

THE ELEMENTARY RESPONSIBILITIES OF POLITICAL  
AND ALL OTHER SCIENTISTS IN NIGERIA

BY

Yusufu Bala Usman  
Department of History  
Ahmadu Bello University  
Zaria.

June 1979

THE ELEMENTARY RESPONSIBILITIES OF POLITICAL AND

ALL OTHER SCIENTISTS

IN NIGERIA

by

Yusufu Bala Usman  
Department of History  
Ahmadu Bello University  
Zaria.

The paper; The Responsibility of Political Science by Sam Oyovbaire, defines the responsibility of political science and presumably of political scientists in Nigeria.<sup>1</sup> Establishing the responsibility of a whole discipline and an academic profession is an important exercise. It is especially important when it is being done in a country whose intellectual life suffers seriously from careerism and sycophancy towards both internal and external authorities.

But establishing the responsibilities of a scientific discipline cannot be done properly and meaningfully unless certain elementary responsibilities of all - not just political - scientists are fulfilled. This note is written because of a concern that in this attempt to define the responsibility of political science (and implicitly of political sociology, political economy, political history, geopolitics, etc.) the writer has not carried out the most elementary of the responsibilities which all scientists, natural, human and social, have to fulfill to give their analyses and discourse value as scientific inquiry and not just wishful assertions and suggestions. The failure to fulfill these elementary and basic responsibilities in this paper, has such significant consequences to the argument and the conclusions that

they cannot be ignored without running the risk of condoning conceptual and methodological irresponsibility for some forms of political "science."

#### THE MOST ELEMENTARY RESPONSIBILITIES OF ALL SCIENCE

The elementary responsibilities of all scientists which have not been fulfilled in this paper include:

- (I) Stating the basis of the fundamental assumptions on which the analyses rests, making clear whether these assumptions are arrived at inductively, deductively or whether they are normative.
- (II) Consistency in the definition of terms and the application of categories.
- (III) Precise definition of the central concepts especially where these define the very units under study.
- (IV) Stating explicitly the objective criteria for any system of categorisation and classification.
- (V) Making quite clear the nature and scope of the empirical evidence from which the inferences are drawn and bringing out openly, the important limitations of this evidence and the method used in collecting it;

#### I. THE BASIS OF THE FUNDAMENTAL ASSUMPTIONS

The argument made in the paper rests on a number of assumptions, which are fundamental to it and on which its validity and meaning stands or falls.

These assumptions are:

- (a) that political science can have responsibilities regarding the nature of political systems beyond analysing how these systems come into being, operate and change;
- (b) that the prime object of study in political science is the state;
- (c) that political science can legitimise, subvert, sensitise or socialise on its own, unrelated to political practice;
- (d) that the role of political science is to sensitise and socialise;

- (e) that there is a meaningful distinction in political systems between scholars and actors, with the former engaged in "scholarship" and the latter engaged in "politics."

(a) Political Science and Political Systems

It is elementary in all science that the basis and even nature of all assumptions have to be clearly stated, especially when these assumption are widely contested. In the case of the first assumption; there are many political scientists, and others, in many other social sciences, who do not accept that political science has a responsibility beyond the analyses of political system, or as some would say, political behaviour, or just politics. They assert that their responsibility stops at discovering knowledge, and the question how this knowledge relates to others and to society is not their concern or responsibility. They see it as the concern of those who want to apply it. Most of the behaviouralists in U.S.A., for example, and the numerous others basing themselves on the techniques of mathematical political science, like those Billy Dudley paraded around the Ibadan University Staff Club and the CDC, hold this position.<sup>2</sup> Twenty years ago, C. Wright Mills subjected these types of social scientists, among others, to thorough criticism categorising them as "abstracted empiricists", but they continue to be very powerful in western bourgeois, social science and flourish as psephologists, experts in voting behaviour, for example.<sup>3</sup> The assumption that political science, has responsibility to society, has to therefore be established on the basis of its theory and method, and how these relate to social existence in general, and political practice in particular. The assumption cannot just be asserted. If the assumption is normatively derived and is thus a statement of the writers values, faith and belief, then this has to be stated.

If, for reasons of space, it is not possible to state this, then a reference should be made to where the basis of this assumption is established, by the writer himself, or by somebody he agrees with. The statement on p.I that:

"Since it may be inferred that those who have been pre-occupied in this manner must be conscious of the responsibility of their enterprise, to inquire about that responsibility may seem like debating a non-issue"

indicates that the writer is not even aware of this elementary requirement of making clear what "responsibility" means for political science in this context. Of course, anybody engaged in the study of any discipline, or any activity for that matter, has some idea of what he is engaged in, what is at issue is the definition of this activity not only as it is done but as it should be done. For this is what "responsibility" means, otherwise there should be no point in writing the paper.

(b) The State as Object

Secondly the assumption that the object of political science is the state has to have its basis established. The statement on p.I that:

"The object of political science in Nigeria, as elsewhere, is primarily the state - its character, structures and values... The major proposition of this paper is therefore that political science has the supreme responsibility to conceptualise properly its primary object of study, namely the Nigerian state.

is a mere assertion with no scientific basis whatsoever. The empirical evidence from which it may have been inferred is not indicated anywhere and there is no indication that it exists. So it cannot be a description of what exists. The general principles from which it may have been deduced are not mentioned, or a reference to the made in some other writing. Nor does the

writer tell us its normative basis. So it cannot be said to be an affirmation of some values and beliefs. So why should a reader accept that the object of political science is the state and not, say, interest groups, or classes, or families? This is leaving aside, presently, the serious contradictions in the definition of a "state" all over the paper. This is treated later.

(c) Theory and Practice

Thirdly, the assumption that political science can legitimise, subvert, sensitise or socialise on its own, unrelated to political practice is so patently invalid that better quote the actual statement in the paper, let it seem like a fabrication or distortion. The writer states on page 1 and 2 that:

"The essential role of political science is to sensitise and socialise; it is not to legitimise or subvert. The latter role belongs to the realm of practical politics - to actors who may be politicians, regime experts and revolutionaries, while there is usually a supportive relationship between scholars and actors in the form of "committed scholarship" or of actors and scholars taking one (sic) from each other, the distinctive role of one must not be confused with that of the other. The responsibility of political science in a university is not the legitimation or subversion of a particular social system regime or set of rulers; rather its responsibility is two-fold: the identification of the fundamental and enduring parameters of a social order and the sensitisation and socialisation of its audience to the benefits and problems of achieving a just social order. In carrying its responsibility political science may unwillingly contribute to the subversion or legitimation of an existing regime, set of rulers or the social order but this must be seen as incidental rather than the mainstream of political science."

The distinction between theory and practice put forward here raises the issue of whether the writer understands even the bare elements what constitute politics and political activity, in spite of the quotations on this taken from Aristotle, Weber and one Wolin. For, is it not obvious that knowledge and information, on their own, constitute crucial aspects of all practical,

"working" political activity? Is it not obvious that when this knowledge involves values perception, which presumably "sensitisation" means, it relates directly to the core of all practical or "working" politics. Is it not obvious that if socialisation here means getting common network and systems of activity in society, then it is in a way the basis of all practical politics? If these answers are in the positive, then how can any person engaged in the recovery and dissemination of knowledge about political system, political behaviour, political activity, etc., not be an actor in a political system whatever institution he may be in. This assumption is especially surprising when the activity of this scholarly political scientist involves:

(a) the identification of enduring parameters of a social order, (b) sensitisation and socialisation towards just social order. How can the very definition of what is enduring in a social system and what is just, not be directly related to practical, "working" politics. Is practical "working" politics only when somebody stands on a soapbox asking for votes, or sits in a parliament, or shoots his way to a radio station? Is 'nt writing an article on JAMB or defining the general parameters within which to assess the significance and operations of JAMB, practical politics? According to which definition of politics is the writer making his argument this time? Aristotle, Weber or Wolin? Or is this definition of practical, "working" politics and the role of the scholar derived inductively/"scholarly" role of Ali Mazrui, Richard Sklar and James O'Connell in Uganda and Nigeria; or at least what these "scholars" choose to define as their role? Of course, the notions of

competitive ethnic modernisation, the inevitability of instability, the Leninist czar, Uhuru-warship, Sklar's very categorisation of for example, the Action Group party, only "unwillingly" and incidentally relate to practical, "working" politics. It is not clear really how the writer can fail to see that the very definition of what constitutes the social order in a country, is always a live political issue, even if this is not proclaimed daily in the headlines. What relates more directly to practical political activity, in this epoch we live in, then the conception and definition of what is a just social order? The writer's assumptions on this may be the result of the tyranny of received paradigm. But surely even if the lack of between basis for this false distinction/theory and practice/scholar and actor has not been shown in a book by Mazrui or Sklar, he must have realised this from his own life experience. The distinction between theory and practice only relates to degrees of elaboration, elucidation, verification and abstraction, but not to activity. All theoretical activity in political science has practical significance what varies is the immediacy of this. In most cases, it directly favours or not, existing rulers, regimes or system. All practical activity in politics is derived from certain assumptions and premises regarding the political system which are based and reinforce or undermine certain political values and theoretical perspectives. It might appear convenient in contemporary Nigeria to declare that "scholarly" political science is neutral in practical politics, but is only concerned with stability (enduring parameters) and justice. It might reflect at a superficial level, its lack of a direct relationship with certain forms of political activity, like rotation of military governors, permanent secretaries, or budgets, or even elections.

is  
 But this/surely not all practical politics is concerned about as the writer would realise if he were to try and convince some election campaign team, for example, that his conception of what is "enduring" and "just" is neutral in practical politics, and only important in "sensitising" and "socialising" his audience. He might get some unforgettable lessons in "working" politics.

What has been said above should indicate that the assumptions listed as (d) and (c) have really no scientific basis at all. They are clearly not inferred from empirical evidence and the general principles from which they may be deduced are nowhere mentioned or references made to them. The most one can see is that these are wishful suggestions of the writer.

#### IIA CONSISTENCY: THE DEFINITION OF THE STATE

Not only do the major assumptions proposed as the basis of argument in this paper lack any scientific basis, but there is a serious lack of consistency over the meaning of some concepts and the application of some categories of analyses. This relates to the concept of the state and to the issue of the relationship between the particular and universal as this touch on the notion of "imported" ideas.

I will first deal with the glaring inconsistencies of the writer over the concept of "the state". This is a concept crucial to the whole argument on the paper, on p.I it is stated.

"The object of political science in Nigeria, as elsewhere, is primarily the state - its character, structure and values... the state like much else in the Nigerian system is an underdeveloped phenomenon in terms of its character, structure and values. The major proposition of this paper is, therefore that political science has the supreme responsibility to conceptualise properly, its primary object of study namely the Nigerian state."

And on p.2 he states what political science is concerned with:

"...politics and its study are concerned with the management or promotion of public co-operation and conflict with the desirable employment of organised power in the interest of more or less or all members of a political order."

From this second statement regarding the object of political science it would appear that the writer conceives the states as that organised power regulating the affairs of a society as some political scientists conceive it.

On p.8 he accuses the "neo-marxist/structuralists" of making:

"...no distinction between the state as the political community, as a regime or system of laws or as a set of rulers or authority patterns."

On p.11 he makes the same accusation against "the neo-marxist/structuralists" for not making clear distinctions over what they mean by the Nigerian state.

On p.14 he makes the statement that:

"The ~~not~~ effect of the political economy has been the emergence of a lopsided system of social relations between on the one hand, a tiny elite with access to wealth, power and status through the manipulation of state apparatus and the majority who do not have his access."

This further confirms that this writer conceives of the state as the organised power regulating society.

But on p.17 he states:

"The importance of nation building as a responsibility of political science is the fulfillment of the Nigerian national object to manifest against complex odds the will of the state as a political community to survive and enable it to strengthen the bonds of domestic unity and of unity with problems of the African continent and its people in the diaspora."

After this excursion into the diaspora, the writer returns to Nigeria and on p.18 and states:

"Its audience should be sensitised to the moral foundations and moral purpose of the social order in terms of costs as well as benefits if any. For example, the rights and duties of citizens compel a commitment to the Nigerian state as a political community within which to demand equitable allocation of resources...."

The confusion now introduced by the writer defining the state not as organised power with its apparatus regulating society but as a political community is compounded by the completely opaque statement on p.19 that:

"The Nigerian state is a modern state in the sense that as of now, it is over and above the pre-Lugardian social orders both in scale and intensity."

After these statements the question that arises is who is failing to make any distinction between the state as a political community, as a regime, or system of laws, or as a set of rulers or authority patterns? Is it the "neo-marxist/structuralist" or the writer? Perhaps his confusion is caused by the tyranny of the paradigm imported by these "neo-marxist/structuralists?"

#### IIB. CONSISTENCY: "THE TYRANNY OF IMPORTED IDEAS"

The writer's major explanation of why the two "tyrannical paradigms" do block political science in Nigeria from carrying out its responsibility is that one is a legacy of colonialism and the other is a result of "import-substitution". Starting from p.2 when he introduced the notion of "received paradigms" what he tries to say is that these paradigms are not useful because they are foreign to Nigeria. This comes throughout the paper and is most clearly stated at the end. All these shall be quoted and the writer's basic inconsistency in this crucial area of his argument brought out:

On p.3 he states

"Even crises at the level of ostensible level of the elite are easily transposed into the people's crisis thus threatening the existence of the political community. These are issues which must be analysed and explained in the framework of the people's experience and not in some metaphysical construct or universal laws of history."

This assertion of the need to use Nigerian or indigenously - derived ideas is brought at more explicitly on p.8 where it is stated that:

"Like the neo-liberalists, the neo-marxist/structuralist paradigm is an adaptation of marxist dissentin, and critique of European society to the Nigerian conditions. In fact as a critique of the neo-liberalist perspective, it is a form of cultural and intellectual import-substitution."

On page 10 he refers to "the problematic of import-substitution" to explain another shortcoming of the "neo-marxist/structuralist."

The foreign nature of these tyrannical paradigms as a hinderance to political science in Nigeria exercising its responsibility, is brought out clearly in the concluding sentences of the paper; and instead of "import-substitution" it is "decolonisation" which is proffered as the solution.

The writer states:

"It is not the proper responsibility of Nigerian political science to visualise let alone seek to unbound the legal and geographical boundaries of the modern order. And modernity according to Mazrui (1978:314) is here to stay: the task is to decolonise. The discipline for this task is political science. But to be able to do this, first of all political science must decolonise its own frameworks - must liberate itself from the tyrannies of intellectual import-substitution."

The inconsistency of the writer here is also glaring. The section titled "The tyranny received paradigms" on p.2 open with definitions of politics from Aristotle, Max Weber and one Wolin. It is not clear how these are not "received paradigms." Their tyrannical position in the writers

perspective is clear from the way he just repeats them parrot-like and almost worshipfully. For example, Aristotle's definition of politics is not the oldest, he lived only in the 4th century B.C. and centuries before his time there had been definitions of what constitutes politics. Some of these definitions propounded in the Nile Valley, India and China, for example, are still extant. One of these definitions of politics made over one hundred years before Aristotle was born, by Confucius, is to this day an explosive issue in the practical politics of China. If the writer ignores it, it might be because of the depth of the "tyranny" exercised on his perspective. What is more, the definition that Aristotle is said to give:

"politics refers to the activities and behaviour of individuals and groups as these relate to the public realm."

can be applied to psychology, depending on how it is conceived. It is certainly not very useful because of its haziness. In the advanced capitalist countries basic relations to the public realm are very much matters of psychology and even psychiatry.

In any case, how do the definitions of Aristotle, Max Weber, Wolin or the frameworks of Richard Sklar or the opinions of Ali Mazrui become part of the "people's experience" in Nigeria and not derivatives of some foreign "metaphysical construct" or "universal laws of history." In which way are these perspectives and concepts which the writer uncritically quotes and repeats not imported and not foreign while those of the writers of the "neo-marxist/structuralists" are foreign and imported. Or is he merely demonstrating in his attitudes an iron law of the present phase of national development which I discovered during the debate on the constitution in 1976. The law is that

"the foreigners of any notion, idea or ideology does not depend on whether it is foreign to the Nigerian nation but whether it is foreign to the western capitalist system. Since the executive presidency and the doctrine of the separation of powers is not foreign to this system, then it is not foreign ideology. If it has ever been it is now indigenised and part of our culture and traditions."4

An issue which might not be worth raising here is that of the universal and particular. For the whole argument about import substitution and the references to universal laws begs the question of whether there are any general and universal characteristic of political systems besides those put forward by Aristotle, Sklar or Mazrui? If there are these universal characteristics, could there be therefore general theory or theories which can be usefully to applied to the circumstances of Nigeria? For the issue is that elementary requirements of consistency require the writer not to criticise foreign ideas and "universal laws" in one page and then derive his concepts entirely and uncritically from O'Connell, Sklar and Mazrui etc. in another page.

### III DEFINITIONS OF CENTRAL CONCEPTS

Not only does his argument has glaring inconsistencies, but some of the central concepts are not clearly defined.

What for example, does the writer mean by a "paradigm"? This central concept is nowhere defined either explicitly or its meaning indicated implicitly. Does the writer mean by a "paradigm" the totality of the premises defining the essential features of a given object whether abstract or concrete? Or does the writer mean by a "paradigm" not just these premises, but including the epistemological principles of first order rank from which the premises are derived? The notion of "paradigm" was popularised recently in the debates

over the history and philosophy of science especially as a reaction to positivist and empiricist theories of science but its very meaning varies.

But in the context of this writer's argument it is crucial to be clear, at least, about which of these two meanings the concept has in the paper. For if it is the latter, the totality of these premises of all the writers mentioned as "neo-liberal" or "neo-marxist/structuralist" have to be demonstrated. For it is important to be clear about the difference between the use of the same language of discourse and sharing the same premises. Jargon and premises are not synonymous; and the former may be used to obscure a complete lack of clarity over the latter, as is so well demonstrated by this writer.

But if by "paradigm", this writer means the second definition then there is no basis on which "neo-liberal" or "neo-marxist/structuralists" can be said to constitute distinct paradigms. The failure to provide a clear definition of this central concept means that it is not possible to really understand what exactly are these two categories the writer is proposing and whether they actually describe anything.

#### IV BASIS OF CATEGORISATION

This position is made more confused by the writer's failure to state what actually distinguishes "neo-liberalist" from the "neo-marxist/structuralist." The statement he makes is staggering in its admission of a theoretical emptiness in the core of his argument. The writer says:

"It is against this background that one can charge the existing political science paradigm in Nigeria with tyranny and a lack of help to the responsibility of the discipline in the country. These paradigms which derive from the existing literature have for convenience been grouped here into two: the neo-liberalist and the neo-marxist/structuralist." (my emphasis)

How can the major categories in an argument have no rational but convenience? Classifying, categorising, grouping in scientific analyses, is done on the bases of an objective criteria even in an experimental basis to test a hypotheses. But to group and categorise for convenience raises the important question of for whose convenience? Is it then possible to change the groups to neo-liberalist/structuralist and neo-marxist, or neo-liberalist/marxist and neo-structuralist just for convenience? The emptiness here is staggering!

But it even extends even to the meaning the two concepts "neo-liberalist" and "neo-marxist/structuralist." What is "liberalist" or even liberal about Coleman Post, O'Connell, etc. for example. If liberal means something to do with free enterprise, and the rights of the individual etc. what makes these apologists of colonial authoritarian states and neo-colonial dictatorships, liberal? Perhaps, the most recent writing of this "neo-liberalists" referred to here is O'Connell's notorious ABU public lecture "Reflection on the Nature of the State (1975)<sup>5</sup> which he not only celebrates Pax Britannica and colonial "pacification," but actually defends the glaring corruption of Nigerian neo-colonial dictatorship when it was most bankrupt. As for "neo-marxist/structuralist" it must be just convenient jargon.

#### V. EMPIRICAL BASIS

The paper is supposed to be an analyses of various studies of Nigerian political reality. Its empirical basis therefore has to be these studies and the Nigerian political reality they attempt to describe and explain. It is a necessary, and elementary responsibility of the writer to be fully acquainted with all the studies he purports to analyse and categorise. This

is especially necessary because the writer makes great claims for this exercise. The claims are based on what the writer regards as the comprehensiveness of his review of the literature. For he states in the footnote on p.4 that:

"This is a selective commentary on the existing literature. Not all published works are included but even those which are left out of the selection do not constitute or consist of any new framework."

(my emphases).

This is again staggering, because there is no basis for making such a wide-ranging assertion especially when the two "frameworks" the writer proposes are defined on no other basis than convenience. In any case the only scientific indicator that this claim may be taken seriously is if the writer has provide a full list of all the literature on Nigerian political reality he has read and this list appears to include most of the literature. But when he does not provide this list, or even indicate where he has compiled it, as a reference, this claim verges on academic fraud. For it is an elementary responsibility of all science to be quite explicit about one's empirical evidence and all its limitations.

This writer does not only fail to indicate the limitations of the empirical evidence, in the form of the literature he uses, but goes on to claim that all the literature falls in one of the two categories he proposes, without giving any evidence of his ever reading most of the literature. The evidence that he has not read most of the literature by the eighteen people he lists as "neo-marxist/structuralist" and even by the thirteen he lists as "neo-liberalist" comes from the categorisation itself and also from the specific criticism he makes of them.

For example, two of the major criticisms he makes of the "neo-marxist/structuralist" are seen to be baseless when put against the writings of most of the people he categorises as "neo-marxist/structuralist." These criticisms are, firstly, on p.8, he states:

"... no distinction between the state as the political community, as a regime or system of laws or as sets of rulers or authority patterns.

And secondly, on page 9, he states:

"...the operatives of the neo-marxist/structuralist paradigm are a triangle of "foreign and local businessmen and state officials" (Turner 1976:64). The latter triangle constitutes both the ruling and exploiting class: it is the Nigerian state and the factionalism within it which cause the instability and unsteadiness of the social system. The vast majority of the Nigerian peoples are not members of the state or at best they are members only in their collective sufferance and unsung struggles."

One could cite many writings but it is probably better to take those of Dr. Eskor Toyo, one of the longest-standing and most influential Nigerian marxists, who the writer categorises as a "neo-marxist/structuralists." Eskor Toyo has written a great deal on Nigerian political reality, over a period of over thirty years as "scholar" and "actor", still writes. The least the writer should have done in order to make the basic empirical research necessary for his paper is to have referred to Eskor Toyo's works and not Terisa Turner or Gavin Williams. These and many other Africanists he so much relies on, are almost completely insignificant as far as the responsibility of political or social science in Nigeria is concerned. Unlike O'Connell, Mackintosh and others, they have never controlled Nigerian academic systems and fostered proteges to perpetuate their conceptions. But Eskor Toyo has been a consistent intellectual and political fighter against imperialism

and capitalism in Nigeria. A reference to only two of his writings would have shown the writer that the criticisms he make have no basis whatsoever. In a paper he wrote for a lecture at this university on 16th January 1975, titled, The National Question in Nigeria.<sup>6</sup> Eskor made the distinctions the writer accuses him, among others, of not making. He also made an analysis of the issue of state-creation and the ethnic problem which shows the baselessness of the writers criticisms on p.9; Eskor states:

"Let us start by defining the national question a bit more closely. The national question is the issue of the recognition of the dignity, unity, integrity and freedom of peoples. For any people, however, this is defined, the national question may be a question of internal and external relations. Three categories are relevant in speaking of the national question: nationalities or ethnic groups, nations, that is modern nations and states which in the modern context are nation-states. A nationality I define simply as any people speaking one main language though there may be local variations and sharing other cultural characteristics. Examples are the English nationalists, the Yoruba nationality or Tiv nationality. A nation I define as a group of nationalities that have come to share a common economy, a common history and elements of a common culture and among whom there is a sentiment of common belonging such that there arises a dominant desire to be recognised and treated by the outside world as one political entity. There is associated with this the desire for the status of an independent nation-state. A nation in this sense is a product of the bourgeois historical epoch beginning from the Dutch revolt in the 17th century. A state I define as a territorial political machinery expressing the power of a dominant social class or group of such classes over a defined territory or group of territories. ...The effect of the various modes of production and the dominant process of primitive accumulation which superintends their development or disintegration is to create various interest groups whose ambitious and awareness is vital to understanding issues in Nigerian politics in general and the national question in particular."

"...As already hinted, it is the process of primitive accumulation that dominates Nigeria economic and political life and conditions cultural life processes among the major decision makers, big and small. Essentially the process popularly known as "modernisation" is in this country the process of primitive accumulation in symbiosis with the process of decolonisation and the process of nation formation.... Participating in primitive accumulation are city business tycoons, traditional chiefs under going capitalist metamorphosis, bureaucrats in government

establishments and firms, a host of petty bosses such as workshop and transport owners... The process of primitive accumulation proper embraces loans from the federal, state and local governments to Nigerian businessmen and accumulating farmers; award of contracts and sub-contracts by all state levels...7

So much for citing Terisa Turner and Gavin Williams! Eskor Toyo's book The Working Class and the Nigerian Crisis, published over ten years ago should at least have been read in preparation for this "seminal exposition."

All the criticisms the writer makes can be shown to be baseless in this way.

If scholarship, not subversion or legitimation, are the responsibilities of a political scientist, then it is an elementary requirement of scholarship

that the empirical research is done not simply asserted.

#### THE QUESTION OF DEPTH

There is a striking shallowness about the arguments in this which should be pointed out. The most obvious relate to the issues of idealism and morality and subversion or legitimation.

One of the responsibility of political science seems to be, according to this writer, sensitising its audience to moral issue, moral foundation, justice, equity. This is the "idealism" in the paradigm proposed by the writer. But the question arises what actually constitutes the morality and the conception of justice that the political scientist who is not subversive or legitimising should sensitise his audience with.

How is this arrived at and how does this relate to practical politics.

In a country where leading local notables are said to have refused to support a political party because it does not explicitly say it will restore slavery and where the sacrifice of human beings for the funeral of a chief is a major issue, how can one assume that the issue of morality and justice is almost given and does not relate to legitimation or subversion?

As for the matter of what ideas, theories and analysis may subvert or legitimise an existing political order, it is not as simplistic as the writer puts it. Whether a certain body of knowledge, of ideas, undermines or support an existing order does not depend on what explicit assertion these ideas make. The ideology of West European terrorism is stridently directed at the overthrow of the bourgeois order there. But the actions and statements of the Italian Red Brigade, the German Red Army Faction and the Spanish Anarchists have so much reinforced the support this order has that it is widely believed of that some of these "revolutionary" groups are sponsored by those who want to preserve that order without any serious challenge to it. This is leaving aside what constitutes this "order" and what are the process consolidating or undermining it. If an important element of the present "political order" in Nigeria is the existence of one nation-state, then the most serious threats comes from western bourgeois political science in the form taught by James O'Connell which makes tribes and ethnicity the given and determinant variables of Nigerian political reality.

If, however, the issue of subversion/legitimation is only introduced by the writer for an accusatory purpose as he does on p.10:

"Metuge (1978:136) Nnoli (1977:32) drum the battle song for social and political scientists to "commit class suicide" perhaps transform the universities or departments of political science where they comfortably commune into brigades of the revolutionary armed people of Nigeria, provide the vanguard for the seizure of state power by peasants and workers and to form their own dictatorship a true rule by the majority" thereby liquidating the liquidators (see also Ake, 1975)."

then he should have come out explicitly and done so. To evoke armed subversion in such lurid terms and point accusing fingers at one's colleagues may be

part of the new "responsibility" of political science in Nigeria, but seems so much like a sycophantic reaction to the ravings of the Muhammed Commission Report and the Federal Governments White Paper. It is perhaps this element which Turi Muhammadu, of the New Nigeria, instinctively found attractive; especially when Ola Oni, Bade Onimode and Oma Onoge, whose dismissal he welcomed, because he says they are "squalid nuisance", are said by this writer to have "disintegrated" as a group, in a footnote on p.7.<sup>9</sup> Instead of making such accusations in advance, the writer should have waited for another Muhammed Commission tribunal to submit a memorandum blaming "Marxist-Leninists" for misleading the students, as Femi Odekunle of the Department of Sociology did and was profusely quoted.<sup>10</sup> A new responsibility for social science could be such "sensitisation" for judicial tribunals of inquiry.

But actually calling for ABU and other universities to be turned into detachments of a peoples army was done sometime ago. Perhaps this writer is not aware of this due to the tyranny of received paradigms. This was done in the presence of the head of state, General Obasanjo, on ABU campus on 10 December 1977. The person who made this call, as a conclusion to a lucid and systematically argued lecture, was described by General Obasanjo as:

"an illustrious son of Africa whose contribution to liberation struggle against political and economic oppression in Southern Africa has marked him out as one of the greatest African leaders of our time."<sup>11</sup>

His call was made as a condition for accepting an honorary degree of ABU

Samora Machel said:

"This elitist conception of the university necessarily creates an artificial division between theory and practice. Knowledge ceases to be the joint work of men and science is removed from its eminently collective dimension. ... We want in our Ahmadu Bello University, that knowledge and science should be instruments of

liberation. We are certain that this university, its leaders, its teaching staff, its students and all its workers, are conscious that the Nigerian people like all African peoples, expect that our universities should be detachments of the great army that is the people determined to achieve their complete liberation; the people determined to carry the fight against oppression humiliation and exploitation against colonialism and imperialism to the end and to build a new society. And this was why the people of Mozambique, FRELIMO, and the government of Mozambique have accepted the honour bestowed on us and our struggle by the Ahmadu Bello University."<sup>12</sup>

(my emphasis)

The lecture by Samora, Knowledge and Science Should Be For the Total Liberation of Man in Our Ahmadu Bello University, may be categorised as another "neo-marxist/structuralist" subversion of the Nigerian political and social order coming after the "neo-liberalist" speech by the Chancellor, Chief Awolowo, and followed by Sklarist (idealism/working politics) speech by General Obasanjo? The act of "neo-marxist/structuralist" subversion by Samora was conducted while he was standing next to the head of state and flanked by <sup>many</sup> members of the Supreme Military Council. What actually is legitimation and what is subversion? What is a scholar and what is an actor? Or do these "paradigms" not help us to understand even what happened at such a sedate event as the convocation of ABU?

#### CONCLUSION

The paper is not completely worthless. It indicates that the writer is reading Gavin Williams, Terisa Turner, Colin Leys etc., and does not just stick to Ali Muzrui, Richard Sklar, James Coleman and James O'Connell. It is probably of product of the difficulties the writer is having in merging these types of writing, especially their different jargon, which seems to be one of the areas he is fascinated with.

The serious shortcomings of the paper, of a conceptual and methodological nature, caused by the writers failure to fulfill the most elementary requirements of scientific research and inquiry, prevent it from even coming to grips with the issues involved in discussing the responsibility of a discipline like political science in Nigeria today.

### References

1. This paper was presented at the Nigerian Political Science Association Sixth Annual Conference, Benin, 26-30th March 1979 and Staff Seminar, Dept. of Political Science, A.B.U. April 1979.
2. See the Report of the Constitution Drafting Committee, Lagos 1976, the section with the proposals on elections where Dudley put in his algebraic formula for election.
3. The Sociological Imagination by C. Wright Mills, London, 1970.
4. Democracy and National Development, "Lecture to Kaduna State NUJ" New Nigerian - October 1976.
5. "Reflection on the Nature of the State" A.B.U. Public Lectures, 1974-76, Zaria n.d. pp.119-126. In this lecture delivered in 1975 O'Connell said "In African countries after the initial resistance to the colonial occupation most societies settled down to enjoy the Pax Britannica and its French and Belgian equivalents." (p.119) a clear apologia for colonial oppression. What is liberal about this concluding statement of the lecture made at the time when a neo-colonial dictatorship in Nigeria had shown itself utterly corrupt, bankrupt and regressive? "Above all elite groups will have to learn to communicate and to conciliate better than some of the first generation did after independence; they must communicate across ethnic and social differences and conciliate those within their own ranks and those outside who vie with them for power and privilege. This mediating role calls not only for patience but for discipline, generally within themselves. Their people are likely to concede them power, respect and money. They are entitled to ask in return for commitment, service and integrity." What is this if not fascist or even feudal? The tyrannical paradigm should be neo-liberalist/fascist!
6. The National Question: Discription, Analysis, Prognosis Polemics by Eskor Toyo, Lecture at ABU Zaria, Minieo 16 January 1975.

7. Ibid., pp.6-7, 13-14.
8. This book of Eskor Toyo was published by the Sketch Publishing House, Ibadan, 1967-68.
9. See the editorial of the New Nigerian of 29/8/78 where the dismissals of "messiahs of revolution" was praised. The sneer about the life-style of these dismissed "messiahs" in that editorial, is echoed in Oyovbaire's reference to Metuge and Nnoli quoted ("department of political science where they comfortably commune").
10. See Federal Republic of Nigeria. Report of the Commission of Inquiry into the Nigerian Universities Crisis, Lagos, 1978, Vol.I, para 1:16, 9:3, pp.8, 216-17.
11. New Nigerian, 15/12/77.
12. Race and Class, A Journal of Black and Third World Liberation, Vol.XIX, No.4, 1978, pp.403.