

## NEGATING AS A CRITICAL STYLISTIC FEATURE IN KAIANE AGARY'S *YELLOW-YELLOW*

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### **Abstract**

This paper examines Kaiane Agary's *Yellow-Yellow* from a linguistic perspective. The objectives include to identify and describe the hypothetical worlds created in the texts, the linguistic features used in creating such nonexistent worlds and the ideologies promoted in the text through the creation of such nonexistent worlds. Drawing on Jefferies's (2010) Critical Stylistic model, this paper utilizes one textual-conceptual function, namely: negating to examine few extracts purposively sampled from the text. Findings show that the various nonexistent worlds identified in the corpus studied include the natives' expectation of the media to herald police brutality of youths in the region, the natives' desire for good education and better life for their children, provision of family needs by the Niger Delta men and the youths' willingness to sacrifice their lives for the emancipation of the region. These non-existent worlds are constructed through negating which is realised syntactically, lexically and morphologically in the text. Through the critical stylistic tool of negating, the ideologies of environmentalism, justice, activism and patriarchy are foregrounded. Unveiling the ideologies residing in the text explains the reasons behind the creation of the non-existent worlds used by the author to improve the story.

**Keywords:** Critical stylistics, hypothetical worlds, ideology, Kaiane Agary

### **Introduction**

Ideologies are expressed and supported by language, which makes language and ideology intricately intertwined. An ideology is a set of ideas or beliefs that directs a person's or a group's actions and choices (Aluya and Ochulor, 2024). These actions and choices can be expressed through language, which can also influence people's thoughts and perceptions of their environment (Freedon, 2013). For example, various terms or expressions used to convey certain concepts may be linked to particular forms of ideology. Similarly, distinct language and vocabulary may be associated with specific ideas. Language use can reflect and reinforce social, cultural, and personal beliefs (Stewart 1999, Ogunsiji and Aluya, 2022). Understanding how

language is used to express and reinforce ideas is crucial because it allows us to better understand and communicate with others. Additionally, it is vital to acknowledge that language is not neutral and that how it is used has a significant impact on how people think and act (Fowler and Kress, 1996, Aluya and Edem, 2024).

Language is employed to depict the world in literature (Aluya, 2023). The worlds depicted in literature can be actual or hypothetical. Actual implies depicting the true state of the world in a literary text. Conversely, hypothetical refers to the evocation of a non-existent world in a literary text. Whether actual or hypothetical, writers have ideological basis for creating any form of world in their texts. Certain terms and phrases employed by writers may reflect their thoughts or biases,

influencing how they depict and interpret events in their texts. This seminal paper focuses on the creation of hypothetical worlds in literary texts with a view to describing the ideology promoted through the creation of such worlds. The text under study is Kiane Agary's *Yellow-Yellow*.

Kaine Agary's *Yellow-Yellow*, published in 2006, depicts the sordid conditions of the people in Niger-Delta, especially the women who are exposed to various exploitations as a result of the ecological problems of the environment. These ecological problems result to social ills in the society (Francis, 2019). The Niger Delta is an agricultural society, with women producing riches in collaboration with nature. The narrative revolves around Zilayefa, the protagonist, and her mother, Bibi. The protagonist describes how her mother, grandmother, and great grandmother supported themselves through fishing and farming. However, they have been subjected to different sorts of violence and had their land confiscated as a result of the oil conflicts that have plagued the oil-producing area for several years (Ojiakor, 2020).

The Niger Delta represents colonial exploitation, whereas Zilayefa, Bibi, and other women represent the victims of both colonial exploitation and patriarchal systems, which are mechanisms of enslavement and oppression. Zilayefa is the offspring of an exploitative patriarch who got Bibi pregnant before abandoning her. Bibi endured the agonising difficulties of her pregnancy before giving birth to Zilayefa and dealing with the burden of raising her as a single mother. Zilayefa on her own is further exploited by Admiral Ken who sexually and emotionally exploited her and thereafter abandoned her (Hani, 2024).

Through the text, Kaine Angary exposes the moral bankruptcy caused by joblessness, poverty, lack of social amenities, and environmental degradation in the Niger-Delta community. The author gives a vivid pictorial view of the

patriarchal and cultural victimizations that the women are subjected to as a result of the horrible conditions in their environment. The women are sexually exploited by both foreign and local men because they need to survive in this hostile region that is suffocating. As earlier mentioned, this seminar paper examines the text's construction of nonexistent worlds using Critical Stylistic Theory. It seeks to explain the ideological motivations behind the writer's creation of such worlds. In order to accomplish these objectives, the paper first outlines the problem or gap in the literature that it aims to fill. The review of earlier research on the text comes next. This is followed immediately by the theoretical framework on which the study is anchored. The data and methods, data analysis and discussion, conclusion, and references come next.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Texts represent the world as it is or the text producers' perception of it (Aluya and Edem, 2017). Many texts, however, construct non-existent versions of the world. Such non-versions can be created for many different ideological reasons. Kaine Agary's *Yellow-Yellow* is one of those texts where a non-existent version of the world is created through the manipulation of linguistic devices. Notwithstanding the proliferation of studies on the text from literary perspective (e.g. Simon 2010, Chukwuma 2013, Nwangwu and Iboroma 2018, Ashaolu 2019, Francis 2019 & Hani 2024 etc.) and linguistics perspective (e.g. Koussouhon and Dossounmou 2014, Abioye and Ajiboye 2015, Ibbu 2018, Robert and Umoekah 2019, Aluya and Obande, 2014, Okafor et al., 2024 etc.), the non-existent world created in this text and the ideologies promoted in the text through the creation of such worlds have not been explored. The present seminar paper is set out to address this gap in literature.

### **Literature Review**

Several studies have been conducted on Kaine Agary's *Yellow-Yellow* from literary and linguistic perspectives. This section reviews these studies and attempt to identify how they relate to the current one, the perceived gaps in the related studies and what also distinguish this study from

previously conducted ones. The review of related literature will commence with literary studies on Agary's *Yellow-Yellow*. In furtherance of the review of related studies, Simon (2010) conducted a study on the female predicament and the dichotomy of rural and urban existence in the Niger Delta region. Using selected extracts from Agary's *Yellow-Yellow*, the study sought to expose how the dividend of oil exploration eluded the people who should be beneficiaries of the oil largess. The findings revealed that the exploration of oil in the Niger Delta had grave ecological, socio-political, economic and health implications for the populace and especially women in the text. Also, it showed the complex situation women were trapped in and called for urgent attention. To address the issue of urban migration, the study called for the need to create an enabling environment for the Niger Deltans to live in and the women should be empowered. The study concludes that the wealth of the region could be harnessed and used in developing the region. The reviewed study is relevant to the current study because both employed Agary's *Yellow-Yellow* as data for study and also focused on the subject of environmental degradation and its attendant issues in the Niger Delta region. However, the divergence between both studies is that while the reviewed study explored Agary's text from a literary perspective, the current study examines similar text from a linguistic perspective drawing insights from one of the theoretical tools of Critical stylistics.

In another related study, Chukwuma (2013) focused on the provocations, corollaries, and correlations of the displaced male-image through its absence and presence in Agary's *Yellow-Yellow*. Using the Freudian and Jungian theories, the study examined how the various offshoots of this image are posited by the text's major characters. The findings revealed that the manifestation of the varied shades of the male-image is vital for the destiny of the main character

and a few others accounting for their sexual behaviours, consequent torture and the work's tragic form. This study relates to the current study as it also focused on Agary's *Yellow-Yellow*. However, both studies differ in respect of the perspectives from which the text is explored as well as the objectives and theoretical frameworks deployed. While the reviewed study employed the Freudian and Jungian theories, the current study utilises Critical Stylistics.

Nwangwu and Iboroma (2018) examined the psychological effects of single parenthood in Kaine Agary's *Yellow-Yellow* and Sefi Atta's *Everything Good Will Come*. The study drew insights from Sigmund Psychoanalysis and Control theories in order to help understand the completed process of growth and development of the characters in relation to their social environment as well as the effect of single parenthood on the emotional and social behaviour of children within the family unit. The study employed secondary data sources in order to elicit information that would assist in filling the overarching gap found in the literature. The findings validated the relevance of psychoanalysis and control theories because it illustrated that human nature, historical and cultural differences affected the emotional and social behaviour of children under single parenthood. This study is relevant to the current one because both examined Agary's text with a view to identifying and describing the effect of oil degradation on the environment. The divergence between the current study and the reviewed one is that both examined Agary's text from different perspectives (that is, linguistic and literary) using divergent theoretical frameworks.

In a related study, Ashaolu (2019) examined Kiane Agary's *Yellow-Yellow* from the standpoint of ecofeminism. The aim of the study was to advance a critical discourse on the variables of the closeness between the joint exploitation and degradation of African women and her

environment. To achieve this objective, the study utilised selected extracts to interrogate how male-biased power over and the logic of domination was characterized by environmental degradation and the persistent oppression of African land seen in her woman and Mother Earth, to the advantage of the West and African patriarchal capitalists – traitors of African progress. The paper concludes by highlighting the complementarity of African woman and nature as well as underpinning a symbiotic relationship between woman and the non-human other. This study relates to the current one because both focused on the issue of the environment using Agary's text as data. While the reviewed study approached the subject of environmental degradation from a literary angle using ecofeminism, the current study approaches the same subject from a linguistic perspective using negation as one of the Critical Stylistic tools.

Furthermore, using Kiane Agary's *Yellow-Yellow* as data and ecocriticism as theoretical framework, Francis (2019) explored the female predicament in the Niger-Delta region. The study sought to examine the differences between the urban and rural communities in this region and how the gains of exploration of oil eluded the people who should have benefited greatly from its exploration in the region. The findings showed that the Niger Delta inhabitants were environmentally exploited, their farmlands, plants, fishes and water polluted and destroyed as a result of oil spillage. Other issues such as sexual exploitation of local women by oil company owners, corruption, high rate of poverty, youth agitation, violence and pipeline vandalization resulting to unnecessary loss of lives were foregrounded in the analysis through ecocriticism. This study is relevant to the current one because both examined the subject of environmental concerns in Agary's *Yellow Yellow*. However, the current study is different from the reviewed one because it explores Agary's text from a linguistic stance point using Critical stylistics while the reviewed one examined similar

text from the literary standpoint using ecocriticism as theoretical framework.

Adeyemo and Shittu's (2021) study focused on the connection between the violation of the woman and the degradation of the environment in Kaine Agary's *Yellow-Yellow*. The study approached the text from the perspective of ecofeminism with a view to describing how the degradation of the Niger Delta environment in Southern Nigeria directly translated to the deterioration of the female folk who depended on it for survival as well as how ideology of patriarchy contributed to the destruction of the environment and emasculation of the female characters. To achieve these objectives, the study drew insights from Vandana Shiva's Critique of patriarchal capitalism. The findings showed the interconnectedness between the woman and the environment and emphasized that the female is a first-hand victim of the degradation of the environment because she depends on the environment for survival. Also, the study argued against the objectification of the woman and the environment and advocated for an egalitarian society where humanity recognizes the interconnection of all life and respects nature. The paper concludes that there is an urgent need for humans to move beyond power-based relationships if we must achieve an egalitarian society and a healthy environment.

Using the postcolonial discourse theory and ecofeminist's principles, Hani (2024) interrogated the different shades of exploitation represented in Kaine Agary's *Yellow Yellow*. The study sought to examine subaltern experience of women in a postcolonial context and the socioeconomic environment that worsened their repression. With the aid of selected extracts from the text, the study showed how the use of evocative telegraphic diction was used to relate various shades of exploitation that have enveloped a former colony of the British Empire. This includes the utilisation of pitiable images of women and the environment.

The study argued that it takes a subaltern woman to tell truly the deep stories of women subaltern in an aggressively exploited subaltern environment. The study concludes that both women and the environment are victims of exploitative colonial, postcolonial and patriarchal structures.

The second aspect of the review captures some linguistic studies that have been conducted on Agary's *Yellow-Yellow*. Koussouhon and Dossounmou (2014) studied Agary's *Yellow-Yellow* with focus on the experiential and textual meanings. The goal was to determine how the author encoded her experience via the medium of language on the one hand and how she organized her language to achieve this on the other. Using insights from the lexico-grammar theory drawn from Systemic functional grammar with special emphasis on transitivity and theme, the study analyzed some extracts purposively culled from the novel. The findings indicated that the author employed the material process, topical themes as well as a blend of extradiegetic and hypodiegetic narrative in encoding and organizing her experience. By focusing on the experiential and textual metafunction, the study placed the Nigerian new millennium novelists such as Kaine Agary in a good position to reconstruct the past and the present in proper perspectives in order to project the future of their nation. The study contributes to shaping the readers ability to address the contemporary and topical scourges undermining and hampering the development of their nation. This study is relevant to the current study because both studies approach Agary's text from a linguistic angle. While the reviewed study adopted transitivity theory in analysing Agary's text, the current study utilises negation as one of the Critical Stylistic tools as framework.

Koussouhon and Dossounmou (2015) analyzed Habila's *Yellow Yellow* from the angle of mood and modality in order to identify the types of mood and modality used in the text. The study, which drew insights from Critical Discourse

Analysis (CDA) and womanist theory, examined some selected extracts culled from the texts using the qualitative descriptive method. The findings revealed that the analysis of interpersonal meanings is described against the backdrop of Critical Discourse Analysis and Womanist theory. Also, the analysis indicated that despite the blend of monologic and dialogic organization of the novel, Agary tried to portray the sociological schisms marking up the daily life of young girls in the oil resourced region of Nigeria. The choice of mood and modality discovered in the text indicated some kind of power and hierarchy relations and conflicting ideologies among the characters.

Abioye and Ajiboye (2015) examined Agary's *Yellow-Yellow* from a Stylistic perspective. Using insights from the lexical stylistic approach coupled with a qualitative descriptive method, the study examined selected extracts from the text for how lexical features have been used by the author to convey his message. The study's findings revealed that some of the lexical stylistics features deployed in the text include: loan words, loan blends and loan expressions, semantic extensions, coinages, neologism, Nigerian pidgin and imagery. The lexical choices have been stylistically made to create a synergy between language used in the text and the environment in which they are used. These choices are aesthetics and socio-culturally relevant to the linguistic composition of the text, as the culturally rich expressions are able to provoke vivid images in the reader.

Ibbi's study (2018) focused on discourse markers as central features of Nigerian English and indicators of ownership and identity in general discourses and texts. Also, it examined the importance of discourse markers in indigenous texts and how they provide insight into the existence of discourse markers in conversation. The study adopted Labov's variability theory in examining some extracts from Chika Unigwe's *Night Dancer* and Kaine Agary's *Yellow-Yellow*.

Information about the discourse markers were also obtained from secondary sources of written materials and journals. The study concluded that the indigenous discourse found in the texts play important roles in depicting ownership in the texts, and are intelligible to Nigerians users.

Robert and Umoekeh (2019) approached Agary's *Yellow-Yellow* from a linguistic stylistic perspective. The study sought to establish the writer's style as well as interpret the message conveyed in the text. Employing Halliday's Functional Linguistic and Linguistic stylistics as its theoretical basis, the study appraised the major lexical, lexico-semantic, grammatical and graphological features of the text. In doing so, it discovered that the text employed mainly concrete nouns, active and dynamic verbs, first person pronoun "I", coordinate and simple sentences, semicolon and exclamation marks as its peculiar linguistic features. Also, it employed neologism, sexist tropes, parallel clause structures, Nigerianism and pidgin to beatify and contextualized the discourse. The study, therefore, submitted that Agary played a major role in the thematization of the nation's ills and the stylistic development of linguistic and literary themes.

Akabuikwe (2022) investigated first language transfer on English as a second language, factors that cause the transfer and the effect of the transfer. The study derived its theoretical framework from contrastive Analysis Hypothesis (CAH) and Chomsky's Universal Grammar Theories. The population of this study comprised a deliberate selection of two literary texts namely: Chimamanda Adichie's *Half of a Yellow Sun* and Kaine Agary's *Yellow—Yellow*. Data for the study comprised excerpts from the literary texts that depicted transfer from L1 to L2. These excerpts were randomly selected. Textual Analysis was employed to evaluate the data. The result of the analysis indicated that the use of English by Nigerian authors requires some characteristic forms such as transfer and semantic extensions of

certain lexical items at the syntactical level. It equally discovered that sociocultural context factor is a major cause of transfer from L1 to L2. The study concludes that English usage in the Nigeria socio-cultural setting, as demonstrated in the analysis of the syntactic and lexical semantic variations, has been given a distinctive Nigerian coloration so as to enable it effectively reflect the Nigeria situation.

Aluya and Obande (2024) investigated the connection between language and its environment, with a focus on the function language plays in relation to ecological degradation and the social ills that accompany it. Using insights from Arran Stubbe's (2015) ecolinguistics framework, the article examined purposively sampled extracts from Kaine Agary's *Yellow-Yellow* to determine how the issue of ecological degradation was framed, the frames used to construct it, the ideological stories presented in the text and how they influenced the way characters think, talk and act. The findings revealed that complex sentence constructions, additives, adversatives, contrasts, pronominal and vocabulary items were among the framing techniques employed to relate the issue of ecological degradation and other societal concerns that accompany it. To underline the gravity of the issue, the writer portrayed it in a negative light. This portrayal was achieved through the coalescing of source and target frames with evaluative and descriptive lexical phrases that convey negative connotations. These linguistic resources highlighted the various ideological stories in the text and how they influenced the issue. In conclusion, the study, thus, exemplified the fact that language is indeed a means through environmental concerns can be addressed.

Okafor et al. (2024) examined how ecolinguistic theory is deployed in Kaine Agary's *Yellow-Yellow* in highlighting the problems that oil-rich communities face as a result of the activities of oil drilling companies in the Niger Delta region. A purposive sampling of six extracts

from the text was conducted, and Stibbe's framing and evaluation frameworks were utilized to provide insights for the textual analysis. The results showed that Agary employed the ecolinguistic tools of framing and evaluation in foregrounding issues such as prostitution, discrimination, environmental degradation, kidnapping, destruction of micro/macro-organisms on the ecology, and oil theft/bunkering among others. The study concludes that the text constructed these issues and presented them from a negative angle using the tools of framing and evaluation.

The above literature review is evidence that many studies have been conducted on Agary's *Yellow-Yellow* from different perspectives ranging from linguistics and literature using different theoretical insights from these disciplines. A close study of the above studies reveals that Agary's text, which is the focus of this paper, has not been explored in order to identify the non-existent worlds created in the text as well as the ideological reasons for the creation of such worlds. It is on this premise that this seminar paper employs negating as a critical stylistic tool in examining the text in order to reveal the non-existent worlds created in the text as well as describe the ideological reasons for the creation of such worlds.

### **Theoretical Framework**

This work adopts negating, one of the Critical Stylistic tools, as theoretical framework. The stylistic venture of exploring the ways in which social meanings are demonstrated through language is referred to as critical stylistics. Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) and Critical Linguistics have primarily stimulated and shaped this stylistic inclination (Norgaard et al., 2010). It is largely attributed to Lesley Jeffries' research, which builds on CDA research by employing various methods of analysis to depict the connections between language, power, and ideology. Critical stylistics is a method of analyzing texts to reveal the ideological

construction depending on transitivity as well as other textual practices. It seeks to answer the question "what is the text doing?" by using a variety of linguistic tools of analysis to uncover the ideologies that underpin literary and non-literary texts. It also bases its framework on Halliday's theory of grammar (Evans and Schuller, 2015: 132).

Jeffries (2010) identifies some set of tools for critical stylistic analysis. In that way, critical stylistics tries to link CDA, the critique of ideology, and stylistics that is mainly interested in literary texts. In the same manner, critical stylistics brings together the essential functions that a particular text adopts to show reality (Jeffries, 2010). Critical stylistics does not support a political view. It shows that most documents are ideologically written whether the author has intended them to be so or not (Jeffries, 2016, p.160). Jeffries has proposed ten tools as textual-conceptual functions to set her model of critical stylistics. They include the following: (1) "Naming and Describing", (2) "Representing Actions/Events/States", (3) "Equating and Contrasting", (4) "Exemplifying and Enumerating", (5) "Prioritizing", (6) "Assuming and Implying", (7) "Negating", (8) "Hypothesizing", (9) "Presenting the Speech and Thoughts of other Participants" and (10) "Representing Time, Space and Society" (Jeffries, 2010).

The present paper attempts to investigate negating as a critical stylistic tool for unravelling the hypothetical worlds created in the text through linguistic features and the ideology promoted through the linguistic features in Kaine Agary's *Yellow-Yellow*. Of the ten tools of Jeffries' essential model of critical stylistics, negating is used for its ideological significance. A great deal of communication occurs through "constructing and interpreting non-existent versions of the world which are created for many different reasons" (Jeffries, 2010, p. 106). Negating is used in a

general term to deal with the conceptual practice rather than the verb negative form. It helps the speaker produce a hypothetical version of reality or constitutes alternative realities within a particular text. That's to say, where something is not existed in one reality, it means it is existed in the other. As a critical stylistic tool, negating has the power of a persuasive kind which can be negative or positive. Negation can be realized, first, syntactically through the combination of the negative particle added to the verb phrase. Second, lexically through the negative connotation of the certain lexicon. Third, morphologically through affixes. Finally, negation can be constructed through certain pronouns such as 'nobody,' 'no one,' 'nothing,' 'none,' etc., or through the modification of the noun by 'no'. The creation of non-existent worlds in order to improve a story and persuade discourse receivers into fearing, seeking, or believing the evoked reality; it is an implicature arising from disobeying the relational principle. The justification for this Critical stylistic tool for this seminar paper is hinged on its objective to explore the non-existent worlds created in Agary's *Yellow-Yellow* and described the ideological reasons behind the creation of such non-existent worlds.

### **Data and Methods**

This paper adopts a textual research design. Belsey (2013) observes that textual analysis is essential for research that focuses on texts or seeks to understand the imprint of culture in its artefacts. To corroborate this view, Caulfield (2022) avers that one of the aims of textual analysis in literary studies is to establish the author's intended meaning. To achieve this aim, it frequently investigates potentially unintentional links between texts, inquiries about what a text tells about the context in which it was created or attempts to interpret a classic work in a novel and unpredictable way. Therefore, the present study adopts a textual analysis to uncover the non-existent worlds created in literary text and the

ideology promoted through such worlds. The data for the study is Kaine Agary's *Yellow-Yellow*. A total of ten (10) extracts were selected from the text through the method of purposive sampling. The justification for this method is hinged on the fact that it allows for the selection of extracts that are most relevant to the study's objectives. To conduct the analysis, the paper utilises the textual construction by Jeffries (2014) who explains that textual-conceptual functions generally attempt to capture what a text is doing conceptually in portraying the world (or, in the case of literature, a fictitious world) in a certain way. It, also, describe how the linguistic system's resources are used to construct this conceptual meaning.

### **Data Analysis and Discussion**

This section highlights how negating as a Critical Stylistic tool is used to construct a nonexistent world. Also, it describes the ideology promoted by the author through the creation of such non-existent worlds. The selected data for analysis is discussed below.

**Text 1.** Mostly they were successful, but sometimes one or two of our boys failed to return from a mission. The word around the village was that the police had caught and kill them, but we would not hear about this on the radio (9-10).

The first text speaks of the Niger Delta youths' protest against the government and oil company workers. Also, it captures the elimination of these youths by law enforcement agents. Negating, as a Critical Stylistic feature, is realised in this text syntactically through the combination of the negative particle "not" added to the verb "hear" and lexically through the negative connotation of certain words such as "failed", "caught" and "kill". The expression "...but we would not hear about this on the radio" denotes the non-existent world in the text created by the author through the speech of the protagonist. Jefferies (2010) notes that negating works on the textual level between semantic and pragmatic meanings. Hence, within the context of this text, the



nonexistent world denotes the natives' expectation of the media to announce the elimination of the youths by the police. This expectation was not met by the media. Agary employs the nonexistent world in this text to foreground the injustice perpetrated against the Niger Delta region thereby promoting the ideology of justice for the region.

**Text 2.** She believed that she had found her life partner and that this man would take care of her. I don't think my father ever told her that he would marry her; she just assumed that he would (7).

Negating in text two is constructed syntactically through the negative particle "not" added to the verb "think". The nonexistent world is configured in the expressions "...this man would take care of her..." and "...he would marry her...". Here, the writer speaks of the young Bibi who found a man in Port Harcourt, took him as her life partner and believed that he would marry and take care of her without him proposing marriage to her or promising to marry her. Within the context of the text, it can be inferred that the nonexistent world in Bibi's minds refers to the life of marital union which she had hoped for but never happened.

**Text 3.** The black oil that spilled that day swallowed my mother's crops and unravelled the threads that held together her fantasies for me (10).

Text three discusses the subject of environmental degradation in the Niger Delta region. It depicts how the natives' crops were destroyed by oil spills owing to the activities of the oil company. Negating is constructed through lexical words that have negative connotation such as "spilled", "swallowed" and "unravelled". The non-existent world created in the text is seen in the expression "...her fantasies for me". Within the context of the text, one can deduce that the non-existent world refers to education beyond the secondary level which Bibi had desired for Zilayefa, her daughter. To her, education is the only key that could elevate her daughter and take

her beyond the borders of the village. Unfortunately, Bibi's dream for her daughter's future was aborted owing to the destruction of her farmland by oil spills. Agary employs the nonexistent world in the mind of Bibi to depict how the destruction of farmlands in the Niger Delta region could truncate the dreams of the natives for their children. Through this avenue, the writer promotes the ideology of environmentalism in the region which she wants the reader to accept.

**Text 4.** Disillusioned, my mother went back to her village to face the shame of being an unwed mother with nothing but dreams about my future. She would make sure that I accomplished what she had not (8).

Text four refers to the return of Bibi back to her village after being pregnant for a man in Port Harcourt who left the city without marrying her contrary to her expectation. Negating in this text is constructed morphologically through the prefixes "dis" and "un" attached to the lexical words "illusioned" and "wed" to form "disillusioned" and "unwed". The expressions "...dreams about my future..." and "...she would make sure..." denote the nonexistent world in the text created in the mind of Bibi for Zilayefa, her daughter. These expectations of Bibi for her daughter never materializes. Agary employs the creation of nonexistent world to portray how one's dreams could be aborted due to disappointment.

**Text 5.** Every young boy had visions of dying valiantly for the cause, as Ken Saro-Wiwa just had and as Isaac Adaka Baro had done nearly thirty years before him (34).

Text five captures the Niger Delta youths' resolve to fight for the emancipation of the region from all forms of exploitation and oppression. This resolve is precipitated by government's elimination of Ken Saro-Wiwa and other Ogoni leaders. The critical stylistic feature of negating is constructed in this text lexically through the word "dying" which has a negative connotation. However, the non-existent world in the text is

expressed in the expression "...visions of dying valiantly for the cause...". This nonexistent world is configured through the speech of the protagonist and it refers to the risk which the youths in the region plan to take in order to bring emancipation to the region. This hypothetical world provides Agary the avenue to project the ideology of activism which is prompting the youths to want to embark on such dangerous cause not minding its outcome.

**Text 6.** They demanded a hearty meal when they were hungry, disregarding the fact that the women had to walk extra kilometers to get firewood or cultivate and harvest the food now fertilized by their sweat and blood (40).

The patriarchal system in the Niger Delta region is presented in text six where Agary depicts men's dominance over the women. The men derelict their duties as heads of family leaving the women to provide for the family. Negating in this text is realised morphologically through the prefix "dis" denoting a negative particle attached to the lexical item "regarding". The hypothetical world created here is seen in the expression "disregarding the fact that the women had to walk extra kilometers to get firewood or cultivate and harvest the food...". This expression describes the efforts made by the women to provide for their families amidst their maltreatment by their husbands. The nonexistent world in this text is constructed by the protagonist represents the Niger Delta women's anticipation for their men to take up their position as men by providing for their families instead of abandoning their responsibilities for the women.

Through this text, Agary foregrounds the patriarchy ideology which most men in the Niger Delta region leverage on to maltreat their wives.

### Conclusion

The very target of this article was to gain an insight into how hypothetical worlds are encoded in Kiane Agary's *Yellow-Yellow*, drawing on Lesly Jefferies' Critical Stylistic Model. The objective was to identify and describe these nonexistent worlds and the ideologies promoted in the text through the construction of such worlds. The Critical Stylistic tool deployed in examining the text is negating. The analysis of negation in Kiane Agary's *Yellow-Yellow* demonstrated that as a critical stylistic device, negation is a dutiful linguistic tool. The data analysis revealed that the various nonexistent worlds identified in the corpus studied include the natives' expectation of the media to herald police brutality of youths in the region, the natives' desire for good education and better life for their children, provision of family needs by the Niger Delta men and the youths' willingness to sacrifice their lives for the emancipation of the region. These non-existent worlds were constructed through negating which is realised syntactically, lexically and morphologically in the text. The ideologies of environmentalism, justice, activism and patriarchy were foregrounded in the text using the critical stylistic tool of negating. The paper concludes that unveiling the ideologies residing in the text uncovers the reasons behind the creation of these non-existent worlds used by the author to improve her story.

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