

**THE PORTRAYAL OF INSURGENCY AND ENVIRONMENTAL DEGRADATION IN  
NIGERIAN OIL-PRODUCING COMMUNITIES IN CHIMEKA GARRICKS'  
*TOMORROW DIED YESTERDAY* AND HELON HABILA'S *OIL ON WATER***

**BY**

**David Oghenero APPIAH**

**MAT NO: ART1800475**

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## CERTIFICATION

This is to certify that this study was carried out by David Oghenero APPIAH in the department of English and Literature, University of Benin, under my supervision.

.....

**Dr. (Mrs.) Esther Jamgbadi**

**(Project Supervisor)**

.....

**Date**

## **DEDICATION**

I dedicate this work to the Almighty, who saw me through this process and helped to this stage. I also dedicate this work to my late father who saw me begin this journey but could not see me finish it.

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I extend my deepest gratitude to the Almighty, whose boundless love and mercy accompanied me throughout this journey. This process has been a rollercoaster of emotions but his unwavering support kept me going. With a sincere heart, I say thank you.

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## ABSTRACT

Since the discovery of oil in Nigeria's Niger-Delta region, it has experienced a dire situation marked by corruption, environmental degradation, insurgency, militancy, oil smuggling, and other unfavorable circumstances. Chimeka Garricks' *Tomorrow Died Yesterday* and Helon Habila's *Oil on Water* are two remarkable novels that delve into the topics of insurgency and environmental degradation in this region. This analysis explores how these issues are depicted in these texts. Additionally, it sheds light on how the region's youths resort to kidnapping expatriates, engaging in oil smuggling and militancy as responses to the government's corrupt practices regarding the uneven distribution of oil revenue and the polluted environment left behind by oil companies. Furthermore, this study conducts a comparative analysis of the two novels, highlighting both their similarities and differences.

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## CHAPTER ONE

### 1.1 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to critically analyze and explore the portrayal of insurgency and environmental degradation in Nigerian oil-producing communities, as depicted in the novels Chimeka Garricks' *Tomorrow Died Yesterday* and Helon Haliba's *Oil on water*. By examining these literary works, we aim to gain insights into the complex socio-political and environmental dynamics at play in these communities, highlighting the consequences of oil exploration, the resulting conflicts, and the lived experiences of the community members. This essay aims to contribute to a deeper understanding of the challenges faced by these communities and the ways in which literature can shed light on their plight.

### 1.2 Scope of the Study

The study focuses specifically on the portrayal of insurgency and environmental degradation within the context of Nigerian oil-producing communities, as presented in *Tomorrow Died Yesterday* and *Oil on Water*. These novels offer rich narratives that explore the themes of kidnapping, corruption, environmental destruction, and the struggles faced by individuals and communities affected by oil exploration. This study aims to provide a detailed analysis of the representation of these pressing issues in literature and their implications for understanding the broader socio-economic, political, and environmental landscape of these communities.

### 1.3 Methodology

To achieve the objectives of this study, a qualitative research approach is employed. The primary data source is the selected literary works themselves, *Tomorrow Died Yesterday* and *Oil on Water*. These texts are analyzed using content analysis techniques, focusing on the portrayal of insurgency and environmental degradation. Furthermore, relevant secondary sources such as scholarly articles, books, and reports on Nigerian oil-producing communities are consulted to provide additional context and support the analysis. The integration of qualitative data from both

primary and secondary sources facilitate a comprehensive exploration of the selected novels and the broader issues they address.

## **1.4 Background to the Study/Summary of the Texts**

### **1.4.1 Background to the Study**

Literature has long served as a powerful medium to reflect and critique the social and political realities of a society. Within the context of Nigerian oil-producing communities, two poignant novels, Chimeka Garricks' *Tomorrow Died Yesterday* and Helon Habila's *Oil on Water*, delve into the harrowing portrayal of insurgency and environmental degradation. These literary works offer profound insights into the struggles and challenges faced by these communities, providing a platform to explore the complex interplay between armed conflict, ecological devastation, and the human condition. As Nigeria's oil industry booms, the Niger-Delta region becomes a focal point in the exploration and extraction of valuable resources. Unfortunately, this economic prosperity comes at a grave cost, as oil-producing communities bear witness to the profound impacts of insurgency and environmental degradation. The novelists, Chimeka Garricks and Helon Habila, skillfully weave narratives that bring to light the multifaceted experiences of individuals caught in the crossfire of armed conflicts and ecological devastation.

In *Tomorrow Died Yesterday*, Garricks portrays the lives of four childhood friends who grew up in the Niger-Delta region amidst the backdrop of insurgency caused by tensions between foreign oil companies and the marginalized ethnic minority groups. The novel spans decades, interweaving the characters' personal histories with the unfolding events in the region, highlighting the consequences of oil spills, gas flaring, and the loss of livelihoods in the face of relentless environmental degradation. Similarly, in *Oil on Water*, Helon Habila immerses readers in a haunting tale of the Niger-Delta's oil-related conflict. The novel follows the journey of a journalist and his guide as they search for a kidnapped British oil engineer's wife in the heart of the region. Through their experiences, Habila brings forth the devastating impact of oil spills, deforestation, and the proliferation of armed groups on the lives of local communities. To explore the themes of insurgency and environmental degradation in these literary works, this essay analyzes the ways in which both authors employ storytelling to shed light on the social injustice, ecological devastation, and human suffering that have become pervasive in Nigerian oil-

producing communities. By examining the characters' experiences, the social dynamics, and the environmental implications depicted in these novels, this study aims to deepen our understanding of the complex challenges faced by these communities and the urgent need for sustainable practices and social justice in the Nigerian oil industry. In this pursuit, this project draws upon various scholarly sources and literary analysis to provide a comprehensive exploration of the portrayal of insurgency and environmental degradation in *Tomorrow Died Yesterday* and *Oil on Water*. By delving into the power of literature to uncover pressing societal issues, this study contributes to a broader discourse on the intersection of literature, social justice, and environmental consciousness in the context of Nigerian oil-producing communities.

## **1.4.2 Summary of Texts**

### **1.4.2.1 Summary of Helon Habila's *Oil on Water***

#### **About the author**

*Oil on Water*, published in 2010, is a captivating novel crafted by the talented writer Helon Habila. Before establishing himself as a professor of creative writing at George Mason University, Habila began his literary journey as a journalist and poet in Nigeria. Helon Habila is the author of the novels: *Waiting for an Angel* (2002), which won the 2003 Commonwealth Writers' Prize for Best First Book (Africa Region); *Measuring Time* (2007), which won the 2008 Virginia Library Foundation Prize for Fiction and was nominated for the Hurston/Wright Legacy Award and the Dublin IMPAC Prize; and *Oil on Water* (2010), which was shortlisted for the 2012 Commonwealth Writers' Prize for Best Book (Africa Region), the 2013 PEN/Open Book Award, and the 2013 Orion Book Award. As his third novel, *Oil on Water* showcases Habila's remarkable ability to merge the realms of journalism and enchanting prose, evoking powerful emotions and responses in readers. Through his writing, Habila skillfully weaves captivating narratives that engage the imagination while shedding light on pressing social issues, making *Oil on Water* a literary work of profound significance.

Source: Premium times and Super summary.

#### **Summary**

In the heart of the Niger Delta, a young journalist named Rufus embarks on a perilous journey with his idol, the renowned reporter Zaq. Their mission is to find a kidnapped woman, Isabel Floode, who has become a pawn in the battle between the Nigerian government and its people over the highly coveted resource - oil. The conflict rages between the government and its military, defending the interests and profits of the oil industry, and the militant forces fighting to liberate their people from the oppression of the industrial complex. The militants aim to halt the environmental degradation caused by the oil company, but their violent actions also bring terror to the region. As Rufus and Zaq venture deeper into the dangerous waters of the Niger Delta, they encounter influential figures on both sides of the conflict. However, their focus remains on the impoverished communities trapped in the crossfire, where villages and lives are in constant peril. Amidst this turmoil, Zaq struggles with the twin demons of alcoholism and an infection that threatens his life. Meanwhile, Rufus is driven to continue despite the dangers because he supports and cares for his sister, who bears the scars of a tragic oil fire accident.

As they unravel the mystery surrounding Isabel's disappearance, Rufus and Zaq discover that her driver, Salomon alongside a police officer, Jamabo and Bassey, his neighbour orchestrated the kidnapping as an act of revenge against her husband James, who impregnated Salomon's fiancée, Koko. However, the situation quickly spirals out of control, with Isabel being shuffled between different militant groups, wreaking havoc on the island of Irikefe, which finds itself caught in the center of the conflict. In the midst of this chaos, Rufus must locate Isabel and uncover the truth behind her abduction, all the while navigating the dangers of the deadly oil war that surrounds them. The journey becomes a test of survival and truth-seeking in a world fraught with violence, deception, and the insatiable quest for power.

#### **1.4.2.2 Summary of Chimeka Garricks' *Tomorrow Died yesterday***

##### **About the Author**

The author Chimeka Garricks was born in Rivers State Nigeria. He currently lives and work in Biya, Port Harcourt with his family. The novel *Tomorrow Died Yesterday* which is one of our primary sources of data is his first publication. He studied law and practices as a lawyer.

## Summary

*Tomorrow Died Yesterday* follows the compelling journey of four childhood friends. Doughboy (Doye), Amaibi, Kaniye, and Tubo - who share a deep bond while growing up in Nigeria's oil-rich Niger-Delta region. The story unfolds against the backdrop of the region's turbulent history, marked by conflicts arising from the exploitation of ethnic minority groups by foreign oil companies. Set in 2003, the novel takes a tragic turn when Doughboy's kidnapping of a foreign oil worker goes awry, sparking a series of events that reunite the friends. Each character has taken divergent paths in life: Kaniye, once a lawyer, now owns a restaurant; Tubo works for Imperial Oil, the central company in the story; Doye leads a militant oil group involved in kidnapping foreign oil workers, and Amaibi is an activist and lecturer. The narrative spans three decades, delving into key moments from their childhoods in the 70s, 80s, and 90s. The book artfully switches between the events of 2003/2004, the aftermath of the kidnapping, and significant memories from each friend's past, illuminating the evolution of their friendship and the factors that have shaped their individual lives.

The novel provides glimpses of the four friends' birth, the situation surrounding their birth, significant activities in their past and how these activities shape their lives and affect their future. We learn how Tubo was abandoned as an infant, and how Kaniye was given birth to by his dad's maid which made his dad absent in the early years of his life. The novel further captures how Amaibi was nurtured properly in a godly way which made him an upright and honest man to the core. We further see the pathetic background of Doughboy, how his brother Soboye lost his life as a result of oil-bunkery, and the death of his dad which was caused by military officers. These events are crucial to the progress of the novel as they serve as a platform to understanding the actions and unfolding of events in the novel. In this captivating tale, Garricks explores the profound complexities surrounding Nigeria's oil industry. He skillfully portrays various themes, including oil bunkering, oil militancy, the impact of oil on everyday Nigerians in the Niger-Delta, the presence of corrupt politicians and oil company employees, and the resilience of people striving to survive amidst these trying circumstances. The major conflict in the novel is the involvement of Amaibi in the kidnap of Manning, an expatriate that works as an engineer at Imperial oil company. Amaibi is supposed to deliver the ransom Doughboy demanded and get Manning released. The whole situation gets messed up when Doughboy handed Manning corpse

to Amaibi after he delivered the ransom. Amaibi got arrested after this incident and was accused of having a hand in the kidnap and death of Manning. The novel progresses as Kaniye takes up the case as Amaibi lawyer after abandoning his law profession for years, striving to prove Amaibi's innocence.

## **1.5 Theoretical Background**

The theoretical background of this study draws upon sociological theory to analyze the portrayal of insurgency and environmental degradation in Nigerian oil-producing communities. Sociological theory provides a framework for understanding the social, cultural, and economic factors that shape individuals' experiences and communities' dynamics.

### **Sociological Theory**

Sociological theory encompasses various perspectives and approaches that seek to explain and understand society and its structures. Literary analysis from a sociological perspective involves applying sociological theories and concepts to the study of literature. It examines how literature reflects and engages with social structures, cultural norms, and power dynamics within a given society. By drawing on sociological theory, literary analysis can shed light on the social, political, and economic dimensions of literary works and their implications for understanding society. In the context of this study, sociological theory helps in examining the complex social issues related to insurgency and environmental degradation within Nigerian oil-producing communities. One relevant sociological perspective is Marxist theory, which highlights the existence of social inequalities, power struggles, and conflicts within society. According to Terry Eagleton, a leading British Literary theorist, Marxist Criticism is concerned with how novels get published and whether they mention the working class. Pediaa states that the basic goal of this criticism is to assess the political tendency of a Literary work and determine whether its social content or Literary forms are progressive. Marxist criticism pays special attention to the division of class, class struggle, oppression, and political background of the story. In other words, this theory focuses more on the social and political elements of a work than its aesthetics (artistic and visual) value.

According to Study smarter, Marxist literary theory and criticism analyse literature from a Marxist perspective. There are many ways of explaining the role of Marxism in literature and literary theory. In general, Marxist literary theory examines:

1. How literature is part of the superstructure and can never fully escape the influence of its social and economic contexts.
2. How literature may sometimes, consciously or unconsciously, become a channel to articulate certain ideologies.
3. How the economic mode of production, say capitalism in most societies today, determine, control, or influence the creation of a text, either in content or form.
4. How literary works interact with the ideologies around them.
5. The extent to which the social and economic background of the author informs the literary text.
6. How literature reflects the world around in its portrayal of characters and their lives, with an emphasis on class. (Marxism Literary Criticism. Studysmarter.co.uk)

Another pertinent theoretical framework is Eco-criticism. According to research guide, Ecocriticism is a term used for the observation and study of the relationship between the literature and the earth's environment. Ecocriticism investigates the relation between humans and the natural world in literature. It deals with how environmental issues, cultural issues concerning the environment and attitudes towards nature are presented and analyzed. One of the main goals in ecocriticism is to study how individuals in society behave and react in relation to nature and ecological aspects. This form of criticism has gained a lot of attention during recent years due to higher social emphasis on environmental destruction and increased technology. It is hence a fresh way of analyzing and interpreting literary texts, which brings new dimensions to the field of literary and theoretical studies. Ecocriticism is an intentionally broad approach that is known by a number of other designations, including "green (cultural) studies", "ecopoetics", and "environmental literary criticism." Western thought has often held a more or less utilitarian attitude to nature —nature is for serving human needs. However, after the eighteenth century,

there emerged many voices that demanded a reevaluation of the relationship between man and environment, and man's view of nature. Arne Naess, a Norwegian philosopher, developed the notion of "Deep Ecology" which emphasizes the basic interconnectedness of all life forms and natural features, and presents a symbiotic and holistic world-view rather than an anthropocentric one.

Ecocriticism is the result of this new consciousness: that very soon, there will be nothing beautiful (or safe) in nature to discourse about, unless we are very careful.

Ecocritics ask questions such as:

- (1) How is nature represented in the novel/poem/play ?
- (2) What role does the physical-geographical setting play in the structure of the novel?
- (3) How do our metaphors of the land influence the way we treat it? That is, what is the link between pedagogic or creative practice and actual political, sociocultural and ethical behaviour towards the land and other non-human life forms?
- (4) How is science—in the form of genetic engineering, technologies of reproduction, sexualities—open to critical scrutiny in terms of the effects of science upon the land?

The essential assumptions, ideas and methods of ecocritics may be summed up as follows.

- (1) Ecocritics believe that human culture is related to the physical world.
- (2) Ecocriticism assumes that all life forms are interlinked. Ecocriticism expands the notion of "the world" to include the entire ecosphere.
- (3) Moreover, there is a definite link between nature and culture, where the literary treatment, representation and "thematization" of land and nature influence actions on the land.
- (4) Joseph Meeker in an early work, *The Comedy of Survival: Studies in Literary Ecology* (1972) used the term "literary ecology" to refer to "the study of biological themes and relationships

which appear in literary works. It is simultaneously an attempt to discover what roles have been played by literature in the ecology of the human species.”

(5) William Rueckert is believed to have coined the term “ecocriticism” in 1978, which he defines as “the application of ecology and ecological concepts to the study of literature.” (Pramod, Nair. *Literary Theory Today*)

### **1.6 Review of Literature/ Justification of Study**

The Nigerian oil industry has been a subject of critical analysis due to the complex interplay of insurgency and environmental degradation in the oil-producing regions. This literature review examines how Garricks’ *Tomorrow Died Yesterday* and Habila's *Oil on Water* portray these issues in the context of Nigerian oil-producing communities. The analysis explores the scholars' and students' perspectives on the socio-political and environmental challenges faced by these communities and the broader implications of such portrayals.

#### **A review on Helon Habila’s *Oil on water* by the Luminaries Bookclub states that:**

The major themes in the book are environmental pollution, penury and poverty, Kidnapping and abduction, violent and death, lack of employment, fear and mystery, faith and Love. Supporting this comment, I'd state that Helon Habila is a novelist that pay attention to every aspect of the society. This is evident in his novel *Oil on water* as he captures every single situation the oil producing communities tends to encounter. From Insurgency down to unemployment, poverty, environment degradation and others. Helon Habila lends his voice to the people of the Niger Delta to make the universe see their plight.

The Luminaries Bookclub further states that "A prose work which entails the story of people who live in fear and abject poverty because of a natural mineral resources which is supposed to be a blessing but ends up to bring them division, betrayal and loss of their birthright and roots (lands)." The discovery of mineral resources has been one of Nigeria's greatest breakthrough over the years. Nigeria is one of the few nations that is blessed with natural resources and this should give the nation an edge over other nations as the demand for these resources is high in the universe. The irony about Nigeria being blessed with these resources --

which is the devastating situation of the oil producing region-- is what Helon Habila tends to make the universe see.

Luminaries Bookclub also posits that: "The book stands for TRUTH. The truth the government doesn't tell us of the situations in the region. The truth the media do not print out, the truth the researchers hide at the expense of the people's health. The truth about the real stand of the militants:

*"... we are not the barbarians the government propagandists say we are. We are for the people. Everything we do is for the people, Everything we do is for the people, what will we gain of we terrorise them?.. that is why I am letting you go, so you can write the truth..." (Chapter 21)*

The excerpt from Chapter 21 highlights the perspective of the militants, who claim to be fighting for the people's welfare rather than terrorizing them. This portrayal challenges the stereotype of militants as solely violent and extremist, presenting a more nuanced understanding of their motivations and actions.

Cornel Onyemauch states that: Literature serves as a mirror, a channel through which the social, political, cultural and economic issues that ravage a society are explored. As such, there is a correlation between art and life, hence Literature deals with a people and their experiences in a given milieu. (*Beyond the Pardon in Niger-Delta Politics*, 170)

### **A Review on Chimeka Garricks' *Tomorrow Died Yesterday***

*Tomorrow Died Yesterday* is a core example of a literature work that explore the social, political, cultural and economic issues that ravage the society. Although, the novel didn't capture the whole part of the country as it focuses on the Niger-Delta region of Nigeria.

Cornel posits that: Chimeka Garricks wrote *Tomorrow Died Yesterday* to inform the world of his view on the Niger-Delta to inform the world of his view on the Niger-Delta crisis and the rise of militancy in Nigeria. *Tomorrow Died Yesterday* is a literary composition conveying moral truth mixed with fictional characters and their personal experiences. The novel has five books and each episode is named after the narrator or major character or incident. The novel explored various themes like suffering pain, disappointed, poverty, exploitation, above all tyranny and oppression. (173)

Cornel statement attest to the fact that Literature explore societal issues affecting the populace. Chimeka Garricks' in his novel *Tomorrow Died Yesterday* calls the world attention to devastating state the Niger-Delta region has been in since the discovery of oil in the region. He further explain how the discovery has led to birth of the militancy in Nigeria.

Ijenebe Anwuri and Adebua Babatunde Olanrewaju in their journal article entitled "Reflections on Eco-activism in the Niger-Delta" in Chimeka Garricks' *Tomorrow Died Yesterday* states:

"Environmental advocacy has gone beyond just showing the wrecks wrought on the environment. It has to show the wrecks wrought on the people's lives too. A whole region is being raped, sodomized and marginalized, yet the government and oil companies keep mute because of the wealth they accrue from the businesses. Eco-activism thereby falls on the militant characters like Doughboy to advocate for both the environment and the marginalized people."

From Ijenebe Anwuri and Adebua Babatunde Olanrewaju stance: As Eco-activism comes into play as a result of environmental degradation caused by the activities of the oil industry in the Niger-Delta region. Doughboy plays out as a prominent character that pushes Eco-activism alongside Amaibi.

## **1.7 Thesis Statement**

This research work demonstrates the interplay of insurgency and environmental degradation in Nigeria oil producing communities as portrayed in Chimeka Garricks' *Tomorrow Died Yesterday* and Helon Habila's *Oil on Water*.

## **CHAPTER TWO: INSURGENCY, ENVIRONMENTAL DEGRADATION AND NARRATIVE TECHNIQUE IN HELON HABILA'S *OIL ON WATER***

### **Brief introduction**

The Niger Delta region, located in southern Nigeria, has long been plagued by the interconnected issues of insurgency and environmental degradation. This region is characterized by a complex web of socio-political, economic, and environmental challenges, primarily centered around the exploration and extraction of oil. Insurgency in the Niger Delta refers to the activities of armed militant groups that emerged in response to the perceived marginalization, environmental degradation, and economic exploitation of the region by the Nigerian government and multinational oil corporations. These groups, such as the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND), have carried out acts of sabotage, kidnapping, and attacks on oil infrastructure, aiming to disrupt oil production and demand justice for the local population. Environmental degradation is another pressing issue in the Niger Delta. Decades of oil exploration, production, and spills have resulted in significant pollution of the region's waterways, farmlands, and forests. Efforts to address these issues have been made over the years through government policies, community development programs, and corporate social responsibility initiatives. However, progress has been slow and often marred by corruption, lack of accountability, and ineffective implementation. Helon Habila set out to explore the issue of Insurgency and environmental degradation in his Novel, *Oil on water*. The novel is set in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria, Port Harcourt precisely.

### **2.1 Kidnapping**

Kidnapping is a pertinent phenomenon in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. This is as a result of the struggles of the militant groups in the region to siphon money from the federal government and the oil companies leveraging on the oil discovered in the region. These militants tend to paint a picture that they are fighting for the Niger Delta people, and they justify their sinister acts saying they are simply taking back what is rightly theirs by kidnapping expatriates from oversea that works in Nigeria oil companies and demand huge amount of money as ransom for their release. Militancy is indeed not new in the region. The militant in the region are seen as defenders of the system. The youth in this region have turned militants because they want to

draw attention to their bastardized environment. This militancy can be likened to guerrilla fighters. In Habila's *Oil on Water*, the militant groups include: the Black Belt of Justice, the Free Delta Army, the AK – 47 Freedom Fighters, among others. These groups comprise youth, school dropouts, and criminals like Professor, a militant kingpin. In the novel, the self – styled Professor (Ani Willson) was a backstreet thug, jailbird, party thug, and killer, turned militant/kidnapper. Some militant groups operate as criminals, kidnapping and raising money from oil companies and collecting ransom from kidnapped hostages, rapping, killing and looting. The Professor's group is orderly. He tells Rufus:

*“... I am aware that out there, they are criminal elements, looting and killing under the guise of freedom fighting but we are different. Those kind of rebels, they are our enemies. That is why I am letting you go so that you can write the truth...”*(*Oil on Water* 209)

The issue of kidnapping is a central theme in the novel. The plot revolves around a search for a kidnapped woman, Isabel Floode, and the novel explores the motivations and consequences of kidnapping in the context of the oil industry. Habila furnishes the novel with a lavish use of flashbacks, as the novel recalls incidents preceding the present actions to as to make the readers relate with the current situation.

Habila uses the character of Rufus to takes us through his journey, using the flashback narrative technique to relate the present situation he is cut up in. Though as a reader, if care is not taken, you might get lost on what are present and past events. The use of first-person point of view such as “I and We” used by him tells us the whole narration is from his view. We are able to understand each characters emotions, hidden expressions, decisions from how and what he tells us in the book. One of the key uses of flashback in the novel is to provide context and background information about the characters. For example, we get several flashbacks throughout the novel that help us understand Rufus' past and how it shaped him into the man he is today. Another example is when we get a flashback to Zaq's time as a child, which helps us understand his motivations and the way he approaches the kidnapping case. Flashbacks are an important part of the novel's structure and help to create a richer, more complex story.

In *Oil on Water*, the primary focus revolves around the kidnap of Mrs. Isabel Floode, the foreign wife of a British Petroleum engineer. Habila establishes a connection between the

prevalence of kidnapping and various socio-economic factors such as the scarcity of decent employment opportunities, poverty, disillusionment, and corruption. Salomon, Mrs. Floode's university-educated driver, experiences a betrayal when his employer impregnates his girlfriend, Koko. This situation leads Salomon, in collaboration with Jamabo, a police officer, and Bassey, his neighbor, to devise a kidnapping scheme as a means to improve their financial circumstances. Jamabo draws a comparison between kidnapping and ransom, as he contemplates the rationale behind their actions. The novel explores the motivations and consequences of kidnapping in the context of the oil industry. In the novel, kidnapping is shown to be driven by a variety of factors. For some, it is a means of resisting the oil industry and expressing their anger and frustration with the way the industry has exploited and polluted the region. For others, it is a way to make money or gain power. And for some, it is simply a desperate act, driven by poverty and a lack of other opportunities. The novel also explores the effects of kidnapping on the victims, their families, and the kidnapers themselves. One of the main effects of Isabel's kidnapping is the emotional toll it takes on her and her family. Isabel's husband, David, is left to deal with the pain of not knowing what has happened to his wife. The novel delves into David's psychological state and how the uncertainty and anxiety of the situation affect him. Meanwhile, Isabel is also shown to be deeply traumatized by her experience. She is held captive for a long time and is subjected to physical and emotional abuse. As the novel goes on, we see how the experience of kidnapping changes her as a person. Isabel Floode is the woman who is kidnapped in the novel. Her kidnapping is a catalyst for the novel's plot, and it raises many questions about the nature of violence and exploitation in the Niger Delta region. The novel suggests that Isabel's kidnapping is not just an isolated incident, but a symptom of the deeper problems of the oil industry. As the novel progresses, we see how the kidnapping affects Isabel, her family, and the people who are involved in the search for her. The novel also raises questions about the nature of power, violence, and justice. The story of Isabel's kidnapping is used as a lens through which to examine the larger issues of the Niger Delta region.

Habila also recollects additional instances of kidnapping in the novel, including the abduction of a 70-year-old woman and a 3-year-old girl. These cases highlight the indiscriminate nature of kidnapping in the region, where both vulnerable individuals and innocent children become victims of such crimes. Furthermore, there is a mention of an incident involving Monday, one of the militants, who attempted to make money quickly by kidnapping an albino. However,

he faced severe consequences from his leader as a result of this action, indicating the complexities and dangers associated with kidnapping even within the ranks of the militants themselves. Additionally, the novel touches on the abduction of a foreign family, further exemplifying the indiscriminate targets of kidnappers. The family's company responded to the kidnapping by paying a ransom of "three million naira for them" (*Oil on water*, 202)

## **2.2 Unemployment**

While unemployment is not a central plot element in Helon Habila's *Oil on Water*, it is indirectly addressed and serves as a backdrop to the story. The novel primarily focuses on the environmental and social impact of the oil industry in the Niger Delta region, but unemployment is one of the consequences faced by the local population due to the industry's practices. Throughout the narrative, Habila paints a picture of a region where the oil industry has disrupted traditional livelihoods and contributed to economic instability. The extraction and exploitation of oil resources have led to environmental degradation, displacement of communities, and a loss of traditional occupations such as fishing and farming. As a result, many individuals in the Niger Delta have been left unemployed or struggling to make a living. Although the novel does not delve deeply into individual stories of unemployment, it captures the broader socioeconomic struggles faced by the local population. The presence of armed militants, rebels, and criminal activities within the narrative can be seen as a consequence of unemployment and the frustrations it engenders. The lack of employment opportunities creates a breeding ground for dissatisfaction and a sense of hopelessness, leading some individuals to resort to extreme measures.

By portraying the dire circumstances faced by the people in the Niger Delta, Habila indirectly highlights the devastating impact of unemployment caused by the oil industry. It underscores the wider theme of social and economic injustice resulting from the exploitation of natural resources and the biased distribution of wealth and power. While *Oil on Water* primarily focuses on the environmental and political aspects of the oil industry, it provides a glimpse into the socioeconomic consequences faced by the local communities, including the issue of unemployment.

## **2.3 Environmental Degradation**

Environmental degradation is the process by which the environment is damaged or destroyed. This can be caused by natural factors like climate change, but it is often the result of human activity, such as pollution or deforestation. In Habila's *Oil on water* environmental degradation is a major theme, as it is a direct result of the oil industry's operations in the Niger Delta region. The story explores the effects of this degradation on both the natural environment and the people who live there. Environmental degradation is a central theme in Habila's *Oil on water*. The novel vividly portrays the devastating impact of the oil industry on the Niger Delta region's ecosystem and highlights the consequences faced by the local communities. Habila's narrative explores the environmental degradation caused by oil extraction and pollution. The region's once undefiled waterways and beautiful vegetation have been contaminated by oil spills, leading to the destruction of wildlife habitats and the loss of biodiversity. The novel describes scenes of oil-soaked rivers, dead fish, and barren landscapes, reflecting the ecological devastation wrought by the industry.

Habila's *Oil on water* vividly describes the environmental degradation caused by oil pollution in the Niger Delta region. The protagonist, who is visiting a village in the Delta, comes across a communal well that should provide clean water for the community. However, the well is contaminated with a foul smell, likely emanating from a decomposing organic material, possibly a human body, mixed with the unmistakable stench of oil:

*"In the village centre, we found the communal well. Eager for a drink, I bent under the wet, mossy pivoted beam and peered into the well's blackness, but a rank smell wafted from its hot depth and slapped my face. I reeled away, my head aching from the encounter. Something organic, perhaps human, lay dead and decomposing down there, its stench mixed with that unmistakable smell of oil. At the other end of the village, we headed towards the big river where we had left our boat. The patch of grass growing by the water was suffocated by a film of oil, each blade covered with blotches like the liver spots on a smoker's hand." (Oil on Water 9)*

This passage reflects the harsh reality of how oil spills and pollution have severely impacted the local communities in the Niger Delta. It highlights the devastating consequences of oil extraction and the contamination of natural resources like water and land, resulting in health hazards and loss of livelihoods for the people living in the region. The vivid descriptions evoke a sense of despair and illustrate the harshness of the environment the characters are navigating

while on their assignment to cover the kidnapped girl's story and the activities of the militant group in the Delta.

*"Soon we were in a dense mangrove; the water underneath us turned foul and sulfurous; insects rose from the surface in swarms to settle in a mobile cloud above us, biting our arms and faces and ears.... The atmosphere grew heavily with suspended stench of dead matter. We followed a bend in the river and in front of us we saw dead birds draped over tree branches, their outstretched wings black and slick with oil; dead fish bobbed white-bellied between tree roots" (Oil on Water, 8).*

The provided quote from *Oil on Water* effectively captures the issue of environmental degradation in the novel. It vividly portrays the devastating consequences of oil pollution on the natural ecosystem of the Niger Delta, emphasizing the ecological damage caused by oil extraction and spills in the region. The description of the water as foul and sulfurous indicates severe pollution. The presence of harmful substances in the water not only makes it undrinkable but also adversely affects the entire aquatic life in the area. The presence of swarms of insects and a suspended stench of dead matter in the atmosphere suggests the widespread contamination caused by oil pollution. Oil spills and the decomposition of dead organisms contribute to the toxic environment, harming both wildlife and human populations in the area. The image of dead birds with outstretched wings black and slick with oil illustrates how the oil pollution directly affects flying creatures. Birds often get coated in oil when they come into contact with polluted water, rendering them unable to fly and ultimately leading to their death. The sight of dead fish with white bellies floating among the tree roots highlights the impact of oil pollution on aquatic life. The oil-coated water suffocates fish and disrupts their natural habitats, leading to mass die-offs and a decline in fish populations.

The author also addresses the issue of gas flaring, a common practice in the region. Gas flaring releases toxic pollutants into the air, contributing to air pollution, respiratory problems, and the destruction of crops and farmland. Habila vividly depicts the choking smoke, the foul odour, and the health consequences suffered by the local population as a result of this practice. Moreover, the novel explores the social and cultural impact of environmental degradation. Displaced communities, forced to leave their ancestral lands due to oil spills or other industrial activities, suffer from the loss of their connection to the environment and the disruption of their

traditional ways of life. The destruction of fishing and farming livelihoods increases poverty and social unrest. Through the characters' experiences and interactions, Habila highlights the urgent need for environmental justice and accountability. He exposes the complicity of both the oil companies and the government in perpetuating environmental degradation for economic gains. The novel also delves into the struggles faced by activists and local communities as they resist the destruction and fight for their rights. Overall, *Oil on Water* serves as a powerful critique of the oil industry's environmental impact. It raises awareness about the devastating consequences of unchecked resource extraction and the urgent need for sustainable practices, environmental protection, and the recognition of the rights of affected communities.

## **2.4 Conclusion**

In this chapter of this essay, we embarked on an in-depth analysis of three critical aspects in Habila's novel *Oil on Water*: insurgency, environmental degradation, and narrative techniques. Through this exploration, we gained valuable insights into the complex interplay of these themes, shedding light on the social, political, and environmental challenges faced by the Niger Delta region. The novel's depiction of insurgency is both compelling and harrowing. We witnessed the profound impact of armed conflict on the lives of the inhabitants of the Niger Delta, as militant groups clashed with government forces and oil companies. The author skillfully painted a vivid picture of the brutal realities faced by the local communities, caught in the crossfire of a conflict driven by resource exploitation and political power struggles. Through the characters of Rufus and Zaq, we were confronted with the moral dilemmas and ethical ambiguities that arise in situations of war and upheaval. Moreover, *Oil on Water* masterfully explores the theme of environmental degradation caused by oil extraction activities in the Niger Delta. The author presents a haunting portrayal of the region's once natural ecosystems transformed into polluted wastelands. The devastating consequences of oil spills, gas flaring, and deforestation were vividly depicted, reminding us of the profound ecological toll of unchecked resource extraction. This ecological degradation further aggravates the suffering of the local communities, who depend on the natural resources for their livelihoods.

In addition to the substantive themes of insurgency and environmental degradation, Habila's narrative techniques add a layer of complexity to the storytelling. The use of multiple perspectives, including that of a journalist and a hostage, allows readers to experience the events

from different angles, fostering a deeper understanding of the characters' motivations and struggles. The non-linear narrative structure, with flashbacks and foreshadowing, engages readers in an interesting puzzle, inviting us to connect the narrative dots and discover the underlying truths hidden within the story's fabric. This chapter has revealed *Oil on Water* to be a thought-provoking novel. By seamlessly intertwining themes of insurgency, environmental degradation, and narrative techniques, Habila crafts a compelling narrative that impact readers on multiple levels. The novel serves as a powerful call for environmental awareness and social justice, urging us to confront the real-world issues of conflict and ecological devastation that persist in our global society.

## **CHAPTER THREE: INSURGENCY, ENVIRONMENTAL DEGRADATION AND NARRATIVE TECHNIQUE IN CHIMEKA GARRICKS' *TOMORROW DIED YESTERDAY***

### **3.1 Environmental Degradation**

The post-colonial Nigerian society has undergone significant changes and faces numerous challenges, with ecological issues being a central focus. While the discovery of oil in Nigeria and subsequent oil exploration, trade, and activities have brought wealth to the country, it has also become a curse for the region responsible for generating this wealth. Undoubtedly, the Niger Delta has borne the brunt of its own blessings, suffering from vandalism, environmental degradation, pollution, and exploitation due to oil exploration activities. The environmental degradation experienced in the Niger Delta has given rise to ecological problems such as despoliation, climate change, and global warming, among others. Consequently, these issues have led to both positive and negative agitations in the Niger Delta. The Niger Delta, a region blessed with abundant natural resources such as oil and gas, fertile land, rich forests, and diverse water systems teeming with various fish species, boasts a continuous tropical forest and a picturesque riverine environment. Regrettably, this very region, responsible for a significant portion of Nigeria's export earnings, especially from crude oil sales, is suffering from severe neglect on the part of the government and oil corporations. Environmental degradation is a

prominent theme in *Tomorrow Died Yesterday*. The novel portrays the devastating impact of the oil industry on the Niger-Delta region of Nigeria, Asiamama precisely, where the story is set. The region's rich natural resources have attracted foreign oil companies, leading to the exploitation of the land and its people, resulting in severe environmental damage. The environmental degradation is explored from various dimensions which are discussed below.

**Oil Spills and Pollution:** In Garricks' *Tomorrow Died Yesterday*, the issue of oil spills plays a significant role in highlighting the environmental degradation caused by the oil industry in the Niger-Delta region of Nigeria. An oil spill refers to the accidental or intentional release of crude oil or petroleum products into the environment, typically occurring in marine or terrestrial ecosystems. This results in oil pollution, which is the contamination of land, water bodies, and the surrounding environment due to the presence of oil substances. Oil spills can have devastating consequences for the environment, wildlife, and the livelihoods of local communities.

The novel highlights the frequent oil spills that occur in the Niger-Delta due to aging infrastructure, lack of maintenance, and sabotage. These spills contaminate water sources, farmlands, and fishing areas, causing health problems for the local communities and severely disrupting their traditional livelihoods. Oil pollution is a recurring disaster that continues to affect the environment and the people living in the region. Asiamama where the novel is set is devastated to the extent that her people are rendered jobless. Fishermen are chased out of the river as the fishes turn up dead and farmers cannot farm because the farms are soaked in oil spills, which the oil company – Imperial Oil – does not clean. Doye narrates:

*"This year there was also something that happened up on Asiamama River. We woke up one morning to see oil, thick and black, floating on top of the brown water of the river. The river became sluggish in its flow, as the oil gradually choked its life away. After school, I sat on the banks and watched dead fish, turned on their sides, slowly drift by. The river stank. papa called it an oil spill." (Tomorrow Died Yesterday, 97)*

The passage vividly depicts the horrifying consequences of environmental degradation in Asiamama, with the community suffering immensely due to the actions of the Imperial Oil company. The description paints a distressing picture of how Asiamama is metaphorically “raped”, as the land is exploited and contaminated to the point where its people are left jobless and struggling to sustain their livelihoods. The devastation caused by oil spills is evident in the

Asiama River, with thick and black oil floating on the brown water, choking its flow and suffocating its life. The river becomes a graveyard for dead fish, their lifeless bodies drifting by as a result of the pollution. The once vibrant and abundant fishing grounds are now deserted, as the fishermen are forced out due to the contamination of the water and the subsequent death of the fish.

Additionally, the farms in Asiama have been ruined by oil spills, rendering farmers unable to cultivate their land. The soil is soaked in oil, making it unsuitable for agriculture and destroying a vital source of income for the community. Despite the evident environmental catastrophe, the Imperial Oil company neglects its responsibility to clean up the mess it has caused, further worsening the situation. The Niger Delta people are left with no choice but to endure this nightmarish environment as their home and way of life. They face the dire consequences of the oil industry's activities, leading to unemployment, loss of livelihoods, and a devastated ecosystem. The passage serves as a constant reminder of the devastating impact of environmental degradation on local communities and highlights the urgent need for responsible and sustainable practices in the oil industry to protect the environment and the well-being of the people living in the region.

**Gas Flaring:** Gas flaring is another significant environmental issue depicted in *Tomorrow Died Yesterday*. It is a practice commonly associated with the oil industry, where natural gas produced during oil extraction is burned off into the atmosphere rather than being captured and utilized. Gas flaring is a widespread problem in many oil-producing regions worldwide, including the Niger-Delta region of Nigeria. Gas flaring is the burning of natural gas during oil extraction. Gas flaring releases harmful gases and toxic pollutants, contributing to air pollution and climate change. The constant flaring in the Niger-Delta has adverse effects on the health of the communities and exacerbates global environmental problems.

Asiama has been polluted to the point of being unrecognizable. Gas flaring and oil spills have become daily occurrences, deeply affecting the lives of its inhabitants. Even the young boys, Doye, Kaniye, Amaibi, and Tubo, are aware of the nightmarish reality in their land, describing it as "hellfire."

*"Tubo expresses his distress emphatically, pointing to the distant fire that rages relentlessly, emitting black smoke, and originating from what appears to be a vertical pipe. The fire is situated far away, somewhere along the Asiama River, but its visibility extends throughout Asiama Island" (Tomorrow Died Yesterday, 80)*

The little boys may not fully comprehend the cause of this strange phenomenon, but they are acutely aware of its intensity. The heat it generates is so intense that they dare not approach it. Animals are perishing as a consequence, and the island itself is undergoing a slow loss, succumbing to the destructive impact of the fire. Among the boys, Amaibi is the one who recognizes the situation, explaining to his friends that it is called a "gas flare" – an unwelcome gift from the Imperial Oil company to the people of Asiama. The passage paints a vivid and distressing picture of the environmental degradation plaguing Asiama, with gas flaring being a significant contributor to the devastation faced by the community. The effects of the gas flares, coupled with oil spills, have led to a nightmarish existence for the inhabitants of the island, threatening their health, livelihoods, and natural surroundings.

### **3.2 Kidnapping**

The novel is set in the Niger-Delta region of Nigeria, which is historically significant as it is the heart of Nigeria's oil production. The discovery of oil in the region in the 1950s brought immense wealth to the country, but it also led to various challenges, including environmental degradation, economic disparity, and conflicts over resource control. The Niger-Delta has experienced prolonged conflict due to tensions between foreign oil companies and ethnic minority groups residing in the area. As depicted in the novel, local communities have often felt marginalized and exploited, leading to protests, militancy, and acts of sabotage against oil installations. The novel's focus on kidnapping foreign oil workers is historically relevant. In the early 2000s, there were several cases of militant groups kidnapping foreign workers in the Niger-Delta to draw attention to their grievances and demand changes in the region's oil policies. The rise of militant groups in the Niger-Delta during the 1990s and 2000s is a significant aspect of the novel's context. These groups, often referred to as "militants," resorted to armed resistance to fight for the rights and betterment of their communities in the face of perceived exploitation by oil companies and the Nigerian government. The novel portrays the socio-economic impact of oil exploitation on the lives of everyday Nigerians in the region. The vast oil wealth has not

necessarily translated into improved living conditions for the local population, leading to disillusionment, frustration, and resistance.

The theme of kidnapping plays a central role in *Tomorrow Died Yesterday*. The novel opens with the Kidnap of Manning Brian, a white expatriate in Nigeria working for imperial oil.

*“We planned to kidnap the white man at about 11:27 a.m. on a drizzling Friday morning in August. We were on one of the nameless, winding creeks that flowed from the Asiamas River. The white man was on a boat, a 20-seater speed boat owned by the company he worked for, Imperial oil.” (Tomorrow Died Yesterday, 1)*

The opening lines of the novel *Tomorrow Died Yesterday* immediately set the stage for the intense and suspenseful plot centered around the kidnapping of a foreign oil worker. The novel's opening lines establish a specific time and location for the planned kidnapping - a drizzling Friday morning in August on a winding creek connected to the Asiamas River. This vivid description helps immerse the reader in the atmosphere of the Niger-Delta region and sets the mood for the events about to unfold. The reference to the intended victim as "the white man" hints at the racial dynamics involved in the story. The presence of foreign oil workers in the Niger-Delta region adds an element of cultural and social contrast, and it may play a role in the motivations behind the kidnapping. The victim is an employee of Imperial Oil, the oil company at the center of the story. This detail underscores the tensions between foreign oil companies and the local population in the Niger-Delta, who feel exploited or neglected by such corporations. The mention of precise timing (11:27 a.m.) indicates a well-thought-out plan, and it suggests that the characters involved are organized and methodical in their approach to the kidnapping. The use of "we" in the opening lines implies that the narration is likely from the perspective of one of the characters involved in the kidnapping. This intimate viewpoint can offer readers insight into the motivations, emotions, and dilemmas faced by those planning and executing the abduction. The setup of a kidnapping operation from the very beginning creates immediate tension and suspense for the reader. The anticipation of the events that follow keeps the audience engaged and curious to learn more about the characters' actions and their consequences.

*“In the past three years, Doughboy has been credited with eleven kidnappings involving eighteen imperial oil expatriates staff.” (Tomorrow Died Yesterday, 17)*

The quoted passage from *Tomorrow Died Yesterday* provides a glimpse into the character of Doye, the leader of the Asiamas Freedom Army, and his involvement in a series of kidnappings targeting expatriate staff of Imperial Oil. Although the story starts with the kidnap of Manning, Garricks uses the flashback narrative device to move backward in time to help the readers understand the actions of certain characters. Garricks employed the first person point of view using five characters which are Doye Koko, Tubo, Amaibi, Deola and Kaniye as narrators in the novel to enable readers catch a glimpse of the thought process of every significant characters in the novel. The passage introduces Doye, also known as Doughboy, as a central character in the novel. It reveals that he has been involved in multiple kidnappings over the past three years. With the use of flashbacks, Garricks is able to provide the reader with the background story of Doughboy and how he turned out to be leader of the Asiamas Freedom Army. We get to know that Doye used to be an intelligent young boy with dreams, but the government failed him because he could not get help, and his elder brother, Soboye, also died as a result of gas flaring. As the novel progresses, we see that his dad was killed by the military during the 1997 crisis that happened in Asiamas. The government is responsible for his father's death as a result of their protest against the government's unwillingness to address issues caused by oil spill. This prompts him to give up on his dreams and turn a kidnapper. Doughboy takes on a prominent role in the militant activities targeting foreign oil workers in the Niger Delta region. The mention of eleven kidnappings involving eighteen expatriate staff members of Imperial Oil points to the severity of the conflict in the region and highlights the escalating nature of the situation. It indicates that militancy and kidnappings have become significant challenges in the Niger Delta during this period. The repeated abductions of their expatriate staff have likely caused major disruptions to Imperial Oil's operations and personnel management. The company may have faced difficulties in retaining skilled workers or finding individuals willing to work in the region due to security concerns. By being credited with these kidnappings, Doughboy is portrayed as a prominent figure within the militant groups operating in the region. This raises questions about his motivations, leadership, and the influence he holds over other members of the group. The continuous targeting of expatriate staff members further aggravate tensions between the oil companies and the local communities. The situation deepens the divide between the Niger Delta's ethnic minority groups and the foreign corporations exploiting the region's resources. The passage hints at the potential consequences of escalating violence in the region. Besides the

direct impact on the kidnapped expatriates, the security situation could worsen, leading to more significant military presence, human rights abuses, and further instability. The passage highlights the ongoing conflict between foreign oil companies and the Niger Delta's ethnic minority groups, which is a recurring theme in the novel. This conflict is rooted in issues of resource exploitation, economic disparities, and perceived injustice. Situational irony is a resilient narrative device explored by Garrick in *Tomorrow Died Yesterday*. The irony is tied around the death of Doye. Doye being the leader of the most feared militant group in Asiamma dies a shameful death. His second-in-command, Kabongo, used Doye's girlfriend, Lolia, to get him down. Lolia took his gun away after having sex with him and Doye could not defend himself. It turns out to be a very shameful death because Doye is a strong and fierce man, he dies naked, killed by his second-in-command with the help of his girlfriend.

*"We've kidnapped and hounded expatriates so much that they are beginning to flee the Niger Delta. We kidnap the ones who build roads and treat our children when they are sick"*  
(*Tomorrow Died Yesterday*, 599)

The quoted passage from *Tomorrow Died Yesterday* highlights the consequences of the rampant kidnappings and violence perpetrated against expatriates in the Niger Delta region. The passage mentions that expatriates, who are foreign workers often hired by companies in the region, are becoming targets of kidnappings. The frequency and intensity of such attacks have reached a point where these expatriates are no longer safe, leading to a significant concern for their safety and well-being. The kidnappings are not limited to expatriates working for oil companies; they also extend to those who provide essential services to the local communities. The mention of expatriates building roads and treating children when they are sick implies that the abductions are not only affecting the companies' operations but also crucial infrastructure development and access to healthcare. The consistent kidnapping and hounding of expatriates contribute to a climate of fear and insecurity in the Niger Delta. The departure of expatriates fleeing the region due to safety concerns can have adverse effects on local development projects and access to specialized skills and medical expertise. The situation described in the passage suggests that the kidnappings have far-reaching consequences on the region's socio-economic landscape. The departure of expatriates may result in project delays, hamper economic growth, and negatively impact the quality of healthcare services available to the local population. The

quote implies that the kidnappings have escalated to a point where they are no longer confined to specific targets but have spread to anyone perceived as an outsider or associated with external companies. This escalation can perpetuate a cycle of violence and further worsen the existing conflicts in the region. The passage raises ethical questions about the use of violence, including kidnappings, as a means of addressing grievances or seeking justice. It prompts readers to reflect on the moral implications of such actions and the potential consequences they bring to both the victims and the perpetrators.

Garricks employ flashbacks as a narrative technique to capture past events to make readers understand certain events in the novel. Garricks further uses flashback to take the readers through the backgrounds of the four major characters in the novel to make the readers understand the reaction of every of the characters better. Garricks employed the first person point of view through the characters of Doye (Doughboy), Kaniye, Tubo, Amaibi and Deola. Throughout the novel, kidnapping serves as a catalyst for various events, shaping the lives of the characters and reflecting the broader context of conflict and exploitation in the Niger-Delta region. The novel highlights the ongoing conflict between foreign oil companies and ethnic minority groups in the Niger-Delta. The kidnapping of a foreign oil worker by Doughboy (Doye) at the beginning of the story exemplifies the tensions and hostilities that exist between the local population and the oil companies they perceive as exploiters. This act sets off a chain of events that deepens the rift between the communities and the oil industry.

The kidnapping gone wrong sets in motion a series of unfortunate events. The consequences of this action not only impact the kidnapped worker but also reverberate throughout the lives of the four friends. As they grapple with the fallout, it becomes evident that kidnapping is a dangerous and morally complex act, leading to loss, betrayal, and heartache. Doye's involvement in militant oil groups reflects the desperate measures some individuals resort to in response to the perceived injustices caused by oil companies. The act of kidnapping foreign oil workers is an act of resistance, an attempt to disrupt the exploitative practices and demand attention to their grievances. The kidnapping incident becomes a test of the friends' loyalty to one another. As they navigate the complexities of the situation, their bonds are put to the test. The theme of kidnapping intertwines with themes of friendship, trust, and how far one would go for their friends. The theme of kidnapping sheds light on broader societal issues within the Niger-

Delta region. It exposes the impacts of oil-related conflicts on ordinary people's lives, the desperation of some individuals driven to extreme measures, and the difficult choices people face in the face of adversity. The novel's exploration of kidnapping is deeply rooted in the historical and cultural context of the Niger-Delta region. Kidnapping of foreign oil workers was a real phenomenon in the region due to the volatile relationship between oil companies and local communities. In *Tomorrow Died Yesterday*, the theme of kidnapping serves as a lens through which the author explores complex social, economic, and political issues surrounding the oil industry in Nigeria. It brings to the forefront the consequences of exploitation, the price of resistance, and the intricate web of relationships that define the lives of the characters. Through this theme, the novel provides a poignant commentary on the human cost of the conflicts in the Niger-Delta region.

### **3.3 Corruption**

Corruption is a prevalent theme in many societies, and in the context of this story set in Nigeria's Niger-Delta region, it plays a significant role. The novel explores how corrupt politicians, government and oil companies exploit the oil resources in the Niger-Delta region for their own gains, rather than using them for the benefit of the local communities or the country as a whole. Politicians may be involved in embezzlement, bribery, and other forms of corruption to enrich themselves at the expense of the people they are supposed to represent. The first portrayal can be seen in form of tyranny and oppression as Amaibi describes his mode of arrest to Kanye. Amaibi says:

*"They came into my house very early one morning, almost a squadron of them. They smashed down my door, commando-style. They arrested me In bed. I didn't resist then. They shot me. I still don't know why (Tomorrow Died Yesterday, 55)"*

The oppressive nature of the government is vividly evident in the situation described above. Amaibi, a principled man and an activist, vehemently opposed the government's control over the oil companies operating in Asiamama. Instead of prioritizing the well-being of the town's residents, the government was solely focused on the revenues generated by these oil companies. As a result, they neglected the essential needs of the oil town, such as providing basic amenities

and developing necessary infrastructure. The oil companies, on the other hand, demonstrated a blatant disregard for environmental concerns and proper waste disposal practices. Their irresponsible actions led to the pollution of the Asiam River and surrounding environment, causing significant harm to aquatic animals, which were crucial to the livelihoods of the town's predominantly fishing community. Amaibi valiantly challenged these injustices, understanding that the people of Asiam were at the mercy of the powerful oil companies. He took the government to court, seeking justice with the assistance of his friend, Barrister Kaniye Rufus. Additionally, he organized rallies to draw attention to the government's negligence towards the Asiam community, further pressurizing the governing body. In an unfortunate twist of events, the government found an opportunity to target Amaibi by involving him as an intermediary between his childhood friend and militant leader, Doye Koko, and the Imperial Oil Company.

Unaware that the kidnapped hostage was already deceased, Amaibi agreed to deliver a ransom to Juju Island in exchange for the Imperial Oil staff manager. The government used Amaibi's selfless actions against him, collaborating with Wali, the tyrannical chief security of the Imperial Oil Company, to build a case that accused him of aligning with militants. This became a means for the government to oppress and dehumanize Amaibi, who had been a consistent challenger of their actions. Amaibi's words to Kaniye during his imprisonment vividly conveyed the harsh reality of his life and the precarious situation he found himself in. His unwavering commitment to justice and his refusal to back down in the face of adversity illustrated the strength and courage of this remarkable individual.

Amaibi says:

*"No leader from the Niger-Delta has gone to court with the government against him, and came out a free man, I won't be the first. I'm certain of that, twenty senior advocates can't save me. I'm going down, Kaniye, no matter who I get to defend me. In the circumstances, I'd prefer to go down fighting . . . (Tomorrow Died Yesterday, 36)."*

Indeed, Amaibi emerges as one of those resolute voices in society who refuse to be silenced by the oppressive and corrupt government, even in the face of grave danger, potentially risking his life for the pursuit of justice. His unwavering determination to challenge the system and advocate for the rights of his community showcases his bravery and commitment to standing

up against tyranny. Even Sir James Rufus, a senior advocate and Kaniye's father, recognizes the Corrupt nature of the government. When Kaniye seeks his advice to assist in Amaibi's trial, Sir James candidly expresses his belief in the government's unjust and predetermined intentions. He acknowledges that the government views Amaibi as a threat and is determined to remove him from their path, regardless of the truth or the legal process. His warning further highlights the depth of corruption and manipulation within the government's actions. Both Amaibi and Sir James represent courageous individuals who challenge the oppressive regime, with Amaibi fighting from the grassroots level as an activist and Sir James using his legal expertise to reveal the darker side of the government. Their combined efforts shine a light on the unjust practices within the system and demonstrate the importance of standing up for truth and justice, even in the face of overwhelming odds. Sir James had this to say:

*"The government wants Amaibi out of the way. In this country, the government is the mafia. Everything has already been arranged. The trial will be merely to rubber stamp his predetermined conviction. And the rest, as they say, will be history." (Tomorrow Died Yesterday, 69)*

Garricks emphasizes the theme of corruption in his author's note and effectively uses the character Chief Dumo Ikaki to satirize selfish politicians present in society and to showcase the corrupt nature of the human mind. Chief Dumo Ikaki, a member of the Asiamia Council of Chiefs and the special adviser to the governor on special duties, is depicted as a figure who seeks to maintain control and power. One would expect that his influential position within the government could bring about much-needed infrastructural development in the Asiamia Community. However, Dumo's true intentions are exposed as he is primarily focused on enriching himself further. He plays a pivotal role in orchestrating the arrest of Amaibi because Amaibi's involvement in the ransom delivery interferes with the percentage he and the Imperial Oil staff executives were supposed to receive from the money. This illustrates Dumo's tyrannical and oppressive nature, willing to take extreme measures to protect his own interests. Moreover, Garricks skillfully portrays Chief Dumo Ikaki's company, Tortoise Shell, securing a contract from the Imperial Oil Company to provide electricity to the Asiamia Community. Instead of fulfilling the responsibilities of the contract and bringing much-needed power to the community, Chief Dumo's actions reveal his corrupt tendencies. His priority remains focused on personal

gain rather than genuinely serving the needs of the people in Asiamama. Through the character of Chief Dumo Ikaki, Chimeka Garricks effectively highlights the darker side of society, where individuals in positions of power prioritize their own wealth and well-being over the betterment of the communities they are meant to serve. This serves as a powerful commentary on the pervasive corruption that exists in some areas of society, contributing to the challenges faced by the Niger-Delta region. He used the contract as an avenue for money laundering and oppression. This can be seen in the words of Tubo, an Imperial Oil staff:

*"Tortoise Shell bought a second-hand contraption from one Asian country. It powered parts of Asiamama town for all of twenty-three days before falling apart. I say parts of Asiamama town because the whole town was never completely wired. Coincidentally, it was the houses of Chief Ikaki's enemies that were not wired (Tomorrow Died Yesterday, 72)."*

Cornel O. U further state that "Chief Ikaki, being the head of the Asiamama Council of Chiefs, intimidated the chiefs with his governmental position and runs the chiefs' council with an iron fist. He is also the Amayanabo's puppet-master because he compels the Amayanabo to do whatever he says. He even banished Sir James and his loyalists from Asiamama because they challenged his authority."

The novel *Tomorrow Died Yesterday* delves into the complex and multi-faceted issue of corruption in the context of Nigeria's oil industry. It likely portrays corruption as a pervasive force that impacts various aspects of society, from politics to business and even the lives of ordinary people. The intertwining of corruption with other themes, such as militancy and the struggle for justice, add depth to the narrative and provide a critical commentary on the challenges faced by the Niger-Delta region and its people.

### **3.4 Conclusion**

In this chapter, we delved into the intricate themes of insurgency, environmental degradation, narrative techniques, and corruption in Chimeka Garricks' novel *Tomorrow Died Yesterday*. The story's setting in the Niger Delta region serves as a poignant backdrop for the exploration of these interwoven issues, shedding light on the harsh realities faced by the inhabitants of this oil-rich but troubled region. The theme of insurgency takes center stage in the novel, as we witness the profound impact of armed conflict on the lives of the characters and the

communities they represent. The portrayal of rebel groups and their grievances against the government and oil corporations adds depth to the narrative, exposing the complexities of the region's history and political dynamics. Garricks adeptly captures the despair, fear, and resilience of the local people amidst the chaos of insurgency, bringing to the fore the human cost of violence and the struggle for self-determination. Simultaneously, the novel presents a stark depiction of environmental degradation caused by oil extraction activities in the Niger Delta. The region's once-bountiful ecosystems are portrayed as desolate landscapes scarred by oil spills, gas flares, and deforestation. Garricks' vivid descriptions serve as a powerful indictment of the ecological toll of unchecked resource exploitation, emphasizing the urgent need for sustainable and responsible practices. The author's narrative techniques enrich the reading experience, immersing us in the lives of the characters and the events that unfold in the novel. The use of multiple perspectives and shifting timelines allows us to gain a comprehensive understanding of the story's intricate plot and the motivations driving each character's actions. The blending of personal stories with historical and political contexts creates a compelling narrative that captivates readers and prompts contemplation of the broader implications of the issues at hand.

Moreover, *Tomorrow Died Yesterday* sheds light on the pervasive issue of corruption that permeates various levels of society, including government and corporate entities. The novel exposes how corruption exacerbates the problems of insurgency and environmental degradation, perpetuating injustice and hindering meaningful progress towards resolving the region's challenges. The corrupt practices depicted in the novel underscore the need for transparency, accountability, and ethical governance to address the underlying issues plaguing the Niger Delta and other similar regions around the world. Chimeka Garricks' *Tomorrow Died Yesterday* stands as a powerful literary work that confronts the complex issues of insurgency, environmental degradation, narrative techniques, and corruption in the Niger Delta region. Through compelling storytelling and profound insights, the novel serves as a clarion call for social awareness, environmental stewardship, and the eradication of corruption to create a more just and sustainable future for all.

#### **CHAPTER FOUR: COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF HELON HABILA'S *OIL ON WATER* AND CHIMEKA GARRICKS' *TOMORROW DIED YESTERDAY***

#### **4.1 Similarities between Helon Habila's *Oil on Water* and Chimeka Garricks' *Tomorrow Died Yesterday*.**

##### **Common Settings**

The major similarity between *Oil on Water* and *Tomorrow Died Yesterday* is that both novels are set in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. This shared setting allows both authors, Helon Habila and Chimeka Garricks, to explore the complexities and challenges associated with the oil industry in the region and its impact on the lives of the people living there. In both novels, the Niger Delta serves as a crucial backdrop for the unfolding of events, highlighting the social, economic, and environmental issues that arise from oil exploitation. The setting provides a context for examining the conflicts, struggles, and experiences of the characters as they navigate the consequences of living in an area with significant oil resources. It is important to note that while the setting is a common factor, the narratives and specific themes explored in each novel may vary, offering unique perspectives on life and society in the Niger Delta region.

##### **Oil Related Conflicts**

Both novels revolve around conflicts that are directly or indirectly related to the oil industry in the Niger Delta region. In *Oil on Water*, the conflict is multifaceted and involves different parties with vested interests in the oil reserves. The Nigerian government, the military, and oil companies are pitted against militant groups fighting for the liberation of their people from the exploitation of the oil industry. This conflict creates a volatile and dangerous environment for the characters, as they navigate the dangerous waters of the Niger Delta in search of a kidnapped woman, caught amidst the battle for control over the oil resources. Similarly, in *Tomorrow Died Yesterday*, the conflict is sparked when a routine kidnapping of a foreign oil worker goes awry. This event sets off a chain of events that reunites four childhood friends, each representing different aspects of the oil industry and its impact on their lives and communities. The novel explores the repercussions of oil exploitation, including oil bunkering, oil militancy, corruption, and the struggles faced by everyday Nigerians in the Niger Delta region. Both novels use the backdrop of oil-related conflicts to shed light on the larger issues affecting the region, such as environmental degradation, socio-economic disparities, and the exploitation

of local communities. These conflicts serve as a driving force behind the character's motivations and actions, influencing the trajectory of the stories in both novels.

### **Impact on Local Communities**

Both novels explore the profound impact of the oil industry on the lives of the people residing in the Niger Delta region. In *Oil on Water*, the narrative follows the journey of two journalists who venture into the heart of the Niger Delta in search of a kidnapped woman. Along the way, they encounter impoverished communities trapped in the crossfire of the conflict between the government, oil companies, and militant forces. The novel highlights the devastating effects of the oil industry on these communities, where environmental degradation and violence are constant threats to their livelihoods and well-being. Similarly, *Tomorrow Died Yesterday* delves into the lives of four childhood friends who grew up in the Niger Delta region. The novel spans several decades, providing glimpses of each character's childhood and the events that shaped their lives. Through their stories, the novel explores how the presence of the oil industry has impacted the everyday lives of the characters and those around them. It delves into issues such as oil bunkering, corruption, and the struggles faced by ordinary Nigerians living in the Niger Delta region. Both novels shed light on the socio-economic and environmental challenges faced by the local communities in the Niger Delta due to oil exploitation. They portray the hardships, disparities, and complexities of life in a region that is both blessed and burdened by its rich oil reserves. The impact on local communities becomes a central theme in both stories, allowing readers to gain insight into the human cost of the oil industry's presence in the region.

### **Kidnapping**

Both novels involve significant plot points related to kidnapping. In *Oil on Water*, the central mission of the two journalists, Rufus and Zaq, is to find a kidnapped woman named Isabel Floode. Isabel has become a pawn in the ongoing conflict between the Nigerian government, oil companies, and militant groups in the Niger Delta region. Her kidnapping sets the stage for a dangerous journey for Rufus and Zaq as they venture deeper into the region to uncover the truth behind her abduction. In *Tomorrow Died Yesterday*, the novel's plot is triggered by a kidnapping gone wrong. Doughboy (Doye), one of the four childhood friends, kidnaps a foreign oil worker as part of a routine operation but things take a disastrous turn. This

event leads to a chain of events that reunites the four friends, and they become entangled in the aftermath of the kidnapping, with each facing their own set of challenges and dilemmas. Both novels utilize kidnapping as a catalyst for the main storyline, leading the characters on dangerous journeys that intertwine with the broader conflicts and themes present in the Niger Delta region. Kidnapping serves as a powerful narrative device to drive the plot forward, explore character motivations, and reveal the complexities of the oil-related conflicts affecting the lives of the characters and the communities around them.

#### **4.2 Differences between Helon Habila's *Oil on water* and Chimeka Garricks' *Tomorrow Died Yesterday***

##### **Narrative Structure:**

In *Oil on Water*, the narrative follows the journey of two journalists, Rufus and Zaq, in the present time as they search for the kidnapped woman, Isabel Floode, in the Niger Delta region. The story is primarily presented in a linear manner, focusing on the events unfolding during their dangerous expedition to find Isabel. The novel provides a more immediate and direct approach to the plot, highlighting the urgency and perilous nature of their mission. In contrast, *Tomorrow Died Yesterday* employs a more complex narrative structure. The novel spans three decades, shifting back and forth between different time periods. It begins in 2003/2004 when the kidnapping occurs, but it also delves into key moments in the childhoods of the four friends, Doughboy (Doye), Amaibi, Kaniye, and Tubo, during the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s. The narrative intricately weaves together past and present, creating a multi-layered storyline that provides insights into the characters' formative years, their friendship, and the events that have shaped their lives and perspectives. This approach allows readers to understand the characters' backgrounds and motivations more deeply, providing a richer and more comprehensive understanding of their actions and choices in the present-day events. The difference in narrative structure impacts the pacing and depth of the storytelling in each novel. *Oil on Water* offers a focused and immediate experience of the events surrounding the kidnapping, emphasizing the intensity of the conflict and the journalistic pursuit of truth. On the other hand, *Tomorrow Died Yesterday* employs a more reflective and introspective approach, offering a broader exploration of the characters' lives and the factors that have brought them to their present circumstances.

## **Main Characters:**

In *Oil on Water*, the central characters are two journalists, Rufus and Zaq. Rufus is a young journalist, while Zaq is an experienced and renowned reporter, serving as Rufus's idol. The novel primarily focuses on their perspective as they embark on the perilous journey to find the kidnapped woman, Isabel Floode. Their roles as journalists drive the plot forward, and they serve as the lens through which readers experience the events unfolding in the Niger Delta. Their mission to uncover the truth behind the kidnapping and their encounters with various influential figures in the conflict form the core of the narrative. On the other hand, *Tomorrow Died Yesterday* revolves around four childhood friends: Doughboy (Doye), Amaibi, Kaniye, and Tubo. Each character has a distinct role and background. Doughboy is the leader of a militant oil group involved in kidnapping foreign oil workers; Amaibi is a lecturer and activist; Kaniye is a lawyer who has not practiced law in years and owns a restaurant; and Tubo is the self-centered one who works for Imperial Oil, the oil company at the center of the story. The novel delves into the lives of each friend, exploring their personal struggles, aspirations, and how they have been affected by the presence of the oil industry in their lives. The story provides multiple perspectives and insights into the characters' experiences, motivations, and actions, creating a more multifaceted portrayal of life in the Niger Delta. The difference in main characters shapes the narrative focus and themes in each novel. *Oil on Water* centers on the journalistic journey and investigation led by Rufus and Zaq, emphasizing the pursuit of truth and the dangers faced by journalists reporting in conflict zones. In contrast, *Tomorrow Died Yesterday* offers a character-driven narrative, examining the complexities of friendship, individual struggles, and how the oil industry influences their choices and relationships.

## **Themes**

*Oil on Water* explores themes of survival, truth-seeking, journalistic integrity, and the quest for uncovering the mystery behind the kidnapping of Isabel Floode. The novel delves into the dangers and challenges faced by journalists as they navigate a volatile and violent environment in the Niger Delta region. The story highlights the importance of the press in shedding light on critical issues, such as the impact of the oil industry on local communities, and the pursuit of truth in the face of powerful interests. The themes of environmental degradation, conflict, and the human cost of the oil industry play significant roles in the narrative. *Tomorrow*

*Died Yesterday*, on the other hand, delves deeper into themes of friendship, personal struggles, and the challenges faced by ordinary Nigerians living in the Niger Delta region. The novel provides an intimate portrait of the four childhood friends and how their lives have been shaped by the presence of the oil industry. It explores the impact of oil bunkering, oil militancy, corruption, and the daily struggles of the people living in the region. The themes of friendship, loyalty, and the complexities of human relationships are central to the narrative, with each character facing their own dilemmas and choices that are influenced by their experiences in the Niger Delta. While both novels share the backdrop of the oil industry in the Niger Delta region, they approach the themes differently. *Oil on Water* focuses on the journalistic pursuit of truth and the broader consequences of the oil industry on society and the environment. In contrast, *Tomorrow Died Yesterday* takes a more personal and introspective approach, diving into the lives of the characters and how the oil industry has shaped their individual journeys.

### **Writing Style**

*Oil on Water* is written by Helon Habila, who is known for his lyrical and evocative writing style. His prose often delves into the emotional depths of the characters and vividly portrays the landscapes and settings of the Niger Delta. Habila's writing is rich with imagery and sensory details, allowing readers to immerse themselves in the complexities of the region and the characters' experiences. The novel is driven by the urgency of the journalists' mission, and Habila's writing effectively captures the tension, dangers, and moral dilemmas they face during their journey. *Tomorrow Died Yesterday* is written by Chimeka Garricks, and the novel employs a narrative style that spans multiple time periods, weaving together the past and present. Garricks skillfully transitions between different decades, offering glimpses into the characters' childhoods and formative experiences. His writing delves into the inner lives of the four friends, exploring their hopes, dreams, and struggles against the backdrop of the oil industry's influence. Garricks' prose strikes a balance between introspective and engaging, providing readers with a deep understanding of the characters and the social issues they encounter. The difference in writing style shapes the overall reading experience of each novel. *Oil on Water* may offer a more immediate and action-driven narrative, with a focus on the suspenseful events and the urgency of the journalists' mission. In contrast, *Tomorrow Died Yesterday* takes a more reflective and introspective approach, providing an exploration of the characters' inner worlds and their

personal growth over time. Both authors bring their unique voices and writing techniques to their respective novels, contributing to the distinctiveness of each work and offering readers varied perspectives on life and society in the Niger Delta region.

### **Time Period:**

In *Oil on Water*, the events primarily take place in the present time, focusing on the journey of the two journalists, Rufus and Zaq, as they search for the kidnapped woman, Isabel Floode, in the Niger Delta region. The story unfolds in the contemporary setting, offering a glimpse into the current state of affairs in the region and the conflicts surrounding the oil industry. On the other hand, *Tomorrow Died Yesterday* covers a broader time span, spanning multiple decades. It shifts back and forth between the early 2000s when the kidnapping occurs and key moments in the childhoods of the four friends, Doughboy (Doye), Amaibi, Kaniye, and Tubo, during the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s. This time-jumping narrative provides a historical context and allows readers to understand how the characters' past experiences and the societal changes in Nigeria influenced their present-day circumstances. The difference in time periods impacts the scope and depth of each novel. *Oil on Water* focuses on a specific event in the present, creating a sense of immediacy and urgency in the narrative. In contrast, *Tomorrow Died Yesterday* takes a more expansive approach, providing a comprehensive look at the characters' lives and the evolution of the Niger Delta region over several decades. This broader time frame enables readers to see how the characters and the region have been shaped by historical events and societal shifts.

### **4.3 Conclusion**

Habila's *Oil on water* and Garricks' *Tomorrow Died Yesterday* are two compelling literary works set in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. Both novels delve into the pressing issues revolving around the oil industry's impact on the environment, communities, and society, shedding light on the complex challenges faced by the region. In terms of similarities, both novels share a common setting in the Niger Delta, a region heavily influenced by the oil industry. They explore the devastating consequences of oil exploitation, including environmental degradation, displacement, and social injustice. Additionally, the themes of insurgency and corruption emerge prominently in both works, illustrating the region's devastating history and the

struggles faced by its inhabitants. Both authors tackle these themes with a thought-provoking approach, compelling readers to confront the harsh realities experienced by the Niger Delta's communities. The narratives present vivid portrayals of the human cost of armed conflict and the profound impact of corporate greed and political power plays on the lives of ordinary Nigerians. Despite these commonalities, the novels differ significantly in their narrative techniques and character focus. *Oil on Water* adopts a non-linear storytelling approach, employing alternating perspectives to provide multifaceted insights into the characters' experiences. In contrast, *Tomorrow Died Yesterday* encompasses a period of three decades, featuring four childhood friends whose lives and friendship evolve over time. The character focus in each novel also sets them apart. *Oil on Water* follows the journey of two journalists investigating a kidnapping, exposing the exploitation of the region and the pursuit of truth amidst danger. On the other hand, *Tomorrow Died Yesterday* centers on the lives of four friends with distinct professions and perspectives, allowing for a broader exploration of the Niger Delta's complexities and the lasting impact of their choices. Furthermore, *Oil on Water* primarily concentrates on the immediate aftermath of the investigation, while *Tomorrow Died Yesterday* spans several decades, offering glimpses into the characters' childhoods and the events that shaped them. This broader scope in the latter novel enhances the understanding of the characters' backgrounds and the historical context in which their stories unfold.

*Oil on Water* and *Tomorrow Died Yesterday* share common ground in their exploration of the Niger Delta's challenges posed by the oil industry, insurgency, and corruption. Both works provide powerful narratives that implore readers to reflect on the far-reaching implications of unchecked resource exploitation and the importance of seeking justice and environmental stewardship. However, their narrative techniques and character-driven focuses distinguish them, each offering a unique perspective on the region's struggles and resilience. By engaging with these literary works, readers gain valuable insights into the complexities of the Niger Delta's sociopolitical landscape and the urgent need for positive change. These novels serve as essential contributions to the broader discussion of social justice, environmental protection, and ethical governance, urging us to advocate for a sustainable future that respects the rights and well-being of all communities affected by resource extraction worldwide.

## CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION

The portrayal of insurgency and environmental degradation in Nigerian oil-producing communities in Chimeka Garricks' *Tomorrow Died Yesterday* and Helon Habila's *Oil on Water* serves as a stark reminder of the complex challenges faced by these communities. Both novels provide poignant narratives that shed light on the devastating impact of oil exploration and the subsequent uprising of insurgency in the Niger Delta region. Through the lens of fiction, Garricks and Habila offer profound insights into the socio-economic, environmental, and human toll caused by the oil industry's presence in Nigeria. *Tomorrow Died Yesterday* explores the human cost of insurgency, illustrating the painful consequences that violence and conflict have on the lives of ordinary people caught in the crossfire.

On the other hand, *Oil on Water* delves deep into the environmental degradation caused by oil spills and pollution in the Delta, painting a vivid picture of the ecological devastation and its far-reaching consequences on both wildlife and local communities. The two novels also highlight the role of corporate interests, government corruption, and the struggles of marginalized communities who bear the brunt of the exploitation of their natural resources. As readers, we are challenged to confront the harsh realities of insurgency and environmental degradation, recognizing the urgent need for sustainable and equitable solutions. The authors' compelling storytelling compels us to empathize with the plight of those affected, urging us to take collective action to address these pressing issues.

*Tomorrow Died Yesterday* and *Oil on Water* stand as powerful literary works that go beyond entertainment, prompting us to reflect on the complex interplay between insurgency, environmental degradation, and social justice in Nigeria's oil-producing communities. These novels serve as important catalysts for dialogue and change, advocating for a more responsible and conscientious approach to resource extraction and conflict resolution. By confronting these difficult themes, Garricks and Habila challenge us all to work towards a future where the prosperity of these communities and the preservation of the environment are placed at the forefront of our collective consciousness and efforts.

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