we are killing you, we are killing your wife and anyone in whose vein your blood flows” (page. 371). They were out to clear the eternity of corrupt people and as far as they were concern this is the only way to do it.

On the other hand, Tibor has resolved to leave the refineries out of the issue and go after its operators, as attacking the refinery will be causing more harm to the community, “The refineries were innocent. The real culprits were the operators. The operators were the villains to destroy. Burning the refineries would only produce carbon dioxide thereby exacerbating global warning” (373). In this regard, the next target was the new Pollution Control Manager who is in no way better than the former. Without using guns or machetes, Tibor has already devised a means to erase him without trace. As he says “There was no point hiring anyone to kill somebody with a gun or by some other crude method. Poison was the best and most refined weapon of attack.” Since the manager was very fond of pepper soup, this would be the easiest way to get the work done. Jonathan and Tibor got the plan out and involved the pepper soup woman who will do anything for money, as Jonathan says “she is a good candidate for suicide bombing” (377).

This she did after the discussion with Jonathan. Thus:

A week after this discussion, the death of the manager in charge of environmental pollution control of Chinaka refinery was reported in the national dailies of Cockde. There was not even mention of the fact that he died after eating at mama Wimbi’s pepper soup joint, probably because he died a day after eating there. (377)

This illustrates how much hatred the victims of corruption have for their oppressors. Thus, killing the refinery workers, was inducing physical retribution on them and bringing to their consciousness that the people are getting to know those responsible for the devastation of their land and the death that has pervade their community. The refinery staff were being killed and anyone connected to it. The killings caused tension in the refinery as the head of the lawyer defending it at the court was found in the premises. The narrative voice recounts thus:

Two days after the death of the manager in charge of environmental pollution control, the head of the lawyer was found inside the premises of the refinery. It had been half eaten by rot and dust. Like the notice on the torching of the waste drainage, the head of the lawyer was found lying close to the fence near the waste drain. A thick cloud of fear gathered over

the refinery and everyone who had anything to do with it. The Managing Director of Cockde Petroleum Company called an emergency meeting in the refinery conference room. (378)

The motive behind this method of going after the refinery, the worker and the lawyer was to bring back life and sanity in the community as these people were the once responsible for the evil befalling the community by indulging into corrupt practices.

### **Conclusion**

On the whole, this chapter has examined the issues that surround the relationship between man and his environment. The issues pointed out in the text show that man is responsible for the devastation of the environment and the subsequent crises that follow these devastations. Through this environmental pollution done by man, we see that the air, land and water turn out to be dangerous and endemic to man. The text reveals that man is the greatest threat to the environment and the survival of the ecosystem. Adamu Kyuka's *The Death of Eternity*, therefore, raises critical issues concerning the preservation of the environment and canvases for environmental justice to those responsible for its degradation, as the failure to do so may spark off other critical issues in the society as we have seen in the text. This reality that characterizes the existence of man and his environment justifies Ecocriticism within the space of literary studies and makes it a viable tool or the lens through which literary text are weighed in relation to the environment.

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