



All Nations University Journal of Applied Thought (ANUJAT)
A Multidisciplinary Approach

Volume 8/ Number 2

May 2021

Article 8

The Question of Conscience in *Why am I Doing This?*

ADEYEMI AMOS ADEGBOYEGA

ADEYEMI AMOS ADEGBOYEGA holds a Master of Arts (M.A) degree in Literature from Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida University in Lapai, Niger State, Nigeria. He is currently a Lecturer in the English Program at Bowen University, Iwo, Osun State, Nigeria.

For this and additional works at:

anujat.anuc.edu.gh

Copyright © May 2021 All Nations University Journal of Applied Thought

(ANUJAT) and Authors

Recommended Citation:

Adegboyega, A. A. (2021). The Question of Conscience in *Why am I Doing This?* *All Nations University Journal of Applied Thought (ANUJAT)*, 8(2): 111-124. All Nations University Press. doi:<http://doi.org/10.47987/HPAV5040>

Available at: <http://anujat.anuc.edu.gh/Vol8/No2/8.pdf>

Research Online is the Institutional repository for All Nations University College. For further information, contact the ANUC Library: anujat@anuc.edu.gh

Abstract

*Greatly concerned and obsessed with the state of affairs in the country, literary artists more often than not, call to conscience the sensibilities of their audience, politicians inclusive. Against the prebendal nature of politics which is characterized by different anarchist tendencies in Nigeria, literary artists find justification for their craft as they seek ultimately to re-organize the society and confront its perils. This is the crux of this study. My concern is to rationalize Abubakar Gimba's *Why am I Doing This?* banking on the interrogative undertone of the title, a variation from the norm. This interrogative undertone as will be explicated herein questions the rationalities – of the author and the actors in his observations as documented. Four essays from the collection were purposively sampled to demonstrate this. Deploying the literary tool of postcolonialism, this study a critical qualitative analysis submits that Abubakar Gimba laments the anathema and apathy that pervades the Nigerian society despite the professed democratic system of governance. He unveils the hidden and sad truths of modern Nigeria in its raw and naked form. These truths contradict her democracy. It is against this that Gimba hopes for a change in the status-quo and modus operandi of statecraft.*

Keywords: *apathy, conscience, politics, prebendal, perils.*

Introduction

There is nothing is more seductive for man than his freedom of conscience, but there is nothing more tormenting either. – Fyodor Dostoevsky, in *The Brothers Karamazor*, 1880.

Ben Okri in his seminal piece, *The Famished Road*, calls man to conscience, to rethink the essence of his continued existence and make the world a better habitation for his fellow man. This aptly captures the postcolonial situation of Nigeria. Okri writes that

Our lives are changing. Our gods are silent. Our ancestors are silent. A great something is going to come from the sky and change the face of the earth. We must take interest in politics. We must become spies on behalf of justice [...]. Rats and frogs understand their destiny. Why not man, eh? (1991, p. 498)

Contemporary realities of postcolonial disillusionments in Nigeria have reached an alarming state such that citizens have reluctantly resigned it. To say and repeat the words that Nigeria will be better has somewhat become the only consolation that Nigerians, largely the masses hold unto.

The elite are not oblivious of this either, especially when they pretend to be sympathetic to the better Nigerian project and the numerous chatters to make the country work.

Efforts have been on top gear since independence as affirmed by previous studies to make democracy work in the country, in line with global best practices. Scholars, nationalists, and politicians alike have debated on ways to make this happen, however, all efforts have proved abortive and futile. This much professed system of government, which holds the elected accountable to the electorates remains a mirage in Nigeria. The prebendal nature of politics has made it such that the system has failed woefully and its mandate of democratization i.e. allowing the citizens to participate in governance and decision making process in a free, fair and equal democratic atmosphere has been thrown to the wind. Consequently, democracy remains largely unpopular among the masses, the majority of citizenry.

The flag of freedom hoisted in Nigeria after nationalist struggles which culminated into independence in the 1960 and the transition to democratic administration after many years of despotic military interregnum has not paid off. The abundant natural resources in the country continually benefit a minute faction of the Nigerian populace. It is in this light that Okpeh Ochayi Okpeh submits that

[...] Nigeria is an interesting paradox. Although the country is abundantly endowed with natural resources, yet she perpetually suffers acute shortage of basic necessities. (2011, p. 554).

The system of government as it has been practiced since independence is such that the abundant natural resources benefits only a small but privileged faction of the population, thus favoring the minority against the majority. This justifies Okpeh's submission above.

On the practice of democracy in the country, and in fact on continent of Africa as it is conducted by the ruling class, Claude Ake cited in Okpeh Ochayi Okpeh is of the view that

Africa is democratizing, but the democracy occurring in Africa does not appear to be the least emancipatory. On the contrary, it is legitimizing the disempowerment of ordinary people who seem to be worse off than they used to be because their political oppression is no longer perceived as a problem inviting solution but a solution endowed with moral political legitimacy. Okpeh (2011, p. 563).

This justifies the ugly trends that have come to characterize democracy in Africa at large and Nigeria in particular. It calls to question the conscience of the ruling elite who continually profess democracy, but will never allow the system to find a strong footing by their actions. In the biblical term, they are wolves in sheep's clothing.

In a related stance, Eme Awa in ‘Democracy in Nigeria: A Political Scientist’s View’ examined the practice of the nascent democracy in Nigeria as compared to what obtains in other climes. His final submission on the subject matter aligns with the views above. According to him,

The question of political parties, the ideas of justice, freedom, equality and fraternity which are used by the west to adorn their democratic theory and practices, are flawed considerably in their application in the Nigerian situation partly because the civil society in Nigeria is not freed from the socially imposed disabilities of poverty, ignorance, disease and squalor. We find that there is an accretion of political and economic power increasingly in the hands of a few people and steep inequality has come to characterize the system and to render the system and to render the democratic system like a poor image of what is borrowed, with little evidence of our traditional generosity. (1996, p. 21)

Awa’s view as captured above succinctly captures the dilemma of the democratic system in Nigeria, which has only provided the platform for unprecedented mismanagement of state’s resources, and high-handedness.

On the pedestal of social criticism, through the instrument of literature as the mirror of the society, the literary artist finds social relevance in discussing different issues that militates against the development of his society. He has remains sensitive to the political going-ons in his environment and thus becomes the spokesperson for the masses through his creative outputs. A critical observation of the creative and literary vigour in Nigeria in particular will reveal that it is through the non-fictive genre, essays precisely, that the literary artist in the country has adequately engaged in and remained relevant to the socio-political discourse of his country. Famous creative artists and critics alike in this category include Chris Anyawu in her life writing, *Days of Terror: a Journalist’s Eye-witness Account of Nigeria in the Hands of Its Worst Tyrant*, Okonjo Iweala’s *Fighting Corruption is Dangerous: The Story Behind the Headlines* and *Too Good to Die: Third Term and the Myth of Indispensable Man in Africa* by Ayisha Osori and Chidi Odinkalu among others. The above titles and so many others unmentioned have strong political undertones and are directed towards making Nigeria better. To this category belongs Abubakar Gimba.

For Gimba, his creative outputs, which is a product of his active participation and interactions at different levels of the society is always critical of the dysfunctional and amoral trends of events in Nigeria. Abdullahi Ismaila and Ezekiel Fajenyo aver that

Gimba’s writings indubitably reside in the domain of critical discourse [...] For Gimba; politics is a tool for enhancing understanding and cooperation in any given community. It is not to be used for strife and disharmony. (2008, p. 6-7).

Gimba’s perception on the relevance of literature in his society provides a strong basis for his preoccupation first as a literary artists and then as a social critic and an essayist. According to him,

Literature is sharing with other people, ideas about things, [To] make them have ideas about things [...] to provide some form of mirror in which these people see themselves as they have not done before [...] people can only be part of literature, part of the literature culture if literature has meaning to them and their development. (2007, p. 15-16)

He sees himself as a writer with a cause who

[...] must take cognizance of his environment, cultural mores and ethical background [...] through arts, I want us to look at ourselves again, and each one of us should re-examine himself, x-ray himself, see himself, and see how we are not helping in the solutions. If we could be a little more honest with ourselves and see who we truly are in the mirror, perhaps, the ugliness now ravaging us like a plague will be more obvious. And our conscience would then lead us to start our way out of Egypt. (2007, p. 26)

It is with this understanding of literature and the roles of literature in human affairs, that Gimba throughout his literary career remained famous for his patriotic and altruistic observation subtly railing against prevailing national problems in Nigeria. His oeuvre, particularly his essays are social commentaries that scold the complacent attitudes of Nigerians, particularly the political elite towards governance which has hampered the democratization process in Nigeria. The crux of his essays is a call to conscience and the need for a redirection of the course of the country. He firmly held on to this ideal and further demonstrates it in his last written piece, posthumously published as *Oh Uhud: Thy Haunting Spirit* in 2015. This commitment in the words of Ezekiel Fajenyo

runs through his [oeuvre] with clarity of focus and touching accuracy [and they become] a critical response to regeneration issues in the Nigerian society, especially those that affect the people and hinder our development as a nation [...] outrightly (sic) condemning those vices in us that unfortunately, have continued to bring us into disrepute in the comity of nations, while advocating attitudinal change and moral regeneration. [His] experimental framework covers all facets of the Nigerian life: economy, politics, literature and education, religion, leadership, etc. (2008, p. 27/28)

These same reflections are not divorced from his 2001 collection of essays, *Why am I Doing This?* in which he engages issues ranging from democracy, tax and taxation, national identity, security, violence and terrorism, anti-graft war, neglect of history, to the decay in the public service in Nigeria. All of these issues and many more in his view have contended against Nigeria's democracy and hampered the democratization process in Nigeria.

Why am I Doing This? is a collection of Gimba's column articles while he wrote as a columnist with the *Nigerian Tribune* and *Weekly Trust*, two leading national dailies in Nigeria. Undoubtedly, Gimba through this collection seeks justice, equality and fairness for all Nigerians without prejudices to ethnic, religious, tribal or political affiliations. This as he explains is the rationale behind the interrogative undertone of the title which leaves the reader wondering what the author hopes to achieve with the piece. In his view,

[j]ustice for every human being, to preserve and honour our humanity [...] [is] part, the reasons why I am doing this – writing for a column. I have no tall ambition: just to make a contribution to national discourse so as to make life meaningful, with or without the present boundaries that define Nigeria. So help me God.' (2007, p. 12).

The over fifty essays in the collection are thus aimed at achieving this set mandate. Considering the contemporary situations in Nigeria, the overheating of the polity by avaricious and over ambitious politicians, this study, a qualitative critical analysis draws insights from postcolonialism to further demonstrate Gimba's commitment to the Nigerian project i.e. to totally entrench democracy and to enhance the democratization process in Nigeria.

Theoretical Construct

The theoretical anchor for this study is postcolonialism. The approach to postcolonialism that will be adopted here is from the perspective of home critic paradigm. This field of inquiry has gained acceptance in literary cum political discourses, especially in Nigeria and other third world countries in recent times. Its inherent ability to navigate between the past and the present and locate a written piece within the postcolonial conditions of the home front justifies its continued relevance in this regards. In the words of Silemon Stephen, the concept of postcolonialism

[...] proves most useful when it is used synonymously with a post-independence historical period in once colonized nation...when it locates a specifically anti – or post – colonial discursive purchase in culture, one which begins in the moment that colonial power inscribes itself onto the body and space of its Others and which continues as an often occulted tradition into the modern theatre of neo-colonialist [...] relations (1991, p. 3).

Adherents to this field of enquiry examine a text as a body of the larger culture that produces it. They focus largely on the postcolonial state, which has unequivocally been characterized after the political independence by attendant disillusionments that have hampered her journey towards attaining nationhood. Hence, two issues at the heart of postcolonialism are the ideas of nation and nationalism. The continued relevance of this field of enquiry is as such seen as a process of reconstructing the society. Homi K. Bhabha in *The Location of Culture*, cited in Sule E. Egya, theorizes that

The problem is not simply ‘selfhood’ of the nation as opposed to otherness of other nations. We are confronted with the nation split within itself, articulating the heterogeneity of its population. The barred Nation It/Self alienated from its eternal self-generation, becomes a liminal signifying space that is eternally marked by the discourse of minorities, the heterogeneous histories of contending peoples, antagonistic authorities and tense locations of cultural difference. (2014, p. 129)

Postcolonial scholars see the development of the new elite in a postcolony after independence as the greatest self-undoing of the state. Frantz Fanon, a leading psychologist cum postcolonialist avers in this regards that the elite become ‘aider and abettor of the young bourgeoisie which is plunging into the mire of corruption and pleasure’ (1995, p. 156). It is in response to this that literary artists seek to support and advance true democratization in the spirit of nationalism through their literary creations. In the words of Fanon, the postcolonial writer, now

[...] progressively takes on the habit of addressing his own people’ (1995, p. 155).

This emanates from the deep desire to institute a discourse of change against despotism, hegemony and the excessive overheating of the polity by a few minorities.

Thus, the literary artists preoccupy themselves with issues surrounding the political, social and economic wellbeing of their countries. They become advocates and frontiers for a change in the polity by engaging and tackling

corruption, the empty rhetoric of political sloganeering, the manipulation of the mass media to legitimize dictatorship and the cult of personality’ (Kerr, 1995, p. 93)

that has pervaded the society. Through their works, they demonstrate a concrete knowledge and observation of the everyday situations and realities of the populace. Thus, they contribute to the concerted discussions towards a progressive social renewal in their countries.

The Question of Conscience in *Why am I Doing This?*

For the purpose of this study, four essays, subdivided into two groups, are purposively selected to demonstrate Abubakar Gimba’s conscientious objection to the trend of events in Nigeria.

Engaging Nigeria’s Democracy in ‘Lawlessness as Democracy’ and ‘Our Democracy of Voter Irrelevance’

Lawlessness as Democracy

In 'Lawlessness as Democracy' Gimba engages the system of democracy obtainable in Nigeria in which people and by this he means both the electorates and the elected care less

about the rule of law and due process [which are] the very soul of democracy (2007, p. 35).

As an attribute of self-righteousness which Nigerians are known for, the neglect of rules and regulations in conducting both private and public businesses has become a bane and a negative shadow which militates against the democratic system in the country. This no doubt, has negatively affected her democratization process. On the one hand, an average Nigerian takes laws into his/her hands, disallowing the law enforcement agents of government from carrying out their constitutional duties. The democratic tenet that every suspect is adjudged innocent until proven guilty by a law court of competent jurisprudence does not apply in Nigeria. The arrest of a suspect especially when this is not done by a law enforcement agent is followed by a mob attack and eventually lynching. The law enforcement agents on the other hand display a high level of compromise in executing their duties, reinforcing the prejudicial views held against them. This Gimba says has become a national tragedy. In his words,

[...] here lies in our national tragedy. We are all by and large victims (active perpetrators) of this impulsiveness. The malaise is often triggered off by a pervasive and chronic affliction of a self-righteous psychosis from which we suffer. We are then seized, as if by an epileptic fit to act as if we are above the law or the law itself (2007, p. 35).

Nigerians usually forget that democracy as professed and practiced will thrive and succeed only when citizens abide by laid down rules and regulations, respect their limits and respect the agencies of the state. This negative trend has characterized the democratic system in Nigeria. According to Gimba,

[A] democracy with limits which are not respected is a prescription for lawlessness. And lawlessness is only one step to anarchy. This is the unfortunate situation of our country [Nigeria] from which we must retract' (2007, p. 36).

Indeed, it is rather unfortunate that in the Nigerian parlance, democracy has become synonymous with acts that are capable of grounding the democratic space. This, Gimba says, is as a result of the self-righteous acts always exhibited by Nigerians which generally applies to both the leaders and the led.

Disappointedly, the elite and the leaders, who are at the top of the echelon and who ordinary citizens, expect to be role models are lead perpetrators of these acts into which they initiate the masses and the led.

But in its most frightening dimension, the elites and public officers [who] are tops [and] are the frontline advocates of democracy [...] will with disdain and impunity trample on the limitations and the laws governing them as long as such rules of the game go against the grain of their self-interest' (2007, p. 36).

This same lawless act is what has resulted to situations like issuing of threats and ultimatum (which is not novel to the democratic system in Nigeria) by different groups, ethnic and religious militias, regional caucus, pressure groups, students' bodies, traditional rulers and even professional bodies. With this, there is hardly any difference between the military and democratic dispensations as

the military coupists all travel along the road (except that soldiers go much further!) (2007, p. 37).

The utter disregard for the peace and welfare of the state by agitators with different motives has 'attempted to hold the present and the future of this country hostage' (2007: 37). In his final appraisal, Gimba avers that

Democracy is the recognition that diversity exists in the society, and seeking to resolve the possible frictions that would emanate there from through decent discourse and compromises. [Hence], [t]hreats, intimidations, blackmails, hostage-takings by a section of the society which seek to promote its own sectional interests but which harms the interests of the whole society amounts to lawlessness (2007, p. 37).

This 'betrays our unrefined instincts: the intolerance and the dictatorial inclinations which we much detested in the military regimes'. As a postcolonial phenomenon, Nigeria's variant of democracy which has no limits is a strong impediment towards attaining nationhood.

Our Democracy of Voter Irrelevance

One strong and an indispensable shareholder pivotal to the practice of democracy the world over is the voter. The general assumption of democracy as the government of the people, by the people and for the people, reemphasizes that the people (largely the masses) determine who gets to which position and at what point. Paradoxically, the situation obtainable in Nigeria (especially since the return to democratic administration in 1999) is in no way close to this very important tenet of democracy, the relevance and power of the voter. One begins to wonder if the democratic system in Nigeria is 'a different brand' of democracy, different from the one handed down by the ancient Greek philosophers. This is the focus of Gimba in 'Our Democracy of Voter Irrelevance'.

In his words,

[T]he voter in a democracy, is the kingmaker. And if politics is all about who gets what, when and how [...] one then appreciates the overwhelming significance of the role of the voter [...] that leads to the determination of the political kings who would take charge of sharing the community's resources (*the what*) (2007, p. 100).

The irony of the Nigerian democratic system in which voters are irrelevant when they are supposed to be kings is what Gimba satirizes herein. He laments the situation where voters practically get killed as a result of the avaricious attitude of the politicians. Since their ultimate interest is in the votes and not the voters, vote rigging syndrome, becomes the order of the day. This in Nigeria has degenerated to such an extent that

ghost voters who are absolutely loyal to their creators [...] often outnumber the real voter (who have flesh, blood and bones) like you and I. (2007, p. 99).

The situation is such that the democratic kingdom in Nigeria
is in disarray, but long lives the king! (2007, p. 99).

This problem in Nigeria has become recurrent especially when clouds gather for a new election. No doubt, it has become a strong bane militating against the democratization process in Nigeria where 'the voter is dying' and the 'voted' lives in affluence and political immunity. One begins to wonder when Nigeria's democracy will grow and eschew negative tendencies such as this. Until that happens (and never can it happen by chance, it must be a synergetic effort of all Nigerians), the voter will remain irrelevant in Nigeria's democracy, with the highest premium placed on the votes. The consolidation of her democracy will thus be a mirage constantly escaping from the grasp of Nigerians.

The Failure of Democracy and Civic Irresponsibility in 'Pension Crisis or Moral Failure of Leadership' and 'Wanted: National Honours with Integrity'

A probable deduction from the conceptualization and practice of democracy the world over as it has been established earlier is that it is centered on the citizens. As such, the people (largely the masses) who vote must be given priority and they must all enjoy dividends of the democratic system without prejudice to age, sex, race, ethnicity, religion, or socio-political affiliations. Ironically, what obtains in the Nigerian democratic space is far from realizing this mandate. It is against this backdrop that critics of the democratic system in Nigeria have over the years argued and contended against the failure of democracy in Nigeria. This largely is as a result of the failure of the democratic leaders since independence.

After the democratic system was hastily bequeathed on Nigeria in 1960 by the British colonialists, succeeding events clearly revealed that Nigeria is not able to maintain the system. Her inability to make it fully functional for its mandate to be fully realized has been impeded by various issues, some of which had earlier been highlighted. The administrators and handlers of different sectors in the country which include but not limited to the administration of pension and national honours, have all brought nothing but shame to the country. This instance is a signal of the failure of democracy and civic irresponsibility in Nigeria. The example that readily comes to mind in this regards is the maladministration of pension funds under a taskforce headed by one Abdulrasheed Maina. Gimba engages this in 'Pension Crisis or Moral Failure of Leadership' and 'Wanted: National Honours with Integrity'.

Pension Crisis or Moral Failure of Leadership

In 'Pension Crisis or Moral Failure of Leadership' Gimba laments the neglect of retirees, who mostly are senior citizens, by the democratic leaders under the aegis of pension board. Gimba, himself a retired civil servant, denied his pension rights on grounds of technical civil service rules once wished he had entitlement to pension. However, considering the plight of pensioners in Nigeria, he reneges on his wish. In his words,

[...] over the last few years, I have listened to the sad tales of some of my colleagues who qualified for pensions, and I felt happier without it (2007, p. 78).

He laments the incapability of the pension boards in handling pension administration thus causing pension troubles for retirees. The

tales of humiliation of retired public officers at the pension offices [...] Tales of deals and underpayment of pensioners with an arrogant air of take-it-or-leave-it by the pension office staff [...] tales of neglect of military, police, railway workers, immigration, prisons staff, civil service pensioners by government as reported in our daily newspapers' (2007, p. 78)

are to say the least demeaning.

One begins to wonder what democratic system forgets within the shortest possible time citizens that have served the country with their fruitful years. This eventually sends the wrong signal to the youthful, agile and working class group of Nigerians that the only thing they will get after thirty-five years of service to their father land and humanity is poverty, neglect and abandonment. They as such will at every opportunity and by every means possible help themselves with public funds, thus enriching themselves through corrupt means. In their own perception, this is the only way to save for the raining days, days when they will eventually suffer neglect and abandonment. The experience and plight of their forebears in the line of retirement is a red signal in this regards.

Gimba concludes this essay with a call, reminding pension administrators in Nigeria's democracy that

democracy means paying workers their salaries and as when due each month's end and promptly paying the pensioners their entitlements (2007, p. 81).

Subjecting pensioners to hardships in the name of verification and proper documentation as it is done in contemporary Nigeria not only 'demeans our pensioners' (81) but is also an abuse of the democratic process which gives power of the state to the electorates, pensioners inclusive.

Wanted: National Honours with Integrity

National honours in advanced climes is a platform to acknowledge and appreciate the magnanimous efforts of citizens and country men from all walk of life, who have contributed their quota to national development without out prejudices to political, social or religious affiliations. However, a critical look at the *modus operandi* of the honours awards in Nigeria indicates that it has long been bastardized and the real motif lost. Abubakar Gimba examines this in 'Wanted: National Honours with Integrity'.

Although Gimba praised the efforts of the national honours committee to accept and eventually honour the nominees with

outstanding contributions to the nation, service to the community, remarkable achievements in the field of expertise, distinguished career, acts of bravery, and any other acts of outstanding nature (2007, p. 95),

he laments that '[h]onour seems to have been removed from the National Honour Award exercises of the recent past'. This is due to the inability of the National Honour Award Committee to keep faithfully to the criteria for the award of the honour. Ergo, some recipients of the honours who do not deserve the honour conferred on them and have been

mis-honoured [and] have brought dishonour and pollution to the integrity of the national honours awards (2007, p. 95).

Some citizens automatically qualify to be honored when they attain certain positions, without any recourse to the processes leading up to their emergent.

It is from this backdrop that he kicks against the disqualification of nominees on the bureaucracy of the refusal to submit colored photographs, current curriculum vitae (C.V.), and

current postal address. In his view, contrary to all these trivial conditions for an eventual conferment of national honours award on any individual, the national award committee

needs a decent level of disinterested objectivity, ungarnished truth, to enhance its status, credibility and integrity' (2007, p. 96).

Rather than commercialise the national honour as is now the case with traditional titles, the national honours he says should be protected and fortified to

'become the prime vehicle for promoting national values' (2007, p. 97).

The intelligentsia and especially universities administrators have also been found guilty of this. Scholarship has been bastardized and sacrificed on the stinking altar of honorary degrees. Universities now try to outdo themselves on the conferment of honorary degrees, not to truly deserving members of the society, but

to the rich and not-so-famous, in the spirit of commercialization (2007, p. 97).

He concludes that in the spirit of democracy and democratic governance, the national honours awards should be restructured to

bring transparency and sanity to our National Honours Awards, so that we are not made a laughing stock by the new international community' (2007, p. 98)

where credence is given to merit, due process and other unbiased factors.

Conclusion

The essence of the exposition in this study has been to demonstrate Abubakar Gimba's motif in his collection of essays, *Why am I Doing This?* It has been revealed that Gimba is a dedicated essayist who has taken steps aimed at the goal of justice, fair treatment, equity and equality in the Nigerian society. It is with this passion, that he interrogates the democratic system in Nigeria. His essays attempt to re-awaken the national consciousness in Nigerians in the journey towards attaining nationhood. *Why am I Doing This?* thus falls within the spectrum of postcolonial discourse. Considering all the ills as highlighted, it is a misnomer to say Nigeria is a nation yet. It is rather a country, worst still, a conglomeration the good, the bad and the ugly. It is for this reason that I stuck to the use of country, herein.

In addition to this, he has demonstrated that democracy and democratic processes should be for the common good, satisfaction, protection and profit of the common man and not in the interest of the bourgeoisie, the ruling and political elite in the society. If this will be realized, then, all hands must be on deck. All parties involved, both the leaders and the led must key into the

democratization process. Gimba has taken a critical look at the Nigerian system through the lens of literature and has called to question the conscience of Nigerians, particularly the ruling elite, saddled with responsibilities of the statecraft, but have failed woefully to deliver on the mandate of democracy. No doubt, he is on the side of the masses. It is against this backdrop that this research concludes that it is only when there is a radical change in the political status-quo of the country and this can only happen through a 're-conscientization' of Nigerians, that democracy would have achieved its essence in Nigeria, and Gimba's dream of a truly democratic state in Nigeria be fulfilled. Contemporary social commentary efforts must adopt this line of preoccupation as prevailing situations in the country are all indications that there is no time for apathy and complacency.

References

- Anyawu, C. (2002). *Days of Terror: a Journalist's Eye-witness Account of Nigeria in the Hands of Its Worst Tyrant*. Spectrum.
- Awa, E. (1996). Democracy in Nigeria: A Political Scientist's View. Oyeleye Oyediran. Ed. *Governance and Democracy in Nigeria: Essays in Honour of Professor Billy J. Dudley*. Oyeniran Consult International. pp. 1 – 21.
- Dostoevsky, F. (1880). *The Brothers Karamazor*. The Russian Messenger.
- Egya, S. E. (2014). *Nation, Power and Dissidence in Third Generation Nigerian Poetry in English*. Unisa Press.
- Fajenyo, E. (2008). An Introduction to Gimba's Writings. Abdullahi Ismaila and Ezekiel Fajenyo. Eds. *Abubakar Gimba: Perspectives on His Writings and Philosophy*. Kraft Books.
- Fanon, F. (1995). National Culture. *The Post-Colonial Studies Reader*. Eds. Bill, Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin. Routledge. pp. 153–157.
- Gimba, A. (2007). *Why am I Doing This?*. Kraft Books.
- ... (2015). *Oh Uhud: Thy Haunting Spirit*. Kraft Books.
- Ismaila, A and Fajenyo E. (2008). *Abubakar Gimba: Perspectives on His Writings and Philosophy*. Kraft Books.
- Iweala, N. O. (2018). *Fighting Corruption is Dangerous: The Story Behind the Headlines*. The MIT Press.
- Kerr, D. (1995) *African Popular Theater*. Heinemann.
- Odinkalu, C and Osori, A. (2018). *Too Good to Die: Third Term and the Myth of Indispensable Man in Africa*. Kachifo Limited.
- Okpeh, O. O. (2011). The Postcolonial State, Leadership Challenges and the Governance Process in Nigeria. *Nigeria At Fifty: Issues and Challenges in Governance 1960-2010*. Bawuro M. Barkindo etal. Eds. Aboki Publishers. pp. 553–574.
- Okri, B. (1991). *The Famished Road*. Jonathan Cape.
- Stephen, S. (1991). Modernism's Last Post' Past the Last Post: Theorizing Post-Colonialism and Post-Modernism. Eds. Ian Adam and Helen Tiffin. Harvest. pp. 1–11