

Drifting from the Earth towards Death: A Study of Stephen Kekeghe's *Rumbling Sky*

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Received: 04 / 09 / 2024

Accepted: 22 /11 / 2024

Published: 15 / 01 / 2025

Abstract

Ecological and sociological studies are generally intertwined, especially in literary surveys. The neglect of the earth ultimately leads to the death of society which supplies the ingredients of corruption which also impacts negatively on the polity. This is a trajectory in today's poetics and the concern of this study. Environmental literature, which gives ecological issues a prime place, focuses on the elevation of awareness about environmental justice, the preservation of the earth and the espousal of nature in both literary discourse and physical realism. The need for this direction was generated to save the environment including humanity. This is the thrust of engagement in this paper, which takes Stephen Kekeghe's *Rumbling Sky* as its primary text. The paper found that the environment is not being treated justly, rather it has been grievously abused. Intermingling with this injustice to the environment is the corrupt engagement of the people, especially those in power. The consequence of this is the death of the waters and forests, the land and air and the inhabitants of these, especially within the Niger Delta. In the face of the discovery, the paper concludes that there is a general drift from the earth which ought to breed life towards death due to humanity's attitudes and actions. The significance of this study will be the raising of awareness about environmental justice and the preservation of nature to promote the relationships among humans and the flora and fauna and as such keep all alive.

Keywords: Earth, ecocide, ecocriticism, ecology, environment, nature

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Introduction

This paper examines the ecological and sociological perspective of *Rumbling Sky* by Stephen Kekeghe. Stephen Kekeghe is from Niger Delta, under his birth. In addition, he has lived in the region designated and he has experienced the activities of the oil prospectors, explorers, and merchants. The activities involved in oil prospecting and its attendant consequences on the people and place are not been lost to him. He has experienced a first-hand effect of ecocide. Therefore, *Rumbling Sky* is indeed birthed of its own. Kekeghe can be identified as one of the courageous, energetic, and fearless Nigerian writers, who despite the current government's posture against freedom of speech, spoke without reservation of words in *Rumbling Sky*, which is divided into three parts. His boldness can be seen in the first part "... of power and wreckage". This section contains sixteen explosive, stinging truths of political oppression, ritual killings carried out by adults and adolescents, herdsmen justification of preference of their pets for human lives, shameless ballot carriers, the lazy youth, and many more. The second part "... of boom and doom" which contains seven poems, depicts the crude oil wasted on water and soil, leading to the poisoning of the environment and humanity, coupled with the cases of corruption, especially in high places. The third part "... of pains and triumphs" contains fifteen poems dealing with sundry human experiences in the journey for survival, sustenance, and attainment. This paper looks at the second part of the *Rumbling Sky* which deals with ecological studies. The significance of this study is in its raising of awareness about environmental justice and the preservation of nature with a view to the promotion of the intra- and inter-relationships among humans and the flora and fauna and as such the keeping of all alive and healthy. Therefore, the paper seeks to examine Kekeghe's poetry collection, and through that demonstrate how environmental degradation and pollution could be stemmed. Consequently, such questions as "What is the place of nature in the scheme of affairs?"; and "How should the environment be treated?" arise. Responses to the above will point the way forward for a better and harmonious relationship between humans and the environment.

Literature Review

Ecocriticism is the study of literature in its interaction with nature; it is the theory that tries to redefine the relationship between humans and nature (environment), and literature and environment. It is an academic discipline, that has gained a global movement and expanded its consciousness, all over the globe in the last four decades plus. According to Sutariya (2020), "ecocriticism has become a coherent and organized discipline within literary studies in the last decades of the twentieth century" (p. 126). This attests to the fact that the theory is young. Despite this, it has become a movement and has en-grafted itself into the consciousness of mankind. According to Mishra (2016.), the term Ecocriticism was coined by Williams Rueckert in 1978, in his work "Literature and Ecology: An Experiment in Ecocriticism" (p. 168). One idea one can deduce from the whole treatise on the meaning of "ecology", a concept that forms the fulcrum of this present study, is that the word is made up of two morphemes: "eco-" and "-logy". Whereas "eco-" relates to the earth, "-logy" means study (logical discourse). Another definition of ecocriticism, according to Buell (1995) is the study of the relationship between literature and the environment conducted in a spirit of commitment to the environmentalist praxis (p. 430).

Talking about the relationship between humans and the natural world in amaXhosa folktales, Diko (2024) observed that "ecocriticism examines the subtleties of [the] connections and the messages they convey about humanity's place in the ecosystem.... It underscores the interconnectedness of humans and the environment, buttresses environmental consciousness and promotes sustainable practices" (p. 205). This is the business which ecocriticism engages in; that

is the defining and redefining of the relationship between and among humans and the flora and fauna. Siwi et al. (2022) expressed the same opinion. To them, “ecocriticism investigates the relationship 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” (p. 1279). Diko (2024) stated that ecocriticism “... scrutinizes how these representations reflect and configure human perceptions, attitudes, and behaviors towards the environment” (p. 204).

Ecology is perceived in two ways: shallow and deep. Shallow ecology not only displays anthropocentric behaviour, it is geared towards the benefit of humanity. The theory advocates that nature is there to serve humans and their needs, and that mankind is the master; that as a superior entity and intelligent beings, humans should oversee the usage of the numerous natural resources abounding within and around the earth. On the other hand, deep ecology negates the concept of shallow ecology, stating that nature is not to serve man, but rather it (nature) ought to preserve itself and protect its original form from impediments from man. The whole idea here is that nature is superior as an entity and has the right to live. This is encapsulated in the concept of ecocentrism. One very important idea emanating from the study of ecocriticism is that, according to Sutariya, the “quality of natural environment determines the standard of human life” (p. 125). This is the more reason ecocriticism has become very pertinent in this age when the environment is poisoned daily. Some movements under which ecology has been studied, according to Abdulsalam (2023), include “... Green Studies, Romantic Ecology, Political Ecology, Conservation Ecology and Environmental Humanities” (p. 29).

To stem the dangerous trend of the annihilation of the environment, Governments in many parts of the world have tried to promulgate laws concerning the protection of flora and fauna. One author who has identified this is Odey (2023). According to him, “Environmental laws are put in place to mitigate the threatening environmental problems that emanate from human activities in the quest for economic growth and development” (p. 91). Laws are constantly promulgated to enhance environmental sustainability. It is against this backdrop that such laws as “the Criminal Code Act”, “the Public Health Act”, and “the Harmful Waste Act” have come into effect. It must be pointed out that these laws have not attained the desired goals. Also, according to the goal of environmental sustainability, there has been a push for scientific remedies. This is equally a good move in the right direction. However, since these remedies are very academic in most cases, members of the public seem not to internalise them. To bridge the gap, there was the need to appeal to the emotions of people. This is where both the literary artists and critics come in. According to Abdulsalam, the task of ecologists and eco-critics is to develop ways or strategies of preventing human activities from wreaking havoc and recklessly or indiscriminately destroying the natural environment. The act of destroying nature is dangerous to humanity (p. 29).

Ecocriticism is an example of reality being perceived by the study of nature. It analyses nature writing in literary text, it reviews the principles and customs of our society in relationship to nature. Ecocritical literature's goal is to bring about awareness of environmental problems, and as they affect both humans and the “others” of nature. According to Akingbe (2024), “emphasising advocacy of the harmony of nature in her collections, Baderoon tends to offer a critique and celebration of humans’ relationship with agents of nature and environment like the landscape, water, animals, and the hills and valleys” (p. 93). Listed above are some of the manifestations of nature and the environment. Continuing on the same page, Akingbe states: “arguably, debates on global environmental imaginaries have also shifted from the domains of science to engage broadly with the causes and effects of climate change as represented in literature through genres such as ecopoetics and aquaponics”. This is a relatively new trajectory of studies in both literature as well as the environment. Zeroing in on poetry, Akingbe concludes that

"ecopoetry manifests when literature promotes a heightened awareness of nature's consciousness by interacting, associating, and bonding with ecology through poetry" (p. 93). It is in the raising of awareness and its sustenance that literature has become a veritable tool.

There have been varied efforts and techniques geared towards mitigating failings in the treatment of natural resources and the environment. According to Abdulsalam (2023),

to fence the failures of natural resources in Nigeria, environmental experts advocate for the application of scientific knowledge, land reform, land use control, resource management and environmental education. In spite of such suggestions, the pathetic environmental problems remain in a state of flux. (p. 28)

Therefore it has become the duty of the literary artists and critics, who one may refer to as the conscience of the society, to subtly chart the way towards the resolution of the environmental crises. However, not many literary artists have engaged in this all-important duty. This is as Abdulsalam observed when he presented a list of those who have paid a level of attention to the environment in their works. He opined that

only a handful of literary works properly address the loss of rustic serenity in a literary context. The African society is built on nature and preservation of the environment is a daily practice. Key writers like Niyi Osundare, Nardine Gordimer, Amos Tutuola, Ferdinand Oyono, Ngugi Wa Thinog'o, Helon Habila, Isidore Okpewho, Chinua Achebe and a host of others were highly inspired by nature. These writers directly or indirectly advocated for eco-consciousness and contested/protected against nature degradation by addressing the issue of nature's havoc in their themes. (p. 28)

The phenomenon of environmental despoliation is global. Many countries are experiencing it today. However, it must be noted that this is most crude and cruel, and deliberately orchestrated, perhaps without minding the immediate and remote consequences. Nigeria has a fair share of this, being a subset of the global set. Thus, Onuoha et al. (2022) state that, "Nigeria is faced with similar environmental problems experienced around the world" (p. 6). A major contributor to the environmental degradation is oil. This is not ruling out the other agents of environmental degradation. In all, humans are constantly implicated. According to Nwoma (2024) "human activities have greatly altered the state of the natural environment as humans consequently face existential problems" (p. 3). The case of environmental degradation is widespread in Nigeria. It is in the realisation of this that Nwoma (2024) said:

Most parts of the country currently experience different forms of environmental crises, ranging from oil spills and gas flaring to desertification and drought, through ravaging gully erosion, to industrial waste, flood, land degradation, loss of biodiversity, and so on. Within Nigeria's composite structure, the Niger Delta has the worst of it—an environment that has been ruined in the most unimaginable ways. (p. 3)

As has been mentioned above, there have been efforts by different disciplines to stem the tide of environmental degradation and crises. Writers have advanced and are still advancing these in their works. According to Nwoma, "Environmental rights activists and creative writers have addressed Nigeria's environmental issues from different perspectives with the intent to bring such issues to public consciousness and discourse" (p. 3). The critics must explicate the contents of the available literary (creative) works.

This paper, therefore, attempts to analyze *Rumbling Sky* through the viewfinder of environmental justice, the identification of the injustice on the earth/environment, and the search for ways for the remediation of the growing challenges.

Drifting from the Earth towards Death in *Rumbling Sky*

Poetry, to most humans, is therapeutic. It brings to mind the past, and the present, and it envisages the future with a view to soothing and assuaging the pains of humans and putting them in a better frame to continue to live. Apart from the therapeutic, poetry performs instructive functions in that it teaches humanity what is needed to live a worthy life. Its short lines help to expose the follies, elicit the conduct of individuals as well as provide strength to the weak. In

addition to its therapeutic and instructive functions, it also serves to mirror society.

Rumbling Sky in this case is not just therapeutic, it also exposes the ills of our Politicians and rulers, the illegal killings and man's ill-treatment and activity on nature, and the effects of these on the people in their surroundings. Suffice it to note that since the world is now a "global village" as it is commonly said today, such surroundings are everywhere.

Kekeghe opens the second part of the collection with lines from Ibiwarai Ikiriko in *Oily Tears* "...the crude wasted our waters soiled our soils and lacerated our lot" (p. 39). The impact of oil prospecting and merchandising is overbearing and suffocating to both humans and the general environment. It is not only the waters that are wasted, the soil is sullied and humans "our" are "lacerated". This is an apt description of our state. It is not surprising therefore that Kekeghe appropriates this excerpt from Ibiwari Ikiriko's poem to usher in this section of *Rumbling Sky*.

This second part deals with the destruction meted out on the earth through the selfish acts especially of the drilling of oil without thinking of the health implications on nature and citizens by the oil prospectors. Also implicated in this destruction of the environment and citizens of the Niger Delta are the self-centered government and the privileged Nigerians in Abuja and their counterparts in our parts of the country, as well as their multinational and international allies, who benefit from the enterprise of oil exploitation.

In "This boom" the voice laments about the disfigured and malnourished state of the natural environment due to the activities of humans, how the gas flaring pollutes the atmosphere leaving the people breathless, damaging their lungs and liver poisoning them the choice of the vital organs of lungs and liver is significant. The water bodies and plants and other animals are not left out, as the water is polluted by the crude oil, and the fish are breathless also. This is man's inhumanity, not to only man but to nature as well. The "others" are suffering as much, even more than humans. According to the voice,

In this wilting mangrove,
Gas flares freeze your breath,
And crude crawls into your waters,
Meanders into your lands,
To choke your fishes
And kill your crops. (p. 40)

The diction, especially those signifying violence and death is strong here. Breaths are choking, waters are poisoned, flora and fauna are dying, and humans and plants are killed. Such expressions as "wilting", "freeze", "choke" and "kill" are generously used. This graphically presents the state of affairs and being in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. It is therefore not surprising that the blood is "darkening". This is not only in the veins of humans, but also that of the earth.

Mingled with the eco-degradation of the earth are the issues of deprivation of the masses and the attendant poverty. This is an acknowledgement of the fact that eco-degradation leads to human degradation. Therefore, human degradation and oppression is a projectile from the eco one. The convergence of these is that "Today, / hunger hacks your heart / Sears your senses" (p. 40). In the midst of these, the "prosperity of the land is "piped away" (p. 40). Therefore, it is only the "mangled corpses" that are visible, although not to the rulers who see only profits.

The pains initiated in "This boom" are carried into "Black bloods". Here the voice cries over the dry farmlands, caused by the dredging of the waterways where applicable and the laying of pipelines from Warri to Kaduna and the polluted lakes, which has forced the people of Niger Delta into feminine. The voice mocks us through our ancestors (Idjerhe), who sneer at human greed over what was given freely. The voice wipes off the tolls of death on hungry individuals

who seek their daily bread through the illegal fetching of oil (Black Blood):

...to anoint our frail fingers
 With the oily lakes
 In our fading farmlands
 Of pipelines, piping Warri to Kaduna
 And Idjerhe jeered at us
 With burnt ashes of lives
 Who scooped death from oil. (p. 42)

Kekeghe in his collection *Rumbling Sky* did not only look at the attack on the environment but also the effect of the oil prospecting disaster on the people. The people are impoverished and deprived of the means of sustenance and are further exposed to the flaring all around. Consequent upon this, there are massive “burnt ashes of lives” of those “who scooped death from oil” (p. 42). It is death that people fetch in the name of oil.

In “The Boom” the voice acknowledged the masquerades behind the scenes, the “Executhieves” and the “Legislathieves”, those in the “Villa of power” who only gather to share and not to solve the people’s problems but rather to add to the people’s pain and sorrow. It is in the bid to satisfy the greed that the despoliation of the environment occurs. This is captured thus:

Do they see the mud houses?
 Sitting on pressure pipes?
 Do they see the rustic villages?
 In the womb of darkness
 And their lights,
 Wired to torment wild lives? (p. 40)

The silent response to these questions is a loud “No”. What they see is the affluence that flows into their pockets, banks, and bellies. This destruction is in the rural villages that are dark due to a lack of infrastructure. This consequently puts a hardship on the people. The stanzas quoted above depict the self-centeredness of the Executhieves and Legislathieves who neglect the needs and demands of the people, neither do they care about the environments from which the wealth, which they gulp is siphoned. They closed their eyes and ears like *Ubi-Jus*, with outstretched arms like *Ubi Remedium* to unleash justice to those who tempered with their supposed supply of wealth. Therefore, the people, including the infants are malnourished and sickly. They are “kwashiokored” as they stare “blankly” at “flaring gas and menstruating pipes” (p. 41). The gory picture is metaphorically painted in the images of “kwashiokor children”, “menstruating pipes”, “drowning homes”, “mangled corpses”, and “hovering vultures”. This leads the voice to rhetorically ask,

Do they see the kwashiokor children?
 Staring blankly at flaring gas
 And menstruating pipes in
 Your dregs of drowning homes?
 In this your mangrove
 Of mangled corpses
 The hovering vultures
 See the gains, not the pains.... (pp. 40-41)

These are the pictures that are not palatable, neither are they good at all. They are gory and nauseating, as they are painful and death-reflective.

The rulers, who are the “Executhieves” and “Legislathieves” overlook the effect of feminine

on the people (children) of Niger Delta, who wonder at the unceasing fire, not like that of their real mother's kitchen, the continuous draining of what makes the people unique. The idea of "unceasing fire" calls to mind the idea of eternal fire, hellfire, the unquenchable. This is what the people see daily in their lives.

Insecurity and the shattering of the family bond are some of the consequences of the prospecting of oil and the attendant greed that emerges from it. In "Black bloods" the voice is heartbroken on how brother turns against brother, while Abuja lords enrich themselves as gods", who only destroy to make gains. This is the consequence of greed and excessive self-enrichment, the gathering of more than what one can even spend in several lifetimes. Greed bothers narcissism. The implication of this on the populace is that they suffer. The suffering is not just by humans, but also by the environment. The process of satisfying the unbridled greed leads to the desolation of the bland and all it contains. Despite all attempts, the greed is not assuaged. Thus one hears that,

...as the dark blood of our earth
 Bloom wealth in private pockets
 Of Abuja gods,
 Warri of three brothers war
 At the feet of sharing Shell
 And ruin their love
 Till eternity.... (p. 42)

It is these rulers that are the "Abuja god". These are the "Executhieves" and "Legislatheives" of the earlier referent. Apart from the poverty and pain elicited by greed and attendant despoliation, war is another of the consequences generated. The war in this situation is among "three brothers": the Urhobos, Itshekiris, and Ijaws who before the discovery of oil in commercial quantity in the region had lived peacefully and harmoniously. Among other things, the war they engage in now is a war for survival. The reason for this is that the land has been stripped of her natural endowment, and whatever is left is sucked dry and razed in flame. Consequently, there is a huge insufficiency. For this, there is a constant and cyclical war of attrition. Violence and the destruction of lives and property are rifts in the land, all because of the oil wealth that only the rich and their cronies enjoy to the exclusion of and to the detriment of the poor masses.

Sometimes there are speeches about cleaning up the water, which naturally, if accomplished ought to return health to the environment. Suffice it to say that such speeches are political, leading to further impoverishment of the environment and the people. The rulers approve the money, pay it out, collect it, and never attend to the job of cleaning up the water and waterways. However, a few times they make some moves to do the cleaning, but these usually lead to more and heavier destruction of the environment. While they were cleaning up their mess at *Ogoni*, another was raised at *Odi*, lives lost, the wealth gained for those who gave the order, and houses on the pipeline track, tremble like someone suffering from Parkinson's disease. The people's voices were taken away by their legal forces, silence became their safety. The day they decided to rise, "Ayakoromo" was made a scapegoat, that no living being could disrupt their unholy, unnatural, and inhuman act (p. 43).

The voice in "When Can We Be Sane" realizes the natural endowment that they allowed to slip through their fingers in the name of one Nigeria. They once believed that the black blood (Crude oil) was for everybody. Just as our ancient mothers were taught to share, even their husbands with the younger wives, so they did to the natural resources. Little did they know that it was every man for his selfish gain. Wealth is drained from their precious lands while they wallow

in poverty. The Niger Delta has so much to give and gain, yet nothing to show for it. Those who live in the Niger Delta particularly, and Nigeria in general lack the means of sustenance, especially water. Those who live in the waters of the Niger Delta have no water to drink. This is a sorry state of the affairs of the Nigerian people. This lack is highlighted in the stanzas with a build-up from the literary allusion to Samuel Taylor Coleridge's "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner",

I remember Coleridge's sea
without a healthy drop to drink: (p. 44)

Following this is the enumeration of some of the supposed wealth of the people and land of the Niger Delta and Nigeria. However, the irony of the situation is that we are only told about these items of wealth, "So they tell us" since we do not see the benefit nor the dividend of such wealth. The voice says,

We have them here
Erhioke oil Field of Sweet Crude

....

A precious oil meadow

...

So they tell us.

We have them here

Otorogu-gas plant

...

largest in West of Africa

seventh in world gas map

So they tell us.

....

Alakiri gas plant

....

of cracked lips and flaking skins

Bonny gas plant

....

of stunning seashores

and Gamut of greens. (p. 44)

The only visible impact of the presence of these infrastructures are "cracked lips and flaking skins" and "stunning seashores". The voice reels out a long list of supposed infrastructures and elements of development and on each occasion, there is a declaration "so they tell us" and later it was "we have them there". These are said without convincing emotion, more or less they are said absent-mindedly. There is a long list of comments enumerated with supposed facilities, but these are all false claims. Consequently, what we have is "the withering heart of our Delta" (p. 45). The only succour in the entire landscape or waterscape is the "Gamut of green". But one can almost bet that the green so talked about is only deceptive. It is a mirage. It is the old glory that is harped upon as the green has virtually disappeared, gone and replaced by flaring flames on the cloud, in the sky. Therefore, it will not be out of place to ask if we still have green. The neglect of the people and the land with our corrupt practices interact and intermingle to produce the total degradation of life of the flora and fauna to the extinction of all.

To highlight the mismanagement and corruption in Nigeria, especially the Niger-Delta region, the voice draws attention to the fact that Malaysia's importation of oil seedlings from Nigeria (NIFOR especially) now feeds the world's need for palm products, and Nigeria now

imports most from her. To make matters worse, the crude oil that Nigeria relies on has brought diseases and death to her people by derailing their minds and economy. This is the situation that the voice describes in one strong term: "suicide". However, there is hope as there "shall beam the sunrise of smiles" arising "in the midst of tears" (p. 46). According to the voice,

How can we be sane?
go ask Malaysia
how oil palm showed the way
and crude blocked our path
turning us a dark lakes suicide. (p. 45)

The last of the poems examined in this paper is "Our Future". The "Executhieves" and "Legislathieves" (the rulers and exploiters of the land and people) are presented as deceptively coming to the masses as saviours, whereas they are ravenous and dangerous, devouring everything on their path. According to the voice,

they came to us
dressed in messianic costumes
their mouths, dripping of
stinking saliva of falsehood. (p. 47)

This poem focuses primarily on corruption, which transcends the maltreatment of the earth. Implicated in this are the "tenants of ASO ROCK whom the sweet talker beguile us to evict. The hallmark of these new ones and the old ones they want out of the way is that both are simply interested in the wealth of the land which they want to loot or continue to loot. Although we have been fooled to the point of believing the looter and selling ourselves to them, and as such have our lands "pillaged" and our rivers ravaged, there is still hope albeit "hazy". However, hope can only be a reality if the present generation stops the corruption ravaging everywhere since the exhaustion of the oil and the annihilation of the forest will leave the populace without the means of survival.

In "Our Future" the voice described how the looters came with sugar-coated lips. Manipulating them to fight the government of the day, whereas they sit on high thrones made for the king. The people's eyes were blinded with drunkenness. They were too drunk to see the lies, "the sinister conspiracy", their "chameleonic conducts, the tricky tongues". All these "rancid stench" they could not perceive, but their drunkenness deprived them. The voice questions the *Aso Rock* saying:

Where is the future
Of a generation
If the oil stops to flow? (p. 48)

How will the next generation survive when the present only points at crude oil as the only means of survival?

In "Tarrying Tears" out of anger the voice places a curse on those who seek to keep the Niger Delta in poverty, who destroyed their homes and stole the future of the generation unborn. *Olodumare* never sleep. Therefore:

Those that brought these leprous hands
Of rape on our oilfield,
May the red eyes of Iwri
Consume them!
The angry Egbesu
Destroy them! (p. 49)

Ivwri the god of war of the *Urhobo* tribe and *Egbesu*, the god of war from *ijaw* nation would need to deprive themselves of sleep and fight for the course of the Niger Delta people.

This is the high point in the engagement in the section of the poem by Kekeghe under consideration. Curses are invoked on the guilty, those who deprive and despoil the people and the land. Among the crimes they commit are “smolder[ing] our communal hut”, mowing “down / the tree of our moral norms” and raping “our oilfield” (p. 49). It is for these that the voice places the curse on the “Executhieves” and “Legislathieves”, the alternate and derogatory usages for Executives and Legislatives. There is a very strong declaration by the voice that underscores the situation of the land, and the plight of the earth. According to the voice, “... the cloud is darkened / by the doom of a flaring boom” (p. 150). The darkened cloud is ominous. Physically, this situation is caused by the flaring of gas, but beyond the physical, it is the attitude of humans that is responsible for the doom that is looming. The flaring of gas now constitutes doom instead of prosperity which it ought to engender.

Conclusion

There is an intricate relationship that exists between and among humans and other entities in the world. This relationship is constantly studied within the academic and social circles. Thus, Ecological and sociological studies are generally intertwined to fashion a better existence and living. Findings have shown that the neglect of the earth ultimately leads to the death of the society to which it supplies ingredients. Also, corruption impacts negatively on the polity. These are major trajectories in the poetics of the recent and the concern of this study. The main focus of every piece of literature (and poetry) is humanity, but humanity does not exist in a vacuum. They live within the environment. Although this study is on humanity living in the Niger-Delta, there are references to the environment and the happenings around and within her. There is the imagery of the despoliation of the earth profusely employed in the poetry. The relationship between humanity and the environment points to the fact of the indissoluble link existing between humans and the environment in which they live. Thus, the destruction of the earth will automatically translate into the annihilation of humanity as he cannot survive in isolation. It will be easier for the earth to survive without humans. If there were to be a dissolution of the intricate amalgam between humans and the environment, the earth could survive, but not so with humans. It is a symbiotic relationship, though more lopsided in favour of man. This is the finding in this study. Therefore, the paper concludes that if humans are to continue to live on earth, they must adopt the attitude of maintaining a balance between harvesting from the environment and replenishing it such that degradation is, if not eliminated, but at least mitigated. Also, the rulers should engage themselves and rule in such a manner that corrupt practices are eliminated. This is to reduce the excessive greed leading to the high level of degradation and despoliation of the environment.

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Cite as:

Ejirodu, M., & Okwechime, E. (2025). Drifting from the Earth towards Death: A Study of Stephen Kekeghe's *Rumbling Sky*. *ATRAS Journal*. 6(1), 198-208