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Dissent and Denunciation in Ebi Yeibo's *The Fourth Masquerade*

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Abstract

One of the socio-political conditions affecting the African society right from the twilight of the twentieth century is the overwhelming widespread of terrorism. Nigeria too has been on the front page of world news due to the irascible activities of the notorious sect called Boko Haram. This research therefore investigates how Ebi Yeibo, a contemporary Nigerian poet, in his collection *The Fourth Masquerade*, has portrayed and reacted to the nefarious ordeals of this sect. The theoretical framework intended for the analysis of this collection a sub-tenet of postcolonialism, which is colonial mentality. While the proponents of this critical perspective argue that a homogenous group of people often associate themselves with foreign ways, this paper examines the anti-colonial mentality attributes that the Boko Haram sect claims to promote to the world as one of its key creeds, arguing that the sect exhibits principle of colonialism, such as control, power, and so on. An overview of the different perspectives of the poet's portrayal of the Boko Haram sect will certainly be the thrust of this research. Attention will be paid to the dissent and denunciative voice of the poet expressed in viciously stern tone through which the poet questions, ridicules and eventually castigates the very identity of the sect.

Key Words: Boko Haram, dissent and denunciation, identity crisis, colonial mentality, terrorism

Word Count: 207

Introduction

With the advent of Western civilization, one of the malignant problems identified with many African countries is the pressing issue of insecurity. Right from the independence of many African states about fifty-five years ago, the spate of insecurity in the continent has witnessed a meteoric rise, transcending communities and cutting across ethno-religious divides. From the anti-colonial revolutions in East Africa, the notorious genocides in Central Africa, environmental insecurity in Southern Africa, the infamous civil wars that surged out in several West African

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countries, to the twenty-first century Arab spring movement in North Africa, insecurity has indeed been a worrisome, but constant phenomenon on the second largest continent in the world. Even the horn of Africa is not left behind as accelerated processes of globalization and militancy are part of the factors reconfiguring the geopolitics of insecurity (Kristein Ulrichsen, 2011). Today, Africa is perhaps the only continent that boasts of internal conundrums as component of its developmental phase.

Over many decades, many writers have responded to the insecurity problems ravaging the continent. Hardly would one find any African fiction that would not reflect the theme of insecurity. The renowned Nigerian novelist, for instance, Chinua Achebe, in his last narrative cum biographical work, *There Was A Country* (2012), significantly describes Africa as “a continent in disarray”. From his perspective, Achebe concentrates on factors such as the effects of colonialism, bad leadership and corruption as the precursors of insecurity. Isidore Kpotufe (2015) identifies with Achebe's position, expressing fears and anxiety over more contemporary phases of insecurity. He alludes to growing spate of insurgents, rebel groups, terrorist movements and uprisings and unrests as a worrisome trend that would continue to suffocate efforts geared towards the socio-political development of the continent. Given this degenerating condition, new voices arose with the pressing desire to militate against these extant forces. Ebi Yeibo remarkably becomes one of the birthed, well-articulated voices in the twenty-first century to rise to the challenges of violence and terrorism in the Nigerian nation.

Yeibo is a multiple award winning poets and one of Africa's contemporary writers that have continually engaged domestic and national issues that insecurity. Through his collections of poems that persistently interrogate socio-political realities that revolve round the Nigerian nationhood, Yeibo is associated with Third Generation Nigerian poets, with distasteful propensity for societal decadence, one of which is the spate of mindless torture and killings by the notorious sect, Boko Haram. Teaming up with the multitude of others namely, Ezenwa-Ohaeto, Uche Nduka, Toyin Adewale-Gabriel, Onookome Okome, Afam Akeh, Remi Raji, Ogaga Ifowodo, Ibiwari Ikiriko, Chiedu Ezeanah, Nduka Otiono, Pius Adesanmi, Lola Shoneyin, Cecilia Kato, Hannatu Abdullahi, among others, Yeibo, in his collections of poetry, *Maiden Lines* (1997), *A Song for Tomorrow* (2003), *The Forbidden Tongue* (2007), *Shadows of the Setting Sun* (2012), explored a variety of contemporary themes, ranging from politics, leadership, ecology, to war, love, (dis)order, corruption to hope, freedom and reconciliation. *The Fourth Masquerade* (2014) joins in the fray of his poetic explosion, in line with the protest spirit and resourceful energy of the Third Generation Nigerian poets.

Throughout his collections of poetry, Yeibo showcases appreciable consistency as a dutiful versifier of societal shenanigans that have become everyday experience of the Nigerian nation. His focus however is on the numerous problems that characterize the Niger Delta region. He tirelessly sheds light on the deplorable conditions of the people who suffer despite the abundance of natural resources at their disposal. In *A Song for Tomorrow*, the poet toes the lines of his Niger Delta progenitors, the likes of Gabriel Okara, J.P. Clark-Bekederemo, Tanure Ojaide and so on in addressing the ills that have besieged their land as a result of untoward exploitation, bad leadership and moral decadence. According to Ogaga Okuyade (2014:13), “Yeibo performs his ethical and social responsibility by linking his natural environment to the bleak and stifling social circumstances of the Niger Delta in particular and the Nigerian nation at large”.

The Fourth Masquerade, Yeibo's fifth collection of poetry, is replete with an impressionable poetic strategy, which stems from the poet's never-ending attempt at expounding on socio-political anomie and cultural dearth prevalent among the Nigerian states in contemporary times. This collection offers a deluge of subject matters on political unrest, environmental degradation, severe poverty, corruption and wanton depletion of resources, oppression, among others. In the first poem “The fourth masquerade”, the poet persona's resolution on continuous interrogation of societal frailties is depicted, with resounding disposition to patriotism and nationhood. But what is striking, among other salient issues, in the poem is the poet's responsibility to inform, predict and to warn against the menacing communal storms, set to rip the Nigerian nation apart:

These lines are the owl
Hooting ominous messages
In choking pain
In pubescent twilight

The theme of dissent and denunciation runs through in this collection. In “burden of blood” the poet vehemently disagrees with the witlessness of the political elite class whose idea of leadership is to further afflict the struggling masses, rather than ameliorate their deplorable conditions. He further lampoons the political trickery and betrayal of certain leaders and political parties that feign dissimilar identities, as depicted in the poems “They need new names” and “They need new names II”. While the poet also denounces the hypocritical stance of new religious sentiments in “the triumph of charlatans”, the trope of denunciation cuts through “In this vast world”, “the bankrupt mind”, among others, where the poet's dissenting voice triumphs over societal decadences that further entrench the nation

into the endless abyss of economic and moral paucity, reckless corruption and bad leadership, as a result of several ubiquitous crises that have perpetually situated the Nigerian nation as underdeveloped.

Despite the myriads of issues addressed in this collection, the focus here is on how Yeibo narrows his searchlight on the insecurity intrigues peculiar to the Nigerian nation. Interestingly, he appropriates an upsurge of igniting poetry as the channel through which he addresses this menacing problem. Okuyade (2014) further affirms that the poet's work "encapsulates ethnomoral metaphors geared towards re-ordering the human conscience". In addition to this stylistic import, the poet further indulges a provoking blend of imagery and applicable allusions to insecurity factors effacing peace and stability in the country. The objective of this paper is therefore aimed at how the poet, in his collection, *The Fourth Masquerade*, elucidates on Nigeria's insecurity situation in contemporary times, with significant representations from the Boko Haram insurgency as expressed in some of the poems.

Although there have been several dissident 'voices' in the past, the principal aggravator of insecurity today is championed by the irascible activities of the notorious sect called Boko Haram. Their nefarious actions have put Nigeria on the front map in recent times. A.F. Ahokegh (2012) avers that "though Nigeria has ever faced series of security threatening challenges, the one caused by the activities of Boko Haram remains quite unique in all ramifications". The sect's inglorious engagements in the last few years have conditioned the independence of Nigerian people as bereaved of economic stability, psychological trauma and unprecedented level of insecurity. It is at this juncture that this paper therefore expounds on how Yeibo, in his collection, has portrayed and reacted to the nefarious ordeals of this sect. While stating that *The Fourth Masquerade* is certainly not limited to the theme of insecurity, it is interesting to note that quite a number of poems in the collection directly address the pervasiveness of the Boko Haram sect, and its determined vow against peace and stability. On this note, the propensity for dissent against the false 'anti-colonial' identity, and irascible actions of the sect by Yeibo becomes a core issue that would be critically discussed in this essay.

In the exploration of postcolonial theory and its application on the selected text, *The Fourth Masquerade*, this paper sits on a tripod perspective. To begin with, it explores the allusive identity reconstruction of the Boko Haram sect, in its quest for proclaiming a constructive identity for itself. Next, there is a needful appraisal of its 'anti-colonial' mentality, which the sect expressively declares. This will be anchored on postcolonialism as the appropriate theoretical framework. Finally,

there will be an exploration of the dialectics of dissent and denunciation which reverberate in the language choice of Yeibo in this collection of poetry.

Boko Haram and Yeibo's allusive identity reconstruction

Debates on the definition and classification of the concept of identity have been on for many centuries; several controversies and contrasting opinions have emanated with cut across several disciplines, particular the social sciences and the humanities. In contemporary times, the issue of identity revolves round social construct, (James D. Fearon, 1999:2) and this has been expanded into individual, social, cultural and national forms. Significantly, identity plays a crucial role in relation to national and/or ethnic issues (Horowitz 1985; Smith 1991; Deng 1995; Laitin 1999). Part of its complexities is that identity also connects to other significations such as race, gender, class and so on.

In relation to postcolonial theory, the quest for identity also remains sacrosanct. Stuart Hill (1990) joins in the fray by alluding to the general belief that identity is not as transparent or as unproblematic as we think". In his essay, entitled "Cultural Identity and Diaspora", Hill describes identity as never a complete process, but rather a revolving one.

Perhaps instead of thinking identity as an already accomplished fact, which the new cultural practices then represent, we should think, instead, of identity as a 'production', which is never complete, always in process, and always constituted within, not outside, representation. (222)

The word 'production', which is illustrated above as a continuous process or (search), is perhaps what Franz Fanon (1986:109) describes as "a passionate research... directed by secret hope of (re)discovering beyond the misery of today, beyond self-contempt, resignation and abjuration whose existence rehabilitates us both in regard to ourselves and in regard to others." Therefore, the process of identity (re)construction is ever dynamic and secondly, as much it is intuitive, that is, created out of inherent metamorphosis, it is as well extrinsic. And this peculiar characteristic predisposes some measure of communal or global recognition. Consequently, it is on this basis that Yeibo's allusive reconstruction of the Boko Haram identity becomes highly indicative, given the fact that the poet, through his poetic discovery of retrogressive activities of the sect, deconstructs any notion of 'anti-colonial' representation, beginning with the bogus identity consciousness.

Right from its first attack on the nation on May 29, 2011 in Abuja during the

swearing-in of Dr Goodluck Ebele Jonathan as president of Nigeria, the identity of the Boko Haram sect was initially as controversial as was the supposed connotation of their despondent activities. Today, many historical scholars have portrayed several views by which the sect is presently identified. Shehu, 2011; Moses, 2012; Agbambu, Bwala, Ibrahim & Usigbe, 2013; Burstin, 2013 all define Boko Haram as “a jihadist and takfri militant sect based in the northeastern part of Nigeria, north of Cameroun and Niger”. Others such as Cook, 2011; Bartolotta, 2011; Ifowodo, 2013 further state that the Boko Haram group, “founded by Mohammed Yusuf in 2002”, “seeks to establish a “pure Islamic state ruled by sharia law, putting a stop to what is deemed 'Westernisation'.”

While certainly not disputing the above-stated depiction of the Boko Haram sect, Yeibo's choice of identifying the Boko Haram sect in an allusive manner becomes ideologically progressive, as well as significant to the issue of identity construction. In as much as the series of information given are historical and factual, the above-mentioned definitions or descriptions probably accord too much respect, thereby dignifying the irrational existence of the sect. Yeibo seems to downplay that historical applicability of the sect in his poem “the burden of blood” and probably rightly so, especially given the senseless killings as well as immoral kidnapping and molestation of over hundreds of young girls in the North Eastern part of the country.

It is therefore not surprising that the title of the poem, “the burden of blood,” metaphorically whittles down any ideological projections of the Boko Haram sect. Although the poem alludes to other forms of interpretations, the sickening imagery of blood foregrounds the identity of the sect as merely a destructive cannibalistic group, nothing more. More succinctly, his choice of ignoring or completely avoiding a direct introduction confirms the suspicion of the poet's distaste for any form of constructive identity to any mindless, spineless sect who preys on the weakling in the name of ideology. His first stanza justifies this assertion.

How can we enjoy laughter,
 On the wrong side of the mouth
 Or hanging tremulous
 On stung and twisted tongues
 Between two canine teeth? (*The Fourth Masquarade*, 26)

The choice of a rhetoric question at the very beginning of this poem is not accident. Rather, the poet persona's volatile question activates the spirit of dissent in

its condemnation of atrocious atrocities committed against the nation. It is significant that Yeibo here gives no room for dialogue or explanation. He simply foregrounds the message of dissent with his outright opposition to giving the sect any form of concrete or justifiable identity. In this poem, he referentially avoids any attempt at understanding what the group stands for or claims to stand for, and impatiently questions its existence in the first place. The use of the refrain “how can we enjoy laughter” at the beginning of the stanzas affirms the poet's unrelenting cry towards re-ordering the blood-ridden status quo. The poem reveals his vociferous voice for the complete obliteration of the radical sect, as well as his unquestionable stand for peace and security in his death-plagued nation. The third stanza reads:

How can we enjoy laughter
 When nuts tucked away
 In sightless carapaces
 Of clowns, remain uncracked? (*The Fourth Masquarade*, 26)

Yeibo's use of epithets in delineating the identity of the Boko Haram sect is obliquely portrayed with interwoven strings of metaphors – “burden of blood”, “brood of ancient hyacinth”, “importunate beings”, all depicting the cold-blooded characteristics of the sect. Unsympathetically, Yeibo chooses to lay emphasis on offensive and illicit actions as the true means of depicting the sect's identity. The poet persona's anger is distilled against this uncanny nature, as depicted in three other poems aimed directly or bizarrely dedicated to Nigeria's most infamous “burden of blood” in recent times. Also, the metaphoric description of the sect as “clowns” also downplays any concrete identity, however justifiable, that the sect have alluded to. The poet euphemistically describes the sect as pranksters or jokers, given the fact that their professed objective as ‘freedom fighters’ remains antithetical to their inhumane actions.

Therefore, one cannot ignore the syntactic effect of Yeibo's verse in the overall discourse of identity and other. Here, it is definitely not a coincidence that the poet's consistent use of the personal pronouns ‘we’ and ‘us’ conceptualizes the import of ordering, as witnessed in the second stanza of the poem...

How can *we* enjoy laughter
 When the burden of blood
 Weighs *us* down a throbbing grave? (*The Fourth Masquarade*, 21)

Through this rhetorical question, the poet validates the already-present conscious delineation of brigands and killers, a group in which the Boko Haram sect

actively belongs, from the national identity. There is the affirmation of the polarization of the Nigerian society, irrespective of religious, ethnic, ideological, class or political affiliations, into anti-Boko Haram and pro-Boko Haram divides. The poet further subscribes to attempt at subversion of power, a notion which has, over the last few years, been a principal subject matter in almost every social gatherings, religious settings and even the Internet. Therefore, there is the denunciation of the 'anti-colonial' creed of the sect, whose messages are rife with the condemnation of the 'colonial' Nigerian masses that embrace Westernisation, even at the risk of their lives.

Perhaps the poem "burden of blood" is just an appetizer, the allusive identity of the Boko Haram sect becomes explicit even in the first few lines of the poem "Rage in the desert", one of the several poems specifically dedicated to the militant sect. The poet persona becomes confident and expressively declares his point of view. In this poem, the sect is directly conceived as a terrorist sect, rather than the presumed 'colonists', who fights (terrorizes) rather than "write back".

Terrorists taunt mortal blood
In the desert, like some plaything
Perhaps like a child's toy (*The Fourth Masquerade*, 34)

In the poem "We hawk horrid memories", the poet persona further unmasks the nature of the sect with the imagery of the hawk as a tenacious bird of prey that continues to inflict horrid memories on its victims. However, the third stanza of the poem further elucidates on the rancorous rage of the sect. The poet persona rhetorically questions activities

Who on earth revels
In hawking loose beings
Whose rancid breath chokes the earth
Whose wild instincts
Defy all rational schools...? (*The Fourth Masquerade*, 36)

The poet here underscores the insensitivity and callousness of the sect through these lines. Hence, his definition of the sect as part of the nation's "burden of blood" is not out of place. The point here is that there is a subtle connection between the two poems. The poet decries the false image that the sect has continually expressed as freedom fighters. Rather, their heinous act of spilling innocent blood situates them within the ambience of destructive force. Identity construction is irredeemably constructive, and not destructive. Mikhail Bakhtin

(1986:138), in his work entitled, "Speech genres and other late essays" states that, "authenticity and truth in here not in existence itself, but only in the existence that is acknowledged and uttered". In this vein, Yeibo's poetic stance on Boko Haram's identity is purposive and absolutely necessary in the re-ordering of the people's ideological leaning as far as insecurity, stemming from the notorious insurgent group, is concerned.

In sum, Yeibo, through these poems, attempts a reconstruction of the identity of the Boko Haram sect, who, hitherto claims to be fighting a just cause against the Western idiosyncrasies. This paper argues that the nature of the Boko Haram sect is defined by their actions and how these actions affect the society in general. Yeibo, through his poems, validates this assertion in his enunciation of the activities of the sect. In the same vein, while submitting that Westernisation has its limitations, the philosophy/identity of the Boko Haram sect suffers another setback in relation to the group's incongruous sympathy towards anti-colonial ideology.

Boko Haram and its 'anti-colonial' mentality

Situating Boko Haram within the context of postcolonial theory appears to be a tall order. The reason for this statement will be divulged later on in this essay. However, this study's endeavour tries to justify a connection, albeit by way of a sarcastic intent, between an aspect of postcolonial theory and the ideology of the Boko Haram sect, with the view to revealing the skewed mentality that the terrorist group projects.

Against the backdrop of other controversial beliefs, the most declared self-acclaimed creed of the Boko Haram sect is its rejection of Western civilization. This is one of the first ideological precepts ascribed to quite a number of postcolonial proponents, who did ascertain anti-colonial struggle. It is not quite surprising that the Boko Haram group proudly identifies with the ideology of 'anti-colonial' struggle, that is, against all forms of Westernisation, especially education. Nonetheless, it would be psychologically unbearable or generally absurd to place Shekau, the ascribed leader of the Boko Haram sect, in the same anti-colonial class with the likes of Ngugi 'wa Thiong'o, Chinua Achebe, Salman Rushdie, and so on, based on this much professed ideology. But a closer study reveals satisfactory layers of contradiction, as evidently illustrated in Yeibo's position that the identity should not just be defined by ideology, but by functionality; in the case of Boko Haram, not from its much-touted creeds, but by its deeds.

The irony is that the Boko Haram sect not only showcases colonial tendencies, but in fact celebrates some of its unholy notions. Lois Tyson (1999)

identifies the colonizer with certain specific terminologies – 'domination', 'imperialism', 'violence', and 'arrogation of power', 'annexation of human and natural resources', 'cultural imposition and so on. All these are the ideological trademarks of the Boko Haram insurgent group. While there appears to be truism in the notion that this sect somewhat utilizes colonialist ideology as a springboard to necessitate its activities, the twist however is that the sect is ideologically defeated as indicated by Yeibo. It is quite incongruous that the sect's choice of weaponry, technology, communication facilities it uses to fight the 'West' are obtained from the West. But it is completely misleading too for the sect to evoke an anti-colonial creed as its choice of dialectical contrivance.

By and large, the kidnapping of young girls, and forceful indoctrination of innocent boys to become militant extremists is not merely a criminal offence but it is also part of the colonialist process, whereby these weaklings become colonial subjects. These colonial subjects are forced to undergo a postcolonial phenomenon called mimicry, where they are made to alter their lifestyle in terms of dressing, language, religion, and so on. In a nutshell, in terms of their proposed ideology, Boko Haram sect is not even dressed “in borrowed robes”, as modestly suggested by Macbeth when announced as the thane of Cawdor, but in “stolen Western wardrobes”.

Again, Yeibo's outright denunciation of this anti-colonial creed is summed up in one word – clowns, as appropriately stated in the poem “the burden of blood”. The group's ideological representation is a far cry from its nefarious activities and Yeibo saliently underscores this gap in his poetic expression. Perhaps more succinct is the poet's position in the third stanza of the poem “Rage in the desert” which was dedicated to the Boko Haram insurgent group.

O the detached logic
 Of power schemers
 Who see human breath
 as mere off-and-on switch... (*The Fourth Masquarade*, 34)

Through his use of apostrophe, the poet persona laments the irascible nature of the militant group, foregrounding the meaninglessness of their outspoken philosophy. The phrase “detached logic” reveals the truism of the sect as lacking any ideological significance in their proposed course. Rather, the third and fourth lines in that stanza explicitly defines the sect as a psychological lopsided and mentality unstable group with little or no regard for human life. Nevertheless, what remains consistent is the rationale behind the sect's dastardly acts which amounts to

power and control. The poet persona describes them as “coven kings” whose single agenda is to take “over the cringing earth”. In sum, the poet mournfully addresses the sect as deprived of judgment or any form of reason.

The acts of the sect, as described in this collection, simply typify the arrogance of autocracy and tyranny, deprived of any sign of compassion and empathy towards their victims. Here, the anti-colonial garb which the Boko Haram adorns itself is conceptually torn apart through Yeibo's poetic exposition. The sympathy that the sect initially generates was born out of a misconstrued identity, in which the sect disguises as the victim and the oppressed. Rather, Yeibo reveals, they are the marauders, pillagers, and the guerrilla colonist, whose “flaming strikes ... smothers the world” (34,35).

Like the covert code
Of coven kings
Takes over the cringing earth
Replacing tingling crops
With tripping tombstones. (*The Fourth Masquerade*, 34)

The 'anti-colonial' mantra of the Boko Haram sect is a deceptive ideology that must neither be accepted nor promoted. Yeibo explicitly denounces this philosophy, arguing that they actually are not the victims of imperialism as was being professed. On the contrary, they bore the garment of imperialism, with bloodthirsty crave for power, control and despotic voice. In the fourth stanza of the poem “Rage in the desert”, the poet persona depicts the self-absorbed desperation of the sect in gaining control at all cost. The stanza describes one of many atrocious acts of the militant sect in which it recruits suicide bombers who detonate themselves and others, having been wrongly indoctrinated by false promising of attaining paradise.

The estrange lore
Of martyrdom dreamers
A handle for neutron bombs
In undecipherable gestures
Of the deaf and dumb
Smothers the world
To clear footpaths to paradise... (*The Fourth Masquerade*, 34, 35)

The “estrange lore” that the poet persona refers to is that of victimization. These suicide bombers are conditioned slaves, a mere tool in the enactment of violence and terror. Booker T. Washington (1901), in his description of black American slaves, refers to them as “unfortunate victims”, (2) conditioned by malignant

institutions of oppression. This definition is not far-fetched from the experiences of the suicide bombers who are helplessly “deaf and dumb” and thus become “a handle for neutron bombs”. In another dedicated poem to the Boko Haram sect titled “We hawk horrid memories”, the poet expressively showcases that very deception.

Let us probe the masked moon
That deceived the straying cockerel
Into the depths of night
Disarm her grinning antics
Or fall into the trap

The moon is a reliable entity particularly in thick darkness. The metaphor of the “masked moon” is symbolic of the Boko Haram sect, whose indoctrinations are dead traps for the “straying cockerel”. The point here is that the militant group operates on a colonialist ideology of “pervasive force” over their colonial subjects (Lois Tyson, 1999). Therefore, this ideology of subjugation is a far cry from their anti-colonial decrees. Yeibo recognizes this colonial deceptions and ends on the note of warning that the war against insurgence should not be limited by military confrontations alone. It is a war in which veracious dialectics must also be applied.

Poetic Language of Denunciation

Yeibo's diction is significant to his reaction and his overall discourse of the Boko Haram sect. It is on this note that the last part of this essay buttresses on the language choice of the poet. The objective is to unify the concepts of dissent and denunciation in relation to the poet's thoughts and feelings about the identity and activities of the sect.

In his poem, “Perverts on the prowl”, the word 'pervert' reverberates the paltry existence of the sect, while the metaphorical phrase 'hooded angels of darkness' in the poem “Rage in the desert” foregrounds the cover up of their true identity and explicitly describes their destructive and arid nature. The word 'rage' is highly symbolic. Apart from the fact that it illustrates the uncontrolled indignation of the sect, it also affirms that lack of purposeful and constructive agenda from the rabid group. But the putrid persistence of the sect's violence makes the poet persona to be more confrontational. In the same poem, he practically begins the verse with the phrase “terrorist taunt mortal blood”. Also, the metaphoric statements, such 'importunate beings', 'soulless felons', 'masked moon', 'mountain freaks', repudiate any iota of humanity for the sect and clearly criticizes the ignoble selfish atrocities of the sect using a completely false ideology.

The tone of the poet is melancholic, but also saturated with sarcastic intent, especially in relation to the professed anti-Western ideology of the sect. The poet persona is as well disenchanted by the triviality of human lives in the hands of the Boko Haram sect. In "Rage of the desert", the shedding of "mortal blood" is being compared to "a child's toy". Angered by the meaninglessness of bloodshed, the poet repudiates the fanatic actions and intended ideological subjugation of the militant group and charges all and sundry to rise up against any form of institution that breeds violence and tyranny.

The last poem which is equally dedicated to the Boko Haram sect and their sponsors is titled "Facing the flames". Here, the dissenting voice of the poet persona rises to its peak to condemn the brash nature of the sect.

O drag them down
 The mountain of shame
 From where they pee
 On messengers of the most high... (*The Fourth Masquerade*, 38)

At a metaphorical level of interpretation, the poet persona becomes defiant in deep-seated anger against the antics of blood-thirsty rebels, who kill in the name of "the most high". There is a call to react positively against the oppressors with the view to bringing peace and stability back to the nation. The poet persona calls for "funeral drums" to begin to sound, not in the 'middle of the market places' but "in the depths of the desert". The themes of dissent and denunciation become the essential platform for the fight against terrorism and long term quest for the return of peace and tranquility in the land.

In conclusion, this paper has attempted to interpret different perspectives of the poet's portrayal of the Boko Haram sect as evident in the series of poems in his collection, *The Fourth Masquerade*. The dissenting and denunciative voice of the poet calls to question once more the existence and true purpose of the Boko Haram sect vis-à-vis the challenges it poses to the peace and security in contemporary Nigerian society. *The Fourth Masquerade* no doubt is teeming with myriads of other national issues. This paper submits that Yeibo also lends credence towards the fight against terrorism in the country, especially from a literary vantage point.

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