

PDF - OIL IN NIGERIAN PROSE FICTION: A STUDY OF HELON HABILA'S OIL ON WATER AND KAINE AGARY'S YELLOW YELLOW - researchcub.info Nigerian novelist and poet, whose writing has won many prizes, including the Caine Prize in 2001. He worked as a lecturer and journalist in Nigeria before moving in 2002 to England, where he was a Chevening Scholar at the University of East Anglia, and he now teaches creative writing at George Mason University, Washington, D.C.

Habila was born in Kaltungo, Gombe State, Nigeria. He studied English Language and Literature at the University of Jos and lectured for three years at the Federal Polytechnic, Bauchi. In 1999 he went to Lagos to write for *Hints* magazine, moving on to *Vanguard* newspaper as Literary Editor. His first novel, *Waiting for an Angel*, was published in 2002, and the following year won the Commonwealth Writers' Prize (Africa Region, Best First Book).

Moving to England in 2002, Habila became the African Writing Fellow at the University of East Anglia. In 2005 he was invited by Chinua Achebe to become the first Chinua Achebe Fellow at Bard College, NY, where he spent a year writing and teaching, remaining in the US after the fellowship in America as a professor of Creative Writing at George Mason University in Fairfax, Virginia.

In 2006 he co-edited the British Council anthology *New Writing 14*. His second novel, *Measuring Time*, published in 2007, was nominated for the Hurston-Wright Legacy Award, the IMPAC Prize, and in 2008 won the Virginia Library Foundation Prize for fiction. His third novel, *Oil on Water*, which deals with environmental pollution in the oil-rich Nigerian Delta, was published in 2010, being shortlisted for prizes including the Pen/Open Book Award, Commonwealth Best Book, Africa Region, and the Orion Book Award. His anthology *The Granta Book of the African Short Story* came out in September 2011. His Awards and honors include: 2000 Music Society of Nigeria (MUSON) national poetry award; 2001 Caine Prize, "Love Poems"; 2003 Commonwealth Writers' Prize, Africa category, *Waiting for an Angel*; 2007 Emily Clark Balch Prize (short story), from *Virginia Quarterly Review*, "The Hotel Malogo"; 2008 Library of Virginia Literary Award for Fiction, *Measuring Time*; 2011 Commonwealth Writers Prize, shortlist, *Oil on Water*; 2012 Orion Book Award, shortlist, *Oil on Water*; 2012 PEN/Open Book Award, shortlist, *Oil on Water* and 2015 Windham–Campbell Literature Prize (Fiction) valued at \$150,000.

His books include: *Prison Stories* (2000), *Waiting for an Angel: A Novel* (2004), *New Writing 14*, (2006), *Measuring Time* (2007), *Dreams, Miracles, and Jazz: An Anthology of New Africa Fiction* (2007), *Oil on Water* (2010), and *The Granta Book of the African Short Story* (2011).

**Kaine Agary** grew up in Port Harcourt Nigeria. She lived in the United States of America and now lives in Lagos, Nigeria where she is the editor of TAKA Magazine. *Yellow Yellow* is her first work of fiction published in 2006.

She holds a Bachelor of Arts Degrees in Sociology and Economics from Mount Holyoke College, USA and a Masters in Public Administration with a specialization in Public Policy from New York University's Wagner School of Public Service in the United States of America. She has over ten years work experiences covering health care administration, policy analysis and arts/culture promotion.

## CHAPTER TWO

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### 2.1 Historical Perspectives on Oil in Nigeria

The Niger Delta consists of the following states: Abia, Akwa Ibom, Bayelsa, Cross River, Delta, Edo, Ondo, Imo and Rivers respectively. As of 1991, the National Census estimated that "about 25% of the entire

Nigerian population lives within the Niger Delta region” (Twumasi and Merem, 206). They went further to report that the Niger Delta region has a steady growing population of approximately 30 million people as of 2005, accounting for more than 23% of Nigeria’s total population.

The British discovered oil in this region in 1956 and crude oil was discovered in commercial quantity by the Shell British Petroleum, which is now called Royal Dutch Shell at Oloibiri, a village in the Niger Delta and “in 1958 commercial production began with a production of about 6,000 barrels per day” (Uyigue and Ogbeibu, 200). The region has huge oil and gas reserves, and “ranks the sixth world’s largest exporter of crude oil and ranked as the third world’s largest producer of palm oil after Malaysia and Indonesia” (Omofonmwa and Odia, 209).

Oil and gas from the region are the main source of revenue for the Nigerian state, accounting for about 97% of the country’s total export. Since the discovery of oil in the region, oil has dominated the country’s economy. The Niger Delta is highly susceptible to adverse environmental changes, occasioned by climate changes because it is located in the coastal region. Conclusive reports have stated that due to oil exploration and exploitation activities, the area has become an ecological wasteland. Ogoniland has witnessed recurrent social unrest during the past several decades over concerns related to oil industry operations, its revenue and petroleum related contamination. Although oil industry operations were suspended in Ogoni land in 1993, widespread environmental contamination remains. The effect of oil exploration in the region is negatively multifarious.

Since the discovery of oil in Nigeria in the 1950s, the country has been suffering the negative environmental consequences of oil development. The growth of the country’s oil industry, combined with a population explosion and a lack of enforcement of environmental regulations has led to substantial damage to Nigeria’s environment, especially in the Niger Delta region.

According to UNEP Report of 2005, when there is an oil spill on water, spreading immediately takes place. The gaseous and liquid components evaporate. Some get dissolved in water and even oxidize, and yet some undergo bacterial changes and eventually sink to the bottom by gravitational action. The soil is then contaminated with a gross effect upon the terrestrial life. As the evaporation of the volatile lower molecular weight components affect aerial life, so the dissolution of the less volatile components with the resulting emulsified water, affects aquatic life (Akpofure et al, 26).

The harmful effects of oil spill on the environment are many. Oil kills plants and animals in the estuarine zone. Oil settles on beaches and kills organisms that live there; it also settles on ocean floor and kills benthic (bottom-dwelling) organisms such as crabs. Oil poisons algae, disrupts major food chains and decreases the yield of edible crustaceans. It also coats birds, impairing their flight or reducing the insulative property of their feathers, thus making the birds more vulnerable to cold. Oil endangers fish hatcheries in coastal waters and as well contaminates the flesh of commercially valuable fish.

In the Nigerian coastal environment a large areas of the mangrove ecosystem have been destroyed. The mangrove was once a source of both fuel wood for the indigenous people and a habitat for the area’s biodiversity, but is now unable to survive the oil toxicity of its habitat. Oil spills in the Niger Delta have been a regular occurrence, and the resultant degradation of the surrounding environment has caused significant tension between the people living in the region and the multinational oil companies operating there. It is only in the past decade that environmental groups, the Federal Government, and the foreign oil companies operating in the Niger Delta began to take steps to mitigate the impacts. Large areas of the mangrove

ecosystem have also been destroyed. The mangrove forest was in the past a major source of wood for the indigenous people. In some places it is no longer in a healthy state to sustain this use (Nwilo & Badejo, 25)

The Idoho oil spill traveled all the way from Akwa Ibom state to Lagos state dispersing oil through the coastal states, up to the Lagos coast. This culminated in the presence of sheen of oil on the coastal areas of Cross river state, Akwa Ibom state, Rivers state, Bayelsa state, Delta state, Ondo state and Lagos state. In many villages near oil installations, even when there has been no recent spill, an oily sheen can be seen on the water, which in fresh water areas is usually the same water that the people living there use for drinking and washing. In April 1997, samples taken from water used for drinking and washing by local villagers were analyzed in the U.S. A sample from Luawii, in Ogoni, where there had been no oil production for four years, had 18 ppm of hydrocarbons in the water, 360 times the level allowed in drinking water in the European Union (E.U.). A sample from Ukpeleide, Ikwerre, contained 34 ppm, 680 times the E.U. standard (UNEP, 2005).

Following the major Texaco spill of 1980, it was reported that 180 people died in one community as a result of the pollution. On several occasions, people interviewed by Human Rights Watch said that spills in their area had made people sick who drank the water, especially children.

Apart from the effects of oil spills, other negative vices came with the discovery of oil which affects the people and their environment, and the nation at large. Subsequently, several protests and clamors for justice have been registered by the local people to no avail. Characteristically, both military and civilian governments have ignored clamors for equitable remedy and forcibly smothered protests through use of overwhelming military might and other documented acts of state sanctioned political violence.

The existing concept of Federalism in Nigeria today falls short of prospects in both definition and practice. To the extent that it is being practiced as quasi-federalism, there has been an overly concentrated control of resources by the federal government. Thereby making its component units (state) including the Niger Delta state to be completely dependent on the Federal Government for survival. This abnormality continues to generate continual conflict with indigenous rights, hence, has become a main cause of conflict in the Niger Delta region especially from dishonorable deprivation principles for revenue allocation to the states in the region. The struggles of the Niger Deltans which have assumed violent dimensions in our recent history, are explained to be an expression of the people's grievances over neglects, marginalization, oppression, subjugation, exploitation and deprivation by the Nigeria government and its collaborators (multi-nationals) of the people's right to equity and justice of their God-giving resources.

As Biakpara puts it "what the people of the Delta are asking for is equity and justice and due recognition of their rights as citizen. These issues are contained in the Ogoni Bill Rights, the Kaiama declaration, and similar declarations by other groups in the Niger Delta. Sound, the people are insisting on a cessation of destructive oil exploration activities which destroy the Niger Delta ecology and human lives" (3).

Biakpara reports further that, the Niger Deltans want the abrogation of all laws which dispossesses them of their rights as a federating unit within Nigeria. They want the crisis of poverty in the Niger Delta to be addressed. According to him, "although the general poverty index of Nigeria has risen sharply, the worse poverty situations are found in the Niger Delta. The people also want Nigerians to pay attention to their message and treat them with respect as equals in the Nigerian nation" (3).

The precedence was set when in 1966, Isaac Adaka Boro and Nottingham Dick, two Ijaw young men, set up the Niger Delta Volunteer Service (NDVS). They were concerned with rising poverty levels of

their people and also perceived that the domineering tendencies of the major tribes in Nigeria were to blame. It was on the platform of the NDVS that they declared an Independent Niger Delta Republic in February 1966. This first secessionist-bid in the history of Nigeria failed (*Tell*, June 25, 2009:6).

## **OIL IN NIGERIAN PROSE FICTION: A STUDY OF HELON HABILA'S OIL ON WATER AND KAINE AGARY'S YELLOW YELLOW**

**The complete project material is available and ready for download. All what you need to do is to order for the complete material. The price for the material is NGN 3,000.00.**

**Make payment via bank transfer to Bank: Guaranteed Trust Bank, Account name: Emi-Aware technology, Account Number: 0424875728**

**Bank: Zenith Bank, Account name: Emi-Aware technology, Account Number: 1222004869**

**or visit the website and pay online. For more info: Visit <https://researchcub.info/payment-instruct.html>**

**After payment send your depositor's name, amount paid, project topic, email address or your phone number (in which instructions will sent to you to download the material) to +234 70 6329 8784 via text message/ whatsapp or Email address: [info@allprojectmaterials.com](mailto:info@allprojectmaterials.com).**

**Once payment is confirmed, the material will be sent to you immediately.**

**It takes 5min to 30min to confirm and send the material to you.**

**For more project topics and materials visit: <https://researchcub.info/> or For enquiries: [info@allprojectmaterials.com](mailto:info@allprojectmaterials.com) or call/whatsapp: +234 70 6329 8784**

**Regards!!!**