

Social Issues in Nnamdi Anumihe's Chartered Messenger

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Abstract

Social issues in literary creativity revolve around the socio-political, economic, cultural and religious temperament in the society. Indeed, the treatment of burning issues of the day and its effective reflection and mirroring in various degrees and dimensions in literary creativity is what is commonly referred to as social engagement in literature. Thus, a literary writer who chooses to use his creative ability to serve a given social cause or interest in his artistic environment shows a measure of commitment by being honest and faithful in capturing and reflecting the traumatic experiences, struggles and harrowing inhuman conditions in his society. In fact, his literary creativity should be critical of such occurrences in his society. In other words, his creative input should condemn in varying degrees of accuracy, bribery and corruption, social evils and injustices, social discrimination, armed robbery and all forms of racketeering, etc. These are in fact, among the thematic preoccupations of *Chartered Messenger*. The focus of this paper, therefore is to critically examine how effectively the literary artist under study has employed his creative ability in his work to tackle these harrowing inhuman conditions and problems in the society with a view to calling for social change and reform in the lives of the people.

Introduction

The modern world is obviously not static but in constant flux. As it undergoes systematic and dynamic changes, literature which studies human behavior and activities in the society does likewise. As a feature of the urban environment, modern literature acts as check and balance on the excess of the society. The fact that man lives in an uncertain and hostile environment calls for means through which man can attempt to combat these hostile forces which not only tend to stultify his survival, but also terminate his existence. In order to sustain his survival and continued existence, therefore, man needs to devise sustainable ways of fighting these diverse and hostile environmental conditions. One of the ways of achieving this is through creative and imaginative literature.

Invariably, the creative artist on whose shoulder this enormous task has fallen must use his art to react against these evils and injustices positively and authentically. As he tries to regulate social behavior in the society, he must use his artistic enterprise to attack and criticize any perceived social evils and injustices in his environment with the aim of correcting them in order to re-shape and improve the society. Fortunately, the literary artist is neither blind nor ignorant of the weight of social responsibilities the society expects him to carry. He is thus, not only expected to reflect in his artistic construct that he is alive to the current socio-cultural, socio-economic and political problems in his environment, but also to employ all his creative resources and wealth of artistic experience to address these problems.

Apparently, it is in recognition of these many roles which literature as an aspect of art performs that the creative artist who wants to be functionally relevant employs the various forms of literature to react to the socio-economic and political contradictions in his society since he cannot remain indifferent. In his versatility, the creative writer is thus seen as a superman who must consciously reflect in varying degrees, all the activities in his social environment. It is against such a background that South African critic, Ngugi (1982: 47) describes the creative writer as one who “responds with his total personality to a social environment which changes all the time. Being a sensitive needle, he registers with varying degrees of accuracy and success, the conflicts and tensions in his society”.

Consonantly, Achebe also perceives the social roles of the creative writer in the same light. Achebe cited in Nwahunanya (1998:91) writes that the literary artist is “a human being with heightened sensitivities, he must be aware of the faintest nuances of injustice in human relation.” The creative writer, whether the poet, dramatist/playwright or novelist effectively and successfully perform his artistic function through satire, lampoon, allegory, parody, etc.

It is in an attempt to portray the various ways with which the creative writer has executed these imposing social functions that this paper examines the social issues that Nnamdi Anumihe raised in his novel *Chartered Messenger*. Since the target text for this discourse is from the genre of prose, it is needful to briefly consider how the novelist has mirrored socio-economic, political and leadership problems in post-independent African states.

The Role of the Novelist as a Social Critic

Indeed, the African novelist has not lost focus on what should form his novelistic sensibilities, especially, since

the attainment of political independence by African states. One who has carefully and systematically followed the turn of events in Africa would realize that the euphoria and optimism which accompanied the attainment of political independence disappeared quickly as African leaders and administrators began to loot the scarce economic resources in various African nations. These leaders usually jailed or killed their political rivals without trial and always dealt ruthlessly with any form of opposition to their regimes. Freedom of speech as an inalienable right of the people was cast overboard and the masses lived in fear. There was breakdown of law and order. Bribery, corruption, arson, thuggery, assassination and murder of political opponents became the rule rather than the exception.

However, the visionary artist who supposed to respond positively to these unfortunate economic, social and political problems still preoccupied himself with the exhausted theme of cultural rehabilitation and affirmation. This indifference to the current realities of post-independence atrocities, evils and disillusionment forced Nigeria's critic, Wole Soyinka (1968:16) to question whether the "Writer in contemporary Africa" exists at all. Soyinka feels that if he does, then he needs a re-examination of his position to explain the "lack of relevance between the literary concerns of writers and the pattern of realities... in the majority of the modern African states".

It is in the light of the above thematic concerns that Achebe (1975:59) examined the duties and roles of an African novelist and writer. While acknowledging Ezekiel Mphahlele's (Mphahlele is a South African) statement that the African novelist is "the sensitive poing of his community", Achebe asserts that the "writer cannot expect to be excused from the task of re-education and regeneration that must be done" as these revolve around his responsibility. In similar vein, Lewis Nkosi (another South African critic) (1981:55) looking at the instability and total collapse of established order which gave novelist of the contemporary time utterance, makes the following declaration:

We are obliged to note that this shift in style is occurring against a background of chronic instability in Africa, that the basis of close organic relationship between the individual and the rest of the community is being seriously undermined by the new economic and social forces.

Novelists who wrote novels with this thematic preoccupation used their artistic works to criticize and condemn the prevailing political, economic and social problems in the society. By so doing, they desire to correct, change and bring about social reforms. Novels of this thematic temperament include those written by Chinua Achebe such as , *A Man of the People* (1966), Gabriel Okara, *The Voice* (1964), Wole Soyinka, *The Interpreters* (1965), Ayi Kwei Armah, *The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born* (1968), Ngugi Wa Thiong'O, *A Grain of Wheat* (1967) and *The Petals of Blood* (1977), Peter Abraham, *Mine Boy* (1946), *A Wreath for Udomo* (1965) and *This Island Now* (1966), Ezekiel Mphahlele, *Down Second Avenue* (1959), Carin Anver, *Golden City* (1968) and *A Dream Deferred* (1973), Alex La Guma, *In The Fog of Season's End* (1972), Festus Iyaye, *Violence* (1979) and *The Heroes* (1983) to mention just these few. Appreciating the ways and manners the African novelists artistically tackled in their creative works, these prevalent social and political issues in their time, Ngwaba (1986: 22 – 23) writes that:

The African writer has adhered to what seems to be the novels inevitable posture in relation to human needs. He has been sensitive to changes and as a result, formal conventions have reflected creative intensions.

The understanding of the broad thematic phases in the African novel accounts for constant shifts or change of literary interest more so as literary history often discerns the decay of one convention and the rise of a new one which aptly "establishes the reason for that change of convention at a particular historical moment", according to Nwahunanya (2010:53). It is in this respect that this discourse can conveniently make reference to the current literary thrust in Africa, especially, Nigeria today, a modernist and post-modernist literary output known as contemporary Nigerian fiction. Writing in this dispensation, Nigeria's literary critic, Charles Nnolim (2009:230) notes that contemporary Nigerian fiction,

depicts a society adrift and a people lost in the imbecilities of fertile optimism; hoping that materialism and the pursuit of dirty lucre will compensate for the loss of the nation's soul' for the Nigeria we encounter in its contemporary fiction is a nation without a soul, without direction, without a national ethos – it is a rudderless ship a-sail amidst the jetsam and flotsam of a directionless voyage to nowhere (230).

Nigeria's novelist, Ben Okri is without doubt the harbinger of the contemporary fiction in this remove. He is thus the link between the old and the new generation of Nigerian literature. His two novels, *Flowers and Shadows* and *The Landscape Within* define the main thematic preoccupation cited above. Nnolim, asserts that he captured in "Scumscape" a painting by Omovo seized by the authorities where Keme describes the painting as disturbing a commentary on our society showing people on a drift, a scummy drift" (230).

Other Nigerian novelists of the contemporary period who show a shift in the thematic interests of the

earlier two generations or phases due to what they perceived as the decay of the convention include Maik Nwosu whose novel, *Alpha Song* sets the tone for contemporary Nigeria fiction. Nnolim opines that the work portrays characters who “engage themselves in seeking for a great indefinable pleasure, where daylight time is of no productive consequences while the night sits as the queen of drunkenness and whoredom”. (230). To this age belong Tonikan Onwordi’s *Ballad of Rage*, Jonah Ageda’s *God’s Own Country*, Omo Uwaifo’s *Fattening House*, Chim Newton’s *Under The Cherry*

Tree and Fola Arthur Worrey’s *The Diaries of Mr. Michael*. It is on this thematic vision that Nnamdi Anumihe’s *Chartered Messenger* focuses.

Social Issues in Nnamdi Anumihe’s *Chartered Messenger*

Novelists and other literary artists in Nigeria like other nations of the world have continued to explore in their artistic works, the precarious position of man in his environment and the daunting problems he constantly faces in the society in general. Man’s concerted effort to tackle these problems and so, create a niche for himself is often confronted with retrogressive forces which totally thwart his sincere attempt. These unfortunate social forces not only left man in a dilemma, but also directionless as Nnolim has succinctly noted above. This creative ability in fact, espouses Marxist literary orientation.

Generally, a writer whose thematic pre-occupation depicts in varying degrees, the harsh and harrowing socio-economic conditions in his environment and the masses struggle for survival, i.e. presenting the daily life of the characters; the way they suffer in order to eke a living inspite of the inhuman and traumatic experiences they go through amidst capitalistic tendencies of the society is what Marxism stands for. The realistic portrayal of these forms of exploitation and oppression of the poor masses in literary creativity depicts Marxist temperament and orientation in literature. A Nigerian critic Emevo Biakolo (2000:137) notes that this is portrayed through “the intention of the author, the subject matter he treats and the very form of the art aimed at change in the material production and class relations in Marxist term”.

African writers whose literary creativities are Marxist bent include Ngugi Wa Thiong’O of Kenya, Ousmane Sambene of Senegal and Festus Iyaye of Nigeria whose novels, *Petals of Blood*, *Gods Bits of Wood* and *The Violence* are Marxist in orientation. Also, one of the preoccupations of English novelists has been the critique of society. Here, one can quickly remember the works of Charles Dickens, Thomas Hardy, George Eliot, William Makepeace Thackeray, James Joyce, Anthony Trollope, among others whose literary creativities criticized the English society of their time. Nnamdi Anumihe’s *Chartered Messenger* which is written on this thematic preoccupation concentrates on societal problems with a view to correcting the various ills that constantly militate against efforts geared at socio-economic and political development of the country.

There are also sub-themes such as mediocrity versus intellectuality and the triumph of the just and upright over the wicked and unjust, as well as socio-economic decadence in the society. Anumihe equally stresses the theme of education, insisting that good and proper family upbringing is not only a panacea for Nigeria’s persistent socio-economic and political problems, but also the key to successful living. The author in various ways. Portrays greed and envy as the motivating forces behind most criminal acts in the country.

The novel authentically and realistically depicts the Nigerian world as a world where the highly placed, those who occupy prominent and managerial positions use their positions to intimidate and manipulate the masses in need of help. It is a world without conscience or sympathy, a world of inverted morality, a world where evil, injustice, bribery and corruption, hypocritical and materialistic indulgence are conceived of as legitimate human behavior. Set in metropolitan Lagos, the story of the novel revolves around Fred, the only son of Mr. Ibeabuchi, an accountant and seasoned banker who is one of the victims of the failed bank’s phenomenon.

Thematically, Anumihe tackles contemporary social problems, problems that have permeated into the very fabric of the nation. This is the syndrome of god fatherism or having Abraham as father (a term/phrase often used to qualify sentimental closeness or disposition) which has unfortunately affected the corporate existence of Nigeria as a nation. The term also goes with a certain underhand connotation with dubious and fraudulent intent. Against this background, one who has no prominent and influential individual or highly placed personality or no connections whatsoever to any political bigwigs who can link one to those occupying important government offices, companies or other establishments has no place in the society or labour market. This is of course irrespective of whether such an individual possesses the best qualifications, takes the first position in both written and oral interviews. In fact, employment for such candidate is unthinkable and remains as far away as the sky or heaven can be.

Instead, those who never attended any interview or those who failed or even performed very poorly at an interview, or possess no experience whatsoever, the mediocre, even though they may be suffering from one physical disability or the other, are usually preferable. People are no longer employed because of their eligibility, experiences, excellent qualifications or good technical know-how. The magic wand for gainful employment is simply powerful links and connections or enough cash in brown envelopes to buy the job or position. Employment in such a society is done on a cash and carry bases. This accounts for the harrowing experiences

and harsh ordeals the protagonist of the novel, Fred has to go through in an attempt to secure a job. Fred has to condescend to a lowly and menial position of a mere messenger in order to survive and assist in alleviating the family suffering. This employment becomes possible on the intervention of James and Chimdia, staff of IDEAL Bank Plc. Instead of the position of an accountant which is appropriate for his qualifications as the best accounting student of his time and excellent performance at the interview, Fred is given the job of a mere messenger by the bank's authorities.

In order to tackle the contemporary theme of social discriminating, perversion, nepotism, exploitation, injustice, bribery, corruption, armed robbery and insecurity, the author carefully creates three contrasting characters, Fred, notable for his intelligence, avowed honesty, dedication and fairness as a guiding principle, Benji and Kekere notorious for their fraudulence, duplicity, mediocrity, and criminality. For instance, Fred is unable to understand the reversal turn of things in an interview he was the first on the list. Many of those whose names came behind his have been given employment letters. In an attempt to unravel the puzzle and find out why he was not among those employed, the following disheartening information is given to him.

... someone in the personnel took me outside and told me in confidence that if I wanted an appointment letter, I should bring twenty thousand naira [Nigeria's currency] for the personnel manager (34).

Fred who has often managed to survive either on 101 or even 001 daily sheds tears as he has never dreamt of such amount in his life. Hear his response: "I don't have that kind of money sir. Moreover, I used to think that banks go for the best. I used to think that employment in banking was on merit".

When Fred reports this to one of the staff of the bank and a former colleague of his father in the bank, Mr. James, he nods his head in an unspoken acknowledgement of the practical situation with the following intra-personal conversation.

He knew full well that merit was no longer emphasized, rather, god fatherism was the open sesame. You were either well connected and got the goodies or you could go and drown in the sea of poverty and frustration (35).

Fred who still believes that Mr. James has the capacity to assist him continues to pester the man either at home or in the office. Mr. James eventually opens up loud thus:

Young man, he sighed, it's really very unfortunate that we live in a very corrupt country where a person who tops others in an interview is sidelined, while those who fail are employed. Tomorrow, they will complain of inefficiency ... I feel so disappointed, so frustrated [that he cannot help the situation] (40).

Unable to pass secondary school examination and obtain SSCE (Senior Secondary Certificate Examination) or WASC (West African School Certificate) through their personal efforts, Benji and Kekere moved to private school called "Miracle Centre", just like the special centres we have in the present day Nigeria, where they practically purchased their certificates. Kekere who has already registered in the Miracle Centre along with Benji explains to Fred who is ignorant of what the term stands for thus:

...Miracle Centres are private examination centres in the cities which the proprietors established to help students pass their examinations. You see, these proprietors are business people; they pay the examination people a lot of money to secure the centre and ensure that students who register in their centres pass very well. In turn, they charge the students high registration fee and guarantee them success... They hire brilliant students like you to answer the questions. Some even buy the questions ahead of the exams... Even the police whom you see guarding the place are paid by the proprietors. It's really a very well organized syndicate (Chartered: 22).

Thereafter, Benji who has already boasted of joining the business so as to become godfather begins to run his own private miracle centre called "Examic Commercial Institute". He fraudulently rises to the top, become a money lender, a business mogul and is addressed as Honourable Alhaji, Dr. Ben Jack, Chairman, Chief Executive Officer, BENJACK Group of International Companies. He secures a clerical job for his pal, Kekere, through the influence of his immense wealth and vast political connections. Unfortunately, before Fred appears as a messenger, Benji had in existence, a powerful criminal syndicate secretly perpetrating crime and fraudulent activities in the society. The author carefully paints a vivid picture of these set of societal criminals who through their clandestine activities, thwart all efforts aimed at change and reconstruction, as well as socio-economic and political development of the nation.

Even though merit is no longer emphasized, even though god fatherism and individual connections are the norm, there are still people who want the right and proper things to be done. Consequently, Fred's brightness and intelligence are spotted out through his brilliant contribution at a lecture on the consolidation and recapitalization exercise of failed banks by the Governor of the Central Bank. After the lead paper presentation and other lectures on the consolidation and recapitalization exercise, the governor called for questions and contributions. As no staff of IDEAL Bank seems to know anything on the exercise, none came from the bank

audience. Fred, a mere messenger who should know nothing less than mere menial activities and chores in the bank impulsively raises his hand for contribution. Of course, his personal readings, consultations and inquiries exposed him to what the exercise is all about. Thus, he is more knowledgeable on the consolidation and recapitalization activities than even the General Manager and Managing Director of the bank put together.

Consequently, he is recognized and given an opportunity to contribute. The following comments are revealing:

Mine is a contribution rather than a question. I have listened very attentively to both the Governor's Key Note Address and now, the Lead Paper. The incidence of failed banks should be viewed, not merely as a crime but rather as a sin against humanity because the affliction it brings to affected families is so devastating that it can be likened to genocide. I am speaking from experience because my father was a victim. I am therefore a passionate stakeholder in support of the consolidation exercise (72).

The Central Bank Governor and his team are happy to find someone in the audience who has a grasp of what the programme is all about. Although he appreciates Fred's contribution, he calls for definite solution. "Young man, you seem to have a good idea of what we are doing, but strategies and solutions are what we desire most now". Fred responds adequately to arouse the Central Bank Governor's exceptional interest as he succinctly adds:

Yes sir, I do. Firstly, I believe that the exercise should be geared towards turning the country away from its over-dependence on the oil sector. Secondly and more importantly, we should aim at repositioning our vision towards an agro-based ICT driven, sustainable economy that will emphasize self-reliance and capacity building, financed by banks with adequate capital base to compete in the international market. But sir, they must be manned by technocrats and professionals not politicians (73).

Through divine will, this singular action not only brings Fred to the limelight, but also propels him to prominent position in the bank and national recognition. Through scrutinization and inquiry, the Central Bank Governor discovers that although Fred was employed many years ago as a messenger, he is a Chartered Accountant with HND (Higher National Diploma) distinction in accountancy. He becomes surprised that the young man was employed with a position not commensurate to his qualifications. In a bid to help himself and his family to survive Fred is advised to come into the bank through the back door by taking employment as a messenger. This will enable him to pave a way for his rise and thus carve a niche for himself. Chimdia, a staff of IDEAL Bank who through James's assistance, secures the present position for Fred advises and informs Fred's family on her hidden intention for the inevitable action.

He is not to present his HND for now until a good opportunity comes up, then he will be at an advantage, because he would already be a staff and he would just require up-grading. That is the practice everywhere in the country for those who have no connections to give them good jobs immediately they graduate (56).

Fred is immediately and automatically upgraded to the rank of Senior Accountant and equally appointed a member of National Finance Policy Consultancy (NFPC) responsible for advising the Federal Government on Financial Policies on the orders of the Central Bank Governor. These promotions elevated Fred far above his seniors who now see him as a threat, an obstacle and clog in the wheel of their progress. They therefore, put in motion, intrigues aimed at over-running and destroying him.

Earlier, Fred had through private extra-mural classes, enrolled and obtained a certificate in ICAN (Institute of Chartered Accountant of Nigeria), making him a chartered accountant, a feat which is responsible for his sudden growth and acceleration from the rank of Senior Messenger to Senior Accountant, an occurrence which Chimdia earlier predicted from insight and experience. As the most knowledgeable officer in the consolidation and recapitalization exercise, Fred is assigned to head the operation. He quickly discovers intrigues and criminal activities capable of ruining the bank. The syndicate swindles customers and defrauds them of their hard earned money. Attempts to correct and put this in check lands Fred in a serious risk of losing his life in the hands of the cabal who vow to eliminate him.

When Fred finds out the money laundering business of the cabal involving Damisa, Kekere, Dom, GM and other top bank officials, he attempts to bring them to book. Kekere, the insider threatens to deal with him as he vows thus: "I know what to do. When I finish with him, he would wish he has remained a chartered messenger only" (124). As is usually the practice, any one who attempts to point out the illegalities, injustices, deceits, underground bribery, corruption and the likes being perpetrated, is either dismissed as a disgruntled element sponsored by godfathers and political bigwigs or marked out for total destruction. This is in fact, the fate of Fred when he tries to expose and bring the criminal activities to book. Through underground work by the syndicate, Fred is posted to bullion runs in the strong room operations, an action taken to position him as a target for destruction. This posting is done without the permission of the Managing Director (MD). Immediately after this, a gang of armed robbers, an arm of the syndicate usually employed to unleash evil, mayhem and destruction

on the peace loving society or any group who dares to challenge them, storm the bank with Fred as their only target. Before carting away millions of cash, Fred is shot severally at close range so that he loses consciousness.

Through incriminating report of Kekere, an insider and member of the cabal, Fred is framed up as an accomplice. He is subsequently dismissed and handed over to the police, although he is still unconscious. In what seemed like a dramatic twist, nemesis catches up with one of the armed robbers. He is nabbed and thrown in the same cell where Fred is kept under close watch after his gradual recovery. He is among the armed robbers that Chimdia's friend, Bose picked with her video clip during the armed robbery operation. This is how Bose discloses her incriminating evidence.

I was hiding under the table in my computer room and I video them with my cell phone when they shot Fred. That man's face is very clear (149).

As Inspector Ike Japhets of EFCC (Economic and Financial Crime Commission) watches and confirms the video clips, he takes it to the DPO, who after looking at the clips exclaims thus: This is armed robbery and attempted murder happening live" (151).

Following this discovery, Inspector Ike Japhets swings into action with this physical evidence. Rasta, as the armed robber is called is picked and moved from police cell to EFCC cell under maximum security. Through revelation, Kekere is implicated as an inside link who informs the syndicate that Fred holds the key to the strong room. He also exposes Godfather, Benjack as the sponsor of the operation. This informs us that no serious armed robbery operation will succeed without a powerful syndicate as sponsors such as the one running the nation's economy down whose members include governors, senators, ministers, lower and upper house representatives, commissioners and business moguls like Godfather who have in their payrolls, top government officials like the DPO. Parts of the inside swindlers are the IDEAL Bank General Manager, Chief T.M. Pampas, Chief Accountant, Damisa, Dom (all, Staff of IDEAL Bank) and some members of Board of trustee of IDEAL Bank, such as Chief Eselu Nego, Dr. Peterson, Chief Maboriowo, among others. This is what one of the armed robbers caught, Rasta unravels:

Ah ma guy, you don't know that every deal we do somebody must to sponsor am. See, you sabi say na somebody inside that time na im give us sign say na you hold key to strong room? ... listen my guy. Godfather tell us say somebody inside the bank will cough as signal to show who hold strong room key ... that's the inside man. You don't know that for every job we do, some sharp guy, who will get his cut, will provide information (154).

In this text, the author attempts to depict the various faces of bribery and corruption, deceit, fraud, duplicity, injustice, sponsored armed robbery and under cover swindling and stresses that government needs to make serious efforts and policy aimed at checking the social malaise if the country must move forward. The so called police hide under their normal role of maintaining law and order to exploit the masses and collect bribes from law abiding citizens as well as horribly victimize the people they are supposed to protect and unleash various social injustices and evil on the society.

Stressing that it is against this sensibility that the police erect barricades on the roads where they lay siege on innocent citizens, collecting money from taxi, bus drivers and Okada (Commercial motor cyclist), while the real criminals, the armed robbers, armed bandits, car-snatchers, human-traffickers, kidnappers, drug-peddlers, money launderers, assassins and the likes operate in broad day light unchallenged, the author emphasizes that the presence of the armed forces on the roads is a mere smoke-screen as things never really change. What they do is to assume different shapes.

Nonetheless, the novelist, Nnamdi Anumihe, uses the various harsh experiences Fred passes through to portray divine intervention and God's presence in the affairs of man on the one hand and to state that change may be slow in coming, but it must come when the right people are placed at the right place. He is also of the view that the just shall prevail and no matter the extent of pressure mounted to destroy truth and subvert the course of justice, if carefully and authentically handled, the truth must be made manifest.

It is in the light of the foregoing that the author seeks to prove that although bribery and corruption have become the rule rather than the exception in the country, though the rich has continually taken advantage of his economic and political power to intimidate and subdue the poor and down trodden, the law, if appropriately applied, still remains the last hope of the common man. Thus, the author uses Fred to exemplify the Biblical sensibility that weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning.

This is the underlying message in Fred's harsh job seeking experiences. In spite of the mocking and derogatory position of a messenger's office given to him, his perseverance and persistence to survive where others fail are responsible for his accelerated rise and upliftment from chartered messenger to chartered accountant, a senior accounting officer at first and a general manager later. Again, in spite of the attempts, subversive activities and the conniving intrigues to pervert the course of justice, the rule of law is able to apply its full weight on the offenders.

Conclusion

The knowledge that the creative writer acquires his literary materials from his own environment and that serious literature is always judged in relation to its social functions lend colour to the story which Anumihe tells in his novel *Chartered Messenger*. This is why Nnolim (2009) describes literary creativity which focuses on the burning issues of the day thus:

The work of art is seen as a conquest, a struggle between the artist and his world, an accusation against forces that hold humanity in servitude ... of suffering ... the devastation of economic order, the instabilities of government in most African countries south of Sahara, the frequent disruptions of democratic order through military rule, and the ravages of disease, especially, the HIV/AIDS pandemic have taken their toll in the area of literary production (259 - 260).

We are, therefore, not surprised as Anumihe purposely deploys two contrasting set of characters so as to make the social issues he is handling vivid and illuminating. For instance, characters like Solomon Bench, the MD, his loyal staffers such as Fred, Chimdia, Bose, on the one hand, and the dupes and criminals like T.N. Pampas, the GM, Demisa, the Chief Accountant, Kekere, the Cashiers and Dom Messenger on the other, through which the money laundering and bank robbery operations become possible, are put in place not only to treat the multiple themes of honesty excellence, reward for hard work and perseverance alongside injustice, bribery and corruption, but also to redeem the battered image of the Nigeria Police. The aim is to prove that although there are bad eggs in the rank and file of the police, not all the members of the police force are corrupt. There are still among them, some upright, law abiding and serious minded individuals who are there to maintain peace, law and order through the enforcement of the law. The arrest, prosecution and conviction of the criminal syndicate led by the godfather Benjack, shows that no one is above the law and that the law is no respecter of persons. Thus, Anumihe finally calls for the needed socio-economic change through the cleansing and installation of the social crusader, Fred, at the helm of affairs of the IDEAL Bank.

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