

## Textual Analysis of Administrative Corruption in Julie Okoh's *Who Can Fight the Gods?* And Development Issues in the Nigerian Space

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### Abstract

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This study aims at interrogating the economic problems of administrative corruption in the Nigerian space. The nature of this cankerworm contributed towards making Nigeria as one of the poorest countries on the planet earth, despite the fact that the country is regarded as the highest oil producer on the African continent. This nuance envisaged through the activities of corrupt public and private administrators through acts of looting, fraud, and embezzlement of public funds has resulted to an increase in the level of hardship, suffering, poverty, diseases, and death of the people and has brought underdevelopment to the country as portrayed in Julie Okoh's *Who Can Fight the Gods?* This menace, despite the establishment of the EFCC and other crime agencies, seem to have become stronger, having unequivocally resulted to increase in issues like kidnapping, armed robbery, wanton killings, politically motivated assassination, oil bunkering etc. Among the major findings is that this situation has provided impetus for creative punches in dramatic and theatrical representations by notable playwrights. With content analysis method, therefore, this work investigates Julie Okoh's approach and attempt to establish the nature of administrative corruption on the Nigerian space using drama as an instrument. The effect of it will create positive change amongst Nigerians, thereby effectuating change around societies. The study therefore recommends that the EFCC and other crime agencies be given autonomy of discharging their patriotic duties towards monitoring and prosecuting public and private offenders as that would provide a transparent administration on the fronts of the Nigerian space.

**Keywords:** *Who Can Fight the Gods?* Cognitive Studies, Administrative Corruption, Nigerian

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### **Background to the study**

From pre-history till present, corruption which is fathomed as the greatest threat plaguing the African continent is also regarded as a global issue which today may be regarded as a social problem. It is a complex, omnipresent and multi-faceted phenomenon with multiple causes and effects and takes on different context, thus, is found in the various stages of human development; political, economic, judicial etc Otite (1983), Linus, (2018). It is regarded as a universal phenomenon because of its wide range at affecting nations of the earth one way or another, having been with society throughout history (Wraith & Simpkins, 1963). A review of penal codes utilized in various ancient civilization according to Mohammed (2004) quoting Thakur (1979), clearly demonstrates that "bribery" as a clandestine of corruption was also a serious problem among the Jews, the Chinese, the Japanese, the Greeks, the Romans, as well as the Aztecs of the new world. Mohammed elaborated this assertion by quoting Padhay (1986) that corruption prevailed on a larger scale in India during the ancient period and the ones that followed. Mohammed insisted how from this one can actually assume the nature and scale in the increase of corruption from medieval to the present time in the countries of India sub-continent. Furthermore, Mohammed noted that corruption was evident during the British rule in India Mohammed also quoted Dwivedi and Bhargava (1967), that there was almost regular and systematic corruption involving almost all officials at different levels in the political and administrative hierarchy.

For some people, corruption, especially in Africa, is an adaptation of the traditional cultural practice of gift-giving in return for favour (Linus, 2018). The need to be corrupt derives from the obligation to help others in need, to educate ones children and those of relatives, feed kinsmen and organize feasts and funerals, etc (Otite, 1983). On the other hand, one can vehemently state that corruption is as old as independent Nigeria, and that is why all military takeovers of government since the January 15, 1966 coup had always been justified on the basis of ridding the country of corruption Ojukwu and Shopeju (2010), Goodluck, (2018). Goodluck clarifies this statement by quoting Bishop Mathew Hassan Kukah (2015), that "...the question we should be asking ourselves now is how and why is it that every coup plotter in Nigeria hung his colours on the mast of fighting corruption? How come that all successive governments have come in, accusing their predecessors of massive corruption only to turn around and do even worse or leave a similar legacy of rut?".

Goodluck goes on by quoting Major Kaduna Nzeogwu (1966), that "Our problem are the political profiteers, the swindlers, the men in high and low places that seek bribes and demand 10 percent; those that seek to keep the country divided permanently so that they can remain in offices as ministers or VIP's at least, the tribalists, the nepotists; those that make the country look big for nothing before international circles; those that have corrupted our society and put the Nigerian political calendar back by their words and deeds".

Similarly, Goodluck also avers, quoting General Sani Abacha (1995) that "...our leaders revel in squander mania, corruption and indiscipline, and continue to proliferate public appointments in complete disregard of our stark economic realities..." In like manner, Goodluck posits quoting General Muhammadu Buhari (1983), that "while corruption and indiscipline have been associated with our state of un-development; these two evils in our body politics have attained unprecedented height in the past few years. The corrupt, inept and insensitive leadership in the last four years have been the source of immorality in our society. Since what happens in any society is largely a reflection of the leadership of that society, we explore corruption in all its facets.

Instinctively, Transparency International (TI) according to Jide (2013), posited "that accounts for about 20 percent of Nigerian GDP". Jide went on quoting Malgwi (2010), that "it is painful to learn that the country was identified among the top nations in the over \$1 trillion annually paid globally in bribe". Furthermore, Jide avers that various reports in the media (print, broadcast, and social media) attest to the fact that corruption has attained a mega status in Nigeria with high level sophistication in its modus operandi, especially during this democratic dispensation. Jide went on to clarifying this assertion by stating that "virtually all the corruption cases of politically exposed persons (PEPs) handled under this democratic experiment including the latest (Maina's) show that the judiciary has demonstrated within its self-inflicted affliction to be a dubious ally in the corruption conundrum, especially through carefully orchestrated plea bargaining and procured judgments".

Jide concludes by noting that "for as long as the leadership of the country plays with corruption, the consequences are bound to be grave and these includes: weakening of the public bureaucracy; diversion of scarce resources from public purposes to private ends; perversion of political and administrative decisions through lobbying and clandestine manipulations; deceleration in economic progress/development; lack of commitment to national values and civic responsibilities".

Extensively, Reno (2018) also avers that "if nothing else justifies the Transparency International Corruption Perception index rating which reveals that corruption in Nigeria has worsened under President Buhari, this latest Presidential does". He further explained by way of comparison, that "the Peoples Democratic Party government of President Goodluck Jonathan dismissed Abdurashheed Maina, the biggest alleged thief in Nigeria's civil history, and declared him wanted, but the incumbent APC government of President Muhammadu Buhari brought him back, reinstated him and gave him double promotion". He went on stating that "the President, through his Attorney General of the Federation, went on to court to block the senate's attempt to unravel how Abdurashheed Maina was smuggled back to Nigeria and given armed guards, we already know the truth about that as revealed in the leaked memo from the Head of the Civil Service, Mrs. Winifred Eyo-Ita". Reno vehemently noted that "Nigeria under Dr. Jonathan was not heading to collapse, as the APC led government is instigating, rather, the nation was projected by CNN Money to be the third fastest growing economy in the world after

China and Qatar in 2015, and the British Government projected us to be the fourth fastest growing economy in the world". He clarified this statement by quoting the then British Prime Minister, David Cameron, that "we have been hearing about China and India for years but it's hard to believe what's happening in Brazil, in Indonesia, in Nigeria too.

The effects of this cankerworm are visible as issues of poverty, suffering, hardship; pain and death is apex in the Nigerian society. Despite the benevolent endowment of the crude oil that has positioned Nigeria as the richest and fast growing black nation on the planet earth in the year 2014, Nigeria as a state, is, according to Linus (2018), rated as one of the poorest countries in the world (as majority of its people live below the poverty line of less than US\$1 per day, with some in absolute poverty), Gross Domestic Product (GDP), per capital income stands at \$1300, for a population of well over 190 million people". Linus summed this assertion by stating that this is caused as a result of an increase in corruption.

Notwithstanding, this issue of corruption has become so tensed in recent time. In other words, Nigeria was more corrupt in the year 2017 than it was in the year 2015 when President Goodluck Ebele Jonathan handed over to President Muhammadu Buhari (Goodluck, 2018). On the effect of corruption in Nigeria, Goodluck (2018) quoted Tribune (a newspaper founded by Obafemi Awolowo) that "...Nineteen years on, not only is the polity still afflicted by worsening cases of poverty and corruption, the country's democratic credentials are virtually in tatters. Indeed, it is doubtful that democracy is being practiced in the country, let alone being entrenched..."

Extensively, Linus, (2018) observes that "the depth of the crisis in the issue of corruption in Nigeria Space is evident in the massive unemployment and a general lack of opportunities for economic ventures, low living standards, devalued currency, and a failure to meet the health, food, habitat, and security needs of the majority of its people". Linus also evidently avers that "the economic situation in Nigerian space is such that most parents are unable to care for and properly feed their families". On administrative corruption, which forms the base for the study, Becker, (1968) avers that a civil servant will sell decisions for bribes if his or her expected benefits exceed expected costs, including the risks of being detected, reputational costs, and moral obstacles to committing crime..

All these issues derived from corruption are still visible and have ripened in spite of the establishment of Economic and Financial Crime Commission (EFCC) and other agencies whose duties are meant to investigate financial and economic related issues such as fraud, embezzlement, looting, and bribery. Hence, the cause and effects of the menace being explained in Julie Okoh's *Who Can Fight the Gods?* Pose as the main thrust of the study.

### **Principal Agent Theory**

Principal agent theory, which insists that a principal agent problem exists only when one party to a relationship (the principal) requires the service of another party (the agent) even though the principal lacks the necessary information to monitor the agent

performance in an effective way, is the cradle of which this study is shaped. The theory defines corruption as a series of interactions and relationships existing within and outside public bodies. It also emphasizes the rational choices taking place in individual incidents of corrupt behaviours (Linus, 2018). This ideology is plausible because the predominant theoretical approach, according to Linus, was based on a principal agent model.

Extensively, this theory has, over the years, become increasingly concerned with historical, political, and ethical questions towards identifying the inherent nature of corruption and how it is practiced, even though literatures that analyze corruption from a collective action perspective have begun to appear, emphasizing the collective or even systemic rather than purely individual nature of corrupt behavior (Linus, 2018). This theory is helpful in as much as it interrogates the nature of administrative corruption in Nigeria space and its effects on the people. If properly harnessed, it would provide certain guides required towards grasping in a lucid way the nature by which corruption is practiced in the Nigerian space and its effect on the people. Conclusively, the theory sees corruption exclusively as an agent problem, with the principal/employer (government or private entrepreneur) unable to play effective monitoring or oversight role on their workers/employees, mostly as a result of lack of information (Andvig et al, 2001). Relating this assertion to the plaguing menace corruption on the Nigerian space, it is pertinent to state categorically that this cankerworm can be intensively understood when properly explained, for holistic and dynamic examination.

### **Methodology**

This research work employs the case study and content analysis research approaches of the qualitative research method. It involves explaining the issue, describing, analyzing and interpreting data on the bases of administrative corruption as portrayed in *Who Can Fight the Gods*. It is qualitative because it deals with the analysis by a notable Nigerian playwright, and descriptive because it involves the use of ideas to describe and analyze the nature and effects of youth restiveness within the play contexts. To achieve this, the study employs the primary and secondary sources. The primary source is the play text and the researchers' ideas concerning the nature and effects of administrative corruption on the Nigerian space, while the secondary source includes materials from the institutional publications, articles, journals, text books, internets, research materials, amongst others.

### **Meaning of Corruption**

There is no comprehensive and universally acceptable definition of corruption. The origin of the word is from two Latin words 'corruptus', meaning 'spoiled' and 'corruptere' meaning 'to run; to break into pieces' (Wikipedea. 2018). The working definitions presently in vogue are variations of 'the misuse of a public or private position for indirect or direct personal gain'. To this, other definitions are presented which invariably encounter legal, criminological, and in some countries, political problems. On this note, Linus (2018) avers that "corruption is a complex, omnipresent and multifaceted phenomenon with multiple causes and effects and takes various forms and functions in different context".

In the same vein, Mohammed (2004) argues that corruption can be viewed under five approaches which include public-interest-centered, market-centered, public-office-centered, public-opinion-centered, and legalistic. The proponent of the public-interest-centered approach, according to Mohammed, quoting Rogow and Laswell (1970), believes that corruption "is in some ways injurious to or destructive of public interest". Mohammed avers that "Market-centered enthusiasts suggest that norms governing public office have shifted from a mandatory pricing model to a free market model, thereby considerably changing the nature of corruption". Public office centered protagonist's stress the fact that misuse by incumbents of public office for private gain is corruption (Theobald, 1990).

Those who believe in public opinion-centered definition of corruption emphasize the perspectives of public opinion about the conduct of politicians, government and probity of public servants (Mohammed, 2004). On the other hand, the moralists view corruption as "an immoral and unethical phenomenon that contains a set moral aberration from moral standards of society, causing loss of respect for and confidence in duly constituted authority (Gould, 1991)".

Against this backdrop, Mohammed (2004) also avers that "corruption is conventionally understood and referred to as the private wealth seeking behaviour of someone who represents the state or the public authority. He concludes by quoting World Bank (2012) that "corruption is the abuse of public office for private gains. He elaborated this assertion by averring that "public office is abused for private gain when an official accepts, solicits, or extorts a bribe". Corruption on a simpler note may also mean the abuse of authority, bribery, favouritism, extortion, fraud, patronage, theft, deceit, malfeasance and illegality (Caiden, 1991). One can elaborately define it as the use of one's official position for personal and group gain and that includes unethical actions like bribery, nepotism, patronage, conflict of interest, divided loyalty, influence peddling, moonlighting, misuse or stealing of government property, selling of favours, receiving kickbacks, embezzlement, fraud, extortion, misappropriation, under or over invoicing, court tampering, phony travel, administrative documents, and use of regulation as bureaucratic capital (AAPAM, 1991).

In a nutshell, corruption is not an innate form of behavior, but rather a symptom of wider dynamics which ranges from economic, political, administrative, social, and cultural. This explains that it opens up and closes down spaces for individuals, group, organizations, and institutions that populate civil society, the state, the public sector and the private sector (UKAID, 2015).

In a nutshell, corruption is referred to as a phenomenon of give-and-take, thus, is considered normal so far as it is shared amongst the perpetrators. As being noted, Transparency International (TI), the leading global institution researching, reporting, and rating countries fundamental corruption, defines corruption "as the abuse of entrusted power for private gain". It categorizes it as grand, petty and political. The grand

according to them involves high government circles and the functioning of the state; the petty involves low and middle levels functionaries, dispensing basic goods and services to the populace.

### **Nature of Administrative Corruption in Nigeria**

Several scholars have argued that the popular diagnosis of the root of Nigeria's economical, and political underdevelopment is through pervasive corruption in public and private life, thus constitutes a canker worm that has eaten deep into the fabric of Nigeria's social system (Linus, 2018). Corruption has a deep root in the society in this part of the world and has continued to be an integral part of culture (Mohammed, 2004). Mohammed, quoting Khan (1997), avers that "the level of corruption varies depending on how influential a position varies, depending on how influential a position the particular civil servant holds".

This means that in the civil service there is big, middle, as well as low corrupt practices. The big can be fathomed to be associated to that of the top politicians and senior civil service workers who are in-charge of higher positions, thus are symbolically referred to as top senior citizens of Nigeria. They are into looting and embezzling of public funds. The middle is those civil service workers answerable to the senior civil service workers. They are good at taking bribe, fraud, and most times embezzling funds meant for public use, while the low corrupt practices are those civil service workers who solely depend on bribe, as if without it they wouldn't make a living, whereas they are being paid of their agreed income.

This assertion is made plausible in that the civil servants have by and large become accustomed to live a kind of lifestyle far beyond their legal income, thereby creating some means by which their wants could be actualized. This has become the lifestyle of Nigerians that the reality that nothing moves without adequately satisfying the concern of the civil servant (Mohammed, 2004) has pragmatically defined its *modus operandi*. For instance, most civil service jobs were and are not given through due processes: the person who pays the highest bid winning the job, in essence, leaving the qualified applicants handicapped; overlooked "misfits" left to roam the streets. Awarding of contracts on the other hand is also another example where qualified applicants are denied accesses to having opportunity towards rendering a perfect job; rather, the contracts are awarded to unqualified contractors due to what they are able to offer.

### **Causes of Corruption in Nigeria**

The causes of corruption in Nigeria are many such as the needs of man are insatiable. It is mainly caused due to some fundamental issues ranging from greed, nepotism, lack of positive values, weak enforcement mechanisms, excessive materialism, social pressure, lack of virile security in employment tenure, and so on (Ayoola, 2007). Ayoola noted that corruption sprouts and strives in situations where office holders enjoy large discretionary powers in a monopolistic situation with no mechanical accountability (Linus 2018). It is also envisaged when life appreciations go beyond giving of thanks either verbally or

written words to offering of gifts. This statement justifies the notion averred by Linus (2018), that “the problem as it relates to corruption is that expression is increasingly taking the form of gifts with intent to influence the cause of action and decisions”. He also noted that “in many instance, gifts are not without strings, they are either expressions of appreciation for actions already performed, or in anticipation of a favour to be done”.

Obviously, it is the strong desire for favour or appreciation that give rise to various forms of gratification which in contemporary society such as Nigeria appears to have attained an alarming proportion (Linus, 2018). The major problem in this regard according to Linus is that in official circles, there is hardly any form of gift or favour and appreciation appears inherent in human nature. The school that sees corruption as inevitable argues that it is a matter of degree.

On the other hand, Ottong (1983), sees corruption as “a corollary of Nigerian poverty”. This is so because the Nigerian public servants demands and receive various forms of gratification in cash or in kind because their pay pockets are very meager. For instance, the Nigerian police force is generally regarded as a corrupt system, a situation that is believed to be attributed to the poor pay structure in the system (Linus, 2018). Linus goes on to quote Ottong (1983), that “the means to increase ones earnings are generally legitimate and borders on fraud, misappropriation and downright bribery. This simplifies the notion that in the Nigerian space, only few civil servants are comfortable with their monthly pay (Akintunde, 2018), while most civil servants live below one dollar (\$1) per day. Despite this assertion, the poor are not mainly attributed to corruption in as much as they are not given positions for such act, though, are one way or the other indulge in taking and giving of tips for one reason or the other.

In conclusion to the above assertions, Linus (2018) avers, quoting Ottong (1983), that there are three schools of thoughts as to why there is corruption in the Nigerian society. They are:

1. That which sees corruption in society as inevitable;
2. That which regards corruption to poverty; and
3. That which regards corruption as a way of life

### **Synopsis of Julie Okoh's *Who Can Fight The Gods?***

The play *Who Can Fight the Gods?* takes issue with the university environment as a microcosm of the Nigerian society. It discourses more of the general issues plaguing Nigeria which ranges from corruption, state repression, mass domiciled, dilapidated infrastructure, lack of funding, the graft, immorality, and cultism, envisaged in every groups – politicians, administrators, academics, soldiers, and the students.

The play centers on the narrator who painstakingly explains the ordeals of Doctor Lecturer who, due to his quest of investigating the cause and effects of the total blackout in the university community and other heinous issues that brought death and hardship to the people and underdevelopment to the university community, is arrested by the members of the State Security Service and relieved of his duty as a lecturer in the University Community.



At the beginning of the play, the narrator sums up the thrust of the text from the explaining of the role of the theatre in the society and to emphasizing the value of independent thinking and critical evaluation of our universe of existence. He exposes the nature of corruption and its effects on the students, workers, and the university community at large. The narrator strives to establish a scenario where the university community where the best minds are supposed to be trained not only in learning but also in virtue. However, the lived experience is that neither learning nor virtue is anywhere to be found, thus decorum and ethics, phenomena guiding a better citizen are replaced by laws and activities of those who rule the system. He also explains that the real tragedy is not necessarily that tyranny is invigorated by the moral cowardice of the elite and the unintelligent ambivalence of the masses, but that those who condemn oppression and injustice are murdered in cold blood.

On this note, his emphases are more on Doctor Lecturer who has to stand against the oppressors, investigating how the infrastructures of the university community are dilapidated and how funds given by the federal government for rehabilitation are embezzled by corrupt administrators who see themselves as demi-gods. Before then, the narrator explains the confrontation that occurred between Doctor Lecturer and the Campus Catholic Union Fellowship members led by Rev. Father and the Catholic Women Fellowship representatives over the rightful users of the University Convocation Arena. Doctor Lecturer whose quest is to administer his examination to his student's claims that the arena was built for educational purposes and not for religious bigotry, while the Catholic Union Fellowship's claim is that they have been given permission from Dean of students affair over the usage of the arena for their Sunday mass. The confrontation leads to the revelation that the cause of the total blackout in the university community is as a result of mismanagement of fund meant for the purchase of a new generator for the university community.

During the investigation, Doctor Lecturer observes that the generator bought for the university community was scrap reconditioned and sold at a cheaper rate to the University Community while the balance was embezzled by the university administrators and the director of maintenance who happens to be the husband to one of the Third Catholic Women representatives. It is also revealed how that they also embezzled other capitals meant for capital development of the university community.

From this discovery, other issues ranging from the inter cultism activities that claimed the life of Damian (Third CWO and Director of Maintenance son) and the cause and effects of corruption in the university community are also enumerated. These discoveries lead to the recognition by the three CWO's and the Rev. Father that Doctor Lecturer who for long is seen as being mentally ill and hated by all is actually the sane one who strives to restore sanity and sanctity to the university community by striving to expose the corrupt administrators who are the perpetrators of these crimes. The CWO's and the Rev. Father both vow to partake in the fight against the corrupt administrators as that would restore glory to the university community.

The narrator also explains the ordeal of the former university chief administrator who was unduly attacked by the student body on the basis that the infrastructures that he bought for the development of the university community was stolen thereby increasing the suffering of the students. This occurred as a result of his refusal regarding the plights of the Supreme god (Chancellor) of the university community. The supreme god had earlier wanted him to provide financial allowances and other exorbitant provisions for him and his praise singers, of which he refused.

The narrator goes on to explain how some Nigerian intellectuals such as Wole Soyinka, Ola Rotimi, etc. have gone for self exile to avoid being maimed by the demi-gods who have succeeded in killing powerful activists such as Claude Ake, Ken Saro Wiwa, Kiobel Barinem, Baribo Bera, John Kpuinem, Nordu Eawo, Paul Levura, Dadiel Gbokoo, Saturday Dobe and Felix Nuate, amongst others, for their activism against the corrupt administrators in Nigeria.

The play comes to conclusion when members of State Security Service arrest Doctor Lecturer and the three CWO's and the Rev. Father decides to forfeit mass so as to testify against the corrupt administrators and their likes and then vindicate Doctor Lecturer.

### **Character Analysis**

The play *Who Can Fight the Gods?* has a total number of ten characters and other minor characters that help to support the action of the central characters. The main characters are listed below:

1. **Narrator:** He is old, wise, peaceful, patience, and a human right advocate. He painstakingly narrates the ordeals in the University community. Narrator represents the human right activists in the Nigerian society who daily agitates against the corrupt administrators and politicians who are daily repressing and oppressing their people.
2. **Doctor Lecturer:** He is the central character of the play and a lecturer in the University. He is strong, straight forward, bold, hot tempered, stubborn, daring, fearless, lively, and quick to provocation. He took upon himself to investigate the cause of the total black out in the University community and other malicious issues that brought death, suffering, pain, and lack of development in the University community. His misfortune started when he refused to accept a bribe from the Director of Maintenance in order for him to discard the evidence about the rebranded generator that was bought by Director of Maintenance instead of a new generator that has resulted to a total black out in the community that led to the death of a small girl that was bitten by a snake. Being overwhelmed by the persistence threats against him in the University community, Doctor Lecturer decides to educate members of the Christian Women Organization and the Reverend father concerning the activities of the Dean of Student Affairs, Chief Administrator, Director of Maintenance, and their likes in the University Community. Like other social and human right activists in the Nigerian society

such as Ken Saro Wiwa, Claude Ake, Wole Soyinka and their likes who are either dead or alive, Doctor Lecturer in the play, was labeled insane and was later arrested by members of State Security Service for daring the powers that be.

3. **Dean of Student Affairs:** He is the Dean of the Student Affairs. He is corrupt, discrete, passive, hot-tempered, daring, determined, fearless, greedy, diabolic, egocentric, and unpredictable. He represents the corrupt administrators in the Nigerian society who daily embezzles the capital funds meant for societal development of the people for their selfish interest. He decides to fight against Doctor Lecturer because he understood that if the evidence concerning the embezzlement of the fund meant for the purchase of a new generator is made known to the public, he may have lost his oblivions in the college community, Church, and the society. He quickly sneaked out and organized the members of the State Secret Service, when he discovered that Doctor Lecturer is revealing their secret to the three CWO's and the Reverend Father, who in turn would help fight against the corrupt administrators.
4. **Supreme God:** He is selfish, greedy, determined, hot-tempered, discrete, corrupt, and deadly. In the play, he is otherwise known as the Chancellor to the University. He represents those corrupt top administrators and top politicians in the Nigerian society who are busy using their high offices against the development of the society which they serve. These corrupt administrators can go as far as removing the most competent and replace with an inexperienced just to satisfy their selfish aim in detriment of the people. They award contracts to inadequate contractors who in turn lack the competence of good work. In the play, Supreme God took offense against the Chief Administrator because his desire that the Chief administrator should prepare a walk home allowance for him and his praise singers was not meted. This resulted to his immediate removal of the Chief Administrator from office.
5. **Chief Administrator:** He is polite, gentle, stubborn, educated, and considerate. He is the former Vice Chancellor of the University. Because of the love he had for his student and the University Community, he declined given Supreme God the money he requested as his take home fee and that of his praise singers. Chief Administrator also refused renting exuberant hotels for the Supreme God's praise singers, rather, he pledged using the money in the University for capital development of the University Community. Because of this, he was framed by the powers that matter and forced out of the University Community by the same students he was fighting for. Chief administrator represents those Nigerian patriots ranging from Ernest Emeyonu and his likes who are presently in self-exile to other countries.
6. **Director of Maintenance:** He is Second CWO's husband. He is ambitious, deceitful, deadly, composed, and corrupt. He is in-charge of all procurements in the University community. It is through his office that all the embezzlement

activities in the University Community by the corrupt administrators are carried out. He signed huge amount of money for the purchase of a new generator for the University community; instead, he purchased a rebranded and worn out generator. This act resulted to the total black out in the community which unequivocally created suffering, pain, hardship, and death to the University. Just like the corrupt administrators in the Nigerian civil service, he tried to bribe Doctor Lecture when he observed that Doctor Lecturer has concrete evidence regarding the purchase of the generator. When Doctor Lecturer refused to accept the bribe, he tried to blackmail Doctor Lecturer using Doctor Lecturers past sexual relationship with a female student which is considered abomination in the University Community. He also reminded Doctor Lecturer of the news in the University Community that he is mentally ill, and the management's intention of relieving him of his duty as a result of that. He was embittered when he received the news that his son, Fabian, was involve in cult activities in the University Community that claimed his life.

7. **Reverend Father:** He is reassuring, peaceful, religious, pessimistic, straightforward, tolerant, cordial and helpful. He was upset when he discovered that the hall that was given to them by the Dean of Student Affairs for their Mass has been taking by Doctor Lecturer and his student for their fixed examination. On the process of convincing Doctor Lecturer to leave the hall, he learnt that Doctor Lecturer who is widely seen as insane, stubborn, and discrete was formally fighting for transparency, accountability, and holiness as it affects education, which also rhymes with his biblical teachings. He finally joins the three CWO's to speak for Doctor Lecturer when he was arrested by members of the State Secret Service. He represents the religious and clergy men in the Nigerian society who are busy preaching against corruption and agitating against corrupt administrators.
8. **First CWO:** She is a Professor in the University community. She is kind, gentle, loving, peaceful, considerate, religious, and honest. As a member of the Christian Women Organization, she was angered on discovering that the hall for their Sunday mass has been taking by Doctor Lecturer. She tried persuading Doctor Lecturer to vacate the hall before Reverend Father comes for his mass. She later discovered the secret behind the total black out in the University Community. Like the Reverend Father and the other CWOs, she decides to speak against the corrupt administrator so as to acquit Doctor Lecturer. She represents the Nigerian women professors, likes of Tess Ekweme, Julie Okoh, Zulu Sofola, etc., who are busy agitating against corrupt administrators.
9. **Second CWO:** She is Director of Maintenance's wife and Fabians mother. She is a member of the Christian Women Organization. She is kind, conservative, eager, polite, and most often stubborn. She returned from her abroad leave to receive the news of Damian, her son's death and the black out in the University Community.

She took offence with Doctor Lecturer when he painstakingly narrated her husband's involvement in the black out in the University community and other heinous crimes that brought death, pain, and suffering to the people and underdevelopment to the University community. When she was fully convinced of her husband's deep involvements, she decides to speak against her husband and other corrupt administrators, as revenge for the death of her son Fabian. She represents Nigerian women who are daily agitating against their husbands when they discover their involvement in crime.

- 10. Third CWO:** She is polite, loving, peaceful, and religious. She is also a member of the Christian Women Organization. Like her fellow CWO's, she was angered observing that the hall meant for their Sunday Mass was taken by Doctor Lecturer. Touched by Doctor Lecturer's revelation, she decides to speak for Doctor Lecturer when he was arrested by members of the State Security Service. Her likes in the Nigerian society are busy agitating against corrupt administrators and corrupt politicians.

#### ***Who Can Fight The Gods? and the Nigerian Experience***

Armed with Principal Agent Theory, it is clearly seen in the play *Who Can Fight the Gods?* that the issue of administrative corruption exist when one party to a relationship (the principal) requires a service of another party (the agent) but the principal lacks the necessary information to monitor the agent's performance in an effective way and any attempt of monitoring by another body (third party), who unequivocally is part of the system, leads to the third party either being maimed, killed or framed for an offence he/she is not guilty of. It is also pertinent to deduce that the playwright interrogates on the matters ranging from general neglect, dilapidated infrastructure, lack of funding, misappropriation of funds, kleptocracy, graft, immorality, cultism, and the corruption in the Nigerian University system.

In like manner, Julie Okoh unmask the university community as microcosm of the larger Nigerian society in all its plurality and power play, vice and vulgarity, and internal contradictions. On the same plain, she goes on to note that the corrupt practices of the administrators have resulted in total madness in the head and general paralysis in members. All of these speculations are plausible in the Nigerian society as its sectors – public and private are overwhelmed with corruption, mostly on the administrative level. This is mostly visible in the play where virtually all characters such as the Dean of Students Affairs who is a fence-sitter, eager to defend the unholy action of the administration; the Director of Maintenance who embezzles funds meant for University project, and the students who indulge in lots of malpractices, cultism, drug, and other heinous acts that affect the University community. In the main, there seems to be no light in the end of the tunnel, since the only just man excluding Doctor Lecturer, Rev. Father, and the three CWO'S, who was the Acting Vice Chancellor is forced into exile by the Chancellor who in his turn proved to be more corrupt than all others put together, and by the very students for whose welfare he had worked so hard to the point of daring the

powers that be. His fellows in the Nigerian society are also forced into self exile, thus are essential contributors to the rapid development of the countries that are transparent in fighting corruption that they find refuge in.

Most importantly, Julie observes that administrative corruption is the major problem hampering the progress of Nigeria as issues of lack of development, innovation, hardship; poverty, death, and pain are besieging the people. This issue according to Julie has resulted to other issues ranging from terrorism, militancy, politically motivated assassination, lethal car bombing, armed robbery, drug abuse, prostitution and other heinous issues championed by youths, as portrayed in the play.

In the play, it is also observed that the death of Demian, the son of the Director of Maintenance and the third CWO Representative is probably through involvement in cultism. This is seen in the Nigerian society where students deprived of adequate education as a result of the continuous Academic Union of University strikes indulge in so many extracurricular activities which affect the society where they belong and the country at large.

Julie Okoh understood that the Nigerian University is the pavement for nation building and where modesty and uprightness for good citizen is built emphasized that for corruption to be curbed from the Nigerian society, the University system of the nation must be purged of her ridiculous and ambiguous involvement in corruption masterminded by the office holders that control the activities of the daily involvements of its citizens. The University system according to the playwright should imbibe the holistic nature of training the right minds for a patriotic nation building and not acting in accordance to the authorities by which the system is controlled.

In a nutshell, the obvious message of the play and indeed its social significance is that the demi-gods of our society are many and connected. No individual can fight them alone. This statement is plausible in the Nigerian society as a result of political parties' affiliation. On this note, such as in the play, the political gladiators impose laws that guild their members that any corruption charges targeted at their members and investigations aimed at ascertaining the exact nature of these offences are thrown into the abyss. For example, the recent financial issue with the former Director of Nigerian National Petroleum Commission; the present director of Economic and Financial Crime Commission; and other related financial and economic crimes targeted at the members of the ruling political parties which are today seen as most dreaded crime cases in the history of Nigeria are not prosecuted; instead, they are set free after such heinous crimes, thus negating the primary notions by which the present government professes to fight against.

Most significantly, the title of the text can, on the one hand, be read as an invitation to fight the demi-gods of the Nigerian society and, the other hand, it could be read as a voice of frustration in the face of the unfathomable godfathers of corruption. On this note, fighting against the demi-gods in the play resulted to the immediate arrest of Doctor Lecturer by

the members of the State Security Service and the immediate self exile of the Acting Vice Chancellor of the University. In the Nigerian society, the fight against the demi-gods resulted to the execution of human right activists such as Claude Ake, Ken Saro Wiwa, Kiobel Barinem, Baribo Bera, John Kpuiem, Nordu Eawo, Paul Levura, Dadiel Gbokoo, Saturday Dobe and Felix Nuate, amongst others.

Furthermore, characters in the play are direct representations of the Nigerian populace. For example, characters such as the Supreme God (Chancellor), Director of Maintenance and the Dean of Student Affairs represent the leaders in the higher, middle and lower administrative sectors in the public and private establishments. They are also heads of political parties and holders of political positions. A character such as Damian represents some irresponsible Nigerian youths who abandon their studies in their febrile pursuit of the false symbols of life. On the other hand, characters such as the members of the Christian Women Organization (CWO) represent those women in the Nigerian society whose moral censors condemn the sordid behavior of men in positions of authority. They stand for truth and most times strive for administrative positions with the aim of correcting the mistakes of the men, while a character like the Rev. Father represents those religious leaders in the Nigerian society that stands for the truth and most times, takes it upon them to speak against the ordeals of these corrupt politicians. Finally, and most importantly, Doctor Lecturer and the Vice Chancellor represent those human, economic, and political activists such as Wole Soyinka, Claude Ake, Ken Saro Wiwa and the rest of them, who are daily agitating against economic misappropriation, leadership incorrectness, political sabotage, and religious bigotry. Most of these activists have being killed; some are presently in exile, while some are imprisoned.

### **Problems of administrative corruption in Nigeria**

From the foregoing, it is clear that the issue of administrative corruption possesses major threat to the Nigeria society, hence it has position as one of the greatest problems which has resulted to so many issues that the federal government finds difficult to solve in the recent time. The issue has created problems ranging from all round degradation, economic devaluation, and total breakdown of law and order in all fronts of the Nigerian society. It has also created other problems such as terrorism, kidnapping, incessant killings, armed robbery, prostitution, and drug abuse. It has also resulted to heinous acts such as pipeline vandalism and illegal oil bunkering, etc. that has affected the GDP of the nation. Its effects have affected the national development, thus, has brought death, suffering, hardship, and poverty to the Nigerian people.

Politically, corruption is deadly to good governance. In the race to increase their ill-gotten wealth in the administrative strata, the culprits pose a threat to democracy and rule of law as wealth accrued from corrupt transitions diminishes the capacity to raise public funds for social development. On the economic front, administrative corruption may make government leaders and their entourages to allocate their resources to vain projects not priorities, so the rest is dipped in their pockets.

Corruption also enrolls the social fabric of nation, accompanying the notion of nation building, especially when the nations are multiethnic and traditionally rivals. It enrolls faith and trust in the rule of law and the political system as a whole. It undermines individual discipline and accountability. When it comes to the field of natural resources exploitation, the problem of corrupt transition can result in severe environmental degradation, ecological systems are ravaged when licenses are given randomly to mining and lobbying companies.

Generally speaking, the culture of fairness, equality of opportunities, equity, justice, and unity is severely assaulted. Administrative Corruption presupposes the negation of legality and established procedures. The law is allowed to be abrogated for reconsideration. Procedures are ignored for reconsideration. Implementations of projects are precipitated for consideration, cases hastened and justice or injustice is sped up for reconsideration. Examination marks are awarded for reconsideration. Promotions and appointment in the public service can be bought; yet, sins are forgiven for reconsideration.

What drives corruption engine is greed. This may be greed for power, within political parties or ministerial positions; this may be clandestinely bought by the highest bidder. Political parties subsidiaries such as the youth movement, women and workers movement, are often lead out on high and lucrative government offices. Their leaders can be bought. In market economy, the negotiations are up and intricate, complex and cross-sectional. Negotiations present opportunities for seeking and taking bribes; and where competing for multinational contracts are involved, the openings are bound for soliciting payments, locally or overseas.

### **Conclusion**

From the study, it is established that administrative corruption poses as the greatest issue that has ridiculed the Nigerian identity in recent time. This is so because it has become part of society as everyone handling any governmental and nongovernmental positions is victim as such. Those who stand arbitrary to this are either framed and excommunicated from the system or are maimed and most often imprisoned or killed. This is fathomed due to lack of fervent zeal of curbing it over the years. It is plausible that the institutions such as Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) and the Independent Corrupt Practices and other Offences Commission (ICPC) positioned towards curbing corruption in Nigeria are yet to discharge their patriotic duties to the nation as issues of corrupt practices are increasingly visible in the Nigerian space.

Most Nigerian administrators find it easy storing embezzled funds in foreign banks, pits, and most often, buried without traced while some loots recovered by the aforementioned bodies are mismanaged or re-embezzled by the demi-gods who they answer to. They target their attention on those the demi-gods in high offices consider their political enemies, leaving the main culprits to continue in their heinous acts. These acts such as fraud, embezzlement, and looting have pragmatically increased the issues of poverty,



suffering, hunger, pain, and hardship upon the people. Thus, these issues have resulted to other heinous issues ranging from terrorism, kidnapping, armed robbery, political assassinations, suicide bombing, incessant killings, drug abuse, prostitution, and other related vices. Nationally, these issues have also created underdevelopment, economic devaluation, and have ridiculed Nigerian identity before the international lens.

Hopefully, Julie Okoh's *Who Can Fight the Gods?* insists that corruption in the Nigerian university system which serves as microcosm to the macrocosm of the Nigerian society can be curbed if there are independent institutions established for the sake of curbing these crimes, and the institutions must be faithful and patriotic in checkmating the activities of the Nigerian administrators without fear or favour.

### **Recommendations**

From the foregoing, it is apparent that administrative corruption is the major issue that has affected the Nigerian fronts in recent time. It is also obvious that it has created other issues which the Federal government finds difficult to address irrespective of the falsities behind the establishment of crime related agencies. To this, it is pertinent to establish the following recommendations for the fight against corruption in the Nigerian space:

1. The Economic and Financial Crime Agency (EFCC) and other crime agencies should be given autonomy of discharging their holistic duties towards monitoring and prosecuting public and private crime offenders as that would provide transparent administration on the fronts of the Nigerian space.
2. Corruption as an issue should be seen to be nationally endemic therefore should be destroyed for massive development.
3. One of the best ways to curb the incidence of corruption in the country is to appeal to people's conscience and raise their consciousness to evil inherent in the scourge. A good way to achieving this is through the use of drama either by enacting or narrating; then, the perpetrators would identify their acts and have a change of attitude.
4. The greatest antidote against corruption is good governance. Whatever measures put in place by the government must be those promoting good governance, accountability, and transparency.

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