

# Environmental Nexus with Social Disconnect: The Trajectory in Wole Soyinka's *The Swamp Dwellers*

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## ABSTRACT

The paper examines the interaction between humans and the environment and how they affect each other. It delves into the dynamics of life between the rural and city environments. It upholds that a dislocation from the natural environment transcends into a disruption of the family bond and life. This is because it causes sterility, since there will be no root. The paper takes as a base *The Swamp Dwellers* by Wole Soyinka, which it looks at from the environmentalist connection as a new model, especially as it concerns its effect on family tie as well as the dislodgment of youths from the rural area to the city. It is true that some critics may have examined the play, taking some look at it from the environmentalist perspective. They may not have taken cognisance of the influences and affinity between the neglect and abuse of the earth and the destruction of character and humanity with modernity, which these elements cause. This is a major trajectory of this paper. In all, the paper employs library research method with direct references to actual occurrences in the society. This is to expose the implications of the abuse of the environment on humanity, as well as implicate them.

**Keywords:** Earth; Environment; Ecocriticism; Family.

## INTRODUCTION

Literature serves humanity, however one looks at it. It is generally noted to serve two major function: entertainment and education. No matter the form in which it comes. According to Sangeetha, M., "literature in all its bureaucracy may be seen as written facts, whether the literature itself is authentic or fictional. ... literature becomes very important in learning about one's surroundings (1). Continuing on the same page, Sangeetha says that, "literature offers insights into how society has developed. It also facilitates the recognition of the references made in more modern literature because authors frequently refer to mythology, surroundings, i.e., eco-grievance, traditions, cultures, and so on"(1).

Dwelling more on the ecological issues confronting humanity, Ambika Bhalla, posits that, at the dawn of the new millennium, the whole globe is facing serious ecological crisis. The most urgent issues like global warming, chronic resource shortage, rainforest destruction, and species extinction indicate the "end of nature". Myriads of physical as well as mental problems are emerging due to the environmental crisis. If we wish to pass on a safe and healthy world to children then protection of environment will be the issue of immediate concern. (1)

This is very true of the life of humans, and it is a major reason for this study. It becomes most critical upon a crucial look at the situation as we have it in the world today. Ecological crises abound everywhere, and

numerous physical and mental ailments are infesting humanity the world over. Moving further, Bhalla says that “there is an utmost need today that the children must be made aware regarding the present state, protection and preservation of the environment. Eco-writing, in the form of children’s literature can enhance environmental literacy” (1). The reference to children is possibly due to the fact that children of today are the hope of the future, and where they are not properly orientated, the future will be catastrophic.

Other writers who have written about environmentalism are Nabeta Sangili Nixon and Ongutte Ngala Ronald. Drawing references from (Nwagbara, 2010 and Fai, 2010), Nixon and Roland have observed that, “these ecological issues, we can say have defined humanity and the quality of life he leads” (29). While acknowledging that both scientist and artists have reacted to the phenomenon of the environmental destruction and the attendant consequences, they regret that the literary artist has not been taken seriously, a situation which they referred to as the “downside”. According to them, “he [the literary artist] has not been heard and observed keenly, and if he has, he has not been appreciated for the lack of hard statistics, yet: he like the scientist actuates the reality albeit creatively”(29). Finally, Nixon and Roland conclude that “ecocriticism reckons that all humanity is affected by climate change and environmental degradation regardless of social class, economic systems, political or professional orientations” (30). To be added to this is that not only humanity will be affected, but also every other thing in existence. This is because, “everything is connected to everything else” as Barry Commoner (16) has posited as the First Law of Ecology.

Eco-criticism is the interpretation of literary works from the environmentalist perspectives. It aims to explore the (mis)treatment of the environment with an ultimate view to protect, nurture and preserve nature primarily for the good of humanity, and on a general note for the good of everything in existence. Therefore, according to Krishnasamy, K., Eco-criticism is “one of the ways in which humanists fight for the world in which they live, ... [and try] ... to restore the Earth’s health which remains lost owing to man’s wrongdoing” (55). Humanity is implicated in the whole scheme of the destruction of the environment, and is, in fact, the only culprit. Sandeep Kumar and Abha Singh have pinned this down to a particular occurrence in history of human existence. According to them, “Colonialism has been a huge component of the global destruction of the environment” (4215). This is the crux of the matter. Humans have consistently endeavoured to make themselves “comfortable” without commitment to the plight or welfare of the other elements within the society.

According to Enamul Kabir Pasa ecocriticism “... tries to reread the representation of nature in literature from the environmentalist point of view” (2221); and to Beatriz Lindo Mañas, “a growing concern for the future—not only for us, humans, but for the planet—has propelled this academic movement into every direction”(246). This is the concern of environmental literary criticism.

Liam Kiehne, referring to Leopold Aldo’s question and answer about “How do you make someone think like a mountain?” (1), identified what could be cited as the real essence of the study of environmental literature: “...to pursue conservation efforts and to fight for the just treatment of the land” (1). This is the fulcrum of the whole effort in the environmental study of literary text: “to fight for the just treatment of the land”. This, in the final analysis, is to ensure that both humans and the “Others” in existence continue to thrive.

Hubert Zapf has delineated the function of literature in relation to sustainability. According to him, “to discuss literature in connection with the concept of sustainability raises the question about its relationship to economic, social, and ecological concepts of sustainability” (15). As integral parts of the study of literature and sustainability, there are social, economic ecological as well as ethical questions regarding the just treatment of the environment. Zapf, on the same page, citing Kagan, sums up the whole essence of sustainability thus: “to characterize a management of forests that would not deplete resources, but allow the renewable natural resources to regenerate’ (15). This is because, according to Brundtland Report as quoted

by Zapf, “humanity has the ability to make development sustainable to ensure that it meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” (15). It is this ability that humans have deliberately refused to utilise or are unaware of. To bridge this gap, therefore, environmental criticisms of literary works have become mandatory.

## CONCEPTS

The **Earth** is used predominantly as a symbol for the environment. It is the land, flora and fauna, all entities in existence that are naturally provided, including the dry lands, the swamps and the waters. This is a position that has been advanced elsewhere by Michael O Ejiodu. According to Ejiodu, “This relates to the earth in the ordinary sense as well as the hidden treasures and entities on, in, and around it. It is within this domain that one can talk of such concepts as biosphere, flora, fauna, the environment, others, as well as man” (31).

The **Environment** is not far from this. As a matter of fact, both terms could be and have actually been used interchangeably. Both terms cannot actually be separated. According to Felix E. Okieimen and James M. Okuo, environment is “everything that is around us ... the sum total of biophysical and sociocultural condition that influence and is influenced by organisms. The natural environment consists of four inter-related systems: the atmosphere, hydrosphere lithosphere and biosphere” (1).

This same concept has attracted attention from other writers. In their work, Sandeep Kumar and Abha Singh have simply identified the environment as “the collection of the socioeconomic, biological or chemical factors that make up the surroundings of a human acting as both creator and moderator of his own environment. It comprises both living and non-living beings *that exist in agreement with one another*” [emphasis added] (4214). Humans are part creators and the moderators. Most importantly, all the elements, including humans, within the environment must exist in agreement such that non destroys the other, nor threatens their existence. Another author, Nanny Sri Lestari has posited and rightly that “in general or literally, the definition of the environment is actually divided into two major parts, namely the natural environment and the social environment. The environment itself has meaning of everything that is around humans” (464). It is important to note that the environment under focus here is “the natural environment”.

One of the most productive phenomena relating to literary creation, both in terms of imagination as well as criticism, is the environmental challenges that gained recognition from the 1990s with the work of Cheryll Glotfelty. And about ecological environment/challenges and its contribution to literary creations, Li Hou, Jianjun Kang and Yongli Xu have said: “The ecological environment and human culture have contributed to the creation of literature, and the works have constantly given new symbols to the regional environment to enrich its image, and the two have influenced and promoted each other” (69), and moving further they concluded that “...literary geography provides a very important way of studying texts” (70). This has come to realisation with respect to the study of literary text that may be considered old. They have now come alive with new meanings and vigour. This is true about Wole Soyinka’s *The Swamp Dwellers*.

Critics have over the years examined *The Swamp Dwellers* from diverse perspectives, but this paper looks at it from the environmentalist nexus as a new paradigm, especially as it concerns its effect on family bond as well as the dislocation of youths to the city. Some critics may have examined it from the environmentalist perspective, but they may not have taken cognisance of the intricate relationship between the neglect and abuse of the earth and the destruction of characters and humanity, as well as the connection and affinity of these with modernity (which the city represents). This becomes most important as the havoc is noted to be taking a huge toll on the youth which ought to be for the propagation of humanity. It is against this purview that this paper seeks to acquire its relevance. Also, the paper looks into the role played by religion in the entire process of the destruction of the swamp, city and the youth as well as the impoverishment of the

masses represented by the members of the solitary hut in the swamp.

## **ENVIRONMENTAL NEXUS WITH SOCIAL DISCONNECT IN WOLE SOYINKA'S *THE SWAMP DWELLERS***

The *Swamp Dwellers* has enjoyed a very large readership, but it may suffice to say that all the while, it continues to be read from the environmentalist, emotive, social, cultural and psychological perspective, ignoring the very obvious, yet so hidden: The Earth, and its interaction with the city. Here, effort is being made to try to establish the consequences of the neglect of the earth in humanity's daily activities. It is important to note that the injustice done to the earth finds its way into the lives of humans, hurting them just as much as they hurt the Earth, if not more.

Mohammad Ataullah Nuri, although examines *The Swamp Dwellers* from the point of view of the relationship between humans and the environment, did not focus on the disconnection which this the city has wrought to the rural environment. Also, it built attention on the Niger-Delta issues. Although, riverine and swamp topography form the locus of the entire play, the subject is not mainly oil spillage and pollution. Rather, it is majorly one of flooding. According to Nuri,

In *The Swamp Dwellers*, which was written before the oil was found in a significant amount; Wole Soyinka rightly anticipated the indiscriminate and callous onslaught on nature that has become characteristic of the Nigerian culture during the recent decades after the discovery of oil in this region. In *The Swamp Dwellers* Wole Soyinka shows that the arrival of modernity and industrialization in the Niger Delta region has a serious effect on the environment as well as on the family relationship and the relationship between the humans and their environment. The strong and respectful bond between the swamp dwellers and the swamp has been taken over by the arrival of the urban and capitalist forces. *The Swamp Dwellers* focuses on the conflict between the rural and the urban forces, the former being the symbol of honest living and honest thinking and the latter being the symbol of corruption, materialism and dishonesty. (1-2)

The city may be said to breed dishonesty, but the rural area cannot be said to be the abode of sincerity as one can still see from the life of the like of Kadiye. The Priest was never in the city, yet he was more corrupt than the city dwellers. Again, it may be right to posit that the case of *The Swamp Dwellers* is one of prophetic proclamation. This is borne out of the fact that as at the time of writing of the play, neither environmental pollution nor flooding had started. The play is overtly anticipatory. Referring to Igwezu's farm, oil spillage and flooding are presented thus:

**BEGGAR:** Was there much damage to the farm?

**MAKURI:** Much damage? Not a grain was saved, not one tuber in the soil...And what the flood left behind was poisoned by the oil in the swamp water. [*Shakes his head*].... It is hard for him, coming back for a harvest that isn't there (92).

Flourishing oppression pervades everywhere: from human to human, and from humanity to the environment. The rulers oppress the masses, and just as the subalterns' revolt against the rulers, the environment (another subaltern) revolts against humanity: humans having transgressed against the earth. Also, the city removes the humanity in humans just as it gradually erodes the rural environment, destroying everything in its way and wake; trying to make cities out of the villages, and in the process make machines of humans. Consequently, humans have lost feelings for one another.

The city swallows the youths, so also the forest and the swamp, the people, having been contaminated by the city. Those it cannot swallow, it vomits to the city for annihilation. Consequently, the future is lost, while the elders sit and virtually do "nothing". This leads to a state of great despondency. This is the state of

affairs in and around the solitary hut in the swamp where Makuri and his family lived. This is symptomatic of the life of the people in the play, and as such the whole community whose name is unknown, and is never mentioned. The fact of the community not being mentioned, is a pointer to the fact of the community representing the whole of human habitations.

From the first stage direction, the atmosphere is set with the earth as a major concern. The earth, natural as it may seem, is replete with signs of desolation and destruction. The destruction orchestrated by flood which in the real sense, is brought about by the actions of humans. It may just serve to posit here that this is a form of objective correlative, and a chorus giving insight into what is to be expected in the life of humanity within the hut which harbours every human presented in the play.

The village is located in a swamp where frogs, rain and other swamp noises are heard pervading everywhere. This is set out from the onset in the stage direction:

A village in the swamps

Frogs, rain and other swamp noises (81).

This is dreary and portends disaster and dislocation that is to come. There is no cheery portrayal, and as such, no hope of a better future. Rather, what one sees and feels is a sense of dejection and rejection.

The scene is a hut built on stilt in a slum. This is, from all sense of decency, a place not fit for habitation. It is most disgusting and uninhabitable. As stated in the stage direction: “the scene is a hut on stilts, built on one of the scattered semi-firm islands in the swamps” (81). The backdoor introduction of the elements of firmness should not be taken seriously, as it is only “semi”. This shows clearly that it is not firm and could give in any minute. This is the atmosphere created for the setting of the play. This is where the play begins and ends. It is the only setting and scene. Part of the reason for this deplorable condition is as a result of the activities of man, although overtly stated as that of the Serpent, the deity of the waters, whose priest is Kadiye. The Serpent is said to vomit water albeit with the knowledge of its priest.

Although there is an attempt at invention of city life, it fails, just like the city failed those who run into her embrace. The city either turns them into mechanical devices (machines) which are without feeling or into failures by all standards: economic, social, matrimonial, etc. The last statement of the opening stage direction is: “It is *near dusk*, and there is a gentle wash of rain outside [emphasis added].” This is ominous. The implication of this is that time and life have gone far, far spent and as good as gone. Respite is far gone or forgotten. Hope is gone.

The image crafted of the people by Makuri as they come for their haircuts is as disgusting. But it must be pointed out that in all, it was only Kadiye that had a cut of his hair, and he very nearly lost his neck to Igwezu’s razor. The implication is that the priest is dirty, rotten. The populace is not different. Makuri addresses his wife, “the older you get, the more of a fraud you become” (82), and further down continues, “if you had to get up so often to shave the heads of the whole village ... and most of them crusted with kraw-kraw so that a man has to scrape and scrape until...” (82). Indications of the rottenness in the village are captured in the word “fraud” and the expression “crusted with kraw-kraw” above. These reek of corruption which is heightened by the flatulent disposition of the priest, Kadiye. He is bloated from the proceeds of his corrupt enrichment from the submissions from members of the community. Even the “kraw-kraw” above is nauseating, just as the people of the land and the priest of the serpent, represented in this case by Alu and later by Kadiye. But it was not the Serpent who vomited the flood. It was as a result of the actions and inactions of humans that the flood laid everywhere desolate. Humans violated the environment thereby choking her. She needed to breathe and has to vomit the waters of the flood.

The first hint at getting lost in the swamp is made and it is with reference to Igwezu (82). This is after a rigorous rigmarole by both husband and wife (Makuri and Alu). But what Alu did not realise is that both Igwezu, his brother Awuchike, the youths and the entire populace, especially the youths are lost in the quagmire which the city is, and which the marsh also represents at the village level. Although Alu expresses doubt about Igwezu's ability to find his way back, which in reality is the truth, the fact is that though he comes back, it was only for a brief moment, and half-heartedly at that. At the end of the play, Igwezu rushes off to the city since the village could not contain him anymore. His mind and soul have been snatched from him and the village. Worse still, he is totally lost to and in the city. Part of the reason for this dislocation of character, personality and sensibility is the rejection of the swamp. One sees a difference in the life of Makuri and Alu who share much in the mud and with the mud in their early days.

Only the beggar remains at the end. His presentation in the stage direction gives an inkling to this: “*the blind man is tall and straight.... His bearing is of quiet dignity*”. He is not only “tall”, he is also “straight”. In addition, he exudes “dignity”. This is in spite of his blindness. He is the only one who is in love with the earth, one who is desirous of kneading the soil with his hands. He accompanies this with pious prayer almost all the time. It is therefore not surprising that he is the only one left when all others have been rattled out of the stage. This is prophetic about those who can and will remain after the anti-earth ones are gone. This is life at the biblical end-time when only the just will inherit the kingdom of God. The Beggar is a priest and messiah of some sort, another Christ who has come to sacrifice to redeem Igwezu, just as the original One of *The Bible* came for mankind. Like most of mankind, Igwezu refuses to be redeemed. Consequently, he is damned to the city. To cap his actions and roles, in the final statement, the Beggar says,

The swallows find their nest again when the cold is over. Even the bats desert dark holes in the trees and flap wet leaves with wings of leather. There were wings everywhere as I wiped my feet against your threshold. I heard the cricket scratch himself beneath the armpit as the old man said to me (112).

Finally, in a Salvific manner, “*The Beggar sighs, gestures a blessing*” and concludes, “I shall be here to give account” (112).

One striking thing to be noted about the play is that the community where the play is set is nameless. This presupposes and means that it could and is any and every place (village, town, city, nation or even the entire world). The hut is therefore universal. So, it involves everyone. This universal idea is captured by Muhammad Mushfiqur Rahman where he says,

the play goes beyond the border of a particular area. It expands the border of readers' knowledge, and deals with tensions, problems, conflicts, calamities, and struggles ever-present in human community across the world.... The characters presented in *The Swamp Dwellers* happen to exist in a particular place and time, but the universally significant themes soars [sic] the play to a great height. (1)

Another focus in the play is the land. Land is very important to Africans. It is the cradle of life and the core of sustenance to humanity. Finally, it receives man's remains upon death. So, it is not surprising that Africans sacrifice to the earth goddess. It is little wonder therefore that the only one who pledges to continue the work with the earth, and with his bare hand, is spared when all others lose in one way or the other. This lone survivor is the blind Beggar.

Yet another important element is the filial ties. These are the strands that bind a people and humanity together. In *The Swamp Dwellers* both are shattered. Today is on quick sand, therefore the future is neither steady nor safe. Although Alu makes efforts, albeit verbally, to rescue his boys, she could not save any. His boys were already lost. None could or does send words home to the family. This is an attitude alien to

Africans, which has the family as the core of their lives.

Some of the earth and environmental elements identifiable from the text include rainfall, mud and muddy terrain, mire, slough, flies that try to suck blood from people as is observed in the case of Alu. She “[*Yells suddenly and slaps herself on the arm*]” (82) and Makuri reacts thus: “... Ha! Don’t tell me that a fly has been trying to suck blood from your dried-up veins” (82). The environment is infested by nuisance bugs and other blood-sucking insects (81). and Alu appears to suffer more than the normal viciousness of the swamp flies.

The play opens on a note of apprehension: a son seems lost. Soon, readers are gradually led to understand that it is actually two sons, twins that are lost. The readers never get to meet the second whose name (Awuchike) is only mentioned twice. From the first moment, Awuchike is never found. He is totally lost. According to Igwezu, “Awuchike is dead to you [the parents] and to this house. Let us not raise his ghost” (104). This feeling of trepidation is actually manifested in the psychological enslavement and despondency into which Igwezu, a representative of the youths of the nameless land, falls. Initially Igwezu returns to his parents’ place physically, but by the curtain fall, he runs off back to the city. The implication of this is that he is lost forever, and so are the youths. Alu laments,

.... He shouldn’t have rushed off like that ...dashing off

Like a madman before anyone could ask him a thing. (82)

In great enthusiasm, Igwezu rushed off to the city hopeful of better prospects. But did he come back, rather visit home? Yes: not in affluence, but rather in debt. Alu describes her son in the image of a madman as he rushes off to the city. This is exactly how it looks and sounds as the youths hasten off to the city for “greener pastures” as they say.

Makuri says, “Dead men don’t go to the city. They go to hell” (82). He is right. The city kills people and they go to hell, especially as they have become insensitive towards their fellow humans as well as the environment. Recall, Awuchike totally abandons his twin-brother and they are totally separated. This progression is from home (village) to the city, they die and proceed to hell, having been turned mechanical and non-human.

Alu concludes that she had two sons, but that one (Awuchike) was lost in the mire of the city, stating that she does not want to lose the second (Igwezu). Alu says, “... I had another son before the mire drew him into its depths, I don’t want Igwezu going the same way” (83). To this Makuri retorts, “you haven’t lost a son yet in the slough... (83). The truth is that Makuri at this time could not sense that which a mother’s sensibility alone could understand. Actually, Awuchike was already lost, and so, Alu affirms, “the worst has happened already. Awuchike was drowned” (83). In fact, Awuchike was already drowned in the city’s psychological disposition. He is never to return, neither is he to re-establish filial feeling. Thus, he goes after and actually takes his twin brother’s wife and throws him out to suffer and possibly die in the city’s callousness. Having experienced the city, although Igwezu comes back home, he is not comfortable. His mind and sensibility have been violently snatched by the city. This has only happened because he abandoned the earth. So, at the end, he rushes off to the city and is swallowed up, just like his brother, Awuchike.

These people are local farmers, living a subsistence life in the slummy marshland making baskets and such like goods for survival. Whatever else that seems like continental lacks patronage from all, except the agent of the Serpent, Kadiye the Priest. Among the various activities of the people for sustenance are the hunting of crabs, and crocodile for their skins, during which process Makuri suggest that the traders must have taken

Alu's skin along, thereby making her insensitive. But the truth is that Alu felt very strongly as a mother should, towards her children when they are or have drifted away: "lost" (84). She has lost them, and as a barren one, dejectedly retires to the back of the solitary hut to mourn and possibly die of loneliness and heartbreak. This again is not unconnected with her involvement in the despoliation of the environment. The hunting of the various species of the flora and fauna presupposes this.

On their marriage night, Alu and her husband Makuri experienced a new drowning or sinking in the mire (85 – 86). It is a revelling in love and affection between the couple on one hand and the couple and the mud on the other. This is a mingling most desirable and reinvigorating. It imbues the couple with energy and the needed spirituality that they are able to perform optimally and so produce vibrant babies. Sexuality is also displayed as performed by the couple, (Makuri and Alu) by the river and in the swamp, mingling with nature and the entire environment. It is, therefore, not surprising that there was a bountiful production of twins. It is important to note that after the twins, no child comes again. This bareness could be linked with the dawn of city life, indicated by the presence of the gadgets from the Western world in the barber's shop. The youths who have been driven to and drawn by the city become sterile. They are out of tune with nature (Earth), so artificial, that they become bereft of fertility in all aspects: milk of humanity, filial love and affinity, procreation, et cetera. The author, by this, seems to say that city life and things drain people of their reproductive abilities.

When a people desecrate the land, they become scared she might take out a revenge on her aggressors. This is an African creed. Such is it that humanity, especially Africans, is afraid of nature, represented in this instance by rivers and swamps. Prior to the despoliation of the environment, people could frolic in the natural environment without fear. But the moment the relationship became one of exploitation and despoliation, all that changed. Humans became mortified, horrified to say the least of their natural habitat. This is what one observes in *The Swamp Dwellers* from Alu and her husband as they dialogue and reflect on their sex life of youthful years in their marriage. In a sensual manner, Makuri teases Alu about her erotic display and disposition as they play and follows up with: "You never feared the swamp then. You could walk across it day and night and go to sleep in the middle of it.... Alu, do you remember our wedding night?" (85). The high point of the display on their bridal night is encapsulated in the teachings by Alu's mother which she was enjoined to practise on her bridal bed. This she does by the rivers at night, which constituted the bridal bed: "where the rivers meet, there the marriage must begin. And the river bed itself is the perfect bridal bed" (86). This is what Alu and Makuri practised. The consummation of their marriage was done at the point where two rivers meet in the mud, in the swamp. It is, therefore, not surprising that the marriage is blessed with twins. Those who run away from nature are not only barren of procreation, but also of sensibilities. They are sterile in all respects. The fore- and after-play were all carried out in the mud by the rivers, while sliding and rolling in the mud, mire, swamp and waters of the rivers at their confluence. It is striking to note that according to their father, Makuri, "the whole village said that the twins were the very colour of the swamp ...." (86-87). This is transcendental. The swamp is manifested in the twins. This is how it is. Environment and human are bound by a mystical cord. So, when Igwezu fails to take his woman into the mud, the magical bond is broken and the wife breaks away from him, and the family is shattered.

The twins leave the mud of the village for the city and their spiritual umbilical cord is also broken. Thus, they become alienated, totally estranged. This is the plight of the youths and of the future of the village of the solitary hut of the play. This is the state of the future of the generations, unless there is a retracing of steps. According to Makuri, "it ruins them. The city ruins them" (87). This is the conclusion. The city ruins the youths and the future. The whole episode of the ruining of the farmland by the flood is nature's own way of revisiting mankind with the violence from them against the earth as well as earth's abandonment. The people must suffer for neglecting the earth and for doing violence against her. There is, therefore, a call to humans to tend the earth in a most caring manner.



## CONCLUSION

There are many levels of disconnection: twins, children from their parents, spouses in their later years compared to their beginning, the old from the young, the people from their priests, the village from the city. All these are orchestrated by humanity's disconnect from the earth.

Our ancestors have left the signs for us; they have set up the lampstands in the sand of time for us unworthy children as could be seen in the play. These symbols were to guide us on the part way to success in life. Unfortunately, humans have grown insensitive to the good things around them, taking those things as retrogressive and outdated. This, to a large extent, is due to the indoctrination from modernity which has led Africans into the abandonment of their lore.

Humans have been on a trajectory that seems to lead to anarchy. Therefore, it is necessary that they chart a new course and take a new bearing which should lead them to a better destination. In doing this, it is necessary that humans plot their route beginning from the past, through the present into the future by heeding the warnings encapsulated in *The Swap Dwellers*.

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