

Colonialism and Its Aftermath: The Crisis of Knowledge Production

Author(s): Olufemi Taiwo

Source: *Callaloo*, Autumn, 1993, Vol. 16, No. 4, On "Post-Colonial Discourse": A Special Issue (Autumn, 1993), pp. 891-908

Published by: The Johns Hopkins University Press

Stable URL: https://www.jstor.org/stable/2932216

JSTOR is a not-for-profit service that helps scholars, researchers, and students discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content in a trusted digital archive. We use information technology and tools to increase productivity and facilitate new forms of scholarship. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of the Terms & Conditions of Use, available at https://about.jstor.org/terms



The Johns Hopkins University Press is collaborating with JSTOR to digitize, preserve and extend access to *Callaloo*

This content downloaded from 109.81.212.241 on Tue, 13 Apr 2021 17:50:41 UTC
All use subject to https://about.jstor.org/terms

COLONIALISM AND ITS AFTERMATH
The Crisis of Knowledge Production*

Olufemi Taiwo

I

In the discourse about the myriad crises afflicting African countries, it is customary to castigate colonialism and its consequences. It is claimed that colonialism and its aftermath distorted the processes of socio-historical development in the continent and that the current crises are the results of the colonial exploitation of the continent. This manner of reasoning is not limited to critics of colonialism alone. Even its apologists point to the transformations that colonialism effected in the lives and times of the colonized as well as in the topographies of their colonies. Both opponents and antagonists alike have focused too much on the economic dimensions of the crises. I do not want to suggest that this emphasis is misplaced. I think, though, that there has been too little effort to examine the manifestations of the crises in the area of *knowledge* and of its *production*. Very few thinkers have sought to understand the cultural dimensions. When they do, such thinkers have looked more at the visual and performing arts generally. Those who have looked beyond the arts have often espoused a recurrent reductionism that transforms the cultural crisis into an epiphenomenon of the economico-political crises. Reductionist analysis fails to see that cultural processes may not always be amenable to economico-political explanations. Their dynamics force us to examine them in some relative isolation as constituted *regions* of inquiry before inserting them into a general theoretical matrix.

This paper focuses on the Nigerian experience. It argues that a better understanding of the crises of life and thought pervading the Nigerian nation can be obtained from a close examination of the stunted development of the *mode of knowledge production* prevailing therein. The paper describes the concept of the *mode of knowledge production* and its determinants. It asks and answers the following questions: Did we have *modes of knowledge production* in our indigenous communities? What were they like? What was the impact of the various alien historical movements which have impinged on these indigenous modes? By "alien historical movements" I mean Islam, Slavery, Christianity, Colonialism, and Capitalism. It will be argued that whatever *modes of knowledge production* (MOKPs, for short) were present in our indigenous communities were in many cases profoundly altered for the worse, and, in some others, utterly destroyed by these alien historical movements. The roots of the contemporary limited development of the MOKP in Nigeria can be traced to the impact of these processes.

*The original version of this paper was a contribution to "Nigeria and the Challenge of Knowledge," A Colloquium in Honour of Mr. J. O. Dipeolu, University Librarian, Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Nigeria, September 20-21, 1990.

Callaloo 16.3 (1993) 891-908

This content downloaded from
109.81.212.241 on Tue, 13 Apr 2021 17:50:41 UTC
All use subject to https://about.jstor.org/terms

II

What is a *mode of knowledge production*? A *mode of knowledge production* is identified by its product: KNOWLEDGE. There are other elements in a MOKP. They can be conveniently grouped into two major subunits: the *material structure* and the *social relations*.

At the earliest and most primitive stages of human society, all human beings experienced human needs as instinct, and there was little, if any, conscious production of materials for their sustenance. But from the first historical act of production of the means of life, all societies have exhibited some degree of complexity manifested in some level of social differentiation, division of labour, and the production of surplus goods. They usually possess a set of institutions through which the accumulated wisdom of past generations is transmitted to present and future generations. At a most primitive level,[1] such wisdom may be little more than the skills requisite for agricultural production, animal husbandry, shelter construction, food processing, leisure activities, dispute processing and resolution, ritual observances, health care delivery and child socialization. More sophisticated societies will have, in addition, more complicated and elaborate wisdom regarding science and technology, structures of governance, systems of myths, economic organization, and industrial production. The *spaces* in which the storing, retrieving, processing, and dissemination of these compendia of wisdom take place and the *persons* through whose agency these activities are executed conjointly form the *material structure* of a MOKP.

At the initial stages of societal evolution, both the *spaces* and *personnel* of knowledge production were undifferentiated. That is, there were no specially designated spaces to which the business of knowledge production was exclusively consigned. There were no specialized personnel exclusively charged with the responsibility for knowledge production. The situation changed with the increasing complexity of social organization occasioned by advances in the development of the forces of production in societies, as well as the growing diversity of human needs. With time, the family became too limited a space for knowledge production. The division of labour expanded to accommodate ever-increasing levels of specialization. There emerged specialized personnel whose sole contribution to social production was the storing and retrieving, processing and dissemination of knowledge.

In most societies, the first category of specialized personnel was made up of priests. This should not be the least bit surprising. Sacerdotal power always arrogated to itself divinely-ordained, earthly omniscience. In an environment marked by lack of knowledge of natural forces and processes, it is arguable that those who make such claims and could get others to believe them are more than likely to get others to look up to them for guidance. Recall, too, that consistent with the claim of earthly omniscience, the class of priests pretended to be teachers, healthcare providers, propitiators of inscrutable deities, and so on. Societies later moved from a stage in which the family was at once a school, place of worship, health centre, and unit of production, to one in which new *spaces* emerged to fulfil the need for education (schools), worship (synagogues, mosques, churches, special shrines), healthcare delivery (hospitals, sanatoria), and so on. At the present time, the material structure of a MOKP consists of the physical spaces—schools, colleges, universities, research institutes, seminaries, media houses, mosques—where knowledge is produced, stored and retrieved, processed and disseminated; and the *personnel*—teachers,

This content downloaded from
109.81.212.241 on Tue, 13 Apr 2021 17:50:41 UTC
All use subject to https://about.jstor.org/terms

researchers, priests, editors, imams, students, worshippers—who operate, direct, and generally function in these institutions.

The second element of a MOKP consists of the social relations of production to be found in each mode. There are two different but related sets of social relations of production. First, there are those relations that obtain as a consequence of the interactions among the personnel of the material structure. For example, some of the personnel are teachers while others are students, some are priests while others are supplicants, some are editors while others are readers. Then, there are the relations subsisting between the personnel and the spaces they occupy in the material structure. These create matrices of reciprocal obligations, mutually reinforcing identities and behavioural patterns. They are typified by how the personnel stand in relation to the spaces/personnel of the material structure. In the latter case people are strictly owners/producers of the material means of knowledge production. Proprietors of schools or media houses and founders of religious sects belong to this category. They are owners of the spaces of knowledge production. They may also be producers of knowledge. In contemporary times, there is a marked division of labour between the entrepreneurs of knowledge production and the producers. Others are, strictly speaking, users/consumers of the material means of knowledge production. Editors, teachers, and congregants fall within this group. Finally, there are those who are owner/users of material means of knowledge production. Owner/editors of newspaper houses, school proprietors who run their outfits, are examples of this last kind. The boundaries of these different categories are quite fluid. There are editors who are producers and owners of their press houses. These categories must therefore be approached flexibly.

Similar considerations apply to the product of knowledge production: knowledge. Although the social relations of knowledge production are a consequence of the interactions among the personnel of the material structure, these relations are often influenced by that between persons and things in the material structure. For illustration, the relationship between a researcher and her assistants can be affected by whether or not the relevant institution is independently-owned.

Were there MOKPs in the indigenous societies in Nigeria in the remote past? As already pointed out, any complex society has a MOKP. Given the available evidence in history, sociology, anthropology and political science, there is sufficient warrant to say that many of the indigenous Nigerian communities attained a very high level of social differentiation as well as of material and cultural development in the period before the advent of the alien historical movements which disrupted their capacity for autochthony. The only problem is that little has been done to research these MOKPs and describe their characteristics. One can only hope that historians, anthropologists, philosophers, and others will in the near future make available to us detailed descriptions of these indigenous MOKPs and the dynamics of their evolution in the distant past.

However, from the little we know, we can identify the outlines of some specific MOKPs. For example, the Yoruba developed a highly complex system of divination—*Ifa*—which has continued to challenge scholars since it first caught their attention.[2] Considered as a system of knowledge, the *Ifa* corpus not only had its complement of specialized personnel; it also had, in many communities, *spaces* exclusively reserved for its dissemination to those who sought to acquire the knowledge it contained. Attention, too, is only now being directed at the system of medical education through which generations of healers,

This content downloaded from
109.81.212.241 on Tue, 13 Apr 2021 17:50:41 UTC
All use subject to https://about.jstor.org/terms

herbalists, and diviners were created to minister to the health needs of the population.[3] Other aspects of the indigenous MOKP that are sure to benefit from scholarly inquiry include the system of music education, technological education, and priestly training.[4] I have referred only to Yoruba MOKP. The country is suffused with different MOKPs. Unfortunately, the facile and simplistic dominant approaches to the study of African phenomena by indigenous and foreign scholars alike do not permit their purveyors to take seriously the enormous variety of sophisticated forms of social ordering to be found in the African continent.

III

The indigenous modes of production domiciled within Nigeria were profoundly affected by the experiences of Islam, Slavery and the Slave Trade, Christianity, Colonialism, and Capitalism. Some were irremediably altered. Others were utterly destroyed. Very few, if any, escaped widespread disruption. The impact of these experiences on the political and economic development of Nigeria has often dominated the scholarly agenda. One need not underestimate the importance of politics and economics. Yet one must lament the little attention that has been paid to the cultural transformations brought about by these alien movements. The strength of social transformations must be gauged by how deeply they alter people's perception of reality, how successfully they manage to substitute new myths to live by, new modes of acquiring knowledge, new idioms to describe the world in. Extrinsic political and economic forces prey upon local idioms to infiltrate the consciousness of people and thereby secure wide acceptance for the concepts of justice and morality they presuppose. The cultural lenses through which a people apprehend reality, the myths and metaphors they live by, are important elements with the aid of which they construct their identity, denominate the world, and make sense of reality. Through them, a people fashion the world in their image. The resultant construct supplies the coagulant for the discrete, disjointed impressions of the world of its individual members. This picture is disseminated through the various ideological devices to be found in the society, a subset of which forms part of the MOKP.

If the above claim is true, then analyses of the crises in Nigeria which dwell on its economico-political underdevelopment are apt to ignore some of the other agents of transformation at work in Nigerian history. Some of these agents predated colonialism and capitalism. A few of them had in fact so altered the Nigerian *mindscape* that they thereby rendered the task of conquest much easier than it might have been. The alien movements altered the various precapitalist modes of life. Indigenous MOKPs were disrupted. Some of them were utterly destroyed. For example, very little of indigenous Hausa culture of the pre-Islamic period survived the islamization of the area. The erstwhile coherent pictures of reality, the specific identities of the peoples, the myths and metaphors they lived by were shattered. The consequence was the *de-centering* of collective life, the dissolution of common and shared meanings. The ideologists of the alien historical movements would like us to believe that these movements substituted new pictures of reality and endowed the societies concerned with new MOKPs. This claim is asserted more often on behalf of colonialism and its twin, capitalism. I would like to argue that the claim

This content downloaded from
109.81.212.241 on Tue, 13 Apr 2021 17:50:41 UTC
All use subject to https://about.jstor.org/terms

that colonialism and capitalism fostered a new mode of life with a corresponding integrated MOKP is only partially true.

It is usual in discourses about colonialism and its consequences on the colonies and the colonized to castigate colonialism for what it did to its victims. On the other hand, apologists of colonialism like to point to the transformations it effected in the lives and times of the colonized, as well as in the topographies of their colonies. Contrary to both of these approaches, I would like to focus on *what colonialism did not do* and the aftermath of these omissions. I suggest that colonialism was a system of *exclusions* and that colonialism, at least in Africa, is distinguished more by what it *excluded* from the colonies than by what it *included.*

The MOKP always is an aspect of a way of life. For colonialism to have been the agent of epochal change that its apologists claim it was, it would have had to substitute a new MOKP, a dominant one, in place of the myriad MOKPs it altered, disrupted or destroyed. This, in turn, would have required the introduction of a new dominant way of life. It should be noted that the argument here does not require that the new way of life be the only one; merely that, having altered, disrupted or destroyed indigenous modes of production and MOKPs, and given the dominance of the colonial state, colonialism ought to have been an agent for epochal change as it was in the "frontier states" of North America. There are those who might think that colonialism did introduce a new way of life and substituted new MOKPs. I would argue that whatever looks like a new mode of life was unintegrated and uncomprehensive. And the effort to create one was half-hearted. Why was this so? The answer is to be found in the *exclusions* that characterized colonial theory and practice.

Wherever there appears to be evidence of a new mode of life introduced by colonialism, it can be shown that, notwithstanding the appearance, colonialism was not interested in revolutionizing social relations; it always found a reason for not going all the way. I shall give five instances of the *exclusions* that were symptomatic of the half-heartedness I am speaking about.

(1) Many historians of colonialism consider the system of *Indirect Rule,* especially where presumably it succeeded, as a stroke of genius on the part of its originator, Frederick Lugard. It, on the one hand, reduced the costs, to the British, of administering the areas where it was practised. On the other, it preserved the indigenous modes of governance it found in place. A closer look at the system might suggest a different appraisal. This sometimes celebrated system might in fact have been a pernicious, even if unintended, effort to arrest movement towards genuine *epochal* transformation in the areas where it took roots. To show the character of what took place under the cover of Indirect Rule, let us draw an analogy from similar developments in Western Europe.

The transition from feudalism to capitalism in some parts of Europe was an example of an epochal transformation. In this process, the emergent burgher class used its burgeoning economic wealth to bankrupt the feudal oligarchies and put Europe's monarchs in its debt. The consequence was the overthrow of the dominance of the monarchies and aristocracies. In places where they survived, the feudal oligarchies and aristocracies were completely and forcibly deprived of salience, both political and economic, reduced to curio exhibits for the titillation of foreign tourists. Imagine, for a moment, that the emergent bourgeois classes in Europe had adopted a system of Indirect Rule in their relations with the crumbling seigneurial system. The consequence would have been that the bourgeois classes would have left the seigneurial system intact and, instead of

This content downloaded from
109.81.212.241 on Tue, 13 Apr 2021 17:50:41 UTC
All use subject to https://about.jstor.org/terms

outflanking the manors by establishing cities whose air made people free, they would have administered their polities through the moribund aristocratic class. But this was not what happened. The seigneurial system was smashed up, republics were established and the regime of capital with its ideological concomitants, *liberté, egalité* and *fraternité,* predominated in France and England. It is worth noting that the histories of those countries in which the sort of transitions that took place in France and England never occurred are much more similar to that of Nigeria and other African countries. I refer to late developments in Russia and other countries of the defunct USSR, those of Eastern Europe, and until recently, Spain and Portugal.

Let us get back to Nigeria. The incorporation of the Indirect Rule system meant leaving more or less intact modes of governance that were not necessarily congenial to the development of institutions that are considered to be some of the most important gains of modernity. Hence, in Europe, new modes of governance were substituted for the moribund feudal oligarchies, whereas in Nigeria the empirical analogues of these oligarchies were strengthened. The British even sought to extend these modes of governance to places, e.g., parts of eastern Nigeria, where there were no local antecedents. The so-called commitment to the preservation of "native" institutions might have merited some approbation had it not been that it proceeded from not so noble motives and was not in consonance with the proclaimed mission of the colonizers to bring "civilization" to the "natives" to whom they stood as guardians. The consequences of this exclusion were deeper still. The next exclusion is one such consequence.

(2) Having excluded the "natives" from "the forward march to modernity" and its concomitants, it would have been incongruous for colonialism to extend *citizenship* and its appurtenances to the colonized. It avoided this incongruity. I am arguing that *citizenship,* as it was articulated in European political theory and defended as one of the gains that the victory of bourgeoisdom secured for even propertyless proletarians in Europe, was a nonpresence in the colonies. In the colonies, there were *citizens,* made up of colonial settlers, officials and their supporting cast, and *natives,* who could not become denizens of the mother country. For the British, the *natives* might one day, after long tutelages in the ways of "civilization," become *citizens* of *their own* countries to be created through the good offices and benefaction of the British Colonial Office. For the French and the Portuguese, the *native* could become a *citizen* of France or Portugal, but only after having become an *evolué* or an *assimilado.* In other words, even for the French and the Portuguese, the *native* could not *immediately* be a *citizen.*

Contrast the Nigerian situation with that of Canada or Australia, or even the original American colonies, and you will find ample confirmation of the argument in this section. British settlers in these places had no trouble travelling with their citizenship. It was not an accident that the American colonists fought for their independence in reaction to what they considered as affronts to their citizenship on the part of the British monarchy and government. In the case of Nigeria, even returning slaves and freed slaves who came back home via Sierra Leone, and who insisted on their rights as British subjects (as citizens were then called), had no success in persuading the British Colonial Office of their entitlement. More ominously, those who persisted in claiming the rights of citizenship got jail and brutalization at the hands of the agents of the colonial state. Also, the colonial nomenclature differed depending on whether it was a settler colony or the sort that proliferated in Africa. The original American colonies were mostly styled Commonwealths; Canada was

This content downloaded from
109.81.212.241 on Tue, 13 Apr 2021 17:50:41 UTC
All use subject to https://about.jstor.org/terms

styled a Dominion. In Africa, there were colonies and Protectorates, both designations consistent with the non-self-governing character of the polities concerned.[5]

(3) *Natives* were excluded from citizenship and from the march towards modern institutions. A direct consequence of this exclusion generated a related exclusion. The colonized were excluded from participation in the legal and political systems that dominated the mother countries and were available to those who were *citizens* in the colonies and protectorates. As A.J. Christopher points out:

> Initial occupation and conquest necessitated the exercise of military might, and force or some form of coercion was essential for the maintenance of colonial rule. It was the local administrators who controlled the apparatus of local coercion, dealing with such matters as the police, prisons, law and taxation. Thus in some areas the first evidence of the establishment of the colonial state was the construction of the police station and the prison. Indeed as Jorgensen, J.J. has shown for Uganda, coercion was the dominant element in colonial expenditure prior to the First World War. In the ten year period 1901/2—1910/11 coercion accounted for 33.0 per cent of expenditure as opposed to 2.0 per cent for agriculture, 0.1 per cent for education, and 8.5 per cent for health services. Although expenditure on services rose, the allocation of monies only showed a marked shift towards education as a government provision in the 1950s, when it accounted for 17.4 per cent of Ugandan budgets and coercion only 11.2 per cent. Changing priorities were reflected in the structures built and maintained in the towns and countryside. Police stations and prisons symbolise the early colonial period, schools and clinics the late period.[6]

The dominance of coercion in the operation of the colonial state was a consequence of the exclusion of *natives* from participation in *citizenship* and its appurtenant practices and institutions. A related consequence was the deliberate invention of a regime of *customary law* for the *natives*.[7] Such was the absurdity of much that the British subsumed under the category of "customary law" that many natives did not find their ways of life in what was touted as the sum of *their* customs. Of course, the *natives* who claimed citizenship rights for themselves were forced to litigate in *native* courts, unless their cause involved a *citizen*, a euphemism for "European." Meanwhile, when the British deigned to open the jurisdiction of the common law and statutory courts to *native* participation, magistrates and judges were mostly appointed from the ranks of civil servants. The phenomenon of police magistrates was widespread in the colonies.[8]

(4) *Natives*, finally, were excluded from participation in forms of social ordering and acquisition of forms of social consciousness that prevailed in Britain. Many Nigerians, through the agency of Christian missionaries, had been exposed to British education and the way of life it enjoined. Some of them, good students that they were, had taken seriously the promise of individualism, the importance of *liberté, egalité,* and *fraternité,* and had sought to model their personal lives on this awareness and to bring their communities along on this path.[9] We very well know who were their opponents in this position: British colonial officials. In some areas, colonial policies discouraged the breaking down of barriers among national groups and actively sponsored ethnic organizations. Attempts at

This content downloaded from
109.81.212.241 on Tue, 13 Apr 2021 17:50:41 UTC
All use subject to https://about.jstor.org/terms

trade unionism, a principal weapon in the emergence of worker consciousness and supra-ethnic solidarity were frustrated and punished by the colonial state. Socially, to strive to be modern was regarded as a pathology and many who ventured got caught in the kind of bind that Albert Memmi so poignantly described in *The Colonizer and the Colonized*[10] and Frantz Fanon trenchantly analyzed in *Black Skin, White Masks.*[11] Too "English" for their fellow "natives," too "dependent" for the paternalistic English, those among the colonized who took seriously the promise of new ways of thinking and new modes of social ordering found themselves in the twilight zone of acute schizophrenia.

(5) (1) through (4) are the inexorable result of the ultimate exclusion which was simultaneously their basic presupposition: the prior exclusion of Africans from membership of *humanity.* The colonial encounter is best understood as an emanation from arrogance, a swaggering confidence that Europeans exhausted the universe of humanity and the rest of us have to be dragged willy-nilly to the human universe. For, if Africans had been considered human in the first place, it would have been unnecessary to exclude us from the march of history and from the gains that humanity made up till the time of the colonial encounter, especially those regarding respect for persons and human rights. By extension, in the same way that the march towards modernity in Europe made imperative the preservation of monuments, knowledges, and identities that came before, a basic acknowledgment of our humanity might have spared many of the monuments, knowledges, and identities that testified to our human achievements in the period preceding the encounter with Europeans. But this was not what happened. The coming of the Europeans and their imperiousness, the subsequent denial of our humanity, conjointly underwrote the devaluation of what was useful in our achievements, the undermining of our collective identities and meaning, the destruction of our indigenous technology and modes of knowledge production and the withering of our capacity for autochthonous history-making.

I conclude from the above that we can talk of the colonial system introducing new MOKPs into Nigeria only in a very limited, highly qualified sense. Although the old MOKPs had been shattered, the half-heartedly substituted new transplants have not found a hospitable receptacle in Nigerian communities. Those who could have been the agents for the successful transplantation of the new way of life, the self-consciously "modern" Africans, as we have seen above, confronted hostility from the colonial state. The old identities have been lost; but new ones have only been partially constituted. The lives of most Nigerian communities are, as a consequence of the movement I have described, without unifying myths, collective metaphors, common meanings. Where they are available, lacking their previous salience, they are inauthentic. Without these unifying myths and common meanings, reality is *de-centred.* Contrary to the claim that new MOKPs were implanted in the Nigerian environment, the most we may affirm is that the transplantation of the new MOKPs was only partially successful. One fruit of this partially successful transplantation can be seen in the numerous failures of the new MOKPs to deliver on the promise they hold out to us. One area where the promise remains unredeemed is the University system. It will be argued that the stunted development of the university system in Nigeria is a manifestation of the more general underdevelopment of the MOKP which, in turn, results from the incomplete transformation or fossilization of indigenous forms.

This content downloaded from
109.81.212.241 on Tue, 13 Apr 2021 17:50:41 UTC
All use subject to https://about.jstor.org/terms

IV

Universities are a component of the new MOKP purportedly introduced by colonialism to Nigeria. They illustrate in a very graphic manner the underdevelopment of the extant MOKP. Both the material structure and the social relations of the MOKP are underdeveloped in the universities. To claim that the MOKP in Nigeria is underdeveloped is to risk being accused of falsifying the facts. Nigeria has what, to the unsuspecting eye, could pass for a well-developed education system. At present count, limiting ourselves to universities alone, there are twenty-one Federal universities and ten State universities. In physical development, even the least developed of the campuses is impressively laid out. The country houses some of the most beautiful campuses in the African continent. How then could one say that the MOKP in general, and the university system in particular, is underdeveloped?

Certainly, one who contends that the MOKP in Nigeria is underdeveloped is bound to come up against a plethora of what would look like evidence of healthy development. The number of graduates from the universities has been increasing exponentially since the 1970s. The number of higher degrees awarded and graduate programs available has also been on the rise. Additionally, Nigerian academics are easily some of the most widely published groups in the world. In the humanities and the social sciences, it is not unusual to have editors return manuscripts submitted by Nigerian scholars because their journals already have a surfeit of submissions from Nigerians on Nigeria-related themes. Nigerian scholars have won laurels in different disciplines, the crowning feat being the Nobel Prize for Literature won by Wole Soyinka in 1986.[12] One must concede the plausibility of the above argument. However, its plausibility rests on a very tenuous, if not questionable, set of assumptions.

The argument assumes that the presence of physical structures, especially beautiful ones, represents development. On the contrary, it may actually *represent underdevelopment.* One is here reminded of the old saw: "never judge a book by its cover." As I argue shortly, the closer one looks at most of those campuses with their ostentatious, alluring physical beauty, the more they resemble the proverbial whitened sepulchre. An awareness of their sepulchral inside makes it less easy to tout them as icons of development.

Second, to acquit the university system and call it developed because of the impressive numbers of enrollees, research publications, and accolades garnered by scholars is, on the one hand, to mistake *quantity* for *quality.* On the other hand, it is to lose sight of the underside of the research and publishing activity of academicians. It is also to ignore the palpable disproportionality between the tiny few who win these accolades and the vast majority whose ability or desire to research and publish is preempted by the aggravations of daily existence in an environment which is hostile to academic exertions.

There is some irony in our first objection: the same structures that are used to argue for the developed nature of the university system are now being used by us to argue for its underdevelopment. It is not enough to have beautiful buildings with beautiful facades. Ultimately, the usefulness (the beauty?) of a physical structure will be judged by whether or not it conduces to human comfort: how comfortable an environment it provides for work. As soon as we go beyond the facades we are confronted by mind-numbing ugliness.

For illustration, central to the possibility and sustenance of knowledge production in the spatial context of a university is the Library.[13] The older universities have libraries

This content downloaded from
109.81.212.241 on Tue, 13 Apr 2021 17:50:41 UTC
All use subject to https://about.jstor.org/terms

which have built impressive collections from the boom times when resources were easily available for acquisitions. With the exception of the University of Nigeria, Nsukka,[14] all of the first generation universities in Nigeria—Ibadan, Lagos, Obafemi Awolowo, Ahmadu Bello, and Benin—have library buildings of varying architectural complexity. But that is the limit of the positive attributes of these structures. Books are very precious and delicate. Climate control is absolutely vital to the survivability of books and other documentary collections. *How many of these libraries can boast of central air-conditioning with automatic temperature controls?* Again, we are reminded of the lack of wisdom in judging a book by its cover.

The library at Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, the one best known to me, is equipped with central air-conditioning facilities. I know no one who could recall any one time when the entire edifice was all cooled *at the same time.* From time to time, parts of the building are cooled. Most of the time, though, it so happens that only individual offices get cooled by room units while the reading halls where the stacks are housed remain uncooled. The lesson is that anyone who does not go beyond the mere presence of buildings, even of physically installed cooling systems, is unlikely to see the hidden non-functionality of the structures. The consequences of this lack are serious. Precious manuscripts become excessively brittle earlier than would otherwise have been the case. Given that the original construction presupposed central cooling and, consequently, was not designed to take advantage of the tropical breeze, the non-functioning of the facilities makes for very little user-friendliness. It is not only books that deteriorate in the sweltering heat of the tropics. Library patrons, too, have a hard time using the library especially in the dry season.

Climate control is equally vital to the success of complex laboratory equipment and experiments. One may add that, given the peculiarities of a tropical climate, climate control is indeed important to the productivity of academics. Only a few academics, especially those who have become more bureaucrat than academic, and the cream of the university bureaucrats who wield more influence than their relevance in the academy warrants, get this all important facility most of the time. Sometimes, unwary young academics are inclined to want to move quickly up the academic pecking order to enable them to enjoy, among other perquisites, more comfortable working *spaces.*

Let us suppose that the university authorities are desirous of doing what has to be done to rectify the defects mentioned above. They are bound to run into one of the principal symptoms of the underdevelopment of the university system: they cannot always count on *regular electric power supply.* What many of the institutions have done is to behave like the rest of the populace—individualize the problem and seek an individual solution—they build their own standby power plants. This solution does not come without drawbacks. In the first place, they never have enough resources to buy a big enough generating plant for their present needs, much less one that will accommodate future needs. Second, and worse still, ever depleting resources now have to be expended on servicing inadequate power plants, and creating new or expanding old bureaucracies. Finally, emergency plants have to serve for long periods as the main source of power. In such a situation their life-spans are cut short and in no time at all their capacity is further reduced or they break down completely. It is a no-win situation for the universities. The situation illustrates the symbiotic relationship between the underdevelopment of the MOKP, which the university system manifests, and the general underdevelopment of the social formation that provides the larger framework for the evolution of the MOKP.

This content downloaded from
109.81.212.241 on Tue, 13 Apr 2021 17:50:41 UTC
All use subject to https://about.jstor.org/terms

There is one more aspect of the first objection that merits mention. There was a time, at least in the first generation universities, when there were *spaces* in the institutions *outside* the classrooms, laboratories and formal meeting rooms, where academics, their students, administrators, and the general public, could meet free of the staid and stuffy air of regimented encounters of formal practices. Faculties had Common Rooms and Lounges to which teachers and students alike could retire for informal consultations; halls of residence provided settings for the molding of student consciousness; food and catering facilities were integral to any meaningful socializing; and relaxing activities existed for all members of the university community. Such *spaces* are fast becoming rarities in the universities.

It might be objected that I am taking what is peculiar to the present state of the universities to be typical of what they are or have always been. Such an objection would be mis-aimed. If I had any reason to think that the present situation is only an uneasy interlude in an otherwise salubrious history, this paper would be uncalled for. It needs to be explained why the barest necessities of a university system properly understood are *at all* casualties of the crisis. That they are some of the first casualties suggests to me that we might be dealing with a worse pathology that years of prosperity in the early seventies did not permit us to appreciate fully. The fragility of the structures, the fragility of the arrangements, require deeper analysis.[15]

The second objection directs us to take seriously the gulf between the quantitative output of Nigerian academics and the paucity of quality, path-breaking research. In spite of what appears to be a rich harvest of publishing, the yield is in reality very poor. Very few Nigerian academics do multi-year, multi-volume research; the kind that is built up over several years reaching out in several directions, unfolding at different places, engaging the energies of numerous scholars from the middling senior undergraduate to the eager doctoral candidate, the post-doctoral fellow and mid-career researchers, under the able, even sage, direction of the experienced scholar. The proclivity for immediate gratification, the rush to fly through the ranks, the pressure to move on up to ameliorate an all-too-often desperate material situation, all combine to ensure that scholarship-for-promotion—or what an American might call "bottom-line" scholarship—is the order of the day. Again, this is not a product of the current downward turn in the economic fortunes of the country.

First as a student, and now as a teacher, I have often asked myself why many of our humanities and social science scholars are frequently writing on "The Problems and Prospects of..." (whatever it is they choose to study). When they are not offering disquisitions on "Problems and Prospects," they are busy reviewing the "Past, Present, and Future" or they are asking "Some Questions" of different themes. One is right to ask: if they spend so much time on articulating "Problems and Prospects," when are they going to move on to offering ANSWERS? Needless to say, it is much easier to write general articles than it is to do long-term research which might bring greater glory but, by the same token, might not. So intense is the pressure to publish that the period during which a fundamental inquiry is in gestation is looked upon as one of idleness for which the serious researcher pays in the loss of promotion opportunities. "Bottom line" scholars move fastest up the academic totem pole. The power that comes with occupying positions at the apex of the pole combined with the "bottom line" scholars' capacity for self-reproduction in their protégés have left us with universities top-heavy with mediocres, pretenders in the

This content downloaded from
109.81.212.241 on Tue, 13 Apr 2021 17:50:41 UTC
All use subject to https://about.jstor.org/terms

corridors of the academy. It is precisely this restless run of mediocrity which makes the individual achievements of the few who strive to shine even brighter than their ranks would suggest. Nevertheless there is some hope offered by a third category of scholars. Those in this last category possess the appropriate attitude to scholarship. But many of them have succumbed to the repeated depredations—e.g., low pay, lack of research facilities, paucity of financial and professional support, a skewed reward system—of a generally hostile (to scholarship) environment. The future of the university system depends on this last category of academics having its members freed from the aggravations of daily existence and supplied with the appropriate tools to work with.

There is one last point to be made about the material structure. Every MOKP is a system of information processing, storage and retrieval. In the MOKP in Yoruba communities before the disruptions, and in those elements of it that have survived, an orate culture patented numerous mnemonic devices for the retrieval and processing of information from the *Ifa* corpus. Court bards were repositories of lineage histories. Older people made their memories available as information banks for their communities. Grandparents doubled as consultants on family histories. Folktales distilled the wisdom of the community in matters of moral pedagogy. Court rituals were the open though unwritten book of immemorial usages in the constitution of political legitimacy. The complexity of the contemporary MOKP bequeathed in part by the alien historical movements we spoke about has rendered insufficient past MOKPs and their systems of information processing, storage and retrieval. The system of storage is vastly different now. Books, microforms, computers, tapes, newspapers, etc., are the preferred modes of storage these days. In addition, a MOKP at the present time is evaluated by how well it can store information and how fast it can retrieve it. This is the idea behind fully automated library, banking, and other systems. Where do the universities stand in this new dispensation?

Someone who is familiar with the antiquated bureaucracies in the universities would require little convincing of the decrepit state of information processing and retrieval in them. "Those who can least afford waste end up wasting the most" best describes the state of affairs. Multiple copies of the most routine memos are required by the bureaucracy. Every tier of the bureaucracy requires fresh multiple copies of the same material as your matter moves through the structure. You cannot be too sure that your paper will arrive safely at the designated destination; in which case you have to furnish fresh copies as soon as you are informed that your papers have suffered shipwreck. It is not unusual for academics to receive information on grants and fellowships a day before or on the day the deadline expires because it has taken a month, sometimes even more, for the announcement to move from the Registry to the relevant Departments. It takes the better part of the semester to resolve conflicts in the time-table for lectures and tutorials. Processing and retrieving student and staff records is a nightmare. Supposedly confidential documents, including personnel records, have a way of showing up as snack wrappers for roadside vendors. It is true that some of the problems with information processing and retrieval have become accentuated with the worsening economic situation. It is appropriate to point out, though, that the inability of the original systems to cope with changes, to expand to accommodate the needs of a vastly expanding education system is an index of their limited potential in their original conception.

This content downloaded from
109.81.212.241 on Tue, 13 Apr 2021 17:50:41 UTC
All use subject to https://about.jstor.org/terms

V

This section focuses on the underdevelopment of the second basic component of the MOKP: *the social relations of knowledge production.* Human beings are the principal motors of the process of knowledge production. In the first component of the material structure we refer to human beings, the *personnel,* only in their individual roles as facilitators of the production process and their contribution in this respect. In the second aspect the focus turns on the *relations* that obtain as a consequence 1) of the interaction among the personnel of the MOKP and 2) of the relationship between the personnel and the designated spaces of the mode. The first of these—that is, the structure of interaction among the personnel of the MOKP—is the more important one for our purposes.

The personnel are differentiated into roles as *producers, consumers,* and *producer/consumers* of knowledge. As *producers* of knowledge, human beings are scholars, writers, researchers, scientists, performers, producers (as in drama, film, music), designers, priests, editors, etc. As *consumers,* they are scholars, writers, researchers, students, readers, audiences at performances, congregants, etc. Nigeria has a surfeit of human beings in the knowledge production process. Still, I would argue that the extant social relations of knowledge production exhibit basic features of underdevelopment.

There is a dialectical relationship between production and consumption of knowledge. Writers present their works for the consumption of their readers. The process of production in research is consummated in the consumption of its results in their "hard" form by industries, government, etc., and in their "soft" form by other researchers, students, and any curious mind in general. Production is a precondition for consumption. Simultaneously, consumption creates new conditions, new needs, for production to begin afresh the entire cycle. In a healthy MOKP this dialectic is continually renewed. An examination of this dynamic in the Nigerian condition will reveal that the social relations of knowledge production are, in the main, unhealthy. Again, this unhealthy state is mostly reflected in the university system.[16]

The social relations in the university system are unhealthy. Universities are supposed to be places where the best and brightest of the community are brought together with the sole purpose of pushing back the frontiers of knowledge in all fields. Universities embrace, among others, the ideal that those domiciled within them, freed from the encumbrances of want and poverty and the disruptive interferences of sponsors, will lead lives of the mind, unswervingly dedicated to thinking about and seeking solutions to the problems of their immediate societies, and of humanity in general. The realization that inquiries for the fulfilment of their purpose might conflict with short-term interests of power-holders in society has led to the tradition of investing the academy with freedom from overt interference and the removal of curbs on the scope of subjects fit for scholarly investigation. It is true that the ideal is often subverted by the universities themselves. At other times power-holders have breached the ideal. Nonetheless, the ideal remains the benchmark against which to measure the health of any university system.

Once the appropriate political climate is created, universities generally aspire to realize the ideal. In the normal case the pursuit of the ideal unfolds in research, teaching and publications. Scholars produce and consume knowledge. The basic vehicles are teaching and research. Additionally, there are professional associations, learned societies, at whose meetings efforts are made to disseminate new knowledge on an ongoing basis. There is a

This content downloaded from
109.81.212.241 on Tue, 13 Apr 2021 17:50:41 UTC
All use subject to https://about.jstor.org/terms

complement of journals, newsletters, digests, reviews, magazines, where research results are announced, controversies are initiated, fought out, and concluded. In this medium consumers scattered across vast expanses of land get to know, sometimes intimately, the producers of the knowledge they consume. Finally, the publishing industry devotes a significant portion of its output to the arcane disputations of academic researchers, publishing them in specialized texts. Usually governments, private companies, and philanthropic individuals and organizations furnish the much-needed material support.

The many ways in which the business of knowledge production is carried out requires the personnel of the academy to operate in several divergent but related roles. Without editors, reviewers, and conscientious referees, for example, journals cannot be published and sustained. Books require editors, reviewers, and publishers. Most important, books and journals both thrive on *readership*—again the moment of consumption asserting itself. Readers' reactions create the controversies by which further knowledge is produced. Critical reviews direct the attention of the reader to the strengths and weaknesses of particular book offerings. Referees help journals ensure that poor articles or unsupported conclusions do not make it to their pages. Of course, the system of peer review, criticisms, and debates assumes honesty and openness on the part of the participants, a commitment on their part to fairness in disagreement and the advancement of learning. Although these ideals are not always realized, again, they are the metric by which performance is evaluated. How does the university system in Nigeria fare when examined for these ideals? Not very well.

The Nigerian academic landscape is littered with the remains of journals that were hastily conceived to meet the exigencies of "bottom line" scholarship and quickly left to die as soon as their sponsors secured their objective. Other journals that were nobly conceived and carefully nurtured have fallen prey to the predations of careerist editors with hidden agenda that could not have been known to their appointers. The unfortunate journals have fallen into oblivion also. Others, especially those founded when the universities were few and the pretence to scholarly culture was taken more seriously, have fallen victim to another feature of underdeveloped relations of knowledge production—reviewers/referees who would not read manuscripts sent to them for assessment; others who might not read them on time; yet others who sometimes lose manuscripts sent to them for assessment. In all these cases, the hapless editor is forced to waste scarce energies trying to pry these manuscripts from the clutches of the reviewers. We need not comment on the impact this failure has on the morale of the writer who has to wait interminably for a verdict on her article. Meanwhile, by the time the article makes it to the printed page, it has become dated.

When the system of refereeing seems to work, new problems emerge. The cronyism fostered by the commitment to "bottom-line" scholarship ensures that only clients/friends of the patron/editor get their materials published in the journal. The consequence is that knowledge production is shortchanged, and the journal is marked for inevitable death. There is only so much poor writing that a discerning readership can tolerate.

There are the mindsets, the forms of social consciousness, predominating in the academy. They bear the marks of the underdeveloped social relations of knowledge production to which they correspond. Ultimately they are conditioned by other processes unfolding in the larger society outside the academy. These mindsets predispose the scholars who share them to a fundamental aversion to controversy, to debate. When they

This content downloaded from
109.81.212.241 on Tue, 13 Apr 2021 17:50:41 UTC
All use subject to https://about.jstor.org/terms

write articles, they do not much care whether or not they are read. What is important is that they have new entries on their CVs for purposes of advancement in the pecking order. They are gratified when they are read. But they are enraged when their readers controvert their findings. Rejoinders are looked upon as declarations of hostility. Their persons, not their ideas, seem under attack. Efforts are made to line up supporters—often with thinly-veiled threats. Disagreements have on a few occasions taken on the dimensions of a feud. The consequence is that disagreement is discouraged, debates are actively avoided, and openness to contrary ideas becomes a casualty of the insecurity of the "bottom-line" scholar. Journal articles are dull. There are no clearly identified schools of thought. Divergent traditions of scholarship are rarities. Knowledge production is aborted or its growth is stunted. A chasm develops between production and consumption; the dialectic is unhinged. Various atavisms assert themselves, the worst being an abiding gerontocracy. Under it, the querulousness of youth is inhibited, mediocrity is permitted to fly on the wings of age. It is little wonder that doubts are now being expressed, especially in ruling circles, about the relevance of university education to the country's national aspirations.

VI

The last two sections have painted an admittedly dismal picture of the university system in Nigeria. This final section tries to explain the cause of the stunted development of MOKPs and the absence of a dominant one in the country. In section III, we referred to the profound alterations of the Nigerian mindscape by Slavery, Islam, Christianity, and Colonialism/Capitalism. Many who have studied aspects of our economico-political history usually conclude that colonialism incorporated Nigeria into the world capitalist economy as a junior partner. Most Marxist scholars and others of a radical persuasion belong to this school of thought. Even those who shun a Marxist orientation are quick to conclude that colonialism bequeathed to Nigeria a legacy of Westernism or modernity whose hallmarks include liberal democracy under the rule of law. Both schools share a basic assumption that colonialism did substitute new ways of perceiving reality, new metaphors to live by, new cultural lenses to see the world through. The main vehicle by which this cultural transformation was accomplished was Western education. Hence, they all assume that colonialism substituted a new MOKP. I have challenged this assumption in section III above where I argued that colonialism was a system of exclusions. As was also pointed out, whatever new mode of life colonialism introduced, it was not meant for the total transformation of the Nigerian polity.

But the view that colonialism substituted a new MOKP is open to a different sort of challenge. It assumes, problematically in my opinion, that colonialism was the most important of the various alien historical movements alluded to in this paper—that its impact was the strongest and most lasting. These assumptions are questionable. If a single, coherent MOKP had been constituted by colonialism probably some of the contemporary problems would not have arisen. Contrary to the received wisdom, it is arguable that things are the way they are now precisely because after the original MOKPs had been disrupted, destroyed or altered, no *single,* pan-Nigerian, integrated MOKP took their place. Rather, what we have is a melange of MOKPs marked by dissonance, pulling

This content downloaded from
109.81.212.241 on Tue, 13 Apr 2021 17:50:41 UTC
All use subject to https://about.jstor.org/terms

individuals in different and often contradictory directions. What obtains parallels developments in the political economy. In the aftermath of the destruction of indigenous social formations, a nondescript dominant mode of production that received wisdom has tagged "capitalism" has had perennially to contend with the vestiges of some of the earlier social formations with disruptive consequences for the political and economic development of Nigeria. The evidence for this contention is easy to adduce.

Christianity has a longer genealogy than colonialism in many parts of southern Nigeria. Long before the imposition of formal colonialism, the catechist's residence—the quintessential icon of the murderous challenge to the reality of the indigene—had become a disruptive presence in very remote villages in parts of Nigeria. Communities that were only marginally affected by colonialism had had their collective identities and common meanings challenged and frequently overcome by Christian metaphors before the Resident and the District Officer appeared on the scene. Given what we have said before, colonialism could operate through "indirect rule." Christian proselytization, on the contrary, had no room for "peaceful coexistence" with indigenous beliefs, practices, and institutions. The orgy of cultural destruction unleashed by Christian zealotry left its victims cultural orphans afflicted with sometimes wilful historical amnesia needing foster parentage that the Christians gladly provided. The split identity manifested in names like *"Hezekiah"* (Christian) *"Fágbèmí"* (indigenous) had been effected for many persons before the structures of colonial governance took roots. The first government school was not established until 1909, whereas missionaries had been tinkering with the indigenous mindscape as far back as the 1840s. In sum, Christianity had midwifed a MOKP infused with Christian myths and metaphors, alongside new identities for groups and individuals. There is no evidence that colonialism eliminated this MOKP. The colonial authorities enhanced instead the prestige of the mode and appropriated its services when necessary. And those who took too seriously the promise of the new way of life, especially in the sphere of politics, got jail from the colonial state.

Islam has an even longer history in Nigeria than both Christianity and Colonialism, dating back to about the tenth century A.D. So much has Islam been entrenched in large parts of northern Nigeria that some would query the propriety of speaking of a pre-Islamic period in their history. While we are not competent to pronounce on the pre-Islamic MOKPs in indigenous Habe societies, Islam has no doubt introduced a definite MOKP in those areas. More than Christianity, Islam interpellates its adherents in a mode of life, a universe of meaning that is all-embracing. Furthermore, it has a well-developed MOKP which includes Universities (although no Islamic universities were built in Nigeria). Consequently, Islam and its educational system were a lot more resistant to change under colonialism. In Nigeria, under Indirect Rule, the colonial state pursued a policy of leaving them almost intact and keeping out elements of the MOKP inspired by both Christianity and capitalism. As a result the MOKP integral to Islam remains a principal component of the contemporary MOKP in Nigeria with serious repercussions on the unity and coherence of the education system.

Finally, many of the indigenous MOKPs managed to survive with varying degrees of resilience. Many of the communities have preserved, with appropriate modifications, their systems of priestly training, the dramaturgies of their festivals of renewal and rites of passage, as well as modes of training health care providers. In addition, many aspects of the world-views that predominated in the past have survived to date, though in very attenuated forms.

This content downloaded from
109.81.212.241 on Tue, 13 Apr 2021 17:50:41 UTC
All use subject to https://about.jstor.org/terms

From the foregoing, it should be obvious that contrary to the view that colonialism substituted a new, dominant, and integrated way of seeing the world or new identities, what obtains is a quilted patchwork of discrete, sometimes mutually exclusive, contradictory MOKPs. The loss of identity, the disassembly of erstwhile coherent traditions of discourse, and the non-substitution of fresh constructs represent, I submit, the basic causative factor of the absence of a healthy MOKP in contemporary Nigeria. The absence is illustrated in many areas. Once again, the university system is the object of analysis.

It is inapt to speak of the academic culture or the scholarly tradition in Nigeria. There are several for which no particular one serves as a unifier. Because colonialism was not seriously interested in creating a unified vision of reality, nor could it have done so even if it was, given its philosophy of exclusion, the university system it established was not created as an organic part of a mode of life shot through with coherent ideologies and identities. Universities were not established for any high ideals integral to a properly defined way of life. In large part, they were created as training schools for technocrats who would operate the machinery of State and produce goods and services. There was not created an integrated MOKP for which the university was the apex. Nor was there any effort, unsurprising in light of the pattern of exclusions, to create organic intellectuals, foster scholarly traditions, develop the material structure of knowledge production. The indigenous successors to colonial rule, the self-same graduates of half-hearted transformations and dissonant knowledges, have not fared better in the post-colonial period. Possessed of "schizoid" personalities, they were neither able to create nor desirous of working out coherent ideologies complete with appropriate philosophical anthropologies, a national, self-determined agenda of culture of which an academic culture could be a part. Little wonder then that a national cultural grid is lacking into which individual scholarly exertions could be connected. Such a national cultural grid would also supply us with ideas of who we are and would like to be, how we see and should see the world, and in what relation we stand or should stand to the rest of the world. To create such a cultural rallying point is the challenge to scholarship in Nigeria. Without such a rallying point, scholarly debates will remain themeless, there will be no common meanings to be worked out in controversies, there will be no focus for individual endeavours beyond those supplied by considerations of personal gain, and dissonance will continue to dominate the Nigerian mindscape.

Nigerian scholarship should be in the forefront of the struggle to *reconstruct* an African identity, to create a new universe of shared and common meaning, to fashion the agenda for academic pursuits, to *reinvent* a coherent and integrated MOKP—one that will enable Nigerians to become full participants in the march of history in a twenty-first century world. The materials are already available. Only the will is lacking.

One should not underestimate the amount of work that needs to be done to realize the above aims. Nor should one forget that a good proportion of the required struggle is extra-academic, political in the main. Nigerian scholars must then brace themselves for the struggle, against the powerholders, to reorient the national agenda away from the enthronement of expediency and commitment to "fire brigade" tactics in national affairs. They must substitute sober, reflective, articulate, long-term strategies for the recovery of national, nay, racial pride and identity.

This content downloaded from
109.81.212.241 on Tue, 13 Apr 2021 17:50:41 UTC
All use subject to https://about.jstor.org/terms

Notes

1. This characterization is not limited to any one people or society. All societies went through this phase. After all, as Marx remarked, humanity itself is the product of historical development.
2. See Wande Abimbola, *Ijìnlè Ohùn Enu Ifá,* Apá Kííní (Glasgow: Collins, 1968); *Ijìnlè Ohùn Enu Ifá,* Apá Kejì (Glasgow: Collins, 1969); *Sixteen Great Poems of Ifa* (Paris: UNESCO, 1975); *Ifa: An Exposition of the Ifa Literary Corpus* (Ibadan: Oxford University Press, 1976); *Yoruba Oral Tradition: Poetry in Music, Dance and Drama* (Ile-Ife: Dept. of African Languages and Literatures, Obafemi Awolowo University, 1975); W. R. Bascom, *Ifa Divination, Communication Between Gods and Men in West Africa* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1969). For the contribution of the Ifa Divination system to the development of mathematics in Yoruba culture, see Claudia Zaslavsky, *Africa Counts* (1980); Robert G. Armstrong, *Yoruba Numerals* (Ibadan: University of Ibadan Press, 1972).
3. See Abayomi Sofowora, *Medicinal Plants and Traditional Medicine in Africa* (Chichester, West Sussex: New York: Wiley, 1982).
4. A notable recent contribution to the description of work and its diverse forms in indigenous Yoruba society is T. M. Ilésanmí, Olótùú, *Isé Isènbáyé* (Ile-Ife: Obafemi Awolowo University Press, 1989). For a more general discussion see, Olu Daramola *ati* A. Jeje, *Awon Àsà ati Orìsà Ile Yoruba* (Ibadan: Onibonoje Press, 1975).
5. "...An examination of the imprint of the various groups of Europeans interacting with Africans and with the African environment offers a means of disentangling the complex changes which took place in the geography of Africa in the colonial period. It must be remembered that Africa was peripheral to European interests and that the numbers involved were small compared with those engaged in penetrating the other continents on the Great Frontier. Furthermore, many of the social and political ideas associated with the Turner thesis, such as the growth of democracy and private enterprise, did not apply in an environment where state control was so pervasive.... In this Africa followed the Latin American, not the Anglo-American prototype, unfettered by the laws and representative assemblies which characterised the metropoles (Hennessy, 1978). It was the distinctive colonial state which emerged, not a developed frontier state." A.J. Christopher, *Colonial Africa* (London: Croom Helm, 1984), 2.
6. Christopher, *Colonial Africa,* (55-56). It should be noted that the period in which schools and clinics symbolise colonial policy coincided with the period of the struggle for independence.
7. See Richard Roberts and Kristin Mann, "Law in Colonial Africa," in Kristin Mann and Richard Roberts, eds., *Law in Colonial Africa* (Portsmouth, NH and London: Heinemann and James Currey, 1991), especially pages 19-23.
8. It continued in Tanzania until 1975.
9. See M.J.C. Echeruo, *Victorian Lagos* (Lagos: Macmillan, 1977), for an especially good discussion of some cultural dimensions of this consciousness.
10. (Boston: Beacon Press, 1970).
11. (New York: Grove Press, 1967).
12. I have limited my purview to universities for ease of exposition and constraints of space. A full exposition of the argument for the developed/underdeveloped nature of a MOKP must include reference to and discussion of the growth and proliferation of schools, research institutions, mass media (both print and electronic), entertainment media, book publishing and production, etc.
13. In what follows, I refrain from talking about the latter generation of universities. They are all struggling with diminishing resources to build libraries.
14. The institution is building a new library, having lost its original library to the Nigerian Civil War which ended in 1970.
15. I have omitted the more grotesque expressions of the inadequacy of the spatial arrangements, e.g., the unavailability of the simplest necessities and the sheer inability to keep some of the structures in a minimally decent sanitary state.
16. It should be pointed out that there is some uneven development in the evolution of these relations in different regions of the MOKP. The problems identifiable in the university system may not be as disruptive in their effects in the media or in the churches which equally are regions of the MOKP. They may also be presented differently.

This content downloaded from
109.81.212.241 on Tue, 13 Apr 2021 17:50:41 UTC
All use subject to https://about.jstor.org/terms