

Culture, Identity and Leadership in Nigeria

Emmanuel Samu Dandaura
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A special publication of the
SOCIETY OF NIGERIA THEATRE ARTISTS (SONTA)
in honour of
Alhaji (Dr) Aliyu Akwe Doma, OON, FSONTA

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Editors

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Dedication

This book is dedicated to Alhaji (Dr) Aliyu Akwe Doma, OON (SONTA Fellow & Trustee), the Executive Governor of Nasarawa State, Nigeria, in recognition of his outstanding achievements for advancing Nigeria's multicultural heritages locally and internationally.

Akwe Doma has been bestowed with other honours and distinctions. These include:

- (a) Founding Father Award, University of Jos, 2002;
- (b) Founding Father Award by the Government and People of Nasarawa State, 2002
- (c) Grand Gold Medal Award for the Overall Best Performing Governor in Northern Nigeria, 2007/2008, by Africa Independent Television/Project for Excellence (AIT/PAE).
- (d) Nelson Mandela Gold Award for Leadership by Pan-African Transparent Leadership Centre, Accra-Ghana, 2008.
- (e) Dr Kwame Nkrumah African Leadership Award by *West African International Magazine*, 2008.
- (f) Nigerian Youth Award for Excellence by the National Youth Council of Nigeria, 2008.
- (g) Outstanding Personality of the Year 2008 by National Standard Magazine, 2008.
- (h) Honourary Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D) in Public Administration by Presidential University, Kyiv, Ukraine, 2009.
- (i) Honourary Doctor of Letters (*Honoris Causa*) of the University of Jos, Nigeria, 2010.

As a cultural icon, he has a long list of traditional titles which include: the *Okuba* of Doma Kingdom and the *Olimene-Attah* of Igala Kingdom. He is also the winner of the maiden SONTA Distinguished Leadership Award in 2008 and was installed as SONTA Trustee in 2009. The aforementioned leadership traits and indeed the outstanding contributions of Alhaji Aliyu Akwe Doma to the development of the culture, tourism, arts and entertainment sectors in Nigeria account for the decision of the Society of Nigeria Theatre Artists (SONTA) to dedicate this special scholarly publication in his honour.

Emmanuel S. Dandaura, PhD · **Egwugwu John S. Illah**, PhD
 SONTA National President & Fellow Professor & SONTA Fellow



A Prognosis on Culture, Identity and Leadership in Nigeria

Emmanuel Samu Dandaura
 AbdulRasheed Abiodun Adeoye

The ongoing “Rebranding Nigeria Project” of the Federal Government in Nigeria and the shock of the attempted suicide bombing of a Delta airliner on the soil of the United States of America by a 23-year-old Nigerian-born Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab on the 25th day of December, 2009 reawakened fresh scholarly concerns about the lingering issues of culture, identity and the leadership question in Nigeria.

Culture is a muse for the society. Man is its carrier and promoter. Certainly, Wallace’s (77-8) dialectics on culture and cognition between stimulus, receptor, the mediating schema, response and reinforcement on “what is learned” and the description of information-processing structures on the basis of inference from performance defines the learning theory in the cultural process. Importantly, man has attempted, and very materially too, to be the defender and promoter of culture. At the theoretical level, scholars have sought to consider the honour and inspiration between what is socially cultural and that which is politically cultural – extending same to the dialogue on the anthropological contention and sociological evolution of high culture and the Eurocentric microequilibrium of low culture. Yet, the search for a common ground on the essence of culture and the need for African cultural renaissance remain largely inconclusive.

However, the legitimacy of culture as germane to human existence is hardly contestable. Culture encapsulates the ethics, ethos, mores and procedures for human growth and development in any society. Cultural prosperity within micro and macroeconomic templates is indicative of the power of culture to turn things around positively. Interestingly, Adeoye (1) has argued that the regenerative essence of culture deifies and houses its dynamism. The dynamic motif of culture within

human consciousness invariably shapes it for change. As a determinant factor in human evolution, an existing culture builds itself to systematically construct, deconstruct and reconstruct the individuals in the society.

Thus, a response to culture is a response to human identity. Identity itself can serve, at some point, as physical, transcendental, philosophical and archetypal building blocks in man's evolutionary process. Cultural consciousness provides the guide for the realisation of possibilities within the vision of the collective. The rationality surrounding identity extends human thinking into a wholesome revolution of belonging, awareness, accountability, creativity, sustainability and intentionality.

Within the core motif of identity, the split image – a tension within one individual whose existence is characterised by duality of living cannot be ruled out. The pedagogy of a character in the gamut of split image usually sets the pace for a potpourri of ideas that may not be rooted on the ideas of the people but rather, a decent to individualism, a toga for self-glorification, a manifesto for untamed radicalism and a stereotype for self-destruction.

The "culturalist assertion" as argued by Illah (129) informs the deployment of cultural elements to function at two levels:

One is directly for the purpose of cultural rehabilitation necessitated by decades of colonial and recolonial fragmentation of the personality of colonised people ... The second function is largely ideological. There was need for the cultural elite in post-independence Nigeria to project a sense of cultural bliss and tranquility. There was also the need to create the necessary structure to project this cultural reawakening.

The reinvention of culture is also the reinvention of our identity. Our identity is who we are and who we are is our ultimate response to leadership. Here lies the interface between culture, identity and the leadership question. Culture, like a rainbow with many colours, is capable of doing so many things to the very essence and existence of human beings. Madubuike

(772) opines that culture:

1. Helps to nurture members into elders and leadership status in society.
2. Helps to establish society and facilitate good governance as well as the management and control of natural resources.
3. Helps to define the rights and duties of individuals in society.
4. Facilitates development and sustains continuity in the society.
5. Defines sexual roles and responsibilities in the society.
6. Gives guidelines to the livelihood of the individual members.
7. Provides security and identity for members in the society.

We cannot agree less with Madubuike because whether it is through the culture of the past, the modernisation of culture and or, the culture of modernisation, the behaviour of culture is so important to the African continent. This is why Babalola (8) underscores the "clarion calls for the realisation of African renaissance ... not only from self-proclaimed friends of Africa but also from African statesmen, politicians, and intellectuals."

Our celebrant in this book, Alhaji (Dr) Aliyu Akwe Doma, OON, OOM (*Madauchin Doma*) and the Executive Governor of Nasarawa State graduated with a Professional Diploma in Educational Drama from the prestigious University of Ibadan in 1966. He also attended the British Drama League School, London and the Centre for Advanced Tourism Studies, Turin, Italy in 1973. His humble achievements in society so far have confirmed, just like other dramatists and theatre artists all over the world before him, that there is a clear connection between culture, theatre, identity and leadership globally. The Nigerian nucleus space only served as focus for the essence of culture and the theatre in this discourse. Little wonder then that Musa (171) concludes rather emphatically that "culture is theatre and theatre is culture because all cultural activities are essentially theatrical and most theatrical activities are moments of cultural re-enactments."

Domaism is, therefore, interpreted to mean a theatre artist's moving spirit for excellence in administration and development, extended to include indisputable "victory for democracy" and good governance in education, health, agriculture, economic empowerment, urban and rural transformation and cultural reorientation. Certainly, Domaism is "nothing less than service" for the emancipation of the human race, which our celebrant Alhaji (Dr) Aliyu Akwe Doma embodies.

This book contains twenty-four well-researched, well-written and intellectually gripping chapters (from some of the best scholars in the theatre and culture industry Nigeria can boast of) on culture, identity and leadership in Nigeria. Some of the chapters are deductive, analytical and exploratory within the diversified realm of culture, drama, theatre and performance, while a few are rooted in the epistemology of interdisciplinary dialogue and comparative analysis between democracy, politics, education, art, security and social change.

Tor Iorapuu's chapter is an objective celebration of participatory leadership and democratic innovations in Nasarawa State under the administration of Alhaji Aliyu Akwe Doma. The lexicon that "another Nigeria is possible" is demonstrated through Doma's genuine intervention in governance. Iorapuu argues that Doma's professional background as a theatre artist necessarily propels him to higher heights. He submits that Doma is the first Board Member of the Nigerian Popular Theatre Alliance (NPTA) in 1989. NPTA has carried out many theatre-related interventions, education, orientation and engineering programmes which Governor Doma directly and indirectly participated in. The author further concludes that Doma anchors his leadership philosophy upon the "adaptive capacity" style between spirituality, culture and philosophy, a combination which helps him to remain a profound political theatre actor.

Ahmed Yerima's "An Appraisal of the Nigerian Cultural Policy" brings to the fore, the theory of symbolisation which he claims allows man to be identified both as a cultural and political entity. He contends that culture and politics are intertwined and that the understanding of the operations of the use of

symbols in cultural identity cannot be overemphasised. Yerima accepts the fact that the current Cultural Policy for Nigeria is a good document suffering from lack of proper implementation because of the emergence of a new hybrid culture due to the effects of modernism and the non-commitment of government and the people to its implementation. He concludes that for the expected social change to happen in Nigeria, the Cultural Policy for Nigeria must be reviewed and its implementation vigorously pursued.

Articulating a clear revivalist's position on Nigerian culture, Sam Ukala's article, "Challenges of Nigerian Cultural Revival in the Face of Modernity" reviews the arguments surrounding ancient culture (the Eurocentric poetics of Barbarian Culture), traditional Nigerian culture and modern culture. This chapter becomes dialectically idiomatic as the author concludes by calling on all stakeholders to revive the desirable aspects of Nigerian traditional culture through deliberate actions targeted towards cultural retrieval, preservation and promotion. We also share in Ukala's rehumanisation of the populace theory which serves as his conclusion in the search for an authentic Nigerian identity.

Duro Oni's centripetal article, "Mainstreaming the Arts into National Development Agenda" focuses on the place of the arts in Nigerian national development. The author views arts from the totality of its manifestations—visual, auditory, literary and verbal—to include the fine arts, literary crafts, industrial arts, music, oral poetry and so on. The evil of colonialism as a major destroyer of Nigerian arts is also clearly articulated in the chapter. He is strongly convinced that the arts must be incorporated into Nigeria's national development agenda to ensure its sustainability; and as forgotten alternatives, the arts are very important for the needed cultural revolution.

After an extensive and carefully discussed literature review on culture, terror and globalisation, Alex Asigbo raises fundamental concerns in his "Reimagining Nigerian Culture in an Age of Terror and Globalisation". These include the lopsidedness in the practice and lack of strong political will for the implementation of well-thought-out programmes within

the reimagining praxis. Asigbo condemns the negative influences of globalisation as he calls for its substitution with glocalisation which is a conscious attempt by the stakeholders to market the highly humanistic and humanising indigenous Nigerian cultures globally. His reimagining manifesto includes an honest and conscious attempt at ethical, moral and cultural revolution. His radical conclusion condemns the use of the Bible and the Quran by political office-holders for oath-taking. In their place, Asigbo recommends the use of the symbols of traditional religions to enforce morality under the doctrine of what he calls, "a return to our past".

The thrust of Egwugwu J.S. Illah's fascinating paper, "Reconstructing Peace Through Culture: The Template of the Nigerian Middle Belt" is that as unique and dissimilar as people from various ethnic nationalities appear to be, there is an esoteric lore in all cultures that behoves the people to recognize and accept the cultural humanity in others. The great cultures recorded in human history have subsisted because of the willingness to accept this principle. Unfortunately, Illah contends, the civil strife that rocked Plateau State in 2001, 2008, 2009 and 2010 has challenged this several cultures, one humanity's theory and ushered in the repeated tragic destruction of lives and properties. These tragedies were triggered by political ideologues looking for constituency footholds. The solution Illah advises lies in the deliberate promotion of human activities that emphasise more of the people's commonalities than their dissimilarities. These functions that unite the people include regular cultural festivals, exhibitions, drama, literary/art competitions, painting, creative design and the like. The author concludes that culture is a veritable instrument for building peace which should be explored adequately.

Jenkeri Zakari Okwori's ambitious chapter is a reconstruction of the famous Akan Sankofa principle of identity within festivals and culture among the Idoma, Ogoni and African-Americans. Sankofa is an Akan bird creatively re-contextualised in the African folkloric tradition for the essence of the contemporary reality. As a continuum, the Sankofa spirit

is a construction of the past, the present and a negotiation of the future within the consciousness of the individual in the praxis of identity. The author reviews culture, festivals, dressing and so on to define identity among the Idoma and Ogoni people of Nigeria. These same icons, through cultural retentions are used by the African-Americans as response to slavery, enslavement, oppression and racism. Okwori concludes that before the African can find liberation, the secularities of its groups should be taken into account. As a nation aspiring for greatness, Nigerian, certainly, cannot underplay the challenges and imperatives of identity and citizenship.

The cultural diplomatic essence of Nigerian films cannot be underestimated in the evolving African identity. Consequently, Emmanuel S. Dandaura and Obi Okoli's chapter, "Nigerian Home Video and the Imaging of Igbo Leadership Values and Cultural Identity", revalidates the fact that the emerging Nigerian culture is derived from an aggregate of the various indigenous cultures that abound in Nigeria. It therefore re-establishes the fact that there is at the moment nothing like Nigerian culture, rather there are Nigerian cultures. The concept of a Nigerian culture can only emerge over a long period of continuous cultural dialogues and transmutations among the various ethnic groups and languages that currently abound in the country. The correct reflection of the authentic cultural identities and indigenous leadership values ingrained in the cultural products of the various ethnic nationalities like performing arts, film and home video is an important strategy towards ensuring the correct imaging of Nigeria as a major contributor to the ongoing global cultural dialogues. After carefully reviewing nine select Nigerian home video within the Igbo imaging and cultural identity, Dandaura and Okoli conclude that the films that they reviewed have bastardised, misrepresented, distorted and misapplied the core Igbo values. The truth is that most producers and directors do not understand the customs and traditions of the Igbo people. This is a sad development that must change. The younger generation of Nigerians must be made to see, watch and perceive the truth about the real Nigerian cultures and identities.

Extending the feminist manifesto through the examination of cultural and leadership issues in women and girl-child trafficking in Nigeria, Charity Angya argues that poverty, corruption, maladministration, discrimination against the girl-child, and exploitation are some of the causes of women and girl-child trafficking. She highlights the dangers of this practice to include: rape, denial of education, denial of basic rights and a major contributing factor to the continued underdevelopment of women. The author advocates the application of the Theatre for Development (TfD) approach to fighting the child trafficking scourge in Nigeria. Angya further contends that trafficking in persons is a crime against humanity which can be checked by dismantling all the structures that ensure discrimination, non-integration and non-inclusiveness in the society. The chapter concludes that there is a need for strict legislation against discrimination of the girl-child and other harmful traditional practices that inhibit women from contributing effectively to national development.

Barth Oshionebo, a scholar who has consistently redefined the space between theatre-in-education and the creative intervention of the values of education in theatrical enactments argues in his paper, "Cultural and Creative Arts Education: Inculcation of Values and Leadership Qualities in Nigerian Primary Schools", that positive values and leadership qualities such as respect for elders/authority, obedience, hardwork, truthfulness, trustworthiness, patriotism, love for one another, team work/cooperation, wisdom/innovativeness, hospitality/kindness and the like need to be properly theorised, practicalised and inculcated into the psyche of our youths right from the primary school level of their education. Oshionebo condemns the growing exposure of the youth to negative values via foreign role models on satellite television. However, he recommends that Cultural and Creative Arts (CCA) as a subject should be included in our primary school curriculum because if well-handled CCA in schools can serve to prepare children to uphold the desired high moral standards in our society.

The artistic boldness, credibility and versatility of the women in the Yoruba popular theatre tradition are critically

foregrounded in the chapter by AbdulRasheed Abiodun Adeoye. In the chapter entitled "Performance and Cultural Perspectives of Women in Yoruba Popular Theatre", Adeoye argues that the theatre is a unisex and non-gender-specific universal profession although he believes that feminism, especially the one coloured in African garbs, is faustian. He reviews the historical antecedents that led to the popularisation of the Yoruba travelling theatre and laments that the thriving tradition of the Yoruba popular theatre is dying due to the general acceptance of the celluloid and the home video. However, Adeoye concludes that the performance and cultural perspectives of women in the Yoruba popular theatre through singing, dancing, acting, costuming and so on cannot be underestimated in the phenomenological understanding of Yoruba popular theatre. He also calls for the revival of this theatre while hoping that women dramatists would ensure that the living stage does not die.

The emerging culture of godfatherism in Nigerian politics and its security implications is the concern of Jonathan Mamu Ayuba's chapter which examines the historical evolution of godfatherism in the Nigerian democratic space. In his view, godfathers such as Abubakar Saraki, Chris Uba, Emeka Offor, Admiral Muhammed Alabi, Clement Mbadinuju, Jim Nwobodo, Alhaji Lamidi Adedibu, Olusegun Obasanjo and their respective godsons have on many occasions heated the polity by creating tension and political instability in Nigeria's political history. Jonathan contends that godfatherism breeds corruption and violence. It promotes a culture of impunity, and insecurity as it perpetuates electoral malpractices. The author concludes that godfatherism is bad because politicians and their godfathers have compromised the security of the country by providing arms for political gangs in order to achieve electoral success which has often worsened the fragile security situation in most Nigerian states.

In charting his peace and sustainable development agenda for the Nigerian nation, Lanrele Bamidele sees cultural diversity as the challenge of nationhood especially in a multicultural nation such as Nigeria. He submits that integration, social

cohesion and peace can be effectively negotiated in the political process of a plural society. The hope for Nigeria's development, he argues, lies in her cultural diversity. He concludes that in the people's daily interactions there is an unconscious cultural intercourse which builds enduring bridges over tribal, ethnic and religious divides. The more people within a geographic location tolerate their individual and group differences, there will be no room for any kind of misunderstanding to develop.

Steve Oga Abah's chapter, "Theatre and Social Change: The Transformational Strategies of Participatory Theatre in Africa", is a holistic redefinition of Theatre for Development (TfD) within the profile of communal, religious, political and economic crises. Drawing extensively from dark spots in the African continent (Kenya, Somalia, Nigeria, Zimbabwe, South Africa, Rwanda and Ethiopia), Abah brings the reader to terms with the main wheel behind participatory theatre: social change and transformation. The author recalls some of the transformational strategies that he has used while spreading the gospel of TfD across the continent. The TfD research process he has experimented with over the years subsumes preliminary contacts, community research, information analysis and prioritisation, scenario development, drama making and rehearsals, community performance, post-performance, evaluation and action plan, among several others. Abah, in this interesting article, concludes that theatre for development has learned to understand who its friends and supporters are. Consequently, TfD has moved from didacticism to participation, and responding to the exigencies of life through adaptation, growth, reinvigoration, collaboration and conversation.

The aesthetics of Ebira-Ekuechi Festival in Nigeria within the traditional theatre paradigm is interrogated by Sunday Enessi Ododo in the chapter entitled "From Masquerade to Facekuerade: A Transition". The festival under study, Ododo opines, is the celebration of the unmasked masquerade which he creatively christened *Facekuerade*. *Facekuerade* refers to a performance 'masquerade character' without a mask. The researcher further argues that the 'masklessness' of the Ekuechi facekuerade has both aesthetic and theatrical importance which

are expressed in the following twelve features of facekuerade: the absence of mask or the mask presence essence for dramatic distance, role playing and impersonation, mystic facial presence, simplified performance abstraction, male audience participation, static communication signal through facial transformation, overt female participation (physical and metaphysical), multiple dramatic casts, nocturnal performance time, communal and individual authorship and satirical compositions which share other interrelated features with other African masquerades. Ododo concludes that most of the aesthetic features of the facekuerade theatre can compare favourably with the aesthetics of Grotowsky's poor theatre in which there is less physical adornment but yet in terms of functionality, there is so much to learn.

Victor Samson Dugga's "Lagbaja: Mask, Music and the Re-invention of Africa" is a scholarly attempt to situate the works of Lagbaja within the matrix of culture and identity. Dugga contends that Lagbaja has revolutionised the Nigerian music scene through his creative uses of traditional African idioms within the Yoruba's fertile music culture. Lagbaja's Africa-centric philosophy through his "Motherlan Clubhouse" is compared to Fela Anikulapo-Kuti's "Africa Shrine". Lagbaja's mask has been literarily unmasked by Dugga in this chapter. Some of Lagbaja's songs, the author reveals contextualise the identity crisis in Africa and call for a brighter African future in which music will play a prominent role in its actualisation and sustenance. He concludes that the uniqueness of Lagbaja's music is in its relevance to the contemporary world through an African personality that is catalytic to a new society.

Solomon Ikibe's chapter, "Notating the Unnotated Music of Idoma Folk Stories of Nigeria", is an ethnomusicological response to the problem of African music as it concerns the issue of notation. This original response from Ikibe, through the participant-observer method, emphasises the essence of transcription and sound as crucial factors in notation. Consequently, six Idoma folk stories are structurally analysed through the consideration of variables such as: range, frequency, tonal centre, type of scale and rhyme structure. Ikibe concludes

that musicologists should work more on how the problem of microtones in traditional African music can be resolved through notation. He calls for the intervention of computer experts and physicists in solving the challenge of notating indigenous African music.

In the chapter "Highlife Music in Nigeria: A Sociocultural and Historical Perspective", Emielu observes that Highlife music grew from diverse roots, first, as a subregional socio-musical phenomenon in the then British West Africa, became a national model in Nigeria in the 1950s and 1960s, and then branched off into ethno-based and regional stylistic and cultural identities in latter years. The chapter further observes that although Highlife music was a regional phenomenon in the then British West Africa, its articulation in various cultures reflects the social and cultural dynamics of the environment. Sociohistorical processes are, therefore, key elements in the creation of urban art and popular culture. The author whose contribution here is drawn extensively from his doctoral research concludes that the creation and sustenance of urban-derived art like Highlife music, is contingent upon the prevailing sociohistorical and socio-musical environment.

Songs and music in Africa have functioned as double-edged swords as they, alongside other oral media, reaffirm the traditional patterns of power relations even in marriage ceremonies. Salami-Agunloye's refreshing chapter highlights the manner in which Bini songs have been used to construct feminine identities which tend to perpetuate the subordination of women to men. She contends that patriarchy has played a major role in the composition of these songs and that the traditional African ideology that men are naturally superior to women in all aspects, affects the modern day organisation of social structures and has also been a major influence on these songs which ironically are performed by women. Through their performances, the Bini women themselves articulate a patriarchal ideology and celebrate masculinity. As cultural and ideological products, the songs define women's space in the marriage institution where the husband is the lord, master and decision maker and the woman is enjoined to be silent,

submissive, gentle, patient with no autonomy and status. The author draws attention to the need to correct this gender stereotyping by analysing these songs from a feminist perspective.

Kafewo's chapter titled "Methodological Conversations: Researching Peaceful Coexistence in Nigeria" is a report of an empirical study conducted by three Nigeria-based non-governmental organisations (CEDCOMS, BAZIKS and NPTA) on the application of diverse participatory learning and action, theatre and media techniques to research and build peace in communities threatened by ethnic and religious conflicts. Kafewo regrets that since its return to democratic governance in 1999, Nigeria has been prone to sporadic violence because various groups long suppressed as a result of being subjected to many years of military rule characterised by coercion have sought avenues to let out pent-up angers. The fusion of methodologies of participatory learning and action and theatre arts using the people's cultural and artistic forms proved effective tools towards researching peace in Nigeria. He concludes that conflict transformation must actively envision, include, respect, and promote the human and cultural resources from within a given setting. This involves a new set of lenses through which we do not primarily see 'the setting and the people in it as the problem' and the outsider as the 'answer'. Rather, we understand the long-term goal of transformation as validating and building on people and resources within the setting.

Gowon and Embu seek to highlight "The Role of Drama and CSOs in Political Education" in a report of yet another empirical study conducted by the Nigeria Popular Theatre Alliance in Jere and Konduga Local Government Areas of Borno State. The chapter opens with a critique of Nigeria's sociopolitical environment as it observes that having been governed by the military for about 33 of our 49 years of independence, the populace find it difficult to grasp and understand the concept of governance under a democratic dispensation. This conceptual confusion is more pronounced among the largely illiterate and rural populace who often do not have the privilege

of monitoring events through the mass media like the urban folks. This obvious gap, the authors contend, could be filled with popular or community drama demonstrating the issues involved in democracy and good governance with the active participation of community members. Gowon and Embu conclude by recommending the integration of community drama into all aspects of civic education outreaches, especially where the population is largely rural and non-literate in the English language.

Gbilekaa's chapter, titled "Nigerian Literature and Social Experience: The Zaki-Biam Episode", highlights the place of literature in addressing the challenges of the Nigerian identity and reimagining crisis. He observes that in spite of the usual pessimistic views of the various commentators on the future of Nigeria, there appears to be some consensus across the broad political spectrum that the country has the human and material resources to become a major global political and economic powerhouse if she can get her acts together. In order to do this, however, she needs to discover a new way of re-engaging the creative energies of her citizenry in such a way as to challenge their unbelief and enlist their willing support to identifiable national dreams and aspirations. Gbilekaa contends that since Nigerian writers are among the most celebrated in the world, its literature remains a strategic tool for the desired national rebirth. In an illuminating study of Shija's *Serenades of Zaki Biam* and *Zaki Biam Blues* both of which are creative works based on the 2001 military invasion of the Zaki Biam community in Nigeria, Gbilekaa concludes that much of the finest creative works written by Nigerians are still gathering dust in most drawers because of the needless pains of publishing in Nigeria. Government, he submits, could address this situation by institutionalising policies that would engender an enabling environment for literature and other creative endeavours to thrive.

In a primary research that awakens us to the dangers associated with the poor documentation culture in Africa, Doki refocuses our discussions once more on the specific contributions of the cultural icon to whose honour this

publication is dedicated, Alhaji Aliyu Akwe Doma. The historical role played by Doma in exposing the Tiv *Kwagh Hir* theatre to national and international attention has never been given any serious mention in the growing body of literature on this popular contemporary Tiv art form. Besides bridging this gap in the study of the *Kwagh Hir* theatre, the author highlights some salient leadership traits of Alhaji Aliyu Akwe Doma which he hopes would deepen scholarly interest in the leadership training dimension of theatre practice. Doki informs that as a Director of Culture, Aliyu Akwe Doma was a great mobiliser who managed, efficiently, all the diverse categories of human and material resources available to him with such amiable disposition that endeared him to all his staff and superiors alike. From the bold achievements of Alhaji Aliyu Akwe Doma as the Governor of Nasarawa State in the area of the dispensation of the much desired 'democracy dividends', the author concludes that political success could be theorised as a function of professional competence and result-oriented service.

One way to enrich the varied ideas but rich harvest of the finest scholarly thoughts contained in this book from the cream of Nigerian arts and culture theorists and professionals is to have more readers key into the rewarding debates. You are, therefore, encouraged to go beyond this brief introduction and savour the ideas chapter by chapter. Welcome!

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