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**ECO-TRAGEDY AND RESISTANCE: NATURE AS VICTIM AND AGENT IN TOCHI
ONYEBUCHI'S *WAR GIRLS* AND TANURE OJAIDE'S *THE ACTIVIST***

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Abstract

This article examines the intersection of eco-tragedy and resistance in Tanure Ojaide's *The Activist* and Tochi Onyebuchi's *War Girls*, arguing that both novels position nature as both victim and agent in ecological struggle. Drawing on postcolonial ecocriticism, Rob Nixon's concept of slow violence, and Graham Huggan and Helen Tiffin's expanded definition of agency, the study demonstrates how Ojaide's realist depiction of Niger Delta oil extraction and Onyebuchi's Afro-futurist projection of planetary collapse establish a narrative continuum rather than a generic break. Through close textual analysis, the article reveals that eco-tragedy encompasses systematic destruction, irreversibility, and the paradox of human agency, while resistance operates across representational, political, and ecological registers. Nature emerges as a wounded yet powerful agent whose transformations shape human possibilities, from the embodied suffering of Niger Delta communities to the mutated landscapes of Onyebuchi's Redlands. The study concludes that African environmental literature serves a prophetic function, warning of unchecked extraction while insisting that resistance persists even in the face of irreversibility.

Keywords: Eco-tragedy, resistance, slow violence, nonhuman agency, Nigerian literature, Afro-futurism, Niger Delta

Introduction

The intersection of ecological crises and narrative structure has led to the emergence of two key concepts in contemporary ecocritical discourse: eco-tragedy and resistance. Eco-tragedy moves beyond the Aristotelian focus on individual downfall to position the environment and human–nature relations as the central site of catastrophe. It reflects the idea of "slow violence," as described by Rob Nixon, where environmental harm occurs gradually and often invisibly. Eco-tragedy arises when extractivism and industrial expansion lead to the breakdown of the life-sustaining relationship between humans and the earth. Resistance functions as a counter-narrative to ecological despair, encompassing not merely political protest but an ontological rejection of the assumed inevitability of environmental destruction. This includes reclaiming land, preserving indigenous knowledge, and challenging exploitative corporate, colonial, and technological systems.

The Niger Delta region of Nigeria represents a critical site of what Anna Zalik describes as "petro-violence," capturing the conflicts, militarization, and social instability associated with oil extraction (401). Since the discovery of crude oil in commercial quantities at Oloibiri in 1956, the region has been transformed from an agriculturally self-sufficient territory into what Samson Imasogie Omofonmwan and Lucky Osaretin Odia describe as an "enclave development" zone, where multinational corporations employ capital-intensive technologies that generate limited local employment (28). This extractive economy has produced severe environmental consequences: gas flaring, oil spills, acid rain, and the contamination of both aquatic and terrestrial ecosystems. Nature becomes the primary victim, its waters poisoned, its soils depleted, its air thick with soot. As Omofonmwan and Odia document, "the region is the worst hit by poverty among the other zones in southern part of the country," despite its status as Nigeria's primary revenue generator (29).

The emergence of organized environmental resistance in the Delta, particularly the Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People (MOSOP) led by Ken Saro-Wiwa in the 1990s, established a literary and political precedent for representing ecological violence as a form of warfare against civilian populations. This context directly informs Tanure Ojaide's *The Activist*, which stages the confrontation between indigenous-rooted resistance and the combined forces of multinational capital and militarized state power. The historical foundation of *War Girls* lies in the Nigerian Civil War (1967–1970), a conflict fought between Nigeria's federal government and the secessionist state of Biafra. *War Girls* brings the story of Onyii and Ify, two adolescents entangled in military conflict, into a futuristic Nigeria where technological advancement is driven largely by war, while climate change and nuclear contamination make much of the Earth uninhabitable. As Katarzyna Ostalska argues, the historical war was partly fuelled by control over oil resources; in the novel, this is transposed into a conflict over the mineral "Chukwu," a precious resource that both sides fight to control (2).

African literature has undergone significant evolution in its engagement with environmental questions. As Sule E. Egya notes, "Nigerian literature, perhaps more than any other national literatures in Africa, remains a rich resource with which to validate the argument that nature and environment, the biotic and the abiotic life forms, and indeed the relations between the human and the nonhuman, have long been thematised in Africa" (3). This tradition has converged with Afro-futurism, which Nnedi Okorafor defines as a genre whose "default is non-western; its default/center is African" (qtd. in Ostalska 2). Ostalska observes that Afro-futurism "embraces Africa's history, current socio-cultural conditions, and high-tech science as the foundation of creative SF visions" (2). Where *The Activist* intervenes directly in ongoing struggles over resource extraction, *War Girls* projects the Nigerian Civil War into a post-nuclear future shaped by radiation and space colonization.

Rob Nixon's concept of "slow violence" provides a crucial theoretical bridge between the two texts. Nixon defines slow violence as "a violence that occurs gradually and out of sight, a violence of delayed destruction that is dispersed across time and space" (2). Ojaide's *The Activist* operates squarely within this framework, depicting the incremental poisoning of water, soil, and air. Here, nature is rendered victim twice over: first by extraction, then by the invisibility of its suffering. As one character laments, "The air used to be cool because of constant rain and the luxuriant forest, but oil slicks, blowouts, and gas flares had destroyed that life. Even the rain that fell was so soot-black" (70). Onyebuchi's *War Girls* stages the aftermath of what Ewa Drab calls "apocalyptic and post-apocalyptic fiction," where "the contamination of the land by nuclear conflicts and the war between two sister states send the elites to space stations" (8). The novel's Redlands represent the terminal endpoint of extractive capitalism's logic.

Abba A. Abba in his work "Petroculture: Ecological Precarity and Eco-Activism in Niger Delta Poetry" defines ecological precarity as "a curious state of dynamic exchange between selves and others and a corporeal interplay between subjects, objects and ideas in the world" (4). This conceptualization extends Nixon's framework by emphasizing the relational nature of environmental vulnerability how the precarity of the natural environment in Niger Delta ecopoetry "is an issue that has become impossible to ignore" (4). Abba's analysis reveals that ecological precarity, "which speaks to the sense of vulnerability occasioned by oil war, instigates environmental activism in Niger-Delta poetry" (1). This insight deepens our understanding of how *The Activist* stages the confrontation between resistance and multinational capital. Furthermore, Abba Abba and Nkiru Onyemachi argue that in the age of the Anthropocene, "human beings deploy their exceptional capabilities to alter nature and its essence, which invariably leads to eco-alienation, a sense of breach in the relationship between people and nature" (1). This eco-alienation is central to understanding both novels, as "the anthropocentric positioning of humans at the center of the universe, with its resultant hyper-capitalist greed, is the premise in the discussion of eco-alienation" (1).

Both novels operate within what Harry Garuba terms an "animist unconscious," a narrative framework in which non-human entities possess agential capacity. In Igbo cosmology, minerals, trees, rivers, and rocks are "endowed with vital force" (qtd. in Ostalska 10). This cosmological understanding informs Onyebuchi's treatment of Chukwu minerals as simultaneously material resources and sacred substances: "It's been said that the minerals are the divine right of the Igbo, their blessing from Chukwu" (7). Ojaide's novel, while operating within a realist mode, similarly attributes agency to the environment. The women who report rising infertility rates, malformed births, and "burning inside their bodies" (194) testify to this entanglement, as do the mutated animals and flora of Onyebuchi's irradiated landscape.

This study adopts a postcolonial ecocritical framework, drawing on the theoretical insights of Nixon, Huggan and Tiffin, and Iheka to examine how Ojaide and Onyebuchi represent eco-tragedy and resistance. Postcolonial ecocriticism is particularly suited to this analysis because it attends to the ways in which environmental degradation in formerly colonized spaces is inseparable from histories of exploitation and ongoing neocolonial extraction. By placing *The Activist* and *War Girls* in a literary continuum, this study demonstrates that environmental tragedy and resistance operate across two distinct Nigerian contexts, the contemporary Niger Delta and a speculative post-nuclear future while sharing a common concern with nature's victimization and agency.

Eco-Tragedy, Slow Violence, and Theorizing Nonhuman Agency

The concept of eco-tragedy emerges as a distinct analytical category that differs from classical tragedy. Panu Pihkala argues that "a key element in 'environmental tragedy' is the

fact that much environmental damage stems from the same human characteristics that are also the source of many good things: such as technological creativity and a forward-looking attitude" (554). Pihkala emphasizes that climate crises "have already brought tragic losses: losses that cannot be reversed. Extinction is a prime example" (554-55). Eco-tragedy thus involves three elements: systematic destruction of life-sustaining relationships between humans and the earth, irreversibility of that destruction, and the paradox that human agency is both cause of and potential response to crisis.

Rob Nixon's concept of "slow violence" provides crucial understanding of the environmental catastrophes depicted in both novels. Slow violence operates through "incremental and accretive" processes, its "calamitous repercussions playing out across a range of temporal scales" (2). Nixon identifies three key characteristics: representational invisibility (slow violence "is often not just attritional but also exponential," operating as a "major threat multiplier" [3-4]); temporal displacement ("attritional catastrophes that overspill clear boundaries in time and space are marked above all by displacements" (7); and discounted casualties "casualties of slow violence, human and environmental are the casualties most likely not to be seen, not to be counted" (13).

Resistance in eco-tragedy emerges as a counter-narrative that challenges dominant stories of progress and modernization. Nixon argues that slow violence presents profound representational challenges, and resistance must find ways to render visible the invisible. As Nixon insists, a central question is "how to convert into image and narrative the disasters that are slow moving and long in the making" (3). Huggan and Tiffin establish that resistance in environmental literature must contend with the entanglement of anthropocentrism and Eurocentrism that has historically justified exploitation. They argue that "the western definition of humanity depended and still depends on the presence of the 'not-human': the uncivilised, the animal and animalistic" (5). Resistance must challenge not only specific acts of environmental destruction but the category of the human itself. Their analysis of postcolonial pastoral reveals how pastoral, a mode historically complicit in mystifying power relations, can be transformed into a counter-pastoral that exposes the violence beneath idyllic surfaces (84).

Abba Abba examines how Niger-Delta ecopoetry "seeks to resist modernity's appropriation of the region as a 'sacrifice zone' and the petrocultural treatment of nature as mere resource for human exploitation" (1). This resistance operates through what Abba identifies as the "regenerative potential" of ecopoetry, which "enables it to articulate a vision of autonomy in the face of twenty-first-century colonial conditions and to show that local struggles over energy technology and environmental hazards can be championed through indigenous narratives" (4). Abba and Onyemachi argue that "literature proves to be a critical medium to investigate human life" and that "the signal function of literature is also to question those practices and narratives that seek to destabilize not only people's relationship with nature but also people's relationship with their environment" (3).

Cajetan Iheka argues for a more radical decentring of the human in African ecocriticism. He critiques the prevailing environmental justice framework for its tendency to "deemphasize the nonhuman implications of environmental tragedies," warning that "placing a premium on human lives to the detriment of Others carries the risk of reifying the anthropocentrism that leads to ecological disasters" (2). Iheka introduces the concept of "proximity", the spatial nearness that binds humans to nonhuman beings and proposes an "aesthetics of proximity" that recognizes nonhuman entities as active participants in ecological narratives (22-23). He advocates for "distributed agency," the idea that agency is shared across a network of human and nonhuman actants, including animals, landscapes, and inanimate matter (83).

Indigenous cosmological frameworks from Urhobo and Igbo ontologies provide resources for this reconceptualization. The Chukwu minerals in *War Girls* embody this cosmology: "It's been said that the minerals are the divine right of the Igbo, their blessing from Chukwu" (Onyebuchi 7). Abba Abba demonstrates that Niger-Delta ecopoetry positions itself as "an infrastructure for folk resistance and grassroots knowledge," functioning through "narratives and storytelling" to "shape human consciousness" (4). As Abba and Onyemachi observe, Niger Delta poets "look up to their native Urhobo gods for inspiration" (7), drawing on indigenous cosmological frameworks that position nonhuman entities as participants rather than resources. Abba Abba argues that "the natural world is to be seen no longer as a passive recipient of human projections but an active participant in the formation, reformation and transformation of human culture and society" (10).

The theoretical framework established here drawing on Nixon's slow violence, Huggan and Tiffin's counter-pastoral and expanded agency, Iheka's distributed agency and proximity, and Abba's ecological precarity and animist unconscious provides the analytical tools necessary to examine how Ojaide and Onyebuchi represent eco-tragedy and resistance. This study reveals that both novels, while operating in different temporal and generic registers, share a fundamental concern with nature's victimization and agency. This shared concern establishes a narrative continuum that serves a prophetic function in African environmental literature.

Narrating Victimhood and Agency in Ojaide's *The Activist* and Onyebuchi's *War Girls*

The Activist documents the comprehensive destruction of the Niger Delta's ecosystems through the operations of multinational oil companies. The novel establishes this systematic destruction through multiple registers: the air, the water, the soil, and the human bodies that depend on all three. The Activist observes upon his return that "oil slicks, blowouts, and gas flares had destroyed" the once-luxuriant environment (70). The systematic quality of this destruction is captured in the observation that "the air used to be cool because of constant rain and the luxuriant forest, but oil slicks, blowouts, and gas flares had destroyed that life. Even the rain that fell was so soot-black" (70). The transformation of rain from "God-given water" to soot-black poison registers the violation of both physical and spiritual relationships with the environment.

The women in the novel who report "burning inside their bodies" (194) testify to how systematic destruction penetrates the human body itself. Umutor reports that "in the Oginibo area the women are finding it difficult to conceive" (190-91). Titi testifies that "our pregnant women are delivering so many malformed babies" (190-91). The women collectively articulate the transformation: "They once lived in a paradise that had disappeared with the oil boom" (191-92). Abba and Onyemachi argue that "oil is envisioned as an oxymoronic element that contains within itself the seed of joy and pain" (9). This oxymoronic vision "if it is a source of joy, it is also a source of disillusionment; if it is a blessing, it is equally a curse; if it is a source of life, it also bears the seed of death" (9) is central to understanding the systematic destruction depicted in *The Activist*. The oil that was supposed to bring development has instead transformed the environment from a paradise into a site of suffering.

War Girls projects destruction onto a broader planetary canvas. The novel's Redlands represent the terminal endpoint of extractive capitalism's logic. Drab observes that "the contamination of the land by nuclear conflicts and the war between two sister states send the elites to space stations" (5). The Redlands landscape registers systematic destruction: "Animals skinny with radiation poisoning or thick with blight from polluted water roam

hardened ground so red and brown it looks like a giant scab" (72). The Chukwu minerals are at the centre of this systematic destruction, their extraction enabling space colonies while condemning those on Earth to irradiated wastelands. As Ostalska argues, the novel presents "the destruction of the natural environment as an outcome of both patriarchal and neocolonial disregard for more-than-human beings" (3).

Abba Abba argues that "the social continuities and discontinuities of this historical period provide the bases for petrocultures defined broadly as the social imaginaries constituted by the knowledge, practices and discourses resulting from the consumption of and subsequent dependence on oil" (3). In *War Girls*, this logic has extended beyond oil to Chukwu minerals, producing ecological precarity projected into a future where contamination sends elites to space stations. Abba contends that "these communities are sacrificed at the hands of the government and capitalism" (4), a description applying equally to inhabitants of the Niger Delta and the Redlands. What is significant here is how both novels demonstrate that the logic of extraction whether oil or Chukwu minerals produces the same pattern of victimization: communities are sacrificed for the benefit of elites, and nature is treated as a mere resource to be exploited until it can no longer sustain life.

The irreversibility of environmental destruction is a central preoccupation of both novels. *The Activist* persistently registers what has been permanently lost. The Activist remembers that "whenever my mother wanted to prepare a meal with crayfish, she literally put a pot of water on the fire and took her scooping net and went to the nearby lake to catch fish" (87). This memory contrasts sharply with present scarcity: "Those lakes and wetlands have been filled, first with rubber trees, then new roads and developments that left the people hungry, diseased, malnourished, and alienated from their roots" (87). The novel catalogues lost biodiversity: "What happened to our oil-beans, breadfruit, mushroom, urhuru grapes, owe apple, and otie cherry fruit? Either gone or barely available!" (89). The question "Where are...?" expresses grief for what has been permanently lost. The Activist's observation of "the magnitude of the desolation of the water" captures this irreversibility: "Where were the flying fish that used to shoot out of the water into the air and then somersault back into water? That spectacle was now confined to memory" (84).

Abba and Onyemachi note a persistent "ironic situation" in which "the Niger Delta indigenes now perceive oil wealth in their region as a source of death rather than a preserver of human life" (1). This perception is rooted in irreversibility: the fish "confined to memory," the water "no longer the herb-dark draught," the crops "either gone or barely available" (89). Abba and Onyemachi argue that poets "articulate the tragic irony of a people blessed with oil wealth but who, instead of enjoying fulfilling existence, are daily confronted with the omnipresence of death" (12). This tragic irony is central to *The Activist's* depiction of irreversibility: the very resource that was supposed to bring prosperity has instead brought permanent transformation that cannot be undone.

The irreversibility of environmental loss in *War Girls* operates on a planetary scale. The nuclear contamination that has created the Redlands is not reversible. The space colonies represent an admission of irreversibility: the lucky ones have abandoned Earth because it cannot be saved. The border of the Redlands registers this irreversibility: "The air between the two metal poles of the gate shimmers. A scanner. When she leaves, they want her to have truly left everything behind" (248). The novel's depiction of bodies affected by radiation registers irreversibility at the organism level. Onyii, whose body is "mostly metal" (229), has been permanently altered. Her prosthetic arm enables her to fight but reminds her of what she has lost: "In this dream of Biafra, her arm has a proper skin attached to it instead of the black band she always wears" (31-32). I argue that this somatic irreversibility mirrors the

ecological irreversibility of the Redlands, suggesting that environmental destruction and bodily destruction are inseparable, a point that aligns with Iheka's concept of proximity.

The paradox of human agency is central to both novels. *The Activist* embodies this paradox: the same human capacities that have produced environmental catastrophe are invoked as solutions. The Activist has benefited from education abroad, a form of agency enabled by the very systems of extraction he seeks to resist. His return is framed by the proverb: "A hunter goes out to hunt and returns home! It matters not whether he has shot any game; he always has to return home and not live in the wilds" (29). This frames his return as natural but reveals the paradox: the hunter's agency is constrained by the conditions of the hunt. His activism deploys the tools of the state to challenge state collusion with extraction. The Activist wins the governorship election and "brought major changes to the State government," yet even as governor, he cannot reverse the irreversible (271-72). Huggan and Tiffin's expanded definition of agency is crucial here: "If we define agency less by the essentialist capacities apparently required to effect change than by the effecting of change itself, we have not only a less anthropocentric but also a less circular definition of agency" (191). This formulation allows us to see agency distributed across human and nonhuman actors, a point I will return to in discussing ecological resistance.

Furthermore, both novels confront Nixon's representational challenge: how to render visible "violence that is neither spectacular nor instantaneous" (3). *The Activist* rises to this challenge through documentary realism, cataloguing the incremental poisoning of the Niger Delta. The women's protest represents representational resistance: "Our lives cannot be one long story of being victimized. We have to put a stop to being victimized in order for us to live happy and contented lives. It is a fight for survival" (211). Their planned nude march invokes "Umalokun" (217), the patron goddess of women, to "avenge the rape and humiliation of women during the protest" (217). This cosmological dimension of resistance challenges the assumption that environmental protest must operate within Western frameworks of legal challenge and political advocacy. What this study finds particularly compelling here is how the women's protest mobilizes indigenous spiritual authority "Umalokun" to demand justice, suggesting that resistance must draw on the very cosmological resources that extractivism violates.

War Girls employs speculative representation, projecting the history of Biafran war to the "After" of collapse. The Redlands is the endpoint of slow violence made visible through speculative fiction. Abba Abba argues that "ecopoetry in the region positions itself as an infrastructure for folk resistance and grassroots knowledge" with "regenerative potential that enables it to articulate a vision of autonomy" (4). This potential is evident in both *The Activist* and *War Girls*, as Abba contends that "activist poetry participates in the war against environmental imperilment, much of which is not easily noticed even as they gradually destroy human subjects" (4). This study argues that speculative fiction extends this representational resistance by imagining the consequences of unchecked extraction, thus serving a prophetic function that warns of what is to come if current patterns continue.

Political resistance takes multiple forms in both novels. *The Activist* depicts the Egba Boys, who "were dedicated to Egba, the god of war that helped his devotees to take back what had been forcibly taken from them" (47). Their worship of Egba, "the god of war, revenge, and restitution" (51), frames their actions as restitution: "They saw no contradiction in robbing those who had robbed them" (48). The Delta Cartel, the bunkering operation co-founded by the Activist, represents economic resistance that reclaims resources from oil companies (126). *War Girls* depicts political resistance through the War Girls themselves, a community of female refugees who have created an autonomous camp in the forest. The camp represents resistance to both the Nigerian state and the conditions of war.

Abba Abba observes that "local struggles over energy technology and environmental hazards can be championed through indigenous narratives" (4). Abba and Onyemachi note that "Ojaide's poetry offers a virulent attack on the greed and desperation that subject eco-humanity to 'omnipresent destruction'" (10), and argue that "the struggle for the emancipation of the people of the area should not be left only in the hands of gun-toting militants working in the creeks" (4), suggesting that intellectual and narrative resistance is equally necessary. Both novels demonstrate that effective resistance must operate across multiple registers representational, political, and ecological simultaneously. Ecological resistance is perhaps the most significant dimension of both novels, as it foregrounds nature's refusal to remain passive. In *The Activist*, this refusal operates through diminished agricultural yields, poisoned water sources, and embodied suffering. Egba "burns your enemies" and "gives your enemies no comfort" (51). The area boys who worship Egba understand themselves as instruments of nonhuman agency: "I accept Egba as my protector... I will give all I have, including my blood and sweat, to obey the commands of Egba" (53). This cosmological framing challenges the separation of human and nonhuman agency, suggesting instead that human resistance is a form of nonhuman agency working through human agents. This study argues that this insight is crucial: by framing their resistance as service to Egba, the area boys position themselves as instruments of a nonhuman agency that demands justice, thus challenging the anthropocentric assumption that only intentional human action counts as agency.

In *War Girls*, ecological resistance operates through mutation and adaptation. The "Agba bears" and "wulfu with their two heads and ridged backs" (30) represent nature's refusal to remain as it was a transformation that is not recovery but a refusal to be destroyed. The Redlands is not a passive backdrop but an active force shaping migration and survival. Radiation functions as nonhuman agency shaping every aspect of human existence: "the radiation gets so thick that skin peels almost instantly" (16). The Chukwu minerals are not inert resources but actants with spiritual demands: "the divine right of the Igbo, their blessing from Chukwu" (7). This recognition of nonhuman agency disrupts the anthropocentric assumption that only humans matter, insisting that nature is not a passive backdrop to human activity but a wounded yet powerful protagonist whose autonomous agency determines the possibilities and limits of Africa's ecological future.

The trajectory from *The Activist* to *War Girls* is the trajectory from oil to radiation. In *The Activist*, the poison is oil: "oil slicks, blowouts, and gas flares" (70). In *War Girls*, the poison is radiation: "the contamination of the land by nuclear conflicts" (Drab 5). Both are described as sacred, both are objects of extractive violence, both are sites of resistance. Nixon warns that slow violence "can fuel long-term, proliferating conflicts in situations where the conditions for sustaining life become increasingly but gradually degraded" (4). *The Activist* depicts the beginning of this process; *War Girls* depicts its end. Abba Abba argues that "the Anthropocene inaugurates a sense of eco-precarity in Niger-Delta poetry" (14). Abba and Onyemachi contend that "the Anthropocene is not simply a crisis that will pass some day in the future; instead, it is an absolute fracture" (6), a "breaking down, if not collapse, of the previously stable ecological conditions" (6).

The continuity between these two novels demonstrates that the past of slow violence is never fully past. As Nixon observes, 'industrial particulates and effluents live on in the environmental elements we inhabit and in our very bodies. The transition from contemporary environmental realism to speculative fiction is revealed as a narrative continuum rather than a generic break. *The Activist* operates within the "Now" of Niger Delta extraction, documenting the immediate effects of oil exploitation and the grassroots resistance it produces. *War Girls* projects the "After" of slow violence, imagining the endpoint of Chukwu minerals extraction and conflict when pollution has become planetary and

radiation has transformed landscapes and bodies. Together, they demonstrate that African environmental literature serves a prophetic function, warning of unchecked extraction while insisting that resistance persists even in the face of irreversibility.

Conclusion

This study has examined eco-tragedy and resistance in Ojaide's *The Activist* and Onyebuchi's *War Girls*, demonstrating that African environmental literature serves a prophetic function, warning of unchecked extraction while insisting that resistance persists even in the face of irreversibility. The transition from environmental realism to speculative fiction is revealed as a narrative continuum rather than a generic break: *The Activist* operates within the "Now" of Niger Delta extraction, documenting the immediate effects of oil exploitation and the grassroots resistance it produces. *War Girls* projects the "After" of slow violence, imagining the endpoint of chukwu minerals' extraction and conflict when pollution has become planetary and radiation has transformed landscapes and bodies. Nature transcends its role as passive victim to become a proactive agent in both texts through embodied suffering, cosmological authority, mutated landscapes, radiation, and minerals as spiritual actants. The value of postcolonial ecocriticism is demonstrated through Huggan and Tiffin's expanded agency, Nixon's slow violence, and indigenous ontologies that position nonhuman entities as participants rather than resources. Building on this foundation, Abba and Onyemachi conclude that these novels participate in a broader humanistic project, establishing literature and the Humanities as essential "media for articulating and negotiating the human condition" within global ecological discourse (12). The distinct narrative approaches advocate for a complete reimagining of human-nature relations, one that respects nonhuman agency, acknowledges irreversible damage, and replaces silence with active resistance.

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