

Corruption and the Politics of Terrorism in Contemporary Nigeria: The Perspective of Soji Cole's *Embers*

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Abstract

Corruption and terrorism have become in the recent times two most cancerous issues that bedevil and plague the progress of the Nigerian nation. The literary artists on the other hand have remained vocal and faithful in their reflection and representation of these social cankerworms consciously established to blight the future of the Nigerian nation and people. The contemporary Nigerian society is grossly accursed with the most turbulent sociopolitical issues of national disaster: corruption and terrorism, which now require constant literary confrontation if the Nigerian nation stands any chance of social recuperation and political resuscitation. This paper therefore seeks to interrogate corruption and the politics of terrorism as to how they contribute to the plethora Boko Haram activities in the Nigerian nation. This study adopts the content analytical approach as well as the qualitative research methodology for the analysis and evaluation of most troubling terrorist activities within the Nigerian space, as reflected in Soji Cole's *Embers*. The study finds that corruption thrives effectively in the Nigerian society because every member of that society is culpable of the crime. It also reveals that there is a total conspiracy of silence by the supposed well-meaning individuals in relation to all the terrorist onslaughts of the Boko Haram group on the people which explains the general atmosphere of distrust as seen in Cole's play. The study reveals also that the problem of corruption plaguing the well-being of the nation is a problem of humanity as can be seen with significantly every member of the society in the play having this inordinate corrupt inclination. On the final assessment, the study reveals that the dramatist is still hopeful of a new and better Nigeria if the exploited and victimized group is willing to rise to the occasion and recuperate the nation.

Keywords: Corruption, Terrorism, Boko Haram, Sociopolitical, Contemporary

Introduction

Post-colonial African societies are still grappling with the lofty effects of colonialism. Following the attainment of independence, many African societies and citizens rightly expected better living conditions for the African people. But at the wake of independence it appeared almost immediately that both human and social conditions have continued to deteriorate, and in the recent time even at a gross rate. As Promise Adiele has observed,

In Africa, following the attainment of independence, many African countries have been enmeshed in new politics and the fashioning of new societies. In this process, there is inevitable schism, a yawning, abysmal gap between the emergent new political, bourgeois class and the toiling masses who only depend on their labour power for relevance and survival. Accordingly, African writers have responded to these developments by directing their creative and critical

energy towards social commitment and the immediate need to identify various anomalies in society. (36)

The postcolonial African society is constantly at the brink of perpetual collapse. However, with globalization, largely enabled by constant literary intervention and interrogation, focus is rapidly moving from the effects of colonialism to the contemporaneous human and sociopolitical realities of the Nigerian and African spaces. At every social sector, particularly within the Nigerian space, things have grossly gone moribund, consequently degenerating the living conditions of the Nigerian populace. After all, African “independence did not bring about fundamental changes... (as the) age of independence had produced a new class and a new leadership that often was not very different from the old one” (Ngugi, p. 65). It suffices therefore to say that even at the wake of the much clamoured independence, African leaders have not fared any better than the colonialists in terms of their own leadership. Nothing seems to have worked for the majority of the Nigerian people because of the cankerworm, corruption that has eaten deep into the

marrows of the individual and national institutions.

Corruption has been the bane to Africa's social, political and economic development. Chinua Achebe had constantly identified poor leadership and governance as a major impeding factor toward the development of African societies, particularly addressing the political situation in Nigeria. In his seminal book, *The Trouble with Nigeria*, Achebe instantly points out that

The trouble with Nigeria is simply and squarely a failure of leadership. There is nothing basically wrong with the Nigerian character. There is nothing wrong with the Nigerian land or climate or water or air or anything else. The Nigerian problem is the unwillingness or inability of its leaders to rise to the responsibility, to the challenge of personal example which are the hallmarks of true leadership. (1)

Politically, socially, economically, culturally, and even religiously, corruption has continued to creep into the fabrics of the

Nigerian society and has constantly wreaked ominous havoc. Significantly, literature has come to assume an invaluable position in the society, thereby standing as a watchdog to society and human activities. Following an age long cliché that literature is the mirror of the society, it suffices therefore to say that a sociopolitical-oriented literary artist must without fear or bias, uphold that mirror for the society to have a proper gaze. It is in the adherence to this enviable responsibility that the artist's social relevance is guaranteed. It is also against this backdrop that the utilitarian aspect of literature is rightly placed.

Most notably, corruption is at the basic of the writers' concern and thematic preoccupations, especially, in the contemporaneous Nigerian setting. Greed and deceit; significant components of corruption have been assured permanency in the ordering of things within African societies, and as such, most post-colonial African writers reflect these as recurring thematic concerns in their literary engagements. The modern Nigerian writer must device a means to the interrogation of the nation's contemporary situations that have left both the people and society at the precipice irredeemable doom. It is therefore crucial that the literary artist assumes an

enormous responsibility toward the attainment of social progress, by graphically charting the history of his immediate environment, whether the past, present or future, thereby making a sociopolitical conscious engagement of his society. Outlining therefore, the invaluable role a writer plays in reflecting the peculiar African experience and the need of course to better human condition, Vitalis Nwulu observes that:

Every writer is influenced by his society in as much as he wishes to bring his own influence to bear on the society [...] The nature of the human society in the contemporary world, especially in Africa where maladministration, corruption and nepotism reign supreme, requires the services of writers who respond quite genuinely to the social relevance of art, perhaps more than ever before. This is because the African experience of colonialism and all the attendant problems over the years [...] the post-colonial disappointment and

sell-out by the emergent African leadership; the widespread poverty and social injustices which Africans experience, all call for greater level of commitment from African writers with the healing tonic as a way of redirecting the misplaced priorities of African political and socio-economic processes. (115)

In the recent time, writers are indeed swiftly turning attention from the aftermath of colonialism to the contemporaneous issues and crises bedeviling African societies. Jasper Onuekwusi points out that literature of every environment should be ready to advance and evolve as its social domain evolves, “as human society and social activities evolve and develop, the narrative follows in their footsteps to document, explain and explore the trends” (50). Echoing Onuekwusi’s sentiment, Solomon Adedokun Edebor points out that “Issues of underdevelopment, corruption, poverty, epileptic power supply, incessant workers’ strike, electoral fraud, and compromise of the judiciary and other law enforcement agencies, among others, have, consequently, formed part of the nation’s dark history” (46),

and of course, these remain prevalent in the Nigerian socio-political corrupt system. It is ideal that African writers pay crucial attention to the socio-political crises of their immediate environments. The Nigerian corrupt system has undoubtedly led to many and worst disturbing issues of social crises such as Boko Haram terrorism, Herdsmen massacre, Unknown Gunmen incessant attacks and carnage, etc, all of which debilitate the progress of the Nigerian society.

Portrayal of Corruption in *Embers*

Soji Cole's *Embers* chronicles the mayhem of the Boko Haram activities and the politics around terrorism. The play can be read as a modern day tragedy of the Nigerian society which has become markedly prevalent with ostentatious political corruption and incessant decapitation of human lives and property. As part of the dramatist's thematic preoccupations, corruption and the politics of terrorism have caught the eye as two most recurrent issues confronting the society and hinging its progress. It is inconceivable, in the dramatist's opinion that as a society which largely revels on its triumph on sociopolitical vices would ever hope for any form of collective achievement. It is important that the literatures which emanate

in the contemporary Nigerian milieu would necessarily reflect these heinous social vices. Therefore, as topical as the case of Boko Haram terrorism within the Nigerian space, it becomes significantly timely that as a dramatist, Cole engages the medium of art to interrogate the politics around the existence of Boko Haram as well as its sustainability. According to John Egole and David Nwakanm, "Cole's dramatic discourse on Boko Haram terrorism is significantly timely. The dramatist is socially relevant because *Embers* addresses one of the bothering topical issues in the society" (79). As corollary to this development, Ayodele Ibiyemi, in consideration of Cole's relevance with *Embers*, notes that, "it becomes imperative for the current wave of terrorism and insurgency to herald another genre" (*Wawa Book Review*, 2019).

It is however safe to point out that the modern crises in Nigeria are all borne out of the insatiability of the leaders, and of course individuals. Thus, these social vices are issues that thrive on the premise of corruption. The Nigerian society has found itself entwined in a considerable political quagmire as a result of the nation's corrupt proclivities. Even when corruption, a bane to national development remains visible within the nation, the problem of insecurity,

orchestrated by corrupt practices that are founded on socio-political and socio-ethnic trajectory remain prevalent. The problem of insecurity has become unwholesome that both human lives and properties remain constantly vulnerable to daily terrorism in Nigeria. Nigerian literary artists have therefore identified literature as a veritable domain upon which these contemporaneous issues are graphically charted. As Sola Owonibi observes, “Apart from revealing the lines and contradictions in the present African societies, the modern African drama is a potent means of recording African experiences in its numerous dimensions. Therefore, it has always been a realistic medium of expression of the different developmental stages of African social consciousness” (290).

Cole’s award winning *Embers* addresses the issue of corruption in the face of terrorism. Maik Ortserga notes that *Embers* “is a drama of metaphor and the author best illustrates a dark testimony to our humanity and also a sad commentary on contemporary Nigeria” (*World Press*, 2020). Accordingly, Edebor notes that “the nation is trapped in the throes of escalating but avoidable terrorist acts of Boko Haram insurgents, as well as Herders’ carnage across the country. These are in addition to other socio-political challenges

that daily trouble the nation, thereby pushing the nation to the threshold of collapse” (47). Quite apart from meeting the lofty expectations of the jury for the 2018 NLNG Literature Prize, Cole’s *Embers* reflects the current issue of terrorism in Nigeria. According to Ibiyemi, “Soji Cole’s *Embers* narrates the story of victims of Boko Haram, the terrorist group that has continued to wreak havoc in many parts of northern Nigeria. The story captures the different dimensions of the crisis and the responses of the parties involved” (*Wawa Book Review*, 2019). This is significant if we consider the fact that “writers use their works to address issues of social injustice, exploitation of the masses and seek to rectify these imbalances through the medium of art” (Nwulu, 116).

It is Cole’s perception in the play that every member of the society is inexorably corrupt. The political leaders, businessmen, religious leaders, and even those looked upon as epitome of civilization; the teachers, all contribute to the social, cultural, political maladies and moral decadence in Nigeria. Frantz Fanon is right after all in his proposition that ‘there is a thief in all of us.’ Pointing to the corrupt system that entangles every member of the society, Soldier 2 reveals, “The government destroys the system. The police do. The army do.

Teachers do. Traders rip off people. Churches join too. What will be left of the country for your children and mine? Carcass. I tell you; mere horrific carcasses!” (76). Ironically, and sadly too, all these are people in whom the progress, peace, security, order, sustainability, development and morality of the nation should without any misgiving be entrusted.

Cole has equally not spared the masses in his exploration of corruption which testament to the innate human inclination. In the play, Talatu points out that “... the poor steals from each other too! That’s why the curtains rise and fall in our lives but nothing ever changes! We are all thieves! But the crudest thief is the one who has no sanctity for the sacredness of friendship! The one who twists the knife on the back of her sister!” (91). In fact, corruption as Cole portrays in the play cuts across all and sundry. Cole’s *Embers* does not indict only the politicians’ nefarious dealings, but also the always overlooked activities of the downtrodden. Pointing to this, the dramatist observes in the author’s note that “The game of ‘survival of the weakest’ has taken top mandate – even among the common people. The poor robs the poor too!” (iii). Evident to the foregoing, Talatu recalls how her mother would throw back the dirt she sweeps from the premises of

Dogon-Kuri Local Government Council, just to ensure she maintains her daily job: “She had struggled so hard to live, and she died wretched... She worked as a cleaner at the Dogon-Kuri Local Government Council where she swept its compound for two years...When no one was watching, she would throw back the dirt she had swept so that she could return the next day to keep her job...” (7).

Cole’s thematic preoccupation in *Embers* is all encompassing and all-embracing in its interrogation of corruption. The dramatist points accusing finger virtually at every member of the Nigerian society. Every individual in the society in one way or the other contributes to the prevailing decadence. The political leaders, the police, the army, the religious leaders, Boko Haram terrorists, businessmen and the general public have all failed to propel the cause of the nation. In its entirety, *Embers* points to the fact that at every level of social stratification, man is an agent of exploitation. The powerful exploits the weak, the rich exploits the poor, yet, the poor further exploits the poor, while the powerful, the rich, and the poor exploit the society. As Talatu captures the imagery, “My mother’s death taught me a lesson; we are all inside a grave, to come out of it you must tread on corpses” (7). This paints a disdainful

picture of a society whose regeneration is apparently to exist on illusion. The exploitation the characters suffer in the play is outrageous. Talatu narrates how her mother is denied funeral service probably because of her social background, “I remember vividly the day she was lowered into the grave. A hurriedly dug grave. It was the most undignified interment I have witnessed. Even the Imam refused to pray for her body because she stopped going to the mosque long before she died. She had struggled so hard to live, and she died wretched” (7).

As revealed in *Embers*, Nigerian society is a place where nothing but political deceit thrives. Corruption is at the heart of the nation’s body politicking. The government continues to deceive and exploit the people. In their avarice the political leaders constantly devise several means of wrecking the nation’s economy. As Soldier 4 reveals,

We lie to ourselves that we practice democracy. Let me tell you, it is a game of lies. Democracy is a government of the cunning minority for the foolish majority. The politicians have always used and dumped us in the name of democracy... What happened

after we changed government? What happened after all the massive protests? Nothing!... The country continued as before... (26-27)

Even when the people protest to make their plight known, government turns deaf ear. Rather than provide for the people, these politicians even exploit them. Ortserga notes that

For Soji Cole, the contemporary reality that confronts his dramatic vision is the rampant exhibition of moral inadequacies and corruption that have become so widespread in IDP camps such as: camp officials having sexual intercourse with the helpless young women in exchange for certain favours as well as the division of relief materials meant for suffering IDPs. The insincerity of the political class is reflected in the idea of the IDPs preparing dances to welcome leaders who are in the news to announce all the things that

they have donated to the camp... (Word Press, 2020)

The horror which the female school captives of Boko Haram in the process of their incessant as reflected with the experiences of the protagonists is also the dramatist's portrayal of the politics of terrorism. According to John Egole and David Nwakanma, Cole's portrayal of the rape of the Boko Haram victims is clearly the dramatist's symbolic representation of political corruption in the sociopolitical Nigerian space. In other words, Cole finds significant correspondence between the politics of Boko Haram insurgency and the political corruption practicable in the nation. Pointing to the playwright's symbolic approach, it suffices to note that

The rape which these girls, including Talatu experience at both the Sambisa forest and the IDP camp is logically symbolic. Symbolic in the sense that the sexual exploitations they endure colorate with the economic plundering by the nation's political leaders [...]These politicians wreck the nation's economy dry, as the bandits

would rape the girls to death. It represents the looting of the nation's economy as the politicians embezzle public funds and share oil resources amongst themselves. (Egole & Nwakanma, 76)

Further exploring the politics of corruption and terrorism in Nigeria as reflected in *Embers*, these critics point out that

The terrorists abduct these girls, serially rape them in the forests, the soldiers rescue them, rape them too in the IDP camps, while the politicians visit them; bringing them insufficient food and water, and also sexually exploit them in return. The politicians insist in keeping the girls in the camp so they could have continual opportunity to constantly exploit their womanhood. (Egole & Nwakanma, 74)

Thus, the politics of the rape of the nation's economy, largely represented by the incessant rape of the girls by those that should be preserving them is indeed a merry go round affair.

The Politics of Terrorism in *Embers*

The play *Embers* is the dramatist's revelation and representation of the activities that go on in the Internally Displaced People's (IDP) camp in Nigeria. The countless lofty promises the politicians make during elections in Nigeria reflect too in the play. As seen in the play, these politicians continue to lie to the general public and the international society of how they provide for the displaced people as Soldier 4 reports thus:

You mean those senators!
Please don't talk about them here! They are the biggest leech in our democracy... You forgot everything they promised the IDPs? Has any of those things been fulfilled? No! Yet they send their drivers here every other night to take some of the girls away to the city... Those senators who flay the skins of their own people and use them as carpet in their bacchanal parties? (28)

Notably, *Embers* suggests that it is partly for the purpose of carnal advantage and other selfish interests that the politicians have refused to exterminate the Boko Haram

terrorist activities in the country. While many Nigerians are disenchanted and worried over the lives and security of the plethora of school children captured by these terrorists, terrorism has become a source by which the politicians get young girls for their carnal satisfaction and other sinister practices. This of course offers answer to why many of the abducted school girls never return to their parents. The activities of the politicians are not just illicit, but inimical. Cole therefore indicts the Nigerian politicians on the illicit sustenance of the Boko Haram terrorism. It is this indictment that crucially effectuates the politics of terrorism in the play. Whether or not *Embers* leaves a vitriolic taste among the Nigerian politicians, it remains one of the most recent publications that cannot be easily discarded for its political energies.

As a social activist, the dramatist continues to reshape the affairs of his society and propagate its evolving history through his dramaturgy. As watchdog to the society, the dramatist also interrogates the activities of government. African dramatists have never deterred in their social responsibility and commitment. Drama has constantly been engaged as veritable tool for social, cultural and political recuperation. As a committed social activist, Cole has not shied away from the human-induced problems that enervate

the progress of his society. Deploying the literary tool, writers generally recognize that part of their responsibility is to hone the society and make it a livable environment.

The activities that go on in the IDP Camp as represented in Cole's *Embers* is the dramatist's microcosmic variation of the corrupt political activities that is prevalent in the Nigerian nation. The play is Cole's factual and fictive recreation of the corruption and terrorism infested Nigerian society. As *Embers* shows, vices such as abduction, kidnapping, hooliganism, criminality, bigotry, gangsterism, terrorism, banditry are no longer considered as aberration, but are all allowed to thrive at the very expense of society's peace and order. Unfortunately, Nigerian government has become a shadow of itself. It is a government established on the principles of lies and deceptions. Memunah reports of the deceit thus:

Every day we hear the news of what people are bringing to the camp for us. The governor is coming tomorrow, and we have prepared another dance for him. He will on the news again to announce all the things that he donated to the camp. The foreign aid team

will come with their own supplies too. They will come with trucks full of goods and they will come to talk to us. They will take pictures with us – and with all the things that have been donated to the camp. The newspapers will show our pictures smiling like we have been instructed to do by the camp officers when the pictures were being taken. But then the store is always empty. The foods, the water, the drugs and even the mosquito nets disappear immediately the pictures have been taken. None of these things have legs! How did they walk away? The answer is simple. They took them. (60)

Ironically, the Camp established to provide safety and security to the many victims of the Boko Haram scoundrels in *Embers* practically turns into their biggest nightmares. Instead of preserving their lives, these girls are reserved for the politicians to satisfy their sexual yearnings. Even the soldiers entrusted with the safety of the girls equally rape them in turns. Because of their

cruel experiences in the camp, the girls suddenly prefer the Sambisa Forest; at least it will be clear to them that they are living with Boko Haram miscreants. Hence, as a result of their heinous encounter in the IDP Camp these Boko Haram victims are left with no choice than prefer their abductors and oppressors in the forest. It is unfortunate therefore that their situation completely degenerates to the point where the girl victims are forced to suffer Stockholm syndrome as Memunah opens up thus:

That is why I said the forest is better! This is where the Boko Haram really operates. Look at those soldiers; every night they go into the tents to rape the girls. The camp officials also rape us. They threatened us with foods and other supplies if we don't have sex with them. The governor would come here with ten bags of rice, and tell the world that he brought a hundred. Then at night his driver comes around to pick up one of us... (60)

It is however crucial to recall at this juncture that Cole points out himself that "... for the

victims in this play, the IDP camp where they are resettled is no different from the camp of the Boko Haram terror group when they were in captivity" (iii). Omowunmi Osuolale unequivocally indicts the political leaders for the activities the terrorist groups marauding the nation thus:

Rather than causing the Boko Haram terror group to crumble, it is the government's actions that serve as the sparks that add to it. We would think that it would be just the opposite. One can rightly observe that the eventual outpouring of anger and resentment of the female suicide bombers in the play, as seen in Idayat, stem from the growing moral decadence of the political leaders and the military who are meant to stand up to care for the displaced people. (*Tuck Magazine*, 2019)

Thus, the insensitivity of the Nigerian government to the plights of the abducted victims and their families exudes with an aura of a conspiracy of silence. It is not out of place to state that the activities of Boko

Haram terrorism established and sustained on religious extremism thrive on the politics of corruption. At every stage of the story development in the play we see intricacies of corruption, so much so that even the soldiers resonate this fact. As Cole points out in the play, the society is in ruins and shambles because of the level of corruption practiced in the country. Significantly, the dramatist identifies corruption as a major bane to the nation's advancement. As Soldier 4 reveals,

... our country has been ruined beyond measure. After the war, the politicians decapitated the rest of the nation. The citizens are the victims. They are always victims like votive deposits left in the shrine of a despicable god. It is corruption that brought us to this point. Corruption everywhere! We need a complete change of system but the democracy we practice will never bring that change.
(68)

Consequently, even the perceived sane politicians equally become corrupt which suggests that everything in the system is at

the verge of irredeemable collapse, "The good ones get corrupt too because their good is swallowed in the sea of violent corruption. That's why the hardworking man in our country gets tired before the epilogue of his life. Then he resorts to stealing... That's the way we are! That's why we are in crisis..." (69).

Furthermore, Cole identifies unemployment as part of the consequences of bad leadership and poor government. The problem of unemployment is borne out of the leaders' mismanagement of public funds necessitated by corruption. As it is always the case, the politicians will always make available jobs for children and relatives. While at other instances people will have bribe for these jobs when they are finally open and available. Cole uses a fraction of the Nigerian society; the Army to depict the depth of unemployment in the country. As shown by the conversation between Soldier 3 and Soldier 4, most people take up certain jobs in Nigeria out of frustration that broods from dearth of career jobs. Soldier 4 reports thus:

If I had a choice after leaving the Polytechnic, I won't be here. I had to join the Army out of no choice. There was no job around. My girlfriend was

behaving funny. I knew I had to make a choice, even if it appeared like a desperate choice... The jobs were not there quite alright... I should have done what my mates did after leaving school. They threw their expertise away and took jobs from the banks... Even the first class graduates are there in the banks counting the money that our thieving politicians have stolen... I waited three years without a job. By the time reality came even the bank jobs were gone! (25-26)

It is the dramatist's proposition that part of the problem of humanity remains the question of trust. Ideally, any society where corruption flourishes as part its value system is largely doomed to fail. In the play people live in constant suspicion of one another. Consequently, betrayal sets in. Cole presents betrayal as a deterrent factor to social and collective progress. Betrayal in Cole's assessment stems from the individual's self-centered orientation. An average individual in Cole's world as seen in the play is prone to egoism. Humans value their personal progress than any collective advancement,

and as such, they continue to exploit others and situations around them at the slightest opportunity. It is apparent from the play that human society cannot experience social, cultural, economic and political progress when certain debilitating factors like hypocrisy, sycophancy, bickering and backbiting are allowed to exist within a group. As seen in the play, Atai betrays the cause of the young female protagonists for certain personal reasons. In spite of all she suffers in the hands of the soldiers in the IDP camp, Atai exposes the plan by the girls to raid the camp. Idayat reports of Atai thus, "She is a blackmailer! She is a spy! She tattled on us! The camp authorities put her on to watch all of us and report our activities... Betrayers don't talk! Every other night she sneaks out of the camp to sleep with those politicians. We know; Memunah and I, but we never breathed a word of that to anybody... this girl sold us out..." (86-87). Atai chooses her personal interest over the collective cause of the people which simply explains the human frail nature. She shows no remorse for her actions, "I am not ashamed of my decision. I chose life over death. There is nothing more important in life than life itself" (91). Atai's betrayal for personal interest is logically testament to Frantz Fanon's proposition that there is a

thief in all of us. Her reversal from the original collective plan further explains the dramatist's indictment of every member of the Nigerian society as being corrupt.

Conclusion

The level of socio-political decadence *Embers* exudes is significantly gory. Caught at the web of fact and fiction, the play is a true account of the painful experiences of the Boko Haram captives and the further exploitations of these victims by those entrusted with their safety and wellbeing. The government, the Army, the Camp Officials, including the soldiers all sexually exploit the female captives, represented by Talatu, Memunah, Idayat and Atai. *Embers* shows that the Nigerian socio-political system has been established on the premise of corruption; deceit and greed. As shown in the play, the politicians' general insatiability has led to the retention of the rescued female captives of the Boko Haram terrorist group. *Embers* reveals that corruption broods over the entire nation. As Achebe rightly pointed out, "Corruption in Nigeria has *passed* the alarming and *entered* the fatal stage; and Nigeria will die if we keep pretending that she is only slightly indisposed... Nigerians are corrupt because the system under which they live today makes corruption easy and

profitable; they will cease to be corrupt when corruption is made difficult and inconvenient" (38). In the play, Cole clearly depicts that the Nigerian political system, left on the brink of a disastrous collapse, is as a result of inappropriate government policies, especially with its negligence on the disturbing insecurity problems ravaging the peace of the common man. It is crystal that the Nigerian political elites know exactly what to do to put an end to the debilitating situation in the nation but for their sense of cupidity, have blatantly refused to do the needful. Cole suggests that African leadership or governance system must be redressed to accommodate the interest of all, instead of the interest of the few privileged individuals. Any political connection to the different terrorist groups: Boko Haram, Herdsmen, ESN, Niger Delta Militancy, Ebubeagu, etc in Nigeria must be dismantled for collective peace and progress within the Nigerian landscape.

The activities of the different terrorist groups in Nigeria, as represented by the abduction of the female teenagers: Memunah, Idayat, Atai and the numerous unnamed persons in the IDP Camp and Sambisa forests by the Boko Haram terrorist sect as portrayed in *Embers* should be considered inhumane and abhorred. Though Cole offers hope of a new

generation when “The rain begins to fall” (95), there has to an urgent dismantling of the old generation. Cole’s adoption of rain in the play is clearly symbolical. Following the explosions in the camp, the rain crucially purges the land of its socio-political and moral putrefaction caused by the activities of politicians and terrorist groups. It is the dramatist’s idea therefore, that this rain which is significantly timely washes off the ‘embers’ of the old generation, and as such, the old dystopian society brought about by corruption and politics of terrorism becomes significantly transformed. The rain symbolically offers hope of what is to come—a society devoid of political decay, social insecurity, social filth, cruel policies, oppression, marginalization and exploitation of the masses. As a committed social activist and observer, the dramatist through *Embers* proposes a Nigerian society that is devoid of the evils caused by hunger and rancour; a society free from the politics of corruption; a society free from all forms of terrorism and insurgencies. Through *Embers*, Cole canvasses for good governance at all levels.

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