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Revolutionary Trope and Environmental Pedagogy in Frank Arase's *Somewhere in Africa: The Cries of Humanity* and David Attwood's *Blood and Oil*

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Abstract

The dehumanisation and exploitation of the environment of the Niger Delta has become a template for fear of the end of human existence. This has driven an increased interest in studies about Anthropocene. From the 1980s, Robert Buell and Adrian Ivakhiv have advanced what Smith Kopnina terms *The Environmental Condition* to the frontiers of global scholarship thereby greening the humanities. Scholars in environmental studies like Bill McGuire have decried the rising level of floods, the ignorance of the destruction of the environment and the possibility of an apocalypse. Creative writers and dramatic artistes alike, including film makers from Africa and beyond have engaged in the exploration of environmental interests focusing on its degenerating condition, often depicting how people could take social action towards liberating themselves and their environment from oppressive chains. The study aims to interrogate how these stated eco-critical aims have been achieved in selected movies. Through the concept of anthropocene and eco-criticism, the paper undertakes a content analysis of Frank Arase's *Somewhere in Africa: The cries of Humanity* and David Attwood's *Blood and Oil* to explore these concerns.

48

Keywords

Eco-capitalism, Eco-criticism, Language, Memory, Revolutionary praxis, Environmental pedagogy

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Introduction

From the inception of modern society, capitalism has remained a key player in the struggle for resource control and its detritus impact on its derivative space. Angus (2016) identifies the contributory role of capitalism to environmental degradation and its capacity to adopt a scorched earth principle to achieve its goals. Smith acknowledges capitalism's power to negatively impact on humans and the ecosystem through the imposition of big units of green house emissions implying that "big job cuts across industrialised economies around the world" (2014:14). Chinyere Nwahunanya chronicling the capitalist mood of exploitation of the Niger Delta and the effect on the environment submits that:

"...the uncontrolled decimation of aquatic life and the flora and fauna of the region has lost its human population to massive emigration, with the consequence that the erstwhile vibrant fully employed farmers and fisher-folk that peopled the area have become migrant labour seeking nonexistent jobs in the sprawling cities"(2011: xiii).

Capitalist exploration of fossil fuel in the Niger Delta and eternal gas flaring have intensified the poisoning of the Niger Delta environment and accelerated the forced migration of its people from their ancestral homes to urban landscapes where existential survival is not guaranteed. This statement illustrates the impracticality of caution in the exploration of fossil fuel and the emission of carbon into the atmosphere thereby laying the structure for the occurrence of anthropocene in our land.

For decades now the Niger Delta has floundered under the heavy weight of capitalist speculators exploiting its precious fossil fuels without reflection on the future of the constituency of that region. Scholars have attempted in various ways to describe this phenomenon notably through the concept of anthropocene. Ian Angus in describing the anthropocene process submits that: "the anthropocene, viewed as a new geological epoch displacing the Holocene epoch of the last 10,000 to 12,000 years, represents what has been called an "anthropogenic rift"...((2016:9). Although the foregoing gives historical framing of the concept of anthropocene, Angus further defines it as standing "... for the notion that human beings have become the primary emergent geological force affecting the future of the earth system. ..."(2016: 9). The capitalist system accounted for within the framework of Industrial Revolution in the eighteenth century and nuclear weapon testing as noted by Angus accelerates human impacts on the environment with the attendant consequences of anthropocene as a gradual birth of man's decimation of the environment. Angus(2016) and Nwahunanya(2011) concur that the capitalist system in its inordinate drive for profit destroys both human and ecological systems thereby speeding the dawn of the anthropocene age. William Vincent Fisher implicates capitalism within the framework of industrialization thus:

...growing awareness has arisen concerning the role industrialisation has played in ecological destruction and its potential verifications for environmental and social sustainability. Over the course of the last century the natural science literature surrounding ecological destruction has reached a crescendo and warns of due consequence if left unaddressed.(2014:1).

Science, and lately literature, has been at the forefront of the strategic re-imagining of the environment and the reversal of the capitalist impact on it through the premise of memory and the creative engagement of historical effects of capitalism on the environment best exemplified by the referential films used in this paper as case studies. Eco-film is a theoretical approach that highlights the expanding nature of dramatic arts and by extension film. David Ingram (2013) in x-raying the functionality of eco-criticism and eco-film describes eco-film as a film with a conceptual content which more or less explicitly promotes ecological ideas and ecological sensibility. The creative piece, David Attwood's *Blood and Oil* fulfils the key requirement of the classification of text as Anthropocene's engagement in eco-cinematic images as a result of capitalist decimation of the environment captured in the world of the eco-cinematic representation within the secondary world of the text. Cinematography plays a vital role in conceptualising capitalism through the framework of

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film studies. Through motion pictures man is granted access to the world of re-enactment of memory and remembering as a process of witnessing against capitalism and its agents i.e. the multinationals, the Nigerian government and Niger Delta elites who form the capitalist trinity in the balkanization of the Niger Delta environment. Scott Macdonald in accounting for the functionality of film notes that “...film events, might play a small but useful role in helping viewers become more mindful of the implications of their more conventional cinematic experiences, and more particular not only in their engagement, but in their efforts to guide inevitable environment change in directions that nurture a more healthy planet.”(2013: 52) The emphasis on the human experiences through motion pictures reveals the effects of human actions on the organic environment as portrayed in *Blood and Oil* which succinctly highlights the effect of oil spillage and gas flaring on the Niger Delta environment and its people.

David Ingram foregrounding the role of eco-film is of the opinion that: “An important aim of eco-film criticism has been to promote a better and more urgent understanding of environmental issues in the culture of arts and humanities”(2013: 59). Consequently, the foregoing clearly highlights the literary and discursive temperament of this paper. Ingram observes that film theory is useful in exploring the aesthetic assumptions that have shaped such criticism. He concludes that the ‘aesthetics’ of capitalist decimation of the environment and environmental degradation becomes an aesthetic engagement through which eco-film is interrogated. Andrew Hageman reviewing the function of cinema affirms it as “an aesthetic means to shaping ecological perceptions and actions”(2013: 82). Eco-cinema is an aesthetic means of shaping the perceptions and actions of the multinationals and the Nigerian government in regards to the effect of capitalist exploration of oil in the Niger Delta. Fisher further implicates the role of eco-cinematic images to raise consciousness “concerning anthropogenic ecological destruction and the need to alter human interaction with the planet...”(2014:1). *Blood and Oil* is an advocacy driven awareness of the effect of oil exploration in the Niger Delta and its attendant contribution to anthropocene on the global scale. Taiwo Afolabi and Stephen Okpadah view dramatic depiction from the premise of the politics of representation which eco-cinematography is implicated in. They note that: “Media representation is an essential example in discourses on the politics of representation because it reifies the notion that meaning is constantly changing.” (2019: 79). The evolutionary nature of meaning is a counter narrative to the Western bogus claim of colonial development in Africa. *Blood and Oil* gives a new perspective to the issue of the Niger Delta through the emphasis on remembering as a witness against the Nigerian government and the multinationals.

Afolabi and Okpadah (2019:80) affirm that: “the politics of representation recognizes the role an individual plays when it comes to receiving and making and appropriates socio-cultural and political nuances that influence meaning making process, hence is constantly changing”. Frank Arase’s *Somewhere in Africa...* highlights how dictatorial rulers disrupt the people of the human ecosystem as a result of self-deceit and the effect on the human society. *Somewhere in Africa...* is a narrative of inequality, brutalisation and exploitation of the masses by the oppressor. Servaes Jan in accounting for inequality notes that: "The social consequences of social inequality are derived mainly from the social relationship that exists between individuals based on class or rank, and in relation to access to and location of all forms of capital (social, cultural, material). Embedded in the description are issues of power, freedom, marginalisation, exclusion..." (2016: xvii). The military government of Mumbasa exploits the people and the land just as the Niger Delta scenario. Mumbasa’s totalitarian regime is a form of capitalist system for the benefit of a few feeding off the heritage of the majority. Mrs Archibong prepares the students for the future by inculcating revolutionary tendencies in them so they can resist the totalitarian government.

Atanda Yemi (2016:253) is of the opinion that the dialects of revolution "... is the dramatic search for a just society. It remains a veritable source of criticism in order to understand the inherent values in any given ideology". Through pedagogy Mrs Archibong creatively envisions a just society for her child and pupils to flourish. This struggle for a just society is referred to by Karl Marx et .al (2012) as the struggle between social classes. The juxtaposition of the referential pieces, *Blood and Oil and Somewhere in Africa...* in this study is to highlight the fact that Eco-criticism is not solely about the human habitual space, but it also includes the habitants and prominent concerns which could affect their environment in diverse ways. This includes the social action of their communities and how their existential struggles challenge the suffocating values instilled by capitalist forces around them and the establishment. Humanity implies freedom to voice concerns and interrogate realities, and any denial of such is an attempt to stifle people's voices. Correlation praxis would be adopted for the purpose of this discussion;significantly the Environmental Praxical Pedagogy as a revolutionary trope. The major objective is to iterate the key issues impelling people towards the practical use of the knowledge of their world to find possible solutions to environmental challenges.

1. Conceptualising Environmental Pedagogy as Praxis

The care of the environment is an integral culture of any group of people in a spatial context. Thus some ethical values are needed to cultivate a sense of responsibility to the environment. Environmental pedagogy entails the application of environmental ethics-the practical value relationship humans have with their non-human elements. An understanding of the environment is needed for a good environmental pedagogy. Innocent I. Asouzu defines environment as:

the totality of the world in which our being unfolds such that

the actual scope of our environment is something that can be continually accounted for as our life unfolds...environment refers to all the facts and realities which, when taken together play a role in shaping our consciousness in particular ways and in relation to other things and these other things in relation to ourselves(2007:282).

51

Good environmental education entails awareness of our obligation to the environment, what it surrounds, the roles of others, and avoiding ways of not stepping on the other. Goralnik et. al suggest that it is not just educating students with content knowledge-let there be a shift from subject mastery to personal development. "The focus should be the role each individual plays in a larger social and ecological system and on both personal and institutional responsibility.From this knowledge, environmental pedagogy should be taken as praxis- the progression of cognitive, affective, physical development"(2012:418).In this sense environmental education is concrete- a structure which is challenging, interactive, critical, emotional and of course engaging since praxis is " reflection and action directed at the structures to be transformed" (Freire, 1970:38). Therefore there is need for accurate knowledge of the environment which comes through learning, in this sense beginning with a teacher (a revolutionary leader) for our understanding of the environment.

Struggle activism challenges values upheld by the environment and what it surrounds. For this to happen there is need for freedom to voice concerns and interrogate realities and idealities responsibly. Such examples could be gleaned from the protest drama of the Kamirithu theatre group representing Kenyan workers and peasants waking up to their responsibilities by opposing the neocolonial comprador ruling class (wa Thiong'o , 1983). Therefore, for an environmental pedagogy to be praxis, learning, leadership, action, and in some situation, counter action are required since it is often about how to interact with hierarchies defined by eco-capitalism. Although this is often conflictual, but in agreement with Lewis Coser's reference to Dewey's definition of conflict as 'gadfly', it stirs us to observation and memory. It instigates us to invention. It shocks out of sheep-like passivity, and sets at noting and conniving. Conflict is a sine qua non of refection and ingenuity (qtd in Okam, 2018:55). Strong foundation is maintained by the way man confronts issues in his environment and the ones affecting him. This empowerment is what environmental pedagogy that is supported by praxis creates.

Foluke Ogunleye, sees this kind of pedagogy as producing a theatre of reciprocal violence- a theatre that functions as a tool of re-socialization; “a re-socialization approach through the process of attrition in order ' to destroy 'en-caging' propensities of long held fallacies ...by raising our collective voices, male and female through theatre and media”(, 2015: 2). The two films under study, *Blood and Oil*, and *Somewhere in Africa...*, highlight how creative works deal with the plight of the environment and the people,, especially rural dwellers, and how the voiceless respond in such conflicted circumstances? The focus is on how best to communicate and engender a positive environment and society, and how military and civilian leaders cocooned in the web of capitalism handle protests used as tropes to create an enabling environment for the people. The explication of critical issues highlighted in the study will be undertaken through the analysis of Revolutionary trope and Environmental pedagogy in the two films.

2. Revolutionary Trope and Environmental Praxical pedagogy in David Attwood's Blood and Oil

The struggle for resource control and power has been one of the spawns of conflict translating to displacement and destruction in Africa. The capitalist system in Nigeria and the complicit Nigerian government have collectively subjugated the Niger Delta populace. Nwahunanya (2011: xvi) submits that; “As the land bleeds oil, so the people bleed tears in their abject poverty, and real blood as they fall under constant assault of government agents sent to silence their protests.” The environment bleeds as a result of the damage that the exploration of fossil fuel and the gas flaring cause to that environment and the people’s attempt to resist such decimation leadsto their termination by armed agents of the Nigerian government. Dramatists and other creative writers through memory and re-imagining engage in environmental pedagogy, using art to confront social illsto ensure the survival of the human and ecological system in the Niger Delta.

Boberdeau (2018), in affirming the role of eco-cinematography, is of the opinion that today’s eco-cinematic images continue to raise questions of scale and visuality. Filmmakers and viewers in the anthropocene are engaging with the scalar aesthetics in new ways. *Blood and Oil* is a historical cinematographical adaptation of Oloibiri history to prick the conscience of society and to witness against oppressive leadership and multinational corporations that stifle the existence of the people as a result of their activities in Niger Delta communities. Best Ugala states that:

In the Niger Detla, poverty and neglect are glaring. There are no schools, no health facilities, no roads, no electricity, and no potable water. Oil spillage has destroyed their agrarian and aquatic life. The ocean continues to claim the little land as against the reclamation of land from the ocean going on in the other coastal regions(2009: 65).

Oloibiri is used in the movie as a metaphor for the abuse and subjugation of the Niger Delta in a cinematographic depiction of the plight of the environment and the people of the Niger Delta. *Blood and Oil* opens with the lamentation of the people of Oloibiri over to bury their dead and this awakens the curiosity of the viewers to find out what led to the mourning and lamentation in the host community. This lamentation is induced by a condition Psalms Chinaka blames successive governments that “... paid insignificant attention to the living conditions of the people of the region which has culminated into series of crimes... widespread scourging of the vegetation by gas...” (2011: 27). The failure of government and multinationals is key to the people’s agitation to reclaim their land and in the ensuing struggles result in the loss of lives of their brothers.

Through cinematography the Niger Delta people are portrayed as bearing witness against the Nigerian government and multinational corporations in Nigeria who conspired to loot them to the barest. The

cinematography takes us back to the early days of oil prospecting in Oloibiri in the early 1960s. Through the memory of Timipre Donbra, the film director re-imagines the plight of the people of the Niger Delta as Donbra frequently fills the gaps of the narrative through flashbacks as re-enactment of memory, a process of witnessing and enlightenment about the roots of the calamity afflicting the Niger Delta people using Oloibiri as illustrative metaphor. *Blood and Oil* is a protest cinematography; the use of motion pictures and sounds to highlight the plight of the people and to resist silence solicited by the establishment's failure. Nwahunanyain his submission makes a case for protest literature, which cinematography is implicated in, thus:

...protest literature arises in societies where there are anomalies in the socio-political and economic structures put in place by the ruling class to drive their dominant ideology. In the Niger Delta, as in other parts of the world, protest is employed to draw external attention to the anomalies that must be addressed if the society must function without stress.(2011: 38).

The Niger Delta, as depicted in *Oloibiri*, is a protest narrative against the government as a result of the decimation of Oloibiri flora and fauna. For instance, Donbra while answering the Doctor who asked him how he felt about the situation, responded:

Another company has commenced oil exploration in Otuka's kingdom" and the doctor asked, "Why worry about another village." "Why worry? We are one people, when larch destroyed Oloibiri's rivers and lands..." And the lady asked, "what hurts you most in all of this?"...

Nwahunanya collaborates the foregoing thus: "The impact of the flora and fauna has a direct effect on the human population who have suffered denial of sources of livelihood from environmental degradation, water pollution"(2011: 45) . When a people's survival which is dependent on lands and rivers that are no longer in existence, they are denied a measurable essence of life and well being offered by that land, but which is now polluted by the activities of multinational corporations. After the visual of a boy fetching water from a polluted water body is shown, Donbra continues his witnessing noting that: "oil spillage, oil exploration, our nephews turned kidnappers, if I had protested and held my ground in the sixties all these would not be happening". Through memory recollection Donbra takes responsibility for docility against the multinationals and the Nigerian government. He assumes responsibility for the plight of the Niger Delta saying that; "I have let my community down, I would have fought..." Donbra's feelings arising from the premise of memory of hurt and the effect of the oil exploration on the Niger Delta environment, are an attribute implicated in Allwell A. Onukaogu and Ezechi Onyerionwu's submission that: "The crisis situation in the Niger Delta has emanated from the dissatisfaction of the region over a number of issues that are associated with oil exploration, and can be said to be as old as the trade itself."(2011:51).

Singer views capitalism's approach to the environment as "contradicting and exclusionary in nature than its pseudo attempts at ecological sustainability..." (2010: 128). The movie's plot through flashback takes us back to Huston bemoaning the instigators of the carnage wrecked on the Niger Delta environment. Those at Huston through Foreshaw Limited make money from the destruction of their environment in collaboration with Nigerians who are in the minority and are beneficiaries of the environmental carnage unfolding in the Niger Delta. The manager of Foreshaw Limited informs Huston's investors of the establishment of twelve oil wells and the ongoing process to establish a bigger one: a new well that will produce eight thousand barrels daily without any attention paid to the environmental degradation in Niger Delta. The host of Huston's investors' conference informs that the project is worth over three hundred million dollars annually as returns on investment. The spokesperson concludes that the adventure has just begun and called for a toast to Foreshaw Limited. Oil exploration becomes a metaphor for the exploitation of the masses in the Niger Delta region. Martins Uze E. Tugbikorowei & Ifeanyi Ogu-Raphael highlight the effect of such oil exploration thus: "...rivers are polluted, farmlands destroyed, the flora and fauna of the environment annihilated, acid rain falls, health problems afflict the people, and a whole lot of other consequences"(2010: 113).

As Tugbikorowei and Ogu-Raphael (2010) observe, the punishment is brought home because the communities where oil exploitation is carried out live in Stone Age habitats while the quarters housing the oil workers are very much comfortable and comply with 21st century standards.

Foreshaw Limited's bid to be different, lends credence to the ruinous role of other multinational corporations that have exploited the resources of the environment and dehumanized the masses. The contaminated river is highlighted as a critical symbol of environmental degradation. Bum's mother accosts her son illustrating how the capitalist society conditions the educated ones among them. She asks “What happened to my boy? A son who made first class in geology and secured a good job? What happened to you?” In response he informs her that her son died because the elders of the land failed him leaving Bum weeping at the forlorn outlook of the future generation. The consequential failure of the community elders and the Nigerian government propels Bum to resist the state and the multinationals. Tugbikorowei & Ogu-Raphael (2010: 120) see the resistance of the Niger Delta people as economically motivated. However, beyond the foregoing the decimation of the environment, the attendant health challenges posed on the environment is one of the major factors necessitating resistance. The people's actions are motivated by what W. Steffen et al acknowledge as follows:

...the Earth itself is a single system with which the biosphere is an active, essential component. Secondly, human activities are now so pervasive and profound in their consequences that they affect the Earth at a global scale in complex, interactive and apparently accurately ways...(2005: 1)

It is this attempt to stop the capitalist effect on the disruption of the order in the biosphere that made the people of the Niger Delta to resist such exploitation and to use the environmental cinematographic as resistance narrative. Although the ending of the movie indicates that violence is not the solution to the Niger Delta problem, however, it collaborates Serves Storm's (2011) position that; “...air and ocean temperature are rising, oceans are acidifying and melting, the sea level is rising and natural disaster are occurring frequently and more intently.” The foregoing effect is also seen in Timipre's attempt to prevent a child from consuming water from the polluted river laid waste by the activities of the multinationals in Oloibiri.. Stephen Rust and Salima Monani accounting for the focus of eco-critical perspectives on the environment note that:

... environment is not just the organic world, or the laws of nature to which Kant counterposed the powers of human reason in the struggle for freedom, or that nature from which Marx thought we were condemned to wrest our survival; it is the whole habitat which encircles us, the physical world entangled with the cultural. It is an ecology of connections that we negotiate to make our meanings and our livings. In this habitat, cinema is a form of negotiation that is itself ecological placed as it consumes the entangled world around it, and in turn is itself consumed.(2013:13).

The above statement illustrates the symbiotic relationship between man and his environment and what the cinema does is to highlight this negotiation and in some ways highlight the exploitative trends within the structures of such negotiation.

Rust and Monani make a case for the all engaging nature of cinematic text thus: “...cinematic experience is in specially embedded webs. Cinematic texts, with their audiovisual presentations of individuals and their habitats, affect our imaginations of the world around us, and thus, potentially our actions toward this world.”(2013:14). Cinematic text such as *Blood and Oil* intimates the masses of the extent of the damage oil exploration on the people of Niger Delta and their environment. Rust and Monani went further to affirm that; “...cinema provides windows into how we imagine this state of affairs and how we act with or against it.”(2013:15). This is implicated in *Blood and Oil* in the sense that through cinematography we are further brought in to share in the plights of the people of the Niger Delta. The promise of multinationals to clean up oil spills from the waters of Oloibiri is still

a lip service. Bum's mother's intense encounter with Bum re-ignites her traumatic turn with her husband during the town hall meeting with the Whiteman and a representative of the multinationals. They suggest that they have brought development and employment to the community to which Timipre counters that they are employed as cooks and cleaners. After reminiscing about the past, Timipre asks his wife; "Do you remember when oil was found in Oloibiri?" and she replied: "We all jumped like monkeys". This illustrates that the discovery of oil in Oloibiri was welcomed with initial excitement but sadly transformed in the face of its destruction on the people's well being. Timipre through flashback seems to counter his son's narrative that the elders failed his people. The foregoing emphasizes Wood Roberdeau's submission thus: "Eco-cinematic moving image continues to raise questions of scale and visibility. In many ways, it acts as both mirror and prism for subjective circumstance and situations that are then prosecuted towards more objective concerns." (2018: 75). This is replicated in Timipre's attempts to renegotiate memories and his present reality.

Timipre is at the forefront seeking complete involvement of his people in the exploration of oil in their land. Through Bum's mother, we are made to see the effect of environmental degradation. The people suffer from different illnesses as a result of the pollution of their environment and their source of water and food. Through cinematographic re-imagining *Blood and Oil* accounts for the insecurity in the Niger Delta as a result of the failures of multinationals to clean up of Oloibiri and other communities that are affected by the actions of the multinationals. Chris Onyema collaborates the foregoing thus; "...oil pollution devastates the land and waterscape, gas flaring emits flames of inferno that toxicify the air." (2011: 201). The environment, consisting of flora and fauna is laid to waste to the extent that Oloibiri citizen have no other alternative than to migrate to Port Harcourt to survive. Timipre, through his account holds Leech Petroleum, which sounds like Shell, culpable. Timipre, informs that Leech petroleum has banned all manner of fishing activities, an emblematic action regarding the destruction of the environment. Enajite Eseghe Ojaruega emphasizes the effect of oil exploitation highlighted in Timipre's temperament thus: "The debacle caused by oil exploration and exploitation activities in Nigeria's Delta region has attracted much attention within and outside the annals of literature..." (2011: 495). The affected river has different levels of carcinogenic agents. The affected river brought death and hardship upon the people of Oloibiri as depicted within the world of the narrative. Roberdeau (2018) suggests that in *Blood and Oil* the camera's ability to connect with such effects often delivers an aesthetic impact of discomfiting scale that arguably becomes the most accessible way for perceivers to grasp the crises and welcome the nuances of the lived environment today. The framing of *Blood and Oil* achieves eco-film aesthetics.

Adrian Ivakhiv is of the opinion that; "Cinema... is a machine that produces or discloses worlds. This machine is, at once, anthropomorphic in that it produces a cinematic version of or resemblance to the human, thereby generating an apparent social or 'subject world'..." and this is clearly highlighted in *Blood and Oil*. Timipre suffers from posttraumatic disorder as a result of his experiences relating with the contaminated environment and how the environment has killed his loved ones. The Oloibiri tragedy haunts the elders and makes the young surviving ones to disregard the elders. In Bum's words: "You would have spared him, he is just a victim like all of us". Timipre commenting about the Director of Foreshaw Explorations notes; "His greed brought him grief, it is his business... This is not about your regret. This is about saving a life"

Gunpowder, known as Bum, in his attempt to fight for his people and reclaim their land while advocating for the resuscitation of Oloibiri becomes a terror unto the people. Through memory the characters expose the viewers to a world which Sean avers as "an environmentalism that figures class, poverty, inequality, pestilence..." (Cubitt 2017: 317). This illustrates how class affects environmental protection and the search for the Whiteman as revealed by Bum's dialogue. "Oloibiri I am looking for a Whiteman, if you have him, bring him to me but if I find him, plenty trouble. Oloibiri, you know I don't like to knock."

Timipre sarcastically addresses his son as “god avenging angel” while Bum retorts that: “My mother prefers to call me the god of Oloibiri”. Timipre describes his son as “god twisted all over” while Bum derisively replies him that he is still better than an activist who never made it infuriating his father to send him packing.

Bum believes he is the creation of his father’s lousy generation, a timid bunch cheering while their lands were sapped dry. His father, on the other hand, insists he didn’t cheer but fought as gallantly as he could. The foregoing frames the narrative of a character attempting to contend with self through memory and witnessing as a frame of making a case for the environment. Sean Cubitt sees framing as important for eco-critics thus; “...this concept of framing is of special importance to eco-critics since matters of points of view and vision are so dramatically at stake in works grappling with environmental and interspecies issues. Framing and the aesthetics of the image within a frame, shape how artists and their audience perceive the environment”(2016: 17).

In the framing of eco-film, voice over plays a very important role as in the excerpt above. Motion pictures help foreground environmental discourse within the frame of eco-film. Voicing aids the foregrounding of environmental discourse as could be gleaned in Bum’s accusation of Timipre as a coward who fled to England executed with the cinematic frame. Bum’s boys threaten to kill him but are stopped by Bum who prefers him being kept alive to witness the Oloibiri of his designs. Bum taunts Timipre over his traumatized state when he returned to Oloibiri in 1978 to see the rot occasioned by large oil spills that had destroyed it. Pointing his gun at Timipre’s head he declares that: “My bullets will not end your pains.” This reference to historical memory to advance the plot of *Blood and Oil* occurs within cinematic frame. Adrian Ivakhiv notes that: “In addition to visual images, written inscriptions or audio aspects add verbal effects that also facilitate framing of the environment. Soundscape in film often plays a crucial role in reflecting the relationships between human and non-human beings”(2013:22). Timipre, in assisting the Whiteman to escape from environmental activists who have taken up arms against the state and the multinationals, bears witness against Foreshaw’s exploration services and frames the environmental discourse. He accuses them of siphoning oil to send it to their country to build a better future while Oloibirilives are messed up with important chiefs given hush money while the oil and rivers are messed up with no single drop of drinking water in sight.

Through the eco-film approach, *Blood and Oil* puts the “Whiteman”, a representation of capitalism, on trial through the use of environmental facts weighted against him. Sean Cubitt (2017: 2) notes that: “...film as a 'living medium’”, enables the viewers to see live portrayal of historical events within the frame of time which Adrian Ivakhiv links to the cinema as a means of narrowing the gap between cinematic time and real time (or in terms, ecological time), which facilitates the depictions of “enfoldment of objects or processes within other processes...”(2013:21). In this narrowing and framing audio-visual plays an important role in the conception of the people’s continuous historical memory. Through audio-visual witnessing and remembering, the Whiteman is allowed to defend capitalism and its effect on the environment. Responding to Timipre’s accusations drawn from environmental facts and remembering, the Whiteman declares: “I didn’t come to steal from you. I came here to learn how my company could treat your community with respect. On my way here people innocent of this exploitation died. It takes two people to screw. So get screwed.” The Whiteman also lays the blame at the feet of the host community making a case for capitalism and its insistence to better the lives of the host community amidst the decimation of the environment. The excerpted interaction between Timipre and the Whiteman foregrounds what Sean Cubitt refers to as “mediation names the material processes connecting human and nonhuman events...”(2017: 2).

Hostage taking in *Blood and Oil* becomes a metaphor of resistance to stop continuous oil exploration in the Niger Delta. Cubit further notes that:

an environment and its inhabitants co-evolve. A species does not discover an environment waiting for it. It co-creates that environment by acting in it, eating, excreting, building, reproducing, and dying. Ecology is a science of relations and mediations in which innumerable interactions must constantly recreate the end points 'environment' and 'inhabitant'(2017: 9).

It is this interaction that makes Bum to suggest that it is preferable for him to mingle his blood with other traitors in Oloibiri's oil wells, being more concerned about the role of Oloibiri's elders, their corruption, their greed and compensation culture. The conversation between Bum and Timipre holds certain self-assessment within the narrative structure viz,

Timipre: I fought for Oloibiri, I never demanded a bribe.

Bum: You're worse than those who took bribe because you ran, you jumped shell.

Remembering also indicts the beneficiaries of capitalism. Bum holds Timipre to account as an extended means of holding the older generation to account pertaining the decimation and exploitation of the environment. Stephen Rust et al in substantiating this interconnectivity note that; "...media, society, and the environment are inextricably entangled together, both in how media texts represent the environment ... and in the inevitable ways that media texts and systems are materially embedded in natural resource use and abuse." (2016: 2). Characters' interactions facilitate this entanglement and highlight abuse and the exploitation of the environment for pecuniary gains. Rust et al further note that: "...the frame plays a key role not only in demarcating physical and visual space, but creates the basic units-shots, panels-by which time is rendered legible."(2016: 21). Indeed, human beings' actions and interactions aid eco-film framing. The subsequent death of Bum signals the continuous exploitation of the Niger Delta region without any tangible solutions to their problems.

3. Revolutionary Trope and Environmental Pedagogy in Frank Rajah Arase's *Somewhere in Africa*

Somewhere in Africa opens in a classroom as Mrs. Archibong teaches her students about the importance of national consciousness and freedom in the society. She appropriates from national and world philosophies based on better societies and collective existences of people in a democratized space. Her teaching somehow implicates military intervention in the political process and the disruption of democratic rules. Through Mrs. Archibong's actions and teaching methods she stokes the political aspirations of the young and the desire to resist totalitarian governance. Through the language of praxis and pedagogy Mrs Archibong communicates revolutionary aesthetics to her students. Chinua Achebe (1962:1) notes that: "No man can understand another language which he does not speak... and by language we do not mean verbal craft but a cultural view" (1). The emotion that stirs revolution is what Mrs Archibong communicated to her students as she weaponizes the classroom as an environment of resistance. The students come to see themselves as having the competence to salvage their environment by engaging in actions beyond what they are taught and beyond what those before them did. Mrs Archibong, by virtue of her education and wide reading, belongs to a revolutionary generation that questions dictatorship and bad administration in Africa. She utilizes cultural action for freedom and education for critical consciousness in her attempt to prepare her students for the future. She starts her classes by invoking the revolutionary spirits in her students thus:

There was once a land unknown
A people unseen
A destiny unborn
Trees like hills
Towering to the skies
Mountains like fountains

Chinyere Lilian Okam & O.P. Onuoha “Revolutionary Trope and Environmental Pedagogy in Frank Arase's *Somewhere in Africa: The Cries of Humanity* and David Attwood's *Blood and Oil*”

Welling to the heavens
The sun
Glowing like a river of gold
Across the horizon
And the fields?
Green
As green could ever be
Kimbala land was indeed
A land of hope
A land of dreams
A land of pearls
And treasures
A beautiful land of freedom
Then came the hovering cloud of darkness
The mist of sorrow and the fog of death
Man became an enemy to man and like scavenging beasts
We dug ourselves
A grave which we buried our honour
Military leader: honour to our country
Mrs. Archibong: Our esteem!
Military leader: Esteem for our leaders!
Mrs Archibong: Our loyalty
Military leader: “loyalty to me!”

At the end of the poem the democratic government is overthrown through a coup d'état and the military leader takes over power. Through the process of remembering and witnessing to the students, Mrs Archibong chronicles the history of the people of Kimbala as a revolutionary trope to incite the students to resisting dictatorship. Mrs Archibong uses the classroom as a theatre for revolution. Chima Julius Osakwe in accounting for the functionality of theatre notes that; “...theatre has served as an instrument of socio-political revolution around the world”(2014:2). Consequently, in Africa, the classrooms and the lecture halls are becoming theatres for knowledge revolution and by extension civic revolution as seen during the 1978 Ali must go protest amongst others in Nigeria. Gloria Eme Worugji in her review of revolution which implicates this discourse argues that “Revolution and change are like twin brothers. The quest for change often leads to revolt. In most societies of the world, especially in Africa and Nigeria, failure to recognise, understand and accept positive change leads to several recorded causes of revolt”(2015: 90).

The quest for change of government from a totalitarian government motivates Mrs Archibong to prepare the students psychologically for the grim task of resistance ahead. This is what is called the dominative power of praxis, as through cognitive elements and emotional stirring, the consciousness of the students are aroused since there would always be a desire, a nudge to put into action what is learnt, felt and seen despite the repression that is imminent. Jeff Conant is of the opinion that: “Stories of resistance of course, help to strengthen resistance, rooting it more deeply in belief and in practice, and thus sustaining it.”(2010: 11). From Mrs Archibong’s interactions with the students she sows the seed of the future and revolution in them to resist totalitarian government in their society. The foregoing seems to suggest that the older generation keeps selling their dreams of a better society to the younger generation as highlighted in the interaction between Frank Leuma and Mr. Archibong. Mr & Mrs Archibong make effective use of revolutionary language to communicate resistance to bad government by the younger generation. However, although the dreams are sold to the youths, they

have the desire to prove themselves and the handover dreams seem to be of compounded motivation. Frank Leuma notes when Dr. Archibong asks him what he knows about governance:

Leuma affirms from the little he knows that elected public officials ought not to defraud the citizenry by betraying the trust reposed on them. He could not come to terms why most African nations wallowed endlessly in the vicious cycle of poverty, suffering in the midst of plenty. Dr and Mrs Archibong through their actions set the stage for revolution by weaponizing journalism and education. Though Dr. Archibong did not answer the questions that were put to him by Mr. Frank, but he succeeded in giving Frank a course to live and die for. The foregoing highlights the power of knowledge acquisition through its communicative importance in the classroom and non formal settings. Mrs. Archibong keeps fiddling with revolution tropes through a collaborative storytelling technique thus:

Education is human rights with immense power to transform. On its foundation rests the cornerstone of freedom, democracy and sustainable human reform. During my life time, I have dedicated myself to the struggle of the African people. I have fought against the white dominations and I have fought against the black dominations. I have cherished a democratic and a free society in which all persons will live together in harmony and also with equal opportunities .It's an idea which I hope to live for and to achieve and if need be, it is an ideal which I wish to die for. I am not bound to win but I am bound to be true. I am not bound to succeed but I am bound to live by the light that I have. I must stand with anybody that stands right and stand with him while he is right and part with him when he goes wrong.

The constant impartation of revolutionary lines during classes indoctrinates the students to the extent that they decide to resist a totalitarian government with their bare hands. Mrs Archibong continues her revolutionary lines with the students sometimes responding alongside her as a preparatory motif thus:

Mrs Archibong: "The independence of our country is meaningless unless it is linked up with the total liberation of Africa". Osagyefo Dr. Kwame Nkrumah

"In the end we will not remember the words, the pain, torture, maltreatment of our enemies but the silence of our friends." Martin Luther King Jr.

"As you talk to a man in a language that he understands that goes to his head. If you talk to him in his language that goes to his heart." Nelson Mandela.

"Change does not role on the wheels of inevitability but comes through continuous struggles and so we must straighten our backs and work for our freedom. A man can't ride you unless your back is bent." She continues

"I am not interested in picking up crumbs of compassion thrown from the table of a man who considers himself my master. I want a full menu of rights."

The call and response rendition of spoken word poetry which foregrounds the core of dictatorship highlights the fact that military leaders and the masses have different realities and their perceptions of realities are quite different. Through cinematography Somewhere in Africa clearly highlights the effect of military intervention in politics and how soldiers kill each other in a high level Russian roulette to become the commander. Through re-imagining of President Gabiza's overthrow, the film highlights the effect of military intervention in politics. Mumbasa like other African dictators sees himself as a god. Within the plot development of the narrative Mrs Archibong could be clearly seen handing over the baton to the younger generation as she fights with them till death. This is collaborated by Worugji (2015: 91) when she submits that; "The attempt yearning for freedom and development is the beginning of awareness on all that see their position as being trampled on." This is what Mrs Archibong portrayed all through the duration of the movie. A revolutionary trajectory where the students through participation develop capability (Okam, 2019) to move from sympathy

Chinyere Lilian Okam & O.P. Onuoha “Revolutionary Trope and Environmental Pedagogy in Frank Arase's *Somewhere in Africa: The Cries of Humanity* and David Attwood's *Blood and Oil*”

to empathy, moving away from what they have been told to an emergent revolutionary realisation through a praxical pedagogical engagement.

Mumbasa takes over government through the power of the gun and in pretence of fixing the country while he is indeed ordering himself be a god. Through his speech he re-enacts the totalitarian tendency of absolute leaders in Africa, thus;

Mumbasa: Does God know how much a litter of petrol cost? No but you do and I do, does he know what it takes to lack potable water and to die of cholera! No but you do and I do, does he know what your people are going through Gabiza? No but you do and I do, the people are screaming on top of their lungs help us Mumbasa. Listen to the name, Mumbasa help us, they are calling for me. I will have to help them and you don't have a choice, they are my people and I am their God.

Gabiza: You are nothing Mumbasa. Nothing! Nothing but senseless, heartless, ambitious soldier.

Mumbasa: You're nothing but a fool to think that democracy has come to stay in Africa. You are a fool to think that the military and the soldiers will stand by and watch you complete your term as President.

Through his words and actions, Mumbasa sets the stage for resistance within his society through peaceful protest organised by minors who have been indoctrinated by Mrs Archibong. Justin Adamu commenting on protest submits that; “...protests...in some cases, is a result of political leaders unwilling to relinquish power when defeated in an election.”(2017: 710). Mumbasa does not win any election but forcefully takes over government, killing those associated with the previous government as highlighted in his broadcast. His military opponents are all executed as directed by the military ruler, bringing sorrow and sadness to the affected families. After their execution, Mumbasa declares that those executed were found to be threats to national security. This cold approach prompts Mrs Archibong's students indoctrinated by her to take to the streets in protest. However, their non violent approach to resolving dictatorial concerns in their country actually succeeds in toppling tyranny at the end of the day at the cost of their lives.

Conclusion

Analysing the concept or revolutionary trope demands pre requisite focusing on dramatic characters whose core activities primarily frame the aesthetics of revolution. This paper's contribution to this special issue is grounded in Anthropocene, and how the two films interrogate the political implications of the capitalist romance with the multinational corporations whose activities obviously destroy the environment. From a phenomenal perspective, the film, *Blood and Oil* plays to Attwood's strength as a film maker who has immense knowledge about the grim realities that Niger-Delta people face on a daily basis. The filmscape continues to evolve in support of the vital issues of environmental depletion and the precariousness of the people's ordeal as captured in their protest. In the end, the viewer could ask why Timipre chose to take sides with Foreshaw Limited which represents the capitalist forces against his people. The obvious answer is that violence endangers the environment more than it protects it. A Theatre of reciprocal violence, is suggested to challenge vice, expose the ills against the land and communicate important messages to the targeted citizenry. It is a strategic approach in response to a repressive government that perceives protest as an attack on the establishment as exemplified in *Somewhere in Africa*.

Praxical pedagogy does not always translate to violence as it is never against the law of the land for people to affectively handle their cognitive issues. This leads us to the question, what is the end product of the revolt that took Bum's life? Bum lacked the awareness of his obligation to the environment and the surrounding social forces. Confronting violence with armed violence is inimical and can only breed more violence therefore Donba's action in saving the life of the oppressor is a salient protest against the futile efforts of the youths led by Bum and also a key process encouraging a context of negotiation. Despite the damage done to the environment through the spillage and gas

flaring, the armed conflict approach results to a non presupposition aftermath. Worthy of emulation is the approach exercised by Donba and Mrs Archibong and the students through armless protestation, thus percolating the context of re-socialisation for positive change. This is in tandem with Ogunleye's theatre of reciprocal violence(qtd in Okam, 2018) - a contestation, protestation and praxis put up to resist anarchy through dialogue in order to transform to a better society. The end product is that peace works through a deliberate unbundling of social issues through informed dialogue seasoned with memory and remembering.

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Chinyere Lilian Okam & O.P. Onuoha “Revolutionary Trope and Environmental Pedagogy in Frank Arase's *Somewhere in Africa: The Cries of Humanity* and David Attwood's *Blood and Oil*”

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