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Roles and Challenges of Literary Writers in a Corrupt and Insecure Society: The Nigeria Experience

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Abstract: Corruption is a pervasive socio-political and moral phenomenon that ravages human societies. However, the preponderance and the inauspicious effects of the social malaise on the individual and collective aspirations of citizens of the contemporary Nigeria is not only worrisome and alarming but the new normal has also entered the fatal stage. But because literature is a veritable avenue through which the infallible emperor could be told that there might be some tincture of irresponsibility in the veins of a monarch, this development has continued to provoke literary consciousness among literary writers in Nigeria. This work examines the roles and challenges of literary writers in a corrupt and insecure society, and identified Nigeria as a country bedeviled by corruption and insecurity which are traceable to the political class who have unbridled penchant for corrupt practices. The study revealed that the roles of Nigerian literary writers are expedient and multifaceted while their challenges include, among others, unsafe environment to speak truth to power, intimidation, arrest, and incarceration, threat to their lives as well as resistance to all forms of political and material inducements that corrupt a sound creative mind. It was, therefore, recommended that special freedom of literary expression be granted to creative writers in Nigeria. Also, leaders should place premium on the rights and welfare of citizens instead of persecuting writers for criticizing their excesses; the literary writers should jettison all forms of inducements capable of making them allergic to truth, whereas the general public should endeavour to read literary works and join in the crusade for an egalitarian society for all.

Keywords: Corruption, Literary writers, Insecurity, Literature, Literature and Society

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INTRODUCTION

The concept of corruption can no longer be construed as an alien social phenomenon in our contemporary society because it has comfortably settled with us. It is a socio-political cum moral conundrum that pervasively ravages mankind and poses a threat to individual and societal development, especially in developing countries. Even though the actual origin of corruption might not be clearly traceable, the hydra-headed monster exists in all societies, transcending local, ethnic, racial or cultural boundaries. However, the degree or magnitude of its existence and widespread differs from society to society. But corruption in Nigeria is a recurring decimal. For instance, the World Bank survey of every level of corruption in selected public and private sector from 2004-2006 shows that every institution in Nigeria is corrupt (Adebimpe, 2011). Again, writing on the endemic nature of corruption in Nigeria, Momah (2019) informs us that out of 180 countries surveyed to ascertain the level of corruption inherent in those countries, Nigeria is scored 136th position in 2015 and 148th position in 2017 by the Transparency International. Thus, whether or not the Nigerian society is a corrupt one is no longer in contention.

Unfortunately, apart from the disturbing issue of corruption, insecurity also stands tall among the prominent challenges confronting the contemporary Nigeria. Indeed, Nigeria is among a few countries in Sub-Saharan Africa where citizens live in perpetual fear and

threat to their lives and property. At present, Nigeria is bedeviled by the menace of Boko Haram religious fundamentalists, Fulani Herdsmen reckless killings and maiming, dastardly activities of banditry, militia groups from the Niger Delta, constant demonstration and rampage from members of IPOB and the recent activities of unknown gunmen. The situation is further compounded by the unfortunate widening of economic gap between the rich and the poor occasioned by extreme unemployment (Tanko, 171), influx of immigrants from neighbouring African countries, emergence of political and regional thugs and the collapse of the nation's judicial system. These unhealthy social circumstances have solidly entrenched fear, insecurity, anarchy and a sense of uncertainty in the society and among the citizenry.

Obviously, failure of political leadership significantly accounts for the existence of the unsafe and corrupt society in which Nigerians live today. Onyeike cited in Nzeako and Osundu (2013) insists that the constant witness of conflict in Nigeria is as a result of (i) inequitable access to power and resources (ii) discrimination on the basis of sex, gender, religion, ethnic origin and socioeconomic status (iii) denial of basic human rights (iv) non-democratic and exclusive governance (v) total absence and abandonment of moral and ethical restraint in the use of power and management of public resources, and (vii) failure of institutions of governance. Unfortunately, till today, these debilitating

socio-political issues have not been remedied in the country. This has further orchestrated renewed hostility, frustration and disillusionment among the citizenry. Unarguably, the Nigerian literary writer lives in the Nigerian society and is inevitably affected by these disturbing social malaise. This has resulted in overwhelming outpour of literary works whose thematic preoccupations are the expression of regret, anger, betrayal, disappointment and neglect. Onuoha (2009) succinctly states that if one views the works of many Nigerian writers, one would see anger, frustration and hopelessness caused by colossal failure of the old generation of failed leaders, who despite their glaring failures have refused to quit the stage.

The literary writer, while confronting the intimidating complexities of his/her corrupt society through his or her work, is most often faced with daunting challenges that manifest in multidimensional ways. Against this background, therefore, this work seeks to examine the roles and challenges of literary writers in a corrupt and insecure society with particular reference to Nigeria and the Nigerian literary writers' experiences in their country.

Understanding the Concepts of Corruption and Insecurity

A painstaking search of relevant literature reveals that there is no consensus definition of corruption among scholars. This could be attributed to its manifestation in multi-dimensional ways in line with the socio-political and cultural peculiarities of various societies. However, a more critical insight into the concept shows that all practices that are detrimental to individual and overall societal well-being and development constitute corruption. Such practices include, among others, illegal acquisition of resources for personal advancement or gratification, looting of public fund or any reciprocal behaviour or transaction in which office holders induce each other through rewards to grant favour against the societal or organizational principles and procedures.

In consonance with the foregoing, Dike (2015) posits that corruption is any effort to secure wealth or power through illegal means for private gains at public expense or a misuse of public power for private benefit. Olusegun (2009) sees corruption as any form of abuse of power which results in obtaining personal or collective benefits to the detriment of the rights and lawful interest of an individual, group or the whole society. The implication of the foregoing is that when a leader selfishly caters away resources meant for the well-being of the generality of the people, such a fellow is indisputably corrupt. Corroborating this thinking, Olufemi, Suilamon and Ajamu (2011) assert that corruption is conceptualized as any transaction which violates the duty of a public office holder with the motive of amassing wealth illegally for personal gratification.

Corrupt practices are not only manifested through unlawful accumulation of wealth or material things but also becomes apparent when one engages in certain dishonest acts or behaviours, especially one who is in authority or occupying a leadership position. Such acts could manifest in the form of deviation from the formal duties of a public office so as to favour a close family friend, relations, and one's social clique or to gain unmerited social status. When any of these occurs, one is said to have abused public power for private benefits (Omimajesin, 2015), and should, therefore, be seen as corrupt.

Furthermore, corruption is exhibited in all societies in varied degrees. It comes in the form of bribery, embezzlement, extortion, favouritism, nepotism and so on. Among the ruling class, corruption appears in the form of unaccountability of one's stewardship, falsification of financial records or unlawful conversion of public property into personal assets. It could equally be exhibited through unjustified appointment of friends or relations to public offices or according them favoured treatments they do not actually deserve.

On the other hand, understanding the meaning of insecurity would entail first exploring and explicating the concept of security. Security simply implies the absence of threat to life, liberty and property or core values of citizens of a society. It could be said to be in place in an environment or situation where individuals feel safe, relaxed and live in environments devoid of anxiety or apprehension or threat to their lives, liberty, and property or core values. However, According to Esuong (2010), when citizens of a society cannot guarantee their safety as a result of threats to their lives, property or liberty, such a people are said to be living under insecurity. Thus, insecurity occurs as a social situation in which citizens of a nation have their lives, property, liberty or values threatened as a result of hostility, violent conflict or war. In Nigeria, insecurity has become a recurring phenomenon and a new normal as no single day passes by without a record of a violent act in form of either murder, rape, arson or the like.

Corruption and insecurity are "twin brothers" in the sense that where values for decent life and existence are compromised and sacrificed on the altar of self-aggrandizement and inordinate material acquisition, the consequence is usually insecurity. In such a situation, people would agitate, protest and subsequently resort to violent demonstration which will threaten peace and destroy lives and property. Again, corruption which, in most cases, breeds insecurity equally manifests in blatant denial of human rights of the citizens on account of certain unconstitutional factors in a democratic society. For instance, the Human Right Watch (2005) as captured in Nwaomah (211) reports that:

Throughout Nigeria, the groups considered "indigenes" or the original inhabitants of an

area are granted certain privileges, including access to government employment, scholarships for state schools, lower school fees, and political positions. To secure access to these privileges, they have to produce an "indigene certificate" which is granted by the local authorities. "Non-indigenes or settlers are denied these certificates and the accompanying privileges. The definition of the term "indigene" is commonly understood to be based on person's place of origin, but many people born and brought up in a particular area are not accorded the status, even though they may never have lived in any other part of Nigeria. The concept of "indigeneship" has been exploited by various groups to further their interests.

It is the foregoing situation and other similar uncongenial status quo that instigate and aggravate conflict situations between ethno-cultural groups in a society with its accompanying security challenges. In other words, an insecure society, in most cases, is the aftermath of the existence of deep-seated corruption in such a society. This worsens when leaders, particularly the political leaders, pay lip service to the hydra-headed monster because they are part of the beneficiaries of the corrupt system. It is in such a situation that a literary writer is faced with the challenge of either turning blind eyes to the circumstances in his/her environment or confront it through his/her artistic work, and sometimes, face the accompanying consequences for daring powers that be.

Is Nigeria a Corrupt Society?

One of the fundamental issues that needs to be addressed in this discourse is the identification of what constitutes a corrupt society. A better approach towards the isolation and explication of the parameters for this judgment would be perhaps to first identify what makes a society corrupt-free. As a matter of fact, if the welfare of all the citizens rather than the advantage of the few privileged individuals becomes the corner-stone of public policy, a society could be adjudged as corrupt-free and somewhat democratic. Conversely, a situation where policies, principles and programmes of the ruling class favour only an infinitesimal number of people considered as socially privileged at the expense of a legion of other bonafide members of the same society, corruption is considered as being operational and inextricably entrenched in such a society.

Against this backdrop, Olufemi, Sulaimon and Ajamu (2011) inform us that a society is seen as corrupt if it is characterized by 'election rigging, son of the soil philosophy, politics of expediency, doctrine of ten percent, judicial fragmentation of citizens, lust for wealth and political Hitlerism as a mechanism for power retention'. A corrupt society is equally one where leaders violate oath of office; engage in pen robbery and looting of public fund; give and receive kick-backs for

government contracts not done or well executed. The list of these unwholesome practices depicting a society where corruption reigns supreme is, in fact, inexhaustible.

Corruption in developing countries, especially Nigeria wears the toga of a true representation at first sight, but its result is the manifestation of an institutionalized robbery of the common people. This might be considered as one of the legacies of colonialism now perpetuated by the political class. Today, among many unresolved problems in Nigeria, the issue of the upsurge of corruption is most disturbing (Dike, 2015). For instance, there are 12 prominent cases of corruption in Nigeria that are still being investigated, some still begging for judgment and justice in various courts (and others already swept under the carpet). They include: ₦195 billion pension scam, kerosene subsidy scam, \$6 billion fuel subsidy scam, 123 billion fraud involving Stephen Oronsaya, Police pension fund fraud, NNPC missing \$20 billion, \$15 million private jet arms scandal, crude oil theft scandal, Ekiti Gate, Mohammed Abacha's ₦446 billion case and ₦7 billion bribe to Christian religious leaders, etc. (www.naiji.com/402850-to-12-corrupt-cases).

The people involved in the afore-stated financial recklessness, even though some of them have not been convicted, are those the citizens entrusted public power into their hands to use it to better their lives. But unfortunately, the leadership situation in the contemporary Nigeria has shown that the masses are yet to see a true representation. In the words of Ogege (2006), "cases abound of a large number of people living in abject poverty in Nigeria because the nation's abundant resources are inequitably distributed via corrupt practices." He observed that many people willing and able to work cannot get jobs, while some categories of people live in dwellings less than habitats for animals. Olusegun (2009) identified the source of the plight of these unfortunate citizens of Nigeria in the political class as he laments that:

The pursuit of power has blinded politicians whose disregard for value and decency in public life is matched by greed and untamed ambition. Where service to the people should have been the chosen pattern, our politicians have adopted the way of the parasite who thrive at the cost of others. And to sustain themselves in power, they have joined hands with criminals and thugs and have even opened for them the door of political parties, State Legislature and in some cases of the Parliament itself.

There is no gainsaying the fact that the above circumstance is what is obtainable in Nigeria among the ruling class whose style of leadership is tantamount to neo-colonialism. A case in point is a situation (in Nigeria) where a Senator allegedly receives ₦164

million per annum, being the highest paid law-making in the world (Okah, 2013), whereas so many citizens of the same nation live below one dollar per day. Being a country that is made up of over 200 million people, the above picture leaves much to be desired. Furthermore, a system which permits a representative of the electorate to earn ₦30.6 million per year, excluding allowances (The Sun editorial, 2013) while a university Professor who produces legions of the nation’s work-force is entitled to ₦5.87 or 6.3 million per annum (NUC, in Guardian, 2013) simply portrays a very sick nation whose leadership system requires urgent overhauling. While a Nigerian lawmaker is the highest paid the world over, his Kenyan counterpart ranks second with a basic salary of \$74,500, according to the data obtained from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) which examined law-makers’ basic salary as a ratio of the Gross Domestic Product per person across countries of the world (The Sun editorial, 2013).

This state of affairs, incontrovertibly, depicts an unfortunate political leadership befalling Africa in the 21st century. The implication of these abysmal circumstances is that corruption has comfortably settled with us. Little wonder the Transparency International, a non-governmental organization based in Geneva, according to Onimajesin (2015), has consistently and annually placed Nigeria among ten in the world’s countries where corruption is most prevalent. The table below shows where Nigeria belongs in the organization’s corruption perception index, a yearly assessment of public sector corruption in countries all over the world.

Nigeria’s corruption index (1999-2014)

YEAR	RANK	NO. OF COUNTRY SURVEYED	CPI SCORE
1999	98	99	1.6
2000	90	90	1.2
2001	90	91	1.0
2002	101	102	1.6
2003	132	133	1.4
2004	144	145	1.6
2005	152	158	1.9
2006	142	163	2.2
2007	147	179	2.2
2008	121	180	2.7
2009	130	180	2.5
2010	134	178	2.4
2011	143	183	2.4
2012	139	176	2.7
2013	144	177	2.5
2014	136	175	2.7

Source: Transparency International, (TI)

The above table clearly indicates that the world has, over the years, continued to perceive Nigeria as a country in which corruption, especially in the public sector, is perpetuated, increasing in both quality and intensity with devastating consequences on human and

national development. It is, therefore, pertinent at this juncture to repeat our earlier question: is Nigeria a corrupt society? If the foregoing situation of affairs presented so far in this discourse would lead us to believe Okoye’s (2015) assertion that “in Nigeria, corruption is akin to cancer, developing to staggering proportion and is now a bane of the country,” then Nigeria is unarguably a corrupt society! Fortunately, Onimajesin (2015) supports our conclusion as he remarks that corruption in Nigeria is both systematic and endemic. Corruption is responsible for the nation’s abundant resources having little or no impact on the living standard of the citizenry. Indeed, corruption which has been an age-long decadence in Nigeria has deferred all solutions to checkmate it. Momah (219) notes that:

Nigeria has had some anti-corruption fights in the past such as the Major Nzeogwu’s 15th January 1966 condemnation of “ten percent politicians; 1975/76 Murtala’s fiery massive retirement of civil servants with immediate effect; GMB’s 1983 WAI military putsch cum long jail term; OBJ’s EFCC/ICPC ombudsman and now, the government of iron fist sheriff approach. From the wisdom of the hindsight, anti-corruption fights collapsed immediately their prime movers leave office. Thus, the time has come to fashion a new people-oriented anti-corruption movement within an egalitarian and all-inclusive government in which all fears are allayed and the nation in unity concentrates more in fighting the cause of corruption and not its symptoms.

The effect of this deep-seated corruption is debilitating to human and societal existence and well-being as it is evident in contemporary Nigeria. The monstrous global phenomenon is so widely acknowledged that the General Assembly of the United Nations sets aside 9th December every year as International Anti-corruption Day, aimed at renewing global consciousness of the ominous menace of corruption, and re-echoing the United Nation’s convention against the social malaise.

The Unbroken Relationship between Literature and Society

Literature has always been and would continue to be an integral part of the society in which it exists. This is because it is a property of the society, acquired from the society and utilized by the society. Literature is a piece of work that is valued as a work of art (Hornby, 2010), reflecting the totality of the society’s lived experiences. In other words, literature mirrors the society, bringing to limelight its good values as well as its vices, extolling good virtues and advocating a positive change where necessary. This literature comes in various genres -- prose, drama, poetry and short stories, all providing microcosmic versions of the society of each generation.

It is uncommon, if not impossible, to find a work of art which does not portray the attitude, morals, culture and values of the society, since no literary writer solely lives in isolation, unexposed to the happenings within his or her society. In other words, literature and society are inextricably linked. Thus, what literary writers do is to create fictional works that serve as a mirror and present them to the society so that people can have a glimpse of themselves and make amends where necessary (Benjamin, 2015). This is the overall essence of literature of all ages.

If literature is a reflection of the society, it implies that it can, and of course it does, reveal why its government fails or succeeds. According to Johnson (2014:3), if one wishes to change a society, one must turn to its literature, which provides model of what worked and what did not work; what was acceptable and what was not acceptable. This implies that literature serves as a historical document through which a people's past can be vividly known, including their culture, belief system, myth, taste, recreation, tradition and legends. Little wonder, Odion (2009:118) sees literature as a creative work of art that reflects a people; what they did or what was done to them at a particular time. This is obvious considering the fact that, for example, African's most memorable experiences of life ranging from slave trade to colonialism, to the present day neo-colonialism has been skillfully and creatively documented in African literature for posterity. The messages these literary works embody attest to the fact that literature is simply a people's lived experiences captured in their widest ramifications (Johnson, 2014).

What is, therefore, found in literature are stories creatively designed to portray various dimensions of human life and actions through some characters who, by their actions, reactions, words and beliefs, convey some messages to the reading public for the purpose of education, information and entertainment. By so doing, such works project good values in the society for people to emulate (Benjamin, 2015) and condemn retrogressive and anti-democratic ones. In all ramifications, literature cannot be separated from the society in which it exists. Then, how does a literary writer write if he finds himself in a corrupt and highly insecure society? First, let us see the role of literature and literary writers in the society of man.

The Role of Literature and Literary Writers in Human Society

The roles of literature in a society are crucial and multifaceted. Indisputably, the primary function of literature in the beginning of time is to entertain the audience, the reader or the viewer (in the case of drama piece). But that is not all literature does. The much more important roles of literature are education and information. It is a mirror of the society and reflects the past, corrects the present and shapes the future. It informs

the reader about facts and situations of the society, teaching various lessons and harping on the need for things to be done the right way.

Literature serves as the societal conscience; a mirror of the society; a documentation of the peoples' past and a social commentary. These make a creative writer the watchdog of the societal conscience, presenting realities in their raw form. For example, Achebe (2012) informs us that creative writers in independent Nigeria found themselves with a new terrifying problem because they discovered that the independence their country was supposed to have won was totally without form. Thus, his works, including those of Wole Soyinka, Cyprian Ekwensi, Christopher Okigbo, Chukwemeka Ike and others were basically aimed at drawing people's attention to the Nigerian unfortunate political realities as at then (which has continued to persist till today). Thus, literature informs, educates and entertains. Furthermore, the claim that literature is a functional creative work means that it must teach in order to uphold, promote, and preserve the values of the society. This is why any literary work that is devoid of the forgoing features certainly loses its worth and would never enjoy wide readership.

Indubitably, there seems to be an interwoven relationship between the functions of literary works and the roles of the literary writer in the society. This relationship is understandable since the literary works – drama, prose, poetry, short stories, etc. are products of the literary creativity of the writer. Thus, it is valid, at this juncture, to examine the roles of the literary writer in his society beyond merely entertaining and informing the society – what the creative imaginations of the writer could do for his society. According to Ike (1991), every society in our present day world needs as many writes of all categories as possible for its survival and orderly progress. Critics have argued that the role of the writer in his society is solely dependent on the health of his society. To his end, the fundamental roles of the literary writer across the globe include but not limited to the following:

Social criticism: The creative writer is a member of the society, and the nature of his writing makes him a keen observer of societal happenings or events in his environment. But unlike any other citizen, he does not only observe these events but also criticizes, confronts, challenges, attacks and queries those unfolding events in his society that are not favourable to the peace, progress, wellbeing and development of the society and its inhabitants. This singular role of the watchdog of the society makes the entire society look up to him to speak truth to power on behalf of the citizens through his works. As Ike (1991) rightly observes, this most widely acknowledged role of the writer is a delicate one and could get him into the maximum security prison, into forced exile, or even to face the firing squad. Nevertheless, the literary writer must not be deterred by

these persecutions when they come if he must remain relevant in his society.

Public education: The writer's role of ensuring public education or sensitization is closely related to his role as a social critic. It is also the duty of the creative writer to bring the attention of the public to the areas where things have fallen apart. It could be in the areas of religion, politics, education (as regards examination malpractice, for instance), disrespect to noble societal values, youth restiveness, kidnapping, cultism among students in higher institutions, etc. By drawing the attention of the public to these social malaise, a paradigm shift is advocated and subsequently initiated, and the society becomes better eventually.

Preservation and dissemination of culture, value system and noble ideologies: Beyond mere entertainment and education, the creative writer's work, in most cases, is aimed at preserving and disseminating the ways of life of the writer's society as well as those values and ideologies such a society holds so dearly. Without the creative writer, there is the tendency that as a society advances over time from one generation to another, young people would no longer be familiar with or interested in those ideologies and value systems that clearly distinguish their society from any other culture in the world. Thus, one of the responsibilities of a literary writer is to help disseminate and preserve the cultural heritage of his society so that those values and unique ways of life of his people do not go into extinction in the course of time.

Documentation of historical and social development: A crucial part of the responsibilities of a creative writer is to document the history of the social and political developments of his society. It is the writer that creates the memories of important events in a society after they had long happened, especially for the benefit of the young generation. Every society has its historical past, and the literary writer owes it a duty to the society to artistically document those events for posterity. For instance, the historic Nigerian civil war has attracted considerable number of literary publications in order to ensure that the event remains in the sub-consciousness of the people. This would, no doubt, help to forestall a reoccurrence of that unfortunate mistake of the past.

Challenges of Nigerian Literary Writers in the 21st Century: A Sad Reflection

There is no doubt that Nigeria is blessed with enormously talented literary writers who have been globally acknowledged as shining stars. Some of them domicile in the country whereas others reside abroad. In spite of their places of abode, these writers and numerous others have been keen observers of social and political situations in the country. Furthermore, it has been well established in this discourse that corruption and insecurity are both systematic and endemic in Nigeria,

with devastating consequences on human and national development.

It is, therefore, pertinent to stress that in the midst of these debilitating social malaise, the ordinary citizens who live kilometers away from the corridor of power are mostly affected, including the literary writer. But while others may choose to remain adamant or phlegmatic and resign to fate, the literary writer voices out through his works. And because of the fact that the position of the writer largely depends on the state of health of the society, such a writer would have no option than to become somewhat "antagonistic and confrontational" with his pen when issues, especially as it affects the common man, become unbearable in the society. According to Achebe, (2012), "decency and civilization would insist that the writer takes side with the powerless." He maintains that even though there is no obligation to write in any particular way, there is a moral obligation not to ally oneself with power against the powerless. This thinking underscores the basis of most literary writers' style of writing in a corruption and insecure society such as Nigeria. After all, no right thinking artist should allow patriotism to destroy his creative potential.

Consequent upon the foregoing, the creative writer is faced with daunting challenges. He is confronted with the option of either "turning away from the reality of life's intimidating complexities or conquering its mystery" by battling with it through his work. On deciding to confront the intimidating complexities of life in the society, the writer could suffer hostilities of unimaginable proportion. In Nigeria, cases abound where literary writers face various dimensions of persecution from the ruling class for their literary works. For example, Achebe (2012), chronicling what would have been a terrible ordeal in the hands of some ruthless Military men sent to annihilate him said:

One Sunday morning, I was telephoned from Broadcasting House and informed that armed soldiers, who appeared drunk, had come looking for me, to test which was stronger – their gun or my pen. The offence of my pen was that it had written a novel called "A man of the people," a bitter satire on political corruption in an Africa country that resembles Nigeria. A week or two later, unknown callers asked for me on the telephone in my hideout. My host denied my presence. I then knew it was time for me to live.

Obviously, this experience of Chinua Achebe is one of the challenges literary writers face in a corrupt and insecure society such as the one we have found ourselves in today's Nigeria. He was marked by the political class for destruction simply because of the prophetic message of the work and its thematic coincidence with the 1966 Military coup in Nigeria.

Another case in point is that of Wole Soyinka, who was also in the 1960s incarcerated in prison for months for being vocal against injustice in the country through his creative works. While in prison, he began a powerful literary work, "The Man Died," in which he maintained that the man died in him who cannot voice out against evil and tyranny. Can the ugly experiences of the late Christopher Okigbo and Okey Ndibe be easily forgotten? What about those of Ruganda in Uganda, Jack Mapanje in Malawi and Ngugi Wa Thiongo in Kenya? The list is endless. Although the literary writer, while insisting that leadership must be objective, purposeful, democratic and create equal opportunity for all without discrimination (Onuoha, 2009), is denied the "delicious food of the emperor," his fulfillment lies in the fact that he creates that awareness among the people with a view to emancipating them.

The implication of the foregoing is that the literary writer, especially in the contemporary Nigeria, must inculcate and display extra-ordinary bravado and uncompromising stand until significant positive changes occur, jettisoning all forms of material and political inducements that corrupt the sound mind. This is the dilemma of the 21st century literary writer in Nigeria. But he or she is bound to tow this 'holy' path if he or she must be relevant to God and humanity, since the literary works teach the infallible emperor that there might be some tincture of foolishness (and tyranny) in the veins of a monarch.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Corruption has come to stay in human society, especially in developing countries, including Nigeria. Though the phenomenon has been an age-long social cankerworm, its manifestation in the contemporary Nigeria is regrettably alarming and unabated, widening its tentacles to all nooks and crannies of the society. But while the problem persists, the Nigerian literary writers continue to confront it through their works. It has become obvious that as these writers challenge the unfortunate status quo, they are faced with enormous challenges ranging from arrest, harassment, intimidation, to threat to their precious lives, especially in the present insecure Nigeria. It is against this backdrop that this work makes the following recommendations:

- All countries of the world should not only just pass into law the freedom of expression but also ensure its full and practical implementation.
- Literary writers should be allowed special freedom of literary expression through their works.
- Leaders should lead by example, placing premium on citizens' rights and welfare, instead of persecuting writers for criticizing their excesses.

- Literary writers should jettison all forms of political and material inducements that could make them become allergic to bitter truth.
- The general public should often read literary works to acquaint themselves with the actual situations in the society, and thus, be able to join in the crusade to make Nigeria a better and safe place for all.

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