

ISLAM AND COLONIALISM

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ISLAM AND COLONIALISM

*Intellectual Responses of Muslims of Northern Nigeria to
British Colonial Rule*

BY

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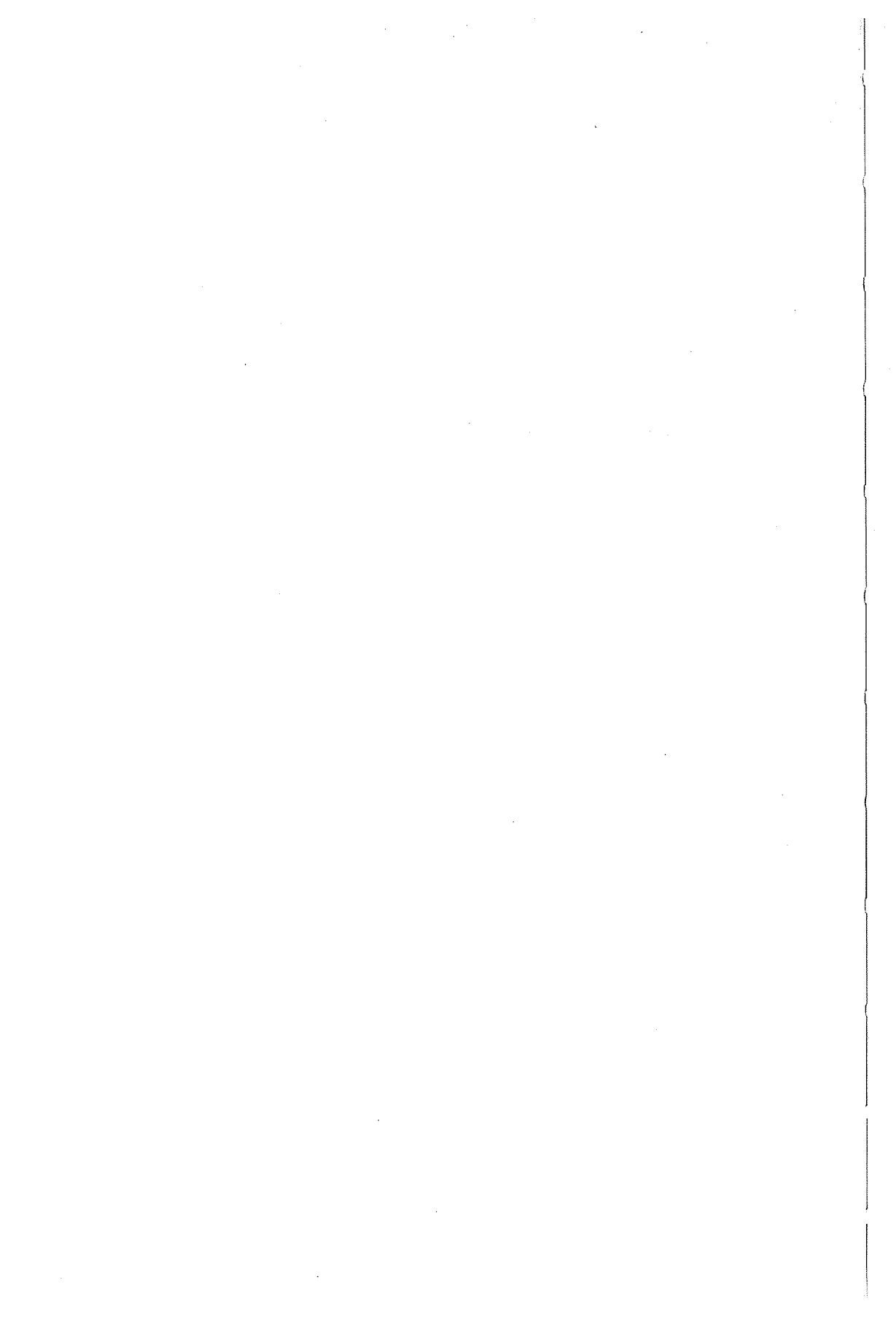
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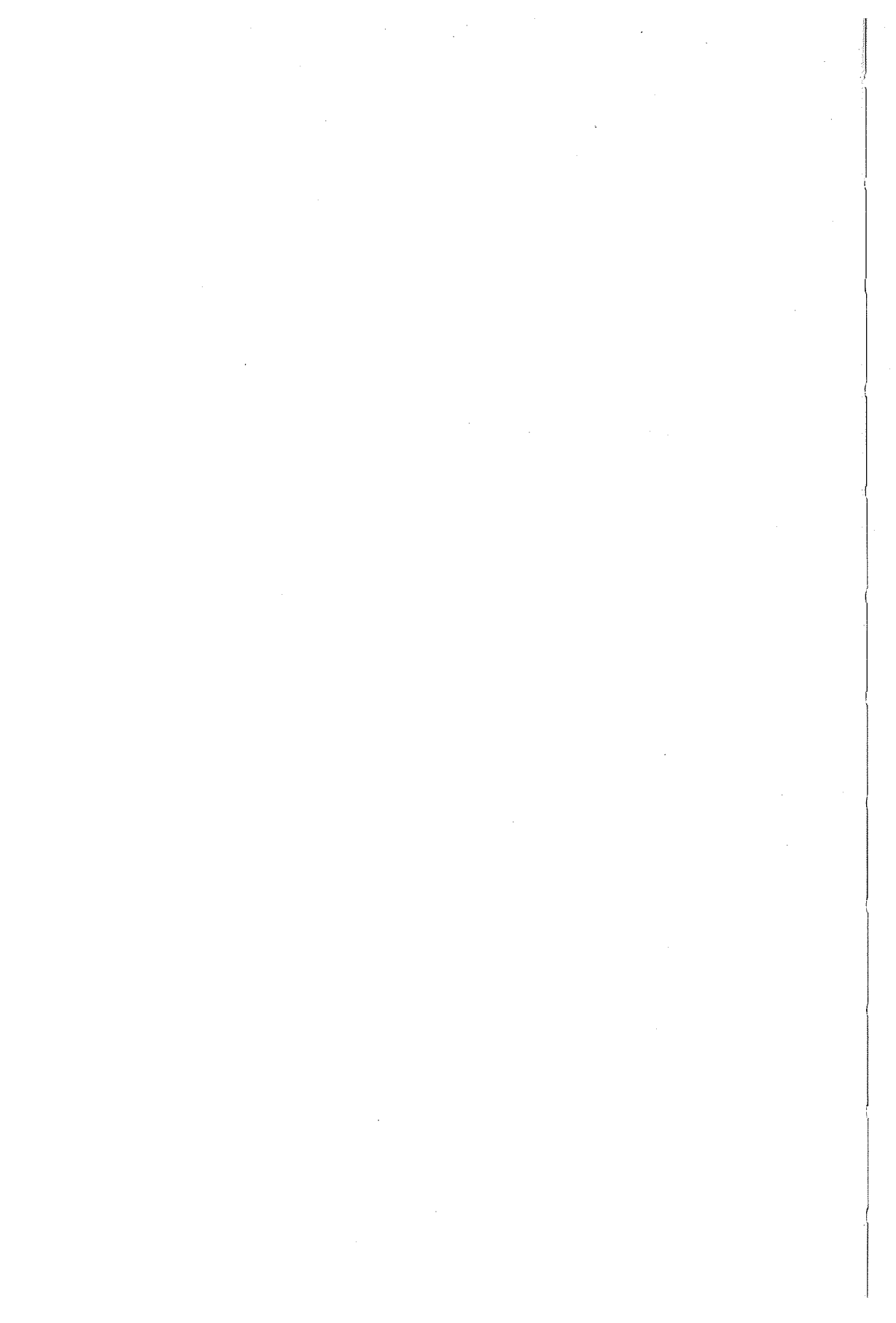


EDITOR'S PREFACE

This study of how Muslim thinkers in Northern Nigeria responded to British activities under their colonial rule in the first half of the twentieth century has been in creation over the past fifteen years. In 1989 Muhammad S. Umar began his Ph.D. program at the Department of Religion in Northwestern University, with me as his advisor. Eight years later he presented his dissertation on this topic, which was readily accepted as a doctoral qualification. Since then, he has been in the Religion faculty of Arizona State University, and has worked to prepare a book out of his dissertation. I was happy to continue helping by editing the book volume and formatting the full text in publication form. This book presents a fascinating study of how Hausa-Fulani Muslims in Northern Nigeria thought about how they should react to British occupation of what had been an Islamic state—now known as the Sokoto Caliphate—especially in regard to the question of migrating from the area, or fighting to try and reject domination under Christians. It also shows how the British occupiers—as local rulers—looked at problems in their relationship with conquered Muslims.

The book not only gives its readers a fully detailed study of Muslims' relations with colonizers, but introduces through it a large number of important source materials—from the colonialists (in English), and from Muslim scholars and rulers (in both Arabic and Hausa), thus helping scholars engaged in further research of the region. Understanding how Nigerian Muslims accepted or rejected colonial policies—particularly in political and social matters—may also make it somewhat more possible to understand certain post-independence discords in those areas of Nigeria. Dr. Umar and I are pleased to be able to make this important material easily available to readers world-wide—including Nigerians—to learn more of their recent past.

John Hunwick



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This study on Muslims' reactions to colonial rule would not have been possible without the kind support and generosity of many individuals and institutions. I am very pleased to acknowledge gratefully the kindness of Professor John O. Hunwick, who first invited me to apply for the Ph.D. program in Religion at Northwestern University, and remained committed to the successful completion of my study. His careful supervision sets higher expectations that I could not have met without his unwavering confidence in what I could do. I am also grateful to all the members of the Hunwick household for generous hospitality whenever I visited or stayed with them. The many gifts I received made me virtually a member of the Hunwiuck family, and also showed that the Hunwick support for me was not merely academic; it was total.

Acknowledgement is due to the Department of Religion, Northwestern University, for the moral and financial support that made it possible for me to utilize the opportunity the Department offered for intellectual development. I am thankful to the entire faculty who taught me and served on my examination committee, including Professors Edmund Perry, Vincent Cornell, Richard Kiekhefer, as well as Ivor Wilks of the History Department, and Robert Launay of the Anthropology Department. Acknowledgement also goes to the Program of African Studies and the Melville Herskovits Africana Library, both of Northwestern University. In particular, I wish to thank Reinessa Neuhalfen for helping me to locate and acquire vital research materials.

Northwestern University Fellowships and Scholarships provided valuable financial support during my course-work. My field research in Nigeria in 1992–1994 was supported by a grant from the Joint Committee on African Studies of the Social Science Research Council and the American Council of Learned Societies, with funds provided by the Rockefeller Foundation. Lawrence University, Appleton, Wisconsin, provided financial support in the form of Pre-Doctoral Fellowship during the 1995–6 academic session. The Department of Religious Studies, Arizona State University (Tempe, Arizona), helped with a light teaching load in the spring of 1996 that allowed me to

concentrate on the final phase of the study. I am grateful to all these institutions.

The continuing support of my family in Nigeria was crucial throughout the years of my study in the United States. For their patient understanding, I thank my mother, Mrs. Yabi Umar, and my elder brother Dr. Awwal Umar, and all my younger brothers and sisters. Special thanks are also due to my beloved wife, Zainab [Umar], for enduring my long absence in the course of this study, and to my in-laws for their kind understanding. Similarly, special thanks are due to Alhaji Hamisu and Mallam Hasan Husaini for their moral and financial support both to me and to members of my family whilst I was away in the United States. Friends and well-wishers in Nigeria also include: Alhaji Rabi'u Usman, Alhaji Sama'ila A. Mohammed, Alhaji Abubakar H. Yusuf, Mohammed Ali, and many others too numerous to mention.

However, I wish to gratefully acknowledge the support of all the individuals and institutions in Nigeria that in one way or another contributed to the successful completion of my research. I thank the University of Jos for releasing me to pursue my study. Also, I obtained important source materials through the courtesy of the National Museum Library, Jos, Arewa House, Kaduna (directed by Hamidu Bobboyi, who did his History Ph.D. at Northwestern), and the National Archives in Kaduna. Acknowledgement is also due to: the Northern History Research Scheme, and the Oral Documentation Unit, both at Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria; the Centre for the Study of Nigerian Languages, Bayero University, Kano; Kano State History and Culture Bureau; Sokoto State History Bureau; and Usman Danfodio University (formerly: University of Sokoto) Departments of History, Islamic Studies, Arabic, and Hausa, as well as its Centre for Islamic Studies. Similar acknowledgement goes to the Federal Radio Corporation, Kaduna, the Kaduna State Broadcasting corporation, and the Kano State Radio Corporation. I thank the staff of all these institutions for their assistance in obtaining relevant research materials. My special gratitude also goes to all those individuals who kindly granted recordable interviews, and whose names have been listed in the Bibliography of this book; their insights proved valuable. Altogether, I thankfully acknowledge the support of all who contributed to this study of mine, making it possible—or suitable—to be published finally as a book. However, I remain solely and entirely responsible for any possible errors of fact and interpretation.

I did final phases of work on the preparation of my study as a book while I was visiting as a Global Fellow at the International Institute of University of California at Los Angeles during academic year 2003–2004. I am grateful to all the people who made my visit possible and productive, particularly Professors Geoffrey Garrett, Vice-Provost for the International Institute; Ronald Rogowski, Director of the Global Fellows Program; Leonard Binder Director of Center for Near Eastern Studies; Allen Roberts, Director of James S. Coleman Center for African Studies. My colleagues at the Global Fellows Program and other visiting scholars the International Institute as well as other departments of the University of California at Los Angeles also deserve thanks for lively exchanges of ideas and sharing with me their expertise and knowledge.

Finally, I wish to thank Oxford University Press for kind permission to reproduce some materials here that were earlier published in the *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, volume 67/1 (March 1999), pp. 59–84; and to Karthala publishers of Paris for permission to reproduce some of the materials I published earlier in *La Tijaniyya: Une confrerie musulmane a la conquete de 'Afrique* (Paris: Karthala, 2000), pp. 327–355.

My editors at Brill, Trudy Kamperveen and Tanja Cowall, and their editorial and production staff members deserve thanks for their assistance throughout the production process.

Muhammad S. Umar
Tempe, Arizona

GLOSSARY OF ARABIC AND HAUSA TERMS

Arabic and Hausa words below are fully transliterated with the standard marks and hooked letters. But in the main text, a simplified form of transliteration is followed, particularly with common names such as Ahmad and Muhammad, and words that are recognizable in English such as jihad and 'ulama.

<i>'ādāt</i>	Pl. of <i>'āda</i> , custom
<i>aḥādīth</i>	Pl. of ḥadīth, tradition of the Prophet Muḥammad
<i>Ahl al-kitāb</i>	People of the Scripture, Christians and Jews
<i>Alkalai</i>	Pl. of <i>Alkali</i> , Hausa for the Arabic <i>al-qāḍī</i> , judge
<i>'Amān</i>	Safe-conduct
<i>'Azīma</i>	Categorical rule of Islamic law
<i>b.</i>	<i>Ibn</i> , son of
<i>d'an</i>	Son of (Hausa)
<i>Darar</i>	Harm
<i>Darūra</i>	Necessity
<i>Dunyā</i>	Material world, here and now
<i>Fatwā</i>	New ruling in Islamic law, responsa
<i>Fiqh</i>	Jurisprudence, rules of Islamic law
<i>Fitna</i>	Crisis, temptation
<i>Hijra</i>	Migration, immigration
<i>Ḥīyal</i>	Pl. of <i>ḥīla</i> , legal ruse, stratagem
<i>Ijmā'</i>	Consensus in Islamic law
<i>Ijtihād</i>	Independent thinking in Islamic law
<i>Imām</i>	Leader of congregational prayer in a Mosque
<i>Jamā'a</i>	Community
<i>Kāfir</i>	Unbeliever, infidel
<i>Kīrari</i>	Praise epithet, nickname
<i>Kitābī</i>	'Scripturist' i.e. Christian or Jewish
<i>Limān</i>	Hausa for Arabic <i>imām</i>
<i>Mafsada</i>	Corruption; opposite of <i>maṣlaḥa</i> in Islamic law
<i>Mallam</i>	Islamic scholar, also Mr., Hausa from Arabic <i>mu'allim</i> , teacher

<i>Maṣlahā</i>	Public/common interest in Islamic law, opposite of <i>mafsada</i>
<i>mazālim</i>	Public Complaints, misdeeds
<i>Muftī</i>	Person who regularly gives fatwās
<i>Muwālāh</i>	Friendship, alliance
<i>Naṣārā</i>	Christians, pl. of <i>Naṣrānī</i>
<i>Qāḍī</i>	Judge
<i>Rukḥṣa</i>	Concessionary rule of Islamic law
<i>Ṣaḥīḥ</i>	Sound, valid
<i>Siyāsa</i>	Policy, executive order
<i>Ṣulh</i>	Truce
<i>Taqīyya</i>	Dissimulation, precaution
<i>Tawḥīd</i>	Theology, Oneness of God
<i>Tā'zīr</i>	Discretionary punishment
<i>Tughyān</i>	Contumacy, oppression
' <i>Ulamā</i> '	pl. of ' <i>ālim</i> ', Islamic scholar
<i>Uṣūl al-fiqh</i>	Principles of Islamic Jurisprudence
<i>Waka</i>	[Hausa] Poem
<i>Wazīfa</i>	Devotional recitation of Tijānī litanies
<i>Wird</i>	Litany
<i>Zāwiya</i>	Circle, Sufi lodge
<i>Zuhd</i>	Asceticism
<i>Zulm</i>	Injustice, oppression

INTRODUCTION

In 1804, the reformist Islamic scholar Shaykh 'Uthmān b. Fodiye led a jihad that transformed the Hausa states into what has come to be called the Sokoto Caliphate, the largest Islamic polity in West Africa during the nineteenth-century.¹ On January 1, 1900, the British proclaimed most of the territories of this Islamic polity to be the Protectorate of Northern Nigeria, with Colonel Frederick Lugard as the High Commissioner. While his campaigns for the conquest of Sokoto were in progress, Colonel Lugard wrote to the Sultan of Sokoto, Abdurrahman dan Atifu, to explain British intentions. Sultan Atifu responded in these words: "I do not consent that any one of you should ever dwell with us. Between us and you there are no dealings except as between Muslims and unbelievers: war as Almighty enjoined on us. There is no power or strength save in God on High."² Despite this, the British defeated Sokoto forces at the battle of Burmi in 1903, and took effective control of the territories of the Sokoto Caliphate. As Muslims found themselves under alien non-Muslim rule against which armed resistance had proved ineffective, they had to devise other ways of dealing with their subordinate position under British colonial rule. How did Muslims conceptualize, interpret, rationalize, or otherwise negotiate everyday Muslim life under the non-Islamic political supremacy of British colonialism? What Islamic ideas did Muslims invoke to comprehend and respond to the changes initiated by the British? How do Muslims' responses to British colonialism in Northern Nigeria compare to responses to colonialism in other parts of the Muslim world?

In addressing these principal questions, this study examines multiple Muslim responses to colonialism from the start of colonial rule in 1903 to introduction of electoral politics in 1945, a development that marked the beginning of decolonization and the rise of Muslims to political leadership. This period affords an opportunity for exam-

¹ Examples of the extensive literature on the history of the Sokoto Caliphate are: Murray Last, (1967); R.A. Adeleye, (1971); Ahmad M. Kane and Kabir A. Gandi, (1990).

² H.F. Backwell, (1969), 13-14.

ining responses to colonialism when Northern Nigerian Muslims were most constrained by the clear supremacy of colonial rule. Additionally, the special focus on Muslims dealing with their subordinate position to the British is better appreciated as a research problematic in historical perspective. Sultan Atifu's Islamic opposition to British colonialism is better understood by recalling that he was the head of the Sokoto Caliphate that was purposely established as an Islamic polity.³ In the global context of Islamic history, Marshall Hodgson observes that one of the bases of Islamic community was the mission of the community to bring God's way into all the world; hence the *rule* [original italics] of the Muslim community should be extended over all infidels.⁴ Since imposition of British colonial rule reversed Muslims' ideological expectation to occupy the high moral ground, an examination of Muslims' intellectual responses to colonialism will therefore shed light on how Northern Nigerian Muslims reconceptualized the ideological bases of Muslims' relations with non-Muslims. An awareness of this ideological revision contributes an important historical background to understanding the difficult and sometime confrontational relationship between Muslims and Christians in contemporary Nigeria and the problem of religious pluralism in general.

Furthermore, this study fills a major gap in the literature on British colonialism and Islam in Northern Nigeria, where only few studies specifically focus on the interface between the challenges of colonialism and Muslims' responses. An early attempt is Adeleye's examination of the arguments by the Wazir of Sokoto, Muhammadu Buhari, to justify in Islamic law his role in leading the surrender of Sokoto to the British.⁵ Adeleye holds that "suspicion and resistance to imposition of European rule had been a tradition in the [Sokoto] Caliphate since its inception." He analyzes the Islamic doctrine of *taqiyya* (dissimulation) in Buhari's argument for the surrender to the British, and concludes that Buhari's treatise demonstrates "not only the vehemence of the Caliphate's resistance but also its essentially

³ For the Islamic legacy of the Sokoto Caliphate, see *ALA* II, 52–155 [authors], and 601–37 [bibliography].

⁴ Hodgson, (1974), i, 322.

⁵ Adeleye, (1968).

Islamic character."⁶ In two separate recent studies, Abu-Manga and Bello supplement Adeleye's early attempts through analysis of *hijra* as the Islamic idea that informed arguments in favor of avoiding, rather than surrendering to the British.⁷ In addition to this specific focus on Muslim responses to the challenges of British military conquest, this study covers the larger framework of Islamic discourses on colonial policies on political, legal, and educational issues as well.

Similarly, the present study builds upon some of the interesting conclusions of Ibrahim Tahir's study on the roles of Muslim scholars in what he terms the "patterns of bourgeois revolution" in Kano, following the imposition of British colonialism.⁸ Tahir contends that the "colonial conquest [of Kano] and the developments and reactions it stimulated" provided the catalyst for "a bourgeois revolution," and that "the most critical economic development was pioneered by local dominant economic classes and Islamic values." He stresses how Sufi revivalism in Kano disavowed asceticism, and instead, provided "a pool of strategies for the motivation of individuals, and for control and distribution of goods, services, and social honor and prestige." Tahir concludes that Muslim scholars provided divinatory and ritual services that proved crucial in "maintaining merchant class competitiveness and their eventual confrontation with and replacement of foreign economic dominance."⁹ Clearly, Tahir's focus is not on Muslim intellectual responses to colonialism, but on the processes of economic development in Kano under colonial rule. His insightful conclusions on the importance of Islamic values in those economic processes are, however, helpful towards understanding Muslims' intellectual responses to the British colonialism that was actively involved in the economy of Kano.

Other studies on British colonialism in Northern Nigeria are not centrally concerned with Islam, though not ignoring it altogether.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 285.

⁷ Al-Amin Abu-Manga (1987); Omar Bello, n.d.; Yahya M. al-Amin, "*Difā 'ulamā' Sokoto al-thaqāfi dīdd al-Istifmār al-Bartānī*," paper presented at the International Seminar on "The Impact of Colonialism on Islamic Education and Other Institutions During the Colonial Period between 1903-1960," Center for Islamic Studies, University of Sokoto, Sokoto, July 1988.

⁸ Ibrahim A. Tahir, "Sufis, Scholars, Saints and Capitalists in Kano 1904-1974: the Patterns of Bourgeois Revolution in an Islamic Society" (Ph.D. diss., University of Cambridge, 1975).

⁹ *Ibid.*, 530-32.

Four approaches are discernible. First, historical studies on Islam in Northern Nigeria, in which the colonial period forms a part, pay only brief attention to Muslims' responses to colonialism. Examples of this approach include: Paden's study of the popularization of Sufi orders in Kano;¹⁰ Hiskett's tracing of the historical development of Hausa Islamic verse;¹¹ and Chamberlain's study of Islamic legal education in Kano in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.¹² Salamone and Yusuf follow this approach also in their separate studies on legal pluralism in Northern Nigeria.¹³

Second, studies concerned primarily not with Islam, but with aspects of colonialism in Northern Nigeria, treat Islam as secondary concern only. This has in fact been the dominant approach in the extensive literature on British colonialism in Northern Nigeria. Samples here include the various studies on British colonial rule in Kano,¹⁴ Katsina,¹⁵ Sokoto and Gwandu,¹⁶ as well as studies taking a regional view of British colonialism in Northern Nigeria as a whole.¹⁷ Without going into the details of these studies, one feature common to them can still be observed: they are chiefly concerned with the impact of, rather than responses to, colonialism. In addition, even when they pay some attention to responses, the tendency is towards the binary model of "collaboration" or "resistance". Therefore, in relation to these previous works, this study stands out by its emphasis on multiple rather than binary responses to colonialism, thereby revealing the impact of colonialism in a new light.

Third, a substantial part of the literature on Muslims' responses to the British conquest focuses on military history. Emphasis here is on the inadequacies of Muslims' strategies, tactics, and weapons. Additionally, this literature accounts for the British victory by highlighting Muslims' failure to mount a coordinated defense against

¹⁰ Paden (1973), 53-6.

¹¹ Hiskett (1975), 103-5.

¹² See Chamberlain (1975).

¹³ Salamone (1983); Yusuf (1982).

¹⁴ Fika (1977); Uba (1985).

¹⁵ R.W. Hull, "The Development of Administration in Katsina Emirate, Northern Nigeria, 1887-1944" Ph.D. diss., University of Columbia, 1968.

¹⁶ W.B. Stouffer, "The Development of District Councils in Sokoto: a Study of Institutions for Popular Participation in Northern Nigeria" (Ph.D. diss., Duke University, 1970).

¹⁷ Graham (1966); Heussler (1968); Shenton (1980).

British aggression, or by emphasizing the political problems within the Sokoto Caliphate at the time of the British invasion.¹⁸ However, a notable exception is Tukur's detailed examination of how Muslims' responses to the British conquest varied over time, and from one place to another. But Tukur's focus on the period of conquest leaves out subsequent Muslims' responses to colonialism in the aftermath of the military conquest.¹⁹ Similarly, studies of Mahdist threats and revolts against the British do not usually examine the Islamic ideas in the Mahdist ideology of resistance.²⁰ In contrast, this study deals not only with the Islamic arguments for armed confrontation with the British, but also analyzes those arguments within the larger framework of Muslims' discourses advocating divergent responses to colonialism.

Finally, studies of changes from tradition to modernity constitute the fourth approach discernible in the literature on colonialism in Northern Nigeria. As part of the genre of modernization theories, these studies are more concerned with the post-colonial period, though they usually begin by examining colonialism. They stress the strategies of adopting and coping with changes in the politics of modernization, and their insights are relevant to understanding Muslims responses to colonialism.²¹ The best example is Whitaker's insightful analysis of the politics of tradition during the *zamanin siyasa*, the era of decolonization and early independence of Northern Nigeria in the 1950s–1960s. His conception of “traditionalizing modernity and modernizing tradition”²² is quite significant for comprehending Muslims responses to colonialism. The period of the present study (1903–1945)

¹⁸ For example, see: Flint (1960); Muffet (1964); Asiegbu (1984); Dugate (1985); Ukpabi (1987); Uba (1994).

¹⁹ Mahmud M. Tukur, “The Imposition of British Colonialism on the Sokoto Caliphate, Borno, and Neighboring States, 1897–1914: A Reinterpretation of the Colonial Sources” (Ph.D. diss., Ahmadu Bello University, 1977).

²⁰ For example, see: Muhammad A. al-Hajj, “The Mahdist Tradition in Northern Nigeria” (Ph.D. diss., Abdullahi Bayero College, 1973); C.N. Uba (1976); A.S. Mohammed, “A Social Interpretation of the Satiru Revolt of c. 1894–1906 in Sokoto Province” (M.A. thesis, Ahmadu Bello University, 1983); and Lovejoy and Hogendorn (1990); Asma'u G. Sa'eed, “A Biographical Study of Shaykh Sa'id b. Hayat (1887–1978) and British Policy towards the Mahdiyya in Northern Nigeria 1900–1960” (Ph.D. diss., Bayero University, 1992).

²¹ For example, see Sklar (1963); Dudley (1968); D.C.R. Weeks, “Adaptive Strategies of Men and Women in Zaria, Nigeria: Industrial Workers and their Wives” (Ph.D. diss., University of Michigan, 1973).

²² C.S. Whitaker, (1970), 3–35, and 458–68.

dovetails perfectly with the period covered by Whitaker, whilst its intellectual focus brings out the Islamic ideas that informed the contending ideologies of the politics of tradition and modernity that Whitaker examines so brilliantly.

While drawing insights from the existing literature, this study departs radically from the prevalent views of British colonialism as either supportive or subversive of Islam. I proceed from the obvious fact that Muslims' responses to British colonialism are better understood by first examining British colonial policies towards Islam. I advocate a new conception of British colonial policies and programs in terms of appropriation, containment, and surveillance. I contend that these props of British colonial policy towards Islam constituted the challenges of colonialism to which Muslims authorized multiple responses through Islamic legal discourses and Hausa literary discourses. I elaborate this basic argument by first emphasizing the gradualism of the British conquest of Northern Nigeria (1897–1903), and calling attention to the firmness with which the British implemented partial changes in political, legal, and educational domains. I then highlight that the *gradual* but *firm* execution of *partial* changes is the central characteristic of British colonial policies relevant to understanding Muslims' responses to colonialism. Muslims responded to the British conquest by confrontation, submission, avoidance, and alliance, and to the political and legal challenges of colonialism in terms of rejection, acquiescence, and compartmentalization of Islam and responses to colonialism.

The partial nature of the challenges of British colonialism, and the gradual but firm manner in which the challenges confronted Muslims, are two important points to consider in analyzing Muslim intellectual responses. The clear military superiority of the British, demonstrated time and again especially with extermination of the Satiru rebels and the physical erasure of their village, created a challenge to which possible responses were: submission, flight, or confrontation. Each of these responses could be justified by a number of Islamic doctrines. For example, submission could be argued for in Islamic legal doctrines such as duress, truce, avoiding self-destruction *etc.*; in the Islamic theological doctrine of accepting what God had already predestined (*qadar*); in the notions of *fitna* or *'ibra* in Islamic history; or on the basis of the doctrine of *taqiyya* (dissimulation). Similarly, flight could be supported by a number of Qur'anic verses and traditions of Prophet Muhammad; by the legal-historical

notion of *hijra*; or by invoking Sufi conception of asceticism (*zuhd*). Finally, the doctrine of jihad represents the clearest intellectual instrument for supporting confrontation. Even though Muslims did not stand a good chance of winning armed confrontation with the British, still two arguments could be advanced to support jihad: the prospect of martyrdom with the guaranteed admission into paradise; and Qur'an 8:65–66, assuring Muslims that with the support of the Almighty, Muslim fighters could win a battle against an enemy double their size—assuming technological parity. Some of these arguments were already appearing in the Sokoto caliphate and in the neighboring Muslim communities faced with an increasing threat from European presence in West Africa during the second half of the nineteenth-century. Apart from the vigorous arguments and counter-arguments between Ahmad al-Bakkā'ī and his opponents on Heinrich Barth's visit to Timbuktu, *amān* and *ṣulḥ* were used to come to terms with the superior power of the Europeans. When the French sacked Segu, its Muslim rulers made *hijra* to Sokoto, which was to fall to the British shortly after, thereby dictating the necessity for alternative responses.

Despite their clear military superiority, the British did not have the resources or the personnel totally to discard the institutions of the Sokoto caliphate or replace the Muslims who ran those institutions; therefore the British decided to appropriate both. Although the British did not prohibit *Islamic religious practices*, they pursued containment policies towards several aspects of Islamic law, as well as what the British regarded as 'subversive rituals' of Mahdists and Sufi orders. British decisions in these respects created political challenges for which possible Muslims' responses are many. Unlike engaging a superior military force, with the demonstrated consequences of defeat and possible annihilation, taking on the political power of the British would not necessarily lead to one determined outcome; there were wide margins for maneuver and negotiation. Varieties of political engagement can be intellectually supported by the prophetic tradition commanding Muslims to change reprehensible things by direct action, failing which, they should speak against it, and to disapprove it in their heart, if they could do nothing else. Thus Muslims who chose to work under the British could argue that political engagement was one way of seeking actively to prevent the reprehensible reality of colonial rule, and even if unable to prevent all of that reality, they could contain some of it, and speak out against the rest.

This argument was made all the more plausible by the British mode of operation in the political arena that made it possible to negotiate and extract concessions. For example, there was not much the emirs could do against the reprehensible act of taking oath of office by swearing on the Qur'an to be loyal to the non-Muslim monarch of Britain, but a way to speak out was incorporated in the oath:

I swear in the name of God to well and truly serve His Majesty King George V and his representative the Governor-General of Nigeria, to obey the laws of Nigeria and the lawful commands of the Governor and the Lieutenant-Governor, *provided they are not contrary to my religion, and if they are so contrary I will at once inform the Resident for the information of the Governor* (added italics). I will cherish in my heart no treachery or disloyalty, and I will rule my people with justice and without partiality, and as I carry out this oath so may God judge me.²³

The italicized clause gives a clear mechanism for adopting the second option of speaking out against reprehensible acts which Muslims are unable to change actively. Furthermore, there is still the third option of disapproving in the heart what could not even be spoken against, which if conjoined with dissimulation provide a solution to the ethical dilemma of swearing not to harbor treachery or disloyalty while at the same time concealing disapproval of the sworn allegiance. Belief in divine retribution for perjury, and strong social disapproval of careless oath-taking, informed Muslims' scruples about taking oath. Some of Lugard's ordinances sought to accommodate the unwillingness of emirs and ordinary Muslims to take oath even in formal legal proceedings, such as "Order 2 (3) of Schedule 1 of the Provincial Courts Ordinance has been drafted to meet this difficulty, but the Judge must be careful to record the fact that the person not sworn was a . . . [Muslim] and to 'affirm' him if the Koran oath is not administered."²⁴ This point leads directly to identifying potential Muslims' responses to the challenges of British colonialism in the legal arena.

It is often claimed that the British straightened and widened the application of Islamic law in Northern Nigeria. For example, Anderson observed: "so far as its [i.e. Nigeria's] Northern Provinces are con-

²³ Lugard, *Political Memoranda*, 308.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 119.

cerned, Islamic law is in fact applied more widely than in any part of the British Empire, except the Aden Protectorate."²⁵ Similarly, Schacht stated that "it was only under British administration that Islamic law, according to the Maliki doctrine, became in practice the only law applicable to the Muslims of Northern Nigeria."²⁶

In the same vein, though less sweeping, Uba concludes that "in spite of the establishment of British administration and subsequent innovation, Islamic law still regulated the lives of the people in very important particulars."²⁷ Viewed from the perspective of British appropriation of Islamic law and legal institutions, all of these observations are true, except for the factual error in Schacht's assertion that Islamic law was "the only law applicable to the Muslims of Northern Nigeria." Many proclamations, ordinances and legislation passed by the colonial administration were certainly not Islamic law, but were nonetheless enforced on Muslims. Furthermore, while British policies of appropriation allowed the application of aspects of Islam law to continue, this study demonstrates that British colonial policy of containment affected adversely many aspects of Islamic substantive law, rules of evidence and procedure, as well as the jurisdiction and scope of Islamic law. In fact, apart from the clear nullification of aspects of Islamic law, another subtle consequence of the British colonial appropriation was to impose "on Islamic law certain terminologies, processes and concepts which have the capacity to profoundly change the substance and form of the shari'a."²⁸ Law reports and precedents are clear examples that readily come to mind. It used to be widely believed that since Islamic law had 'ossified' in its medieval formulations as a result of the alleged 'closing of the gate of independent legal thinking,' there was not much Muslims could do other than acquiescing to the subtle and pervasive challenges imposed by colonialism. This view has now been discredited, and more recent scholarship has been producing evidence of continued creativity and dynamism in Islamic legal traditions. Among the many Islamic legal doctrines, concepts and stratagems that have been, and are still being, creatively applied to deal with the challenges and

²⁵ Anderson (1954), 171.

²⁶ Schacht (1957), 136.

²⁷ Ubah (1982), 73.

²⁸ Yadudu (1991), 22.

legacies of colonialism are: *fatwa*; *maqāṣid al-sharīʿa*; *al-ʿazīma wa al-rukḥṣa* and *hiyal*. These are of course in addition to the more familiar doctrines of *ijtihād*, *qiyās*, *maṣlaḥa*, *istiḥsān* etc. My examination of Muslims' responses to the legal challenges of colonialism leads me to conclude that the categories of Islamic legal thought embody the duality of first stating categorical imperatives, and then appending acceptable modes of exemption to those imperatives.

This duality appears, for example, in Islamic legal maxims: duress, insanity, necessity, and (human) impossibility all provide legitimate exemptions from Islamic legal obligations. Classical formulation of Islamic law established rules for limiting the general (*ʿāmm*), and categorical (*mutlaq*) injunctions to peculiar or particular cases. Certain injunctions are applicable only in specific (*khāṣṣ*), or contingent (*muqayyad*) cases. Still other rules of Islamic law, especially on contractual and transactional cases, are conceived of as situational (*aḥkām al-waḍaʿ*), and are applicable only when a contract or a transaction occurs. This category of rules is contingent on cause (*sabab*), condition (*shart*) and absence of barriers (*māniʿ*). Similarly, a *raison d'être* (*illa*) is believed to inform the rules of Islamic law, and should the *raison d'être* for any rule cease, then that particular rule will cease to be binding. According to al-Shatibi's conception of *maṣlaḥa* vis-à-vis the fundamental objectives of Islamic law towards protecting life, religion, property, sanity, and kinship, the applicability of the entire corpus of Islamic law is dependent on the preservation and promotion of these five objectives. Therefore, from the viewpoint of the Principles of Islamic Jurisprudence (*uṣūl al-fiqh*), rather than from the "codified" body of discrete rules (*fiqh*), there are many legal doctrines and stratagems that Muslims could invoke to respond to all the colonial challenges that confronted them.

Furthermore, no penal institutions are required for the enforcement of sanctions against infractions of many aspects of Islamic law. Some infractions are to be remedied by compensation, seeking the forgiveness of the Almighty, expurgation (*kaffāra*), or by rituals of purification. For example, requiring emirs to swear allegiance on the Qur'an to the non-Muslim Governor of Nigeria, or compelling an Islamic judge to administer the non-Islamic laws passed by the colonial administration, could be shown to be contrary to Qur'anic commandments.

However, the emir or the judge can seek the forgiveness of the Almighty, observe an expurgatory fast, cleanse himself ritually, or

even combine all of these responses, none of which was, or could have been, controlled by the colonial administration. Muslims can observe these "voluntary sanctions" not only in the legal arena, but also in resolving dilemmas arising from unavoidable but ethically or religiously troubling innovations of colonialism. Thus for example, a *mallam* might find it difficult or impossible not to follow the instruction of his emir to teach in colonial schools or to work with a Resident who "requested" the services of a *mallam*. If such a *mallam* found such undertakings religiously troubling but unavoidable because of the intervention of the emir, then expurgation and seeking the forgiveness of the Almighty were two ways to ease the troubled conscience of the *mallam*. These are hypothetical examples; still, they lead to the obvious conclusion that Muslims' responses could be authorized within different sets of Islamic ideas. Therefore, the interesting questions addressed in the following chapters are: which group of Muslims made what responses? For what reasons? What Islamic ideas justify what responses?

I sought answers to these questions from different sources. First, I reconstruct and analyze colonial policies towards Islam via critical examination of relevant colonial records: official correspondence, administrative and annual reports, memoranda and policy guidelines, intelligence and special reports on various subjects, and personal papers and memoirs of colonial officers. The colonial records reflect clearly divergent policy orientations that I analyze under appropriation, containment, and surveillance, thus avoiding the fallacy of a single grand colonial policy to Islam.

Secondly, I outline and interpret Muslims' discourses on colonialism from treatises in Hausa and Arabic authored by Northern Nigerian Muslims, and preserved in manuscript collections in Nigeria: the National Archives in Kaduna; the Northern History Research Scheme at Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria; the Nigerian National Museum Library, Jos; the Center for the Study of Nigerian Languages at Bayero University, Kano; the Center for Islamic Studies at Usmanu Danfodiyo University (formerly the University of Sokoto); and the Sokoto State History Bureau. I obtained some of the treatises from private collections in Bauchi, Katsina, Kano, and Sokoto; and a few others from the Arabic Collection of the Melville J. Herskovits Library of African Studies, Northwestern University Library, Evanston, Illinois (USA). These treatises also reveal considerable variation: some are in prose while others are in verse; and whereas some address explic-

itly the question of what should be Muslims' responses to colonialism, many others refer to colonialism only allegorically or allusively. Muslims' writings on colonialism articulate different arguments within the various modes of Islamic discourse, ranging from legal argumentation, scriptural quotations with exegesis, and historical interpretation, to theological, ethical and moral styles of reasoning. In addition, Hausa and Arabic poems introduce different sets of literary composition. And whereas some of the manuscripts bear both the name of their authors and date of their composition, others are anonymous and undated. Clearly, analyzing these treatises calls for more than a superficial acquaintance with Islamic epistemes.

Third, I also consult Hausa songs and musical compositions obtained from the Oral Documentation Unit of the Department of Nigerian Languages at Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, and also from the Federal Radio Corporation of Nigeria, Kaduna. Similar materials came from the Kaduna State Broadcasting Corporation, the Kano State History and Culture Bureau, and the Kano State Radio Corporation. Additional materials of this kind came from private collections of individuals. These materials have not been used in previous studies, and were quite important in revealing the Hausa notions (as distinctly different from strictly Islamic ideas) that formed a significant part of Muslims' responses to colonialism.

Fourth, I find literary compositions by western educated Muslims as another important source. These compositions resulted from a 1932 Hausa essay competition, and are generally regarded as the first set of modern novels written in the Hausa language. Previous interpretations focused on literary features and structures, except for a few attempts to analyze their treatment of colonialism. I push the few attempts further by interpreting the novels as discourses on colonialism that shed light on the responses of the western educated Muslims towards British colonialism in Northern Nigeria.

Finally, I use oral materials collected in the course of field interviews in Zaria, Bauchi, Kano, Kaduna, and Sokoto. I recorded on audio-cassettes all the [unstructured] interviews by asking the interviewees to narrate what they knew about Muslims' responses to British colonialism, and then following with more specific questions on what ideas informed Muslims' responses to the military, political, legal, and educational challenges of colonialism. Most of the interviews lasted from one to three hours, but some continued over a couple of days. Some of the interviewees provided manuscripts of

the Arabic and Hausa treatises from personal collections, and also helped with the reading and interpretation of the treatises. As will be apparent in the following pages, I used sparingly the materials from my field interviews, for methodological reasons.

These different sets of sources call for a methodology that recognizes the discrete nature of each source. Accordingly, I adopt an episodic approach that examines the different sets of sources in a series of case-studies reconstructing Muslims' discourses on colonialism. For example, legal treatises are analyzed within the framework of the "Principles of Islamic Jurisprudence" highlighting the discursive features of the doctrines invoked to support different positions, as well as the various stratagems with which the legal discourses advocated divergent responses to colonialism. Each discourse is evaluated in terms of the normative imperatives that the discourse sets forth for Muslims, thereby illuminating the complexity of Muslims' intellectual responses to colonialism.

In contrast to the legal discourses, the Hausa and Arabic poems on colonialism call for literary interpretation, the same approach that I apply to the Hausa novels on which I based the examination of western educated Muslims' responses to colonialism. I focus on the articulation of arguments in literary techniques and devices to tease out the responses to colonialism advocated in each piece, and evaluate the effectiveness of each composition's appeal to Muslims. But, unlike the doctrines and stratagems supporting the legal discourses, the literary compositions invoke other Islamic tenets and Hausa ideas and sentiments. The identification and analysis of these Islamic tenets and Hausa notions expand our understanding of the modes of thought through which Muslims authorized multiple responses to colonialism.

These written texts are treated as reflecting the perspectives of their authors during the period under examination, 1900s–1940s. Hence, I utilize the oral materials I collected during field interviews in 1992–1994 only for identifying the social constituencies of the authors who wrote on colonialism during the period studied. I identify the historical circumstances under which those authors wrote as important considerations for appreciating the responses they advocate toward colonialism. Emirs, *ʿulama*, and western educated elite are the three groups whose voices appear in this study. In note and account for similarities and differences within, and among them in terms of the relationships that link and separate their respective responses to the various challenges of colonialism.

The same consideration dictated also that colonial records should not be treated as sources for Muslims' intellectual responses to colonialism. In general, I have analyzed colonial records to reconstruct colonial policies towards Islam only. However, where colonial records incorporate written submissions by Muslims, I examine the submissions, and incorporate them into analyses of Muslims' discourses on colonialism. This has been mainly in the reconstruction of Muslims' responses to the British colonial appropriation and containment of Islamic law, a fact highlighted in the relevant portions of the study. The discrete sources for this book dictate both the issues studied and the methodology of case-study adopted. The overall picture that emerges is a mosaic of multiple discourses authorizing divergent responses. This is consistent with the argumentations elaborated in the following chapters.

Chapter One departs from previous understandings of the interactions between British colonialism and Islam in Northern Nigeria. Rather than the usual portrayals of the British supporting the spread of Islam, or destroying Islamic institutions, the chapter demonstrates how the British appropriated the Islamic institutions of the emirates, and the Muslims who ran those institutions. The British retained aspects of Islamic law judged to be repugnant to British notions of justice, equity, and humanity, while also maintaining constant surveillance on some of the 'ulama whom the British suspected might lead Islamic opposition to colonial rule. The chapter analyzes the challenges to Muslims from British colonial policies with specific references to military, political, legal, and educational domains.

Chapter Two identifies four Muslim responses to the challenges of British military superiority. First, Islamic legal arguments invoke *hijra* to support avoidance of armed confrontation with the British. Popular support for the *hijra* of Sultan Adcfahiru I was mobilized through a Hausa poem that conceptualizes the British as Christians, and appeals to Muslim historical consciousness of armed confrontation with Christians. Second, employment of Islamic legal doctrines of *maṣlaḥa*, *muwālāt*, and *ṣulḥ* authorized submission to the British army of conquest through the argument that it would be self-destructive for Muslims to continue the armed resistance against British superior military might. Third, *shahāda* (martyrdom) and Hausa notions of bravery in warfare form the bases of arguments for armed confrontation with the British. However, after the British decisively defeated the uprisings in Satiru, Hafejia and Bauchi in 1906, Muslims

abandoned armed resistance against the British. Finally, Muslims sought to ally with the British in order to take advantage of British military superiority against their own erstwhile enemies. The chapter illustrates the intellectual articulation of alliance with the British, through Kebbi royal songs, that welcome the British conquest of the Sokoto for ending the threat Sokoto had posed to Kebbi throughout the nineteenth-century.

Chapter Three takes on Muslims' responses to the political challenges of British colonialism on a spectrum ranging from opposition on one end, to acceptance on the other end. Through his Hausa poems, Emir of Zazzau Aliyu ɗan Sidi constructs allegorical discourses revealing his opposition to colonialism that led to his deposition. His poems employ the imagery of predator-prey relationship to symbolize the irreversibility of the natural order of things, including the social conventions that British colonialism had overturned. Emir Aliyu ɗan Sidi rails against colonial innovations in terms of Islamic moral discourses against the fickleness of the material world. On the other end of the spectrum, we see Emir of Katsina, Muhammadu Dikko, completely at home in the colonial order. His strategy was to domesticate colonialism by receiving colonial innovations, and assigning Islam and colonialism into different compartments. In contrast to the deposition of Emir Aliyu ɗan an Sidi, Emir Dikko was knighted with colonial medals that honored his acceptance of British colonial rule. The Islamic basis of Dikko's strategy is the prophetic tradition urging Muslims to prepare for their salvation in the Hereafter as if they are dying tomorrow, and to seek the betterment of life on earth as if they are going to live for ever. Abu Bakr b. *Qāḍī* Ahmad b. Sa'īd argues for the middle ground between Aliyu ɗan Sidi's opposition to, and Muhammadu Dikko's acceptance of, colonial rule by constructing a legal discourse based on Islamic doctrines, including *darūra* (necessity), *taqīyya* (dissimulation), *'azīma/rukhsa* (categorical/concessionary rules), *tashdīd/takhfīf* (hardline/softline), *muwālāt* (friendship), and *maṣlaḥa* (interest). This legal discourse authorizes the middle ground of Muslims' acquiescence under British colonial rule, and is consistent with the passive resistance by the majority of emirs towards British colonialism.

The concern with the Islamic legitimacy of emirs' position under colonial rule shows relations of power to be the dominant issue in the emirs' discourses on colonialism. In contrast, Chapter Four argues that moral and religious issues are the chief preoccupation in the

discourses of the ‘ulama on colonialism, but without totally neglecting the power imbalance that undergirded colonialism. The ‘ulama who did not work for the colonial regime construct discourses openly critical of colonialism as a threat to the moral and religious fabric of Muslim communities, while the ‘ulama who worked under the British are equally critical of colonialism—albeit not openly so. Instead of the British appropriation and containment of Islamic doctrines of *maẓālim* (public complaint) and *siyāsa* (executive prerogative) to support colonial containment of Islam, Muslims relied chiefly on the doctrines of *ḍarūra* and *taḥiyya*, arguing that the power imbalance undergirding colonialism made it necessary for Muslims to conceal their opposition to colonialism, while outwardly acquiescing under British indirect colonial rule. Given their conception of colonialism as morally deficient, the ‘ulama did not confer Islamic authority on the colonial regime.

The moral deficiency of colonialism is the linkage between the discourses of the emirs and the ulama to the discourses of western educated Muslims. Chapter Five interprets fictional compositions by three western educated Muslim authors as critical reproductions of Lugardian colonialist discourses on Northern Nigeria. The Lugardian discourses proclaimed the ideological basis for colonialism by appropriating the negative portrayals of pre-colonial Northern Nigeria within the nineteenth-century European discourses on Africa as the “dark continent.” Bello Kagara’s *Gandoki* reproduces the Lugardian image of a Northern Nigeria “misruled by the fanatic Fulani race,” whose slave-raiding devastated the country and depopulated pagan communities. But by its portrayal of Islamic triumph over British colonialism, *Gandoki* also subverts the ideological deployment of the Lugardian image of Northern Nigeria. Abubakar Tafawa Balewa’s *Shehu Umar* also reproduces an important aspect of the Lugardian discourses: the horrors of slavery in pre-colonial Northern Nigeria. However, the powerful indictment against slavery in *Shehu Umar* makes the gradualism of Lugard’s abolition policies appear morally inadequate, and thus *Shehu Umar* engages critically an important flank in Lugard’s ideological offensive against the Sokoto Caliphate. Finally, Abubakar Imam’s *Ruwan Bagaja* reveals colonialism as peripheral to the traditional life of Muslims, thereby re-echoing a claim of the Lugardian discourses that British indirect rule preserved the (good) institutions of pre-colonial Northern Nigeria. But *Ruwan Bagaja* also attacks the colonial racism that Lugardian discourses articulated in

the doctrine of a hierarchy of races with the Anglo-Saxons at the top, the Fulani in the middle, and the pagans at the bottom. Thus in reproducing the Lugardian colonialist discourses that formed the ideological basis of British colonial rule, western educated Muslims engaged critically the Lugardian discourses, and subverted the ideology of the colonial regime. Chapter Six concludes the study with comparisons with other studies on responses to colonialism, and by also highlighting areas of further research.

CHAPTER ONE

THE CHALLENGES OF BRITISH COLONIALISM

The military superiority of the British colonial army of conquest is the single most important challenge that confronted Muslims. It provoked a major debate among Muslims at the onset of colonial rule, and remained as the subtext even when apparently not the subject of debate in Muslims' intellectual responses to colonialism. Tracing the military background to the imposition of British colonialism in order to understand Muslims' intellectual responses, this chapter argues that British colonial policies towards Islam are better conceptualized in three broad orientations: appropriation, containment, and surveillance. It further argues that in firmly pursuing these policies, the British introduced changes that posed partial challenges to Muslims, which unfolded gradually over the colonial period. Thus no Muslim response should be expected in areas not challenged by partial changes, and it was not until the *zamanin siyasa* (the 'era of politics' from about 1945, the end of the period covered in this book) that Muslims' responses reflect the full impact of the gradual challenges that have cumulated over the previous four decades. Because of the power disparity between the colonizer and colonized, Muslims had limited options in responding to changes on which the British were firm. These contentions will be elaborated with specific references to the challenges of British colonialism in four domains: military, politics, Islamic law, and western education. Focus on these domains, based on available evidence, most clearly reflects the centrality of the colonial challenges that confronted Muslims in Northern Nigeria.

The Military Challenges of Colonialism

British presence in the Muslim areas of present day Northern Nigeria can be traced from March 17, 1824, when Sultan of Sokoto, Muhammad Bello (d. 1837) received Captain Hugh Clapperton, who began the long presence of British interest in the area. This interest was

continued by the Lander Brothers in the 1830s, Heinrich Barth in the early 1850s, and William B. Baikie, who in the 1860s established a settlement at the confluence of the Niger and Benue rivers. From this settlement at Lokoja, Baikie established contact with the Emir of Bida, in the southern parts of the Sokoto caliphate, and his visit to Kano in 1862 demonstrated the viability of direct trade relations with the emirates of the Sokoto caliphate by eliminating the Brass merchants who profited as middlemen between the emirates and the European trading posts on the Atlantic coast.¹ From the 1860s henceforth, the Niger basin, and West Africa as a whole, became increasingly the scene of struggle for supremacy among the French, the Germans, and the British. During this struggle, British diplomacy in the region was closely tied to an imperial design for developing stable sources of raw materials, especially palm oil for British industries.² The pursuit of this design drew the British to the so-called legitimate trade in produce in place of the slave trade, which was no longer profitable to British capitalism. Shenton argued that "the transition from the trade in slaves to the trade in agricultural produce would not have been possible without the rise of industrial capitalism in Western Europe and, in particular, in Britain."³ The connections between slavery and European imperialism in West Africa have for long been extremely contentious, as reflected in the continuing controversies in the vast literature on these themes. Similarly, the connections between "legitimate trade" and European imperialism on the one hand, and on the other, the European conquest of West Africa and the subsequent imposition of colonialism, have all been extensively discussed in the secondary literature.⁴ These issues will be further examined in Chapter Six of this book, in relation to responses of western educated Muslims to colonialism. Here, it is enough to sketch out some of the major events that led to the conquest of the Sokoto Caliphate and posed military challenges to Muslims.

¹ W.B. Baikie, "Notes of a Journey from Bida in Nupe, to Kano in Haussa, performed in 1862," *Journal of the Royal Geographical Society*, 33 (1867), 92-109.

² J.E. Flint (1984).

³ R. Shenton (1986), 13 ff.

⁴ For example, see: Anstey (1968); Hopkins (1968); Ajayi and Austen (1972); Nzemeke (1982); Law (1983), 101-104; Falola (1987); A. Phillips (1989); Henderson (1993); Cain and Hopkins (1993) vols. 1-2. For the older literature see the bibliographic essays in J.D. Fage and Roland Oliver (1985), 767 ff.

The trade in produce that came to replace the slave trade was initially characterized by cut-throat competition, leading to a “Hobbesian economic warfare pitting transport capital against industrial capital, and British capital against African merchant capital, as well as British and other European merchants against each other.”⁵ This economic warfare threatened British attempts to secure raw materials with imminent collapse, having failed to redirect African farmers to produce commodities for European markets and industries.⁶ It was against this background that George Taubman Goldie replaced chaotic competition with monopoly trade, by merging the various trading firms into the United Africa Company in 1879, renamed the National Africa Company in 1882, and later the Royal Niger Company (RNC) under a royal charter in 1886. Thus during the last decades of the nineteenth century Goldie created the political front through which he would eventually pressurize the British towards the military conquest of the Sokoto caliphate at the turn of the twentieth century.⁷ It was also under the RNC that the leading personality in British colonialism in Nigeria, Captain (later Lord) Frederick John Dealtry Lugard (1858–1945), first appeared on the scene. His contract with the RNC was signed on 24 July 1894, and his first assignment was to check French advance into West Africa in order “to enable the fullest claims to be made for British rights and proper limits to be set to the pretensions of France . . .”⁸ As events unfolded, making the fullest claims for British rights entailed aggression against Sokoto by the Constabulary of the RNC. Two southern emirates were the first to fall, Bida in January 1897, and Ilorin a month later. Thus began partially Muslims’ experience of the military challenge of British colonialism, and the full extent of the challenge was brought home to Muslims gradually over the next six years. Following the RNC’s campaigns against Bida and Ilorin, the British discovered later that the RNC was in no position to effectively check the French; consequently, its royal charter was revoked in June 1899. Muslims constructed diverse discourses authorizing different responses to the changing presence of Europeans from individual travelers, explorers,

⁵ Shenton (1986), 15.

⁶ Flint (1984), 401.

⁷ Dugate (1985), 21.

⁸ M. Perham and M. Bull (1963), 58–59.

and traders to military conquerors. In this book explicit comparisons between these nineteenth-century discourses and those constructed under the colonial rule in the twentieth century will be examined.

The RNC's Constabulary was amalgamated with other British military formations in West Africa to form the West African Frontier Force (WAFF). On January 1, 1900, the Commander of the WAFF, Colonel Frederick Lugard, proclaimed the establishment of the Protectorate of Northern Nigeria, with himself as High Commissioner.⁹ The areas comprising the Protectorate, though not yet fully conquered when initially proclaimed, included the territories of the Sokoto caliphate, but excluding the greater part of the Adamawa emirate in the south-east, which went to the Germans. The northern part of Katsina emirate went to the French, as well as substantial territories in the north-west of Sokoto. Borno was also partitioned between the French, who took Borno territories to the east of Lake Chad, and the British who took the areas to the west. In addition, a number of independent and mostly non-Muslim communities in the Niger-Benue region were also incorporated into the declared Protectorate. However, it took three more years of military campaigns before the British conquest of the Sokoto caliphate was completed, when the Sultan of Sokoto, Muhammadu Ad'fahiru I (r. 1902–1903) was killed by British forces in the Battle of Burmi in July of 1903.¹⁰ The piecemeal conquest of the Sokoto caliphate, and its duration over six years (1897–1903), demonstrate clearly both the partial and gradual ways in which Muslims of Northern Nigeria experienced the military challenges of British colonialism.

The firmness of the challenge resulted from the overwhelming superiority of British fire-power, which left an indelible impression on Muslims. The British took maximum advantage of that superiority in order to compensate being outnumbered by the large Muslim armies. Frederick Lugard wanted military superiority to be unambiguously understood as the basis of colonial rule. In his first public address in Sokoto following his conquest of the town on March 20,

⁹ Frederick J.D. Lugard, *Collected Annual Reports for Northern Nigeria 1900–11*, 157.

¹⁰ Apart from Dugate, other studies of the military conquest of Northern Nigeria include: J.E. Flint (1960); D.J.M. Muffet (1964), and (1978); M. Tukur, "The Imposition of British Colonialism on the Sokoto Caliphate, Borno, and Neighboring States, 1897–1914: a Reinterpretation of the Colonial Sources" (Ph.D. diss., Ahmadu Bello University, 1977); J.U.J. Asiegbu (1984); and G.N. Ubah (1994).

1903, Lugard nullified unilaterally all existing treaties with Sokoto, and claimed *right of conquest* as the basis of British colonial rule.¹¹ To secure Muslims' recognition of that basis, Lugard dealt ruthlessly with any attempt at armed rebellion by conducting punitive expeditions in ways that would also serve as deterrent against any armed insubordination to British colonial rule. As amply documented in the secondary literature, punitive expeditions were regularly conducted through the 1920s against many remote communities and villages that refused to accept British colonialism.¹² This was particularly the case among non-Muslim communities, who (mis)took the British conquest of the emirates that used to control them as a complete liberation not only from the emirates, but also from any foreign power including the British. Sometimes punitive expeditions were carried to salvage "British honor and prestige" when these were believed to be tarnished, or put in doubt by the impertinence of villagers, such as failure to provide for British troops on patrol, refusal to salute British officers, or to yield to their demands. For whatever reasons, punitive expeditions always brought devastation to the targeted communities, leading one historian to conclude that "memories of some military encounters with the British as invaders still exist in almost every Nigerian village or town today."¹³ But in the euphemism of official colonial records, punitive expeditions were meant to "pacify unsettled areas."

The classic example of punitive expedition was the one against Satiru. On February 13, 1906, the Acting Resident of Sokoto, Mr. Hillary, led British forces to arrest the head of Satiru village, Mallam Isa, who was said to have declared himself a Mahdi. An ambush by the Satiru villagers repulsed the British forces, killing 27 soldiers and three British officers, including the Acting Resident. A second attempt to subdue Satiru was unsuccessful, though Mallam Isa was killed. He was afterward replaced by Mallam Dan Makaho as the new leader of Satiru. When Lugard was notified of these developments, he immediately alerted every British military formation in the Protectorate, and upon his request, Lagos sent 250 troops for reinforcement. Within three weeks Lugard had assembled a force of 573

¹¹ Lugard, *Collected Annual Reports*, 164.

¹² For example, see: Johnson U.J. Asiegbu (1984), x, ff.

¹³ *Ibid.*, xiii.

rifles, 30 British officers, 70 policemen, and some 3000 men summoned by the principal war chiefs of Sokoto.¹⁴ The force was ready for action by early March of 1906, and on the 10th Satiru was attacked and destroyed, and the rebels were practically exterminated.¹⁵ Mallam Dan Makaho and five others were captured and executed after a speedy trial for rebellion by the Sokoto Native Court. The village of Satiru was razed to the ground and a curse on the site and on any one who ever tried to settle there was pronounced by the Sultan of Sokoto, Muhammad Adfahiru II. He was afterward given an honorary C.M.G. for his loyalty to the British during the rebellion, while the Emir of Gwandu, Muhammad dan Aliyu (r. 1903–1906) was deposed for his uncooperative attitude.¹⁶

Reporting on the outcome of the expedition against Satiru, the Resident of Sokoto, Maj. J.A. Burdon, noted that “the evidence of slaughter has made a tremendous impression and English prestige is now higher than before.”¹⁷ Lugard also noted that the Satiru revolt “demanded a signal and overwhelming victory for the restoration of our prestige, and the prevention of any such rising in the future.”¹⁸ Colonial authorities proclaimed superior military force as the basis of British prestige and political supremacy. Thus although the military challenge of British colonialism came to Muslims partially and gradually, it was nonetheless firmly impressed on them that the British had the clear advantage of brute force. Clearly, this point is relevant to understanding Muslims’ responses to colonialism. But also relevant were the political limitations of British military superiority.

Despite their clear military superiority, the British did not have the resources or the personnel totally to dispose of the institutions of the Sokoto caliphate or replace the Muslims who ran those institutions. There were never enough British personnel for the large populations and expansive territories of Northern Nigeria throughout the colonial period, but particularly at the early stages when less than a hundred British officers and men had to administer an area

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, xiii.

¹⁵ Lugard, *Collected Annual Reports*, 368.

¹⁶ Arnett (1920), 47.

¹⁷ Dugate (1985), 252.

¹⁸ F. Lugard, *Annual Report*, 369. For further details, see: A.S. Mohammed, “A Social Interpretation of the Satiru Revolt of c. 1894–2906 in Sokoto Province” (M.A. thesis, Ahmadu Bello University, 1983); and Paul E. Lovejoy and J.S. Hogendorn (1990).

of 276,034 square miles and a population estimated at 8.7 million.¹⁹ The British therefore decided to retain, but gradually modify, the institutions of the Sokoto Caliphate, including the shari'a courts and Qur'anic schools. Above all, the British decided not to prohibit *Islamic religious practices*. For the British, failure to win the rulers of the Sokoto Caliphate would leave the British with no option but to rely on their superior military force, which if they had to use it, they must deploy it maximally to compensate for the disadvantage of being outnumbered. But the use of maximum force has its own limitations, hence, the need to use force sparingly. For Muslim rulers, repeated confrontation with the British had only yielded defeat, while submitting to the British meant remaining in office, if not necessarily retaining power. Thus it was to the advantage of both the British and emirs if the application of military force was avoided. Yet, military force was the only sure basis of British colonial rule, and also the only incentive for Muslim rulers to work under the non-Islamic political supremacy of British colonialism. This double paradox unfolds in the political challenges of colonialism that confronted Muslims.

*Indirect Rule and the Political Challenges of
British Colonialism*

As in the military domain, the political challenges of British colonialism were even more partial and gradual, but perhaps not as clear-cut as the military challenges. Right from the beginning, the RNC never directly imposed its own personnel to rule the areas it claimed under its royal charter. Even after the defeat of Bida, the RNC did not take direct control, but appointed the next claimant to the Bida throne, Muhammadu Makum. In Ilorin, where all the other chiefs were known hard-liners against it, the RNC had more reason for retaining its defeated opponent in office when he agreed to certain stipulations. Similarly, Lugard retained in office any defeated emir willing to accept his conditions, while any unwilling emir was simply deposed. This was consistent with Lugard's overall strategy of avoiding any coordinated resistance by all the emirates at once.

¹⁹ Lugard, *Collected Annual Reports*, 413.

While detaching and subduing individual emirates, Lugard was at the same time acknowledging the overall authority of Sokoto over all the emirates. Thus after deposing the emirs of Kontagora in 1901, and Bauchi in 1902, Lugard had the "courtesy" to inform the yet unconquered Sultan of Sokoto why the depositions were "necessary."²⁰ He even sent the payment due to the Sultan according to the treaties between Sokoto and the RNC—though the Sultan refused to accept the payment—and Lugard also allowed the subdued emirates to send their traditional annual tribute to Sokoto.

Lugard assured his appointed emirs that he would be guided by the usual local rules if such rules were acceptable to him. However, the emirs would now have to obey and carry out the laws of his own administration in accordance with the "advice" of a Resident as his political officer in each local area. Local administration of justice and appointment to local political offices would continue subject to certain restrictions. But the right to land, mineral resources, taxation and monetary exchange, firearms, and "other minor matters" would no longer be under the control of emirs. In addition, a military garrison was stationed in the emirates, a necessary precaution since the ultimate basis of Lugard's administration was the right of conquest.²¹ This arrangement had the backing of the Colonial Office which congratulated Lugard for politically departing as little as possible from the status quo, adding that Britain's only difficulties were with "individual rulers, and not with the native tribes or peoples as such."²² Thus began the famous indirect rule, through which the British ruled Northern Nigeria until independence in 1960, as a "response to local circumstances before it became the basis of colonial dogma."²³ Margery Perham described the metamorphosis of indirect rule thus:

The words "indirect rule" have been generally connected with the method by which this expedient was consciously developed by Lord Lugard into a constructive system of government for Northern Nigeria. The system spread to the Southern Provinces, and since then, either by deliberate adoption, or by the less conscious acceptance of methods which in recent years [i.e. before 1937] have been widely dis-

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 157–8.

²¹ *Ibid.*, *loc. cit.*

²² Asiegbu (1984), 217.

²³ J.D. Hargreaves (1985), 285.

cussed and appreciated, its influence has been extended to other parts of British Africa.²⁴

Obviously, this long imperial career of indirect rule is beyond the scope of our current focus. There is no need to even be entangled in the arguments for and against the policy right from the beginning, nor in the many later controversies regarding the degrees of directness or indirectness of British rule in Northern Nigeria.²⁵ It suffices for the argument here to point out that the retention of Muslim rulers in the British system of indirect rule clearly illustrates not only the colonial appropriation of emirate institutions and personnel, but also the partial character of the political challenges of colonialism that confronted Muslims in Northern Nigeria. The gradual nature of the political challenges appears in the subsequent proclamations that specified the "other minor matters" that Lugard mentioned in his first enunciation of indirect rule.

This gradualism has often been seen as British support for Islam. It is often asserted that British patronage encouraged the wide and rapid spread of Islam during the colonial period.²⁶ Others claim that the British actually stifled the growth of Islam in many ways, but especially in educational and legal domains.²⁷ Both arguments are valid to some extent, but neither grasps fully the complexities of British colonial policies towards Islam in Northern Nigeria. I propose new conceptualization of British colonial interactions with Islam in Northern Nigeria. Although British policies towards Islamic issues varied considerably, three broad policy orientations remained fairly constant. In characterizing these policy orientations as *appropriation*, *containment*, and *surveillance*, I will also highlight how the partial and

²⁴ Margery Perham (1937), 345–46.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 345–63. See also Lugard, *Political Memoranda*, 296–97; Margery Perham (1934); Michael Crowder (1978), 198–208; and J.B. Webster and A.A. Boahen (1980).

²⁶ For example, see: Michael Crowder (1968), 23–44, 356–71 *et passim*; Peter B. Clarke and Ian Linden (1984), 11–18; and C.N. Ubah (1991). For a contrast with the spread of Islam in West African French colonies, see: Stephen A. Harmon, "The Expansion of Islam Among the Bambara under French Rule: 1890–1940" (Ph.D. diss., University of California, Los Angeles, 1988).

²⁷ For example, see: H.O. Danmole (1984); Abdulmalik B. Mahmud (1988); Gwarzo (1988); Sambo Junaid (1990), 238–52; and Auwwalu H. Yadudu (1991).

gradual but firm characteristics of British policies created contradictions that influenced the Muslims' discourses on the political challenges of British colonialism.

British Colonial Appropriation of Islam

By the colonial appropriation of Islam, I am referring to the ways in which British colonial authorities took ownership of Islam, and assigned Islam to the specific task of controlling Muslims as colonial subjects. It is this appropriation that has hitherto been regarded as British patronage for Islam. As they took ownership of Islam and assigned to it the important task of control it was necessary for the British to protect that ownership, and to promote Islam to the extent necessary for the efficient control of Muslims, hence lending credence to the theory of British support for Islam. This theory, however, is inadequate, as may be seen in the following illustrations.

As he began to consolidate his administration, Lugard faced enormous difficulties of ruling the diverse communities of Northern Nigeria with all the notable differences in their political traditions, histories, ethnicities, languages, religions, and cultures. The easiest way to start was for Lugard to appropriate the administrative structures of the Sokoto caliphate, the largest political entity in the area, built on the ancient Hausa states influenced by Islam for many centuries before the Islamic revolution of Uthman b. Fodiye's jihad at the turn of the nineteenth-century charged them with more Islamic ideological consciousness. Under the new designation of emirates, the Hausa states served as the model for the political and administrative organization of the Sokoto caliphate as it expanded beyond the Hausa region to incorporate other ethnic groups in the Niger-Benue basin. Apart from their ancient roots, the Hausa states-cum-emirates had two additional features that recommended them to Lugard. First feature was their aristocratic political culture, complete with a functioning taxation system, title-holders in charge of fiefdoms, a clear sense of loyalty to hierarchy, Arabic literacy, and a judicial system based on Islamic Law. The second feature was the potential of the political culture of the Hausa states for the effective administration of extensive areas and diverse communities. Lugard alluded to this potential when he regretted "the annihilation of a central and long established system of rule . . . until a better had been provided to

replace it.”²⁸ Otherwise, he feared that the result would be anarchy among the heterogeneous communities that made up the Sokoto caliphate. It was therefore not surprising that Lugard took over the emirates, along with their aristocratic culture, to fashion the political infrastructure of his administration. The appropriation of the emirates into the British system of indirect rule could not obviously be accomplished within a short period. As demonstrated in numerous studies, the appropriation was the major preoccupation of the British colonial administration within its first decade in Northern Nigeria.²⁹ It is arguable that the appropriation processes continued until independence, thus clearly underscoring the gradual nature of the political challenges that confronted Muslims under British colonialism. As that process unfolded, the British also appropriated other aspects of Islam in addition to the emirates.

Among other aspects, the British appropriated Islamic sentiments and symbols to bolster Muslims' loyalty to colonial policies and programs. This appropriation took the form of celebrating “the Islamic credentials” of the British Empire in the often repeated declarations by colonial officials that the British monarch had as many, if not more, Muslim subjects than the Ottoman Sultan, and that the British were friendly to Muslims in India. In particular, the theme of British friendship toward Muslims, first introduced into Northern Nigeria by Hugh Clapperton in the course of his conversations with Sultan Muhammad Bello in 1822,³⁰ remained recurrent in many colonial official pronouncements. For example, in the early 1930s, there was a project in Northern Nigeria designed specifically for the “collection of information calculated to promote British prestige in Moslem countries.”³¹ Under this project, propaganda materials were to be collected on items such as “news as the opening of a new mosque at Kano or Sokoto, or the issuance by a well known Emir of some

²⁸ Asiegbu (1984), 196.

²⁹ For further details, see: R.W. Hull, “The Development of Administration in Katsina Emirate, Northern Nigeria, 1887–1944” (Ph.D. diss., University of Columbia, 1968); Peter K. Tibenderana, “The Administration of Sokoto, Gwandu and Argungu Emirates under British Rule, 1900–1946” (Ph.D. diss., University of Ibadan, 1972); Adamu M. Fika (1977); and C.N. Ubah (1985).

³⁰ Denham and Clapperton (1828), ii, 292.

³¹ “From Chief Secretary of the Government to the Honorable, the Secretary, Northern Provinces, Kaduna,” 28 August 1937, File No 29096: Propaganda in Moslem Countries, Arewa House, Kaduna, 1.

proclamation specially affecting the health and welfare of Muslims . . . [T]he health of the Sultan, any special incidents at the *id*, important economic, educational or health developments or crises being dealt with by the Native Authorities, all these are of interest in this connection."³² This project was reorganized during the Second World War in response to a dispatch from the Secretary of State indicating that:

Early production by Ministry of illustrated booklets [addressed to ?] Moslem communities including those in tropical Africa is contemplated. Object is to show Britain's good record amongst Moslem peoples in matter of social welfare education health economic and industrial development etc. and to counter repeated Axis allegations of imperialistic selfishness and disregard of native interests. Grateful for suggestions as to general or particular lines for your area and for air-mailing of any helpful material through Colonial Office.³³

The colonial administration in Nigeria drew up a special format highlighting eight themes to guide the collection of propaganda materials for publicizing the Islamic credentials of the British Empire. Among the themes were: "Religious tolerance and technical assistance in building mosques etc.; declaration of intention not to interfere with Moslem religion; encouragement of Africans to take leading part in administration of their own affairs, i.e. support of Emirs in the Northern Provinces, indirect as opposed to direct rule; consultation with Advisory Committee of Chiefs on new legislation affecting their administrations."³⁴ The actual way indirect rule worked, and the kind of consultation between Muslim rulers and the colonial administration will be discussed below. However, one important aspect of colonial appropriation of Islam needs to be highlighted here.

Islamic law was perhaps the most extensively appropriated aspect of Islam by the British. Beginning with the British take-over of shari'a

³² *Ibid.*, "From the Secretary, Northern Provinces to Residents Bornu, Kano, and Sokoto; Assistant Director of Education, Kaduna," 6 November 1937, 19-20.

³³ *Ibid.*, "Secret Telegram No 791 of 23rd August 1941," 58. [Punctuation as in the original]

³⁴ *Ibid.*, "From Secretary Northern Provinces to the Honorable, the Chief Secretary to the Government, Lagos," 2 September 1941, 59. For a specimen of how this propaganda appeared in print, see the article by a Special Contributor, "The Moslem Areas of Northern Nigeria under British Rule," *Nigeria: A Quarterly Magazine of General Interest*, 22 (1944), 31-41.

courts via *Native Courts Proclamation* of 1900, taking advantage of Islamic law to support British indirect rule remained a prominent strategy through the end of colonial rule. A telling example here is enough to define the contours of British appropriations of Islamic law, examination of which will continue in this chapter. In 1925, the British sought and obtained a *fatwa* from Islamic judges in Mecca, with which to refute claimants to being the expected Mahdi. M. Ihsanullah, a Muslim from India, working as a clerk in the British Consulate in Jeddah, obtained the *fatwa* for G.J. Lethem, a colonial officer in Nigeria. Lethem surveyed Egypt, Sudan and the Hijaz in 1924 to make "exhaustive enquiries" on the Muslims from Nigeria who were visiting or residing in these countries, and to report on their actual or potential subversive activities. The questions for the *fatwa* were phrased in a very interesting way:

What do you, the ulema of the Holy Place of Mecca, say about the person or persons appearing in India and elsewhere who claim to be the expected Mahdi? Is their claim justified and acceptable or are they deceivers and false prophets? If they are false prophets and deceivers, please give the reasons why, and also state what punishment may be inflicted upon them and their followers according to the *Shari'a*.³⁵

The most interesting question is the one on what punishment could be inflicted on Mahdist claimants. This underscores explicitly the British purpose of asking for the *fatwa*: to appropriate a powerful instrument for the colonial control of Muslims. The question of whether a Mahdist claimant is a false prophet could only be answered in the negative by any Islamic judge: given that the belief in Prophet Muhammad as the seal of prophets is a cardinal doctrine in the Islamic creed, so it follows logically that any Mahdist claim to prophethood is false. Indeed, it turns out that Shaykh Muhammad Habib Allah al-Shinqiti, the preacher of the Two Holy Cities who wrote the principal opinion, had in fact already authored a book in which he said he had "fully proven all such who claim to be the expected Mahdi or Isa to be liars and deceivers, both by the traditions [of the Prophet Muhammad] and the verses [of the Qur'an]".³⁶ He therefore referred to the views he had already expressed, adding that

³⁵ G.J.F. Tomlison and G.J. Lethem (1927), 51. The mention of India suggests that the British were also pursuing similar policy of appropriating Islamic law for controlling Muslim agitation in India.

“there is no need to add anything to my pamphlet in order to prove such [Mahdist] claims false.”³⁷ On the punishment to be inflicted, Shaykh al-Shinqīṭi quoted legal authorities, including Khalīl b. Ishaq and Ibn Ruṣhd, to recommend discretionary punishment (*taʿzīr*). He further elaborated that if the Mahdist claimant and his followers declared other Muslims infidels, the punishment changes drastically:

By proclaiming as *kāfir* all Muslims who did not believe in him, they had committed *kufir*, and according to the *shariʿa* are themselves *kuffar*, and if this *takfir* is on account of them denying the *sunna*, then they must be killed if they do not repent, and if they deny it on account of the continued traditions, then their punishment is in the hands of the Imām.³⁸

The Hanafi *mufti* in Mecca, Muhammad Saʿīd Abu Khayr Mir Dad, the Chief Judge of the Shariʿa Court in Mecca, Muhammad al-Marzuqī b. Abd al-Rahman Abu Husayn, the Shafiʿi *mufti*, Umar b. Abu Bakr, and also the Maliki *mufti*, Husayn b. Muhammad ʿAbid, all concurred with Shaykh al-Shinqīṭi’s ruling. Therefore, Lethem thought that the *fatwa* he obtained would be “useful in Nigeria to persuade Emirs and leading mallams of the spuriousness of mahdist claims circulating in Nigeria,” adding that: “The fact that this personage [i.e. Shaykh al-Shinqīṭi, who wrote the principal opinion] is a West African in the widest sense, and that the *fatwa* is also confirmed by the Maliki *mufti*, should give it added weight to Nigerian [Muslims].”³⁹ Lethem recommended that the colonial administration in Nigeria should recruit a special agent to work at the British Consulate in Jeddah in the same way Ihsanullah was recruited, adding that such a special agent could provide useful intelligence on Nigerian residents and pilgrims in the Hijaz, including “Fulani irreconcilables, emigrants from Nigeria, and some members of an ignorant and narrow-minded priesthood who have been tools of such movements as the Pan-Islamism of a former day.”⁴⁰

British colonial appropriation of Islam could also be seen in the important area of taxation. In his instructions to political and admin-

³⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 52.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 47.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 60.

istrative officers on the system of taxation, Lugard commented on whether Islamic theory of taxation supported the income tax which he preferred to a general tax. He adopted a suggestion by Resident Gowers that "the general tax itself should be called the *haraji* [Hausa for the Arabic *kharāj*]." Because Resident Gowers had shown "by reference to high authorities that such an extension of the term to cover a general income tax is justifiable to a Moslem mind," Lugard directed that "in future, therefore, all separate pre-existing names of taxes will cease to be used, and in all [Moslem] districts Residents will collect only the general tax under the name of *haraji*. . . . In non-Moslem districts it might be called *Government tax*."⁴¹ As for the rate fixed at one-tenth of gross income, Lugard noted that: "This rate, which corresponds with the *zakka* [i.e. *zakāt*, alms as the third of the five pillars of Islam] has Koranic sanction and is not unduly high," adding that "Moslem custom indeed approves a tax up to 50 per cent. on 'unbelievers'."⁴² Despite this ingenious appropriation of Islamic terminology to designate colonial taxes, Lugard emphasized that the tax was "imposed by the Suzerain power by Ordinance, and must be paid by Christians, [Moslems], and Pagans alike, as in India, apart from religious sanction or the Koranic code."⁴³ He explained that naming the tax in Islamic words was simply because "it has been the policy in Nigeria to adapt the form of the tax as far as possible to that sanctioned by the Koran, and to impose it through the Moslem rulers, so as to enlist the prejudice and traditions of the people on its behalf, and to justify . . . enforcing it as in accord with their religion."⁴⁴

Clearly, this passage reveals that no matter how many aspects of Islam it appropriated, protected and patronized, British colonial administration in Northern Nigeria was not established to promote Islam, but the interests of the colonizing power. However, camouflaging colonial policies and programs with an Islamic veneer was a sure way to enhance their acceptability to Muslims. Yet, because British colonialism was not a project for promoting, or even preserving

⁴¹ Lugard, *Political Memoranda*, 191.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 212. It should be pointed out that there are various rates of *zakka* on different types of wealth, and that the one-tenth rate is applicable only on agricultural produce.

⁴³ Lugard, *Political Memoranda*, 191.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

Islam, aspects of Islam that were actually or potentially subversive to British colonialism had to be contained.

British Colonial Containment of Islam

British colonial containment of Islam was a policy on which there was an explicit directive from the British monarch, whose suzerain power Lugard invoked in the above quotation to impose taxes. In the first *Order in Council* proclaiming the Protectorate of Northern Nigeria, the "Queen's Most Excellent Majesty" commanded as follows:

In the exercise of the powers and authorities hereby conferred upon him, the Governor and Commander-in-Chief may . . . provide for the administration of justice, the raising of revenue . . . respect native laws by which the civil relations of any native chiefs, tribes, or populations under Her Majesty's protection are now regulated, *except so far as the same may be incompatible with the due exercise of Her Majesty's power and jurisdiction . . .* (added italics).⁴⁵

This imperial decree confers upon Lugard the colonial authority he invoked to impose taxes. He was also correctly applying this decree when he stressed that although Islamic terminology may be applied to colonial taxes, Islam was not the source of authority for colonial taxation. It is consistent with this decree to appropriate Islam, and to respect it as one of the native laws mentioned in the decree, but it would be contrary to the explicit orders of his sovereign for Lugard not to subordinate Islam to the colonial power. He correctly observes that despite the appropriation of Islam into the colonial order, it is important that British colonial administration in Northern Nigeria should preserve "the independence of those tribes who had maintained their liberty against the Moslem conquerors."⁴⁶ Lugard's analysis of this issue needs to be quoted in full:

It is not part of the policy of this protectorate to place these tribes forcibly under Moslem rule (which in practice means their conversion to the Moslem faith) even though that rule may be more advanced

⁴⁵ "Orders of the Sovereign in Council Relating to Northern Nigeria, at the Court at Windsor, the 27th Day of December, 1899," in Edwin A. Speed, ed. *Laws of the Protectorate of Northern Nigeria* (London: Stevens and Sons, 1910), 695.

⁴⁶ Lugard, *Political Memoranda*, 302.

and intelligent than anything they are as yet capable of evolving themselves. 'Good government is no equivalent for self-government,' and though the more direct British administration, which is temporarily necessary among these primitive tribes, is not self-government, its aim is to develop among them the same measure of self-government as is accorded to the Moslem States, to foster their own institutions and to refrain from turning them into Moslems by imposing Moslem rule upon them or even by the more insidious process of appointing [Moslems] as their Chiefs, or as Judges for their Courts, or teachers for their schools, while nominally allowing them independence.⁴⁷

Lugard is here explicitly instructing his subordinate political officers to contain Islam by avoiding administrative actions that could help the spread of Islam. It is significant that he emphasized that officers should avert even the unintended consequences of British colonial policies supporting the spread of Islam. Consistent with this policy, political officers in charge of the Provinces of Benue, Kabba, and Adamawa, where Muslims are a minority, were instructed to watch and report on the spread of Islam among the non-Muslim majorities of these three provinces. Through the 1930s, their reports indicated little expansion of Islam.⁴⁸ Clearly, these reports indicate that the containment of Islam was a policy that the British colonial authorities in Northern Nigeria sometimes actively pursued. Lugard's equivocation in the above quotation does not conceal the fact that British colonial administration never forgot that the reason for its existence was not to promote Islam, even as many of its policies had the unintended consequences of privileging Islamic institutions over those of non-Muslim communities.

The seeming contradiction of British appropriation and containment of Islam can be better understood in terms of Crawford Young's study of the colonial state in comparative perspective. Whereas the paucity of personnel and funds dictated the need to appropriate Islam in order to control Muslims and bolster their loyalty to the colonial administration, British policies of containing Islam were dictated by what Crawford Young termed the imperatives for the colonial state to maintain its hegemony and autonomy, in order to transform the single act of conquest into permanent domination. Hegemony means

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

⁴⁸ "Muslim Influences—Progress of in Adamawa, Benue, and Kabba Provinces," File No K 4178, Arewa House, Kaduna.

the capacity to ensure the supremacy of the colonial state, while autonomy means the capacity of the colonial state to act on its own terms without external intrusions or domestic constraints by the civil sectors of society. Young argued that "whether accomplished by diplomatic guile or military force, the assertion of European sovereignty was inherently precarious, and certain to dissolve unless the initial demonstration of superior power could congeal into enduring forms of dominance." It was therefore necessary for the colonial state not only to assert its hegemony and autonomy, but also to routinize both.⁴⁹ By this logic, any aspect of Islam that helps to routinize the hegemony and autonomy of the colonial state deserves to be appropriated, while any aspect of Islam that subverts either, or both the hegemony and autonomy of the colonial state had to be eliminated, or at least contained. Thus the contradictions of British colonial policies towards Islam should be understood not as evidence of British hatred or love of Islam, but as the outcome of pursuing the imperative for the colonial state to assert its hegemony and autonomy. Thus consistent with this reasoning, British policies of containment sometimes aimed not so much at eliminating aspects of Islam, but at ensuring that Islamic practices and doctrines were not employed to promote opposition to colonialism. This was the concern that informed British attitudes towards Mahdism, and also the Tijaniyya Sufi order. As British policies towards Mahdism have been widely studied,⁵⁰ I will focus here on the Tijaniyya to illustrate British containment of Islam.

During the early 1920s, intelligence reports indicated that a number of Tijani *zāwiya* were established in Zaria, and that *wazīfa* was being observed secretly. In February of 1924, the Resident of Zaria reported that Ma'aji Isiyaku, the Treasurer of the Zaria Native Authority, was a member of the Tijaniyya, and that he had invited a *sharf* visiting from the French colony of Soudan to secretly lead other Tijanis to perform their rituals in the Zaria Central Mosque. At the prompting of the British colonial authorities, the Emir of Zaria set up an "inquisition panel" composed of some *ulama*, the

⁴⁹ Crawford Young (1994), 147–9.

⁵⁰ For example, see: M.A. Al-Hajj, "The Mahdist Tradition in Northern Nigeria" (Ph.D. diss., Abdullahi Bayero College/Ahmadu Bello University, 1973); C.N. Uba (1976), 176–83.

Qāḍī and *Imām* of Zaria, to interrogate the Treasurer Isiyaku. He confessed that “the *wird* of Ahmadu Tijani” had never been observed in Zaria Central Mosque, and that he made a mistake by doing so without the prior permission of the Emir. After Ma’aji Isiyaku pledged not to repeat the offense, the Emir pardoned him, and informed him that he and other fellow Tijanis could perform the *wazīfa* in their private homes, but not in the Zaria Central Mosque. The Emir then informed the Resident of these steps he had taken. In turn, the Resident assured the Secretary of the Northern Provinces of Nigeria: “I have no hesitation in stating that while I consider no immediate danger need be anticipated from this movement, it nevertheless contains elements which it would be suicidal to neglect.”⁵¹ Here we have an explicit statement of the colonial fear of Islam that undergirded the British policies of containment towards Islamic practices and movements. It is also significant that Muslim rulers, whose tenure in office depended on British goodwill, played an important role in executing colonial policies of containing Islam.

Similarly, it was the same colonial fear of Islam that led the Resident of Kano to over-react in his attempt to contain the Tijaniyya. Mallam Muhammadu Salga (1871–1939) was one of the prominent Tijani leaders in Kano, and his disciples, the Salgawa, were chiefly associated with the Tijaniyya-Niassiyā in Kano. Mallam Mahmud Alhasan (1863–1943), known as Na-Mallam Salga on account of his close association with Mallam Salga, authored a versification of the teachings of Mallam Salga. The work, *Sabīl al-muhtadī*⁵² was a polemical tract on Islamic funeral rites, an issue on which there was a controversy in Kano during the 1920s.⁵³ The work was printed by the Kano Native Authority Printing Press, and as it gained wide circulation, it was mentioned in police intelligence reports as aggravating the tension arising from the controversy on funeral rites. Rather than “The Way of the Seeker for Guidance,” the title was mistranslated into Hausa as *Tafarkin Mai Shirīya* (The Way of the Guide). It was further mistranslated into English as *Commencement of the*

⁵¹ “From the Resident of Zaria to the Secretary Northern Provinces,” 16 February 1924, File No 15543: Pseudo Tijani Missionaries in Nigeria, Arewa House, Kaduna, 12 (2).

⁵² See *ALA* II, 268.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 256 ff.

*Preparation.*⁵⁴ This mistaken title alarmed British authorities to misconstrue a work on funeral rites as a clarion call for jihad, assuming that the work provided guidelines for burial of anticipated martyrs. Mallam Salga was placed under full scale surveillance, and as a result, his Tijaniyya affiliation attracted the attention of colonial authorities, leading to drastic measures of containment.

The Resident of Kano notified the Lieutenant Governor of Northern Nigeria that "a few words from me to Mallam Salga might have a salutary effect." He said he had come to this conclusion because Mallam Salga was "frequently mentioned in Intelligence Reports as the focus of possibly dangerous new ideas,"⁵⁵ and that he had hosted "sundry roving Sharifai" without informing the Emir of Kano. The Resident wrote further that: "Mallam Salga is, of course, the *Liman* (Hausa for Arabic: *imām*) of the Tijaniyya *zāwīya* established in 1925 under the auspices of the notorious Sharif Alowi (or Alamiyya) of Casablanca."⁵⁶ He noted that Mallam Salga was recognized by the Emir of Kano, and that most people, including the ruling class in Kano, favored the Tijaniyya. These considerations led the Resident of Kano to observe that there was "delicacy and difficulty in handling matters connected with this *zawīya* although, of course, it was well known that under the cloak of this . . . sect new and possibly dangerous ideas are included."⁵⁷

The way the Resident got around his "delicacy and difficulty" gives a telling illustration of the application of British policy of containing Islam. He summoned Mallam Salga and the other Kano *mallams*, and cowed them by alluding to the fact that political power was in the hand of the British. He reminded them of how the British colonial administration had previously contained the opposition of their colleagues by exiling them from their hometowns, and made it clear to the *mallams* that they were under surveillance, and that the colonial administration would not hesitate to take action against anyone of them. Consequently, Mallam Salga resigned from his position as the *imām* of the Tijaniyya mosque, and many *mallams* got rid

⁵⁴ See: the enclosure to "From the Inspector-General of Police to the Private Secretary to H.H. the Lieutenant Governor, N[orthern] P[rovinces]," 8 July 1929, File No C.C. 0052, SAC 1/22/139: Mallam Salga (of Kano), Arewa House, Kaduna.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, Kano Resident, "Secret Memorandum No 200/10," 22 July 1929.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

of their copies of the book containing his views. The Kano Resident thought that the actions he took had created "a severe check on Mallam Salga far more than intended."⁵⁸

This episode illustrates that although camouflaging colonial policies and programs with an Islamic veneer might have made the colonial administration acceptable to Muslim rulers, British colonial authorities were aware that the appropriation of Islam was not acceptable to the *mallam* class—the guardian of Islamic norms. Hence to keep this class of Muslims under surveillance was necessary for the successful application of British colonial policies of containment.

British Colonial Surveillance on Islam

British fears of Islamic uprisings were recurrent throughout the colonial period, even though there was no armed opposition to colonialism among the Muslims of Northern Nigeria since the armed revolts of 1906 in Satiru, Bauchi, and Hadejia were suppressed. Still, intelligence gathering on the *ulama* and Islamic movements, including the Sufi orders, was a priority for the British colonial authorities, so also "special studies on Islamic political propaganda."⁵⁹ In fact, the first item in the standardized format of reporting intelligence had "Mahdism and other Islamic propaganda" as the first of the ten sub-headings under "Political and Religious Influences." Similarly, intelligence reports on personalities were sub-divided into several items, the first of which was: "Religious propagandists, including Mahdist preachers and religious charlatans."⁶⁰ An examination of British intelligence reports on the Tijaniyya reveals the seriousness with which British colonial policies of surveillance on Islam were carried out.

British colonial officers were required to report on the peregrinations of the individual *mallams*. Failure in this regard was not over-

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 2–3.

⁵⁹ Samples of such studies include: G. Gallow, "Notes on Mohammedanism," (1926), File No K 2864, Arewa House, Kaduna; "Islamic Propaganda, External Intelligence," (1927–28), File No K 4682, Arewa House, Kaduna; "Islamic Fraternities (Tarikas) in the Northern Provinces," 1928, File KATPROF 1150, National Archives, Kaduna. See also ZAPPROF C. 68 "Islamic Movements in Nigeria," various dates, National Archives, Kaduna.

⁶⁰ For example, see the various "Quarterly and Yearly Intelligence Reports," Arewa House, Kaduna.

looked, as can be seen in the query, which, at the directive of the Lieutenant-Governor, was addressed to Kano Resident to explain "why the movements of Mallam Ibrahim, a Tijani missionary who stayed in Kano in the early part of last year and who gave authority for the followers of the Tijani tarika to build a zawiya in Kano town, were not reported at the time."⁶¹ Quite clearly, this query was not seeking information, but tacitly rebuking the Resident of Kano for failure to report on the peregrinations of Mallam Ibrahim, on whom the Lieutenant Governor already had quite a lot of information. This suggests that there were other channels of gathering intelligence apart from the Residents.

One channel was the Post Office, where a letter from Morocco to the Emir of Kano was intercepted in 1925. The letter, signed by Khadim al-Tijani Muhammad b. 'Uthman al-Alami al-Hasani, was to "renew our personal promise that is between you and me," and to request assistance from the Emir for the Tijani *zawiya* in Kano, and also "assistance for its agent . . . Mallam Na-Alhaji."⁶² The Resident of Kano wanted to know the "promise" mentioned in the letter, and who Mallam Na-Alhaji was. Subsequent inquiries revealed, among other things, that Mallam Na-Alhaji was an acquaintance of the Emir of Katsina, whose loyalty to the British was not in any doubt.⁶³

The colonial fear of Islam that informed British policy of keeping Islamic practices and movements under surveillance could be seen also in British attitude towards the Umarian Tijanis. After fighting on the Sokoto side in the disastrous battle of Burmi, Umarian Tijanis abandoned opposition to colonialism, and settled down in different places. Those who settled down at Dakayawa, near Hadejia, were described favorably by British officers as being friendly towards colonial authorities.⁶⁴ Still, the community was kept under surveillance, as clearly reflected in the following submission by the Resident of Borno:

⁶¹ "Secretary Northern Provinces to [Resident] Kano," Confidential No 368/21, 10 March 1924, Pseudo Tijani Missionaries . . ., 21.

⁶² See "Letter to the Emir of Kano, Enclosure to "Memorandum from Resident Northern Provinces (Kano) to Secretary Northern Provinces Kaduna," 28 Jan. 1925, Pseudo Tijani Missionaries . . ., 85.

⁶³ *Ibid.*

⁶⁴ See "Tijani Settlement at Dakayawa—Report by Mr. Hoskyn Abrahall," Confidential No 65/3, 6 May, 1931, File No 15113, Arewa Gouse, Kaduna, 3-4. See also "To Secretary Northern Provinces from Senior Resident."

I forward forthwith a translation of a letter from Mohamet Ali of Futa Toro, Senegal, to Alfa Hashim at Medina asking for details of any new ritual to be adopted. The bearer Ahmet ibn Mohamet, belongs to the family and said that he had spent 5 days with Sheik Madani at Dakeawa near Hadejia on his way to Maiduguri. He stated that Sheik Madani told him that a little over a year ago he had received definite news from Alfa Hashim, but my informant would not divulge its purport or name the bearer. He stated however that the bearer of the former letter was an old man who had been sent to Medina for news from Futa and was returning post haste.⁶⁵

The British interest in "details of any new ritual" was born out of the belief that the allegiance of Muslims could be inferred from their ritual practices; hence it was important to determine the source of new rituals introduced into Nigeria. This was also tied in with the British concerns about containing Islamic radicalism from Egypt, and other Islamic countries. As already pointed out, British policies of surveillance fall into the larger framework of appropriating Islam to bolster Muslim loyalty, while at the same time keeping surveillance on Islamic movements and practices in order to contain any opposition to colonialism that might be inspired by Islam. In terms of the three characteristics of the challenges of British colonialism, it should be easy to recognize that appropriation was more gradual and partial than both containment and surveillance, both of which required more firmness. Let us now examine both the policy orientations and the three characteristics of the challenges of British colonialism in the important area of Islamic law.

*Islamic Law and the Legal Challenges
of British Colonialism*

Islamic law attracted the immediate attention of Frederick Lugard even while his conquest of the emirates was still in progress. In order to appreciate the changes introduced into Islamic law by the British colonial administration, and the challenges resulting therefrom, one needs to understand how Islamic law actually worked before the

⁶⁵ "Acting Resident of Borno to Secretary Northern Provinces Kaduna," Confidential No C. 1/25, 26 January 1925, *Pseudo Tijani Missionaries*, 98.

British took over in 1900. In Lugard's *Political Memoranda of 1906*, he described what he found before his changes were introduced thus:

Throughout the . . . [Moslem] states there are native courts in each capital city, and in many of the principal towns, where . . . [Islamic] law is administered by a native judge called the *Alkali* (El-Kadi) who is generally a man of great respectability and considerable learning. In some courts he sits alone as judge, in others (Sokoto, Katagum, Zaria) he has *almajirai* who act as assessors, assistants and learners. The most usual custom is to have two assessors and, in serious cases, other *mallams* may be called in. In Haċeċjia and Katagum there seems to have been an appeal to the Emir, and in the former the court was constituted by the *Alkali* and the males of his family, who referred all very grave cases to the Emir. In Ilorin the Resident states that the *Liman* [Hausa for Arabic *imām*] and his assistants dealt with all cases, and the *Alkali* acted purely as legal adviser to the Emir, and judged no case himself. There was an appeal to a full court of all *mallams* learned in the law. In the majority of courts, however, the *Alkali's* decision appears to have been final, subject to the right of appeal to Sokoto, and the Emir's duties were confined to enforcing the *Alkali's* decisions, sending for witnesses etc. Everyone alike was amenable to this court, and its decisions were, when necessary, enforced by the Emir. The head chief also usually held a court (dealing chiefly with political cases) but this does not seem to have been the case at Sokoto, where the *Alkali's* court was under the close supervision of the Sarkin Muslim [Sultan of Sokoto], to whom daily reports of proceedings were made by agents, and a weekly report by the *Alkali*. In some cities the *Liman* dealt with probate cases. This constitution of the courts varied. The powers of the court were unlimited, the principal punishment probably being mutilation.⁶⁶

It was onto this system that the British grafted gradual changes that constituted the legal challenges of British colonialism. In a series of proclamations, Lugard introduced English law and provincial and supreme courts, along with a parallel court system he termed "native courts."⁶⁷ These meant essentially the *shari'a* courts, for rather than the seemingly endless complexities of the legal institutions of the non-Muslim communities, the British found it more convenient and cheaper to establish the *shari'a* courts for the administration of "native law and custom" even among non-Muslims. As will be discussed

⁶⁶ Quoted in N.J. Brooke (1952), 7.

⁶⁷ Speed, *Laws of the Protectorate of Northern Nigeria*, 9-152, 597-602.

presently, this was part of the legal challenges that confronted Muslims under British colonialism. Thus as the British appropriated the emirates into the colonial administrative structures, they also appropriated *shari'a* courts into the colonial legal order.

At the same time, British containment is evident in Lugard's suspension of the application of aspects of Islamic law, which he judged to be repugnant to British notions of justice, equity and good conscience. Specifically, he disallowed the legal status of slavery, mutilation as a legal punishment, and cases involving capital punishment. Apart from these, Lugard allowed the *shari'a* courts to carry out their own sentences, and for the emirs to see to their enforcement with minimal British intervention. Lugard did not want to identify the British with what he said might "on closer examination, prove to be native injustice." However, British political officers were given powers to intervene at any stage of the proceedings of the *shari'a* courts, and to supervise them to ensure that no "manifest injustice" or "inhuman punishment" were carried out.⁶⁸ As in the military and political domains, the legal and judicial changes introduced by the British started partially and gradually.

These changes appeared to have taken off successfully. In 1902, Lugard characterized the *shari'a* courts as "admirable machinery for the native administration of justice," presided over by what he described as learned Muslim judges "with a keen appreciation of the impartiality and supremacy of the law."⁶⁹ By the end of 1904, eighty native courts were duly established in the provinces, and Lugard was glad to report that the native courts were making "marked and satisfactory" progress "in methods of civilized rule."⁷⁰ In particular, the *shari'a* courts in Kano and Sokoto, on account of their admirable conduct by the end of 1904, had restored to them the power to try cases involving capital punishment but with the restriction that no sentence of death should be carried out without the concurrence of the Residents in the two provinces.

At the end of Lugard's tenure as the High Commissioner of Northern Nigeria in 1906, he was full of praise for the *shari'a* courts, noting in particular the "liberal and enlightening spirit" shown by

⁶⁸ Lugard, *Collected Annual Reports*, 134.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 133.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 213.

the *shari'a* courts in Sokoto, Kano, Zaria and Bida. He expressed "intense gratification" with his reliance on these courts to enforce his proclamations, including the prohibition of the legal status of slavery. He attributed this development to a mutual confidence that had gradually evolved between British political officers on the one hand, and on the other, the emirs and the Muslim judges. It was also part of the satisfactory performance by the *shari'a* courts since the inception of Lugard's administration in 1900 that led to a streamlining of the courts by the Native Courts Proclamation of 1906, reorganizing the courts into grades A-D, broken down into: 9 Grade A; 30 Grade B; 31 Grade C; and 39 Grade D.⁷¹ Thus there was a total of 109 native courts in the Protectorate, but not all were *shari'a* courts.

In the non-Muslim areas considerable difficulties arose in the implementation of the first native courts proclamation, leading to amendments by *Native Courts Proclamation* No. 11 of 1904.⁷² This proclamation empowered British political officers to issue warrants establishing native courts in those areas, or simply *shari'a* courts, which were found to be easier for the purpose of implementing the native courts proclamations. As noted earlier, the *shari'a* courts, being part of the functioning judiciary of the emirates, were appropriated into British indirect rule. However, their engrafting onto non-Muslim communities created difficulties throughout the colonial period. In fact, a major challenge to Islamic law under British colonialism arose from the ambiguities in the hierarchical relationships among three separate sets of laws: British colonial legislation, Islamic law, and indigenous laws of the non-Muslim communities.

The relationships among these three sets of laws continued to be governed by further proclamations that spelt out changes not only in substantive law, but also in other aspects of judicial administration including conflict of laws, and the appointment of judges and other legal personnel.⁷³ Gradualism was the hallmark of the cumulative changes in the legal arena, leading to the three sets of laws being tried in the *shari'a* courts. A similar situation prevailed also in the provincial courts that operated according to British legal tradi-

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 411.

⁷² Speed, *Laws of the Protectorate of Northern Nigeria*, 597-602.

⁷³ Brooke (1952), 18-21. See also, E.A. Keay and S.S. Richardson (1966), 19-53.

tions. By powers of the administrative review of cases and their transfer from the native courts to provincial courts, British political officers could either transfer to the provincial courts any case from the native courts, at any point of their proceedings, or wait for the decision of the native courts and then change the judgment. There was also an automatic appeal against any decision of the native courts to the Residents, who were also the judges in the provincial courts.

Whereas substantive law, rules of evidence, and procedure, all tended to be Islamic in the native courts presided by *alkalis*, unless otherwise specifically prohibited by the colonial administration, British substantive law, rules of evidence, and procedure prevailed in the provincial courts. But in both court systems there was no absolute adherence to either Islamic or British legal traditions, for as noted above, the *alkalis* did try cases outside of Islamic law, and Residents as judges of provincial courts often decided cases according to their understanding of Islamic or indigenous laws. This situation did not change even after British political officers ceased to be the judges of the provincial courts, and native courts of appeal were introduced by the judicial reforms of 1933.⁷⁴ These reforms continued the partial and gradual transformations of the *shari'a* courts and their appropriation into the hierarchical court systems introduced by the British. The provincial courts were transformed into a high court, and below it magistrate courts were established in each province. Under the magistrate courts came the native courts, graded A through D. Usually only *shari'a* courts in the capitals of the major emirates were appropriated to function as native courts grade A, and empowered with appellate jurisdiction over lower native courts.

The judicial reforms of 1933 demonstrate also the firm way in which the British effected unwanted changes in the legal arena by forcing the integration of British, Islamic, and indigenous laws. However, even then, the gradualism noted in both the military and political domains was also present, for the legal integration was not nearly complete. British political officers at the divisional level were retained as appellate judges in some of the non-Muslim communities, whose traditional legal systems lacked formal court structures. No native court of any grade had any appellate jurisdiction over

⁷⁴ Brooke (1952), 18–21. Cf. Keay and Richardson (1966), 37 ff.

magistrate courts, much less the high courts; only the Supreme Court of Nigeria had appellate jurisdiction over all the other courts. Furthermore, wide powers of judicial review and transfer were still available for British political officers at the provincial level, for changing any decision by *shari'a* courts, if found unacceptable to British notions of justice, equity, and good conscience. Thus judicial review and transfer of cases were the instruments by which the British retained firm control in the legal arena, and also contained aspects of Islamic law. This remained the case during the next round of judicial reforms which began in 1945.⁷⁵ Let us now further examine British containment of Islamic law.

In broad terms, all the changes introduced by the British could be viewed as containment of Islamic law since, from Muslims' point view, the British, being non-Muslims, had no authority to interfere with Islamic law. In fact, there was an explicit awareness that any British objection to Islamic law was an objection to Islam itself.⁷⁶ But more specifically, British containment of Islamic law can be analyzed under three themes: substantive law, evidence, and procedure.

Containment of substantive law took three forms: suspending aspects of Islamic law; imposing non-Islamic laws passed by the British; and subordinating Islamic law to British law in cases of conflict of laws. As earlier pointed out, the British forbade the implementation of Islamic penal law involving mutilation, the stipulated punishment for theft and intentional bodily injury including murder. Neither of the two punishments was known to be widely applied by the *shari'a* courts in the pre-colonial period. During field investigations in the early 1950s, Anderson found no one in Northern Nigeria who could recall the application of retaliation in cases of bodily injury in the pre-colonial era, partly because the stringent requirements of eye-witness made conviction difficult.⁷⁷ Therefore, Muslims would not particularly notice British containment of Islamic law in this respect, since it was not commonly enforced.

Even in the case of slavery, where Islamic law was more widely applied, British policies of abolition started with partial changes. The

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 21 ff. See also: Joseph Schacht, "Report on the Position of Muhammadan Law in Northern Nigeria," 1952; Colonial Office Library Pamphlet No 36913 KF 2172.

⁷⁶ Brooke, (1952), 136.

⁷⁷ N.D. Anderson (1954), 197.

Slavery Proclamation of 1901 prohibits “the enslaving of any person, and *only* [added italics] affects domestic slavery in so far as it abolishes the legal status, and declares all children born after April 1, 1901, to be free.”⁷⁸ This means that persons already in slavery prior to that date remained slaves, though they could purchase freedom from their masters. The *Slavery Proclamation* of 1904 made all transactions in slavery illegal, and another proclamation in 1905 defined the penalties for non-natives convicted of possession of a slave, or surrendering a fugitive slave.⁷⁹ Lovejoy and Hogendorn have amply documented that the British did not abolish slavery at once, but pursued a gradual approach that lasted well into the fourth decade of British colonialism in Northern Nigeria; they also pointed out that Lugard was “an expert on Islamic law concerning the emancipation of slaves well before he arrived in the Sokoto caliphate.”⁸⁰ In crafting his policies of gradual abolition, Lugard appropriated Islamic law regarding slave manumission and self-redemption, and relied on *shari’a* courts to enforce his policies.⁸¹ He stated in one of his public speeches in Sokoto that “If slaves are ill-treated they will be set free as your Koran orders.”⁸² He was pleased to win the co-operation of the Sultan of Sokoto, noting that gradual extinction of slavery was being accomplished through “the Head of the Moslem religion, supported by the Moslem jurists.” For Lugard, this was better than ordering a forcible manumission of all slaves at once.⁸³

By outlawing the legal status of slavery, the British contained an aspect of Islamic law allowing slavery. But by couching the prohibition of a legal status of slavery in terms of the Islamic legal doctrines of manumission and self-redemption (*mukātaba*), and then relying on emirs and Muslim judges to enforce the prohibition, the British appropriated Islamic law. British legislation on abolition reveals all the three characteristics of the challenges of British colonialism, for although the British started partially with the abolition of legal status of slavery, and then worked gradually to end slavery itself, they were nonetheless firm that slavery had to be abolished.

⁷⁸ Lugard, *Collected Annual Reports*, 15.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 324, 413.

⁸⁰ Paul E. Lovejoy and Jan S. Hogendorn (1993), 99.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 98.

⁸² *Ibid.*, 164.

⁸³ *Ibid.*

The three characteristics are also evident in British containment of other substantive aspects of Islamic law, particularly where British colonial legislation was in clear violation of, rather than being simply different from, Islamic law. This was something the British sought to either avoid whenever possible, or to arrive at a skillfully negotiated political resolution, where partial changes were pursued with gradualism and firmness. Nevertheless, there were difficult cases of conflict of laws, and differences in rules of evidence and procedure. In such cases, the British contained Islamic law in firm ways that revealed, as in the military and political domains, that the partial challenges of British colonialism that gradually confronted Muslims in the legal domain were also firm, clear and unmistakable.

British containment of the rules of evidence in Islamic law centered around the general bias against documentary evidence in favor of oral testimony of irreproachable adult Muslim witnesses, who must be known to be sane, fair-minded, and scrupulously religious. Islamic standards of proof are generally higher than those in English law, with cases of serious crime requiring for proof two or more eye-witnesses of the type discussed above. With such strict requirements, it was also easier to succeed in disputing evidence before a *shari'a* court than in the provincial courts operating under the British rules of evidence. For example, *alkalis* refused routinely to accept the results of police investigations in criminal cases as admissible evidence, because police were deemed to be biased against defendants. Similarly, medical reports submitted by the prosecution were not acceptable as evidence in the *shari'a* courts, because for written evidence to be complete, the testimony of a witness is required. However, persons compiling the medical reports were rarely, if ever, witnesses to the actual commission of the crime they were reporting; in addition they were also part of police investigations regarded as biased against defendants.⁸⁴ But the most serious conflict in both substantive law and rule of evidence involves Islamic law and rule of evidence relating to non-Muslims and the admissibility of their testimony against Muslims. The way the British contained these aspects of Islamic law reveals the complexities that dictated the need for skilful political negotiations for the British to effect gradual but far reaching changes. This

⁸⁴ Brooke (1952), 130 and 167.

is clearly illustrated by the way the Resident of Kano Province, John H. Carrow, went about dealing not only with the admissibility of the testimony of non-Muslims, but also the whole question of their legal capacity, status, and rights before the *shari'a* courts.

Resident Carrow introduced the issue first by discussing it with the *Wazir* of Kano and other senior emirate officials. First, he spoke of "the necessity for the Native Administration authorities adjusting themselves to modern conditions and religious toleration in the courts."⁸⁵ He further averred that should the Emir fail to accede to this request for tolerance, which the Resident highlighted had the blessing of the Governor, then the Emir's power would be curtailed by more direct action by the Resident and Station Magistrate. Resident Carrow then sought to make the proposed changes less difficult by suggesting that an order from the Governor could be issued, which the Emir had to obey, and could not therefore be "accused of failing in his . . . [Moslem] faith." While reminding the emirate officials that this tactic had been used several times before to successfully "modify strict Islamic law," the Resident suggested that rather than a blunt prohibition against applying Islamic law, "it might be advisable to convey a direction that no person should be barred from giving evidence in the native courts on account of his religion."⁸⁶

Resident John Carrow then took up the matter with the Emir, whom he knew would have already been briefed by the *Wazir*. He told the Emir not to be offended by the frank way he was going to speak about religious points and difficulties. After presenting the issue of non-Muslims before the *shari'a* courts, Resident Carrow endeavored to ascertain that the Emir was really quite willing and prepared to implement the proposed changes. In his earlier discussion with the emirate officials, they had concluded that an executive order from the Governor would be the most appropriate way to communicate the wishes of the colonial administration. But now the Emir said that rather than an executive order or a proclamation, he would prefer a personal letter from the Governor "requesting that a certain action should be taken," after which he would accordingly verbally direct the Chief Alkali of Kano and other *alkalis* in places likely to

⁸⁵ "Rights of Non-Mohammedans Before Mohammedan Courts," Fine No 16032, 1, Arewa House, Kaduna.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 1-2.

have cases involving non-Muslims. Thus it would be possible "for the whole matter to be dealt with as discreetly and quietly as possible to avoid gossip and intrigue in Kano city, the only place where much notice is likely to be taken."⁸⁷

The last aspect of these delicate negotiations was that the letter should be couched in general but comprehensive terms to establish equal punishment in homicide cases involving Muslims and non-Muslims, and the rights of non-Muslims to inherit a share in the estate of a deceased Muslim relative, both of which are hitherto not permissible in Islamic law. Resident Carrow made sure that these points were clearly understood by the emirate officials, even though the points would not be stated explicitly "in the letter of request." When the letter was finally issued, it opened by observing how changes had brought strangers to Kano, and that because of this development it would be appropriate to soften (*a saukake* in Hausa) the application of the *shari'a*, for it is now not possible to discriminate among people on religious grounds. The substantive issue was then stated in the imperative that the Emir of Kano should instruct his judges "that in legal decisions they must make no distinction of any kind between persons of different faiths."⁸⁸ Thus British containment policy effectively nullified not only the Islamic rule of evidence rejecting the testimony of non-Muslims against Muslims, but also substantive aspects of Islamic law relating to the legal capacity and rights of non-Muslims, including the right of inheritance and equality before the law. But perhaps the more interesting point to note here is how the nullification was effected in a manner that made it less difficult for the Emir and his officials to acquiesce to a decision that they would not have made, were it possible not to. The threat of losing more powers to the Resident effectively left the Emir with little choice, but camouflaging an executive order as a "request" made it possible for the Emir to project the appearance of being in more control than he really was. However, none of all this diplomatic maneuvering should obscure the fact that the British contained substantive aspects of Islamic law, nor the firmness with which the containment was communicated to the emir.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, Arabic text of the letter is on p. 8, while Hausa and English translations are on pp. 9 and 10 respectively.

Similar political negotiations went on during the preparations for the judicial reforms of 1933 discussed earlier. The Governor of Nigeria sent the draft legislation for the proposed reforms to the Lieutenant-Governor of the Northern Provinces for comments on the changes being contemplated particularly as they related to Islamic law and the *shari'a* courts. After lengthy discussions at the Secretariat of the Northern Provinces, and receiving comments from the Residents of all the provinces, a policy guideline for further containment of Islamic law emerged as follows: it was neither necessary nor desirable to safeguard Islamic criminal law; Islamic law of marriage and its incidents should remain unchanged; and Islamic commercial law would not be affected by the proposed legislation. On evidence and procedure, it was suggested that no clear cut changes were needed in the situation that had developed, whereby Islamic rules of evidence and procedure prevailed in the *shari'a* courts, except for the changes effected regarding non-Muslims. These policy positions were accepted by the Governor of Nigeria, and subsequently embodied in the *Native Courts Ordinance* of 1933.⁸⁹

However, problems continued to resurface from the way *shari'a* courts continued to administer laws passed by the colonial state, but according to Islamic rules of evidence and procedure. This situation sometime produced judgments totally unacceptable to the British colonial administration. Procedure in Islamic law is not adversarial; hence there was no room for lawyers or cross-examination by the parties in the dispute. Instead, the *alkali* hears the complaint and asks for the evidence, or more accurately testimony of the witnesses. The *alkali* calls upon the accused to defend his or herself, calling witnesses to testify in his or her favor, or by taking an oath of innocence on the Qur'an. Then the judgment follows.

A point worth emphasizing here is the prominent role of oath-taking in proving guilt or innocence under Islamic law, especially in cases with insufficient or circumstantial evidence only. In the procedure of English Law, insufficient evidence leads to acquittal and circumstantial evidence may lead to conviction of a lesser charge. In Islamic rules of procedure and evidence, insufficient or circumstantial evidence establishes a grave presumption of guilt (*lawth*), and

⁸⁹ "Exemption of Moslem Law under Native Courts Ordinance, 1933 10(i) (d)," File No 19245, 1-22, Arewa House, Kaduna.

the case will be decided by calling the party upon whom the grave presumption falls to take the oath of innocence and be acquitted, or be convicted if the party declines to take the oath. In homicide cases, circumstantial evidence leads to conviction of manslaughter according to English procedure, but according to Islamic procedure, acquittal could be decided upon the oath of innocence.⁹⁰ It was here that many problems arose.

British administrators usually allowed Islamic procedure in civil cases, but contained Islamic procedure in criminal cases, particularly in the prosecution of homicide. As already discussed, police prosecution of criminal cases was very difficult for the Muslim judges to accept. Apart from rejecting police evidence and testimony as biased against defendants, crime is conceived in Islamic law as a private grievance, against which the victim has the option of retaliation, compensation, or forgiveness. Should the victim choose to forgive the offender, that would be the end of the case, though the *alkali* reserves the discretion to give some penalties to serve as a warning to the accused, and a deterrence to others. Cases decided in the *shari'a* courts according to Islamic procedure would, on appeal or transfer, be reversed by provincial courts on the basis of the same evidence, but according to English procedure.⁹¹ With *shari'a* courts routinely deciding on acquittal in cases where the same evidence would return a verdict of manslaughter in the provincial courts, the discrepancy became a recurrent source of "anxiety in the conflict between the two procedures in the provincial courts, the high court and finally the Supreme Court."⁹²

This discrepancy was usually averted through early intervention by British political officers, who transferred cases involving the death penalty to the provincial courts if the likely judgment of the *alkali* would not be an acceptable one. Two celebrated homicide cases illustrate all the issues involved and how early political intervention

⁹⁰ For example, see: Muhammad b. Ahmad Miyara al-Fāsī *Sharḥ* on Abū Bakr Muhammad b. Muhammad al-Andalusī, known as Ibn 'Āsim, *Tuhfat al-Hukkām*, (Cairo: Maṭba'at al-Istiḳāma, n.d.), esp. 15 ff. See also: Mathew Lipman, Sean McConville, and Mordechai Yerushalmi (1988), esp. 39 ff.

⁹¹ For an extended discussion of the issues and the Islamic legal doctrines involved, as well as the points objected to by British colonial administration, see Anderson, (1954), 198-204.

⁹² Brooke (1952) 126.

led to different outcomes. The first case was decided in 1923 by the *shari'a* court in Sokoto. Hassana of Fura was convicted of the murder of her husband's former wife, and was accordingly condemned to death by the *alkali*. However, the father of the deceased, the aggrieved party in the case, chose the option of forgiving the offender rather than retaliation in the form of execution of the offender, or payment of blood-money to the heirs of the deceased. The *alkali* gave a *ta'zir* sentence of 100 lashes and imprisonment for one year, extended to five years upon review of the case by the Judicial Council of the Sultan of Sokoto because available evidence pointed to clear intent and malice on the part of the offender. However, the Resident of Sokoto thought that Hassana of Fura should be executed, but did not want to be seen publicly undermining Islamic law by nullifying the judgment of Judicial Council of the Sultan. The Resident therefore sought the views of the Lieutenant-Governor of the Northern Provinces, who upheld the imprisonment for five years, since the judgment was correct according to Islamic law and procedure. The Lieutenant-Governor further commented that "the cases where the relatives renounce the right to exact the death penalty in cases which are undoubtedly murder, without extenuating circumstances, are so rare that it is not necessary to abrogate . . . [Islamic] law and custom on this point."⁹³

This type of political intervention facilitated the gradual containment of Islamic substantive law, procedure, and evidence. By the 1930s *alkalis* had begun grudgingly to accept medical reports and the testimony of police officers if they were witnesses to the actual commission of the crime. Though lawyers and cross-examination were never allowed in the *shari'a* courts, a compromise developed for cross-examination questions to be asked through the *alkali* but not directly by one party of the dispute to the other. I have already discussed the changes implemented in the legal status and rights of non-Muslims before the *shari'a* courts. However, while this slow process of change was being pursued skillfully by the British colonial administration, emirs and *alkalis* stalled, and became all the more determined to resist as the British contained more and more aspects of Islamic law. This development and the reaction of emirs and *alkalis*

⁹³ *Ibid.*, 128.

were brought to a head in 1946 by a judgment of the West African Appeal Court on a conviction of murder decided by a *shari'a* court in Gwandu Emirate.

Whereas early political intervention in the case of Hassana of Fura averted any unwanted controversy, the lack of such intervention in the case of Tsofo Gubba vs. Gwandu Native Authority produced a notable political reaction among *alkalis* and emirs all over Northern Nigeria. In dismissing a conviction of murder and sentence of death by the Judicial Council of the Emir of Gwandu, the Judges of West African Court of Appeal agreed that the evidence before the Emir's Judicial Council did in fact justify the Council's conviction of murder according to the Islamic rules of evidence and procedure. But the Appeal Judges held that, according to English procedure, the same evidence established no more than manslaughter as defined by sections 317 and 318 of the Criminal Code of the Colony of Nigeria.⁹⁴ The crucial consideration for the Appeal Judges was the admissibility of oath in lieu of sufficient evidence. In a previous judgment in a similar homicide case decided first by the *shari'a* court in Katsina Emirate, the West African Court of Appeal observed that "the principle has been that the verdict and sentence of a native court which is an integral part of our judicial system carried out in accordance with procedure enjoined by native law and not obviously inequitable, will be accepted even though the procedure is widely different from the practice of English Criminal Courts."⁹⁵ This principle was replaced in the Tsofo Gubba case with another principle dictating that "where an offense is an offense under customary law and under the Code, a native court can only convict of it in accordance with the provisions of that Code."⁹⁶ For example, in the Tsofo Gubba case, murder was the offense in both Islamic law, which is a form of native law, and also in the Criminal Code. However, conviction of murder could not be returned in the Criminal Code by taking oath to supplement insufficient evidence, but this was permissible in Islamic law and procedure. Thus the net effect of the new principle was to nullify Islamic procedure especially in administering colonial legislations.

⁹⁴ For a critical analysis of this and similar cases, see: Mahmud, (1988) 15-27. Cf., Key and Richardson, (1966) 46-51.

⁹⁵ Brooke, (1952), 135.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 137.

The challenge for the *alkalis* was that most of them were not familiar with the procedure of English law, even if they were willing to implement it. In addition, there was the very serious challenge of administering the non-Islamic laws of the colonial state, which might have been made somewhat easier by adopting Islamic procedure. But the containment of Islamic procedure by the new principle established in Tsofo Gubba case, made the challenges much more difficult for the *alkalis* to deal with. Consequently, there were notable reactions to the nullification of Islamic procedure from the *shari'a* courts in virtually all the provinces of Northern Nigeria. Brooke summarized some of these reactions thus:

There has in the last ten years been a hardening in the attitude of the Emirs as well as the *alkalis* as a result of these difficulties. In the past they had accepted the principle that legislation by the Government (but not interpretation by a judge in court) relieved them of responsibility and put their consciences to rest. They had also quite reasonably insisted that the law of the courts was the Moslem code and that they had been trained in on other system of law. They were puzzled by some of the decisions of the English courts but the climax came when they were told that a case tried correctly under the law which Statute said they had to administer was found to be wrong by the principles of law in which they had not been trained and which they were not by law required to enforce.⁹⁷

The hardening of attitude by emirs and *alkalis* was what the British always sought to avoid by the political intervention of transferring potentially problematic cases from the *shari'a* courts to the provincial courts. The idea was to avert nullifying a judgment by the *shari'a* courts rendered correctly according to Islamic law and procedure, but not acceptable to English legal traditions and notions of justice. The problem was that not enough provincial courts run entirely by British personnel existed to handle more than ten percent of the civil and criminal proceedings throughout the provinces, and without the *shari'a* courts as the backbone of the native court system, the administration of justice would simply collapse. Hence it was necessary to retain the cooperation of the *alkalis* especially in administering the non-Islamic laws of the colonial administration, but to constantly nullify the judgment of the *alkalis* was to risk losing their cooperation as well as that of the emirs. Indeed as the

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 130.

decision in the Tsofo Gubba case “hardened” the attitude of the emirs and *alkalis*, it became obvious to the colonial administration that urgent steps were needed to “soften” them. Consequently, “the unusual course was taken of inviting the Legal Adviser in the Colonial Officer to sit on a special committee appointed for the purpose.”⁹⁸ The result of this committee’s deliberations was the Native Courts Ordinance of 1948 that led to another round of judicial reforms during the 1950s.

The Challenges of Western Education

The challenges of British colonialism that confronted Muslims in the military, political, and legal domains started at the onset of colonialism in the form of partial changes introduced gradually, but firmly and unmistakably. However, it was not until the early 1910s that the first colonial initiative on education was effectively in place. Towards the end of his tenure as Chief Commissioner, Lugard reported that insufficient funds “have not permitted any general scheme of education,” and that even the missionary societies have not yet “put forward any scheme which could be supported by government grants.”⁹⁹ Lugard preferred to allow the initiative on education to rest either with political officers who had the inclination and could spare the time, or with Christian missionaries who were all too keen to get people to start reading the Bible. Some of the laborers conscripted for public works were taught as apprentices in the workshops of the Public Works Department, and Lugard reported such apprenticeships as part of the educational undertakings of his administration.¹⁰⁰ In his last annual report, Lugard spelt out the ways he would want western education to proceed in Northern Nigeria:

Education is required for four different classes of pupils: (a) Mallams (viz., natives educated according to native standards in Arabic, . . . [Islamic] Law, &c.), should be taught the Roman character for writing Hausa, colloquial English, and finally reading and writing English, arithmetic, and geography; (b) sons of chiefs require to be taught as

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 137.

⁹⁹ Lugard, *Collected Annual Report*, 470.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 136 and 334.

boarders in a school or college established for the purpose, where they would receive a primary education and be brought up in an atmosphere of loyalty to the King, and imbued with ideas of truthfulness and honesty, so that the next generation of native rulers may be enlightened and loyal, without necessarily foregoing their own religion, or imbibing ideas of European dress and habits unsuited to their environment, and which would cause them to lose influence and caste among their . . . [Muslim] subjects; (c) general primary schools for children on a secular basis, so as not to excite the antagonism of the Moslem population by the teaching of a religion opposed to their own tenets; (d) cantonment schools for the education of the children of native clerks (mostly Christians) and of other Government officials.¹⁰¹

In this first articulation of colonial educational policy for Northern Nigeria, we see British appropriation, containment, and surveillance on Islam, as well as the partial, gradual, but firm approach that characterized the challenges of British colonialism in the military, political, and legal domains discussed so far. As the emirates and *shari'a* courts were appropriated, Islamic scholarship was also appropriated for the partial and gradual take-off of the colonial educational policy. Similarly, the above policy articulation includes among its objectives the containment of "antagonism of the Moslem population" by not teaching "a religion opposed to their own tenets." Most interestingly, British containment policy in the educational domain took the form of denying Christian missionaries their preferred field of operation in education as a necessary step towards containing Muslim religious antagonism. Lugard feared that introducing western education through Christian missionaries would diminish the chances of its favorable reception among Muslims. Therefore, he suggested, and the Colonial Office accepted, that the colonial administration in Northern Nigeria had to start its own secular education as an alternative to Christian missionary education.¹⁰²

The central figure in the secular education initiative in Northern Nigeria was Hanns Vischer (1876–1945), an erstwhile Christian missionary who later joined the colonial service in Northern Nigeria. His knowledge of Arabic was as an important asset to help contain Muslims' suspicion against western education, while the missionaries wanted, and in fact obtained, assurance from Vischer that he was

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 471.

¹⁰² Sonia F. Graham (1966), 41.

“entirely opposed to the usual Colonial way of backing up Islam educationally.”¹⁰³ In light of these considerations, gradualism was the hallmark of the partial beginning of western education among the Muslims of Northern Nigeria. The overall educational philosophy was closely tuned to the political project of indirect rule: appropriating local resources, institutions, and personnel for the execution of colonial policies and programs. Thus the introduction of western education shared the partial and gradual characteristics of the military, political, and legal challenges of British colonialism that confronted Muslims in Northern Nigeria. As in these domains, British firmness in containing Muslims’ objections to certain aspects of western education made the educational challenges unmistakable, as could be seen in the introduction of western education to Muslim women.

An “unofficial class” for women was started in July of 1912 by Mrs. Isabelle Vischer, but it was stopped because of poor attendance. The *Freed Slaves Homes*, established early on by Lugard, offered some training in handcrafts and elementary reading and writing in Roman characters for girls and boys.¹⁰⁴ But it was not until 1930 that the first regular schools for girls were opened in Kano and Katsina. Here again the pioneer classes consisted only of daughters of the aristocratic class,¹⁰⁵ and this was in conformity with the initial objective articulated by Lugard of giving priority to the education of son of chiefs. Tibenderana has pointed out that the emirs of Kano and Katsina welcomed the establishment of girls’ schools in their emirates because they knew that any opposition was not going to succeed since the colonial administration had already decided on the issue.¹⁰⁶ Even when in 1934 insufficient funds led to ending separate schools for girls, and made the existing boys’ schools co-educational, the strenuous opposition of the emirs did not stop the measure. Once it became apparent that the colonial administration was not going to relent on co-educational schools, there was not much else the emirs could do.¹⁰⁷

By disregarding Muslims’ resentments of co-education, the British had unwittingly given one more reason for the strong opposition to

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, 67.

¹⁰⁴ Lugard, *Collected Annual Report*, 181 and 288–290.

¹⁰⁵ Peter K. Tibenderana (1985), 95.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 94.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 100–104.

the education of Muslim girls in Northern Nigeria. Patriarchal notions of female moral frailty and assumptions about the domestic role of women remained the chief obstacles to western education, which was throughout the colonial period never wholly popular even for Muslim boys though for different reasons. The priority of giving western education to girls of aristocratic background had the negative consequence of not allowing the few educated Muslim women to put their education to public service, since the practice of *purdah* was most prevalent among the aristocracy who could afford to seclude their wives, and in fact regarded it beneath their dignity for their womenfolk to be in any gainful employment outside their homes. Thus even when the first women teacher training center was opened in 1939 in Sokoto, very few Muslim women adopted teaching careers after graduation. The British had to contractually bond the graduates of the training center to teach for at least two years after completing their training. Still very few women teachers extended their employment beyond the two years of their bond, for upon marriage all of them were secluded from public life.¹⁰⁸ It was despite the opposition of the emirs that the bond was extended to four years, but that still did not change the prevalence of wife seclusion, not even among husbands who had received western education. In the mid 1940s when British officers were advised to influence young educated Muslims against *purdah*, they discovered that contrary to British expectations, western educated Muslim men were no more inclined to abandon *purdah* than other Muslims.¹⁰⁹ It was not until the 1950s that some western educated Muslim men began a public debate against the seclusion of women, an issue which remained one of the chief obstacles to the education of Muslim females in Northern Nigeria right into the post-colonial era.

Two important issues need to be highlighted because of their relevance for understanding Muslims' responses to the challenges of western education. First, there was, right from the beginning to the end of the colonial period, a long-standing suspicion among Muslims that western education was simply a ploy for the conversion of Muslims to Christianity, or as Lugard made the point, Muslims

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 104–107.

¹⁰⁹ "The Resident Zaria Province to the Secretary, Northern Provinces," 13 July 1944, Arewa House, File No 37385: *Purdah*, 12–13.

regarded western education simply as a "deep-laid plan to subvert their religion."¹¹⁰ Muslims' suspicions made it necessary for British colonialism to be carefully guarded in introducing western education, thereby softening the challenges of western education in order to secure its acceptance among Muslims. The second important issue was the low priority accorded to education by the British colonial administration, as reflected in the detailed criticisms of the Phelps-Stokes' report on the educational situation in British colonies in Africa.¹¹¹

The outcome of the report has been described as "a significant turning-point in African education,"¹¹² for it led the British Government to pay more serious attention to education in its African colonies. Up to the early 1920s there was no clear-cut policy for directing the development of education in the colonies. Instead, local administrators in each colony, left to their own devices, depended heavily on the Christian missionaries to manage the educational enterprise as best as they could.¹¹³ This approach was to change when on November 24, 1923, the Colonial Secretary appointed an advisory committee to advise "on any matters of Native Education in the British Colonies and Protectorates in Tropical Africa . . . and to assist him in advancing the progress of education in those colonies and protectorates."¹¹⁴

After examining the educational activities in the various British colonies in Africa, including Nigeria, the Advisory Committee articulated a policy framework which, with minor periodic modifications and adjustments to local conditions, continued for the next decades as the operating guidelines for the development of western education in British colonies in Africa. Consistent with indirect rule, the educational policy stated that education should be adapted to "the mentality, aptitudes, occupations, and traditions of the various peoples, conserving as far as possible all sound and healthy elements in the fabric of their social life; adapting them where necessary to

¹¹⁰ F.D. Lugard, *Report on the Amalgamation of Northern and Southern Nigeria, and Administration, 1912-1919* (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1920), 60.

¹¹¹ A.B. Fafunwa, (1991), 120.

¹¹² *Ibid.*, *loc. cit.*

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, 119.

¹¹⁴ Advisory Committee on Native Education in the British Tropical African Dependencies, *Education Policy in British Tropical Africa: Memorandum Submitted to the Secretary of State for the Colonies* (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1925), 2.

changed circumstances and progressive ideas,"¹¹⁵ thus creating considerable latitude for pursuing any line of action. For example, the gradualism of "natural growth and evolution" fitted in nicely with the gradualism of the colonial administration in Northern Nigeria. The idea of adapting to local conditions was also in substantive agreement with the style of school organization and educational administration set up by Hanns Vischer. Yet at the same time the appeal to "progressive ideas" in the policy framework could be taken as a warrant for effecting fundamental changes, if a particular colonial administration deemed that to be necessary due to "changed circumstances." Both orientations are reflected in Katsina College, established in 1921 as the first western educational institution of "higher learning" in Northern Nigeria.

The Katsina College started with forty-eight students, and a small teaching staff of British and Nigerian instructors. The college graduated its first batch of trained teachers in March, 1926. This event was said to have marked a new chapter in the history of western education in Northern Nigeria.¹¹⁶ For most of the colonial period, the Katsina College was the major institution for training modern Muslim elite. Its graduates carried the flag of western education to all the provinces of Northern Nigeria, and were the first generation of Muslims to rise to senior positions in the colonial administration; they also formed the political class that ascended to power after independence.¹¹⁷ Perhaps it was in the realization of their crucial roles that the British colonial administration saw to it that the students of the Katsina College were especially groomed in the colonial virtue of gradualism. Chapter five covers the responses to colonialism by the Muslim elite educated at the Katsina College.

Another major indicator of the partial and gradual challenges of western education could be seen in the patterns of school attendance. For example, by December 1913, schools statistics indicated a total of 209 pupils from six different provinces were attending the Primary School in Kano, regarded as the model for the other schools subsequently established in all provinces. At the beginning of 1914, the

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 4.

¹¹⁶ *Colonial Reports—Annual No 1315: Nigeria, Report for 1925* (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1925), 21–22.

¹¹⁷ For further details, see: D.R. Boyan, "Educational Policy Formulation in the North of Nigeria, 1900–1969" (Ph.D. diss., University Wisconsin, 1979).

number of schools in the Northern Provinces was four primary, one secondary, and two technical schools. By the end of the year, there were 527 pupils in government schools in both Muslim and non-Muslim areas, with 35 Northern Nigerian teachers.¹¹⁸ Figures for school attendance in 1916 were estimated at 750 pupils with a native staff numbering 60.¹¹⁹ In 1919, a total of 1,189 pupils were distributed in 18 schools with 998 pupils in average attendance. There were 81 native teachers of secular subjects and 46 teachers of Islam and Arabic language. In addition, there were 98 unassisted mission schools with 2,747 pupils in attendance. For a perspective, these figures should be compared with those for Qur'anic schools, which in 1919 were estimated at 31,313, with a student population estimated at 205,172.¹²⁰ Thus although western education could be said to have gained a foothold by the end of the second decade of colonialism in Northern Nigeria, it was nowhere near replacing Islamic education. This pattern of much higher attendance in the Qur'anic schools remained throughout the colonial period, even as more and more schools for western education were established.¹²¹ This meant that the reproduction of traditional Muslim elite, in contrast to the western educated Muslims, continued despite the educational challenges of British colonialism.

I have earlier referred to the Northern Provinces Law School in connection with the training of *shari'a* court judges. This school began in the early 1930s when teachers were brought from the Sudan to help raise the standard of Arabic and the legal competence of the *alkalis* in Northern Nigeria, who until then were educated by individual scholars of repute within the pre-colonial system of Islamic education in the Sokoto caliphate. For over a decade, the Northern Provinces Law School was concerned only with the training of Muslim judges, but between 1940 and 1945 a new educational policy was formulated to rectify what was regarded as an unhealthy social and intellectual dichotomy that was developing between a small but growing body of western educated Muslims who, though trained in modern secular subjects, were not accorded the high social recognition and

¹¹⁸ Graham, (1966), 153.

¹¹⁹ Lugard, *Report on the Amalgamation*, 64.

¹²⁰ Colonial Reports—Annual No 1064: Nigeria, Report for 1919 (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1921), 10.

¹²¹ For further statistics on school enrollment, see: A.B. Fafunwa, (1974), 244

prestige usually reserved for those learned in the Islamic tradition, and on the other hand, there was envy on the part of the bearers of the traditional Islamic learning, for despite the prestige and recognition they enjoyed, they were now displaced from their positions of influence and were no longer employed as governmental functionaries, since new literary skills were needed for service in the colonial administration. "Psychic tensions" were said to be developing, and to prevent these from becoming acute, it was proposed that pupils showing special aptitude for Islamic and Arabic Studies should be given the opportunity for such studies and be allowed to forego modern secular subjects except for English Language. It was noted that those trained in the Northern Provinces Law School were directed towards a career in judiciary, but it should now be possible for individuals schooled in Arabic and Islamic Studies not to be so confined in their career choices. Hence the Northern Provinces Law School was renamed the School for Arabic Studies, and from 1946 it offered courses in Arabic and Islamic Studies in addition to legal training for Muslim judges.¹²² In the 1950s graduates of the School for Arabic Studies were among the first generation of Northern Nigerian Muslims to be trained in the western school system up to the university level. With training in both Islamic and western education, the graduates of the School for Arabic Studies stand as link between the traditional and western educated Muslim *literati*.

Conclusion

As we have demonstrated so far, the challenges of British colonialism were partial and gradual in the military domain, and even more so in the political, legal, and educational domains. The British attempts to secure firmly the military basis of their political supremacy came to Muslims as unmistakable challenges of a superior military force. But over-caution was the dominant attitude that characterized the British appropriation of Muslim rulers and political institutions, *shari'a* courts and Muslim judges, and Islamic schools and Muslim literati. Hence the political, legal, and educational challenges that confronted

¹²² Brooke, (1952), 151-55.

Muslims under British colonialism were not as clear-cut as the military challenges. However, just as the British were firm in the military domain, they were equally so in carrying out certain changes that posed challenges to Muslims in the other domains. This was particularly the case with the British containment of aspects of Islamic law relating to slavery. In this respect, the partial, gradual, but firm characteristics of the challenges of British colonialism discussed so far, could all be seen as British policies of abolition came to heavily rely on Muslim courts for enforcement. British policies of surveillance were especially directed at what the British perceived as potential or real sources of Islamic radicalism and opposition to colonialism, with Mahdist movements and the Tijaniyya Sufi order being singled out for more intensive surveillance.

Highlighting divergences in British colonial policies towards Islam in terms of appropriation, containment, and surveillance, leads to the conclusion that colonialism was not a stable unity, but an evolving encounter that was not linear but contradictory. This conclusion suggests that the challenges of colonialism and the responses thereto should be examined in terms of the continuities and discontinuities of both, thereby revealing and comprehending the unintended consequences and the indeterminate outcomes of the colonial encounter. The differential impact of the political, legal, and educational challenges of colonialism raises the interesting questions addressed in the following chapters: which group of Muslims made what responses? For what reasons? What Islamic ideas justify what responses?

CHAPTER TWO

RESPONSES TO THE CHALLENGES OF BRITISH MILITARY SUPERIORITY

As discussed in the previous chapter, the first challenge of British colonialism to confront Muslims in Northern Nigeria was the overwhelming military superiority of the British forces of conquest. Throughout the British military campaigns (1897–1906), Muslims did not win a single battle against the British. The most forceful demonstration of British military might was the destruction of the Satiru resistance in March 1906. This year also witnessed the elimination of other armed opposition to the British in Hadejia and Bauchi. Avoidance, submission, confrontation, and alliance were the responses of Muslims to the military challenge of British colonialism. As Tukur has demonstrated, the choice of a response was frequently determined by the internal situations in the various emirates, particularly succession disputes, the influence of the *mallam* class on the ruling emir, relations with non-Muslim neighbors or subjects, as well as the personal disposition of individual emirs.¹ Islamic justifications were always provided for whichever response was chosen, and in this chapter these Islamic justifications are analyzed.

To begin with, when the British launched the conquest of the Sokoto caliphate, confrontation was the response of Sultan Abd al-Rahman b. Abu Bakr Atiq (*r.* 1891–1902), who was noted for his hot temper. He was generally opposed to the British, often sending away British emissaries without even granting them an audience.² When in March 1901 Lugard informed Sultan Abd al-Rahman that

¹ Mahmud M. Tukur, "The Imposition of British Colonial Domination on the Sokoto Caliphate, Borno and Neighboring States, 1897–1914," Ph.D. diss., Ahmadu Bello University, 1977, 2ff.

² Muhammadu Junaidu (Waziri of Sokoto), (1957), 48–56. Cf. his *Dabɓɓi al-mul-taqaʿāt min al-akhbār al-mutaʿarrifa fi al-muʿallafāt*, (lithographed copy without any bibliographic data), 123–32. Manuscript copies of *Dabɓɓi* are preserved in various collections in Nigeria. See ALA II, 198.

he had replaced the emirs of Bida and Kontagora,³ the Sultan replied: "From us to you. I do not consent that any one from you should ever dwell with us. I will never agree with you. I will have nothing ever to do with you. Between us and you there are no dealings except as between Muslims and Unbelievers: war, as God Almighty has enjoined on us. There is no power and no strength save in God Most High."⁴ Similarly, when Lugard wrote again to explain his take-over of Bauchi, Sultan Abd al-Rahman responded: "I have to inform you that we do not invite your administration in the Province of Bauchi and if you have interfered we do not want support from any one except from God. You have your religion and we have ours. We seek help from God, the best Supporter, and there is no power except in him, the Mighty and Exalted."⁵

Despite their brevity, these two letters reveal both *tawhīd* (theology) and *fiqh* (jurisprudence) modes of discourse. By alluding to the Qur'anic commandment for jihad against unbelievers, the Sultan was thinking in the legal framework of *fiqh*. He supported his negation of power from all, and its attribution solely to God by a basic Islamic creed: "there is no strength and no power except in Allah." The Sultan did not elaborate the reasons for taking this position, instead, by making the letters so terse, he added a rhetorical effect to the hard-line position he was communicating. The underlying supposition in the two letters was that if Muslims were to obey God's commandment for jihad, then they could expect God's power to be on their side, and since God's power was affirmed to be the only one, the British were rendered powerless. The belief that those fighting jihad will have God's power on their side is expressed in so many Qur'anic verses. Yet as the British troops advanced against emirate after emirate, there was not a single victory for Muslims, and consequently the belief that God was on the side of Muslims must have been difficult to sustain. The hard-line position of Sultan Abd al-Rahman, who passed away in 1902, was not maintained by his successor, Sultan Muhammadu Ad'ahiru (al-Tahir) I. As the British

³ F.D. Lugard, *Collected Annual Reports for Northern Nigeria, 1900-1911*, (London: HMSO), 157-58.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 159. According to Junaidu, *Tarihin Fulani*, 56, when the Sultan received Lugard's letter, he replied by simply writing on the back of it: *Lā ḥawla wa-lā quwwata illā bi'llāhi*: "There is no power or strength save in God."

⁵ Lugard, *Collected Annual Reports*, 159.

conquest already had gathered momentum at the time of his ascension, Sultan Adđfahiru I was markedly less belligerent than his predecessor.

For instance, Kano was occupied by Col. Morland in February 1903 while its Emir, Aliyu Babba, was away in Sokoto to congratulate the new Sultan.⁶ Morland wrote to Sultan Adđfahiru I, alleging that the reason for British conquest of Kano was Emir Aliyu's honorable reception of the Magaji of Keffi, whom the British had charged with the murder of Captain Maloney. Furthermore, Col. Morland informed Sultan Adđfahiru I that British troops were advancing towards Sokoto, that he should arrest the Magaji of Keffi, and that "If you are loyal to us, you will remain in your position as Sarkin Muslimin."⁷ Sultan Adđfahiru I replied that he had summoned his councilors to deliberate on the matter, and that once "we have agreed on our decision I will write to you what is enjoined on me by them for the settlement of this affair."⁸ Thus whereas Sultan

⁶ There are speculations on why Emir Aliyu decided to visit Sokoto at the time the British attack on his emirate was imminent. For example, Tukur, "Imposition of British Colonial Domination," 58–60, suggests that Emir Aliyu had decided on avoidance of confrontation with the British by supporting the *hijra* of the Sultan of Sokoto (discussed below.) C.N. Uba, (1985), 36, states that before the British attack, "[Emir] Aliyu had already fortified the defenses of the city, and it seemed clear that he was determined to fight, at least in self-defense." However, Uba does not address the question of why Emir Aliyu left Kano if he was determined to fight. In fact, Uba accepts the view that Aliyu deserted his forces. In an untitled treatise, Abd Allah al-Ghadamisi, who was resident in Kano at the time of the British conquest, states that Emir Aliyu decided secretly to escape once Adamu Jakada informed Emir Aliyu of the British plan to attack Kano. For translation and analysis of al-Ghadamisi's account of the British conquest of Kano, see: Muhammad S. Umar and John Hunwick, (1996), 61–96. However, Tahir Ibrahim, "Scholars, Sufis, Saints and Capitalists in Kano 1904–1974: the Pattern of Bourgeois Revolution in an Islamic Society" (Ph.D. diss., University of Cambridge, 1975), 326, argues that rather than cowardly deserting his troops, Emir Aliyu's visit to Sokoto was part of a grand strategy adopted by the Yusufawa, Aliyu's dynasty, which had just gained power after the Kano civil war. Ibrahim argues that according to this strategy, "the Yusufawa dynasty had hedged their bets and decided on splitting their forces. If Sultan Adđfahiru was defeated, they preserved their hold on the throne by secretly nominating Abbas [whom the British eventually appointed as the Emir of Kano] as successor. If, on the other hand, Sultan Adđfahiru won, Aliyu Babba [by his visit to Sokoto] would have kept the throne for the family, having joined the *hijra* [of Sultan Adđfahiru] . . . In this sense Lugard had simply lent his arm to the survival stratagem of the ruling dynasty without knowing it."

⁷ Lugard, *Collected Annual Reports*, 159–60.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 160.

Abdurrahman was unequivocal in stating his willingness for armed confrontation with the British, his successor, Sultan Muhammadu Adfahiru I, was not so inclined.

When the British attacked Sokoto in March 1903, the councilors of Sultan Adfahiru I had not yet decided on the appropriate response to Morland's invitation to surrender. After the attempt to repulse the British attack was crushed, Sultan Adfahiru I escaped, while his Wazir, Muhammadu Buhari, led other councilors to sign the surrender of Sokoto. They then elected Muhammadu Adfahiru II to be installed by Frederick Lugard as the new sultan. While Sultan Adfahiru I was at large, the authority of Sultan Adfahiru II was at best tenuous, and considering the circumstances, the last thing Sultan Adfahiru II would want to do, even if he were in a position to, was to lend any support to Sultan Adfahiru I in his confrontation with the British.

Sultan Adfahiru I embarked on a *hijra* after escaping from the British attack on Sokoto. As he gathered a mass following on his movement eastward to Mecca, the precarious position of Adfahiru II, as well as all the emirs appointed by the British, was exposed. Muslims were put to the test of choosing which one of the two Sultans should have their loyalty and support. To support Adfahiru I in his *hijra* was to risk punitive measures from the British, yet he was still the legitimate Sultan. Some of the emirs, especially those deposed by the British, chose to follow Adfahiru I, while even the British-appointed emirs were providing food, weapons, intelligence reports, and place to hide as the fleeing Sultan was moving through their emirates. Yet some British-appointed emirs were not forthcoming with any support, in fact the Emirs of Gombe and Missau took active measures to prevent their subjects from joining the fleeing Sultan, and went even further to field troops with the British side in the battle of Burmi, where Sultan Adfahiru I was finally killed.⁹

In the aftermath of the battle of Burmi, consultations among the Sultan's councilors on what should be the appropriate response to the British military onslaught, stopped in their tracks by the surprise attack on Sokoto, resumed in the form of a public debate. While the Wazir of Sokoto, Muhammadu Buhari, was seeking Islamic justification for the surrender to the British, the opposing side was

⁹ Tukur, "The Imposition of British Colonial Domination," 66.

also going public with the arguments against surrender, and in favor of either fighting to martyrdom, or avoidance in the form of *hijra*. Although previous studies have pointed out the Islamic doctrines that animated this debate,¹⁰ attention has not been paid to the mechanics of argumentation and the discursive strategies employed by the opposing sides in the debate. Some of the important points are highlighted in the following analysis.

Arguments for Avoidance

In *Risāla wa-naṣīḥa ilā 'l-mu'āṣirīn al-mu'tanīn bi-mā yudkhilluhum fī zumrat al-muslimīn al-nājin* (An Epistle and an Advice to Contemporaries who are concerned with what brings them into the Fold of Saved Muslims), *Qāḍī* Abd Allah b. Alī argues that *hijra* had become obligatory upon Muslims because they could not effectively resist the British invasion. He criticized arguments for fighting against the British, and for truce with them. Abd Allah b. Alī hinted at his preference for *hijra* in opening his treatise with *ḥadīth*: "Deeds are judged only by intention; every person will get what he intends. So whoever undertakes *hijra* for the sake of Allah and His Messenger it will be so, and whoever undertakes *hijra* for the material world he will gain it; or for a woman he will marry her. The *hijra* is for the purpose for which is undertaken." Immediately following this subtle allusion to the position he intended to advocate, Abd Allah b. Alī then introduced the polemical element of his treatise through another *ḥadīth* warning Muslims against seeking a *fatwa* from anyone pretending to be learned, without first ascertaining whether such a pretender is indeed a God-fearing scholar. He argued that it was one of the eschatological "signs of the hour" for knowledge to cease. Consequently, the ignorant would assume leadership and give *fatwa*, leading themselves and others astray. However, the Prophet Muhammad was said to have given assurances that there would remain a

¹⁰ R.A. Adeleye (1968): 285-312; al-Amin Abu-Manga, (1987): 21-49; Yahya Muhammad al-Amin, "*Difā' Ulama Sokoto al-Thaqāfi dīdd al-Istīmār al-Barītānī*" (paper presented at the international seminar on The Impact of Colonialism on Islamic Education and Other Institutions During the Colonial Period between 1903-1960, Center for Islamic Studies, University of Sokoto, Sokoto, July 1988), 1-15. See also Omar Bello (n.d.), 1-2.

group among his community (*umma*) upholding the truth until Allah's command comes for the world to end.

Legal Argumentation for Hijra

The above opening reveals our author's discursive strategy of simultaneously advancing his position (opening with a *hadīth* on *hijra*) and attacking that of his opponents (ignorant people giving *fatwa* because of the cessation of knowledge.) In critiquing the arguments for fighting against the British, Abd Allah b. Alī quoted Qur'an 2:216; 9:5 and 29, and then followed with a *hadīth* stating that "a group among my *umma* will not cease fighting in the way of Allah until the end of the world, whoever opposes them will not harm them. Warfare will not end until Gog and Magog emerge."¹¹ Then he quoted authorities such as the *Tafsīr* of al-Qurṭubī and the *Mukhtaṣar* of Khalīl b. Ishāq to make the point that there is a consensus among Muslim jurists that fighting unbelievers in their territory is a collective obligation (*farḍ kifāya*) on Muslims, but if unbelievers attacked the territory of Muslims, then fighting them becomes an individual obligation on each Muslim (*farḍ 'ayn*). Having thus argued for the obligation to wage jihad against unbelievers, our author then sought to fortify his position. He invoked the Qur'an and Islamic legal texts to emphasize the threat of divine punishment on Muslims who declined to fight against unbelievers for reasons such as fear of death, loss of privilege, prestige, status, worldly possessions or beloved ones. However, the point our author was aiming at was not to urge fighting against the British, but to argue that what is not an excuse for abandoning jihad, should not be an excuse for abandoning *hijra*, and that "the fear of quitting the homeland, of losing wealth, . . . should not prevent one from undertaking the *hijra* because such pretexts are false excuses."¹² Thus Abd Allah b. Alī concluded his analysis of the option of jihad. The flow of his argument creates the impression that he was going to advocate jihad by raising and then dismissing plausible objections to confronting the superior military might of the British. Instead, he concluded with a dramatic twist that extended the arguments against failure to fight unbelievers to the failure to make *hijra*.

¹¹ Bello, (n.d.), 11.

¹² *Ibid.*, 13–14.

Apart from all the legal authorities he quoted, Abd Allah b. Alī added a familiar Islamic moral discourse on the treacherous attractions of *dunyā*: the material world as a powerful counter attraction to Islamic ethical conduct.¹³ The normative imperative of this moral discourse is for Muslims to discern the ephemeral nature of the material world. Therefore, to avoid *hijra* in the expectation of enjoying the familiar comfort of family and home is to follow the inducement of *dunyā*. This is all the more so since Abd Allah b. Alī did not believe that truce with the British would maintain Sokoto as an Islamic domain in which resistance against *dunyā* could possibly succeed.

In summarizing the legal justifications for Muslims to sign a truce with unbelievers (*ṣulḥ/muhādana*) Abd Allah b. Alī emphasized that the object of signing truce should be to realize the *maṣlaḥa* of retaining Islamic rule. If the weakness of Muslims will not allow them to withstand the unbelievers militarily, they should sign a truce in order to gain time to make the necessary preparations for gaining the upper hand in some future confrontation with unbelievers. To further stress the retention of Islamic rule as the condition for the validity of truce with unbelievers, Abd Allah b. Alī quoted once again from Uthman b. Fodiye's *Bayān wujūb al-hijra* that if by virtue of a truce with unbelievers, Muslims expect that fellow Muslims will be released from that non-Muslim rule, or that Islam will be spread there, then truce is lawful. This view is supported by reference to the truce of Hudaybiyya where the *maṣlaḥa* of the Prophet Muhammad's truce with unbelievers unfolded later in the Islamization of Medina and the subsequent fall of Mecca.¹⁴ By this recourse to Islamic history, Abd Allah b. Alī concluded the defense side of his case against truce with the British. He then attacked the opposing argument:

If truce is to the contrary [of retaining Islamic rule and spreading Islam], no one will say it is lawful, like the truce concluded with the Christians [i.e. the British] in our time. This truce will decrease the strength of Islam and the number of Muslims because it will necessarily lead to interference by the Christians in the affairs of Muslims, which in turn will result in Muslims being influenced by the bad char-

¹³ *Ibid.*, 14.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

acter, perverted customs, and forbidden ways of the Christians. Weak-hearted people will become accustomed to their corrupt manners, children will grow up in their religion, and women and youth will be tempted to dress in their garments and adornments. Thus will the esteemed tradition of the Prophet Muhammad (*al-sunna al-gharrā*) die, and dark innovations survive; their religion will gain ascendancy and spread, and Muslims will become degraded by being under the rule of Christians.¹⁵

This passage reveals a conception of an objectionable order of things expected to materialize should Muslims sign a truce with the British. It is anticipated that matters will progressively worsen until Christianity replaces Islam eventually. This conjures up what most Muslims will readily recognize as a troubling sequence of events, with the implied imperative that the sequence should be prevented before it starts. The passage is also indicative of the sites where Muslims' resistance against the political challenges of colonialism will be mounted once they have come to terms with the challenge of British military superiority. These sites include mode of dress, ordinary customs and manners, the social spaces of youth and women, and of course the religious domain that is the focal point of Abd Allah b. Ali's second attack against a truce with the British. He once more raised a plausible argument that because the superior weapons of the enemy will annihilate Muslims, truce should be accepted even if it contains unlawful stipulations. But he counter-argued that truce with the British would eradicate Islam so completely that "not even its scent would remain as we have seen in many of the towns they have conquered and imposed stipulations to destroy the religion (of Islam) step by step without end."¹⁶

Abd Allah b. Ali's third and final attack against truce centers on the conditions that should govern an Islamically valid peace treaty with non-Muslims. He warned against "the tendency of some disciples these days to argue on the authority of *fiqh* texts that because of fear [of British military might] an unconditional validity should be granted to the truce with the British." To counter this argument Abd Allah b. Ali resorted to the hermeneutical technique of explaining that what the *fiqh* texts mean by fear is: "fear of eradicating Islam

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 15.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

and Muslims, and not fear for self or wealth.”¹⁷ Furthermore, the truce with the British cannot be Islamically valid if it contains stipulations such as the nullification of Islamic obligations to wage jihad against unbelievers [Lugard’s prohibition on emirs declaring war], exempting the British from the commandments and prohibitions of Islamic law [Lugard’s exemption of British personnel from the jurisdiction of the *shar‘a* courts]. A truce would also not be valid if it allows them arrogantly to publicize their religion, and gives them free access to wherever they want to go, including mosques and schools. For Abd Allah b. Ali these stipulations are contrary to the Islamic obligation to give priority to the *maṣlaḥa* of religion over and above the *maṣlaḥa* of worldly matters, which he characterized as “the veritable machination of Satan, in which lies the root of destruction.”¹⁸

Abd Allah b. Ali introduced his analysis of the third, and his preferred option of *hijra* with a quotation from Uthman b. Fodiye’s *Bayān wujūb al-hijra*: “*Hijra* from the lands of unbelief to the lands of Islam is obligatory according to the Qur’an, the Sunna and *ijmā‘*.”¹⁹ He quoted Qur’an 4:88–89 and 97–98 to advocate that not only is *hijra* from the domain of unbelief obligatory, but also that according to some interpretations of these verses, Islamic legal protection can be withdrawn from the life and property of those who fail to make *hijra* out of the lands of unbelief. In Islamic legal discourse, withdrawing legal protection is tantamount to the death sentence. Therefore, by this subtle threat of death penalty, Abd Allah b. Ali is here making the imperative for *hijra* all the more compelling. But after stating that the obligation for *hijra* was supported by *ijmā‘*, he then presented the exemptions and the dissenting views:

If a Muslim is so weak in the lands of *kufra* that he cannot manifest his Islam, it is unlawful for him to reside there and *hijra* to the lands of Islam becomes obligatory upon him. But if he is incapable, he is excused until he becomes able to manifest his Islam. If he is able to manifest his religion in his locality because he is respected in his community, or because he has relatives to protect him, and he does not fear being tempted in his religion, then *hijra* is not obligatory upon him but commendable so that he does not bolster the population of

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 16.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

the land of unbelief, or be inclined to unbelief. Some say *hijra* is still obligatory upon him, but the first view is the sound one (*ṣaḥīḥ*).²⁰

This passage illustrates a pervasive characteristic of Islamic legal thought: the duality of first stating categorical imperatives and then appending acceptable exemptions. In a sense, this explains Abd Allah b. Alī's adoption of the two-front discursive strategy of first defending the position he advocates, and then raising what may be the plausible objections of his opponents, and attacking those objections. The attack aims to deny the opposition any resort to the acceptable exemptions that are always to be found alongside any categorically stated rule of Islamic law. Thus by laying out the exemptions from the obligation for *hijra*, Abd Allah b. Alī was not contradicting his argument that there is an *ijmāʿ* for that obligation. Rather, he was forestalling any recourse to those exemptions by his opponents. He stated that the obligation for *hijra* "is not dependent upon the existence of a Muslim community, and therefore the lack of a Muslim community or lands of Islam to which *hijra* is to be made, is not an excuse to lift the obligation for *hijra*."²¹ This is a direct rejection of Wazir Buhari's argument (examined below) that since British troops had occupied everywhere, there was no point for *hijra* out of Sokoto. Abd Allah b. Alī counter-argued that according to Qur'an (chapter 18), the People of the Cave (*ahl al-kahf*) did not make their *hijra* to any community that would have supported them to practice their religion, rather they fled to a place conducive for them to establish the practice of their religion in their own. Similarly, the Qur'an (19:41–50 and 37:83–113) narrates that when the Prophet Abraham fell out with his parents and community, the *hijra* he made was not to any particular community that was more supportive. Likewise the *hijra* of Uthman b. Fodiye out of Degel was not to a Muslim land in which the *sunna* of the Prophet was being upheld.²²

Abd Allah b. Alī's final rejection of any potential recourse by his opponents to the exemptions from obligation for *hijra* was to quote, among other verses, Quran 4:100: "He who undertakes *hijra* for the cause of Allah finds on earth many a refuge, wide and spacious. Should he die while performing the *hijra* to Allah and His Messenger,

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 17.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 18.

²² *Ibid.*, 18–19.

his reward becomes due with Allah.” Immediately after this quotation, Abd Allah b. Ali concluded his treatise advocating *hijra* as the only appropriate response to the British conquest of Sokoto.²³

The promise of divine favor for those who under-take *hijra* is a strong incentive for attracting mass support, however, the main thrust of Abd Allah b. Ali’s treatise seemed to be aimed at the specialized audience of the *mallam* class. His extensive quotations from the Qur’an and various legal authorities would be more effective in persuading fellow scholars than in rousing the popular support of ordinary Muslims. The structure and flow of his argument for *hijra* are, within the framework of the *fiqh* mode of Islamic discourse, quite forceful. Particularly impressive was his rhetorical strategy of conjuring up unpalatable scenarios that would be inevitable if the positions advocated in the rival discourses were adopted. The normative imperative implied in this rhetorical strategy dictates the rejection of the rival discourses in so far as the outcome of their advocacy was the possible eradication of Islam. Additional normative imperatives were presented in the form of severe penalties, including a subtle but unambiguous threat of the death penalty by prescribing the withdrawal of legal protection against those who failed to do *hijra*. However, it was not the threat of legal sanctions that generated mass support for the *hijra* of Sultan Adfahiru I, who was not in a position to enforce any legal sanctions, since he was fleeing following the fall of Sokoto. Rather than austere legal discourse, a different intellectual instrument was needed to mobilize the ordinary Muslims to abandon their homes and join the *hijra*. To understand the mood and the enthusiasm that sustained the support for Sultan Adfahiru I to the bitter end, let us examine the *Wakar Nasara*.

Poetry as an Instrument of Mass Mobilization for Hijra

The anonymous *Wakar Nasara*²⁴ (Poem on Christians), which runs to 55 lines, opens with the identification of the British as Christians, the enemies of the Prophet Muhammad: “In the Name of Allah, I intend to compose a poem/On the Enemies of Muhammad, the Christians.” The powerful emotive appeal of this opening is rein-

²³ *Ibid.*, 19–20.

²⁴ There are several manuscript and published copies of the *Wakar Nasara*, which

forced by tapping into Muslim historical consciousness of rivalry and warfare with Christians, and by the allusion in line 4 to the Qur'anic proof of Christian enmity toward Muslims. Yet the poem is not meant to be a clarion call to arms, but to mobilize support for the *hijra* of Sultan Adfahiru I. The poet appeals to Allah for a way out other than following the Christians, as many confused people were already doing. He names Medina as the preferred destination of the *hijra*, and this is not without significance, for Medina was also the destination of Prophet Muhammad's *hijra* as well as the location of his tomb, and Muslims believe that the two holy cities of Mecca and Medina would never fall to non-Muslims. In addition to imitating the Prophet, the poet also supports *hijra* by the invocation in line 9 of a prophecy attributed to Shaykh Uthman b. Fodiye: "Strengthening my position is Shehu's prophecy/That this land will fall under the domain of the Christians." This prophecy was widespread, leading one Resident of Sokoto to note that:

From the election of Shehu as Sarkin Muslimin at Gudu, in February, 1804, down to the death of Attahiru at Burmi, in July, 1903, is one hundred years less seven months. There is thus some posterior foundation in fact for the alleged prophecy of one hundred years for the existence of the Fillani Empire of Sokoto. This prophecy was much discussed at the time of the British occupation. Major Burdon states that he found no native authority for it. Mr. Gowers, however, states that in 1903 an old Fillani, the headman of Goila in the north of Yola Province, spoke of this prophecy and stated he had read about it in the manuscript of a work by Bello which he had once possessed.²⁵

Even if Uthman b. Fodiye did not actually make such a prophecy, we know that one of his grandsons, Abd al-Qadir b. al-Mustafa (d. 1864) wrote *Muddat al-dawla al-Uthmaniyya* on the "numerological cal-

was first brought to light by Bello Sa'id, "Gudummawar Masu Jihadi Kan Adabin Hausa" (M.A. thesis, Bayero University, Kano, 1978), 443-447. This poem has appeared in several publications: Dandatti Abdulkadir, (1979), 63-66; a partial English translation in M. Hiskett, (1984), 269-71; and a Hausa version in Roman script, plus a complete English translation in Isa A. Abba and P.J. Shea, "Decision to Flee at the Time of the British Conquest of the Sakkwato Caliphate" (paper presented at the International Seminar on the Impact of Colonialism on Islamic Education in the Sokoto Caliphate and Other Institutions During the Period 1903-1960, University of Sokoto, June 1988), 22-27. An Arabic script (*ajami*) copy is preserved in Falke/1569, Arabic Manuscript Collection, Melville J. Herskovits Library of African Studies, Northwestern University Library.

²⁵ E.J. Arnett, (1920), 35.

culuation of the lifespan of the state founded by Shaykh Uthman [b. Fodiye].”²⁶ However, the real significance of the prophecy is the evident attempt to normalize the British conquest, thereby rendering it less alienating by viewing it as the end of the Sokoto caliphate foreseen by no less an authority than its founder. The argument here seems to be that there was no point in fighting to avert the predicted fall of Sokoto. The normative imperative is forcefully stated in lines 10–12:

- 10) Even if I have to leave alone, I will not stay,
For, by Allah, I will not obey the Christians.
- 11) Between two alternatives one must be chosen:
Either *hijra*, or following the Christians.
- 12) Even the *emirs* have left their towns
So—if not *hijra*—what is there for a commoner
Other than to become Christian?

By starkly reducing the options to either making *hijra* or converting to Christianity, the poet adds strong urgency for following the ranks of the fleeing Sultan. The reference to emirs who had left their domains addresses the concerns of the still undecided. Line 12 makes the point explicitly: if emirs are prepared to abandon their domains, then no material possession should be considered valuable enough to prevent ordinary Muslims from joining the *hijra*. The poet makes the call to not stay behind more poignant, as in the legal argumentation for *hijra*, by postulating a detestable prospect for Muslims: conversion to Christianity. On the other hand, if it was fear that was detaining the undecided, line 13 sought to dispel the fear by first appealing to the patriarchal sentiment of manliness: “we are men, yet women have made it first before us . . .” Then lines 14–16 sought to further allay the fears of the undecided:

- 14) Fear of death, and the love of life, we too have.
But to refuse the predestined is to follow the Christians.
- 15) If you say it is difficult to leave,
The totality of *lahan* (injury, blemish) is with those who follow
The Christians,
- 16) If you think you have power and refuse *hijra*,
What power reaches the power of the Christians?

²⁶ *ALA*, II, 224.

This acknowledgment of the overwhelming military superiority of the enemy and consequent futility of armed confrontation does not mean conceding victory on the ideological front. In a direct response to Lugard's repeated self-justification for attacking the Sokoto caliphate in order to end the alleged oppression of ordinary Muslims under "decadent Fulani rule," lines 17–19 launch an ideological counter-offensive by the strongly negative characterization of Lugard's unsolicited gift of liberation to Muslims:

- 17) If they offer a gift, don't accept it.
It is poison they will give you; toxic is the gift of the Christians.
- 18) They admonish us to stop oppression:
But they are themselves oppressors, these Christians.
- 19) They have dark *fitna* and machination,
To spoil the religion of Islam—the Christians!

As Lugard's ideological offensive, characterizing the Sokoto Caliphate as a slave society ruthlessly governed by a predatory Fulani aristocracy,²⁷ had great appeal to the British audience it was meant to sway in favor of Lugard's grand plans for conquest (discussed more fully in Chapter Five), the ideological counter-offensive in these lines has the great potential for mobilizing popular Muslim support for the *hijra* of Sultan Adfahiru I. Equating British gifts with *dafi* (poison) and *guba* (toxic) casts aspersions on the repeated protestations of good will by the British. The Hausa word *dafi* is associated particularly with the concealed potions applied to arrows and spears for deadly effect. Similarly, *guba* is not a particularly visible attribute of the object bearing it. Hence the image being conjured up is that of a macabre plan elaborately concealed with treacherous presents as part of a grand conspiracy of inciting *fitna* against Islam.

Hiskett translates *fitna* as civil strife.²⁸ This political denotation readily comes to mind in light of line 19, hurling the charge of oppression back to the British. However, *fitna* also has historical, theological and moral connotations as well.²⁹ In Muslims' historical consciousness, it was the great *fitna* that claimed the lives of Uthman b. Affan and Ali b. Abi Talib, third and fourth of the four "rightly-guided caliphs,"

²⁷ For example, see Lugard, *Collected Annual Reports*, 71–92, *et passim*. See also Lugard's letters in D.J.M. Muffet (1964), 34–51. For critical examination in detail of the Lugardian discourses, see Chapter Five below.

²⁸ Hiskett, (1984), 270.

²⁹ For example, see Humphrey J. Fisher, (1994), 225–60.

and of course, the lives of many other Companions of the Prophet. It was also the great *fitna* that constituted the watershed separating the sacred moment from the profane moments of Islamic history. *Al-Khilāfah al-Rāshida*, the Arabic term for the sacred moment before the great *fitna*, implies the presence of Divine Guidance as a kind of a warranty for the realization of what the Qur'an (2:143) affirms to be the historic mission of the Islamic community (*umma*): "Thus have we made you an *umma* justly balanced, that ye might be witnesses over the nations, and the Messenger a witness over you." Similarly, Qur'an 3:110 states: "You are the best *umma* evolved for mankind, enjoining what is right and forbidding what is wrong, and believing in Allah." Thus by setting Muslim against fellow Muslim in the warring factions and theological schisms that were never subsequently overcome, *fitna* constituted a derailment of the divine plan for Islamic community to be the best in human history. It is therefore not surprising that the sacred moment before the *fitna* is valorized as an historical perfection, from which the rest of Islamic history is regarded as perpetual descent into profanity. It is also regarded as an act of piety for Muslims not to revisit critically the events of the great *fitna*, for without a tight regime of silence, there seems to be a fear that the evil spell of *fitna* could be reactivated. Thus at once *fitna* seals the end of sacred history as it also inaugurates the perpetual descent into the chaos of profane history. It is perhaps in this sense that the British conquest represents the dark *fitna* in line 19: end of the sacred history of the Sokoto Caliphate as already prophesied by its founders, as well as the commencement of the "machination to spoil Islam."

Qur'anic usage of *fitna* in more than sixty different verses always has negative connotations that include: using *fitna* as an instrument of divine chastisement by putting one through trying difficulties (7:155; 5:41; 51:14; 6:53; 29:3; 38:24; 44:17); as temptation by Satan to disobey Allah's commandment, with the grave consequences that entails (2:102; 7:27; 22:53); and as fanciful desires for worldly material comforts that constrain piety and righteousness (8:28; 20:131; 64:15). Other Qur'anic usages of *fitna* with strongly negative connotations are:

Fight in the cause of Allah those who fight you, but do not transgress limits; for Allah loves not transgressors. And slay them wherever you catch them, and turn them out from where they have turned you out; for *fitna* is worse than slaughter. . . . Fight them on until there is no more *fitna* and religion prevails for (the sake of) Allah; if they cease, let there be no hostility except for oppressors (2:190-93).

They ask you concerning fighting in the Sacred Month. Say: "Fighting therein is grave; but graver in the sight of Allah is to prevent access to the path of Allah, to deny Him, to prevent access to the Sacred Mosque and drive out its members. *Fitna* is worse than slaughter. Nor will they cease fighting you until they turn you back from your faith if they can . . . (2:217).

Fear *fitna*, for it affects not only the oppressors: and know that Allah is strict in punishment. (8:25).

Those who believed and made *hijra* and jihad with their wealth and their persons in the cause of Allah, as well as those who gave asylum and aid: these are all friends and protectors of one another. As for those who believed but did not make *hijra*, you owe them nothing for their protection until they undertake the *hijra*. But if they seek your aid in religion it is your duty to help them except against a people with whom you have a treaty of mutual alliance. Allah sees all that you do. The unbelievers are protectors of one another, and unless you do this (protect one another) there will be *fitna* on earth and a great mischief. (8:72-73).

And your Lord is for those who made *hijra* after they have been put through *fitna*, then they did jihad and persevered: Your Lord, after all this is Oft-Forgiving and Most Merciful. (16:110).³⁰

In Islamic thought, religion is generally conceived as the *raison d'être* not only for human existence, but also for cosmic existence as a whole. In the complex significations of these verses, *fitna* is the antithesis of religion, and it is also linked with oppression and mischief on earth, hence the divine authorization for all-out war against *fitna* so that religion and justice could prevail. Divine favor is also promised for those who, after persevering in jihad, found it necessary to make *hijra* away from *fitna*. Thus the identification of the British with a "dark *fitna*" is at once a major ideological offensive to associate the British with all that is negative in Muslim consciousness, and also a strong call to join the *hijra* of Sultan Adḍahuru I as an escape from "dark *fitna*" to divine favor.

Before further invocations of divine favor, lines 22-29 made rapid allusions to a number of themes: moral causation for the disaster of the Christian invasion; a reiteration of the prophecy by *Shaykh* Uthman

³⁰ All these translations are, with my minor adaptations, based on Abdullah Y. Ali, *The Holy Quran: Text, Translation and Commentary*, new revised edition, (Brentwood, Maryland: Amana Corporation (1989).

b. Fodiye; and the willingness to fight in order to drive out the Christians, or go to paradise if martyred. Still the object remains to carry on the *hijra*:

- 22) It is obligatory on everyone to prepare for the *hijra*.
O Muslims! Let us not accept obedience to the Christians.
- 23) Let us be in constant remembrance of Allah, and Supplication,
With justice we shall overthrow the Christians.
- 24) Commoners and rulers are the same to them;
Contempt abounds with the Christians.
- 25) Rule has become impossible for those with the authority.
What do we do to overcome the Christians?
- 26) If Almighty Allah shows mercy on us,
He will give us a *Mujaddid* for us to overwhelm the Christians.

Here is an interesting mixture of worldly and religious concerns. Complaint for the Christians' contempt and disregard for class distinction between the ruler and ruled, and the inability of those with authority to govern under the Christians, are conjoined with admonition to pray and remember the name of Allah (*dhikr*) as well as the cry for mercy and justice. The following lines continue with another religious theme: the eschatological "signs of the hour," heralding the beginning of the end of the world. The signs are listed as moral lapses (lines 33–48), and then attributed to those who seemed to have embraced the Christians. The concluding lines of the poem (49–55) call for moral regeneration and more scrupulous religious devotion as the necessary preparation for the imminent end of the world, signaled by the British conquest. Moral regeneration and religious reform are also advocated by the opponents of *hijra* as the appropriate response to the military challenge colonialism posed to Muslims.

Arguments for Submission

Muhammad Buhari, the Wazir of Sokoto who signed the surrender to the British, wrote his *Risālat al-wazīr ilā ahl al-‘ilm wa al-tadabbur* ("The treatise of the Wazir to the People of Knowledge and Reflection")³¹ to explain the circumstances and considerations that informed his decision. Embedded in the *Risālat al-wazīr* is the *fatwā*

³¹ For the Arabic text and English translation, see: Adeleye, (1968), 299–311.

given by the *Qādī* of Gwandu, Ahmad b. Sa‘d, in reply to the questions raised by Wazir Buhari, who was troubled by uncertainty over the Islamic validity of the surrender to the British. Wazir Buhari explains that he did not sign the surrender out of selfish desire, but on the counsel of the mallams, who saw “no way of making the *hijra* from this land owing to the scarcity of water along the roads or the total lack of it along some of them as well as the severity of heat and the presence of the Christians camped along all the routes.”³² Thus in theory, Wazir Buhari does not reject the *hijra* option, but since it had become practically impossible for the reasons he enumerated, his chief concern was to find justification for accepting the non-Islamic political dispensation of British colonialism.

Wazir Buhari and the mallams counseling him revisit *muwālāt* discourses on otherness constructed by the leaders of the Sokoto jihad in the early nineteenth century. But instead of the imperative to maintain distance earlier advocated by the leaders of the Sokoto jihad, they now advocate a different imperative based on a close reading of *Shaykh* Uthman b. Fodiye’s *Bayān wujūb al-hijra* and his *Masā’il muhimma*. *Muwālāt* (friendship/alliance) is here categorized according to three motivations, with different normative imperatives for each. The first type of *muwālāt* is the one motivated by a love for unbelievers, and also out of hatred for Islam and the Prophet Muhammad; hence it renders a Muslim an unbeliever, and its normative imperative dictates the treatment of such a Muslim as an apostate. He should be required to recant within three days, failing which he should face the death penalty, and his corpse should not receive Islamic funeral rites. The second type of *muwālāt*, maintaining friendly relations with unbelievers in order to obtain material gains from them, constitutes a sin (*ma’siya*), dictating the normative imperative to admonish the sinner to repent. A sinful Muslim is also exposed to stigma and divine retribution that could take various forms of calamity in the here and now, and in the Hereafter. Unlike an apostate, a sinful Muslim is still a Muslim with the right to participate in Muslim communal life, and for his remains to be given Islamic funeral rites. The third type of *muwālāt*, maintaining apparent friendship with unbelievers out of fear, is lawful, provided that there is no love for the unbeliever in the heart of the fearful Muslim.

³² *Ibid.*, 306.

This type is supported by doctrine of *taqiyya* (dissimulation),³³ which is derived from Qur'an 3:28: "Let not the believers take for friends and helpers (i.e. give *muwālāt* to) unbelievers rather than believers: if any does that, in nothing will there be help from Allah; except by way of *taqiyya* (precaution, dissimulation) that you may guard yourselves from them." On the basis of this verse, Wazir Buhari approaches the British, fearing that they would force Muslims to convert to Christianity; instead, he finds out that they are not going to prohibit the five fundamentals of Islam: faith, five daily prayers, alms, fasting, and pilgrimage. That these religious practices would still be observed publicly and without interference from the British adds a third justification for the surrender, the first two being the practical difficulties of making *hijra* and the above Qur'anic verse authorizing outward submission to a non-Islamic political power that could not otherwise be resisted. Yet, the Wazir is still not sure he had done the right thing, and therefore he seeks the views of *al-Qāḍī* Ahmad b. Sa'd "for a clarification of the truth in this matter."³⁴

In his reply, Ahmad b. Sa'd confirms that Buhari's decision to surrender is indeed correct. To console fellow Muslims, Ahmad b. Sa'd calls attention to similar moments in Islamic history such as the Qarmatians' attack on the Ka'ba in 930 A.D., and the fall of Baghdad to the Mongols in 1258 A.D. Just as God restored normalcy to Muslims after these major disasters, Ahmad b. Sa'd hopes that Allah would "resolve this matter for us and grant us amelioration by His power and His grace." Here is an interesting combination of history and theology as intellectual mechanisms for coming to terms with adversity. By seeing the divine hand in the way Muslims had historically overcome previous misfortunes, Ahmad b. Sa'd reaffirms faith in the ultimate power and mercy of Allah. Earlier in the doxology, he had hinted at this view by quoting the Islamic expression "there is no power and no strength except in Allah." By acknowledging no power other than that of Allah, Muslims in distress utter this "Islamic mantra" both as an expression of human

³³ Although *taqiyya* is more associated with Shi'a, it is a doctrine derived from a Qur'anic verse (3:28); and therefore other Muslims used it as well. For Shi'a doctrine and practice of *taqiyya*, see: Devin J. Stewart, (1996), 1-70. Cf. M. Momen, (1985), 39, 276-77, *et passim*.

³⁴ Adeleye (1968), 308.

helplessness, and as an invocation for favorable divine intervention. Furthermore, the doxology characterizes the world as the domain of trials and tribulations, to survive which one needs the strength of faith, and hope in the power and goodness of the Almighty to prevail in the end.

Theoretically, Ahmad b. Sa'd does not deny the obligation to make *hijra* out of the lands ruled by unbelievers. Adopting the two-prong discursive strategy of defense and attack, he argues that *hijra* out of Sokoto would turn a land of Islam into one of unbelief, and notes that the British are only concerned with worldly matters rather than prohibiting the public observance of the five pillars of Islam. Hence it would not contradict Islamic commandments to sign a truce with the British. It is Ahmad b. Sa'd's view that the restrictive conditions stipulated in the classical texts, including the *Mukhtaṣar* of Khalīl, should be disregarded in light of the fear that failure to surrender would lead the British to "exterminate the community of Muslims."³⁵ He argues that accepting British rule does not constitute *muwālāt*, observing that just as *Shaykh* Uthman b. Fodiye before his jihad lived for years under the non-Islamic rule of Gobir, it can be argued that living under the British is not unlawful. At worst it will be sinful if done deliberately, but done out of necessity, it has no negative legal consequence.

In concluding his *Risālat al-tadabbur*, Wazir Buhari notes that this world is characterized by trials and tribulations, hence the need for patience and dependence on Allah. He then quotes from the *Hikam* of Ibn 'Aṭā' Allah: "Do not be astonished by the occurrence of distressful [events] as long as you are in this world, for it (i.e. this world) would not show forth other than that which is in line with its deserved description and true portrayal."³⁶ This is the first allusion to Sufi ideas in the discourses on colonialism, which have so far been preoccupied with questions of legality. Similar allusion to Sufi ideas could also be seen in another treatise touching on the appropriate Islamic responses to colonialism.

³⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 311.

A Tijāni Argument for Surrender

In a treatise titled *al-Mawāʿiz al-saʿīdiyya fī islāh al-dīn liʾl-bariyya*³⁷ (Felicitous Admonitions Concerning Religious Reform for Humanity), the author identifies himself as Umar b. Muhammad Jelya al-Tijānī al-Maghribī al-Fullānī. He was born in Haḍeġia among the descendants of *al-Hāġj Umar al-Fūṭī* who made *hijra* to Sokoto after the French conquest of their capital at Segou. Their first leader was Ahmad al-Kabīr b. *al-Hāġj Umar al-Fūṭī*, succeeded after his death by his brother, Muhammad al-Bashīr.³⁸ According to Umar al-Fullānī, “this succession coincided with the *fitan* (pl. of *fitna*) of English aggression against Sokoto.” He adds that the Umarians fought with the Sultan of Sokoto in the battle of Burmi, and “used their guns to kill many Christians and their soldiers.” But following the defeat of Sokoto, Muhammad al-Bashīr was exiled to Lokoja, where he passed away shortly afterwards. The rest of the Umarians settled in Haḍeġia, and chose Ahmad al-Madani b. Ahmad al-Kabīr b. *al-Hāġj Umar* as their new leader.³⁹

Umar al-Fullānī states that after settling in Haḍeġia his parents moved to Damagaram, while others moved in different directions, including Mecca and Medina. The main community remained in Haḍeġia at their settlement in Dakayawa village, and corresponded with the splinter groups. As already discussed in Chapter One, such correspondence led British colonial authorities to maintain a surveillance on the Tijānī community at Haḍeġia out of the fear that the community’s international connections might be a conduit for Islamic propaganda against the British. But, as will be demonstrated presently, the community had completely renounced the idea of fighting the Europeans after the battle of Burmi. This fact was known to some British political officers. According to the Resident of Kano Province—under which Haḍeġia was a Division—Madani became

³⁷ Umar b. Muhammad Jelya al-Tijānī al-Maghribī al-Fulānī, *Mawāʿiz al-saʿīdiyya fī islāh al-dīn liʾl-bariyya*, Falke/1403, Arabic Manuscript Collection, Melville J. Herskovits Library of African Studies, Northwestern University Library, Evanston, IL, U.S.A. The author did not give the date of composition, but he mentioned a visit to Abdullahi Bayero, who was installed as Emir of Kano on February 14, 1927. A commendation (*taqrīz*) by Umar Falke was dated 1357/1939. Thus work must have been composed between 1927 and 1939.

³⁸ John Hanson and David Robinson, (1991), 401–10.

³⁹ Umar b. Muhammad Jelya al-Tijānī, *al-Mawāʿiz al-saʿīdiyya*, ff. 1–2.

the leader of the community “with the consent of Resident Bauchi, Mr. C.L. Temple, at Gombe after the fall of Burmi,” and after settling in Hadejia, “Madani and his followers have lived a peaceful and law abiding life for the past 20 years and are not known to have taken part in any political or religious movement.”⁴⁰ Similarly, the British political officer in Hadejia, Hoskyns Abrahall, reported favorably on the community, noting that “general cleanliness was particularly in evidence” around the community, and that their attitude was “respectful and friendly.” He congratulated Muhammad Madani for being the first to complete tax collection, and concluded that “the attitude of the Tijani settlement towards the Administration is above criticism.”⁴¹

To understand how this Tijāni community came to reconcile itself with the British colonial authorities, let us examine further the treatise by Umar al-Fullānī. He states that contact between the Tijāni settlement in Damagaram and the one in Hadejia was maintained through the itinerations of Tijāni *muqaddams*. One of such *muqaddams* was *Shaykh* Saʿīd b. Nūr b. *al-Hājj* Umar al-Fūṭī, better known as Seydou Nourou Tall, who stayed for three days preaching to the Tijānis, initiating new adepts into the Tijāniyya, and renewing the affiliation of the already initiated. In the course of his preaching to the Tijānis, Seydou Nourou Tall “commanded them to follow the Christians, for they are now our rulers and leaders.”⁴² Apart from quoting *ḥadīth* to support this view, Seydou Nourou Tall based his reasoning on the futility of Muslims’ confrontation with the better armed colonial forces. According to Umar al-Fullānī, Seydou Nourou Tall recounted Muslims’ disastrous defeats by European colonial armies in West Africa in order to “prevent venal scholars who, out of ignorance and foolishness, incite and encourage people to fight against the Christians, just as Kawusan [Kaoussan] al-Tuwāriqī did [in 1916–17] when he attacked the Christians and was defeated in less than the flicker of an eye.”⁴³ Umar al-Fullānī notes that Seydou Nourou Tall emphasized the futility of any armed resistance against

⁴⁰ “Senior Resident Kano Province to Secretary Northern Provinces, 11 October 1924,” 1–2, File no. 15543, *Pseudo-Tijani Missionaries in Nigeria*, Arewa House, Kaduna.

⁴¹ “Tijani Settlement at Dakayawa—Report by Mr. Hoskyns Abrahall,” May 6, 1931, 15113, Arewa House, Kaduna, 4–5.

⁴² Umar b. Muhammad Jelya al-Tijāni, *al-Mawāʿiz al-saʿīdiyya*, ff. 5–6.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 6; see also André Salifou, (1973).

the overwhelming military superiority of the Christians. Instead, he counseled that since they did not prohibit any religious practices, and because they respected Muslim religious leaders and gave money to those who requested it, the Christians should be obeyed.⁴⁴ Furthermore, anything that could bring destruction of Islamic religious practices should be avoided. And before his departure, Seydou Nourou Tall urged the community to adhere to Tijāni doctrines and rituals, and to “do the great jihad by the heart and the tongue, which is a better form of jihad.”⁴⁵

In a second visit, Seydou Nourou Tall reiterated the same admonition. But whereas after the first visit, he left Damagaram to Senegal via Tasawa, Magarya and Niamey, this time he was headed to Kano. Hence the French political officer informed the English Resident stating the greatness and importance of Seydou Nourou Tall, and that he should be hosted by an important emir. The “English Resident” arranged with the Emir of Kano, Abdullahi Bayero, for hospitality for “the important guest.” When he was ready to return to Senegal, Emir Bayero prepared a big present, which was however not accepted by the visitor. For Umar al-Fullāni, the reason for not accepting the big present was because Seydou Nourou Tall did not like worldly things, and “his heart desires nothing except the pleasure of the remembrance of Allah.” Umar al-Fullāni emphasizes that Seydou Nourou Tall was one of the people who know *ḥaqāʾiq* and *maʿārif* and that his sole preoccupation was toward the Almighty. For such people, “the wealthy and the poor, the ruled and the ruler are all the same; they do not esteem one for his riches, or humiliate another for his poverty.”⁴⁶ However, a different reason for not accepting the big present was given in different handwriting on the margins of the manuscript:

It is contrary to the tradition of the Prophet Muhammad not to accept a present. Our *Shaykh* Abū ʿl-ʿAbbās [Ahmad al-Tijānī], may Allah be pleased with him, used to accept gifts just like this *Shaykh* [i.e. Seydou Nourou Tall] used to . . . He now refused the gift not in defiance of the *sunna* but for fear that envious people would report him to the Christians, who gave him permission to preach to people on the condition that he would not collect anything from the people. The Christians

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 8–9.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 10.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 15.

provided him with cars and boats free of charge, and to wherever he wanted to go.⁴⁷

This passage invites a reassessment of the reasons why Seydou Nourou Tall spoke so strongly in favor of a complete submission to the Christians. Seydou Nourou Tall is famous for his loyal service to the French colonialists in West Africa. For example, Lucy Behrman wrote: "The single most striking example of the uses to which a marabu could be put is the case of Saidou Nourou Tall."⁴⁸ Similarly, while commenting on how French stereotypes of the Tijāniyya were revised in the early twentieth-century, Harrison stated that: "The most dramatic example in the change in Franco-Tijani relations emerged in the inter-war years in the person of Seydou Nourou Tall".⁴⁹ Harrison argued that Seydou Nourou Tall should not "be dismissed as an unthinking stooge of the French," adding that "in terms of Islamic doctrine his response to colonial rule was a perfectly acceptable position which had already been taken by many other Muslim leaders in colonized countries."⁵⁰ Thus although Tall's loyalty to the French is well-known, the possible Islamic justification for his conduct has only been vaguely alluded to.

The Islamic doctrine Harrison referred to without elaboration could be seen in Seydou Nourou Tall's argument, that Muslims should not attempt armed resistance against colonial authorities because it would be self-destructive. This argument could be supported by Qur'an 2:195: "And spend of your substance in the cause of Allah, and make not your own hands contribute to (your) destruction." As we have already seen in Wazir Buhari's *Risāla*, a further support for this argument was that Muslims should not unwittingly contribute to the eradication of Islam, which would be inevitable if they continued fighting and were annihilated by the overwhelming military superiority of the Europeans. And just as Wazir Buhari observed, Seydou Nourou Tall made the same point: that it was better to submit to the Europeans, thereby preserving whatever Islamic practices and institutions were allowed by the Europeans. This commonsensical argument can be reinforced by the doctrine of *maṣlaha*,

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 13-14.

⁴⁸ Lucy Behrman (1970), 51.

⁴⁹ Christopher Harrison (1988), 170.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 171.

dictating the preservation of, among other things, life and property as fundamental objectives of Islamic law. Another similarity in the two treatises by Wazir Buhari and Umar al-Fullānī needs to be highlighted. As already noted, towards the end of his treatise, Wazir Buhari quoted Ibn 'Aṭā' Allah to make the point that this world is the domain of trials and tribulations, etc. In the same vein, Umar al-Fullānī noted that people who possess *ma'rifa* and *ḥaqīqa* (Sufi terminology for the true comprehension of the nature of reality) tend to deplore this world and its trappings of wealth and prestige. Although neither Wazir Buhari nor Umar al-Fullānī mentioned it explicitly, *zuhd* (asceticism) provides the framework for making this world-denying argument.

Zuhd devalues the world of the here and now as the arena of actualizing the separation between Divine Reality and pious individuals longing towards that Reality. The normative imperative then is to seek actively to overcome human attraction to material comfort and affluence reinforcing that separation. From this perspective, there is not much of intrinsic value in this world, and for Muslims who espouse this view especially some Sufis, even the religion of Islam is valuable only to the extent that it facilitates the goal of direct absorption in the Divine Reality. Thus the loss of mundane possessions, such as political power over territories, could hardly be a total disaster blocking that goal. The realization that only Divine Reality endures, and that all else is transient, is a quantum leap out of the trappings of this world. In other words, Muslims' loss of power and territory to the Christian/European conquerors is normalized within the *zuhd* conception of the evanescent nature of this world. The loss could in fact be seen positively as liberation from worldly obstacles: give them all the worldly things they want, so that you can now concentrate on the more important task of seeking absorption in the Divine Reality. However, accepting to serve colonial authorities is not exactly the same as completely devaluing this world that *zuhd* advocates. Whether authorized by legal doctrines of *maṣlaḥa*, *ṣulh*, *muhādana*, *muwālāt* and *taqīyya*, or by ascetic notion of *zuhd*, submitting to the British and accepting to work under them were difficult compromises for Muslims to come to terms with.⁵¹ For some Muslims, martyrdom was more appealing.

⁵¹ Further research is needed to analyze how different Sufi orders viewed the

Arguments for Armed Confrontation

The idea of waging armed resistance against the British was not initially ruled out completely by some Muslims, despite the repeated victories of the British army of conquest. However, the turning point came in 1906 when the British applied maximum force to eliminate attempted armed rebellions. Apart from the elimination of the Satiru rebels and the erasure of their settlement, there was unrest in Kontagora, Hadejia and Bauchi, leading Lugard to report that “during the year (1906) there have been more than the usual number of fanatical preachers of seditious—though religious—propaganda among the Moslem population.”⁵² On the events in Kontagora, Lugard noted that: “Early in 1906 a traveling preacher caused some unrest by proclaiming that ‘a terrible thing with 70,000 guns was coming from the four corners of the earth,’ and as the British rule would soon end, the people were exhorted to pay no more taxes and to bring presents (which he appropriated). A second appeared in Yelwa and a third in Jebba, but the movement was of no political importance and was easily checked.”⁵³ In Bauchi, the belief that a Mahdi would arise at the Bima Hill caused anxiety to the colonial administration, leading Resident O. Howard to take prompt action: “The leading Mallam, who was preaching the extermination of all Europeans, was arrested and executed, and others were deported, while a force occupied Bima and built a fort there.”⁵⁴ The unrest in Hadejia was much more serious. Lugard characterized the attitude of Hadejia within the first five years of the colonial administration as “consistently marked by chronic obstruction and hostility.” When British troops suffered an initial setback in Satiru, the news was received with “general rejoicing in Hadejia”. Hence Lugard opted for a strong military action.⁵⁵ The Islamic doctrines undergirding the series of armed resistance in 1906 were martyrdom (*shahāda*) and mahdism. Hausa notions of warfare and bravery were

colonial situation, and to answer interesting questions, such as: how did different Sufi orders resolve the clash between *zuhd* and *dunyā*? Were there other Sufis who observed *zuhd* and refused to associate with colonial authorities? etc.

⁵² Lugard, *Collected Annual Reports*, 357.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 408.

⁵⁴ William Wallace, “Annual Report for 1906–7,” in Lugard, *Collected Annual Reports*, 483.

⁵⁵ Lugard, *Collected Annual Reports*, 378.

also invoked to support armed resistance against the British. Let us begin with the examination of martyrdom as the ideological basis of Hadejia resistance, followed by analysis of the Hausa martial songs of the Satiru resistance.

Celebration of Hadejia Martyrs

Begen Yakin Shuhadar Hadejia, "In Praise of the Martyrs of Hadejia,"⁵⁶ is a poem recounting the fall of Hadejia. It opens with a doxology celebrating the uniqueness and power of Almighty Allah, followed by detailed descriptions of the battle and the Hadejia warriors who were martyred. There is emphasis on great turmoil, bullets perforating walls, blasting fire of cannons, and, of course, large numbers of fallen men and horses.⁵⁷ Rather than many people taking refuge outside the embattled city as Lugard reported,⁵⁸ the poem highlights the overwhelming support for Muhammadu Haru, the Emir of Hadejia (1885–1906) who personally led his troops into the battle. In fact, not only the Emir and his war chiefs, but "the whole community of Hadejia people" were described as pledging themselves to martyrdom. In this poetic celebration, the bitter truth of defeat is understood and represented in the Islamic doctrine of *shahāda*. The important point emphasized is that Hadejia mounted a brave fight.

For leading that fight, Emir of Hadejia, Muhammadu Haru is memorialized by nicknaming him Mai-Shahada (The Martyred), and also in his praise-epithet (*kirari*): "*Ba ka bi Nasaraba/Mamman ba kaa bi Nasara ba*," ("You did not follow the Christians/[No!] Mamman, you would not follow the Christians").⁵⁹ The significance of this praise-song should be understood within the context of the socio-political function of *kirari* in Hausa political culture (*sarauta*). In affirming loyalty to political leaders in order to secure favors, *kirari*

⁵⁶ This poem was first published by M. Hiskett (1975), 144. Hiskett notes that this poem was "reported to have existed in several *ajami* manuscripts that were written down soon after the battle took place; but I was unable to obtain access to them. It seems possible, and in the circumstances understandable, that they are closely guarded family treasures, not readily shown to outside inquirers. The present recension was made from an oral recitation by Mallam Ibrahim Katala, who knew the poem by heart."

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 145–47. Cf. 249–51.

⁵⁸ Lugard, *Collected Annual Reports*, 378–9.

⁵⁹ Muhammadu Sambo Wali, interview by the author, tape recording, Sokoto, 14 December 1993.

celebrates what are regarded as the glorious accomplishments of rulers. As Hiskett pointed out with reference to the Kano Chronicle,⁶⁰ *kirari* is also used to record oral traditions about significant historical events, and to proclaim the laudable roles played by the persons associated with such events. Within this context, the *kirari* for the Emir of Hadejia as one who “did not follow the Christians” celebrates his leadership in the defiant, albeit unsuccessful, Hadejia stand against the British. At the same time, the *kirari* conceals the fact that Hadejia did submit to the British, and instead, it memorializes Hadejia’s aspiration to remain independent. However, even though it is quite plausible that the conceptualization of Hadejia resistance in terms of *shahāda* was an after-thought, there is really no evidence contradicting the account in the *Begen Yakin Shuhādar Hadejia*. Furthermore, given the repeated demonstrations of British military might, Emir Muhammadu Haru knew that Hadejia did not stand any chance against the British, and his decision to fight seems best explicable by the Islamic doctrine of martyrdom.

Shahāda, the Arabic word for martyrdom, means, literally, witness. The same word is also used for the Islamic confession of faith: “There is no god except God and Muhammad is His messenger.” The idea of fighting and dying for this creed is mentioned in several verses of Qur’an. For example, Qur’an 2:154 and 3:169–71 state that those who were killed while “fighting in the way of Allah” should not be thought of as dead but that “they live, finding their sustenance in the presence of their Lord.” They are also assured of Allah’s forgiveness and mercy, for Qur’an 4:69 lists martyrs in the company of prophets, true believers, and the righteous ones. Even more explicit rewards are mentioned in *hadīth* and *fiqh* texts guaranteeing salvation for martyrs.⁶¹ In fact, because martyrs are believed to be headed straight to paradise, their remains need not be given the normal Islamic funeral rites. Martyrs are also believed to have the privilege of interceding for sinners before God; hence their tombs often become shrines to be visited in search of blessing and relief from afflictions.⁶² Given this valorization of martyrdom, it should be easy to under-

⁶⁰ Hiskett (1975), 2. Cf. M.G. Smith (1957).

⁶¹ *Shorter Encyclopedia of Islam*, 1953, s.v. “Shahid”.

⁶² This is particularly the case among the Shi’a, for whom martyrdom has been a central motif in their historical consciousness and self-identity. See: Momen (1985),

stand why the Emir and people of Haċeċia chose what amounted virtually to the suicide option of armed confrontation with the British. It should be noted that Sultan Adċahiru I also appealed to the Islamic notion of martyrdom to mobilize support for his *hijra*, as earlier discussed. However, the other major armed opposition to the British was conceptualized in a different Islamic mode of thought.

Hausa Martial Songs and the Satiru Resistance

The characterization of the Satirawa (people of Satiru) as mahdists has been widespread in the secondary literature,⁶³ leading Lovejoy and Horgendorn to contend that "the religious overtones of the 1905–6 uprising drew upon a common tradition of Mahdism that was current in the Sokoto caliphate."⁶⁴ They also argue that it was "the radical clerics who led the revolutionary Mahdist movement."⁶⁵ However, what is known of the Satirawa intellectual outlook does not contain any reference to mahdism. The ideological articulation of Satiru resistance seems to be drawn from Hausa songs of warfare. Abubakar Mohammed has shown that one of the major pre-occupations of the Satirawa was "*takkai* dance in the evenings . . . a martial art which also affords the singers a chance to express their criticisms against some authorities or persons."⁶⁶ Here is one of these songs:

Marafa we challenge you to come,
 Dan Madoma we challenge you to come;
 More so the *Naşara* who wears shorts,
 The adult who dresses in children's clothes.
Sabara, do you want some quilting?⁶⁷

This is the only Satiru war song with explicit reference to the *naşara*. It's ideological attack centered on their mode of dressing. In Islamic

236 *et passim*. For an overview of the significance and functions of martyrdom in different religions, see: *Encyclopedia of Religion*, s.v. "Martyrdom," by Samuel Z. Klausner.

⁶³ For example, see: R.A. Adeleye, (1972), 193–214; Muhammad A. Al-Hajj, "The Mahdist Tradition in Northern Nigeria" (Ph.D. diss., Ahmadu Bello University, 1973), 194–9.

⁶⁴ Paul E. Lovejoy and Jan S. Horgendorn, 226.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 234.

⁶⁶ Abubakar S. Mohammed, (1987), 90.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, with minor emendation in the translation.

dress code, it is regarded as indecent exposure for an adult male not to cover his body from the ankles up to the neck. In this song, shorts that leave the legs up to the knees uncovered, and which were popular with colonial officials, are ridiculed as indicative of not only their infantile habits, but also the larger moral deficiency associated with the *našara*. This moral deficiency is one of the reasons against submitting to the Europeans, as alluded to in the argument for *hijra*. The point is that if British overrule was accepted, Muslim morals would be corrupted, and weak-hearted Muslims would imitate the "bad manners" of the British. Dressing in European clothes was strongly disapproved of throughout the colonial period, and this disapproval continues down to the present.

An important aspect of the Satiru war songs is the attack on Sokoto aristocracy. In the above song, two Sokoto aristocrats, Marafa and Dan Madoma are portrayed as cowards who refused to re-engage the Satiru fighters after the Sokoto troops had earlier been chased out. The Satirawa were quite confident of total victory over the combined forces of the British and the Sokoto aristocracy. After such victory, they would have so much booty at their disposal that the cavalry quilting of their defeated enemies could be thrown away in the bush; hence the rhetorical question to the *sabara*, a shrub commonly found in Northern Nigeria,⁶⁸ "do you want some quilting."⁶⁹ Satiru war songs proclaim the bravery of Satirawa and ridicule the supposed cowardice of their adversaries.

However, it was not only the Satirawa who added an ideological attack as part of the overall offensive against their adversaries. There were also ideological attacks against the Satirawa by the poets of the Sokoto aristocracy.⁷⁰ One such poem was composed in praise of Major John A. Burdon, Resident of Sokoto at various times during the 1910s. In particular, his command of the expedition against Satiru was described thus:

Major Burdon, keeper of the peace,
You captured Sokoto and prevailed.
Father of Majidadi, Kayri and the foreman,

⁶⁸ *Guiera senegalensis*, a plant, the pounded, dried leaves of which are used for piles (*bāsu*), and its wood-smoke keeps flies off cattle; see Abraham (1976), 756.

⁶⁹ Sambo, "interview," 1993.

⁷⁰ Mohammed (1987), 92-8.

The White Head,⁷¹ your deeds are commendable!

Major Burdon no one dares to challenge,
None! on the whole of this earth.

There I saw the Satiru people, their little eyes bulging,
With filth in their anus, pierced by guns.⁷²

Apart from the celebration of British military might as personified in Major Burdon, the poet alludes approvingly to the way the British organized people under capable individuals, represented by the names of two Sokoto title-holders, Majidadi and Kayri, to lead others to perform specific tasks. This seems to be a reference to the requisition of labor for setting up the infrastructure of the colonial administration, including roads, rail-lines and public buildings. The poet regards these as commendable deeds. The fact that the labor was appropriated compulsorily is concealed by the portrayal of the British political officer in the person of Major Burdon as a father, who could legitimately compel his children to do good. Thus whereas the colonizer is infantilized in the Satiru war songs, here it is the colonized who is given the character of an infant before the father-figure of the mighty colonizer. The lines proclaim British military might to be universally superior, and therefore capable of vanquishing any adversary. The annihilation of Satiru is presented, with graphic and gruesome details, as an illustration of the awesome might of the British. While clearly admiring the British as mighty conquerors who kept the peace after subduing Sokoto, the poet disparages the Satirawa for the crushing defeat that left them defecating as they met death! Such an ignoble manner of dying subverts the brave image that the Satirawa claimed in their songs.

It is part of this ideological confrontation for Sokoto oral traditions that characterize the leaders of Satiru as criminals and as deluded magicians who thought they could invoke the powers of jinns and spirits to their advantage.⁷³ In particular, the Satiru leader, Abdulkadir Maikaho, is said to have met a female *jinn* who gave him a horn to use as a magical wand, hence his nickname Maikaho, "Possessor of the Horn." With his magical powers, he could remove his head from his body and place it back again. Among the many

⁷¹ Burdon's nickname.

⁷² Alhaji Junaidu Buhari (Wazir of Sokoto), interview with the author, tape recording, Sokoto, 15 December 1993.

⁷³ Sambo, "interview," 1993.

other wonders he could accomplish by blowing the horn was to call the *jinn* in mounted troops and infantry to fight on his side. Thus he deceived himself and his followers into believing that they could win an armed confrontation against the combined forces of Sokoto and British forces.⁷⁴ Sokoto oral traditions present this account as evidence of Satirawa's ignorance and foolishness,⁷⁵ and should therefore be viewed as an element of ideological warfare. However, there are beliefs in supernatural beings in both Islamic and Hausa traditions, *jinn* and *iskoki* respectively; hence belief in the possibility of manipulating supernatural forces is by no means unique to the Satirawa. It is quite plausible that the Satirawa might have believed themselves capable of manipulating the powers of supernatural beings, thereby assuring themselves of victory against the overwhelming might of the British. Indeed, among the present day Muslim *literati* of Northern Nigeria are still to be found the *mallaman tsubu*, the specialists believed to be capable of invoking supernatural forces to the advantage of a client.⁷⁶ Yet, there is no extant account by the Satirawa of their beliefs about supernatural beings, and how such beliefs might have informed their decision to fight.

Furthermore, no belief about the supernatural was attributed to the Satirawa in an account of the Satiru disturbances written by Mallam Baƙo of Argungu.⁷⁷ Though factually detailed, this account indicates no articulated ideological position, except for one off-hand reference to Satirawa as pagans (*ama*).⁷⁸ Even this was not in a manner

⁷⁴ Habib Alhassan, "*Rashin Jitawa Tsakanin Mallam Satiru da Turawan Mulkin Mallaka, 1906*," (paper presented at the "International Seminar on the Impact of Colonialism on Islamic Education in the Sokoto Caliphate and other institutions during the period 1903-1960," organized by the Center for Islamic Studies, University of Sokoto, June 20-23, 1988), 4 ff.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, *passim*; Sambo, "interview," 1993.

⁷⁶ I. Madauci, Y. Isa and B. Daura, (1982), 75 ff.

⁷⁷ "An Account of Satiru Disturbances: By M. Baƙo," National Archives, Kaduna, O/AR.2/21. A typewritten note on the cover of this manuscript reads: "This account of the Satiru revolt was originally written by Mallam Baƙo to Mallam Jafaru at Arugungu [*sic*] in February 1906. The particular manuscript hereby attached is written by Mallam Jafaru, from the original copy, in January 1910." However, the manuscript mentions events such as the burning of Satiru village, which did not take place till after the capture of the village on March 10, 1906. Thus even though the Satirawa first attack was on February 13, the author of the first copy of the manuscript could not have known that Satiru village was burnt a month before the event happened. Perhaps this is a copyist error, or the second copy of 1910 was updated, and possibly edited.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 6.

that suggests a disapproval of Satirawa beliefs from the perspective of an Islamic orthodoxy. The only Islamic sentiment in the entire narrative is in the conclusion with its pious prayer for continuous health and prosperity, and for Allah "to vanquish our enemies and strengthen Islam."⁷⁹ It is not at all clear whether the British or the "Satiru pagans" were the enemies the author prays against. Probably it was the British, for in narrating how the Satirawa repulsed an attack by the Sokoto forces, the author betrays no disappointment with the initial Satiru victory. Instead, he comments that it was quite shameful to see that less than twenty Satiru fighters chased away the Marafa of Sokoto and his warriors.⁸⁰ He then adds the interesting observation that Sokoto people complained that after paying all the taxes and doing compulsory labor, they were not going to participate in the campaign against Satiru. This would suggest there was no popular support for the draconian steps taken against Satiru, and that vilification of Satirawa as "criminals", "cowards", and "deluded magicians" was probably not accepted by the masses initially.

Arguments for Alliance

In contrast to the response of armed confrontation, some emirates and individuals preferred to ally with the British, with a view to taking advantage of British military might against local adversaries. For example, Muhammad Nya, the Emir of Muri between 1874 and 1896, joined forces with the Royal Niger Company to sack the town of Zhibu in August, 1888. After several unsuccessful expeditions against the Jukun, Emir Nya was only able to prevail eventually when in 1893 he enlisted the services of the French agent, Lieutenant M. Mizon.⁸¹ Similarly, Umaru Majigi, Emir of Bida c. 1873-1884 was only able to crush revolts by the Kedawa with the military support of the Royal Niger Company.⁸² When he became the Emir of Gombe in 1898, Umaru Koiranga was confronted by the threat of Mallam Jibrilla Gaini who had carved out a mahdist stronghold at

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 15.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 10.

⁸¹ Fremantle (1972), 4-21; cf. Dugate (1985),

⁸² Dupigny (1920), 18-19.

Burmi within the territories of Gombe. Emir Koiranga sought British military support against Mallam Jibrilla Gaini, and though unsuccessful in his search, he later joined the British side against Sultan Adfahiru I during the battle of Burmi in 1903 as earlier noted.⁸³ Apart from these emirates, several communities along the Niger sought protection or revenge against their more powerful neighbors by joining the troops of the Royal Niger Company as "allies/friendlies" on the various expeditions of the Company against such neighbors.⁸⁴

Another type of military alliance with the British was that of individuals recruited by the British to serve as soldiers, carriers, and porters, interpreters, and intelligence agents. Although not much is known about such individuals, Ukpabi has demonstrated the complex motivations for many of the soldiers who fought for the British. Foremost were runaway slaves who regained freedom by joining various British military formations from as early as the first half of the nineteenth-century. Desire to escape social and economic disadvantages other than slavery, was another motivation, so also adventure, power, prestige, and revenge against erstwhile enemies.⁸⁵ This conception of British military power as a strategic advantage to be utilized in local rivalries and struggles for power can be appreciated more by a close examination of one intellectual articulation of allying with the British against local adversaries.

A Kebbi Perspective on the British Conquest of Sokoto

Kebbi was one of the Hausa states never totally subdued by the jihad of Uthman b. Fodiye. Following the fall of the Birnin Kebbi to the jihad forces, a new capital was founded at Argungu in 1831. Kebbi fought continuously to maintain its independence throughout the nineteenth century, and survived into the twentieth century as an independent state, despite its loss of several towns to Sokoto. In 1883, Sama'ila dan Yakubu Nabame (nicknamed Sama) became Sarkin Kebbi of Argungu, and was often at war with the Sultan of Sokoto up to 1900 when Sama "welcomed the arrival of the

⁸³ Tukur, "The Imposition of British Colonial Domination," 44-5.

⁸⁴ Sam Ukpabi (1987b), 99-102, *et passim*.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 60 ff. See also S. Ukpabi (1987a), 95-124.

British . . . in the seventeenth year of his reign."⁸⁶ He remained on good terms with the British until his death in 1915, and one colonial account describes Sama thus: "He invariably showed himself a friend of the European and although somewhat inclined to cling to old patriarchal methods inherited from his ancestors, he showed himself capable of co-operating with the Government for the good of his people over whom he had immense influence. His loyalty was severely tested, but was never found wanting in spite of the loss of much of his territory which was ceded to the French, including all his Zaberma and many of his Arewa towns which had played such a loyal part in the long struggle with the Fillani."⁸⁷ Sama's steady loyalty to British colonial administration should be understood within the context of the British conquest of Sokoto, which neutralized the threat Sokoto had posed to Kebbi for nearly a century. A final reconciliation took place in 1907 when Sama visited Sokoto.⁸⁸ This visit was described in one Kebbi royal song, in which Sama was identified with Kanta, who asserted Kebbi's independence from the Songhay Empire in the early sixteenth-century:

Kanta's procession to Sokoto
Was different from the one to Kano:
To Sokoto was a brotherly visit;
He did not intend to frighten them.
To Kano, the Mighty One proceeded
To wage war.⁸⁹

⁸⁶ E.J. Arnett (1920) 18.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 48.

⁸⁹ "AL 4/31-33: Hira da Audu Golobo on Buda dan Tanoma," 1983-1984, Oral Documentation Unit of Department of Nigerian and African Languages, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, Tapes 1-2. Mallam Audu Golobo was the "custodian of umbrella" at the Kebbi court, and though also a royal musician and later the Kebbi griot, he was not the original author of the Kebbi royal songs. He learned the songs from Buda dan Tanoma, his predecessor as Kebbi griot, who used to perform at the Kebbi court till his death towards the end of the reign of Sarki Sama, probably between 1910 and 1915. After succeeding Tanoma, Audu Golobo continued to perform as the griot at the Kebbi court during the reign of the next two successors to Sama, Sule dan Yakubu (r. 1915-1920) and Muhammadu dan Sama (r. 1920-1934). Golobo's recension is the most complete and "authoritative" compared to the mere fragments recalled by individuals who remembered the song as being very popular throughout Northern Nigeria. Field interviews, tape recorded by the author, 1993-1994. The original songs are in Hausa, and the translations of the excerpts quoted here are mine.

In another song, Sama was praised thus:

Kanta has prepared for war!
 The Victorious One, Guard against enemy attack,
 Son of Na-Gwandu,
 Son of Barda,
 City without walls,
 It is God that gave you (the kingdom),
 Not humans.

While still at home,
 Sama Son of Audu,
 And without even moving,
 Elder brother of Sule,
 The Enemy camps cry out:
 Kanta has prepared for war!

.....
 Between Gumbi and Geroji,
 There I met an elderly woman
 Debating an elderly man about the Trunk of the Elephant.
 The Elderly man says:
 "We have known quite early on,
 Shooting does not solve (the threat of) Sama."⁹⁰

Within this context of celebrating Kebbi's glorious victories, Sama and his successors are urged not to give any respite to their long-standing adversaries. Even while recording the outcome of British colonialism, the chief concern of the Kebbi royal griots remained proudly to celebrate Kebbi rulers and their military exploits in the pre-colonial days. British colonialism is then comprehended within this framework, and presented in a way that highlights favorably Kebbi's relations with the British vis-à-vis Sokoto and its emirates. Kebbi griots do not regard British colonial administration as a development that had fundamentally reconfigured the pre-colonial patterns of military and diplomatic relations between Kebbi and its allies on the one hand, and the Sokoto Caliphate and its emirates on the other. Rather than openly acknowledging British supremacy, the griots are more concerned with proclaiming Kebbi's preeminent position before the British over and above all the emirates, including Sokoto. Thus in describing the procession of Sarkin Kebbi Muhamman (son and successor of Sama,) to attend a durbar held in Kano to

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

honor the visit by the Prince of Wales,⁹¹ the griots give details of how many of the erstwhile enemies of Kebbi watched helplessly as the procession passed through their territories. By not indicating that it was only because of the British presence that the Kebbi royal procession was not challenged, as it certainly would have been in the pre-colonial period, the impression is created that Kebbi is powerful enough to do as it pleases. Here is how the arrival of the procession at Kano is described:

Here we arrived in Kano,
 In full battle gear but met no opposition.
 Kano's reception was not good enough,
 Our ruler would have stayed outside,
 But for the mallams of Kano who said:
 "Your Highness, proceed into the City."
 It is said: "No one tramples upon Kano."
 But Mamman did! (Repeat)
 Kano Prince, come and see
 A Ruler unlike those ones.⁹²

Having thus described the triumphant entry of the Kebbi royal procession into Kano, the griot then claims that the preeminence of Kebbi was evident in the way Sarkin Kebbi was treated by the Colonial Governor before all the emirs of Northern Nigeria attending the durbar for the visiting Prince of Wales:

The Governor shook hands with you first,
 Before any other ruler.
 Let it be known back home
 That we have accomplished our aim.⁹³

In contrast to the negative portrayal of the British as a corrupting influence on the moral well-being of Muslims, which was advanced

⁹¹ This visit was described thus: "The Most momentous event of the year (1925) in the Northern Provinces was the visit of His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales in April. A Durbar was held at Kano which was attended by practically all the chiefs of the Northern Provinces. Not only were the chiefs impressed by the magnificence of the spectacle, but they met peoples and tribes, many of whom were but names to them or in some cases traditional enemies, and found they were all at one in their allegiance to the King, whose son's personality so vividly impressed their imagination." See: *Colonial Reports—Annual No. 1315: Nigeria, Report for 1925*, (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1926), 7.

⁹² Golobo, Interview, tape I.

⁹³ *Ibid.*

as part of the arguments for *hijra*, Kebbi griots do not regard the British as being morally deficient. Similarly, whereas Satiru songs ridiculed the British for what the Satirawa regarded as the infantile tendencies manifested in British mode of dress, the Kebbi griots are here celebrating it as a privilege for Sarkin Kebbi to be the first to shake hands with the British Colonial Governor. In fact, Kebbi rulers are urged to be loyal to the British:

Mamman, if you have to submit,
 Submit to the Christians,
 Then we know you have submitted to the Mighty.
 For our Ruler follows no one,
 Save Allah, and the King of England.⁹⁴

Two interesting points in these lines need to be highlighted. First, it is not belittling for Sarkin Kebbi to submit to the British because they are more powerful than the Sultan of Sokoto. This is as much an acknowledgment of the power of the British as it is also an affirmation of the fact that Kebbi never submitted to the Sultan of Sokoto. The griots are saying that whereas it would have been humiliating for Kebbi to accept the suzerainty of Sokoto, it is befitting for Kebbi to submit to the demonstrably superior might of the British. What we have here is a normalization of the imposition of British colonialism as the expected order of things in the hierarchical relations of power. This implies an imperative that it is proper for the weak to yield to the mighty.

The second interesting point is the *caveat* that Sarkin Kebbi submits to no one "save Allah and the King of England". This introduces an Islamic theme into the mainly Hausa worldview that dominates the Kebbi royal songs. This caveat indicates that the Kebbi griots were not totally unaware of the ideological problematic of Muslims' submission to British supremacy. The solution here is a simple disclaimer that absolves conduct from ethical or ideological liability by ranking Sarkin Kebbi's loyalty to the British below his affirmed loyalty to Almighty Allah. Though its brevity borders on the cryptic, this disclaimer is no less effective in soothing any scruple that might have troubled the Islamic conscience of Kebbi rulers than the more elaborate treatises by the 'ulama of Sokoto.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.* Cf. Sambo, "interview," 1993.

As the doctrine of *taqiyya* is invoked to legitimize behavior inconsistent with ideological stipulation, so is this caveat of verbally affirming the opposite of what is actually being done. Both reveal a conceptual mechanism that divests negative conduct from normative sanction. Thus, although the thrust of the Kebbi royal songs is the conceptualization of British colonialism as a strategic factor to be exploited in Kebbi's adversarial relations with Sokoto, there is also a discernible concern to give an Islamic justification for Kebbi's favorable attitude towards the British. In practice, Kebbi's attitude hardly differs from that of Sokoto, for despite the more elaborate Islamic argumentations by the 'ulama of Sokoto, both Kebbi and Sokoto did submit to the supremacy of British colonialism.

Conclusion

The military imposition of British colonialism provoked four responses: avoidance, submission, confrontation, and alliance. Each response was argued for in a number of discourses employing various intellectual resources. Qur'an and *hadīth* are the more frequently quoted in the legal argumentation that relied on the *fiqh* mode of Islamic discourse. Quotations from Islamic classics are augmented with more frequent invocations of the intellectual legacy of the nineteenth-century Sokoto jihad leaders. In particular, Uthman b. Fodiye's *Bayān wujūb al-hijra* is extensively relied upon by advocates of divergent arguments. The ascetic idea of *zuhd* is invoked to conceptualize the British conquest of the Sokoto caliphate in terms of the trials and tribulations of this world, so also Islamic moral discourses on the illusory nature of *dunyā*. Lessons are drawn from various incidents in Islamic history, and applied to support or oppose one response or another. Hausa notions of warfare, and the pre-colonial patterns of military and diplomatic relations, provide different kinds of intellectual framework for conceptualizing British military conquest. Various individuals, communities and emirates sought to ally with the British with a view to exploiting British military might against erstwhile adversaries. Such allies became even better positioned to take advantage of British policies and programs as the political challenges of colonialism unfolded.

The diversity of Muslims' responses to the military challenges of British colonialism demonstrates the limitations of the previous con-

ceptions of reactions to colonialism in the binary model of resistance or collaboration. The complexities of how the colonized conceptualized their responses to colonization come out in sharp relief through the examination of the reasoning and intellectual maneuvering that undergirded the four responses documented in this chapter. These findings are consistent with recent analyses of colonialism that emphasize the agency of the colonized, and thus view the colonial encounter in a different perspective altogether.

The various arguments authorizing different responses could be seen as mere rationalizations of Muslims' attempts to wring some drops of victory out of defeat. Clearly, the arguments for alliance show the concrete interests of *realpolitik* being advocated. Yet one could also discern a genuine ethical concern to find an honorable way out of a difficult situation. In a sense, there is no real conflict here, especially in light of the doctrine of *maṣlaḥa*, which holds that it is a fundamental objective of Islamic law to protect life, property, honor, kinship, and religion. Thus seeking to protect even the mundane interests of property and honor is also a fulfillment of Islamic law. This conclusion reveals the weakness of theories that explain religious beliefs and practices simply by exposing the supposedly real material interests that underpin them. The doctrine of *maṣlaḥa* shows the pursuit of material interest could equally be a religious undertaking as will become more evident in the following chapter, examining how emirs reconciled their Islamic sensibilities to the political realities of their position under the non-Islamic rule of British colonialism.

CHAPTER THREE

EMIRS' RESPONSES TO THE POLITICAL CHALLENGES OF COLONIALISM

Muslims' intellectual responses to the political challenges of British colonialism differed from their responses to the military challenges. The preceding chapter shows that the military challenges provoked sharp and explicit responses to the question of what should Muslims do in the face of the overwhelming military superiority of the British, and the responses were more or less settled within the first decade of colonialism. In contrast, Muslims' intellectual responses to the political challenges of colonialism were not always explicit, principally because of the ambiguities that resulted from British policies of appropriating and containing Islam, as discussed in chapter one. In particular, the British appropriation of the emirates into the system of indirect rule placed the emirs at the very center of colonial administration in Northern Nigeria, and the emirs had to negotiate continuously the parameters of their power and authority under the British. The various political strategies adopted by the emirs have been amply documented in the secondary literature.¹ This chapter explores Muslims' thoughts and reflections on their subordinate position under the non-Islamic political dispensation of British colonialism.

The contention of this chapter is that as Muslim rulers, the emirs had to address questions regarding the Islamic basis of their position under the British indirect rule, especially when the emirs had to participate in the British containment of Islam. At the same time, the emirs could not ignore the imperatives of the power relations between them and the British, for any emir disloyal to the British

¹ For example, see: R.W. Hull, "The Development of Administration in Katsina Emirate, Northern Nigeria, 1887-1944" (Ph.D. diss., University of Columbia, 1968); R. Heussler (1968); Peter K. Tibenderana, "The Administration of Sokoto, Gwandu and Argungun Emirates under British rule, 1900-1946" (Ph.D. diss., University of Ibadan, 1972); Ibrahim A. Tahir, "Scholars, Sufis, Saints and Capitalists in Kano, 1904-1974: The Pattern of Bourgeois Revolution in an Islamic Society" (Ph.D. diss., University of Cambridge, 1975); 316-75; Adamu M. Fika, (1977); Frank A. Salamone, (1980): 1-14; C.N. Uba (1985).

could not remain in office. This chapter analyzes three case-studies to illustrate the different voices within Muslim discourses on the political challenges of colonialism. This approach is necessary because not all of the over thirty emirs, and their numerous subordinate title-holders and courtiers, could be individually discussed here, if only because not all of them have left written articulation of their thoughts on colonialism. The first case-study is of a legal discourse that sought to provide Islamic justification for an emir's participation in indirect rule. This legal discourse represents the middle ground that reflects the passive resistance of the majority of the emirs. Emir Aliyu ɗan Sidi of Zazzau, discussed in the second case-study, represents one end of the spectrum of emirs who continued to serve under British indirect rule: those whose overt or covert resistance led to their removal from office. The third case-study on Emir Muhammadu Dikko of Katsina, represents the other end of the spectrum: those emirs who were at home in both the Islamic and the colonial public spheres.

*Islamic Legal Discourse on Emirs' Participation
in Indirect Rule*

In a work entitled *Irshād al-ḥayārā fī mu'āmalat a'immatinā bi'l-naṣārā*, (Guiding the perplexed on the conduct of our leaders towards the Christians),² Abu Bakr b. *al-Qāḍī* Ahmad b. Sa'īd applies the same legal arguments, earlier made for Muslims' surrender to the British, to the political challenges facing Muslims in the aftermath of the British conquest. As already discussed, the Wazir of Sokoto, Muhammadu Buhari, justified his role in signing the surrender to the British principally on the basis of the doctrines of *muwālāt* and *taḥyīya*. This position was supported by the *Qāḍī* of Gwandu, Ahmad b. Sa'īd, the father of the author being discussed here.

Abu Bakr b. Ahmad takes fear and necessity as the fundamental bases for his main argument, namely: because of British military superiority and the necessity for self-preservation, it is lawful for Muslims to accept the non-Islamic British colonial rule, which would

² Jos Museum, catalogue No JM/A.MS 1007; see *ALA*, II, 242 where the completion date of the work is given as 15 July 1906.

have been otherwise unlawful.³ In particular, Abu Bakr b. Ahmad provides Islamic legal justification for the position of emirs and Islamic judges appointed by the British, and also for payment of taxes to, and association with, British colonial authorities. In addition to fear and necessity, Abu Bakr b. Ahmad employs stratagems derived from a number of Islamic legal doctrines. Therefore, it is necessary briefly to highlight these doctrines in order to understand the intellectual enterprise he undertakes.

Abu Bakr b. Ahmad built his stratagems on *maṣlaḥa*, *‘azīma* and *rukḥṣa*, *tashdīd* and *takhfīf*. As discussed in Chapter One, the concept of *maṣlaḥa* is central to the fundamental objectives of Islamic law. When used in a general sense to confer Islamic legality, *al-maṣlaḥa al-‘amma* means the preservation of the religion [of Islam], life, kinship, property, and sanity. *Maṣlaḥa* is one of the four conditions for the validity of a truce between Muslims and non-Muslims, the others are: it should be signed by a Muslim leader, for a specified period of time, and without flagrant violations of the basic tenets of Islam. However, if there is fear for the physical survival of Muslims, then preserving the lives of Muslims becomes the *maṣlaḥa* that takes precedence over all else. This is the line of argument that Abu Bakr b. Ahmad follows by asserting that emirs' acceptance to serve British colonial rule was based on the Islamically lawful truce (*al-muhādana al-shar‘iyya*), concluded between the British and the Sultan of Sokoto in order to protect the general public interest (*al-maṣlaḥa al-‘amma*) of Muslims.⁴

Literally, *rukḥṣa* means concession, but the term is defined in Islamic law as exemption from *‘azīma* which literally means determination, but technically signifies an *ab initio* legality definitively established by a rule of Islamic law. *Rukḥṣa* is a contingent legality that sets aside the normal legal consequences of *‘azīma* for reason of difficulty (*mashaqqa*), qualifications specified in the original determination of the rule (*shurūt*), lessening its legal burden (*takhfīf*), or permission for optional compliance (*takhayyur*).⁵ Though lawful, *rukḥṣa* should be employed only under the stipulated conditions, and even then only sparingly, for its excessive use, especially if accompanied by legal

³ Abu Bakr b. Ahmad, *Irshād al-ḥayārā*, f. 1.

⁴ *Ibid.*, f. 1.

⁵ Abu Ishāq Ibrahim b. Musa al-Shāṭibī (1991), vol. 223–28.

ruses and stratagems (*hiyal*) is frowned upon as a blameworthy abuse of the divine favor that *rukhsa* represents.

Abu Bakr b. Ahmad's invocation of *rukhsa* to provide Islamic legal justification for Muslims' acceptance of British colonial rule proceeds from his characterization of the position of emirs under indirect rule as one of dissimulation dictated by fear and necessity (*muwālāt al-khawf wa al-darūra*).⁶ He then adds that: "This dissimulation is a *rukhsa*, for if a Muslim perseveres to death in manifesting his faith [implied in the *azīma* rule that Muslims should not accept to be ruled by non-Muslims], he would have gained a great merit."⁷ By contrast, a Muslim who pursues the *rukhsa* option has merely avoided committing a sin by complying with the minimum requirement of Islamic law. This point was not overlooked by Abu Bakr b. Ahmad, for he observes that: "The lawfulness of uttering words of unbelief under duress is a *rukhsa*, but persevering in order to strengthen the religion of Islam is legally preferable [being the *azīma* rule]."⁸

Closely related to *rukhsa* is the binary doctrine of *tashdīd* (hardening, hardline) and *takhfīf* (softening, softline), which dictates that the simpler way out should be adopted in complying with Islamic law. This idea is derived as an Islamic legal maxim from several verses of the Qur'an. For example, "Allah intends every facility for you; He does not want to put you to difficulties" (2:185); "On no soul does Allah place a burden greater than it can bear" (2:286); "Allah does wish to lighten your (difficulties), for man was created weak" (4:28); "Strive in the cause of Allah in the true meaning of striving. He has chosen you, and has imposed no difficulties on you in religion" (22:78). On the basis of these verses, Muslims believe that Islamic law is fundamentally aimed at making human life simpler and happier by avoiding extremism of any sort, and argue that taking a hardline (*tashdīd*) instead of a softline (*takhfīf*) is contrary to the divine intent of Islamic law.⁹

The doctrine of *tarhīb* (deterrence) and *targhīb* (incentive) is derived from a Qur'anic stylistic of juxtaposing strong prohibition alongside generous permission, and is in a sense an extension of the doctrine

⁶ Abu Bakr b. Ahmad, *Irshād al-ḥayārā*, 3, *et passim*.

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ *Ibid.*, f. 4.

⁹ Al-Shāṭibī, vol. 2, 128.

of *tashdīd* and *takhfīf*. In such juxtaposition, prohibition is expressed in strong rhetorical terms (*mubālagha*) to serve the purpose of deterrence (*tarhīb*); but the expression of permission tends towards ease and simplicity (*takhfīf*) for the purpose of giving incentive (*targhīb*). Muslim jurists adopt the principle that the middle ground should be aimed at,¹⁰ for that accords with the Qur'anic verse characterizing the Muslim community: "Thus We have made of you a median *umma*" (2:143). However, some jurists may give a ruling that emphasizes either deterrence or incentive, for a variety of reasons, including personal inclination, or for peculiar circumstances, such as the imposition of British colonialism.

Applying the principle of avoiding *tashdīd* to justify Muslims' acceptance of the colonial appropriation of Islam, Abu Bakr b. Ahmad counteracts the contention that adopting a friendly attitude towards non-Muslims on the basis of fear and necessity is a flagrant violation of Qur'an 5:51: "O you who believe! Take not the Jews and the Christians for friends and protectors." For Abu Bakr b. Ahmad, this verse calls for a hermeneutical intervention to demonstrate that the intent of Allah in this verse is "*tashdīd* for the obligation to keep away from followers of a different religion."¹¹ In this instance, Abu Bakr b. Ahmad is using *tashdīd* in the sense of deterrence, as could be seen in the authorities he quoted to further support his interpretation of the verse:

Ibn Ḥajar said in *Fath al-Rahmān*: "If you think that this verse implies that friendship with a Jewish person is unbelief, it is not so. I contend that it is only for rhetorical excess (*mubālagha*) to emphasize avoiding people with different religion. Alternatively, the verse may be referring to hypocrites, who are unbelievers." It is likewise the case with Qur'an [6:121]: "The evil ones ever inspire their friends to contend with you. If you were to obey them, you would indeed be polytheists." [Obedience here] means to follow them in legalizing what Allah has forbidden, for that will be tantamount to associating a partner in Allah's power to legislate. Ibn al-'Arabī said in *al-Aḥkām*: "The believer becomes a polytheist by obeying a polytheist if the former follows the latter in faith, which makes the difference between belief and unbelief. If the believer obeys only in deed, but continues with his Islamic faith, then he has only committed a sin." This principle should be understood in

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, vol. 3, 268 ff.

¹¹ Abu Bakr b. Ahmad, *Irshād al-ḥayārā*, f. 3.

all cases, and should be the basis for judging all obedience to their [i.e. the British] commands. Allah forgives error, especially under necessity and its peculiar rules; a point known to those whose intelligence has been enlightened by Allah, and to those who take the softline (*takhfif*).¹²

The opening part of the passage makes it clear that Abu Bakr b. Ahmad is employing *tashdīd* in the sense of strong prohibition for the purpose of deterrence. His point is that Muslims' acceptance of British colonial rule, dictated by fear and necessity as he contends, should not be seen as contradicting the Qur'anic prohibition of Muslims taking Jews and Christians as friends and protectors. Construing rhetorical emphasis to mean prohibition amounts to taking a hardline interpretation. In contrast, Abu Bakr b. Ahmad points out at the end of the passage that the softline interpretation shows that there is no violation of the true intent of the prohibition, namely: loss of Islamic faith as a result of friendly intercourse with non-Muslims. He points out that despite their acceptance of colonial rule, Muslims remain steadfast in their Islamic faith. Thus, whereas the hardline interpretation portrays Muslims' acceptance of colonial rule as a flagrant disregard for Qur'anic prohibition, the softline interpretation renders such acceptance to be at the worst just sinful, for which the author invokes Allah's forgiveness.

From an Islamic point of view, the difference between flagrant violation of the Qur'an and sinful disobedience is of decisive importance. Flagrant disregard of the Qur'an is a negation of Islamic faith, and exposes a Muslim not only to eternal damnation in hell-fire, but also to the charge of polytheism, an offense punishable by death in Islamic law. On the other hand, the sanction against sinful disobedience is often no more than observing rituals of purification and seeking the forgiveness of Allah. The chances of obtaining Allah's forgiveness for sinful disobedience are significantly enhanced by mitigating considerations such as fear and necessity, hence Abu Bakr b. Ahmad's recurrent emphasis of these two factors. In other words, Muslims' acquiescence under British colonialism is a sin compelled by fear and necessity, and for which Allah's forgiveness is being sought.

Abu Bakr b. Ahmad's invocation of the paired doctrines of

¹² *Ibid.*, ff. 3-4.

‘azīma/rukḥṣa and *tashdīd/takhfīf* allows him to maneuver easily within what I have termed (in Chapter One) as “the duality in Islamic legal thought.” This duality takes the form of a categorical statement of a rule (e.g. the Islamic validity of a truce depends on four conditions), and attaching acceptable exemptions to the rule, (e.g. fear for, and necessity of, preserving Muslims’ physical survival make a truce valid even if all the four conditions are not met). The duality makes it easy to solve ethical dilemmas once an acceptable exemption can be established, a task easily accomplished with these paired doctrines. However, when these paired doctrines are not applicable, Abu Bakr b. Ahmad adopts other casuistic techniques of argumentation. Thus for Qur’anic verses that contradict his argument for Muslims’ acceptance of British colonial rule in Northern Nigeria, Abu Bakr b. Ahmad resorts to *ta’wīl*: the hermeneutical technique Muslim exegetes adopt in order to adjust the primary and obvious signification of scripture. By *ta’wīl*, arguments are advanced and reversed, meanings are added and shifted, and scriptural imperatives are determined, suspended, restricted, or otherwise modified. Thus where the Qur’an prohibits friendly intercourse with non-Muslims, Abu Bakr b. Ahmad interprets the verse to mean not what it says apparently, but a rather far-fetched signification of warning against the loss of Islamic faith that could result from such friendly intercourse.

Abu Bakr b. Ahmad’s most interesting argument was that the strongest justification for Muslims to serve under British indirect rule was that without the participation of Muslims, the British would not have known how to establish justice.¹³ His reasoning is that the British, as infidels, lacked the moral discernment of right from wrong as defined by Islam. This contrasts sharply with Lugard’s recurrent characterization of the pre-colonial administration of Muslim society in Northern Nigeria as decadent and corrupt.¹⁴ Lugard’s characterization has often been quoted uncritically, even by some Muslim writers,¹⁵ a point examined more fully and critically in Chapter Five. Abu Bakr b. Ahmad’s argument here demonstrates clearly that the Lugardian view of pre-colonial Northern Nigeria as decadent and

¹³ *Ibid.*, f. 7.

¹⁴ Lugard, *Collected Annual Reports*, 71 ff. *et passim*

¹⁵ For example, see: Abdulmaliki Mani, (1956), 12–22; A.U. Jalingo (1982–85), 69–82.

corrupt was by no means universally accepted by Muslims. If anything, it was Lugard's own administration that Abu Bakr b. Ahmad portrays as incapable of establishing justice without the participation of Muslims.

As Abu Bakr b. Ahmad based his main argument on consideration of fear and necessity, he invokes the same consideration to elaborate a number of minor arguments. For example, to confer Islamic validity on the British appointment of Muslim judges, he contends that it is lawful for a just Muslim judge to accept appointment from an unjust or sinful ruler, if there is no other way of administering Islamic law. He quotes, from *Bayān wujūb al-hijra* by Uthman b. Fodiye, the fatwa given by al-Māzarī for the Islamic validity of decisions by Muslim judges appointed by the Christian rulers of Sicily. He asserts that the consideration of necessity that informed al-Māzarī's fatwa is also applicable to the acceptance by Muslim judges of appointment by the British colonial administration in Northern Nigeria. He then adds that it is only applicable to the righteous judges and emirs, who were compelled by necessity to serve under the British, but not to sinful people who followed the British willingly. I will later explain this polemical current in the context of analyzing the audience Abu Bakr b. Ahmad was addressing.

Similarly, Abu Bakr b. Ahmad justifies Muslims' payment of colonial taxes on the same grounds of fear and necessity that justified truce with a stronger non-Muslim power. He maintains that since the British conquest had virtually made Muslims prisoners of war, it is lawful for Muslims to redeem themselves by paying the taxes and other demands of wealth imposed by the British conquerors.¹⁶ To support this argument, he quotes Qur'an 4:75: "And why should you not fight in the cause of Allah and of those who, being weak, are ill-treated and oppressed? Men, women, and children, whose cry is: 'Our Lord! Rescue us from this town, whose people are oppressors; and give to us from You one who will protect; and give for us from You one who will help!'" He adopts Ibn al-'Arabī's interpretation of this verse, namely: Allah made fighting to rescue Muslim prisoners of war an obligation, and that "considering the loss of lives involved in combat, then it is even more obligatory to spend wealth

¹⁶ Abu Bakr b. Ahmad, *Irshād al-hayārā*, f. 4.

for the ransom of Muslim prisoners of war." He further quotes the views of Mālik b. Anas and Ibn Juzayy that "it is obligatory on a rich prisoner of war to ransom himself, and on the *imām* to ransom the poor from Muslim public treasury, and if that is not enough, the entire wealth of Muslims should be used for the ransom."¹⁷

It is interesting that Abu Bakr b. Ahmad equates the status of Muslims as colonial subjects with that of prisoners of war. This speaks directly to the doctrine of right of conquest which Lugard claimed as the basis of British colonial rule over Northern Nigeria. Abu Bakr b. Ahmad implies that without British military superiority, Muslims would not have accepted colonial rule. This challenges the common view that the Muslim rulers of Northern Nigeria were willing partners in the colonial regime. In equating payment of colonial taxes with paying ransom for Muslim prisoners of war, Abu Bakr b. Ahmad reiterates the fundamental basis of his contentions: fear and necessity, rather than willing cooperation, were the basis of Muslims' participation in the British colonial administration. He adds that "any fair-minded observer will know that giving wealth to them for the purpose of liberation from them has the support of *shar'ā*, especially under necessity and the rules peculiar to it."¹⁸

Necessity is once again the basis for Abu Bakr b. Ahmad's justification for Muslims' association with the British. He concedes that *hijra* is preferable to associating with unbelievers, and thereby adding to their multitude. However, he shares the view earlier advanced by his father and Wazir Buhari that *hijra* was not a feasible option for Muslims of Northern Nigeria at the time of the British conquest. Therefore, he argues that associating with the British has become Islamically lawful for reason of necessity, dissimulation, and fear, adding that "to defend oneself from harm to the extent possible is obligatory."¹⁹ This invocation of self-defense as another justification for Muslims' acquiescence under the British is not the first one. He had earlier argued that defending oneself from harm warrants the suspension of the preconditions for the validity of truce.²⁰ His employment of self-defense derives from his characterization of

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, f. 5.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰ *Ibid.*, f. 4.

Muslims under colonial rule as prisoners of war, which he in turn derives from the defeat of Muslims by the British. Indeed, his repeated invocations of fear and necessity are all built on acknowledging the fact that Muslims are in no position to offer any effective resistance to the British conquest; a point he expresses twice in the proverb "seeing is believing."²¹

In the transition from the main body of his treatise to its conclusion, Abu Bakr b. Ahmad shifts from legal argumentation to consoling fellow Muslims. He accomplishes this transition by quoting Qur'an 3:186: "And you shall certainly hear much that will grieve you from those who received the Scripture before you, and from those who worship many gods. But if you persevere patiently, and guard against evil, then that will be a determining factor in all affairs." The opening part of the verse, omitted by our author, introduces trial and tribulation as the theme of the verse: "You shall certainly be tried and tested in your possessions and in your personal selves." Although Abu Bakr b. Ahmad does not explain why he quotes this verse, other than to say that Muslims should take solace in it, his quotation of a verse on trial and tribulation to console fellow Muslims ties in well with the elaborate legal arguments he had constructed to justify acquiescence under colonialism.

The thrust of his treatise is that British colonial rule had imposed an inescapable abnormality which warranted the application of the dictum that necessity knows no law, a principle recognized by Muslim jurists. He seems to be saying to Muslims who might find all his legal arguments too tenuous or unconvincing, and whose conscience might therefore be still not at ease, that they should be reassured by conceptualizing colonialism as a trial and tribulation ordained by Allah. This point is made all the more plausible by the certainty with which the verse affirms that the People of the Scripture, the category under which Muslims identified the British as Christians, will cause grief to Muslims. An example of such grief appears in the British defeat of Muslims, which Abu Bakr b. Ahmad made the fundamental basis of his legal justification for Muslims' acquiescence in British colonial rule. The verse renders such acquiescence more bearable by commending perseverance and patience. Thus although Abu Bakr b. Ahmad did not elaborate on the verse, it fits in very well

²¹ *Ibid.*, f. 2, and f. 7.

with the thrust of his arguments, and serves as a subtle but pertinent termination of the main body of his treatise.

In his conclusion, Abu Bakr b. Ahmad addresses a number of interesting issues. First, he reminds his readers that his purpose is to counsel fellow Muslims by alerting them to what might not be obvious in the interpretation of Qur'anic verses on *taqiyya*. He quotes Sultan Muhammad Bello's *Shifa' al-asqām* to make the point that "to hold the people of Allah in suspicion necessarily indicates the hardening of the heart . . . and might lead to eternal damnation."²² Referring to the British conquest of Northern Nigeria as the "disaster that had befallen Muslims," Abu Bakr b. Ahmad makes his final point by emphasizing a distinction in Muslims' responses to colonialism "between those who were compelled by necessity to accept British colonial rule, and those who chose to associate with colonial rule out of friendship and love [for the British.]"²³ He thus brings his polemical agenda to the fore, thereby raising the question: who is he seeking to convince that Muslims' acceptance of British colonial rule is justifiable in Islamic law?

As I pointed out earlier, Abu Bakr b. Ahmad builds his treatise on the Islamic legal arguments constructed by his father, Ahmad b. Sa'd, the *Qāḍī* of Gwandu, and the Wazir of Sokoto, Muhammadu Buhari, to justify surrender to the British. In essence, Abu Bakr b. Ahmad extends those arguments to the political challenges that confronted Muslims as a consequence of their military defeat by the British. Thus Abu Bakr b. Ahmad's treatise is addressed to two categories of Muslims. First, those who had to deal with the political consequences of surrender to the British, namely, the emirs, Muslim judges, and all the Muslims appointed by the British under indirect rule, and second, those who rejected the surrender, and instead, advocated confrontation or avoidance. As demonstrated in Chapter Two, confrontation was supported by martyrdom (*shahāda*) while *hijra* supported arguments for avoidance. Abu Bakr b. Ahmad directs his polemic at the proponents of avoidance of, and confrontation with, the British. He underscores the direct connections between the military and the political challenges of British colonialism. Similarly, by relating acceptance of British appointment of Muslim judges to

²² *Ibid.*, f. 8.

²³ *Ibid.*

Muslims' fears of British military superiority, he connects the legal challenges of colonialism to both the military and the political challenges, thereby linking all the responses of Muslims' to these challenges that, for convenience, had to be treated here under separate chapters.

Abu Bakr b. Ahmad's invocation of Islamic legal doctrines is rather complex. First, he quotes numerous Qur'anic verses and *hadīths*, and then subjects these quotations to exegetical and legal interpretations, relying on the authority of classical texts to support his contentions. As was the case in the Islamic legal arguments for surrender to the British, he quotes copiously from the works of the leaders of the Sokoto jihad. *Muwālāt* and *maṣlaḥa* are among the features of the nineteenth-century discourses that Abu Bakr b. Ahmad invokes. *Darūra*, the concept of necessity that he employs as the fundamental basis of all his arguments, is closely connected to *maṣlaḥa* in al-Shāṭibī's conception of the fundamental objectives of Islamic law vis-à-vis the role of necessity in determining Islamic legality. Clearly, Abu Bakr b. Ahmad's arguments are well grounded in Islamic Law. Yet, not all Muslims were persuaded; hence different views and counter-arguments were articulated in different sets of Islamic ideas to support different Muslims' responses to the political challenges of British colonialism.

*Emir Aliyu dan Sidi and the Allegorical
Discourse on Colonialism*

In contrast to the Islamic legal discourses on colonialism so far reviewed, poetry was the medium preferred by Aliyu dan Sidi (d. 1924), the first Emir of Zazzau appointed by the British in 1903. He was a noted Hausa poet, whose prolific poems on both religious and secular themes are very popular,²⁴ and influential in the development of Hausa Islamic verse in the twentieth-century.²⁵ He relied chiefly on allegory to express his concerns on colonialism; therefore,

²⁴ For a biographical sketch of Aliyu dan Sidi, and a discussion of the popularity of his poems, see the introductory essay in the anthology of his poems edited by Zubairu Uthman and Nuhu (1980), 1-3. See also *ALA*, II, 360-61.

²⁵ For literary critical analyses of some of his poems, see: Mervin Hiskett (1975),

background information is needed in order to understand this Islamic allegorical discourse on colonialism.

To start with, the advent of the British into Zaria, the capital of Zazzau Emirate, came about without military conquest. Emir of Zazzau, Muhammad Kwasau (*r.* 1897–1902), welcomed the British in 1900, and in 1901, sought their military support against Kontagora raids into Zazzau. In March 1902, Captain Abadie was appointed as the first British Resident for Zaria Province, from where the British launched the conquest of Kano. Emir Kwasau's considerations for willingly submitting to the British were complex, as quickly became clear to the British:

During this year [1902] the Emir of Kano was openly hostile to the British occupation, and the Emir of Zaria Kwasau, being involved in intrigues with him, was removed to Wushishi in September, and in March, 1903, was deposed by the High Commissioner and Aliyu dan Sidi . . . [was] appointed in his stead. The Zaria Emirate was territorially the largest. . . . But, in 1902, as a punishment for the murder of Captain Maloney, at Keffi, by the Magajin Keffi, one of Emir Kwasau's fief-holders, the lower Benue Provinces as they were originally named, were taken from Zaria, the Gurara river becoming the new boundary.²⁶

These circumstances under which Aliyu dan Sidi became the Emir of Zazzau are particularly relevant for understanding the allusions and allegories in his poems on colonialism, as will be demonstrated presently.

The "intrigues" that led to the dismissal of Emir Kwasau refer to his secretly apprising the Emir of Kano Aliyu Babba of British military plans. For example, an official of Zazzau Emirate, Magaji Dalhatu, addressed a letter to Emir Aliyu Babba, stating that:

After greetings the object of my letter is to inform you of the coming of the Christians. For they have increased among us, and have settled more firmly than before. As to news of the others they have come to Kwaba and have collected stores for war. They declare that when they have finished what they are doing among us, they will go away and come to you. So I have written a letter to you that you may have the news.²⁷

83–85, and numerous pages indicated in the index on pp. 263–4; Mamudu Aminu, "Sharhin Wakofin Hausa na karni Goma Sha Tara da karni Ashirin," (M.A. Thesis, Bayero University, Kano, 1977), 78–99; and Neil Skinner (1980), 180–84.

²⁶ E.J. Arnett (1920), 14.

²⁷ H.F. Backwell (1969), 70. See also p. 7 for further correspondence from Zaria on the movement of British troops.

The fact that the British were able to uncover this secret correspondence would not have been lost on Aliyu dan Sidi. Even more telling was the dismissal of his immediate predecessor for "intrigues" against the British. Aliyu dan Sidi also knew that the British were pursuing the Magaji of Keffi for the death of Captain Maloney, and that the alleged reason for attacking Kano was the favorable reception of the Magaji of Keffi by Emir Aliyu Babba. Clearly, any open expression of criticism against the British would not enhance Aliyu dan Sidi's chances of retaining his position. However, some of the changes introduced by the British, especially the territorial reorganization that substantially reduced Zazzau's fiefdoms, left Emir Aliyu dan Sidi with few options other than "intrigues." Apart from the general problems arising from Muslim rulers serving under the British indirect rule, there were additional problems peculiar to Zazzau, as demonstrated by M.G. Smith, the pioneer of modern scholarship on Zazzau.²⁸ He showed that Zazzau was ruled throughout the nineteenth-century by three dynasties in a rotational system of succession, under which all the major emirate officials were appointed from the reigning dynasty. However, by replacing rotational succession with loyalty to the colonial administration, the British introduced great uncertainty regarding succession and tenure of office. Other changes rendered many of the long established traditions and well accepted administrative practices of the Zazzau emirate redundant, and in some cases, turned them into offenses warranting dismissal from office. In particular, some of the old practices of dynastic rivalry became "intrigues," which led to the dismissal of a number of emirate officials by the British.²⁹

Similarly, half of the revenues of Zazzau Emirate went to the British during the first decade of colonial rule, and in 1910, all the emirate officials, including Emir Aliyu dan Sidi, were placed on fixed salaries. In 1912, the fifteen taxable categories of wealth in the pre-colonial period, many of which went to fief-holders, were replaced by four categories, and further reduced in 1918 to a single tax fixed at ten percent of gross income, payable directly into the treasury controlled by British colonial officers.³⁰ Emirate officials found col-

²⁸ M.G. Smith (1960), 199-238.

²⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁰ Arnett (1920), 16-17.

lecting any of the old taxes were liable to dismissal for "peculation" and "embezzlement," and these charges became additional weapons in dynastic rivalry, leading Smith to remark that: "in the last years of Aliyu's reign there was a sudden increase in the number of District Chiefs dismissed from office for actions which had the sanction of local tradition, but which were now defined as offenses under the new system."³¹ Two of Emir Aliyu dan Sidi's sons were dismissed from the post of Madaki, the heir-apparent. The Emir himself was eventually to suffer a similar fate. This pervasive insecurity of tenure must have been a major check on open criticism of the British, hence Emir Aliyu dan Sidi's resort to allegorical discourse on colonialism.

The circumstances leading to the dismissal of Emir Aliyu dan Sidi in 1920 were the direct outcome of the changes introduced by the British, particularly the changes that led to the loss of his executive powers, and sources and control of revenue. Emir Aliyu dan Sidi's attempts to cope with these changes led him to actions often contrary to British colonial standards of public accountability. As a result, the British reversed many of his decisions and appointments. For example, the Islamic judge of Zaria used to be appointed and dismissed by the Emir, but as British judicial reforms made the judge independent, the Emir was stripped of the hallmark of his sovereign judicial powers. Smith observes that the increasing dependence of Emir Aliyu dan Sidi "on his judiciary was emphasized by his failure to prevent dismissals from and re-appointment to territorial office consequent on judicial decisions."³² Emir Aliyu dan Sidi's attempts to assert sovereign judicial powers were not acceptable to the British colonial administration, and in fact, these attempts were part of the formal charges for his deposition: the British regarded his judgments involving the death penalty as vindictive. It should be stressed that Walter Miller, of the Church Missionary Society, played a very important role in the downfall of Aliyu dan Sidi. Miller spent nearly two decades campaigning to oust Emir Aliyu dan Sidi as a precondition for converting Zaria into a Christian city.

In analyzing these major changes, Smith emphasized the insecurity of office that resulted from changes in the accepted rules of competing for, and holding titles to fiefdom, the system of succession,

³¹ Smith (1960), 212.

³² *Ibid.*, 214.

and dynastic rotation. He observed that changes introduced by the British transformed Zazzau Emirate beyond recognition, and that "it is unthinkable that a Fulani ruler of Zaria in the nineteenth-century would ever dismiss his own sons from the position of Madaki."³³ It is my contention that the allegories and allusions in the poems of Emir Aliyu dan Sidi reflect the way he comprehended these "unthinkable changes" within the framework of Islamic thought and his impressive command of the Hausa language.

Allegory in Aliyu dan Sidi's Poems

Hiskett analyzed Aliyu dan Sidi's usage of allegory within the context of the development of personification of the material world as *contemptus mundi*. Hiskett demonstrated, with many excerpts from both Arabic and Hausa Islamic verse, that this personification has permeated poetical composition in Northern Nigeria since the nineteenth-century. He then argued that "the Hausa poet who mused longest on the wiles and deceits of that strumpet, the world, was Aliyu dan Sidi." He illustrated this point with Aliyu dan Sidi's *Wakar ajuza*, the Song of the Old Hag, where the poet "reflects satirically on the ways and wiles of the harlots of everyday life whom he sees around him. Then, in the final verses, he reveals that he is really describing *duniya*, 'the world.'³⁴

As I demonstrated in the previous chapter, Islamic moral discourse on the seductive and treacherous nature of the material world featured in some of the voices in the Islamic arguments for surrender to British military superiority. I will further discuss this theme while analyzing the discourses of the *ʿulama* on the political challenges of colonialism. Aliyu dan Sidi's *Wakar ajuza* is identical with his *Wakar Saudul al-Kulubi* [*sawt al-qulub*], and *Bulalar Dukan Zuciya*, The Moral Whiplash.³⁵ Both poems could very well be analyzed within the context of applying Islamic moral discourse against *dunyā* to the colonial situation. For example, these lines are from the *Wakar ajuza*:

One day we set out on foot, one day on horseback,
And you would put on a becoming blouse,

³³ *Ibid.*, 209.

³⁴ Hiskett (1975), 83.

³⁵ Uthman and Bamalli (1980), 10-17.

One day you would come with an angry eye,
 One day you would come with a smiling face,
 One day with a scowling face, . . .
 Go put on your gown, you harlot!
 Thus thou art, thou woman, Duniya,
 Her lover will be full of cares . . .
 There is discomfort in any other place than God's
 For there you will find no security,
 If you intend to enter [God's place]
 Stop up the door of any other place,
 For [in it] you will not find fulfillment of your need.³⁶

The juxtaposition between utter unreliability of the constantly changing world, and security and comfort of relying on God allude to the many changes introduced by the British that had eroded the powers of the emir and made that office insecure. The poet made the frustration brought about by the constant changes under colonialism more bearable by seeking comfort, security, and fulfillment in God. In order to establish more firmly my contention that the poems of Aliyu dan Sidi contain allegorical discourses on colonialism, let us move to analyze his poem *Wakar Zuwa Birnin Kano*, the Poem on Going to Kano.

Aliyu dan Sidi's Allegorical Discourse on Colonialism

Aliyu dan Sidi composed this poem of 72 lines on the occasion of a durbar held in Kano to welcome Frederick Lugard as Governor of Nigeria (1912–1919), yet the poem has no explicit reference to colonialism, despite the quintessentially colonial occasion of its composition. Neil Skinner notes that this poem might be a record of “the poet’s own first ride on the railway,” and while commenting that Aliyu dan Sidi “wrote poetry that was full of *habaici* (satirical innuendo),” Skinner holds that “this poem appears to be a simple description of a gathering of the rulers of Northern Nigeria at Kano shortly after the railway was opened, perhaps to meet the Governor of Nigeria, about 1910–1912.”³⁷ I contend that this seemingly simple record of a gathering of Emirs at Kano should be read as an allegorical discourse on colonialism because, among other reasons

³⁶ Hiskett (1975), 84–85. Cf. Uthman and Bamalli (1980), 10–17.

³⁷ Skinner (1980), 180.

discussed presently, the poem was composed on a major colonial moment: a public ceremony for the reception of the colonial Governor of Nigeria.

Colonial records from Zaria indicate that in 1912, "His Excellency the Governor, Sir F.D. Lugard, visited Zaria in December on his way to hold a Durbar of chiefs at Kano. The Emir [of Zazzau, Aliyu dan Sidi] and chiefs attended His Excellency's Durbar at Kano in December."³⁸ In the covering letter to his annual report on Northern Nigeria for 1912, Lugard remarked on "the very striking result of the durbar of native chiefs held on the 1st of January, which demonstrated at once the loyalty of the chiefs, and the peace and friendship which now happily exist between them and the pagan tribes."³⁹ Clearly, Lugard regarded the durbar as a major political event, which he further described thus:

A Durbar was held in Kano . . . at which Emirs and Chiefs and their followers from all parts of the Protectorate attended. No crime or friction of any sort resulted from the assemblage of this enormous crowd of once antagonistic rulers and their followers, who, to quote the Emir of Kano, "had never previously enjoyed any shelter in common, save the shade of night." Residents are unanimous in noting the good effects of this visit upon their chiefs—especially those of pagan districts.⁴⁰

Aliyu dan Sidi's *Wakar Zuwa Birnin Kano*, reveals this gathering in a completely different ordering of the significance of its various aspects. Most notable is his complete silence on the presence of Lugard himself, in whose honor the occasion was organized. It is also notable that Aliyu dan Sidi's order of enumeration reduced to an absolute minimum the presence of the colonizer, equalized it with, or placed it below, the presence of the colonized. This ordering is significant because of its difference from the colonial order of things, especially on the important issue of hierarchy.

Aliyu dan Sidi opens the poem with a doxology, which in accordance with the conventions of Hausa Islamic verse, hints at the subject of his composition (lines 1–4).⁴¹ He introduces the gathering at

³⁸ Arnett (1920), 33.

³⁹ F.D. Lugard (1914), 4.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 32.

⁴¹ Skinner (1980), 180–81. I compared Skinner's translation against the two versions of the Hausa original in Uthman and Bamalli (1980), one in the original composition, and one embedded in pentastich form (*takhtum*) by Alhaji Yahya Gusau,

Kano as willed by Allah, rather than a *darbar* summoned by the colonial authorities. He also mentions the Emir of Kano as the host of the *darbar*, but does not mention any of the colonial officials who initiated the *darbar*. Whereas Lugard quoted the Emir of Kano as crediting the colonial regime for making the *darbar* possible, the poet ignores completely any input by the colonial authorities; instead he gives all the credit to the Emir of Kano:

- 24) My greetings go to the Emir of Kano for his work,
For the gathering in his town of Kano,
- 25) For the homes we were lodged in, for the entertainment,
For the going forth to welcome the chiefs as they
reached Kano,
- 26) For the lodgment given to white and to black,
From the city and the village, for the viewing of Kano.
- 27) I have good reason to know about his work,
For I stayed when I went to Kano,
- 28) For I too toiled, when I was going to Kano.
Both to him our host and to us the visitors—May the
Exalted give true virtue—in Kano.⁴²

The mention of “white and black” is the first of the only two explicit references to the colonizer in the entire 72 lines of this poem. In a sense, the mention of the railway, by which Emir Aliyu dan Sidi traveled to Kano (and on which he composed another poem discussed below), could also be regarded as a reference to the presence of the colonizer, which would then be the third reference. Though he mentions white first and then black, the poet does not indicate the hierarchy that existed between white, the colonizer, and black, the colonized. In the third mention of the white man, discussed below, he explicitly juxtaposes the school of white man’s learning alongside the Qur’anic school, thereby creating the sense of symmetry rather than hierarchy.

As a first class emir, Aliyu dan Sidi knew very well that British colonial authorities attached great importance to rank, and to the proper hierarchical ordering of rank in observing colonial protocols at official occasions, such as public ceremonies for the Governor. For Lugard, rank and hierarchy were sufficiently important to warrant

pp. 34–36 and 21–26 respectively. I have adopted Skinner’s translation, with minor modifications, where my reading of the Hausa original leads me to differ.

⁴² Uthman and Bamalli (1980), 35; Skinner (1980), 181–82.

specific instructions for how colonial officers should conduct themselves in the presence of native rulers, with particular attention to the ranks of both the officers and the rulers.⁴³ As a ruler himself, Emir Aliyu dan Sidi saw rank and hierarchy as equally important. Thus by portraying white and black as equal recipients of the generous hospitality of the Emir of Kano, Aliyu dan Sidi could be said to be not merely ignoring the colonial hierarchical order of things, but also subverting it. The pre-eminent mention of the Emir of Kano stands in sharp contrast with the complete silence on the presence of Governor Lugard. This omission acquires importance in light of the fact that in the enumeration of the rulers who attended the durbar, the poet pays attention to both their hierarchy and ranks.

Starting with the Shehu of Borno, the poet lists the various rulers who came for the occasion (lines 9–23). Although no any particular order of listing is apparent, a closer examination of the poet's enumeration of the rulers and the events at the durbar reveals a clear sense of their different levels of political significance. For example, among the good effects of the durbar, Lugard emphasized "peace and friendship which now happily exists between them [emirs] and the pagan tribes." In contrast, "pagan tribes" appeared not as friends, but mere subjects in the royal entourage of Emir Aliyu dan Sidi:

- 31) And I took with me pagans of many tribes,
with trumpeting and drumming in the gathering at Kano.
- 32) The men of Fiti with their horses wearing face ornaments,
And the Shayi, galloping at Kano.
- 33) Of mounted men I took with me to Kano
Five thousands was the total.
- 34) Kurama, Katab and Chawai too,
All performed at the gathering in Kano.
- 35) Jaba and Gwari; the men of Rumniya,
Kadara too—these too I took to the gathering at Kano.

The perspectives of both Frederick Lugard and Aliyu dan Sidi on the participation of "pagans" in the durbar can not be appreciated without first understanding British colonial policies regarding relationships between Muslim communities and "pagan tribes." Central to the entire colonial administration of Northern Nigeria was the dichotomy between Muslims and non-Muslims. On numerous pol-

⁴³ Lugard, (1970), 309.

icy issues, the British colonial administration drew distinctions between, on the one hand, Muslim communities and their emirates as "advanced," "civilized" and "more organized," and on the other hand, non-Muslim communities as "primitive," "backward" and "devoid of political organization." Perhaps the one issue that encapsulated and perpetuated these binary distinctions was the hierarchical classification of native rulers into five grades under the British system of indirect rule.⁴⁴ All the eleven first grade rulers in Northern Nigeria were Muslims, all but one of the sixteen rulers in the second grade were also Muslims. Finally, in Lugard's words: "the more important District Headmen and Pagan Chiefs occupy the third grade, and the less influential the fourth and fifth, according as the Resident may recommend."⁴⁵

Yet despite this obvious privileging of Muslims and their political institutions, it is important to remember that British colonial administration in Northern Nigeria was not established to foster Islam. Lugard stated this point quite clearly when he stressed the importance of "the maintenance of the independence of those tribes who had maintained their liberty against the Moslem conquerors."⁴⁶ His analysis of this issue deserves to be quoted in full:

It is not part of the policy of this protectorate to place these tribes forcibly under Moslem rule (which in practice means their conversion to the Moslem faith) even though that rule may be more advanced and intelligent than anything they are as yet capable of evolving themselves. "Good government is no equivalent for self-government," and though the more direct British administration, which is temporarily necessary among these primitive tribes, is not self-government, its aim is to develop among them the same measure of self-government as is accorded to the Moslem States, to foster their own institutions and to refrain from turning them into Moslems by imposing Moslem rule upon them, or even by the more insidious process of appointing Mohammedans as their Chiefs, or as Judges for their Courts, or teachers for their schools, while nominally allowing them independence.⁴⁷

Lugard's equivocation here should not conceal the fact that British colonial administration in Northern Nigeria never granted equal status to both Muslim and non-Muslim communities. Up to the end

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 273, 297, 301, 307-8, *et passim*.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 308.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 302.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

of the colonial period in 1960, not a single non-Muslim ruler was promoted to the rank of first grade native ruler, despite the protestations of British intention to accord the "same measure of self-government" to both Muslim and non-Muslim communities. Given the importance of rank and hierarchy within the protocols of colonial administration, a first grade emir like Aliyu dan Sidi would not be featured in the colonial order of ceremony and procession on an equal level with "pagan chiefs," all of whom belonged to the third grade or lower. Aliyu dan Sidi's description of both ranks and hierarchy is discernible in his enumeration of the participants in the 1912 durbar at Kano. For example, the kingdom of Abuja was founded in the early nineteenth-century by the rulers of Zazzau displaced by the jihad of Uthman b. Fodiye. Relations between Zazzau and Abuja had been those of rival claimants to the ancient traditions of Zazzau. This point is reflected in the way Aliyu dan Sidi mentions Abuja among those who attended the durbar in Kano:

- 20) Ilorin, the Nupes, and Agaie,
 And even Abuja—in the city of Kano.
 21) And there was the sheep, and there the leopard;
 They drank from the same place; they grazed in Kano.

The portrayal here is that of the prey, the sheep (i.e. Abuja), and the predator, the leopard (i.e. Zazzau) co-existing without aggression. In one sense, Aliyu dan Sidi is here concurring with Lugard's characterization of the durbar as a ceremonial that dramatized the erasure of the pre-colonial patterns of power relations among the rulers of Northern Nigeria. But whereas one gets the sense that Lugard was claiming credit for the cessation of aggression between the predator and the prey, amazement at this reversal of the natural order of things is the sense one gets from Aliyu dan Sidi's description of an unexpected tranquility between the leopard and the sheep. By their different portrayals of this spectacle, both Aliyu dan Sidi and Frederick Lugard put ellipsis in place of explicit reference to the relations of power between the two of them, even as that power was demonstrated in the spectacle that had reversed the natural order of things. The Governor celebrates the beneficence of his power by highlighting the peace and reconciliation he had brought to a region that allegedly had never known either. The Emir laments his loss of power as manifested in the equal treatment accorded to him and his erstwhile contender. Yet even so, the Emir affirms the pre-eminence of Zazzau in this great assembly of rulers:

- 34) In the great galloping of chiefs' horses,
 Those of Zazzau took the honors at Kano.
- 35) And when the games were held and the arena was full,
 Our hoe-men excelled in Kano.
- 36) In a butting match, fat and thin cannot compete,
 As you know, a sheep's strength is nothing—and not only in
 Kano.
- 37) Steel and steel if rubbed together,
 One will cut the other—so it was in Kano.
- 38) Strength is not shown till it matches with another strength
 Rocks were shattered at Kano.
- 39) Go round Kano—find a Kano man,
 From the city, who knows Kano,
- 40) Ask him to tell you God's truth,
 To tell you all about the gathering at Kano.⁴⁸

In asserting the pre-eminence of Zazzau amidst the reversal of the natural order of things, Aliyu dan Sidi indicates his unwillingness to accept what he regarded as the abnormal outcome of the reversal. He had earlier expressed amazement at seeing the unexpected harmony between predator and prey. He now reveals that the apparent harmony is not, in fact, real, for by setting the predator against the prey, the superior strength of the former prevails over the latter. The poet thus exposes the irreversibility of the natural order of things, a view he further affirms in the metaphor of steel cutting steel: even a contest of equals reveals a winner. The pretensions of the defeated are exposed: what appeared to be steel turned out to be a rock. Then, in the name of God, the poet calls for a truthful testimony to the inevitability of the triumph of the strong over the weak, thus invoking the Almighty as the guarantor of the permanence of the natural order of things.

On the surface, this characterization of the pre-eminence of Zazzau by Aliyu dan Sidi, its Emir, represents no more than a ruler's poetical celebration of the importance of his dominions. However, he composed this poem as a description of a public ceremony held for welcoming Frederick Lugard as the Colonial Governor of Nigeria. This context necessarily inserts the poem into Muslims' discourses on colonialism. The conspicuous ellipsis on the presence of Governor Lugard at the public ceremony described in the poem, establishes

⁴⁸ Uthman and Bamalli, (1970), 36; Skinner (1980), 182.

silence as one of the modes of Muslims' discourses on colonialism in Northern Nigeria. Similarly, the allusions and metaphors in the poem constitute allegory as another mode of Muslims' discourses on colonialism.

Aliyu dan Sidi's portrayal of the triumph of the strong over the weak as inevitable, compares in an interesting way to the characterization of Muslims under colonialism as prisoners of war. As already discussed, the colonial captivity of Muslims was invoked as a necessity conferring an Islamic legal justification for Muslims' acquiescence in British colonialism. But just as Aliyu dan Sidi ignores the presence of the colonizer, he dispenses with the need for legal stratagems. Even when he seems to acknowledge the colonial presence, he juxtaposes it with Islam in an enumeration that suggests the ranking of Islam above colonialism, or symmetry between the two, but not subordination of Islam to the supremacy of the colonizer. However, even Abu Bakr b. Ahmad, who argued on the basis of colonial captivity, ended up asserting that the British, as infidels, could not establish justice without the Islamic criteria of right and wrong brought to bear by Muslims' participation in indirect rule.

Aliyu dan Sidi's ordering of colonialism below Islam came in the concluding sections of the *Wakar Zuwa Birnin Kano*, where he made the second of the only two explicit references to the colonial presence. "Learning in the white man's school" appeared within the context of enumerating the various residential sections of Kano. Nasarawa, the European quarters in the outskirts of the walled city of Kano, appeared last:

- 57) Dabinon-uwaka and Mandarawi,
Alfindiki and Kwalwa—all in Kano
- 58) Stop—let me shorten it, lest it be too long;
Let me mention what else I did in Kano:
- 59) We ended there, and I went to Nasarawa,
To see the school of Sambo and the others from Kano
- 60) There's a school for the white-man's learning, at Nasarawa,
Beyond the gate of Kano.
- 61) There's school teaching the Koran and our books,
At the gate of Kano.
- 62) There are boys learning from the wooden slates;
There is a mosque well built in Kano.
- 63) There's a building where the sick ones live,
A place where they are kept by the gate of Kano.
- 64) Weavers, tailors and carpenters,
These too have a compound in the school at Kano;

- 65) And so too blacksmiths, leather-workers and spinners,
 In the school by the gate at Kano.
- 66) In the eleventh year of his reign,
 Aliyu son of Sidi made his visit to Kano,
- 67) And made a poem of it, that those to come after may hear,
 And know from it the time of his journey to Kano.⁴⁹

If one reads the mention of Nasarawa as the last of the enumerated wards of Kano, then one could say that Aliyu dan Sidi was ranking the section of Kano inhabited by the colonizer below the sections of the city inhabited by Muslims. This reading could be further supported by the emphasis that the location of the Industrial School (the first institution of western education in Northern Nigeria) was outside the walled city of Kano. The significance of this should be understood within the context of the colonial administration of urban development in Northern Nigeria. Both Kano and Zaria cities (as distinct from the larger polities of the same name) are among the oldest of the ancient walled cities of pre-colonial Northern Nigeria. These cities served as the capitals of the emirates, as the ancient Hausa city-states came to be known following their incorporation under the larger Islamic polity that resulted from the nineteenth-century jihad of Uthman b. Fodiye, more widely known as the Sokoto caliphate. With the imposition of colonialism, European intrusion into Muslim cities like Kano and Zaria was kept at minimum by establishing in the outskirts of these cities most of the colonial institutions: military barracks, European firms, residences, office buildings, hospitals, schools etc.⁵⁰ The result was the emergence of contiguous habitation differentiated by two public orders: Islamic public order predominated in the cities, while colonial public order predominated in the outskirts. Thus Aliyu dan Sidi's enumeration of Nasawara (the locale outside the walled city of Kano where the first colonial school in Northern Nigeria was established) at the end of the Kano sections he visited, is significant, even if one reads the mention of Nasarawa not as the last, but as the first in a sub-theme in the poem—indicated by the “stop” after the last wards of the city of Kano. Such a reading will then be faced with a transition from the Islamic public order of the city, to the colonial public order at

⁴⁹ Skinner (1980), 183–84.

⁵⁰ Lugard (1970), 404–22.

Nasarawa. In a significant sense, this study is about Muslims' conceptions of the relationships between these two public orders.

In his depiction of Nasarawa, Aliyu dan Sidi juxtaposed Islamic and colonial schools. The teaching of Qur'an, and our books, takes place at Nasawara just as "the white man's learning" imparts vocational skills. There is subtle allusion to the idea among Muslims that the British were concerned only with this world. Wazir Buhari made this point explicitly as one of his considerations for signing the surrender to the British. Emir Aliyu dan Sidi is here alluding to the same point by characterizing the white man's learning as the acquisition of the merely mundane crafts of weaving, blacksmithing, tailoring, etc. In contrast, Islamic learning is concerned with the Qur'an and other sacred texts, a view reinforced by the mention of "the well-built mosque." By highlighting Islamic sacred learning next to mundane colonial learning at Nasarawa, Aliyu dan Sidi inserts Islamic presence in the colonial public order, thereby creating a sense of symmetry comparable to the earlier mention of "white and black" as both recipients of the generous hospitality of the Emir of Kano. Following this insertion, Aliyu dan Sidi concluded the poem with a prayer:

- 68) And we thank God that he took us there safely
 And brought us back safely from Kano.
- 69) Let us beseech the Exalted, the Bountiful, the Merciful
 For a good conclusion, here and in Kano,
- 70) For the people of Islam, men and women,
 From the gathering that we held at the gate of Kano.
- 71) May He give us peace, here—and there too.
 Say "Amen," you who gathered at Kano.
- 72) And so praise be to God that I have finished my poem,
 Through His grace, who took us to Kano.
- 73) And may His Blessing and prayer be for ever
 Upon the Lord of Medina and of us and of Kano.⁵¹

On the surface, these lines fall within the conventions for closure of Hausa Islamic verse, in more or else perfunctory expression of thanks and praises to the Almighty. But in fact, Aliyu dan Sidi made the conclusion of the poem an allegory for an even bigger conclusion: life on earth. It was for this bigger conclusion that he prayed to

⁵¹ Skinner (1980), 184.

God, invoking His attributes of bounty and mercy for all Muslims. This prayer for the ultimate end stems from Muslims' belief in the paramount importance of the final moment before death for the salvation of the individual in the hereafter. A number of Qur'anic verses (30:42; 31:22:35:44; 37:73; 40:21) stressed the uncanny power of God to allow unbelievers and sinners to enjoy themselves long enough to forget about death and judgment after life, and only for them to be then struck by Divine Wrath. It is also within the uncanny power of God to nullify life-long piety, and to even cause a devout believer to lose faith and die in a state of unbelief, thereby forfeiting salvation in the hereafter. With this belief, Muslims pray for *al-'āqiba al-ḥasana*: the righteous conclusion of life.

The desire for *al-'āqiba al-ḥasana* informs Muslims' anxieties and hopes about the way anything might turn out in the future, for the Qur'an (7:99) states that "no one can feel secure from the plan of Allah, except those (doomed) to ruin;" and Qur'an 13:42 affirms that: "Those before them did (also) devise plots; but in all things, the master plot belongs to Allah. He knows the doings of every soul; and soon will the unbelievers know who gets home in the end." (Cf. Qur'an 3:54; 8:30; 16:26) It may also be suggested that Aliyu ḍan Sidi's prayer for *al-'āqiba al-ḥasana* was informed by his anxieties and hopes about what Smith termed the "unthinkable changes" the Emir faced under British colonialism. His prayer could be interpreted as expression of anxiety that he has potentially been doomed to *al-'āqiba al-sayyī'a*, the negative opposite of *al-'āqiba al-ḥasana*, for serving under the non-Islamic rule of British colonialism. Alternatively, his prayers might hopefully be answered, and a righteous *'āqiba* might be awaiting him. The point to note is that petitionary prayer for protection by the Almighty is one of Muslims' responses to the challenges of British colonialism. It should also be noted that prayer for *al-'āqiba al-ḥasana*, is the recurrent form of closure in the poems of Aliyu ḍan Sidi, especially the ones on religious themes, which could be shown to be related to colonialism. Space does not permit a complete analysis of the many poems of Aliyu ḍan Sidi, but among his poems that could easily be read as allegorical discourses on colonialism are *Wakar Diga* and *Wakar Batu*.⁵²

⁵² See Uthman and Bamalli (1980), 4–6 and 26–31.

Aliyu dan Sidi's Second Allegorical Poem on Colonialism: Wakar Diga

Aliyu dan Sidi composed the *Wakar Diga*, "The Poem on Digger," to record his visit to the construction sites of the Baro-Kano railway (1907–1911). Given its subject-matter and the occasion for its composition, *Wakar Diga* should be regarded as a discourse on colonialism. Furthermore, colonial reports stressed that the reasons for the Baro-Kano railway were "primarily the development of the country generally and the reduction of military expenditure and transport charges."⁵³ Thus one of the primary reasons for the railway was to extend the hegemony of the colonial administration by facilitating the movement of troops, and also for the commercial exploitation of the hinterland of Northern Nigeria, by integrating the important commercial city of Kano and other urban centers into the coastal stations of the Atlantic Ocean. Right from the preliminary surveys in 1906, it was clear that the Baro-Kano railway was a project that required close political attention, as evidenced by the visit of the High Commissioner for Northern Nigeria, Percy Girouard, on a tour of Bida Province in April of 1906 "for observation and survey purpose for a railway."⁵⁴ Given this high political significance, Aliyu dan Sidi's *Wakar Diga* on the construction of the railway should be regarded as part of the Muslims' discourses on colonialism.

The recruitment of labor for the construction of the railway was another major issue that required the political intervention of British colonial officers, for without their assistance, "the difficulties would have been almost insuperable and the construction of this line could never have been carried through as rapidly as has been."⁵⁵ Similarly, the participation of the emirs was important, because "the labor for earthworks was recruited locally, and organized by the native Emirs and Chiefs under the direct supervision of the political officers attached to the various provinces."⁵⁶ For example, at the start of earthworks for the railway, Emir Muhammadu of Bida reorganized four districts on the line of construction, and appointed resident district headmen for Baro, Bakopma, Bishitawagi and Banga. Furthermore, Emir

⁵³ See: "Appendix II: Baro-Kano Railway," attached to "Annual Report No 674 for 1908," *Northern Nigeria Collected Annual Reports*, 744.

⁵⁴ E.G.M. Dupigny (1920), 27.

⁵⁵ W.D. Waghorn (1912), 24.

⁵⁶ "Appendix II: Baro-Kano Railway," 744.

Muhammadu created a new district by merging Baro and Katcha, and appointed the Makum of Bida "to assist the political officer at Baro in dealing with local supplies and labor."⁵⁷ It was also necessary to add British officers to supervise labor and supplies, for at the height of the construction in 1909, the Resident of the Nupe Province "had his hands full maintaining drafts of over 3,000 men on the railways, throughout this year, the second complete year of construction."⁵⁸ Obviously, not all these thousands of men were happy to supply their labor for the railway, for as colonial records from the Nupe Province indicates: "the work was not popular, as the Nupe is intensely attached to his house, and does not like leaving it even for two or three months [especially for hard labor on a construction site]."⁵⁹ Quite clearly, political pressure was applied to secure the vast number of laborers needed for construction of the Baro-Kano railway,⁶⁰ and this might explain the allusion to fear and fright in the opening lines of *Wakar Diga*.

After the conventional opening with an appropriate doxology (lines 1-3), Aliyu dan Sidi states that news of the advent of the railway had caused fear and terror among people, and he went to see for himself the construction sites, even as he too was fearful about the railway (lines 4-6). He then lists the various towns and villages through which his royal procession traveled from Zaria through Nupeland, where he met with Emir Muhammadu of Bida (lines 7-17). The two Emirs then proceeded together to a construction site, where they witnessed the technological know-how that processed enormous amount of steel to construct the railways. Aliyu dan Sidi's impressions of a railway construction site can be seen in these lines:

- 18) O Brother, what a wonder I saw:
Steel cutting steel in the work of digger!
- 19) Here trains without limit,
More limitless was the cutting of steel for railways.
- 20) Steel for constructing bridge,
And another steel for striking.
- 21) I thank God for enabling me to visit,
And return safely from the site of digger.⁶¹

⁵⁷ Dupigny (1920), 27.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 28.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 31.

⁶⁰ See for example, Michael Mason (1978), 56-79.

⁶¹ Mamudu Aminu, "Sharhin Waƙoƙin Hausa," 27-28.

Among the interesting points to note here is gratitude to God coming immediately after the expression of wonder at the sight of steel being processed to make a bridge and rail-lines. In the *Wakar Zuwa Kano*, Aliyu dan Sidi spoke of steel as a symbol of raw strength, and he used the predator's application of strength to subdue its prey as an indicator of the overwhelming power of the former over the latter. Similarly, his sense of wonder in the above lines could be seen as an acknowledgment of the power of the colonizer that applied raw strength to process steel for the construction of trains and railways. But by declaring his gratitude to God for the safe return from the construction site, Aliyu dan Sidi seems to be expressing both denial and avoidance of that power. In the arguments for confrontation with British military superiority, denial of the power of the colonizer was articulated in the Islamic expression "there is no strength and no power except in God," as already discussed in the last chapter. Other lines of the *Wakar Diga* support the argument that Aliyu dan Sidi is negating the power of the colonizer by affirming that only the power of God is real. As I pointed earlier, the poet mentioned that people were terrified and fearful about the coming of the railways, and that was why he decided to go and see for himself. To calm the fears of those terrified by the advent of the railway, Aliyu dan Sidi invoked the Islamic belief that power and strength belong to no one but God. Lines 23-27 read:

- 23) All the heads of districts and villages
Were terrified by the railway.
- 24) Women, children and the mischief-makers,
Used to say: the country is dispersed because of [the railway
constructed with] the digger.
- 25) The advance of an attacking enemy does not move the forest;
much less for the rural areas to be dispersed because of a
digger.
- 26) They have forgotten God, who created us all,
Including the European who made the digger.⁶²

Recruitment of thousands of people to work on railway construction was perhaps the cause for the fear that towns were being depopulated; additionally the construction work was not popular, and political pressure had to be applied to secure the requisite labor. The

⁶² *Ibid.*, 28.

mention of an attacking enemy on the advance gives the impression that armed patrols were sent to villages for forced recruitment of labor. However, even if it was not forced recruitment of labor, certainly something else about the railway construction was viewed by villagers with great apprehension; perhaps it was the sheer sight of so much activity, materials and people involved in the construction. Whatever might have been terrifying the ordinary people, Aliyu dan Sidi invoked the name of God to reassure them that there was nothing to fear other than the Almighty, who created all, including the Europeans. This is of course the first mention of the colonizer, and the next mention appears within the context of Aliyu dan Sidi thanking the many people who worked on the various aspects of the construction of the railway:

- 28) I salute the stable Shamaki Isa son of Abdu,
And his team who were steady at the work of digger,
- 29) The old, children and youth,
And the women who did grinding for digger.
- 30) I thank also the district heads,
For doing the work with digger right.
- 31) I thank you all, the people,
Who stayed on the work of digger.
- 32) And the ward-heads who assisted us,
And the youth who did the work of digger,
- 33) And the one who counted the laborers,
And those who relieve the workers of digger.
- 34) To heads of villages, I am thankful;
And also to the common people who did the digging.
- 35) Have mercy on me, let me be one who offers sacrifice,
And graceful, when you brought the digger.
- 36) I salute the intelligence of the telephone people,
Who communicate that the work of digger is done.
- 37) I thank God who enabled me,
To start and finish the example of digger.⁶³

Thus Aliyu dan Sidi concluded the sections of the *Wakar Diga* directly concerned with the construction of the railway. Clearly, the railway was a major project that symbolized colonial power. Yet, the poem has only two direct references to the colonizer. In the first reference, the power of the colonizer is alluded to, but then denied by emphasizing the Islamic belief that power belongs to God alone. In the

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 28–9.

second reference, the colonizer appears at the end of a long list of people who worked on the construction of the railway. Aliyu dan Sidi acknowledged the telephone as an indicator of the [superior?] intelligence of the colonizer. He also acknowledged the colonizer's impressive ability to process steel, which the poet employed as a symbol of strength. Yet, the main thrust of the entire 70 lines of the *Wakar Diga* is not on the presence of the colonizer, despite the fact that the poem was composed on a major colonial project. Thus once again, this poem demonstrates Aliyu dan Sidi's tendency towards silence on colonialism, which he manifested also in the *Wakar Zuwa Kano*.

Aliyu dan Sidi's tendency to allegorize is evidenced in the last sections of the *Wakar Diga* (lines 46-70),⁶⁴ where he once again treated his favorite theme of the moral whiplash against the material world. The digger used in the railway construction served as the personification for the old harlot, apparently for no reason other than to keep the rhyme of the poem in the word digger. I have already pointed out that Aliyu dan Sidi's complaints against the utter unreliability of the material world could be construed as alluding to the many confusing changes brought about by colonialism. The analyses of both *Wakar Zuwa Kano* and the *Wakar Diga* have established clearly that Aliyu dan Sidi used ellipsis and allegory in his discourse on colonialism. Given these stylistic features, it is not difficult to make the case for his *Wakar Batu* (Conversation) being also an allegorical discourse on colonialism.

Wakar Batu: Colonialism and Reversal of the Natural Order of Things

Aliyu dan Sidi cast the entire 34 pentastiches of the *Wakar Batu* in series of allegories and opaque metaphors. He plays on homonyms and the various connotations of a word. For example, the Hausa word *batu* has the various shades of meaning, clustering around speech, conversation, subject-matter, and proposition. It is virtually impossible to determine which meaning applies to each of the four occurrences of the word *batu* in this line (26):

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 29-31.

I have composed for you a poem of *batu*.
 Come and search, those who know *batu*.
 Give it to the experts on *batu*,
 Gather those who are intelligent on *batu*:
 They will not be able to understand.⁶⁵

Clearly, Aliyu dan Sidi deliberately sought to make this poem ambiguous, and he seems to have succeeded very well. In the course of fieldwork, I received two different interpretations of this poem. In Zaria, the poem was regarded as a satire on contenders belonging to the two other dynasties eligible for Aliyu dan Sidi's position, the Emirship of Zazzau.⁶⁶ But in Sokoto, the poem was thought to be an allegorical discourse on colonialism,⁶⁷ whence my inspiration for the interpretation I am advancing here. Both interpretations could easily be supported by the various allegories and sly remarks in the poem. For example, rivals from competing dynasties could very well be the ones alluded to in the following line (13):

Liars and envious [people]
 Cannot do anything to the one.
 The present one, or the former one,
 Gather all of them and try out
 They will not be the same.⁶⁸

But the following line (24) could be referring to the necessity to adapt to the changes colonialism has brought about:

The tortoise and porcupine
 Are one in the habit of withdrawing their neck inward.
 Yet, this is a time for turning around:
 If it were the olden times,
 I do see that they would not make it.

This line is typical of the series of allegories that seem to be discontinuous and unconnected, but all the same, articulate the dominant theme of Aliyu dan Sidi's *Wakar Batu*: the reversal of the natural order of things. The poet expresses different attitudes towards the

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 5.

⁶⁶ Mallam Nuhu dan Galadima Salmanu, Interview by the author, 31 January 1994, Zaria.

⁶⁷ Mallam Muhammadu Sambo Wali; Interview by the author, 14 December 1993, Sokoto.

⁶⁸ Mamudu Aminu, "Sharhin Waƙoƙin Hausa," 4.

various consequences of that reversal, which he saw as chaos, tragedy, and comedy. Yet, there is a refrain that reaffirms the irreversibility of the nature of things, hence the futility of attempting to induce such a reversal. Significantly, the poet viewed social conventions with the same irreversibility, even when they appeared to have been reversed. In fact the richness of the poem depends on its transference of the observed behavior of plants and animals to social conventions, and thereby evoking the sense of permanence for those conventions, and also discouraging any attempt to change them.

As I have already pointed out, Aliyu dan Sidi intentionally composed the *Wakar Batu* in opaque metaphors, and therefore, there may be no point in insisting that one interpretation is closer to the meanings the poet intended. Nevertheless, my contention that the poem is an allegorical discourse on colonialism is supportable by the fact that its dominant theme, the reversal of the natural order of things, has been used by another notable Muslim poet as an allegory for colonialism. In his Hausa poem on the European conquest of West Africa, Alhaji Umaru Kete-Krachi (1858–1934) recounted in a poem of 260 lines the details of the many battles fought during the conquest, including Lugard's campaigns in Northern Nigeria. Alhaji Umaru then adopted the theme of reversal of the natural order of things to describe how colonial rule overturned accepted social conventions. It is necessary to give excerpts here, in order to establish the fundamental elements of the allegorical discourse on colonialism as it features in the concluding sections (lines 221–60) of Alhaji Umaru's *The Arrival of the Christians*:

We can describe metaphorically the Christians' arrival:
 The dog has eaten the hyena thanks to the Christians.
 The she-cat feels safe on the wildcat road:
 She insults him thanks to the Christians' power.

...
 All that I have said is to illustrate
 The world affairs during the Christians' days.
 Because he neither impairs the principles of law
 Nor halts up anyone—the Christian.
 As for Moslem judges, they became spoiled;
 So it is better for me to see the Christians' judge.

...
 As for me, I thank God for their times because
 They have treated me kindly, the Christians.

For me their rule may last for ever

.....

So our poem has been completed and its has reached (its) end
By the power of Him Who created us, as well as the
Christians.⁶⁹

Without necessarily going into the many subtleties of Alhaji Umaru's poem,⁷⁰ I will point out the fundamental elements in his construction of the allegorical discourse on colonialism, and then compare Alhaji Umaru's construction to that of Aliyu dan Sidi. First, the reversal of the order of things in both the domains of nature and society is presented through transference and counter-transference of models of animal and human behaviors. Second, this transference serves as a device by which remote meanings are highlighted, ironies are amplified, and deeper significations are teased out. Third, an extraordinary power is necessary for the reversal of the natural order of things to occur; hence Alhaji Umaru's refrain of thanks to the Christians, whose power has made it possible for the prey to joyfully mock its predator. Fourth, because of the chaos that results from the reversal of the natural order of things, and because only an extraordinary power could cause that reversal, the allegorical discourse usually ends by invocation of the power of God. This invocation is necessary to guard against the potential of that extraordinary power to cause destruction and chaos, demonstrated in its capacity to reverse the natural order of things. All these four elements are present in Aliyu dan Sidi's *Wakar Batu*, as could be seen in the following excerpts:

- 1) Friend, let us converse:
Look at the crescent moon,
Wealth is different from poverty,
The light of the Sun and of the Moon,
Will never be the same.

⁶⁹ Stanislaw Pilaszewicz (1975), 103-08.

⁷⁰ For studies of the literary works of Alhaji Umaru, see: Ivor Wilks (1963), 409-17; T. Hodgkin (1966), 442-60; T. Mustapha, "A Historiographical Study of Four Works of Alhaji Umaru Ibn Abi Bakr of Kete Krachi" (M.A. diss., Institute of Islamic Studies, McGill University, 1970); D.E. Ferguson, "Nineteenth-Century Hausaland: Being a description of Imam Imoru of the Land, Economy, and Society of his People" (Ph.D. diss., University of California Los Angeles, 1973); Stefan Reichmuth (1993), 155-73.

- 2) Oh! Look at the swift,
 It found fish in the neck,
 Thinking there was no fin
 When the fin stuck in the swift's neck
 No one will be there to assist.
- ...
- 5) Here is the field wide open,
 To farm a barren land without fertilizer;
 Surely, there will be a change,
 For a dog and a lion
 Will never be the same.
- ...
- 9) I see he is lean all over,
 He is all muddied up and disappointed.
 He is lying in ambush, hiding.
 To search for the blood of locust,
 Is to search for the impossible.
- 10) Come, take the pulse and feel it:
 Is today like yesterday or not?
 Eye-sickness must be endured;
 For it has no medication
 That can possibly cure it.
- ...
- 14) The jabiru came with its baggy neck
 Hunting for fish under the water.
 Beneath the shore-edges lay the hippopotamus,
 To the side were the crocodiles,
 The legs of the bird would not make it!
- ...
- 23) Here is a question for the white-bellied stork:
 Why do I see it confused?
 I can see the floating-plants on the water.
 If not for the crab,
 The white-bellied stork would not have landed there.
- ...
- 28) God created us all:
 Black and White; He created all,
 Blue and Green too,
 Red and Yellow also.
 He alone, and no other, creates.
- ...
- 31) Let our devotion be a righteous one,
 Let us be in fear and hope,
 Watch out for Asma'u!
 Women, who are wealthy,
 Their affairs are not durable.

- 32) Asma'u, you are well known:
 It has always been your character
 Your schemes are everyday for greed.
 Preferring two, even as you do not have one:
 Is not that a lie?
- ...
 34) Let us remember and praise God.
 Let us seek forgiveness for our sins,
 So that Tomorrow we could be saved
 By the leader of salvation,
 Muhammad, and not by any other.⁷¹

These lines appear on the surface to be no more than disjointed lists of apparently unrelated utterances. As I pointed out earlier, Aliyu dan Sidi sets out deliberately to make this poem opaque, and he accomplishes that by employing devices of Hausa oral literature, including proverbs and idiomatic expressions. As a result, the full richness of the poem depends on the masterful and playful employment of these literary devices, which are not readily translatable into another language.

Still, there is a dominant theme in the poem: the impossibility of reversing the natural order of things. He articulates this theme by episodic portrayal of the relationship between prey and predator, (crab-stork-hippopotamus,) implying that the predator will always be the one to capture the prey, but not the other way around. The poet also expresses the irreversibility of the natural order of things in a number of Hausa proverbs: eye-sickness has to be endured, for it has no medication (*maganin ciwon ido hakuri;*) the locust has no blood (*bari neman jini wurin babe.*) He thus juxtaposes what are regarded in Hausa speech as opposites, with an implied rhetorical question of whether such opposites could ever be united. By these literary devices of the Hausa language, Aliyu dan Sidi reveals the first of the four elements of the allegorical discourse on colonialism: transference and counter-transference of models of behavior between the domain of society to the domain of nature.

One difference between Aliyu dan Sidi and Alhaji Umaru is the articulation, through the proverbial and idiomatic expressions, of accepted social conventions as part of the natural order of things. Alhaji Umaru's sparing use of proverbs makes his metaphors easier

⁷¹ Uthman and Bamalli (1980), 4-6. The translation is mine.

to grasp, while Aliyu dan Sidi's use of proverbs makes his metaphors more dense. But this density gives an added sense of veracity to the portrayal of social conventions in the model of the natural order of things, thus making Aliyu dan Sidi's metaphors more capable of evoking deeper semantic levels among the Hausa-speaking Muslim audiences, to whom the two poems were originally addressed.

The second element of the allegorical discourse is the highlighting of meanings and ironies. Here again, there are differences between the two poets. Alhaji Umaru was also closely involved with German colonial rule in Togo, and approves the outcome of the colonial reversal of accepted social conventions, for he sees the weak being protected by the impartial and just rule of the colonizer. For this reason, he is willing to prefer the colonial judge to the Muslim judge. It is significant that his objection is to the Muslim judge, whom he describes as spoiled, but not Islamic law, on which he chose to be silent. His ellipsis here is due to the fact that he will be negating his Islamic faith if he prefers colonial law to Islamic law. Another point worth emphasizing is Alhaji Umaru's explicit mention of the material benefits he had personally gained from the colonizer as one of reasons for his [Alhaji Umaru's] preference for colonial rule. In contrast, Aliyu dan Sidi does not approve of the outcome of the reversal of social conventions under colonial rule. In fact, he does not see such reversal as possible, and he ridicules the failure to realize that irreversibility. The farmer who thought he could plant on a barren land, the person who searches in vain for the blood of locust, and the person who thought he could earn money by praising for the son of the griot: all these are both tragic and comic figures for Aliyu dan Sidi. His deposition by the British contrasts sharply with the kind treatment Alhaji Umaru said he had received from colonial authorities. Hence, the personal experiences of both poets under colonial rule account in part for difference in their views on the consequences of the reversal of social conventions under colonialism: protection of the weak against the strong for Alhaji Umaru, and comic tragedy for Aliyu dan Sidi.

The third element of the allegorical discourse on colonialism is the necessity of an extraordinary power for the reversal of the natural order of things to occur, while the fourth element is the invocation of the power of God against the destructive potential of that extraordinary power. Alhaji Umaru is more explicit in acknowledging the power of the Christians as demonstrated in their overturn-

ing of accepted social conventions. Aliyu dan Sidi is silent on this account, principally because he does not seem to believe that accepted social conventions are capable of change. For him, even though such change may appear to have taken place, the change is not real, and in the long run, the natural order of things reasserts itself. Those who delighted in the apparent overturning of social conventions are soon exposed to ridicule, or still worse, to tragedy. To this last outcome, prayer is necessary, hence the concluding lines of both poems are invocations of the power of the Almighty.

Two points need to be highlighted in Aliyu dan Sidi's concluding prayer. First, he brings in his favorite theme of applying the moral whiplash against the temptations of the old seductress, who appears under the name of Asma'u this time. Second, he once again prays for a righteous *'āqiba*. He expresses this theme in an adage more common among Sufis: In remembering Allah, a Muslim should be constantly mindful and fearful of His power, while at the same time never losing hope for His mercy. In line 31, Aliyu dan Sidi admonishes fear and hope: a befitting posture toward colonialism for one who, to all intents and purposes, has never truly reconciled himself to the supremacy of colonial rule, even as he accepted appointment to the position of emir from the British.

To sum up, I have earlier pointed out that, in his *Wakar Ajuza*, the "Song of the Old Hag," Aliyu dan Sidi wails against the deceits of everyday harlots, but only to reveal at the end of the poem that actually he was allegorizing *contemptus mundi*. I argued that his characterization of the material world as utterly unreliable refers to the changes Aliyu dan Sidi personally experienced under colonialism. It is the case also that he evaded explicit references to colonialism in the *Wakar Zuwa Birnin Kano*, even though the subject-matter of the poem is a major colonial ceremony for Governor Lugard. Skinner, Hiskett, and Aminu⁷² have all noted the satirical innuendo, personification, and allegory in Aliyu dan Sidi's poems. For these reasons, I contend that the ellipses in two of his poems, *Wakar Zuwa Birnin Kano* and *Wakar Diga*, constitute a silent discourse on colonialism. It is also my contention that his *Wakar Batu* is better understood as an

⁷² Skinner (1980), 180; Hiskett (1975), 83; Mamudu Aminu, "Sharhin Wafokin Hausa," 78-99.

allegorical discourse on colonialism. Aliyu dan Sidi's choice for silent and allegorical discourses on colonialism was a function of partly his own poetical talents, partly his refusal to reconcile himself to British colonial rule, and partly the insecurity of the tenure of his position as an Emir appointed by British. In all these respects, Emir Aliyu dan Sidi stands in sharp contrast to the Emir of Katsina, Muhammadu Dikko, who also reigned during the first decades of British colonialism in Northern Nigeria.

*Emir Muhammadu Dikko and Domestication
of the Colonial Order*

Emir of Katsina, Alhaji Muhammadu Dikko (r. 1907–1944), resolved the dilemmas of Muslim rulers serving under the non-Islamic political dispensation of British colonial rule by consigning Islam and colonialism into different compartments, and by domesticating the colonial order. Emir Dikko's reign could be divided into two roughly equal halves: in the first half he worked at compartmentalizing Islam and colonialism; in the second half he labored to domesticate colonialism.

His pre-colonial background was that of a great Katsina warrior, and he was, unlike Aliyu dan Sidi, neither a poet nor an Islamic scholar. The following analysis of Emir Dikko's attitude toward colonialism is based on journals of his travels, which he dictated to his scribe, Mallam Barmo.⁷³ British colonial authorities appointed Muhammad Dikko as the Emir of Katsina under circumstances similar to those of the appointment of Aliyu dan Sidi as the Emir of Zazzau. Muhammad Dikko was the Durbin Katsina at the time Katsina submitted to the British in 1904, without any armed confrontation, just as was the case in Zazzau. Similarly, despite his submission, the British found the incumbent ruler of Katsina, Abubakar

⁷³ These journals are reproduced verbatim in Emir Dikko's biography written by Mallam Muhammadu Bello Kagara (1951), 27–45; 55–57; 65–72; 79–80; 82–84. Apart from interviews with Emir Dikko and his childhood friends and courtiers, Mallam Kagara's sources included his observations and experiences beginning from 1921, when he started living in Katsina. Mallam Kagara was a teacher at the Katsina College, counsellor to Emir Dikko, the Chief *Alkali*, and *Wali* of Katsina. All the translations of quotations from this source are mine.

dan Ibrahim (r. 1887–1904), guilty of charges similar to the “intrigues” that led to the removal of Emir of Zazzau, Muhammadu Kwasau. Emir Abubakar was deposed in 1904 because he had, according to Lugard, “persistently given trouble since the British occupation, secretly opposing the administration in every way . . . [and making] attempts to poison our wells and to work evil to the Government officers by means of charms.”⁷⁴

In December 1904, Lugard appointed Yero dan Musa as the new Emir of Katsina. But in 1906, Lugard regretted that even though the appointment was well received in Katsina, Emir Yero had “proved a hopeless failure . . . disloyal, dishonest, and incapable.” Lugard further noted that:

There is, however, perhaps no Emirate in which both chiefs and people are more loyal and well-disposed, so that the obstruction of the Emir merely tends to reduce his position. These chiefs have rendered very full and accurate returns of taxation, which form an excellent basis for new assessment. ‘It is difficult,’ writes Mr. Cargill, to ‘exaggerate the loyalty and zeal with which the Katsena fief-holders have taken up their new duties, and the value of their services to Government.’⁷⁵

Of all the Katsina chiefs who received such laudatory acclaim, Durbin Katsina Muhammadu Dikko was the most dedicated and loyal to the British, and was on that account, chosen to succeed Yero dan Musa as the new Emir of Katsina. Emir Dikko’s loyalty to the British must be understood against his political fortunes at the time of the British arrival. During the 1890s, Dikko had distinguished himself as a warrior, and as his influence steadily grew, so also the number of his political opponents, as well as the suspicion of Emir Abubakar regarding the ambitions of Dikko. To curtail the growing power and influence of his war chief, Emir Abubakar exiled Dikko from the palace by assigning him to the defense of frontier districts on the border with Maradi. Dikko continued to build up his military capabilities by acquiring guns and ammunitions in anticipation of a showdown with Emir Abubakar. It was while tension was building up that the first news of the British take-over of Zazzau was received in Katsina. Apparently, both Emir Abubakar and Durbi Dikko saw

⁷⁴ Lugard, *Collected Annual Reports*, 241.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 376.

the advent of the British as a way to get rid of each other. The Emir appointed Dikko to be responsible for all matters relating to the British, and Dikko thankfully accepted. Dikko became the object of popular derision for working with the infidel strangers.⁷⁶ Given the precarious nature of his relations with Emir Abubakar, Dikko seems to have sought a different power base by cultivating the confidence of the first British officials in Katsina. In particular, he was said to have struck a deal with Mr. Richmond Palmer:

The story goes that Muhammadu Dikko had come to the notice of the Resident, Palmer, when he was urgently trying to build a fort at Katsina after the Satiru rising of 1906. The Emir and his leading men all produced excuses until the turn came to a certain district head. He at once promised to produce over a thousand men and complete the work in so many days. Asked to name his reward, he requested not half the kingdom but the whole of Katsina. This district head was Muhammadu Dikko.⁷⁷

This story seems corroborated by the fact that a special relationship developed between Mr. Palmer and Emir Muhammadu Dikko, attested by Mr. Palmer himself in his forward to Mallam Kagara's biography of Emir Muhammadu Dikko. Among Palmer's commendations was a remark that sounded conspiratorial: "Thrice, between 1910 and 1930, when he [Emir Dikko] heard of a danger threatening me, or a difficulty that would obstruct me in the progress of my work, he would immediately send a special messenger from afar in order to give me advance warning. I would then see that but for his warning there was no way I could have known of the danger."⁷⁸ This remark reflects the kind of special trust that developed between Mr. Palmer and Emir Dikko. The British appointed Dikko not because he was the rightful candidate, but because of his loyalty to the British. Already derided for working too closely with the infidels, his appointment as the Emir of Katsina could only aggravate his unpopularity. In fact, the deposition of Emir Yero "touched off anti-British riots and demonstrations. People wore their hats at an angle signifying that they opposed Dikko's appointment, and hoped that soon his

⁷⁶ Kagara, *Sarkin Katsina*, 13-17.

⁷⁷ S.J. Hogben and A.H.M. Kirk-Greene (1964), 175.

⁷⁸ H.R. Palmer, "Sarkin Katsina Muhammadu Dikko!" forward to Kagara (1951), iv.

turban would fall off, and that he too would collapse."⁷⁹ Once on the throne, Emir Dikko had to break this popular opposition and that of Katsina aristocrats, who had earlier estranged him from Emir Abubakar.

Dikko pitched his political fortunes with the British, and developed good relationships with many colonial officers who served in Katsina. By securing his position, Emir Dikko was able to relieve his political opponents from important posts within the Katsina Emirate.⁸⁰ His working relationships with colonial officers often developed into friendships with some of the officers, even after their tour of duty in his Emirate. He was welcomed into the homes of some of these officers during his five visits to the United Kingdom between 1921 and 1939.

For each of these visits, Emir Dikko dictated his impressions and travel experiences to his scribe, Mallam Barmo.⁸¹ In these journals, we see Emir Dikko's conception of the relationships between Islam and British colonialism in Northern Nigeria. His first visit to the United Kingdom in 1921 was to receive the *King's Medal for African Chiefs*, and thereafter proceeded to Mecca to perform the pilgrimage (*hajj*). This was the first visit to England by a Muslim ruler from Northern Nigeria, and also the first pilgrimage by an Emir of Katsina.⁸² It was therefore doubly significant, and perhaps also doubly ironic in that here was a Muslim ruler going on pilgrimage to Mecca, yet proceeding via London to receive honorary medals for his loyal services to the colonial regime, which other Muslims had major difficulties coming to terms with. However, Emir Dikko's journal of this historic journey indicates no sense of conflict between his Muslim conscience and his colonial loyalty to King George V.

Emir Muhammadu Dikko visited Liverpool, Manchester, and London between 27 June and 15 July 1921. He marveled at the numerous technological wonders he saw, for the first time, at factories, hospitals, and farms with mechanized tools and special breeds of animals and birds. Emir Dikko and his entourage were also enter-

⁷⁹ Hull, "The Development of Administration in Katsina," 148. Cf. Kagara (1951), 20.

⁸⁰ Kagara (1951), 20.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 25.

⁸² *Ibid.*

tained at film shows, museums, exhibitions of various exotic artifacts, species of plants and animals from various British colonies around the world, all of which filled them with awe and amazement at the mastery of the colonizer over both the human and natural domains. But the highlight of Emir Dikko's visit was his reception at Buckingham Palace, where he was simply dazed by the magnificence of the palace and the incredible riches on display, all of which attested to the mighty power of his host, King George V. The relevant entry in Emir Dikko's journal deserves to be quoted in full:

On Saturday, July 9, we went with my entourage to the palace of the King of England. We met a lot of soldiers on guard at the palace. There were others on parade with guns in their hands, and dressed in a beautiful outfit. Others wore caps of gold, held thin swords, and stood in line, motionless as if they were not alive. When ushered in, we came into an open yard filled with soldiers. Then we were ushered into a hall, and met the Governor of Nigeria, Sir Hugh Clifford, the Lt. Governor [Northern Provinces] Mr. Gowers, and the Chief of the Palace, Lord Hamilton. We were offered chairs and we sat. The hall was all decorated with gold. We saw beautiful lamps inside something that looked like pearl. We cannot describe the extent of its beauty; one has to see it with one's own eyes! Then three senior Europeans came out, we greeted, and saw them giving sign that the King was present. Governor Clifford stood up, and went in. Shortly afterward, he came out, and called Mr. Gowers in with him. They stayed for a while. Then Mr. Gowers came out, and called me into the presence of the King of England, George V. We stayed for about twenty minutes with the King of England, talking amicably. Then, the King, by himself, brought the medal known as the *King's Medal for African Chiefs*, and gave it to me, his hand to mine. Afterward, Mr. Gowers called in Usman Nagogo [Emir Dikko's son and heir apparent], and he saluted. Then came in the Kankiya and saluted, followed by the Sarkin Musawa, Mallam Barmo, and the Turaki; all of them saluted the King of England. While we were sitting, his face was relaxed and he frequently smiled. We were happy, and expressed out thanks for the opportunity we were given to see him, and for the medal he had given to us. Mr. Gowers was the interpreter. Before we were ushered into the presence of the King, we were shown to various royal halls; we saw fourteen of them, but we cannot tell all that we saw in each hall, because of their decoration and majesty. There were golden chairs, and very gracious carpets of different kinds. There were beds and cushions, whose utter beauty and aroma we could not describe. There were portraits of young and beautiful women, seated on golden chairs, as if they could speak with their mouths. In another room, we saw a portrait of the Queen: We had never seen a beautiful portrait like it! Then, we went to a pool of water behind the building, and saw var-

ious kinds of water birds. Oh! We saw a lot at the palace; and then left to where we were hosted.⁸³

Perhaps, it is not surprising at all that Emir Muhammadu Dikko found beyond description the lavish decoration and display of gold at the palace of the King of England, and Emperor of India. However, despite his appreciation of all the beautiful things he saw, Emir Dikko's face-to-face encounter with the King of England was devoid of any sense of the extra-ordinary. He met the King, received the medal from the King's hand, and chatted amicably with the King for about twenty minutes: all in a rather mundane fashion. The Emir was calm and thankful, but not nervous, terrified, or intimidated by the very presence of the King of England. All of this suggests that Emir Dikko was pretty much at home in the colonial order of things, even at its very fountain. In a sense, this face-to-face encounter with the King of England completed Emir Dikko's reception and normalization of the colonizer; there is no other aspect of colonialism to worry about, for the Emir has now verified that the King was just an ordinary man. This experience helped Emir Dikko to be all the more at home in the colonial order of things back in his dominion in Katsina.

A notable feature in Emir Dikko's journal is the near complete silence on Islam during his first visit to England. There were no disapproving remarks on aspects of British life contradictory to Islam, and there was no mention even of stopping to observe the five daily prayers. The only mention of anything relating to Islam was at a show, apparently organized by the Royal Air Force. Here, Emir Dikko and his son and future successor, Usman Nagogo, had their first flight when the Emir was granted his request to be flown into the air:

I was given the proper gear to wear, so also Usman Nagogo. We boarded the plane, the European pilot in the front and we at the back. We flew high, high, and high, and after we saw quite a lot, we landed. From the aerial view, we saw the towns near the city of London became tiny, and everything on land shrank. Unknown to us while in the air enjoying the view, our people on the ground were praying to Allah for our safe landing.⁸⁴

⁸³ *Ibid.*, 33-34.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 37.

For Emir Dikko, his first flight was not a terrifying experience, but fun, which in fact he requested, without prompting from the colonial officials guiding the visit. But for his entourage, Emir Dikko's fearless adventure into the air called for prayers of protection. This prayer is the only mention of anything related to Islam in all the experiences of Dikko's visit to England. Clearly, the Emir's Islamic concerns belong into a compartment different from that of the colonial order of business that took him to England. Even on the journey from Liverpool to Jedda (July 15–29), Emir Dikko's journal says nothing about Islam, but continues to record the many wonderful things he saw on the water-ways, including several ocean-going vessels. He also recorded receiving letters from two colonial officers who had earlier served in Katsina.

Upon arrival in Jedda, Emir Dikko was royally welcomed by Sharif Husayn, the ruler of Mecca at the time. The Emir met with West Africans resident in Mecca, and with the heads of the four Sunni schools of law. The rest of Emir Dikko's journal records factually his participation in the rituals of *hajj*, his departure from Jedda, and very briefly, the seaports on the way back to Lagos, from where he boarded the train for Kano.⁸⁵

Unlike Emir Aliyu dan Sidi's complete silence on the presence of the colonizer in his *Wakar Zuwa Kano*, Emir Muhammadu Dikko made it a point to first call on the Kano Resident to express his thanks for the assistance of his travel guide, Mr. Webster. Similarly, when he finally arrived in Katsina, and even before reaching his palace, Emir Dikko went first to Katsina Residency to thank Mr. H.R. Palmer. Thus Emir Dikko's journal of his first visit to England and Mecca ended, without any indication of a conflict between Islam and colonialism. This lack of conflict is also reflected in the praise-song welcoming Emir Dikko back to Katsina:

You are the first to go to Mecca.

Dikko, you are the first to go to England.

Hero, son of Isa, on whom poison could be tested,

Let others learn from you.⁸⁶

Here, Emir Dikko's pilgrimage to Mecca and his visit to England are being celebrated as major accomplishments. He is also being

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 39–45.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 54. Cf. Hogben and Kirk-Greene (1964), 177.

praised for his adventure, being the first to do what others might be mortally afraid to try. This view contrasts sharply with the juridical views of Abd Allah b. Alı and Abu Bakr b. Ahmad who drew distinction between Muslim rulers compelled to serve under colonialism, and those who chose to do so on their own: the juridical views justified the position of the former on the grounds of necessity, but offered no justification for the position of the latter—as already discussed in chapter two. I contend that as Emir Dikko compartmentalized Islam and colonialism into different spheres, he had no need for agonizing legal maneuvering to find Islamic justification for serving under British colonialism. After all, Emir Dikko owed his position, power, and influence, to his loyalty to British officers, whose confidence he deliberately cultivated.

Further evidence that Emir Dikko assigned Islam and colonialism into different compartments could be seen in his daily schedules as described by his biographer. Emir Dikko would rise at three in the morning, and after a light breakfast, would be at his morning devotions till sun-rise. From eight in the morning, he attended to affairs of state, and following a break at noon, Emir Dikko went to his farm until sun-set. From eight to ten in the evening, he attended sessions for Islamic studies at the palace, after which he retired for the day.⁸⁷ Similarly, all his children received their western education during the daytime, and their Islamic education between 8 and 10 p.m. Furthermore, rather than drawing money from the coffers of the Katsina Emirate, Emir Dikko provided entirely from his personal funds for the construction of a new Katsina Central Mosque in 1935.⁸⁸ Thus clearly, the silence on Islam in Emir Dikko's journals of his visit to England was not because he had no Islamic concerns at all, but because he had compartmentalized Islam and colonialism into two separate regimes of his daily schedule. Mallam Kagara expressed this point thus:

Whoever was associated with Emir Muhammadu Dikko would testify that the Emir's character was difficult to understand. When Emir Dikko embarked on a worldly task, you would think he never imagined he would ever die. Similarly, when he embarked on a religious task, you would think he was working as if that very day would be his last.⁸⁹

⁸⁷ Kagara (1951), 60.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 73.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 78.

This passage is almost a verbatim translation of the *ḥadīth* commanding Muslims to work towards improving their life on earth as if they would live for ever, and to work for salvation in the hereafter as if they would die tomorrow. This *ḥadīth* gives Islamic authorization for Emir Dikko's compartmentalization of Islam and colonialism, and the ease with which he worked in both domains. It accords with this *ḥadīth* for Muslims fully to embrace the colonial order, and to take maximum advantage of all that colonialism had to offer for the betterment of life in this world, without prejudice to the Islamic devotion that prepares one for salvation in the hereafter. It will be recalled that part of Wazir Buhari's considerations for signing the surrender to the British, was a similar compartmentalization between Islam and colonialism, and that because the British were not going to eliminate the five pillars of Islam, the Wazir held the view that Islam and colonialism were not necessarily mutually exclusive. By adhering to this view, Emir Dikko worked assiduously to attain distinctions in both the Islamic and the colonial domains: "Muhammadu Dikko also made fame by personally paying for the construction of a new mosque, still a proud feature of Katsina town, and by building up a victorious polo team—in which three of his sons were playing—that won both the Georgian and Nigerian Cups."⁹⁰ Polo was first introduced into Northern Nigeria as a pastime for British officers, and as the above quote shows clearly, the Katsina Polo Club attracted the interest and support of Emir Dikko. He memorialized his support for polo by establishing the trophy known as The Emir of Katsina's Cup.⁹¹ Obviously, an Emir who gained fame for building a mosque and a polo team could not have been experiencing the same kind of conflict of conscience addressed in the Islamic legal discourses on colonialism.

Apart from his compartmentalization of Islam and colonialism, I have earlier pointed out that Emir Dikko domesticated the colonial order during the second half of his reign. One indication of this domestication is the participation of his sons in the polo championship competitions. Hull described Emir Dikko as "unusually receptive and open-mind[ed]."⁹² Emir Dikko was always the first to welcome

⁹⁰ Hogben and Kirk-Greene (1964), 178–79.

⁹¹ Kagara (1951), 81.

⁹² Hull, "The Development of Administration in Katsina," 354.

colonial innovations, while other Emirs foot-dragged and complained about how such innovations were incompatible with Islam. His strategy was to receive colonial innovations enthusiastically so that he could master them, and know how to control, manipulate, or contain them. For example, to neutralize the popular fear that greeted the first modern hospital in Katsina, Emir Dikko appointed one of his sons in charge of the hospital (*Galadiman Asibiti*), and sent his other children to be trained as the first nurses, pharmacists, and dispensers.⁹³ Similarly, while many emirs strenuously objected to western education for Muslim females, Emir Dikko welcomed the establishment of the Girls' School in his palace.⁹⁴ It was in part because of Dikko's ready acceptance of colonial innovations that the Katsina College was established in his capital. He also supported the establishment in Katsina of the first Medical Class, the Pharmacy School, and the Arts and Crafts School. The students attending these schools received the fatherly attention of Emir Dikko through his visits and gifts to the schools. The patronage Emir Dikko extended to colonial establishments, and appointment of his sons to liaise with them, combined to create the impression that he was incorporating these colonial institutions into his royal household. Thus he appropriated and domesticated the colonial order, rather than to agonize about its Islamic credentials.

Emir Dikko's appropriation of the colonial order could also be seen in the medals he was awarded in recognition of his enthusiasm for colonial changes and innovations. In addition to the *King's Medal for African Chiefs*, which King George V awarded him in 1921, Emir Dikko was awarded *Commander of the British Empire* in 1930, the *Jubilee Medal* in 1935, and the *Coronation Medal* in 1937. He was also honored by the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals. These medals should be seen not only as indicative of Emir Dikko's loyal services to the colonial regime, but also as his own acquisitions of the important symbols of the colonial order that he had appropriated and domesticated.

I have earlier pointed out that upon return from his first visit to England, Emir Dikko was welcomed back in Katsina by the praise-song that celebrated the visit as an accomplishment that made him

⁹³ Kagara (1951), 77.

⁹⁴ Peter K. Tibenderana (1985), 94.

a first among the emirs of Northern Nigeria. Emir Dikko's journals of his subsequent visits to the United Kingdom became shorter and shorter, and less enchanted with the beautiful things in London. Nevertheless, the journals reflect the fact that Emir Dikko always conducted himself in the colonial metropolis with ease and familiarity, and as if he was on tour in his own dominions. In a sense, Emir Dikko appropriated England as one of his royal retreats. For example, his first and second visits were both for official purposes, the first to receive the King's Medal in 1921, and the second to attend the Wembley Exhibition in 1924. Emir Dikko's fourth (1937) and fifth (1939) visits were for medical check-ups. But his third visit in 1933 was purely for leisure. On his way back from Mecca after performing his second *hajj* Emir Dikko decided to make a private visit to England, and below is his journal of this visit:

After we had completed the *hajj*, I felt a desire to visit England again. Therefore, I bade farewell to some of my entourage at Suakin, and put them under the care of Iyan Katsina, Alhaji Ramalan. Then I departed for England, taking along with me my younger brother Kankiya [of Katsina], Alhaji Nuhu, Wakilan Doka Alhaji Usman Nagogo, Sarkin Zangon Kumashi M. Sallau, Alhaji Yusuf Lamba, my two little grandsons, Ibrahim Ladan Baki and Usman Ladan Fari, and my wife, Ummulhairi.

From Port Sudan we sailed to the island of Malta, where we met with Mr. Anderson who had served in Bida as an education officer. When we arrived in Marseilles I decided not to pass through the Strait of Gibraltar because I knew that route. All the money paid for that leg of the journey was forfeited. I traveled by train through France, passing the city of Paris, the capital of France. We disembarked at Dover, and found Mr. Browne had come to welcome us. From there [we headed] to London. We lodged once again in the house called Hyde Park Hotel. We stayed in London for 14 days. We saw big war ships such as H.M.S. Hood, and H.M.S. Victory (They were among the ships sunk during Hitler's war.) We went to a place called Croydon. We saw different kinds of airplanes, nine were started to entertain us; we boarded and were airborne.

On another day, I and Mr. Browne went to greet the King of England George V. Then, I and all of my entourage went to greet the elder son of the King, Prince of Wales. (He was the one who became the King after the death of his father. He is known as King Edward VIII, who abdicated.)

We [left] London and spent two night at Port Sunlight, a place where soap is manufactured. When we departed, we spent 15 nights on the

Atlantic Ocean before arriving in Lagos. We then boarded the train to Kano, and finally arrived home on 4 June [19]33. We were thankful to the Almighty Allah for our safe journey there and back. I have discharged the obligatory *hajj* incumbent upon every Muslim who has the means. I have also discharged the supererogatory *hajj*, that remains the recommended one (*mustahabb*).⁹⁵

In contrast to the accounts of his previous visits, this account of Emir Dikko's third visit to England is notable not only for its brevity, but also for lack of any amazement. The account of his encounter with King George V appears this time to be rather perfunctory, and without the details of the grandeur and riches that Emir Dikko could not find the words to describe during his first meeting with the King. It might be the case that there was not as much formality because the second encounter was not official. But this still supports the point I am making: that Emir Dikko had domesticated the colonial metropolis as a retreat. Thus after the arduous overland journey to Mecca, and performing the *hajj* amidst all the crowds of pilgrims from different parts of the world, Emir Dikko seemed to have decided, almost on the spur of the moment, to take a two-week vacation in England. Apart from attesting to his familiarity with England, the expression of his religious concerns in the conclusion of the account, shows once again Emir Dikko's compartmentalization of Islam and colonialism: a vacation in London on the way back from pilgrimage to Mecca.

Conclusion

The three case-studies presented in this chapter demonstrate the diverse range of voices within the Islamic discourses on the political challenges of colonialism. Emir Muhammadu Dikko of Katsina compartmentalized Islam and colonialism into different spheres, and easily but assiduously worked to attain distinctions in both spheres. His strategy is supportable by the tradition of the Prophet Muhammad commanding Muslims to improve their lives in this world as if they would live for ever, and to work for salvation in the hereafter as if they would die tomorrow. But whereas Emir Dikko received many medals for his loyalty to the British colonial administration, Emir Aliyu dan Sidi of Zazzau was deposed because he never reconciled

⁹⁵ Kagara (1951), 71-72.

himself to the political supremacy of the British. Through his Hausa poems, Emir Aliyu ɗan Sidi constructed allegorical discourses that view colonialism as a reversal of the natural order of things, including the verities of social conventions. His poems reveal that he thought such a reversal impossible, even when it appears to have taken place. His refusal to accept the colonial reversals of social conventions explains why Emir Aliyu ɗan Sidi did not reconcile himself to the political supremacy of British colonialism. The strictures in the religious poem of Emir Aliyu ɗan Sidi against the material world, which he constantly allegorized as a seductress and an utterly unreliable harlot, are better understood as part of his allegorical discourse on colonialism.

Between the extremes of Emir Muhammadu Dikko's acceptance of the colonial order and Emir Aliyu ɗan Sidi's rejection of it, there is a middle ground represented in the legal discourse that provided justification in Islamic law for Muslims' acquiescence under British colonial rule. Abu Bakr b. Ahmad made the case for this middle ground by extending the Islamic legal arguments earlier made to support Muslims' surrender to the British. Among other Islamic legal doctrines, Abu Bakr b. Ahmad applied *muwālāt*, *taqīyya*, *maṣlaḥa*, and *rukḥṣa* to make the case that Muslims' fear of British military superiority, and the necessity to preserve the physical survival of Muslims, are valid bases for conferring Islamic legality on the positions of emirs and Islamic judges appointed by the British, and also on Muslims' payment of colonial taxes. By advocating a middle ground between rejection and acceptance of colonialism, this legal discourse must have provided most Muslims with the required Islamic authorization for negotiating the political challenges of British colonialism in Northern Nigeria.

For example, Ibrahim Tahir shows that *taqīyya*, on the basis of which Abu Bakr b. Ahmad built his case, was also the basis of many of the policies of Emir Abbas (r. 1903–1919), who, like Emirs Aliyu ɗan Sidi of Zazzau and Muhammadu Dikko of Katsina, was among the first set of British-appointed emirs. Tahir argues that because of the adverse consequences of British colonial policies, there was intense anti-British Islamic propaganda in Kano, which Emir Abbas could not simply ignore.⁹⁶ Thus in the face of the two anti-British revolts

⁹⁶ Tahir, "Scholars, Sufis, Saints," 322–24.

of 1906 in Satiru and Hadejia, Tahir contends that "Abbas had placed his weight and assistance behind the colonial power, but *taqiyya* behavior and the covert propagation of mahdist resistance continued."⁹⁷ In fact, even British colonial authorities seemed to be aware that "Abbas's strategy towards the colonial regime was that of *taqiyya*, outward acceptance but passive resistance."⁹⁸ Similarly, Tukur has pointed out that:

While some emirs more or less readily worked with the British and while some others found it absolutely impossible to work with them and had to be removed, a majority of emirs adopted what the British themselves called passive resistance, a tactic whose usual form was to be very civil and cordial towards the British, to express a verbal approval of most of what they propose but at the same time find one excuse or another for being unable to help in the execution of those proposals.⁹⁹

It is most likely that the majority of emirs based their passive resistance on *taqiyya*, as Emir Abbas of Kano did. However, the point must be stressed that not all of the Emirs were Islamic scholars, who could put together the elaborate legal stratagems needed to make the case for *taqiyya*. Given the way Abu Bakr b. Ahmad articulated the case for *taqiyya* so well, it is very unlikely that any of the majority of Emirs who adopted passive resistance would have dissented. However, the responses of the ulama, whose relationship to the colonial regime is rather different from that of the emirs, reveal that there was a strong dissent against the employment of legal stratagems to rationalize the position of emirs under indirect rule, as will be discussed in the next chapter.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 328.

⁹⁸ P.E. Lovejoy, A. Mahdi, and M.I. Mukhtar (1993), 12.

⁹⁹ Tukur, "The Imposition of British Colonial Domination," 333.

CHAPTER FOUR

'*ULAMĀ*' RESPONSES TO NORMATIVE AND LEGAL CHALLENGES OF COLONIALISM

As a class, the '*ulamā*' (henceforth spelt simply '*ulama*'; pl. of '*ālim*', a learned person, especially in the Islamic religion) responded to the challenges of colonialism in ways different from those of the emirs. The previous chapter has demonstrated that the Islamic legitimacy of the emirs' position within the British colonial system of indirect rule was central to the emirs' discourses on colonialism. The emirs' discourses were significantly constrained by their position within the colonial regime, for emirs who overtly opposed the British were deposed. Thus relations of power between the emirs and the British were at the center of the emirs' intellectual responses to colonialism. Similarly, the discourses of the '*ulama*' on colonialism were also concerned with relations of power. However, religious beliefs, practices, and norms, were the more prominent concerns for the '*ulama*', for although some of them did work for the colonial regime, they did not occupy the same position of power as the emirs did. The prominence of religious issues within the discourses of the '*ulama*' should be understood in the context of their roles as the religious authorities and the moral guardians of Islamic communities. As a class that stood largely outside the colonial administration, the '*ulama*' could openly express their views on colonialism without the risk of dismissal that the emirs could not simply ignore. Whereas the previous chapter demonstrates that emirs' discourses on colonialism were apologetic or allegorical due to their position within the colonial administration, this chapter argues that because of their relative distance from the colonial administration, the '*ulama*' constructed discourses that were more openly critical of colonialism. However, similarities and linkages exist between the discourses of the emirs and those of the '*ulama*'. For one thing, some of the '*ulama*' did work for the British, and such '*ulama*' constructed discourses on colonialism that were in some respects similar to the discourses of emirs. The British colonial appropriation and containment of Islamic law evoked responses from emirs and '*ulama*' because both were involved

in the administration of Islamic law under British colonial rule. Hence Muslims' discourses on the legal challenges of colonialism were constructed by both the emirs and the 'ulama—with the latter serving as Muslim judges. The linkages between the discourses of the emirs and those of the 'ulama are most evident in the colonial administration of Islamic law. Beginning with the examination of the 'ulama as a group, this chapter explores the different voices within the discourses of the 'ulama on colonialism. The chapter examines a number of Arabic poems that highlight the prominence of religious issues and the openly critical attitude towards the colonial administration in the discourses of the 'ulama, thereby revealing the differences between the discourses of the emirs and those of the 'ulama. The chapter exposes the similarities between the two discourses through analysis of the poems of Muhammadu Junaid, the Wazir of Sokoto. Wazir Junaid's poems illustrate how being in the service of the colonial administration made the opposition of some 'ulama take the form of muted complaints against the moral and religious decline that the 'ulama saw resulting from colonialism. The linkage between discourses of the 'ulama and those of the emirs comes out in the examination of the important issue that involved both the emirs and the 'ulama, namely: Muslims' intellectual responses to the legal challenges of administering Islamic law under British colonial rule.

'Ulama as a Group

Studies on the 'ulama stress the considerable diversity of their statuses and roles in Islamic societies, leading Stephen Humphreys to observe that the 'ulama "are neither a socio-economic class, nor a clearly defined status group, nor a hereditary caste, nor a legal estate, nor a profession."¹ Humphreys further notes that the 'ulama "seem to cut across almost every possible classification of groups within Islamic society, playing a multiplicity of political, social, and cultural roles."² Yet, he still holds that "in spite of this ambiguity, they are plainly a crucial element in Islamic society—the one group which in fact makes it 'Islamic' rather than something else—and wherever

¹ R. Stephen Humphreys (1991), 187.

² *Ibid.*

we turn we encounter them.”³ Similarly, Hayyim Cohen’s study of the economic backgrounds of some 14,000 individual ‘ulama leads him to conclude that “the religious scholars derived from all strata of the Muslim society, including the most backward parts such as servants, porters . . . But the majority were merchants and craftsmen.” Cohen finds this diversity to be “true of the religious scholars of the second, third, and fourth-centuries of Islam, and to some extent also of those of the first century.”⁴ In another study focused on the ‘ulama of Damascus from the middle of the fifth century to the middle of the seventh century of Islam, Joan Gilbert also discovers that “the general term of ‘ulama fails in precision, for the broader social roles of the ‘ulama have varied over the centuries.” Yet Gilbert also finds that between 468/1076 and 658/1260, “interaction between the ‘ulama and the ruling families of Damascus increasingly promoted endowment of religious establishments, institutionalization of Muslim scholarship, and professionalization of the ‘ulama.”⁵ Gilbert also notes that similar developments occurred in the Mamluk and Ottoman empires from the late thirteenth century through the sixteenth century. The point to note from these various studies on the ‘ulama is that despite the considerable diversity in their backgrounds, statuses, and roles in Islamic societies, the ‘ulama have historically been a clearly recognizable group.

In the context of Islamic history globally, Ira Lapidus defines the ‘ulama simply as “scholars knowledgeable about Muslim *ḥadīth*, law and theology,” adding that “the one common trait shared by all Islamic societies was the establishment of ‘ulama and Sufis as the teachers and exemplars of Islam and the leaders of Muslim communities.”⁶ More specifically, the ‘ulama have also been the primary religious authorities in Islamic societies, officiating in the public rituals of Islam, instructing Muslims in Islamic religious precepts, and articulating, interpreting, and administering Islamic law.⁷ An important factor that often reinforced group solidarity among the ‘ulama has been the tendency for the children of the ‘ulama to be trained

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ Hayyim J. Cohen (1970), 43.

⁵ Joan E. Gilbert (1980), 106.

⁶ Ira M. Lapidus (1988), 253.

⁷ *Ibid.*, *et passim*.

also as 'ulama. But it should be stressed that kinship is neither necessary nor sufficient requirement for belonging to the 'ulama, for what defined "the 'ulama establishment" as a social group has been their expertise in, and preoccupation with, what can be broadly termed the ideological parameters of Islamic societies, namely: religious, educational, and legal affairs.

The point should also be emphasized that the "'ulama establishment" has historically been divided by schisms on various points of religious belief and practice, as well as politics. Apart from being religious specialists, the 'ulama have also been part of the ruling elite in Muslim societies, not only because of their judicial functions, but also because their literacy qualified them to serve as ministers, scribes, and counselors. The integration of the 'ulama into the ruling elite, perhaps best exemplified in the *'ilmiye* of the Ottoman Empire,⁸ has often been characterized by a tension that divided the 'ulama into opposing political orientations. On the one hand, some 'ulama were comfortable with their roles in the political arena, and on the other hand, some 'ulama preferred to keep distance from the political arena.⁹ In the polemic between these political orientations, the former were often termed 'ulama *al-sunna* (the righteous scholars), and the later 'ulama *al-sū'* (the venal scholars). Bernard Lewis points to another important political division among the 'ulama. He identifies one orientation as "quietist" because it views tyranny as a lesser evil than anarchy, and stresses obedience to even a tyrannical ruler in order to preserve Islamic public order. Lewis describes the other orientation as "activist" because it emphasizes that absolute obedience is due to God alone, and if a ruler becomes sinful he should not be obeyed.¹⁰

An appreciation of how these opposing political orientations evolved historically in Northern Nigeria, and the broader West African

⁸ Stanford J. Shaw (1976), vol. i 132-50 *et passim*. See also: Ali Ugur (1986), xxxvii-xxvi; and Madeline C. Zilfi (1988).

⁹ The roles of the 'ulama in the global history of Islamic societies are explored by Marshall Hodgson (1974) i-iii, *et passim*. The theoretical articulations by the 'ulama on their relationship to rulers are discussed by Ann K. Lambton (1981), 242-63. The roles of the 'ulama in the encounter between the modern west and the Muslim world are examined in the various essays collected and edited by Nikki R. Keddie (1972), esp. 17-92.

¹⁰ Bernard Lewis (1986), 141; *Cf.* W. Madelung (1980), 18-31; Louise Marlow (1995), 101-120.

context, is important for understanding the responses of the 'ulama to British colonialism. In the historical development of Islam in West Africa, the opposing orientations among the 'ulama towards rulers were manifested in the "Suwarian tradition" that represents pacifist orientation and distance from the political arena, and the "Maghilian tradition," that represents activist orientation and involvement in the political arena.¹¹ An interesting feature of the West African context was the question of whether the 'ulama should themselves take power, rather than merely serving as ministers and advisers. The West African jihad movements of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries brought the activist 'ulama into power, thereby reversing the equation between the "righteous scholars" and the "venal scholars." Thus before the establishment of the Sokoto Caliphate at the turn of the nineteenth-century, the "righteous scholars" were those who kept distance from the rulers of the Hausa states, while the "venal scholars" were those who worked for, or associated with, these rulers. But this polemical distinction was reversed after "the righteous scholars" became the rulers of the Sokoto Caliphate. Yet even after the Sokoto jihad, the view that it was more pious to maintain a respectable distance from Muslim rulers remained active among the 'ulama throughout the nineteenth-century.¹² From perspective of this group, it was even more objectionable to work for the colonial regime. On the other hand, the view that tyranny is a lesser evil than anarchy made it easier for some 'ulama to argue that it was less objectionable to work for the colonial regime than to generate anarchy by actively opposing it. Before exploring how the opposing political orientations among the 'ulama reflected in the different voices within the discourses of the 'ulama on colonialism, let us briefly examine the social composition of Northern Nigerian 'ulama.

As pointed out earlier, Islamic scholarship is the primary defining characteristic of the 'ulama as a group; therefore, one becomes a member of the 'ulama by being educated in Islamic religious knowledge, particularly Islamic law. The transmission of Islamic scholarship in Northern Nigeria has historically been through two tracks of Islamic education, which have continued from the pre-colonial period

¹¹ For the Suwarian tradition, see: Ivor Wilks (1968, 2000), 162-97, esp. 179 ff. For the Maghilian tradition, see: John O. Hunwick (1985), 29-53. See also M. Hiskett (1962), 577-96; and Nehemia Levtzion (1978), 333-45.

¹² M. Hiskett (1973), 105 ff. Cf. A.U. Jalingo (1982), 69-82.

through colonialism to the present. The first tract is the *makarantar allo*, and the second tract is the *makarantar ilimi*.

The *makarantar allo*, devoted almost entirely to Qur'anic studies, is the first stage of Islamic learning. From an early age, Muslim children begin to learn Qur'anic recitation and the Arabic alphabet. Emphasis here is on the memorization of the Qur'an, and those able to successfully memorize the entire Qur'an become professional reciters of the sacred text. They earn a living by teaching Qur'anic recitation to *makarantar allo* pupils, opening social and religious ceremonies with recitation of the Qur'an, and also functioning as Qur'an scribes and copyists for other scholarly texts. However, most Muslims will memorize only enough portions of the Qur'an for their own use in the five daily prayers and other Islamic devotions and rituals. Others may choose fields of specialization in Islamic scholarship other than Qur'an recitation. Such a choice will then take one to *makarantar ilimi*.

Whereas the *makarantar allo* begins from early childhood and usually terminates by adolescence, the *makarantar ilimi* does not usually start before adolescence and often lasts for the entire life of most students. Some students might either abandon the intellectual pursuits, or at some stage become learned enough to attract students that might leave them with little time to continue their own studies. Specializations include Arabic Language and Literature, Islamic Law, Theology and Logic, Qur'anic Exegesis, Traditions of the Prophet Muhammad, and History of Islam, and Local Histories. Graduates of the *makarantar ilimi* constitute the *mallam* class (Hausa for 'ulama) and together with those trained in the Qur'anic schools form the Muslim intelligentsia.¹³

The *mallam* class has historically enjoyed considerable influence and social prestige within the Muslim communities of Northern Nigeria. *Mallams* traveled widely, not only in search of specialized teachers, but also in search of clientele. *Mallams* traveled together

¹³ For further details on the traditions of Islamic learning in Northern Nigeria, see A. Abubakar (1972); S.A.S. Galadanci (1982), 55-88; A.B. Fafunwa (1974), 55-72; and Mervin Hiskett (1976), 134-67. For analysis of the social, political, economic, intellectual and religious roles of the 'ulama, see: John N. Paden (1973), 56-61, *et passim*; Ibrahim A. Tahir, "Scholars, Sufis, Saints and Capitalists in Kano, 1904-1946: the Pattern of a Bourgeois Revolution in an Islamic Society," (Ph.D. diss., University of Cambridge, 1978).

with long-distance merchants, and were often a notable part of trading stations (*zangos*), where they served as teachers, letter-writers, legal-draftsmen and notary public, record-keepers of business transactions, and of course as religious specialists.¹⁴ Similarly, only mallams could hold certain governmental positions, including *wazīr* (prime minister and legal adviser to the Emir), *alkali* (Hausa for *qāḍī*, judge) of the *shari‘a* courts, and *imām* who leads the public congregations of Islamic daily prayers. But consistent with the historical roles of ‘ulama in Islamic societies, many mallams avoided governmental positions, and preferred to confine themselves to teaching private circles of disciples. Whether in the service of rulers, or pursuing their scholarly vocation of teaching, writing, and ministering to the spiritual and ritual needs of fellow Muslims, the mallams were an important social group with considerable influence on public opinion.

For this reason, the mallam class attracted the special attention of the British even before the conquest of the Sokoto caliphate was completed. Following the imposition of colonialism, the British needed the services of the mallams for various administrative tasks, but more especially for the administration of justice. The British also targeted the mallams, along with the sons of chiefs, to be the first recipients of western education. The recurrent fear that mallams would incite religious uprisings against colonial rule led the British to place constant surveillance on the peregrinations of the mallams, and gathering intelligence reports on individual mallams was a major preoccupation of colonial administrators, as already discussed in Chapter One.

Other challenges of colonialism that confronted the mallams included the competition that colonialism introduced against their specialized expertise. The introduction of western education challenged the monopoly of the mallams over literacy, along with the important role of literacy in gaining access to governmental positions, economic resources and social prestige. The British colonial appropriation of the emirates and the *shari‘a* courts challenged the Islamic character of these institutions. As the custodians of Islamic norms and values, the mallams had to respond to the ideological challenge of colonialism in this respect. Similarly, there were challenges for the mallams who chose to work, or somehow found themselves working, under the colonial administration. Apart from mallams working in

¹⁴ Mahdi Adamu (1978), 179 ff.

the administrative, judicial, and educational domains, other mallams were also recruited as local historians, interpreters and translators. Mallams served as "native anthropologists" for the compilation of district notebooks used to acquaint new colonial administrators with the history and cultural traditions of the communities the administrators were to administer.¹⁵ At its inception, the colonial administration needed mallams to write official correspondence in Arabic between the colonial administration and the emirates, some of which were yet to be subjugated; hence there was also a need for agents to collect and report intelligence on the emirates, a function that some mallams performed as well.

The mallams in fact were quite important in establishing the administrative infrastructures of the colonial regime. Yet, even as the colonial administration employed the services of mallams, colonialism introduced alternatives to their skills through western education. Thus even the mallams who worked for the colonial administration faced various challenges, in addition to what may be termed normative objections to serving the non-Islamic regime of colonialism. Before exploring the intellectual responses by these mallams to the various challenges of colonialism, let us begin with responses of the vast majority of the mallam class who did not work for the colonial administration.

The Open Opposition of the Ulama to Colonialism

The mallams who did not work for the colonial administration constructed discourses openly critical against the colonial regime as a corrupting influence on the moral and religious aspects of Muslim communities. One of the best articulations of the critical attitude of the mallams towards colonialism could be seen in the Arabic poems of Mallam Zum'atu ibn al-Imām Muhammad al-Fallāṭi. Not much is known about Mallam Zum'atu's life other than what his poems record about his extensive travels in West Africa, and it will take a

¹⁵ Some of the *mallams* who assisted in the compilation of the district note-books are sometimes acknowledged in the published versions of the district-note books, which appeared in the 1920s as *Gazetteers of the Northern Provinces of Nigeria*, vols. i-iv, (London: Frank Cass, 1972, reprint with a general introduction by A.H.M. Kirk-Greene).

separate research project to trace the numerous towns and peoples he mentions in his poems. He states that the occasion for composing his *‘Ajā’ib al-asfār* was “after his return from a visit to his brothers who reside[d] in Yola.” This led Hunwick to suggest that Zum‘atu “would appear to be originally from Yola.”¹⁶ However, according to Mallam Mudi Spikin, the family of Mallam Zum‘atu migrated from Kano to Kumasi, where Zum‘atu was born. The father became the imam of the Kumasi mosque. Mudi Spikin states further that Mallam Zum‘atu was well-known for his wide travels, and that during his many short visits to Kano (lasting three to four months), he stayed in Mabusa, near the Sheshe quarters in the old city of Kano. Although he knew Zum‘atu well enough to describe his physical appearance, Mudi Spikin was not sure of when or where Mallam Zum‘atu passed away.¹⁷

Mallam Zum‘atu expresses his views on colonialism within the context of relating his extensive travels in West Africa. In this respect, Zum‘atu’s experiences compare to those of Wazir Junaid (discussed below) who had also traveled widely; otherwise, Zum‘atu is rather unique among ‘ulama who wrote on colonialism. In his *Qasīda dāhīyya*, Zum‘atu judges social practices he had observed in his travels as indications of the moral decline and religious degeneration resulting from colonialism. He laments that Muslims were unable to reverse this negative situation because of the overwhelming power of the colonizer.¹⁸ In another poem entitled *‘Ajā’ib al-asfār wa’mtihān al-bilād wa al-aqtār* (Wonders of Travels and Trials and Tribulations of Towns and Regions)¹⁹ Zum‘atu prays to Almighty Allah for protection against the negative consequences of colonialism, and for deliverance from the overwhelming power of the colonizer. In contrast to the discourses of the emirs analyzed in the previous chapter, Zum‘atu does not rationalize emirs’ participation in the colonial administration; instead, he condemns unequivocally Muslims’ acquiescence in colo-

¹⁶ See: *ALA*, II, 344–45.

¹⁷ Mudi Sipikin, interview by the author, tape recording, Kano, 13–16 January 1994.

¹⁸ Hand-written manuscripts of Zum‘atu’s Arabic poems are preserved as NU/Paden 173 and NU/Hunwick 255, in the Arabic collection of the Melville J. Herskovits Africana Library, Northwestern University, Evanston, IL, U.S.A. I also obtained a copy of Zum‘atu’s Arabic poems from Mallam Mudi Sipikin, Kano, 1993.

¹⁹ Mss. in NU/Paden, 173, and NU/Hunwick, 255.

nialism. Let us now explore further Zum'atu's poetical exposition of the points briefly identified in this paragraph.

The opening lines of the *Dālīyya* (vv. 1–3) allude to colonialism as an amazing overturning of the way things used to be, and as a “threat that will appear in the land.” The poet sees this development as predestined by God, and as a clear sign of the imminent appearance of the *mahdi*. He then enumerates (vv. 4–8) other negative developments, including: children disrespecting their parents; the learned not speaking the truth; rulers becoming tyrannical, mischievous, and quarrelsome; and only a few Muslim judges deciding cases justly. Although sermonizing on these issues was a common theme in Muslim religious poems even in the pre-colonial period,²⁰ Zum'atu links colonialism to the moral deterioration on these issues. In line 9, he states that Christians and their “crooked laws” are becoming prevalent. He also connects colonialism to moral decline by lamenting that rather than staying in their marital homes, Muslim women were frequenting “barracks” for prostitution.²¹ This seemingly off-hand reference to “barracks” is loaded with negative signification that needs to be highlighted here.

In Muslim discourses on colonialism in Northern Nigeria, “barracks” signifies not only the areas inhabited by colonial military formations, but also other colonial stations, including residential quarters, commercial and industrial areas, and political and administrative buildings. More importantly, “barracks” signifies the lifestyle of the colonizer in contrast to the lifestyle of Muslims, a distinction meant to highlight the lifestyle of the colonizer as immoral. “Barracks” are those spaces where Islamic norms are flouted at will: alcohol consumption and prostitution are believed to be particularly prevalent, and indulged in with impunity. Hence the Hausa word *barikanci* (i.e. Barrackism) means: “the undesirable ways of p[ersons] in *bariki* . . . rest-house, European station, barracks . . .”²² Thus Zum'atu's mention of barracks in the context of moral decline among Muslims reveals the connection he sees between that moral decline and colonialism: the

²⁰ See Hiskett (1975), 21–91; and Abdulkadir Dangambo, “Hausa Wa'zi Verse from ca 1800 to ca 1970: A Critical Study of the Form, Content, Language, and Style” (Ph.D. diss., SOAS, University of London, 1980).

²¹ NU/Paden, 173, f. 2.

²² R.C. Abraham (1946), 83–84. Abraham adds (p. 84) that *dan bariki* (literally ‘son of barracks’), means “soldier, messenger . . . and others who, though in European employ, do not live with Europeans.”

libertine lifestyles of barracks tempt Muslims, and therefore Muslims should avoid barracks.

Zum'atu also links colonialism to moral decline by lamenting that Muslim youth have abandoned studying Islam and have taken to alcohol, and that "imitating the Christians has become the goal."²³ The poet goes on to list other moral lapses that he sees rampant among all classes of Muslims. He complains that children of 'ulama have become like pagans, while the 'ulama themselves, who ought to know better and preach against such lapses, have become worse:

- 22) You see the 'ulama—their preoccupation is towards
womanizing, covetousness, lying, and mischief.
- 23) Some of them have abandoned *ṣalāt*;
hence, they miss the righteous path.
- 24) For by *ṣalāt*, major sins are forgiven,
and the status of one is enhanced among people.
- 25) By *ṣalāt* one also attains salvation in the Hereafter,
and gains all the pleasures of paradise.²⁴

These lines reveal the extent of the moral decline that the poet sees among the colonized Muslims. *Ṣalāt*, the obligatory devotion that Muslims should observe as prayers five times daily, is the most important Islamic religious practice. For example, Qur'an (4:101–103) commands Muslims to observe the five daily *ṣalāt* in all circumstances; even Muslim combatants under enemy fire are expected to observe *ṣalāt*. As Zum'atu states in the above lines, *ṣalāt* is also important for the rewards that its steady observance confers on Muslims in both the here and now, and in the hereafter. Given the centrality of *ṣalāt* in the Islamic religion, and the expectation that the 'ulama should lead in its public observance, Zum'atu's assertion that some 'ulama were no longer observing *ṣalāt* suggests that he thought colonialism had undermined the core of the Islamic moral and religious foundations. This assertion underscores the preoccupation with moral and religious issues in the discourses of ulama.

The discourses of the 'ulama are also concerned with relations of power between the British and their Muslim colonial subjects. This concern appears in Zum'atu's characterization of the emirs as slaves to the British, who frequently summoned the emirs to Kaduna, the colonial capital of Northern Nigeria. He disparages emirs' travels to

²³ NU/Paden, 173, f. 2.

²⁴ *Ibid.*

the new center of power by the simile of unshepherded herds of animals that turn to anyone who beckons.²⁵ The poet also bemoans that: "In this day, people of the truth have been humiliated/and by their humiliation the obdurate has become exalted."²⁶ Zum'atu sees this sad state of affairs as something that could not be reversed, because he believes that "no one could overrule what the Christians have decided."²⁷ In further illustration of his understanding of the overwhelming power of the colonizer, Zum'atu cites the example of a workers' strike that was called on by the Nigerian nationalist leader, Chief Nnamdi Azikiwe. While criticizing Azikiwe's failure to realize that power belonged to the colonial regime, Zum'atu also satirizes the colonial bureaucratic tactic of referring the grievances of the striking workers to higher colonial authorities all the way up to King George VI (*r.* 1936–1952).²⁸ Thus in addition to characterizing colonialism as a cause of moral and religious decline among Muslims, the poet also reveals a realism that indicates his conception of how an imbalance of power undergirded colonialism. Zum'atu's portrayal of the intersection of religion and power under colonialism is evident in these lines:

- 79) The insane quarrels with the Christians,
 for they have gained superiority and control.
 80) The Lord has given them favors,
 and made them better than all of humanity.
 81) A denier of their power will be hurt,
 and will pass the night on the floor without sleep.
 82) Don't you see that in the towns of every land, they are
 establishing barracks?
 83) They have appointed D[istrict] O[[fficer]s for every land,
 and Residents to rule over everywhere.
 84) They have brought churches to misguide;
 their schools are of no use—
 85) Save [for] old lies and confusion,
 monstrosity, cruelty, and apostasy.
 86) Their devotion is but whistling, singing,
 and clapping; it has no guidance.²⁹

²⁵ *Ibid.*, f. 3.

²⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 5.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 5–6.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 6.

In these lines, Zum'atu acknowledges the superior power of the colonizer, and avers that it is futile and indeed self-destructive to oppose that power. He sees the power of the Christians (i.e. the British colonialists) in terms of Qur'an 2:47: "O Children of Israel call to mind the special favor which I bestowed upon you, and that I preferred you to all others." Although this verse refers specifically to Children of Israel, Zum'atu is obviously subsuming Christians into that category, for the Qur'an often refers to both Jews and Christians as one group under the term "people of the Scripture" (*ahl al-kitāb*). It should be noted that the poet is expressing the same sentiment that we have seen in the previous discourses on colonialism, namely: the Islamic belief that power belongs God alone. This belief implies that although the British colonialists have overpowered Muslims, it is still within the power of God to reverse the situation. Zum'atu's wish for such a reversal takes the form of allusion to Qur'an (8:35) to characterize negatively Christian modes of worship. While revealing once again the importance of religious concerns in the discourses of the 'ulama, Zum'atu shows an ambivalence towards the British colonialists conceived as Christians. He attributes "lies, monstrosity, cruelty, apostasy etc." to the British while at the same time acknowledging that God has favored them over all others. This ambivalence is clearer in the following lines:

- 89) Their many wonders are limitless,
 hence they could never be counted.
 90) Their wonders will never cease altogether,
 even if the oceans were ink for recording [the wonders].³⁰

Among these many wonders, Zum'atu lists (lines 91–110) the British conquest of Nigerian towns and cities. He laments that the British exiled Muslim rulers, mentioning in particular the Sultan of Sokoto, and the emirs of Yola and Kano. An even more lamentable consequence of the British conquest is that "their appearance is sadness for the people of God (*ahl Allah*)/but appropriate and happy for the depraved lowly ones (*al-ardhāl*)."³¹ Thus even within the context of discussing relations of power, Zum'atu reiterates the religious and moral concerns that predominate in the discourses of the 'ulama on

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 7.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 8.

colonialism. Similarly, Zum'atu's treatment of power imbalance between the British and their Muslim colonial subjects reveals the opposition of the 'ulama towards colonialism. He sees the overwhelming power of the colonialists fundamentally in negative terms, and as contributing to the moral decline among Muslims.

In *'Ajā'ib al-asfār*, Zum'atu records the experiences of his travels in West Africa. Once again, he protests against the many moral lapses he sees everywhere, and categorizes the towns he visits according to both the hospitality and the moral character of the people of each town. Although he praises some of the British colonies, particularly the Gold Coast, he is unsparing in his criticism of French colonies:

Towns belonging to the French I do not wish to enter,
 I never desire the French towns for fear of humiliation.
 For example, In Duala, they take money from people,
 In transparently unjust confiscations.
 Their oppression never relents while they rule,
 They have no mercy on a traveling guest.
 In Bangui, cold and rain never cease,
 In the winter and in the summer—just like Congo and Chad.
 Diseases have multiplied in Brazzaville,
 As fear has increased in the Gambia.³²

Zum'atu's negative portrayal of French colonialism in these lines is consistent with the widely documented characterization of French colonialism as being more oppressive than British colonialism.³³ However, Zum'atu's overall attitude to both the French and the British is basically the same negative one, for although he praises some British colonies, nonetheless he lists the British colony of the Gambia along with the French colonies that he criticizes. Furthermore, his earlier attribution of "lies, monstrosity, cruelty, apostasy . . ." to the British is no better than his charges of oppression and robbery against the French. Given his earlier stated view that no one could reverse the decisions of the colonial authorities, and the negative traits he sees in both the French and the British, it is not surprising that he concludes the *'Ajā'ib al-asfār* thus:

³² *Ibid.*, 23.

³³ For example, see: Michael Crowder (1968), 163–233; Finn Fuglestad (1983), esp. pp. 107 ff.; and Williams F.S. Miles (1994). See also: G.W. Johnson (1985), esp. pp. 363 ff.

May the Lord of the Throne protect us from any *fitna*,
 And from the evil of what is coming to these lands,
 And from the evil of the Germans, and the trickery of the English,
 And from the evil of America and the multitude of the Russians,
 And from the evil of all the types of pagans,
 And from the evil of soldiers, and the carriers of [colonial] arsenal,
 And from the evil of all types of Christians,
 Such as the iniquity of the French, or the dishonesty of the Indians.
 For they do not uphold trust,
 Nor do they keep promise; they are shameless.³⁴

These concluding lines reveal the centrality of religious concerns in the discourses of the 'ulama on colonialism. In praying for the protection of the Almighty against the "the evil of all types of pagans and Christians," Zum'atu displays a highly ideological conception of the religious otherness of all non-Muslims, particularly the colonialists. He makes no distinction between, on the one hand, the British, French, and Germans, who all had colonies in West Africa, and on the other hand, the Americans and Russians who did not have colonies in the region—except of course the American settler colony of Liberia. In negatively referring to Indians who served under the British colonial administration in Northern Nigeria, Zum'atu ignores completely the fact that some of them were Muslims. His inclusion of Indians in the negative category of the non-Muslim other is particularly indicative of Zum'atu's ideological inclination to assert unambiguously the primacy of difference between Muslims and non-Muslims. Clearly, Zum'atu is ideologically informed by the Muslims' generalized view of Christians as implacable foes. It is from this negative perception that Zum'atu associates Christians (i.e. the colonialists) and pagans with nothing but evil and *fitna*.³⁵ Such ideologically charged generalization of the other is reinforced by Zum'atu's distance from the colonial order, for had he served under the colonial administration, perhaps he would have had some positive experience with one or two colonialists who might not easily have fitted into this negatively generalized other.

Zum'atu's poems illustrate how the discourses of the 'ulama on colonialism are preoccupied with religious and moral issues, and even when relations of power appear in the discourses of the 'ulama, their

³⁴ NU/Paden, 173, 27–28.

³⁵ See Chapter Two for analyses of the ideological signification of *fitna*.

concern is with how the superior power of the colonizer impacts negatively on the moral and religious fabric of Muslim communities. Conspicuously absent is the search for Islamic legal stratagems to justify acquiescence to the colonial regime. Such a search for stratagems predominates in the discourses of the emirs, as discussed in the previous chapter. These characteristics of discourses of the 'ulama that emerge in Zum'atu's poems are also similarly discernible in the poems of other 'ulama on colonialism.

The Anonymous Discourse of Opposition

There are three other Arabic poems openly critical of colonialism in Northern Nigeria. One is titled *Tā'ziyat al-ikhwān* (Consolation to the Brothers);³⁶ the other two have no titles, and will be simply identified here by their rhyming letters, *Rā'īyya*,³⁷ and *Nūniyya*.³⁸ The authors of all three poems are yet to be identified, and therefore it is not certain that the poets were 'ulama who did not work for colonialism. It might be the case that the poets were in fact 'ulama in the employ of the colonial administration, and that might be the reason for not identifying themselves as the authors of the criticism against colonialism expressed in the poems. Until further research reveals the authors of these poems, I suggest that because of their open criticism of colonialism, and their moral and religious concerns, these poems should be regarded as belonging to the discourses of those 'ulama who were not in the employ of the colonial administration.

³⁶ Uncatalogued manuscript, Center for Islamic Studies, Usmanu Danfodio University, Sokoto. The anonymous manuscript bears a long descriptive title: *Tā'ziyat al-ikhwān alā mā aṣābahum fī taḡyīr al-īmān 'alā ṣarf al-zamān wa-'adam al-hijra wa-tark āyāt al-Qur'ān wa-'ajaz al-jihād bi-ahl al-kufrān wa'l-dukhūl fī ghadab al-Rahmān* (Consolation to the Brothers on what has befallen them of changes in faith, in the course of the passage of time, and on lack of making *hijra*, disregarding Qur'anic verses, failure to wage jihad against the infidels, and falling in the wrath of the Merciful God).

³⁷ I obtained a manuscript copy of this poem in December, 1993, from Dr. Kabiru S. Chafe, who was then Director of the Nigerian National Museum, Kaduna. He believed that the poem was composed by the Chief Imam of Chafe, Alhaji Ibrahim Liman (d. c. 1974–5). The imam was deposed in 1962 by the late Sardauna of Sokoto, Alhaji Ahmadu Bello, on account of the imam's opposition to a modernization program of the Sardauna of Sokoto. The poem is not dated, and it can only be inferred from internal evidence that the poet grew up during the colonial period.

³⁸ NU/Paden 36.

The features of these discourses, as already identified in the poems of Zum'atu, are also evident in the *Tā'ziyat al-ikhwān*.³⁹ This poem reveals the same conception of colonialism as a grave threat to the moral fabric and religious foundation of Muslim communities; it also highlights the power imbalance that undergirded relations between the British and their Muslim colonial subjects. The general mood of *Tā'ziyat al-ikhwān* is one of lamentation and helplessness in the face of what the poet regards as a great calamity preordained by God. The poet looks in disbelief as all the Muslim communities of West Africa are subjugated to the non-Islamic political dispensation of colonialism.

There are references to Sokoto, suggesting that our anonymous poet might have come from there. He used the example of Sokoto to grieve over the many unpleasant consequences of the colonization of all the Muslim communities in West Africa. The poet alludes to the ill-fated *hijra* of the Sultan of Sokoto Adḍāhiru I, and lauds it for imitating the Prophet Muhammad's great *hijra* from Mecca to Medina. The poet bemoans the bitter irony of the colonial status of Sokoto as home to the tomb of Shaykh Uthman, the venerable Islamic reformer and founder of the Sokoto Caliphate, and at the same time housing the military barracks of the infidel colonialists. Shaykh Uthman's tomb, known in Sokoto as the *Hubbare*, honors his legacy, and serves as a sacred place to pray for blessing and relief from afflictions. As Zum'atu used "barracks" as a metaphor for the moral deficiency of the colonial order, our anonymous poet uses "barracks" to indicate that colonial presence pollutes the Islamic sacrality of Sokoto as embodied in Shaykh Uthman's tomb.

Similarly, Zum'atu sees Muslims' failure to steadily observe the *ṣalāt* under colonialism as undermining their moral well-being in the here and now, as well as their salvation in the hereafter. The *Tā'ziyat al-ikhwān* reflects the same concerns by asserting that the colonialists have taken control of mosques, hence *ṣalāt* observed in such mosques is no longer valid, and could not therefore save one from hell-fire. This frightening development is aggravated by what the poet describes as Muslims' powerlessness in the face of the colonialists controlling everything. The power imbalance between the British and Muslims is here emphasized in terms of the religiously negative consequences

³⁹ *Tā'fiziyaṭ al-ikhwān*, ff. 2-4.

of that imbalance. Even the *ʿulama* who are expected to speak out for Islam are here portrayed as wallowing in ignorance. It is as if the colonialists had robbed the *ʿulama* of their learning, and rendered them incapable of effectively counteracting the moral decline that the poet sees colonialism has brought about. Once again, it is clear that the discourses of the *ʿulama* are preoccupied with moral and religious issues, even when they address relations of power, and they differ from the discourses of the emirs that seek to Islamically authorize acquiescence to the colonial regime. Yet, as a logical consequence of their open criticism of colonialism, the discourses of the *ulama* advocate distance from, rather than active resistance to, the colonial regime, as illustrated by the following excerpts from the *Nūniyya*, the second anonymous poem against colonialism:

I see the protection of God from our enemies,
 The People of the Scripture; they have engulfed the land.
 God sent them to us because of our depravity,
 [But] God will support us against oppression.
 Stand firm, and without wavering from the religion of our Prophet.
 This affair of the Christians will not last for ever.
 The Christians have transgressed, deviated,
 And abandoned the Sunna (i.e. the Tradition of Muhammad).
 They have disputed our Prophet and His Book,
 Unjustly, and out of jealousy; they are doomed.⁴⁰

In these opening lines, the poet sets his discourse on colonialism in explicitly religious terms. In addition to the familiar identification of the colonialists as Christians, the poet invokes Qurʾanic tropes attributing moral and religious deficiencies to Christians as indicated in their rejection of the Prophethood of Muhammad. The poet employs two Qurʾanic terms, *ṭughyān* (transgression, despotism) and *ẓulm* (injustice), to characterize the colonialist in religiously negative perspective. Qurʾanic usage of *ṭughyān* and *ẓulm* signifies strong disapproval of human insubordination to the supreme will of Allah, and because it inevitably invites the wrath of Allah, such insubordination is self-destructive. Thus the poet's optimism that the colonialists are doomed derives logically from his identification of the colonialists as Christians who disobey Allah's supreme will as revealed through the Prophet Muhammad. Similarly, because such disobedience can be equally

⁴⁰ NU/Paden, ms. 36.

destructive if exhibited by Muslims, the poet states that God has ordained the colonization of Muslims because of their depravity (*fasād*)—another Qur’anic trope linking human insubordination and divine wrath in cause-and-effect relationship. Seeing the imposition of colonialism in terms of moral causation, the poet urges Muslims to remain true to their Islamic religious convictions. In the logic of moral causation, such fidelity neutralizes the moral lapses that brought about the calamity of colonialism. Hence, steadfastness of faith enhances the prospects of ending that calamity. In the following lines (8–20), the poet invokes the power of Allah as creator and sustainer of the universe, and also as one who responds to the distress call of His creation, adding a prayer to Allah to deliver Muslims from the *tughyān* of the colonialists.⁴¹ The poet sees this *tughyān* (lines 21–32) in terms of the colonial conquest of Lagos, Shagamu, Ilorin, Lokoja, Kano, Hadejia, and Sokoto.

In contrast to the mood of lamentation and helplessness dominating the *Tā’ziyat al-ikhwān*, the *Nūniyya* poem reveals an optimism in its allusion to Qur’anic episodes in which the supreme will of Allah always prevails. The poet anticipates this outcome in the repeated prayers for divine intervention in favor of Muslims, and against the colonialists. The optimism of this poem rests on the conviction that the ultimate power of Allah will redress the power imbalance between the British and their Muslim subjects, a conviction that we have seen earlier expressed in the Islamic mantra: there is no power and no strength except in Allah.

However, while sharing this anticipation of divine intervention against the colonialist, the *Rā’iyya*, the third of the anonymous poems against colonialism, transforms the open criticism and opposition to colonialism highlighted so far into an unambiguous defiance. The poem characterizes colonialism as *fitna*, an ideological signifier for all the things Muslims regard as negative. As discussed in Chapter Two, the negative connotations of *fitna* include oppression, mischief, and being the antithesis of religion, conceived as the mainstay of cosmic order. The following lines from the *Rā’iyya* allude to these negative connotations of *fitna*:

We seek cover from the Almighty Allah,
To protect us from the iniquity of the Christians

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, ff. 1–2.

And from encounter with oppression and calumny,
 And from the wretchedness of the Christians.
 My dear brother, wherever you go,
 Do not neglect to watch out for the Christians.
 Their make-up is like that of the Satan,
 They are like the Devil in their habit.
 Surely, the Christians are a *fitna* for humanity,
 Their existence is a disaster.

...
 If asked who is the agent of iniquity,
 Say: the agent of *fitna* is the Christians
 The Christian[s] are the leaders of *fitna* and iniquity,
 We seek protection from the natural disposition of the Christians.
 Even the jinn and the demons are afraid of the Christians,
 And the whole of creation seeks protection against the Christians.⁴²

Fitna here means threat to the cosmic order, and by attributing this kind of *fitna* to the colonialists identified as Christians, the poet discloses a conception of colonialism as the total embodiment of all that is reprehensible to Muslims. It is hard to imagine any more negative characterization of colonialism than equating it with the negative connotations of *fitna* on the existential and cosmic levels. Qur'anic usage of this signification of *fitna* (2:190–93, 8:72–73) usually comes with explicit divine command for an all-out war against *fitna* and its agents, hence the *Rā'īyya*'s clarion call to arms against colonialism in these lines:

It is obligatory to expel the Christians from the land,
 And to turn away from them.
 It is lawful to kill the one who intends to harm you
 Before he gets to do so: Similar should be the response to Christians.
 Thus to kill the Christians is lawful, and permitted.⁴³

This bellicosity represents the climax of the moral and religious opposition to colonialism in the discourses of the 'ulama. Clearly, the anonymous poet articulating these strong sentiments could hardly be expected to be in the employ of the colonial regime. This is consistent with my contention that because of their distance from the colonial regime, the 'ulama were able to articulate openly their moral and religious opposition to colonialism. Even those 'ulama who worked

⁴² Manuscript in author's collection, f. 3.

⁴³ *Ibid.*

for the colonial regime are also critical of colonialism, but not openly so, as demonstrated below.

*The Discourse on the Passage of Time as
Opposition to Colonialism*

As was the case with Emir Aliyu dan Sidi's opposition to colonialism in the allegorical discourses of his poems (discussed in the previous chapter), the 'ulama who worked for the colonial regime resorted to similar allegorical discourses to articulate their concerns on colonialism. But whereas Aliyu dan Sidi employed the metaphor of the impossibility of reversing the natural order of things for his allegorical discourse of opposition to colonialism, the 'ulama who worked for the colonial regime relied on a different trope of Islamic discourse to come to terms with the moral ambiguities of their position under colonialism. At different moments in Islamic history, the 'ulama have often regarded the passage of time (*dahr*, *zamān*) as a process of moral and religious decline, often implying that every succeeding generation will be less righteous than its predecessors.⁴⁴

This view entails a sense of inevitability that may lead to the conclusion that not much could be done in the face of moral and religious decline brought about by the passage of time. Thus although the 'ulama may lament and complain about the moral and religious decline they see resulting from colonialism, there is really not much else they could do. This view renders more bearable the negative consequences of colonialism on Muslims' moral and religious well-being by normalizing the negative consequences as part of what the passage of time is bound to produce. A brief allusion to this view appeared in the *Tā'ziyat al-ikhwān* discussed earlier in this chapter. The view is also common among members of the Sokoto aristocracy, best represented by the Wazir of Sokoto, Junaid Muhammadu Buhari.

⁴⁴ This belief can be traced from the tradition of the Prophet Muhammad, when he declared in the "sermon of his farewell pilgrimage" that the best of the generations is his own, followed by the generation of his companions, then by the generation of the *tabi'ūn*, and so on and so forth.

Wazir Junaid and the Complaint against the Passage of Time

Wazir Junaid (b. 1906–1997) was one of the most prolific authors among the ‘ulama of Northern Nigeria in the twentieth-century. Apart from his over fifty Arabic poems, Wazir Junaid is also the author of more than forty prose titles.⁴⁵ Although no detailed examination of all his ideas and works will be undertaken, the relevant point here is Junaid’s treatment of the theme of complaint against moral and religious decline among Muslims during the colonial period, a decline conceptualized by some ‘ulama as part of the inevitably negative consequences of the passage of time. Unlike many ‘ulama who treated this issue in few lines, or as a sub-theme within their intellectual compositions,⁴⁶ Wazir Junaid made complaint against the passage of time a recurrent theme in his poems, and composed a number of poems specifically on the theme. Thus Wazir Junaid’s poems give us the best construction of the discourse on the passage of time as an intellectual response to colonialism.

Prior to his appointment as the Wazir of Sokoto in 1948, Junaid was a teacher at the Sokoto Middle School, and advisor on religious affairs to Sultan Abubakar III (r. 1938–1989).⁴⁷ Wazir Junaid’s service to the colonial regime began through the Sokoto Native Authority, and he also served directly under the colonial administration of Northern Provinces of Nigeria, especially from the late 1940s onward. Even among the ‘ulama who worked for the colonial regime, none occupied a position of importance comparable to that of the Wazir of Sokoto, and very few had as much experience as Wazir Junaid. Therefore, he was well positioned to articulate the difficulties of those ‘ulama who, even though morally opposed to the colonial regime, found themselves in its service. To understand how such ‘ulama thought through the difficulties of their position, let us now turn to Wazir Junaid’s *Dālīyya*, the best articulation of the discourse of the ‘ulama on colonialism as part of the negative consequences of the passage of time.⁴⁸

⁴⁵ *ALA*, II, 196–211.

⁴⁶ For example, see: Abubakar (1972), 367; Galadanci (1982), 191–200. *Cf.*, *ALA*, II, 192–93.

⁴⁷ See *ALA*, II, 197.

⁴⁸ See Junaid’s *Dīwān al-Wazir Junayd b. Muhammad al-Bukhari*, NU/Hunwick, 295, 6–8; also Galadanci (1982), 193–4.

Wazir Junaid starts the 29 lines of the *Dāliyya* in the conventional opening of the classical Arabic ode (*qaṣīda*) by melancholic reminiscing on the remains of an abandoned encampment. The poet stands mournfully surveying the ruins of what was once a home, and tearfully lamenting that all traces of human habitation are gone. He then describes the dwellings thus:

[The site] has now become a pasture for wild animals,
 After it was the destination of visitors from cities and villages
 Even as the pasture provides nourishment, no one could be seen there,
 Except a chameleon taking refuge in the branches of the trees.
 The chameleon stood there talking to me, then it became speechless.
 Often, silence communicates [better] what is intended.
 The chameleon revolves its eyes, indicating by that
 Passage of time has changed the things you see around here.
 As it changes the color of its camouflage, I understand that
 The world changes its conditions, and that makes me sleepless.⁴⁹

These lines make a transition from melancholic reminiscence on abandoned dwellings that forms the conventional opening of the classical Arabic ode, to the main theme of the poem: the painful realization of the inevitability of change and the necessity to adjust accordingly. The transformation of human habitat to a pasture for wild creatures represents the veritable reality of change, while the chameleon's changing its camouflage to the color of its surroundings attests to the necessity for adjustment to changes that are bound to occur. The poet alludes to the pains in adjusting to change by observing that the chameleon became speechless while explaining to the poet the transformation of a human habitat into a wild pasture for animals. Instead, by changing its camouflage, the action of the chameleon, rather than its speech, communicates more effectively the fact that adjustment is needed in the face of inevitable change, no matter how painful such adjustment might be. The poet's sleeplessness indicates the pains he came to endure, having realized both the inevitability of change, and the necessity for adjustment. In a further conversation with a dove, as one of the creatures now dwelling in the abandoned homes, the poet specifies the aspect of change that causes such pains:

⁴⁹ *Dīwān al-Wazir Junayd*, NU/Hunwick 295, 6-7.

I ask the dove: "where are the ones I was familiar with?"

She said: "they have reached their appointed time" [i.e. passed away.]

I said: "Tell me about those who came after them."

She said: "Only the kingdom of the Kurds remains."

Why do I see that kingdoms of the noble ones are humiliated?

She said: "The kingdoms of the wretched ones have taken over."

I ask: "What is the character of those who have taken over?"

She said: "They are masters of depravity and hatred."

O Dove, do not lie to me; tell me the truth.

She said: "They are envious and corrupt."

Can a great man truly begrudge a lesser man?

She said: "That is the habit of the Kurds."

Then I ask her: "Why do I see you emaciated?"

She said: "Because of my many anxieties and lack of sleep."

What is wrong with your color that it is dusty and changing?

She said: "I have adorned the clothes of smith-craft."

But why are you staying here in the wild?

She said: "So that I can bewail for them on the poles."

Why do not you follow in their footsteps?

She said: "I stayed behind for lack of provision."

May the Lord have mercy on all those who stayed here—

People of piety, generosity, and guidance.

May He bring back the kingdom of the ones I was familiar with here.

And may He scatter the kingdom of the wretched.

Greetings to the Prophet, and to his family,

and Companions, forever and ever till the end of time.⁵⁰

In exploring the theme of the inevitability of change, these lines emphasize also that the change has not been for the better: the kingdom of the wretched has replaced that of the noble ones, hence the pains that causes sleeplessness for the poet. This seems to be a clear allusion to the colonial regime taking over the Sokoto caliphate, a view further reinforced by the negative characterization of the successor kingdom of the wretched with negative traits such as depravity (*fahsh*), hatred (*hiqd*), envy (*hasad*) and corruption (*fasād*). This negative characterization contrasts with the positive portrayal of the bygone kingdom of the noble with the virtues of "piety, generosity, and guidance." Thus, unlike the 'ulama who were not in the service of the colonial regime, Wazir Junaid avoids explicit mention of the colonial regime, but like those 'ulama, he speaks about the moral

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 7-8.

and religious concerns that predominate in the discourses of the 'ulama on colonialism.

The Arabic words with which Wazir Junaid describes the successor kingdom of the wretched are highly charged with Islamic religious and moral disapproval. In particular, *fahsh* also means abomination, vile deed, crime, and adultery.⁵¹ Similarly, *fasād* means rottenness, depravity, wickedness, perversion, iniquity, and immorality.⁵² Two separate Qur'anic verses (6:151 and 7:33) expressly prohibit *fahsh* whether in the open or in secret, and two other separate verses (42:37 and 53:32) list *fahsh* in the category of major sins (*kabā'ir al-'ithim*). Similarly, there is a strong disapproval of *fasād* in all the over fifty Qur'anic verses mentioning *fasād* or its derivatives, with verse 5:33 treating *fasād* along with waging war against Allah as offenses to be punished by the death penalty. With this clarification of the negative connotations of these words, Wazir Junaid's moral and religious opposition to the colonial regime emerges in bold relief.

However, the normative imperative that Wazir Junaid's poem seems to be advocating differs from the one advocated in the discourses of the 'ulama earlier discussed. Whereas those 'ulama advocate distance from, or even armed confrontation against, the colonial regime, Wazir Junaid seems to be advocating resignation to colonialism as a *fait accompli*. We see this in the passive responses of the dove to all the negative consequences of the replacement of the kingdom of the noble ones by the rule of the wretched. The dove is emaciated because of the many anxieties that left it speechless, dusty, and losing its color. Yet, despite all this, the dove continues to stay under the kingdom of the wretched, ostensibly because it lacks the necessary resources to relocate. A sense of irony is discernible in the dove's reason for not departing. The dove seems to have become completely impervious, or at least well accustomed to, all the difficulties that surrounds its continued stay under the kingdom of the wretched. It seems a mere convenient excuse for the dove to say lack of resources forced it to stay. Alternatively, it could be that the dove has lost the will even to attempt anything to alleviate its hapless situation. However one interprets the dove's own reasons for enduring

⁵¹ Hans Wehr, *Arabic-English Dictionary* (New Delhi: Modern Language Services, 1960), 698.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 712-3.

the anxieties and sleeplessness under the rule of the wretched, the dove's response is obviously that of resignation. If the kingdom of the wretched is an allusion to the colonial regime, and the anxieties of the dove are an allegory for the situation of Muslims under colonialism, then the normative imperative in Wazir Junaid's poem is that Muslims should simply endure all the unpleasant consequences of being colonized, until Allah answers their prayers and brings an end to colonialism through the passage of time. This line of reasoning builds on a tacit acknowledgment of the power imbalance between the British and their Muslim colonial subjects.

Yet, at the same time, an element of optimism is latent in this line of reasoning. The very process of the passage of time that replaced the kingdom of the noble ones with the kingdom of the wretched will in due course do away also with the kingdom of the wretched. Thus the advocated resignation confers a staying power that enables Muslims to endure and survive all the negative consequences of colonialism. In addition, the prayer concluding the poem calls for divine intervention to scatter the kingdom of the wretched and to return the familiar kingdom of the nobles, thus clearly highlighting the oppositional character of the discourse of passage of time. Such a prayer, always an integral component of the discourse of the passage of time, is often conjoined with reaffirmation of the inevitability of change that awaits everything and everyone, except Almighty Allah.

This theme of prayer receives very brief treatment in the last three lines concluding the *Dāliyya* analyzed in the above paragraphs. However, Wazir Junaid elaborated the prayer theme in his *Hā'iyya* and *Kāfiyya*, the two poems immediately following the *Dāliyya* in the anthology of his poems.⁵³ Taken together and read continuously, the three poems give a complete picture of all the discursive elements of the conception of colonialism within the framework of the passage of time. The foregoing analysis of the *Dāliyya* has already revealed some of these elements: inevitability of change; the necessity for adjustment to change; resignation to the fact that some consequences of change are bound to be negative; and prayer to the Almighty for a favorable intervention. Whereas Wazir Junaid treats the first three elements more extensively in *Dāliyya*, he focuses on the last element

⁵³ Wazir Junaid, *Dīwān*, 8–10.

the in the *Hā'yya* and the *Kāfyya*.

The *Hā'yya* opens with the observation that oppression perplexes, and looks unintelligible, and then the poet rhetorically wonders why normally intelligent people become confused by things that are quite obvious. The poet then reminds the reader that by its very nature, the passage of time will bring change, often with unpleasant consequences. Having thus reiterated these elements in a matter-of-fact fashion, the poet then calls attention to the logical conclusion to be inferred from the realistic appreciation of the true nature of the passage of time:

Therefore, do not be afraid of the tyranny and machinations of time,
 It never ceases to butt men.
 Whatever is in our world will never be permanent,
 Thus while sweet water is quenching thirst, it turns salty!
 Or else, where are the ancients and what they built?
 Have the victor and the vanquished among them remained?
 Brother, that should be enough admonition for you: do not be
 Like the one complaining about darkness while daybreak is nigh
 obvious.⁵⁴

The proposition that the ancients and all their accomplishments are no more is one of the standard tropes in the discourse of the passage of time, serving as an indisputable affirmation of the inevitability of change. That both the victor and vanquished have never been spared by the inexorable passage of time, is offered here as a self-evident fact that should make bearable the negative consequences bound to result from change, for in the long run everything will come to pass. Since not much else could be done, prayer becomes pertinent:

Return each and everyone of all your affairs
 To God; let not sweet things dissuade you from Him.
 Whenever overwhelmed, put matters up to Him,
 He will be the sufficient response, whereas time comes and goes.
 Surrender everything to Him, and be content with His ruling,
 Whoever seeks protection from God will be successful.
 My Lord, protect me in the here and now, and in the hereafter,
 And make righteous my passing away on the day when mourners
 will be crying.⁵⁵

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 8–9.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 9.

In similar vein, ten of the thirteen lines of the *Kāfiyya* contain this same kind of prayer.⁵⁶ Interpreted in the light of colonialism in Northern Nigeria, this prayer reveals a normative imperative that advocates a combination of resignation and optimism as the appropriate response to the colonial situation. The element of resignation implies an acknowledgment of the power imbalance between the British and their Muslim subjects. In this respect, Wazir Junaid shares in the same realism earlier noted in the other discourses of the 'ulama that explicitly treat the theme of power imbalance. However, the element of optimism rests on the neutralization of the significance of that power imbalance by postulating that the passage of time will ultimately do away with the present state of affairs. This optimism is virtually identical with [the already discussed] negation of the power of the British by invoking the Islamic belief that "there is no power, no strength except in Allah." The only difference is that passage of time is here seen as the processes through which the ultimate power of God works.

It should also be emphasized that consistent with the preoccupation of the discourses of the 'ulama there is no explicit Islamic rationalization for the position of the emirs under British indirect rule. As a social group, the 'ulama tend to be more concerned with upholding Islamic religious norms, rather than ideologically justifying the position of any Muslim ruler. Even the tendency among the 'ulama to prefer tyranny to anarchy rests on the conviction that more than tyranny, anarchy is absolutely antithetical to the public observance of the fundamental tenets of Islam, the minimum precondition of loyalty to rulers. To the extent that the British were seen to have maintained this precondition, the 'ulama could then afford to be more concerned with the additional requirements for upholding Islamic norms, hence the preoccupation with moral and religious decline in the discourses of the 'ulama, rather than the Islamic legality of the position of emirs under indirect rule. This also explains to some extent the notable exceptions of a few 'ulama who worked for the colonial officers, but were either silent about the Islamic implications of working under the non-Islamic colonial regime,⁵⁷ or

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 10–11.

⁵⁷ This is the case with Mahmudu Kofi who worked with Dr. Bargery in compiling his Hausa dictionary. See: Kofi (1977) In his introductory remarks to the

full of praise for their colonial masters.⁵⁸ However, Muslim judges, who were part of the ‘ulama who worked for the colonial regime, had to deal with the question of Islamic legality under British colonialism.

*Muslim Judges and the Colonial Administration
of Islamic Law*

Chapter two highlighted the fact that in order to control Muslims and bolster their loyalty to the colonial administration, the British appropriated aspects of Islamic law and the shari‘a courts along with their Muslim judges. At the same time, the British contained the application of aspects of Islamic law judged to be “repugnant” to British notions of justice and equity etc. In addition, the British restricted application of Islamic rules of evidence and procedure, and the jurisdiction of Islamic law. They also subordinated Islamic law to British colonial legislation in cases of conflict of laws. Still, the British allowed many aspects of Islamic law to be applied in the Muslim areas of Northern Nigeria, leading Norman Anderson to observe that Islamic law was applied in colonial Northern Nigeria “more widely than in any other part of the British Empire, except the Aden Protectorate.”⁵⁹ In the light of these developments, the question that arises here is: how did Muslim judges, as part of the ‘ulama who served under the colonial administration, respond at the intellectual level to the ambiguities both of their position under colonialism

book, Skinner emphasizes that although *Mallam* dōfi “comes from the most conservative part of a conservative society—the *mallams* of Kano—yet he was among the first to get his children vaccinated and to send them to the new schools. And he numbered among his friends and colleagues men of devout Christianity, whose very presence in Kano, a few years before, was anathema to the *mallams*,” p. 2. Kofi’s friendly disposition towards the various colonial officers he worked with is reflected in several pages of the narrative, especially pp. 65 ff.

⁵⁸ This is the case with Mallam Adamu Jakada, who worked as intelligence informant for the colonial administration. His reverent attitude towards colonial authorities, especially Frederick Lugard, could be seen in some of the intelligence reports Jakada filed. See: Philip A. Afeadie (1994), 185–223. An even more reverent attitude could be seen in the attitude toward R. Palmer, in the “memoirs” of his servant, Abdullahi al-Ghadamisi, who was introduced to Palmer by Adamu Jakada; see: Muhammad S. Umar and John O. Hunwick (1996), 61–96. Cf. Paden (1973), 53–4.

⁵⁹ J.N.D. Anderson (1954), 171, Cf. Joseph Schacht (1957), 145–46.

and to British colonial policies of appropriating and containing Islamic law?

In his *Irshād al-ḥayārā* (discussed in Chapter Three), Abu Bakr b. al-Qāḍī Ahmad b. Saʿd grappled with an aspect of this question. He argued for the Islamic legality of the British appointment of emirs and Muslim judges to serve under colonialism, supporting his argument with the doctrine of necessity (*darūra*), and the *fatwā* given by al-Māzarī in support of the Islamic validity of rulings by Muslim judges appointed by the Christian rulers of Sicily. It should be noted that Abu Bakr b. al-Qāḍī Ahmad b. Saʿd treated together the British appointment of both emirs and Muslim judges, thus bringing out the linkage between the two in terms of the challenges of, and responses to, the colonial administration of Islamic law. Apart from these arguments in the *Irshād al-ḥayārā*, we have yet to uncover any other written articulation by Muslims directly addressing the difficult ambiguities that confronted Muslim judges as a result of the British policies of appropriating and containing Islamic law.

However, other sources shed light on the reasoning of emirs and Muslim judges who administered Islamic law under British colonial rule. British colonial authorities continuously sought to provide emirs and Muslim judges with what the British thought to be the appropriate Islamic justification for Muslims to accept the colonial appropriation and containment of Islamic law. In particular, the British appealed to various Islamic legal doctrines that could support the theory that the emirs, as the executive arm of government, had the Islamic authority to set aside any aspect of Islamic law, and also to instruct Muslim judges to do the same. In constructing these justifications, British colonial authorities sometimes consulted with emirs and Muslim judges, and colonial records of such consultations give us some hints of what Muslims thought to be the appropriate Islamic legal bases for their responses to the legal challenges of colonialism. It is preferable to seek Muslims' views in what Muslims themselves have articulated—such as the legal treatises and poems examined thus far. However, because no such articulations on what should be the Islamic responses to the legal challenges of colonialism have yet come to light, it has been necessary to rely on what the colonial records contain of Muslims views on this issue.

A critical examination of the relevant colonial records reveals that emirs and Muslim judges did not base their acquiescence to the colonial appropriation and containment of Islamic law on what the British

thought to be the relevant Islamic legal doctrines. Rather, Muslims appealed to different sets of Islamic doctrines which are discernible in the colonial records. In one instance discussed in Chapter Two, Resident John Carrow of Kano sought to persuade the Emir of Kano to instruct Muslim judges to suspend the application of both substantive Islamic law and rules of evidence and procedure discriminating against non-Muslims.⁶⁰ To make matters easy for both the emir and his judges, Resident Carrow suggested that an order from the Governor could be issued, which the Emir had to obey, and could not therefore be “accused of failing in his Mohammedan faith.” Resident Carrow reminded the emir and his officials that this tactic had been used several times before, successfully to “modify strict shari‘a law.”⁶¹ Although Resident Carrow did not make the point clear in this instance, the reasoning of many British colonial officers was that there were sufficient grounds in Islamic law for emirs, as the executive branch of government, to assume prerogative powers to override any aspect of Islamic law. Before further examination of this point, it should be noted here that the Emir of Kano said that rather than an executive order or a proclamation, he would prefer a personal letter from the Governor “requesting that a certain action should be taken,” thus indicating that the Emir did not wish to assume any prerogative power to override Islamic law, as suggested by the Resident. But the most interesting point was that when the “letter of request” was issued, it opened by observing how changes had brought strangers to Kano, and that because of this development it would be appropriate to *soften* (added emphasis) the application of Islamic law, for it is now not possible to discriminate among people on religious grounds. The letter then stated the substantive issue in the imperative that the Emir of Kano should instruct his Muslim judges: “that in legal decisions they must make no distinction of any kind between persons of different faiths.”⁶²

The language in which this “request” was expressed is significant. The Hausa expression *a saukake* (to soften), carries the misleading connotation that Islamic law was not being set aside, but was merely

⁶⁰ “Rights of Non-Mohammedans Before Mohammedan Courts,” File No 16032, 1, Arewa House, Kaduna.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 1–2.

⁶² *Ibid.*, Arabic text of the letter is on p. 8, while Hausa and English translations are on pp. 9 and 10 respectively.

being softened. There seems to be an implicit invocation of the Islamic legal maxim that says the soft-line (*takhfiyf*) should be preferred over the hard-line (*tashdid*) in the application of Islamic law, a point already discussed in Chapter Three. Thus, contrary to Resident Carrow's suggestion, the Muslim scribe who wrote the Hausa version of the "letter of request" alluded to a different Islamic legal doctrine rather than the widely held view among the British that the colonial containment of Islamic law was accepted by emirs and Muslim judges on the basis of Islamic doctrine of prerogative powers of Muslim rulers.

Executive Prerogative as the Islamic Basis of Emirs' Judicial Councils

In a number of cases, British colonial authorities sought to confer Islamic prerogative powers not on the emirs, but on the British colonial administration itself. In one instance, Richmond Palmer stated that once the emirs and Muslim judges delivered a judgment in accordance with Islamic law, they felt "in no way chagrined or discouraged if the Supreme Civil Power, His Excellency the Governor-General, either pardons the offenders, or reduces the sentence." According to Palmer, this was because Muslims assumed that the Governor had the right to exercise a prerogative of mercy, which freed them "of all religious obligation to carry out the letter of their law." In fact, Palmer wrote further that "it often occurs that Muslims make a request to save their conscience knowing full well that it will be refused, and are glad of the refusal."⁶³ Brooke made the same point when he observed that emirs and Muslim judges "had accepted

⁶³ Quoted in N.J. Brooke (1952), 126-27. Palmer's testimony about how Muslims felt about British containment of Islamic law, needs to be taken cautiously. The possibility of exaggeration and misrepresentation cannot be ruled out, because Palmer was one of the senior colonial officials who, on account of their long tour of duty in Northern Nigeria, developed entrenched interests of preserving the emirates' Islamic institutions on which the system of indirect rule was built. As a result, a marriage of convenience developed between the emirs and those long serving senior colonial officers. Claiming to speak on behalf of emirs, such officers often vigorously opposed or frustrated the implementation of policies of the Colonial Government of Nigeria, or even the Colonial Office in London. This was, for example, how Palmer, as the Lt.-Governor of Northern Nigeria, opposed the policy of Thomson Graeme, the Governor-General of Nigeria, of lifting the restrictions against Christian missionaries entering the Muslim areas of Northern Nigeria. See C.N. Ubah (1988), 119. Cf. Andrew E. Barnes (1995), 412-41.

the principle that legislation by Government . . . relieved them of the responsibility and put their consciences at rest."⁶⁴ For both Palmer and Brooke, there seemed to be no doubt that emirs and Muslim judges had accepted the pretension of the colonial administration to be exercising Islamic legislative authority and prerogative powers of the executive arm of government, with either of which the colonial administration could legitimately override any aspect of Islamic law. As will be demonstrated presently, the emirs did not arrogate such prerogative powers to themselves, much less to the non-Islamic political dispensation of British colonialism.

Another Islamic legal doctrine that the British thought could give emirs the Islamic authority to set aside Islamic law was the emirs' appellate jurisdiction over rulings by Muslim judges. The British construction of this argument originated in a search for a solution to a recurrent dilemma that began from the tenure of Lugard as the High Commissioner of Northern Nigeria (1900–1906). On the one hand, Lugard set up Shari'a Courts Grade A in a number of the major emirates with wide jurisdiction including the imposition of the death penalty. On the other hand, Lugard also set up Emir's Judicial Councils for each of the emirates, including the ones that had Shari'a Courts Grade A. The dilemma that arose during Lugard's tenure as Governor-General of Nigeria (1912–1919) was whether or not an Emir's Judicial Council should have appellate jurisdiction over the Shari'a Court Grade A. The significance of this issue should be understood against the desire of the British colonial authorities to retain control over the Shari'a Courts Grade A, especially when these courts were presided over by conservative Muslim judges more inclined to apply what the colonial authorities called "strict shari'a law." According to the Secretary of the Northern Provinces, one of the values of having an Emir's Judicial Council was for each emirate to have "a composite court with legal members but not consisting exclusively of one *alkali* functioning, or tending to function sometimes, under strict Islamic law only."⁶⁵ The Secretary also noted that successive Lieutenant Governors of Northern Nigeria have paid

⁶⁴ Brooke (1952), 130.

⁶⁵ "Acting Secretary Northern Provinces to [Resident] Benue," K. 639/599, March 1932, *Chief Alkali's Court—Position of with Regard to Emirs' Courts*, File No 16584, 28, Arewa House, Kaduna.

“considerable attention” to “the undesirability of any *alkali* being allowed to regard his authority as not dependent on that of the Emir; a view which having being unwisely stressed by District Officers has given rise to trouble.”⁶⁶

Clearly, in bolstering the superior position of the Emir’s Judicial Council over the Shari‘a Courts, the British were in fact tightening the control over the Shari‘a Courts, because the Judicial Councils, headed by the political figure of the emir, were more easily susceptible to British political pressure than the Shari‘a Courts, especially under Muslim judges inclined towards strict application of Islamic law. Not surprisingly, the British empowered the Emir’s Judicial Councils with exclusive jurisdiction over politically sensitive cases, such as “boundary disputes,” “causes between Muslims and pagans,” “sedition by fanatical preachers,” etc.⁶⁷ Lugard stressed that the Emir’s Judicial Council was “*primarily* (original underline) an Executive Council and should not be saddled with the judicial work for which the Court of the Chief *Alkali* [Grade A] was set up.” At the same time, Lugard also emphasized that “Islamic law confers upon the Ruler the prerogative of death sentences. With that prerogative I had no intention whatever of interfering,” adding that he would prefer that an emir should exercise the prerogative “individually as a ruler, reviewing the *Alkali*’s finding and confirming or otherwise the sentence.”⁶⁸ Here Lugard upheld the dual capacity of the Emir’s Judicial Council as the executive and judicial arms of government, but he did not specify what aspect of Islamic law conferred on the ruler the prerogative to confirm or override the ruling of a Muslim judge. When the issue resurfaced later, the relevant aspects of Islamic law were brought out in the course of consultation with some emirs and Muslim judges, thus giving us some idea of the Islamic legal doctrines Muslims invoked in their intellectual responses to the legal challenges of colonialism, which were different from the doctrines invoked by the British colonial authorities.

During the tenure of Hugh Clifford (1919–1925), who succeeded Lugard as Governor of Nigeria, the appellate jurisdiction of the

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 28–29.

⁶⁷ F.D. Lugard (1970), 270.

⁶⁸ Lugard, “Extract from M.P. 11454 vol. 1, p. 13,” 23 August 1915, *Chief Alkali’s Court—Position of with Regard to Emirs’ Courts*, File No 16584, 22, Arewa House, Kaduna.

Emirs' Judicial Councils was discussed once again. The discussion began when "in January 1920 the Acting Resident of Kano put forward, as the result of a conversation with H[is] E[xcellency] Sir Hugh Clifford, the following questions: (i) a limitation of the types of cases which the Emir's Court should try; and (ii) the constitution of Emir's Courts as Appeal Courts from *Alkali's* Court."⁶⁹ When asked to report on the relationships between the two courts in their respective provinces, the Residents of Kano, Zaria, Bornu, Sokoto, Bauchi, and Adamawa provinces were all agreed that prior to the imposition of colonialism, "the right of appeal to the Emir was universally recognized and in practice existed."⁷⁰ Concurring with this consensus, Governor Clifford further directed that appeals from *Alkali's* Court should not be unduly encouraged, but "in any matter of really serious importance we should recognize that such an appeal is an inalienable right of the people, and not close upon the latter the door of the Emir's Judicial Council."⁷¹ Thus Governor Clifford followed closely in the footsteps of Lugard. In empowering the Emir's Judicial Council to function both executively and judicially, Lugard grounded his decision on the supposition that Islamic law conferred prerogative powers on a Muslim ruler. Similarly, in reaching the same decision, Governor Clifford appealed to what he thought to be the universal practice throughout the Muslim world. As will be discussed presently, when this issue was raised again in the 1930s, a different Islamic basis was sought to empower the emirs to overturn the ruling of Muslim judges. But first, let us now turn to the views emirs and Muslim judges expressed when consulted in 1920.

Two Residents included in their reports the views of emirs and Muslim judges on the Islamic basis for an emir's right to entertain appeal and exercise prerogative powers to override the ruling of a Muslim judge. From Sokoto, Resident Webster reported that:

I have no doubt whatever that, according to local native custom prior to our advent, the final appeal was to the Emir in Council. . . . I have consulted the Sultan and his chiefs and *Malamai* and the following is the gist of their report. All powers center in the Sarikin Musulmi, but as it is impossible for him to deal with everything he had to appoint ministers and one of these was the *Alkali*. If an *Alkali* was granted full

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, "Appeal from Chief *Alkali's* Courts to Emirs' Courts," 1920, 13.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 11.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 14.

powers he could try all cases; if not, only those for which he had been given warrant. All cases involving capital punishment or mutilation always came before Sarikin Musulmi in Council. The Sarikin Musulmi and Council were also the final court of appeal on points of law and any one could always appeal to them from the *Alkali*. This is identical to what I found in Yola where both Emir and *Alkali* were emphatic that everyone had the right to appeal to the ruler of the country as *pater patriae*.⁷²

Similarly, as Resident of Borno Province, Palmer emphasized that “naturally before our advent no independent Emir was inclined to put a limit on his powers.” Palmer added that in Sokoto and Borno, “the Emir was the Imam, and had every Emir who succeeded their first Imam been an educated Muslim with unlimited amount of time at his disposal, it would in theory have been proper that he should try all cases and all appeals himself.”⁷³ In support of this theory, Palmer enclosed “a translation of a note on the position of . . . *Alkali* by the Mufti of Borno.” The note reads:

Know that every Muslim ruler should make himself his own Kadi [judge] if he is able to perform the functions of that office, and is educated and knows the Sunna [traditions of the Prophet Muhammad, the second source of Islamic law]—as was the case in past time, the days of the Prophets, and Messengers of God who are mentioned in many places of the Koran. Such was the practice from the days of the rightly directed Caliphs to the present day. He who is responsible for carrying out the judgment of the Sharia is in that capacity the substitute for the Imam. The Kadi Abu al-Abbas Abd Allah bin Ahmad bin Ghalib, Kadi of Ifrikiya, was not only Judge but administered the taxes, settled boundaries, carried our executions and deposed rulers.⁷⁴

Commenting on this *fatwa*, Palmer noted that while it did not “specifically treat of the question of appeals back to an Emir,” it could still be interpreted to mean that “the power to remove an *Alkali* carried with it an implied right of appeal, and the practice of ‘complaint’ to the Emir is such a universal ‘custom’ that it clinches the matter.”⁷⁵ As noted above, it was on the basis of these submissions, along with identical ones from the Residents of different provinces, that Governor Clifford thought that there was a valid

⁷² *Ibid.*, “Mr. Webster (Sokoto),” 18.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, “Mr. Palmer (Bornu),” 16.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 20.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 17.

Islamic basis for his reaffirmation of Lugard's earlier decision to empower Emir's Judicial Council with both prerogative powers and appellate jurisdiction over the Shari'a Courts.

However, a close examination of what Resident Webster reported as the views of the Sultan of Sokoto and his 'ulama, and the *fatwa* from Borno submitted by Resident Palmer, reveals that emirs and Muslim judges affirmed only the validity of appeal to an emir against a ruling by a Muslim judge. Although this affirmation implied that an emir could set aside a ruling by a Muslim judge, it is significant that neither the view from Sokoto nor the one from Borno stated specifically, or even implied, that an emir had prerogative powers or legislative authority to override aspects of Islamic law. Contrary to Palmer's earlier noted assertion that Muslims understood that "the Supreme Civil Power, His Excellency the Governor-General" could rightly exercise prerogative powers to override Islamic law, such prerogative powers were not accorded to even the emirs as Muslim rulers, let alone the non-Muslim Governor-General. Reporting on the Islamic judicial traditions in Kano, Resident Gowers seemed to have realized the significant limitations on the appellate jurisdiction of an emir, when he stated that:

I should say that the Emir's position, in theory, with reference to the *Alkali's* Court was not exactly analogous to a Court of Appeal, though I agree that it is the right of all his subjects to have access to him. The action of the Emir in a case which has been decided by the *Alkali* is rather analogous to the action of the King through the Home Secretary. I think the theory is that though the Emir (as Imam) can appoint or dismiss (for good cause) an *Alkali*, the decision of the latter, which *ex hypothesi* is given in accordance of the sheriya, cannot be overridden by the former *as a court*, though it might be by the exercise of the prerogative wielded by the person who combines in himself the functions of religious and secular head of the community (both underlines are from the original).⁷⁶

It is not clear if Resident Gowers arrived at the above theory as a result of his observations of Islamic judicial practices in Kano, or as a result of direct consultation with the Emir of Kano and his Islamic legal experts, as was the case with the report of Resident Webster from Sokoto. Whatever might have been the basis of Resident Gowers'

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, "Mr. Gowers (Kano)," 14-15.

report, he made one important point, namely: the appellate jurisdiction of a Muslim ruler does not extend to overriding Islamic law. But Gowers' contention that a Muslim ruler could exercise prerogative power to override Islamic law, was exposed to be of doubtful authority in Islamic law, when these issues were raised again in 1932 after the Resident of Benue was confronted with the problem of how to control the Shari'a Court of a Chief *Alkali* through the Emir's Judicial Council. Two emirates in Benue Province presented difficulties not previously encountered in the other emirates. The Resident found the *Alkali* of Nasarawa emirate "dilatatory and somewhat irresponsible," and therefore, the Resident thought it was necessary to have a court of appeal in Nasarawa. However, the Judicial Council of the Emir of Nasarawa lacked any member qualified in Islamic law. Similarly, in the neighboring emirate of Lafia, the Resident found the Emir of Lafia to be "almost brainless and . . . easily led, or misled," frequently allowing appeals to succeed on "frivolous grounds and without proper hearing." According to the Resident of Benue Province, "had pressure not been brought to bear on the Emir, the *Alkali's* court would have become useless."⁷⁷ When the Resident sought directives on how to effect the necessary changes, the Secretary of the Northern Provinces responded on behalf of the Lieutenant Governor by restating the policy that had been in place since the review of 1920, namely: "unless there is very strong reason to the contrary, it is considered desirable that the Emir's Court should be a Court of Appeal from all Courts in the Emirate."⁷⁸ The Secretary further reiterated that "this is a principle accepted and in effect in some degree or other in almost all of the emirates," and that according to the current policy, no Muslim judge should be allowed "to regard his authority as not dependent on that of the Emir."⁷⁹ However, four months after this reiteration of the 1920 policy, it became the subject of another review, in the course of which new questions arose regarding the Islamic doctrines for the appellate jurisdiction and prerogative powers of a Muslim ruler.

⁷⁷ "From the Resident Benue Province to the Secretary Northern Provinces, Native Courts: Appeals," 3 March 1932, *Chief Alkali's Court—Position of with Regard to Emirs' Courts*, File No 16584, 24, Arewa House, Kaduna.

⁷⁸ "Lafia Native Court: Proposed Appellate Powers For," *Chief Alkali's Court—Position of with Regard to Emirs' Courts*, File No 16584, 28, Arewa House, Kaduna.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

Mazālim and Siyāsa and Colonial Administration of Islamic Law

As part of the background preparation for the extensive judicial review enacted in the *Native Court Ordinance of 1933*,⁸⁰ British colonial authorities asked if there was any Islamic authority "for a court, such as a Judicial Council, consisting of several members," and whether or not Islamic law allows "appeal against a Kadi's decision."⁸¹ In a memorandum addressed to the Secretary of the Northern Provinces, Mr. Reed wrote that Ruxton's translation of the *Mukhtasar* of Khalīl answered both questions in the negative. However, Reed asserted that these negative answers were "not to be found in *Mukhtasar*, which is the basis of the Perron's work and consequently of Ruxton's."⁸² With further reference to different authorities, including Sir Thomas Arnold and Ameer Ali, Reed contended that an Islamic authority for the Emirs' Judicial Councils could be inferred from "a court which dates back to a very early date in Islamic history. This was the Diwan al-Nadhr fi al-Madhalim [*Dīwān al-naẓar fī 'l-mazālim*], the Board for the Inspection of Grievances."⁸³ Quoting further from Von Kremer's *Culturgeschicht*, Reed described this court as "partaking of the nature of a court of equity, dealing with complaints against the Administration and its officials," and it was well established and accorded "all the powers of an appeal court."⁸⁴ Still, Reed's conclusion was quite instructive:

While however we can thus establish a strong precedent for an Emir's court consisting of several members and acting as an appeal court, I doubt very much whether, turning to the subject of this file, we can conclude from this that the Khalifah's Court was accustomed to hear appeals from the Chief Kadi's court. It is, I should imagine, most improbable that a Chief Kadi like Abu Yusuf, however ready to inter-

⁸⁰ Details on these preparations are in "Exemption of Moslem Law under Native Courts Ordinance 1933, 10 (I) (D)," File No 19245, Arewa House, Kaduna. For a discussion of the 1933 reforms, see: E.A. Keay and S.S. Richardson (1966), 38-51. Cf. Brooke (1952), 18-21.

⁸¹ See the Attachment to "From the Secretary, Northern Provinces to Residents all Provinces," 20 August 1932, *Chief Alkalis Court—Position of with Regard to Emirs' Courts*, File No 16584, 38, Arewa House, Kaduna.

⁸² *Ibid.* A hand-written minute identifies Mr. Reed as the author of the 3-page memorandum dealing with these questions, included as an Attachment to "From the Secretary, Northern Provinces to Residents all Provinces," 20 August 1932, cited above.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, 38-39.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 39-40.

pret the Shari‘a liberally in deference to the wishes of the Khalifah, admitted Haruna al-Rashid’s right to revise his judgments by way of formal appeal, but the case of a strong Khalifah and a weak Kadi may have been different.⁸⁵

Of all the British attempts to provide emirs and Muslim judges with the Islamic legal justification for the colonial appropriation and containment of Islamic law, Reed’s appeal to the doctrine of *mazālim* is perhaps the most cogent articulation of an Islamic legal doctrine that could plausibly be construed as the equivalent of the common law doctrine of prerogative powers of the executive arm of government. Yet Muslims did not invoke *mazālim* to justify their acquiescence in the colonial appropriation and containment of Islamic law. To appreciate the reason, it is necessary first to understand the Islamic legal doctrine of *mazālim*, and other Islamic doctrines giving regulatory authority to the executive arm of government, which were also later employed by the colonial administration in Northern Nigeria.

In a study of *mazālim* under the Mamluks, Nielson demonstrates that although historical variations existed in the constitution and operation of *mazālim* courts in the earlier phases of Islamic history, *mazālim* courts “settled down into a regular institutional form” by the end of the third/ninth century.⁸⁶ Nielson also showed that whereas it was not uncommon in the earlier phases for Muslim judges to be in charge of *mazālim*, or for Muslim rulers to convene *mazālim* sessions with the ‘ulama in attendance, the personnel composition of *mazālim* courts changed after taking their regular institutional form: “the vizier was responsible for *mazālim*, sometimes supervising it in person, but mostly assisted by the *ṣāhib al-mazālim*. The session included *qāḍīs*, lawyers, *amirs* and secretaries and were held at regular times.”⁸⁷ This participation of the ‘ulama with competence in Islamic law ensured that *mazālim* rulings were not in fundamental contradiction of the tenets of the shari‘a, a view that becomes even clearer in the historical and juristic analyses of *mazālim* by classical Muslim authors. For example, Ibn Khaldun (1332–1406), who served as judge for both regular shari‘a court and *mazālim* court,⁸⁸ defines the *mazālim* court thus:

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 40.

⁸⁶ J.S. Nielsen (1985), 5. See also, *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, new ed., s.v. “*Mazālim*” by J.S. Nielsen, 934.

⁸⁷ Nielsen (1985), 5.

⁸⁸ Ibn Khaldun, *Muqaddimah*, trans. and ed. by Franz Rosenthal (1958), i, xlviii.

Former caliphs had entrusted the judge with supervision of torts [*mazālim*]. This is a position that combines elements both of government power and judicial discretion. It needs a strong hand and much authority to subdue the evildoer and restrain the aggressor among two litigants. In a way, it serves to do what the judges and others are unable to do. It is concerned with the examination of evidence, with punishments not foreseen by the religious law, with the use of indirect and circumstantial evidence, with postponement of judgment until the legal situation has been clarified, with attempts to bring about reconciliation between litigants, and with swearing in of witnesses. This is a wider field than that with which the judges are concerned.⁸⁹

Ibn Khaldun is here emphasizing that the difference between *mazālim* and regular shari'a courts is in the rules of evidence and procedure, rather than *mazālim* courts being an avenue for supplanting the application of shari'a. Whereas strict adherence to rules of evidence and procedure in the shari'a courts may restrict their administration of justice, the more relaxed procedure that applies in the *mazālim* courts allows wider discretion "to subdue the evildoer and restrain the aggressor among two litigants." The idea seems to be aimed at enabling *mazālim* courts to uphold the spirit of Islamic law rather than to be constrained by strict conformity to the letter of the law. Similarly, al-Māwardī (d. 1058), whose juristic analysis of *mazālim* remained influential on subsequent jurists,⁹⁰ conceived *mazālim* as supplementing rather than superseding the shari'a courts. Al-Māwardī stressed that the composition of a *mazālim* court should have *qādis* . . . to consult . . . lawyers to confer with when something is obscure and to ask covering unclear and problematic matters . . . notaries (*shuhūd*) to testify as to existing obligations and previous judgments.⁹¹ With this stipulation of shari'a experts being members of *mazālim* courts, al-Māwardī guards against *mazālim* judgments departing from the shari'a.

Clearly, from both the historical and practical perspectives of Ibn Khaldun, and the juristic and theoretical perspectives of al-Māwardī,

Rosenthal states that Abu Sālim became the Sultan of Morocco in 1359 with the support of Ibn Khaldun, and that "As a reward for his support, Ibn Khaldun was made his [i.e. Sultan Abu Sālim's] secretary of state. Near the end of Abu Sālim's reign, he was entrusted with the *mazālim*, that is, with jurisdiction over complaints and crimes not covered by the Muslim religious law. This was Ibn Khaldun's first legal position . . . Ibn Khaldun enjoyed his new function; he modestly remarked that he performed it well . . ." p. xlviii.

⁸⁹ Ibn Khaldun, *Muqaddimah*, trans. and ed. by Rosenthal, vol. i, 455-6.

⁹⁰ Nielsen (1985), 27-33.

⁹¹ Quoted in Nielsen, *op. cit.*, 20-21.

mazālim does not entail the jurisdiction to contradict or nullify the *shari'a*. Rather, both authors are concerned with upholding the substance and spirit of Islamic law even while they are not overly concerned with letter of the law. In this respect, *mazālim* is not different from all the other aspects of Islamic law derived from what Muslim jurists regard as the secondary sources of Islamic law, such as *ijmā'* (consensus), *qiyās* (analogy), *istihsān* (equity), etc. All the rules of Islamic law derived from these secondary sources are aimed at upholding what al-Shāṭibī termed *maqāsid al-shari'a*, the intents of Islamic law. Also belonging to the same category is *al-siyāsa al-shariyya*, which Joseph Schacht invoked as another Islamic legal doctrine that could authorize the British colonial appropriation and containment of Islamic law in Northern Nigeria.

Schacht claimed that the doctrine of *siyāsa* provides the Islamic basis for the British colonial appropriation and containment of Islamic law. He held that because Islamic law "purported to fix once and for all what is a subject to continual change, a tension between rigid theory and actual practice was therefore unavoidable."⁹² He built his conception of *siyāsa* on this supposedly unavoidable tension between theory and practice, which he further characterized as "particularly acute in the field of criminal law." He divided Islamic criminal law into three separate branches. The first branch deals with "a restricted number of crimes that are specifically mentioned in the Koran and are threatened with the . . . *ḥadd* punishment." The second branch is concerned with damage to persons and property, and this branch "belongs, strictly speaking, to Islamic law of torts."⁹³ Schacht describes the third branch thus:

The definition, trial and punishment of all other crimes and offenses is left by Islamic law to the discretion of the *cadi* acting under the orders of the sovereign, or in the last resort to the sovereign himself who may delegate his powers in this respect to persons other than the *cadi*. This discretionary power of the sovereign is called *siyāsa*, and the discretionary punishments awarded under it by the sovereign, the *cadi*, the police, or other authorities, can be reckoned as the third branch of Islamic criminal law. This *siyāsa*, which has excellent foundation

⁹² Joseph Schacht, "Report on the Position of Muhammadan Law in Northern Nigeria," 1952, Colonial Office Library Pamphlet No 36913 KF 2172, p. 1.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, 2.

in . . . [Muslim] law, is the expression of the full judicial authority which the sovereign has retained from the beginning of Islam and which he can resume whenever he thinks fit.⁹⁴

Having thus elevated *siyāsa* to the same level with Qur’anic injunctions, Schacht then linked *siyāsa* to *mazālim* by first contrasting the literal meaning of *siyāsa* as “policy” against the technical meaning of *siyāsa* in Islamic criminal law as covering “the whole of administrative justice dispensed by the sovereign directly or through his political instruments of government.”⁹⁵ Schacht posited this meaning of *siyāsa* as “opposed to the theoretical system of the sharī’a or religious law which is administered by the *cadi*,” and contended that *siyāsa* and sharī’a constituted “two systems of jurisdiction, one religious, the other temporal, [which] have existed side by side since the third century of Islam.”⁹⁶ Under this dualism, which Schacht claimed “competent scholars everywhere, including Northern Nigeria, are well aware” that full judicial powers resided with the sovereign, and Muslim judges lacked the power to enforce Islamic law “to the full extent to which it was elaborated by the legal specialists.”⁹⁷ The result was a partial breakdown of the administration of Islamic law. Schacht noted that it was to remedy this breakdown that the “so-called *mazālim* tribunals used to be set up from about year 200 of the hegira onwards.”⁹⁸ His invocation of *siyāsa* as the Islamic basis to support British colonial appropriation and containment of Islamic law derived from his attribution of all judicial powers to the sovereign:

The *cadis* are bound to follow the directives which the rulers may give them under their powers of *siyāsa* within the limits assigned it by the sharī’a. . . . This is the Islamic basis for the enforcement by the *cadis* of [colonial] government ordinances and Native Authority bye-laws. The *cadis* are also bound by any limitation of the competence which the appointing authority may have imposed. This covers both the limitations contained in every Native Court Warrant, and the general abolition of most *ḥadd* punishments under the Protectorate . . . This restriction of the competence of the *cadis* by the appointing authority is based on good doctrine and is generally recognized by the schol-

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*

ars; the protests raised against it in extremist quarters in Northern Nigeria . . . are ill-informed.⁹⁹

The “extremist protests” indicate clearly that Northern Nigeria Muslims did not accept the pretensions of British authorities that the colonial appropriation and containment of Islamic law could be supported on Islamic bases, i.e. appellate jurisdiction and prerogative powers of Muslim rulers, *maẓālim*, *siyāsa*, etc. It should also be noted that these “extremist protests” were not restricted to “certain quarters” only, for Schacht himself noted that:

Northern Nigeria at present [i.e. during the colonial period] represents the most spectacular instance of the self-effacement of *siyāsa* as represented by the political authority, in front of the *shari‘a* represented by the scholars. The Emir of Zaria stated to me in the presence of his Chief Cadi that the Emirs did not wish to be asked about legal problems individually, and not apart from their cadis and scholars on whom they all depended for knowledge of religious law; they did not want a possible ignorance on their part of the finer points of law to be constructed as divergences from one another and from their scholars; they scholars were the only persons whose opinion on points of law was worth having. This statement, which is typical of the attitude of the Emirs of Northern Nigeria is general, implies the abdication of *siyāsa*.¹⁰⁰

This attitude of the emirs should not be surprising at all. In fact, what should be surprising is Schacht’s failure to recognize that the British, being non-Muslims, could not legitimately claim the judicial powers allegedly conferred on the sovereign by Muslim jurists. It is doubtful that Muslim jurists confer *sovereign powers*, judicial or otherwise, sovereignty being one of the attributes of Allah. It should also be noted that the Emir of Zaria at the time of Schacht’s visit in 1950, Emir Ja‘far b. Ishāq (r. 1937–1959) was learned in Islamic law as could be seen in the *fatwa* the Emir issued against the Islamic legality of reciting the Qur’an on the radio. In this *fatwa*, Emir Ishāq demonstrated his firm grasp of the finer points of Islamic law.¹⁰¹

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 5.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 4.

¹⁰¹ *ALA* II, 360. Arabic text of the *fatwa* is published alongside with an opposing *fatwa* by the Senegalese Tijani leader, Ibrahim Niassé in *Majmū‘ thalātha ajwiba* (Cairo: Maṭba‘at al-Mash-had al-Ḥusaybi, 1955). Partial English translations are in John Paden (1973), 132–3. Legal analysis of the *fatwas* is done by Muhammad S. Umar (2002), pp. 1–35. For the biography of Emir Ishāq, see: Abdulkarim A. Garba Maḥarfi (1990).

Thus contrary to the impression Schacht creates in the above quotation, Emir Iṣḥāq yielded judicial authority to his Chief Qāḍī, not out of any "possible ignorance on the finer points of law;" rather, it was simply because Emir Iṣḥāq did not assume the sort of sovereign judicial powers that Schacht's theory of *siyāsa* confers on Muslim rulers.

In this respect, it is quite instructive to note that of all the quotations from Uthman b. Fodiye's *Bayān wujūb al-hijra* to support Muslims' acquiescence to British colonial rule, none of the Muslim writers referred to Uthman b. Fodiye's views on *mazālim*.¹⁰² Similarly, both Abdallah b. Fodiye and Muhammad Bello had written on *siyāsa*,¹⁰³ but there is no reference to these writings in the legal treatises composed in response to British colonialism in Northern Nigeria. Clearly, the Muslim authors who wrote on the Islamic bases of responses to colonialism knew about all the Islamic legal doctrines (appellate jurisdiction and prerogative powers of Muslim rulers, *mazālim*, and *siyāsa*) invoked by the British to authorize the colonial appropriation and containment of Islamic law. But Muslims did not invoke these doctrines simply because British colonialism was not an Islamic political dispensation, and therefore could not be endowed with any Islamic authority. This is a very crucial point Joseph Schacht ought to have known.

It is beyond the scope of this study to critique Schacht's conceptions of the historical development of Islamic law and legal institutions,¹⁰⁴ which informed his advice to British colonial authorities in Northern Nigeria. Rather than joining the chorus of increasing criticisms against Schacht's constructions of Islamic law,¹⁰⁵ I will only highlight some of the problems in his construction of *siyāsa* as the relevant Islamic legal doctrine to support British colonial appropriation and containment of Islamic law. In particular, Schacht's postulations

¹⁰² Uthman b. Fodiye, *Bayān wujūb al-hijra*, ed. and trans by F.H. al-Masri (1978), 37, 69.

¹⁰³ For example, see: Abd Allah b. Muhammad b. Fodiye, *Ḍiyā' al-siyāsāt wa fatawā' al-nawāzil*, ed. by Ahmad M. Kani (1988); Omar Bello, "The Political Thought of Muhammad Bello (1781-1837) as Revealed in his Arabic Writings, more especially his *al-Ghayth al-wabl fī sirat al-imām al-'adl*" (Ph.D. diss., University of London, 1983).

¹⁰⁴ Joseph Schacht (1964).

¹⁰⁵ For example, see: W. Hallaq (1984), 3-4; M.M. Azami (1985); D. Westbrook, (1993), 825 ff.

of an unavoidable and perpetual tension between the theory and practice of Islamic law, and between religious and temporal legal jurisdictions, both of which he sees throughout Islamic history, are rather too simplistic. One critic notes that Schacht's supposition of "a historically progressive separation of law from religion," which Schacht traced to al-Shāfi'ī was "comprehensible only in terms of Schacht's, and not [al-]Shāfi'ī's, intellectual milieu."¹⁰⁶ Furthermore, Schacht's juxtaposition of *siyāsa* with Qur'anic injunctions on criminal law does not correspond to Muslim jurists' conceptions of these issues.¹⁰⁷ The limitations of Schacht's dualisms become even clearer in light of Marshall Hodgson's analyses of the historical development of the shari'a vis-à-vis other legal regimes. In addition to *mazālim* and *al-siyāsa al-shar'iyya*, Hodgson identifies other regulatory regimes that have historically served as "sources of authority that might be appealed to, alternatively to the shari'a." These regimes include bureaucratic regulations and "dynastic law" promulgated by various Muslim rulers and respected by their successors, customary practices of local groups and guilds, and "the fiat of the *amr* . . . representing a sort of martial law."¹⁰⁸ Yet Hodgson demonstrates that "appeal to the Shari'a was likely to invalidate any local corporate convention," and that the Shari'a inhibited these other regulatory regimes because their jurisdiction was local and circumscribed, whereas the Shari'a was more recognized as the 'universal standard of legitimacy' in Islamic societies, hence there was "constant pressure for local patterns to be assimilated to the idealized Shar'ī norms".¹⁰⁹ Hodgson demonstrates clearly that the historical relationships between Islamic law and other regulatory regimes were more complicated than Schacht's simple dualisms allow.

As Muslims did not historically or theoretically understand *mazālim*, *siyāsa*, or other regulatory regimes to have superseded the Shari'a,

¹⁰⁶ Westbrook (1993), 826n.

¹⁰⁷ For example, see the comparative study of Sunni schools of law by Abd al-Rahman al-Jaziri (1993), vol. v. See also, M. Cherif Bassiouni (1982), especially pp. 210–25, and 127–47. For some of the views of classical Muslim jurists on *siyāsa* and its relation to Islamic law, see: Ibn Taymiyya, *al-Siyāsa al-shar'iyya fī ishl al-rā'i al al-ra'iyya* (Beirut, Lebanon: Dār al-Kutub al-'Arabiyya, 1966 ed.); Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya, *al-Ṭuruq al-hukmiyya fī siyāsa al-shar'iyya*, (Beirut, Lebanon: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyya, 1995 ed.).

¹⁰⁸ Hodgson (1974), ii, 121.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 123.

it is not surprising that Muslims in Northern Nigeria did not embrace the view of the British colonial authorities that either *mazālim* or *siyāsa* confers Islamic prerogative powers for the executive branch to set aside aspects of Islamic law. Schacht could claim such prerogative powers for the British only by building his arguments on premises not readily identifiable in Islamic jurisprudence. Similarly, in his study of the cases decided by Emir Abbas of Kano, Allan Christelow posits a distinction between "Islamic religious law" and "secular Islamic law." He includes under the secular category *mazālim*, *siyāsa*, *shari'a*, *ta'zīr*, and *ḥukm*.¹¹⁰ Christelow's main point revolves around his conception of *ḥukm*, which he translates not in its ordinary meaning of a judgment or ruling, but in the rather far-fetched significations of customary law, powers of executive authority, and local legislation. Christelow also adds that "legislation introduced by the British [was] referred to as *ḥukm zamānnā* [*sīc*]." ¹¹¹ Although he observed that British colonial legislation (i.e. *ḥukm zamānnā*) was "a legal innovation reluctantly applied" by Emir Abbas,¹¹² Allan Christelow did not examine systematically the Islamic basis of Emir Abbas's reluctance, nor did he explore the Islamic legal doctrines that informed the judicial decisions of Emir Abbas. Rather than discussing "whether various aspects of the Kano Judicial Council's *ḥukm* are compatible or not with the *shari'a*," Christelow states that: "It would perhaps be more worthwhile, however, to ask to what extent the *qādis* of Kano judged the same kind of cases."¹¹³ Thus lacking interest in the issue, Christelow attributes to Emir Abbas legislative authority on "secular Islamic law." In this respect, Christelow seems to have followed the thinking of British authorities that there is an Islamic basis for emirs and Muslim judges to accept colonial policies on Islamic law.

However, there is no evidence that Emir Abbas recognized Christelow's categories of "Islamic religious law" and "Islamic secular law." As Abun-Nasr has pointed out, it was on the basis of his strange translation of *ḥukm* that "Christelow thus attributes to the judgments of the Judicial Council a purpose which the British authorities emphasized, but which the emirs and their legal counselors

¹¹⁰ Allan Christelow (1994), 8.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, 9–12.

¹¹² *Ibid.*, 17.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, 10.

rejected.” Abun-Nasr also calls attention to the fact that the emirs’ acquiescence in the legal innovations introduced by the British “did not amount to replacing Islamic legal norms by secular legislation,” which Christelow assumes Emir Abbas was enacting.¹¹⁴ Perhaps it should also be pointed out that “secular Islamic law” is contradiction in terms, since the word “Islamic” relates to a religion, Islam.

I have so far demonstrated that emirs and Muslim judges did not embrace the Islamic legal doctrines invoked by the British to support the colonial appropriation and containment of Islamic law, namely: the appellate jurisdiction and prerogative powers of Muslim rulers embedded in *mazālim* and *siyāsa*. Instead, Abu Bakr b. *al-Qāḍī* Ahmad b. Sa’d, the only Muslim writer who expressly addressed the issue, argued that the imposition of British colonialism had made it necessary for Muslims to acquiesce to all the colonial policies, including those pertaining to the administration of Islamic law under British colonial rule. We have also seen the indirect appeal to the doctrine that the softline (*takhfīf*), rather than the hard-line (*tashdīd*), should be followed in interpreting Islamic law under colonialism. Even though we do not have detailed expositions by Muslim judges, we could still infer the Islamic ideas that underpinned their strategies while administering Islamic law under British colonialism.

In exploring these strategies, it is important to keep in mind Norman Anderson’s observation that among both the emirs and the Muslim judges of Northern Nigeria, there were considerable variations “in the complexion (ranging from extreme conservatism to mild liberalism) of the their general outlook on the one hand and the rigidity of their adherence to the letter of the Maliki texts on the other.”¹¹⁵ For example, some evidence indicates that a number of Muslim judges adopted a strategy identical to Emir Muhammadu Dikko’s compartmentalization of Islam and colonialism earlier discussed in Chapter Three. However, there are notable differences in the ways individual Muslim judges operated in the Islamic and colonial legal domains. One illustration comes from Bauchi:

¹¹⁴ Jamil M. Abu-Nasr (1996), 331. Abu-Nasr states the basis of his argument thus: “For as Joseph Schacht emphasizes in the records he kept of his discussions with British and native legal experts in Northern Nigeria in 1950 (still uncatalogued in the Mss department of the Bodleian Library), by the 1930s the emirs were insisting . . .”.

¹¹⁵ Anderson (1954), 183.

Alkalın Bauchi keeps on saying "we are learning" and the changes are being made with surprisingly good grace. He is conversant with two forms of law, the strict shari'a, and the modified form now in use. He expounds the former, but often practices the latter to the exclusion of the former. The same is true, but to a lesser extent perhaps, of other Alkalai in the Province, and of the Emirs in their capacity of Presidents of the Judicial Councils.¹¹⁶

The variations Anderson emphasized are observable even in one province and these variations multiply if one takes an overall view of all the provinces of Northern Nigeria. Another important point in the above quotation is the clear separation between the so-called "strict shari'a" and the "modified shari'a." The former remains theoretically unaffected by the colonial changes the British introduced into the latter: this constitutes the compartmentalization between Islamic and colonial legal domains. Another instance of this strategy, reported to be more frequent in all the provinces, emerges in cases involving conflict between British colonial legislation, and Islamic criminal law. In such cases, Brooke reports that Muslim judges refuse "to administer the sections of the Criminal Code as a matter of principle, where the offense is also an offense under Moslem law."¹¹⁷ He also notes variation between Muslim judges willing to accept colonial modifications of Islamic law, and "others who refused to have anything to do with the administration of any law except Islamic law."¹¹⁸ Among the latter category, Brooke adds that "there were also Mallams of high repute who gave instruction in Hadejia and elsewhere and were so conservative that they refused to recognize the gulf between a criminal law centuries old and modern needs."¹¹⁹

The Islamic basis that seems to inform compartmentalizing Islamic and colonial legal domains is the belief that simply disregarding the injunctions of Islamic law is much less grave than denying the religious validity of such injunctions. As I have pointed out in previous chapters, failure to observe aspects of Islamic law without ques-

¹¹⁶ T.C. Mewton, Resident Bauchi Province, "Confidential Memorandum No C. 8/1933/16 to the Secretary Northern Provinces," 12 July 1933, in *Exemption of Moslem Law under Native Courts Ordinance 1933*, p. 27, File no. 19245, Arewa House, Kaduna.

¹¹⁷ Brooke, (1952), 130.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*

tioning their Islamic legality constitute a *ma'siya*, an ordinary sin for which there are various ways of seeking the forgiveness of the Almighty. But to intentionally legalize what Islamic law has expressly forbidden (*istiḥlāl al-ḥarām*) is to commit apostasy, for which the Islamic penalty is the death sentence. A broader version of this doctrine would regard as apostasy not only the legalization of the prohibitions of Islamic law, but even the simple application of any law other than the *shari'a*. This broader version can be inferred from Qur'an 5:44–47, describing those who administer any legal code other than the revealed will of Allah as infidels (*kāfirūn*), unjust, (*ẓālimūn*), and depraved (*fāsiqūn*). Given such strong Qur'anic disapproval, it becomes clear why Muslim judges refuse to apply colonial legislation, an attitude that Norman Anderson found in his survey of law reform in other colonized Muslim countries. He demonstrated that Muslims preferred to “keep the *shari'a* intact and inviolable . . . as the eternal law which challenged the consciences of all Muslims, even if this meant putting it (as it were) under a glass case, for reverent contemplation rather than practical application.”¹²⁰ As for the religious beliefs that underpinned this attitude, Anderson notes that for Muslims, “it has always been a far more heinous sin to deny or question the divine revelation than to fail to obey it,”¹²¹ and consequently: “It seems preferable to continue to pay lip-service to an inviolate *shari'a*, as the only law of fundamental authority, and to excuse a departure from much of it in practice by appealing to the doctrine of necessity (*darūra*), rather than to make any attempt to adapt that law to the circumstances and needs of the contemporary life.”¹²² Clearly then, the Islamic ideas informing the strategies of Muslim judges in Northern Nigeria are identical to the ones invoked by Muslims in other colonial contexts.

It will be recalled that *darūra* was the main basis of the arguments of Abu Bakr b. Ahmad b. Sa'd, the only Muslim author to explicitly address the Islamic basis of administering Islamic law under British colonialism in Northern Nigeria. Thus in refusing to apply British colonial legislation as a matter of principle, “conservative” Muslim judges, who insisted on the application of “strict *shari'a*”

¹²⁰ Norman Anderson (1976), 35–36. Cf. S.H. Amin (1985).

¹²¹ Anderson (1976), 36.

¹²² *Ibid.*

only, were applying the broader interpretation of the doctrine rejecting *istihlāl al-harām*. On the other hand, the "liberal" Muslim judges willing to apply "modified shari'a" while still expounding the "strict shari'a" were applying the narrow interpretation of that doctrine. Perhaps this was also the doctrine that informed the unwillingness of emirs and Muslim judges to assume prerogative powers as the Islamic basis of supporting colonial appropriation and containment of Islamic law.

Rather than assuming such powers, emirs and Muslim judges insisted on upholding Islamic law in their judgments. This insistence was particularly evident during the 1930s, when the British introduced judicial reforms that sought to contain the tendency of some Muslim judges to apply colonial legislation, but according to Islamic rules of evidence and procedure. This tendency seems to have allowed the so-called "liberal" Muslim judges to minimize the negative implications of not applying Islamic law in its entirety, perhaps by looking at the issue optimistically as "half full" rather than "half empty." However, when the judicial reforms threatened this strategy, the reaction was to sway the ranks of the "conservatives" among both the emirs and Muslim judges, as manifested in the Advisory Council of Emirs passing "a resolution that they were unable to suggest any departure from the strict letter of . . . [Islamic] law" during the judicial reforms of the *Native Courts Ordinance of 1933*. Furthermore, the emirs resolved that "if they abandoned this principle, all their subjects, not only their chiefs and educated class, but also the peasantry would feel that they had abandoned their religion."¹²³ This brings out clearly the religious undercurrent in Muslims' responses to the colonial administration of Islamic law. This religious undercurrent also shows that the responses of Muslim judges (as part of the 'ulama who worked under the British) are consistent with the main argument of this chapter: religious issues predominate in the discourses of the 'ulama on colonialism. Similarly, this religious undercurrent reveals the linkage between the two discourses of the emirs and 'ulama. The emirs were more concerned with relations of power but not to the total neglect of religious issues, while the 'ulama were

¹²³ Brooke (1952), 184. Cf. Schacht, "Report on the position of Muhammedan Law in Northern Nigeria," 4.

more concerned with religious issues but not to the total neglect of power relations.

Conclusion

This preoccupation with religious issues in the discourses of the 'ulama is consistent with the historical role of the 'ulama as the ideological guardians of Islamic societies. As the religious authorities that articulate, propagate and lead in the observance of Islamic precepts and practices, the 'ulama were more sensitive to the moral and religious implications of the non-Islamic character of colonialism. Hence in all the discourses on colonialism constructed by both the 'ulama who were in the service of the colonial regime and those who were not, colonialism is conceptualized in terms of the threat it posed to Islamic norms. Most interestingly, the discourses of the 'ulama reveal that Muslims did not accept the moral pretensions of the colonial regime.¹²⁴ The discourses of the 'ulama examined in this chapter hold colonialism to be morally deficient. As noted in the previous chapter, Muslims' participation in the colonial regime was justified on the ground that since the British, as infidels, lacked the Islamic moral capability to discern right from wrong, it was necessary for Muslims to work under the more powerful British in order to minimize the moral damage that was bound to result from the non-Islamic political dispensation of colonialism. This concern with the moral and religious dimensions of colonial rule is the linkage between the discourses of the emirs discussed in the previous chapter, and the discourses of the 'ulama examined in this chapter. Similar concern with Islamic norms is also discernible in the discourses of western educated Muslim elite, the subject of the next chapter.

¹²⁴ As will be discussed in the next chapter, slavery was the major issue on which the British claimed the moral high ground and the justification of the conquest of the Sokoto caliphate. The recent study on slavery and abolition in colonial Northern Nigeria by P. Lovejoy and J. Horgendorn, (1993) is advertised on the inside cover page of its paperback edition as "a thoughtful and provocative book which raises doubt over the moral legitimacy of both the Sokoto caliphate and the colonial state." Thus the moral dimension of colonization is still a live issue.

CHAPTER FIVE

WESTERN EDUCATED MUSLIM ELITE'S RESPONSES TO THE IDEOLOGICAL CHALLENGES OF COLONIALISM

The western educated Muslim elite responded intellectually to the challenges of British colonialism in ways different from the responses of emirs and *'ulama*. Muslims' intellectual responses to the political and legal challenges of colonialism have been highlighted through the discourses of the emirs and *'ulama* in Chapters Three and Four respectively. The focus of this chapter on the western educated Muslim elite calls attention to Muslims' intellectual responses to the ideological challenges of colonialism especially as represented in western education. As already discussed in Chapter One, the partial and gradual characteristics of the challenges of British colonialism in Northern Nigeria were more particularly evident in the educational domain than in the military, political, and legal domains (Chapters Two, Three, and Four). The colonial administration's first initiative on western education was not effectively in place until the end of the first decade of colonial rule, and it took another decade for the western educated Muslim elite to begin to emerge. Not surprisingly, it was not until the 1930s that western educated Muslims' discourses on colonialism could be clearly identified. These discourses, though emerging rather late in the colonial period, are important for understanding the origins of the worldview of the western educated Muslim elite who inherited power from the colonialists, beginning from 1945, the era of decolonization and the terminal date of this study. The discourses are also relevant for understanding the transitional linkages between Muslims intellectual responses to colonialism during the 'high noon' and the 'twilight' of the colonial period.

This chapter interprets literary compositions by the western educated Muslim elite as discourses on colonialism. In particular, the chapter argues that Bello Kagara's *Gandoki*, Abubakar Tafawa Balewa's *Shaihu Umar*, and Abubakar Imam's *Ruwan Bagaja* reproduce and critically engage colonialist discourses on Northern Nigeria, which were part of the genre of the European discourses on Africa as the "dark continent". The chapter shows that while *Gandoki*, *Shaihu Umar*, and

Ruwan Bagaja illustrate the internalization of major aspects of the colonialist discourses on pre-colonial Northern Nigeria, the positive portrayals of Islam in these works critique the colonialist discourses. The internalization of colonialist discourses is the fundamental difference that separates the discourses of the western educated Muslim elite from the discourses of the emirs and the *‘ulama*. The privileging of Islam unites the discourses of the western educated Muslims to all the discourses of other Muslims on colonialism. As was the case with the discourses of the emirs and the *‘ulama*, the different voices within the discourses of the western educated Muslim elite will also be highlighted.

The works being interpreted here resulted from the 1933 essay competition organized by Rupert East under the Literature Bureau of the Education Department of colonial Northern Nigeria. East organized the competition for the purpose of producing “Hausa books of a non-educational type, which would provide reading matter for those who could read . . . [and] to lay the foundations of a vernacular literature.”¹ He toured the major towns of Northern Nigeria inviting “any who felt so gifted to try their hand at writing fiction.”² East opened the competition to “as many as possible of the intelligentsia,” and specifically invited the *mallam* class to participate in the competition.³ However, only the entries submitted by western educated authors were successful. The first three of the successful entries, published in 1934, are interpreted here to show the different voices of the western educated Muslims on colonialism.⁴

Of the three authors, Bello Kagara (1890–1971) belongs to the first set of Muslims educated at the Kano School, opened in 1908 with Hanns Vischer as the first Director of Education. Kagara was a student between 1910 and 1914, and a teacher at Zaria Provincial School for seven years before joining the teaching staff of the Katsina Training College, which was started in 1921. Abubakar Imam (1911–1981), a younger brother of Bello Kagara, belongs to the sec-

¹ R.M. East (1936), (1943), and (1948).

² East, (1936).

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ Two other successful entries were also published: *Idon Matambayi* by Muhammadu Gwarzo; and *Jiki Magayi* by John Tafida and R.M. East himself. These two are not discussed here because *Idon Matambayi* is now believed to be lost, while the two authors of *Jiki Magayi* are both not Muslims, hence cannot be included in this study of Muslims’ intellectual responses to colonialism. See: Neil Skinner (1971), 172.

ond set of western educated Muslims who attended the Katsina Training College. Admitted in 1927 as student No. 110, Abubakar Imam was one year behind Ahmadu Raba, student No. 87, who became the Premier of Northern Nigeria in the 1950s under the more familiar name of Alhaji Ahmadu Bello, Sardauna of Sokoto. Imam was also a year ahead of Abubakar Tafawa Balewa (1912–1966), student No. 145, admitted in 1928, and who became the first Prime Minister of Nigeria at independence in 1960. Kagara and Imam were from a family of *'ulama*, and their father, Mallam Shehu Usman, was the Muslim judge of Kagara,⁵ a district of Kontagora—both Kagara and Kontagora feature prominently in all the three narratives, as will be discussed later. On the other hand, Balewa's biographer states that contrary to popular legend "which he never troubled to deny," Balewa "was not a district head's son, but well-loved son of a district head's favored household servant."⁶ Despite different family backgrounds, Imam and Balewa shared experiences of being students at the Katsina College, while Kagara was also associated with the college as a teacher.

As the first school for post-primary western education in Northern Nigeria, the Katsina College (later renamed Barewa College and relocated to Zaria) trained members to become the western-educated Muslim elite who, as noted above, ascended to power towards the end of the colonial period. The western-educated Muslim elite stands apart, though not totally disconnected from the emirs and the *'ulama*, particularly in the differing relationships of the three groups towards the colonial regime. Relations of power dominate emirs' relationship and responses to colonialism (Chapter Three), while religious and

⁵ Abdurrahman Mora (1989), 1. Abubakar Imam traces (pp. 1–8) the family genealogy through Mallam Muhammadu Badamasi, who was born in Sokoto "into the family of Mallam Muhammadu Gajibo," and "during the period of the jihad of Shehu Usman dan Fodio, Mallam Muhammadu Gajibo led a group of learned people to pay homage to Shehu Usman." Mallam Shehu, the father of Bello and Abubakar, was born in Sokoto, but he received his Islamic education in Kano and Katsina before traveling to Kontagora "to meet Sarkin Sudan Umaru Nagwamatse." Sarkin Sudan Umaru Nagwamatse (r. 1859–1876) founded the town of Kagara, where both Bello and Imam were born. Their father fled Kagara after the British conquest of Kontagora, but later returned, and was appointed the Muslim judge of Kagara. Abubakar Imam states that these family experiences gave "inspiration to my brother's thrilling novel *Gandoki*." p. 3. Cf. E.C. Duff and W. Hamilton-Browne (1920), 7 ff.

⁶ Trevor Clark (1991), 9.

moral issues inform those of the *'ulama* (Chapter Four). Enthusiasm towards colonial innovations characterizes the attitude of the western educated Muslims. This enthusiasm could be clearly seen, for example, in *Wakar College*, a Hausa poem on the Katsina Training College. The poet, Muhammadu Azare, proudly claims that:

If a European comes to town visiting,
 He will happily tour [the College,]
 And be impressed by how knowledgeable
 are students of the College.

If it is English you would like to hear
 Spoken as an Englishman would speak it in England,
 Then come [and listen] to the students of the College.

....
 The blind man says sight smells bad,
 The stupid one says there is no joy in the College,
 He never has access to the College.⁷

Clearly, western educated Muslims were quite proud of their education. Their pride and enthusiasm for the Katsina College in these lines contrasts sharply with what Zum'atu (one of the poets examined in the oppositional discourses of the *'ulama*) had to say on the schools established by the colonialists: "They have brought churches to misguide/Their schools are of no use—save for old lies and confusion." The profound differences in the perspectives of the *'ulama* and the western-educated Muslims can also be seen in the internalization of the European discourses on Northern Nigeria, as will be demonstrated presently.

The interpretation of *Gandoki*, *Shaihu Umar*, and *Ruwan Bagaja*, as critical reproductions of the colonial discourses on pre-colonial Northern Nigeria is a departure from previous interpretations of these works. Neil Skinner analyzes these works in terms of realism and fantasy,⁸ while a number of his students have examined literary structures in these works, especially the transition from orality to literature. Although these interpretations do not ignore colonialism, they focus mainly on the impact of British colonialism on the emergence of what Skinner terms the "modern Hausa novel."⁹ But, even this focus on the impact

⁷ Muhammadu B. Azare, "Wakar College," *Gaskiya Ta Fi Kwabo*, (February, 1939): 4.

⁸ Skinner (1971), 172–76. See also: Neil Skinner (1980), 163–67.

⁹ Nicholas Pweddton, "Thematic Conflict and Narrative Technique in Abubakar

of colonialism is missing in Hiskett's interpretation of *Gandoki* and *Shaihu Umar* within the context of images of slavery in Hausa literature.¹⁰ Slavery is, of course, one of the major components of the colonialist discourses on both pre-colonial and colonial Northern Nigeria, and it is a contention of this chapter that the treatment of slavery in *Shaihu Umar* is part of the intellectual responses of the western-educated Muslim elite to the challenges of colonialism.

East observes that the main character in *Gandoki* was inspired by Sarkin Sudan Ibrahim Nagwamatse, and that Bello Kagara's positive portrayal of *Gandoki's* main character stands in sharp contrast to the depiction of Nagwamatse in the colonialist discourses. For this reason, East regards *Gandoki* "as particularly interesting for the sidelights which it throws on the character and influence of Nagwamatse." He notes that: "In European accounts this famous slave-raider is described as a tyrant, whose deposition by the British in 1901 gave the greatest satisfaction to his oppressed subjects."¹¹ More than throwing mere sidelights, I contend that *Gandoki*, *Shaihu Umar*, and *Ruwan Bagaja*, are the critical responses of western-educated Muslims to the ideological challenges of colonialism as constructed through the colonialist discourses on Northern Nigeria. To sustain this argument, it is necessary first to outline the important aspects of colonialist discourses, with sufficient excerpts that will make the vocabulary of the colonialist discourses readily recognizable in the discourses of the western educated Muslims.

The Dark Colonial Discourse on Africa

European discourses on Africa as the "dark continent" have for long been contested. More particularly, the extent to which negative portrayals of African past formed part of the ideological justification for colonialism has been one of the most contentious aspects in the long-

Imam's Ruwan Bagaja" (Ph.D. diss., University of Wisconsin, Madison, 1977); and David Westley, "The Oral Tradition and the Beginnings of Hausa Fiction" (Ph.D. diss., University of Wisconsin, Madison, 1986). Similar preoccupation with literary structures is also discernible in Donald J. Cosentino (1978), 19-30. However, Cosentino makes some important observations (in disagreement with Skinner) that will be further discussed later in elaborating the argument of this chapter.

¹⁰ M. Hiskett (1985), 110-21.

¹¹ East (1936), 352.

standing controversy surrounding European discourses on Africa. As Philip Curtin has demonstrated, British ideas about Africa were, by the turn of the nineteenth-century, crystallizing into the familiar image of the “dark continent,” and that: “by the 1850s the image had hardened. It was found in children’s books, in Sunday school tracts, in the popular press. Its major affirmations were the ‘common knowledge’ of the educated class.”¹² Curtin further contends that this “common knowledge” conferred on explorers and administrators who went to Africa “a prior impression of what they will find. Most often, they found it, and their writings in turn confirmed the older images, or at most altered it only slightly.”¹³ Curtin’s characterization of this “common knowledge” highlights slavery, the slave trade, abolition and legitimate trade, all within a tendency “to see Africa, not merely as it was, but as it might be, and with a full consideration for the new Africa in the imperial scheme of things.”¹⁴

Another important part of the “common knowledge” about Africa, was the hierarchy of races propounded by “pseudo-scientific racism in the early nineteenth century.”¹⁵ Curtin notes that “racism, in turn, colored British attitudes towards other peoples across the whole spectrum of thought, from the theory of history at one end to explicit provisions for African education at the other.”¹⁶ This “pseudo-scientific racism” has been frequently contested, even during the nineteenth-century. For example, in 1865, James Africanus Horton’s *The Political Economy of British Western Africa* was published in London as a critical rejoinder to Dr. Hunt’s *The Negro’s Place in Nature*. Hunt’s hierarchy of races, built on the pseudo-scientific racism of nineteenth-century physical anthropology and social Darwinism, aimed at demonstrating an inherent incapability for self-government among Africans. To subvert this theory, Africanus Horton (relying on his study of Comparative Anatomy, for which he earned a Certificate of Honor at King’s College, London) asserted that: “The works of Carl Vogt, *Lectures on Man* [and] of Dr. Hunt, *Negro’s Place in Nature* . . . contained, in many respects, tissues of the most deceptive statements, calculated

¹² Philip D. Curtin (1964), VI.

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, vi.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, viii.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, ix, and 363 ff.

to mislead those who are unaware of the African race".¹⁷ In another polemical tract, Horton set himself "to prove the capability of the African for possessing a real political Government and national independence."¹⁸ Such sentiments were widespread among western educated Africans throughout the nineteenth-century, but especially after the "scramble for Africa" got under way in the last decades of the nineteenth-century, as documented in both their writings and the secondary literature.¹⁹ Therefore, I focus here on how the nineteenth-century European discourses on Africa as the "dark continent" relate specifically to pre-colonial Northern Nigeria, and are in turn reproduced and critically engaged in the discourses of the western educated Muslim elite on colonialism in Northern Nigeria.

Northern Nigeria in the European Discourses on Africa

European discourses on Northern Nigeria can be traced to the nineteenth-century travelogues exhibiting all the elements of the European dark discourses on the African continent thus far identified, namely: slavery, abolition and legitimate trade; hierarchy of races; and the incapability of Africans for effective self-government. All these elements are present in the *Narrative of Travels and Discoveries in Northern and Central Africa* by Denham, Clapperton, and Oudney (1826, reprint 1985), Clapperton's *Journal of the Second Expedition into the Interior of Africa* (1829), and Richard Lander's *Records of Captain Clapperton's Last Expedition to Africa* (1830, reprint 1967). These three travelogues formed the first set of nineteenth-century European accounts on Northern Nigeria, followed by Heinrich Barth's more elaborate *Travels and Discoveries in North and Central Africa* (1857, reprint 1965). Slavery, abolition, and legitimate trade, were the preoccupation of Clapperton's diplomacy at the Sokoto court, where he persuaded Sultan Bello that replacing the slave trade with legitimate trade was in the mutual interests of Sokoto and Britain. Clapperton reported that on hearing British policy of abolition, Bello wondered whom the British employed

¹⁷ Davidson Nicol (1959), 25.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 17. Cf. the tract titled "African Nationality and Recommendations for Self-Government in the African Settlements of Nigeria, Ghana, Sierra Leone and Gambia," 31 ff. See also C. Fyfe (1972).

¹⁹ The most influential of recent critical studies are: V.I. Mudimbe (1988) and (1994); see also Philip Curtin (1972), Robert July (1967), E.A. Ayandele (1970).

for servants if they did not have slaves.²⁰ Clapperton's interest in hierarchy of races was not as abundantly clear as that of Lander, who remarked that "the Felatahs have less simplicity in their manners, and infinitely more art in their dealings than those of the Negro cast of feature, and, to every appearance, are a stage further advanced in civilization than they."²¹ These travelogues began constructing the image of pre-colonial Northern Nigeria within the still evolving European discourses on the "dark continent." Heinrich Barth's *Travels and Discoveries* completed what previous travelogues had begun.

Building on the narratives and travel experiences of his predecessors, Barth constructed the most elaborate image of pre-colonial Northern Nigeria consistent with the fully articulated conventions of the European discourses on the "dark continent." The overall image of Northern Nigeria, scattered in hundreds of pages throughout the three volumes of Barth's *Travels and Discoveries*, can be summarized thus: pre-colonial Northern Nigeria was ineffectually governed by the ruling race of the Fulani (Fulbe, Fulah etc.), who were fired for conquest by their fanaticism for Islam, and whose light skin justified the perpetual slave-raiding of their dark skin subject populations. Fundamentally, these tropes formed the governing vocabulary of the European discourses on Northern Nigeria.

Of particular relevance here are the connections that Barth saw among Islam, slave-raiding, and endemic insecurity throughout the region: "the whole of this country was once a bustling scene of life, with numbers of towns and villages, till, at the very commencement of this century, the 'Jihdi', or Reformer rose among the Fulbe of Gobir, and, inflaming them with fanatic zeal, urged them to merciless warfare against pagans as well as Mohammedans" (vol. i, 450). Barth held that the leader of the Sokoto jihad, "Othman [i.e. Uthman b. Fodiye] ended his life in a sort of fanatical ecstasy or madness" (vol. iii, p. 116). Elsewhere (just south of Bornu), Barth remarked that natives had been "led to slavery or converted to Islam—that is to say, taught to repeat a few Arabic phrases, without understanding a word of them." (vol. ii, p. 102); and that "it is really lamentable to see the national well-being and humble happiness of these pagan communities trodden down so mercilessly by their Mohammedan

²⁰ Denham, Clapperton and Oudney (1829), vol. ii, 297 and 305-27.

²¹ Lander (1930), vol. i, 141.

neighbors." On political incapability of Africans to govern themselves, Barth regarded Sokoto leaders as "effeminate conquerors," adding that "the behavior of the ruling class is certainly haughty." (vol. i, p. 525). Thus the typologies were cast: Fulani (Fulah, Fulbe) as "fanatical Muslims;" "a conquering race;" "slave-raiders;" and "ineffectual rulers."

The obvious contradictions in these typologies are not always lost to their proponents. The contradictions are clearer especially if Barth's scattered remarks in various contexts are juxtaposed together. For example, after staying in Sokoto for more than a month, Barth observed that: "the whole of this ground so near the capital is now very unsafe under the weak rule of Aliyu, and exposed to continual inroads of the energetic Goberawa." Yet interestingly enough, Barth emphasized that "the more desperate the condition of the country was, the more remarkable appeared to me the outward show of dominion which was maintained" (vol. ii, p. 178). Also relevant here is the equivocation in Barth's account of the southward expansion of Sokoto's dominions:

The Fulbe are continually advancing, as they have not to do with one strong enemy, but with a number of small tribes without any bond of union. It remains to be seen whether it be their destiny to colonize this fine country for themselves, or in the course of time to be disturbed by the intrusion of Europeans. It is difficult to describe how a Christian government is to deal with these countries, where none but Mohammedans maintain any sort of government. It cannot be denied that they alone here succeed in giving to distant regions a certain bond of unity, and making the land more accessible to trade and intercourse. (vol. ii, p. 169)

Concealed in the double-speak of this passage is the important element that was later appropriated and deployed for the ideological justification of the imposition of colonialism. Hidden also in the passage is the significant role of religion in the hierarchy of races vis-à-vis the colonization of other peoples. The Muslim Fulbe are here portrayed as superior to, and therefore destined to colonize, pagan tribes. An important marker of the superiority of the Muslim Fulbe is their ability to maintain a government, necessary for trade to flourish. But as already demonstrated, Barth did not think much of the Muslim Fulbe's ability to govern, especially if compared to "Christian government of Europeans." In the logic of this discourse, Europeans should colonize the Muslim Fulbe. Three levels in the

hierarchy of races emerge clearly: Christian Europeans at the top, Muslim Fulbe in the middle, Hausa and pagan tribes at the bottom.

Thus Barth articulated the various components of the nineteenth-century European discourses on the "dark continent" into a particular image of pre-colonial Northern Nigeria. This was consistent with Curtin's point that the image of the "dark continent" had already been crystallized by the 1850s. As a matter of fact, Barth's *Travels and Discoveries* could be regarded as the model application of the established vocabulary of the nineteenth-century European discourses on Africa as "dark continent." But more relevant here is to demonstrate the invocation of this image in the ideological justification of British conquest of Northern Nigeria, and to show how, within the first two decades of British colonial rule over Northern Nigeria, the inherent contradictions of the image came into sharp focus in the revisionism that characterized the colonialist literature on Northern Nigeria during the 1900s–1920s. It is this revisionist version that western educated Muslim elite were most immediately faced with.

Lugardian Discourses on Northern Nigeria: The First Version

The first version of the Lugardian discourses on Northern Nigeria was constructed in the course of Lugard's campaigns during 1900–1903. Born directly out of the ideological justification for the conquest, the first version of the Lugardian discourses relied chiefly on the tropes of the nineteenth-century European discourses on the "dark continent." Its rhetoric proclaimed the horrendous consequences of the "Fulani slave-raids," and the "ineffectual Fulani misrule" as justifying the British conquest. Prior to his advent on the Northern Nigerian scene in 1894, Lugard had already written one of his major treatises, *The Rise of Our East African Empire* (1893). In this work, Lugard's articulation of the European discourses on the "dark continent" emphasizes the linkages among hierarchy of races, Islam and slave-raiding, and abolition and legitimate trade. These elements have already featured in the European discourses on the "dark continent" with explicit reference to Northern Nigeria; the only missing element is specific reference to the "fanatic Muslim Fulbe as a conquering race but ineffectual rulers," and this was for the obvious reason that Lugard's context was East Africa. As for his reliance on the nineteenth-century conventions for writing travelogues, Lugard claims the privilege of many years' friendship with the illustrious "Sir John Kirk,

than whom no living man knows more of these matters, and of the Rev. H. Waller, and others who have devoted their time and attention to African Affairs."²² Lugard further affirms that: "I have, so far as time has permitted me, endeavored to collate the opinions of well-known writers, such as Gordon, Livingstone, Speke, Grant, Baker, and more modern travelers, and where possible, I have quoted my authority."²³ Given this deference to the conventions and authorities of European discourses on the "dark continent," it should not be surprising that in the vast corpus of Lugard's writings on Northern Nigeria, he relied also on the earlier constructions of the European discourses on pre-colonial Northern Nigeria.

In fact, at the time Lugard appeared on the Northern Nigerian scene, British agents in the region were already compiling their reports in the vocabulary of the nineteenth-century European discourses on the "dark continent." In particular, the Royal Niger Company was actively pursuing divide and conquer between, on the one hand, the southern emirates especially Bida and Ilorin, and on the other hand, the various non-Muslim communities controlled by the two southern emirates. When the Royal Niger Company began preparations for the 1897 attack on Ilorin and Bida, the head of the Company, Taubman Goldie, thought it was necessary not to arouse "the fanaticism of the whole dominant race of the Fulahs."²⁴ Maj. Alfred Arnold who commanded the campaigns against Bida and Ilorin, reported that: "on the 14th [January 1897] I burnt the war camp of the Foulahs, and the Governor in Kaba market place in the presence of the pagan chiefs of many towns around proclaimed the freedom of southern Nupe from slavery, and the formal establishment of British rule throughout the same district. Several Foulah villages on or within ten miles of our route were burnt or destroyed by my orders."²⁵

The clichés of a "fanatic Fulani ruling race," "raiding pagans for enslavement," and of course "British colonial rule as an end to slave-raiding," invoked by Goldie and his military agent, are all supportive of the contention of this chapter. The point to emphasize is that

²² Lugard (1893), vol. i, ix.

²³ *Ibid.*

²⁴ Asiegbu (1984), 174.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 167.

even before Lugard's appearance in northern Nigeria, both the political and military agents who launched the British conquest were already invoking the image of Northern Nigeria elaborated in the nineteenth-century European discourses on the "dark continent." In justifying the establishment of the West African Frontier Force that would complete the British conquest of northern Nigeria, the Secretary of Colonies, Joseph Chamberlain, spoke in these tropes: "You can not have omelets without breaking eggs, you cannot destroy the practices of barbarism, of slavery, of superstition which for centuries have desolated the interior of Africa without the use of force."²⁶ Thus reliance on the nineteenth-century European discourses on the "dark continent" is discernible throughout the various British agencies and authorities concerned with the conquest of Northern Nigeria. It was into this framework that Lugard developed his own discourses on Northern Nigeria.

The contradictions in the European discourses on the "dark continent" (earlier noted in Barth's equivocation about religion, hierarchy of races, and the ability to govern) are also notable in the ideological application of those discourses. In fact, one of the reasons for the revocation of its royal charter was "the failure of the Company . . . to suppress slavery in the territories it claims to have the right to govern."²⁷ Lovejoy and Hogendorn explain this curious development in terms of the hypocrisy in the Royal Niger Company policy on slavery: "The Company had often used the suppression of slave raiding and the slave trade as an excuse when a convenient one was wanted for punishing small states, while in other cases a blind eye was turned on slavery in exchange for commercial favors."²⁸ The contradiction in the Company's policy on slavery was also to task Lugard's ability for doublespeak. Upon assuming command of the West African Frontier Force, Lugard had little option but to continue with the ideological claim that imposing British colonial rule was the necessary means for ending slavery. This line had already been articulated by the Secretary of the Colonies as the justification for the British conquest of Northern Nigeria. Hence, Lugard's reports of his campaigns from 1900 to 1903 are replete with the phraseol-

²⁶ Quoted in Lugard (1929), 579.

²⁷ Asiegbu (1984), 163-65.

²⁸ Paul Lovejoy and Jan S. Hogendorn (1993), esp. 8 ff.

ogy of the nineteenth-century European discourses. The following excerpt is from Lugard's annual report for January 1, 1900–March 31, 1901:

Slave-raiding by the Mohammedan chiefs still continues, and produces continual unrest among neighboring pagan tribes, with the usual reprisals and closing of trade routes. . . . Pending the establishment of the new headquarters, I have not attempted to open up any relations with the distant emirates in the north. They still remain great centers of slave trade, as do also Yola and Bautshi, in the east. There is, probably, no part of the "Dark Continent" in which the worst forms of slave-raiding still exist to so terrible an extent, and the slave-raiders are not even provident of their hunting grounds, for those who are useless as slaves are killed in large numbers, the villages burnt, and the fugitives left to starve in the bush. The first great step to check this evil was taken by the Royal Niger Company in 1897, when, after defeat of Bida, they severed from the rule of the Emir all territories south of the Niger (Kabba province). The relief came almost too late, for the country is depopulated, and hundreds of ruins attest the former existence of a population and a prosperity which have now gone. Deprived of their hunting grounds, and anticipating the advent of the European control, with its prohibition of slave-raiding, the Fulani and Nupes began early in the year to ravage the districts nearer home.²⁹

This explicit invocation of the nineteenth-century European discourse on the "dark continent," in their standard vocabulary, continued to escalate the rhetorical demonization of the Muslim rulers of Northern Nigeria as Lugard's campaigns progressed. Fundamentally, the above passage gives an image of Northern Nigeria identical with the one Barth had already constructed in the 1860s, replete with the phraseology of slave-raiding Fulani ruling race ravaging their pagan neighbors. Lugard's report for 1902 repeats: "The country shows signs at every step of the anarchy and war of which for so many years it has been the scene. The population is depleted, towns once large and prosperous are only charred with ruins, while brigandage and pillage are everywhere."³⁰ Lugard describes Emir Muhammadu Kwasau of Zazzau as "outwardly friendly to the British," but whose "acceptance of the British had been due to cowardice only."³¹ Apart from continuing the slave-raiding, Lugard charges that "the Emir had been

²⁹ Lugard, *Collected Annual Reports for Northern Nigeria, 1900–1911*, 10–11.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 10–11.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 67–68.

noted for his cruelties; not only did public mutilation for petty offenses daily take place in the market, but a system of execution peculiar, I believe, to Zaria, was frequently practiced.”³² This peculiar system of execution “consisted in constructing a bottle-shaped hole in the ground in which a prisoner was placed in a standing posture: the neck of the bottle was then completed and the man left to die of starvation and thirst.”³³ According to Lugard: “Muhammadu, the Emir, in spite of my warning, could not refrain from his innate “*munafiki*” (treachery or cunning) . . . His actions had proved what his face indicated that he was a thoroughly bad man, possessed of great cunning, wholly unscrupulous, and by nature cruel and treacherous.” When deposed and exiled, Lugard claims Emir Kwasau “was accompanied by thirty-seven wives and followers.”³⁴ It should be noted that this first version of the Lugardian discourse is not confined to demonstrating the “innate treachery and natural cruelty” of Emir Kwasau as an individual; in Lugard’s words, Emir Kwasau is but “a *type* [added italics] of the very worst class of Fulani ruler.”³⁵ The typology is of course the one established by the nineteenth-century European discourses.

In elaborating the typology of “the very worst class of Fulani rulers,” Lugard quotes directly from the nineteenth-century discourses. He traces how “the Fulahs or Fulani appeared to have been a pastoral race who spread themselves throughout Northern Nigeria in the latter half of the eighteenth-century.” On the “fanaticism of the Muslim Fulani,” a standard expression in the nineteenth-century European discourses, Lugard notes that the religious leader of the Fulani “Dan Fodio, the founder of Sokoto, . . . inspired by fanatical zeal” led the Fulani to wrest power from the indigenous “Habe dynasty,” with the result that “the various Emirates more or less as they exist today were established.” Furthermore, Lugard notes that “This revolution took place about 1810, at the time that Clapperton visited the country. Under the Habes and in the early rule of the Fulahs the country had thriven greatly, and Kano was already the commercial emporium of the western Sudan. When Barth reached

³² *Ibid.*

³³ Lugard, *Collected Annual Reports*, 67–68.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 72.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 71.

Hausaland in 1851 he described it as the most densely populated country in all Africa, and its population was estimated at from thirty to fifty millions."³⁶ Lugard's reproduction of the nineteenth-century discourses here is not entirely accurate.

First, the actual time of Clapperton's first visit to Sokoto was from 17 March to 4 May, 1824. This is twenty years later than the start of the Sokoto jihad in 1804. Second, while describing the history of Kano, Barth writes: "In estimating the population of the town at 30,000, I am certainly not above the truth. Captain Clapperton estimated it 30,000 to 40,000," and that "the province of Kano, which comprises a very fertile district of considerable extent, contains, according to my computation, more than two hundred thousand free people, besides at least an equal number of slaves, so that the whole population of the province amounts to more than half a million, though it may greatly exceed this number." Thus Barth's educated guess at the population of the most populous province of Hausaland makes it highly improbable that the population of the whole of Hausaland could have been the fantastic figure of "thirty to fifty million." After all, the British estimated figure for the whole of Northern Nigeria, comprising more than the Hausaland, was eight to ten million throughout the 1910s.

There is no evidence of any catastrophe that accounts for the disappearance of twenty to forty million people within less than the fifty years between Barth's visit and the British conquest. Lugard's figure must be dismissed as a gross exaggeration, without which his claim cannot be sustained that perpetual slave-raiding by fanatic Muslim Fulani led to the depopulation of country and the devastation of pagan communities. Yet this claim is central to the colonialist discourses on Northern Nigeria. Accuracy is, of course, not a prime concern of the Lugardian discourses; rather, exaggeration is the requisite device for enhancing the rhetorical effect of those discourses. Lugard's further employment of the tropes and vocabulary of the nineteenth-century European discourses on the "dark continent" is even clearer in the following passage:

The Fulani never thoroughly conquered the country... the pagan tribes in the hills and broken country and even in large areas of the

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 77.

plains maintained their independence. They were constantly raided for slaves, and retaliated by attacking caravans and frequently carried the war up to the gates of the Fulani walled towns. This state of chronic war and unrest devastated the country. Caravans could only reach the Niger from the north if powerfully escorted, while the tribute in slaves to Sokoto and the number retained for use in each Emirate led to the depopulation of the country not merely by the reason of the numbers captured, vast as they were, but by the numbers killed in these raids or left to starve in the bush.³⁷

Before explicitly linking the nineteenth-century discourses to the ideological justification for the British conquest of Northern Nigeria, Lugard continues in the familiar clichés: “Fulani misrule,” under which “no conceivable trade and no profession which has not its own special tax” (p. 78); “the decadence which was already apparent in the time of Barth had already reached its extreme before the end of the nineteenth-century” (p. 78); “the conquest of Nupe by the Royal Niger Company hastened the process of disintegration and decay” (p. 78); thus setting the stage for ending “the passion of the Fulani for slave-raiding . . . [which had] . . . denuded the country of its population” (p. 79). Having detailed the misdeeds of the Fulani in five and half pages, Lugard concludes:

The Fulani, therefore, held their suzerainty by the right of recent conquest . . . The misrule of the Fulani had rendered them hateful to the bulk of the population, who would welcome their overthrow, and I can myself see no injustice in the transfer of the suzerainty thus acquired by the British Government by the same right of conquest . . . I explain this to each of the Emirs whom I installed at Sokoto, Kano, Zaria, and also at Katsena. What they had won by conquest they had lost by defeat. They appeared in all cases to accept this as an obvious truism, and to be delighted at the intention of the Government to still maintain them as vassal rulers, with the quondam dignity and customs, and to be relieved and pleased at the lightness of the yoke imposed and the smallness of the taxes which I proposed to inflict upon them.³⁸

The rationale for emphasizing the difference between the “indigenous Habe” and the “alien Fulani” is here revealed as the basis for establishing British right of conquest over Northern Nigeria. Lugard’s tracing of Fulani genealogy as a “pastoral race who spread them-

³⁷ Lugard, *Collected Annual Reports*, 77–78.

³⁸ Lugard, *Collected Annual Reports*, 77–78.

selves throughout Northern Nigeria in the latter half of the eighteenth-century" reduces three centuries of Fulani migrations and settlements in Northern Nigeria to a mere half of a century. This makes more plausible the characterization of the Fulani as an alien conquering race, and hence it appears more credible to assert that the Sokoto jihad was a foreign conquest that established the Fulani right to rule, and therefore that right is forfeited by defeat. Even before the Berlin Conference established the doctrine of right of conquest as a legal basis for claiming exclusive colonial possession of an African territory, the doctrine was already part of the repertoire of diplomatic guile and legal ruses that had been developing in the European jurisprudence of legitimating colonial empires. Crawford Young argues convincingly that beginning from the fifteenth-century, "doctrines and technologies of domination" were perfected by the colonial empires of Portugal, Spain, Netherlands and Britain in the course of "four centuries of imperial history." Young shows that at the onset of the "scramble for Africa" European powers approached the colonization of Africa with "relatively well elaborated notions of how a colonial state should be organized," and consequently, "African societies encountered a colonial master equipped with doctrines of domination and capacities for the exercise of rule that went far beyond those available in earlier times."³⁹ One of these doctrines of domination is of course the right of conquest, hence the logic of characterizing the Sokoto jihad as "a conquest by an alien Fulani race."

An important point to note from the above passage is the image of the defeated Fulani rulers delightfully accepting their subordinate position under the British, and pleased with the lightness of colonial rule. This image signals the beginning of the second Lugardian discourses. However, it would take the next two decades for the second version to displace the first one, especially in the light of connections between the first Lugardian discourses to the long established nineteenth-century European discourses on Africa as the "dark continent." In addition, the first Lugardian discourses had been popularized in the British press, as could be seen in the editorial of the *African Review* of January 16, 1904:

³⁹ Crawford Young (1994), 74-76.

Sir Frederick Lugard shows very clearly, as we have repeatedly pointed out in the columns in reply to ill-informed criticisms in some of our contemporaries, that the Fulani were merely rapacious foreign conquerors whose regime had degenerated at present day into one of unlimited massacre, pillage, and slave-raiding, and that the Hausa inhabitants of the country, far from opposing our advance, have welcome the breaking of the powers of their oppressors with the greatest joy . . . Lugard . . . put an end by armed force (there being no alternative) to the awful miseries and depopulation which the Fulani slave-raiders were causing throughout Northern Nigeria.⁴⁰

Yet even as the first Lugardian discourses were being popularized in the British press, Lugard himself was already proclaiming the premises of the second version of his discourses on Northern Nigeria. No sooner was the conquest of Northern Nigeria completed than the point became clear to Lugard that there was the need for, in the words of Lovejoy and Hogendorn, "keeping slaves in place."⁴¹ Lovejoy and Hogendorn have also documented that "the rhetoric of anti-slavery had served Lugard well in justifying the conquest of the Sokoto caliphate. Despite occasional criticism in Britain, he had managed to acquire an empire in the midst of the difficult period of the Boer War." In their examination of the broader spectrum of British policies on slavery, Lovejoy and Hogendorn observed that "as the foremost slaver of the late eighteenth-century and the abolitionist force of the nineteenth-century, Britain had an ideological heritage that was torn by conflicting views of the infamous institution."⁴² These conflicting views are recurrent throughout the course of British colonial policies on slavery in Northern Nigeria. The conclusion of Lovejoy and Hogendorn is worth quoting in full:

The attack on slavery in the Sokoto caliphate was intimately associated with the British advance. By the 1890s, the century-long abolitionist crusade had found its way into imperialist rhetoric, but in making the transition from evangelical conviction to imperial ideology, abolitionism became less concerned with freeing slaves from an inhumane system of labor and more and more with justifying the conquest itself. Afterwards, colonial policies attempted to protect local economies, and hence slave masters, from the inevitable dislocation associated with abolition. Now the anti-slavery movement was radical neither in effect

⁴⁰ Quoted in Lovejoy and Hogendorn (1993), 28.

⁴¹ Lovejoy and Hogendorn (1992), 49–75.

⁴² Lovejoy and Hogendorn (1993), 10.

nor in intent: it first served to rationalize imperial ambitions, and then it became a conservative force in protecting the very people who exploited slaves.⁴³

These metamorphoses of British colonial policies towards slavery in Northern Nigeria are better understood within the context of indirect rule and British colonial appropriation and containment of Islam earlier discussed in Chapter One. With Muslim institutions appropriated to provide the infrastructure of indirect rule, it was imperative for British colonial authorities to support the Muslim personnel who ran those institutions. Clearly, the requisite Muslims' loyalty and support needed for the smooth functioning of indirect rule could not be sustained by the rhetorical demonization of Muslims and their institutions that worked well in ideologically justifying conquest and imposition of colonial rule. Hence there was the need to revise the image of pre-colonial Northern Nigeria constructed in the vocabulary of the nineteenth-century European discourses on the "dark continent." The result was the emergence of the second Lugardian discourses on Northern Nigeria, against which the western educated Muslims constructed their intellectual responses to British colonialism.

Lugardian Discourse on Northern Nigeria: The Second Version

Lugard commences the second version of his discourses as he completes his conquest of Northern Nigeria. He links the first version to the ideological justification of conquest, but he ties the second version to the doctrine of indirect rule. In his annual report for 1902-3, Lugard spells out the premises of the second version thus:

The British conquest of this vast country has been almost bloodless; the people have welcomed our advent. But in my view the tradition of British rule has ever been to arrest disintegration, to retain and build up again what is best in the social and political organization of the conquered dynasties, and to develop on the lines of its own individuality each separate race of which our great empire consists. That has been our policy in India; and Northern Nigeria, though but a third the size, and many centuries behind the great Eastern dependency, still presents to my imagination many strangely parallel conditions. I believe myself that the future of the virile races of this protectorate lies largely in the regeneration of the Fulani. Their ceremonial, their

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 27.

colored skins, their mode of life and habits of thought, appeal more to the native populations than the prosaic business-like habits of the Anglo-Saxon can ever do. Nor have we the means at present to administer so vast a country. This, then, is the policy to which, in my view, the administration of Northern Nigeria should give effect, viz., to regenerate this capable race and mold them to ideas of justice and mercy, so that in a future generation, if not this, they may become worthy instruments of rule. My desire to utilize the Fulani as rulers has been described in a former report and has met with the approval of the Secretary of State.⁴⁴

Thus the stage was set for the further elaboration and application of the second Lugardian discourses on Northern Nigeria. In the nineteenth-century discourses, Barth described the Fulani ruling race as “effeminate conquerors,” whose behavior was “indolent and haughty.” In the first version of the Lugardian discourse, the Fulani ruling race could not stop “the chronic war and unrest [that] devastated the country.” Now the Fulani are a “capable race” to be regenerated into “worthy instruments of rule.” The first version stresses a number of negative traits: “the passion of the Fulani for slave-raiding;” their indiscriminate taxes; the “bribery, corruption, and extortion that marked the so-called administration of justice;” and “the innate treachery and natural cruelty.” These horrendous traits did not endear the Fulani to their subject population, “nor were the Fulani a warrior dynasty identified with a large section of the governed races.” Lugard claims also that “the misrule of the Fulani had rendered them hateful to the bulk of the population, who would welcome their overthrow.” Now the second Lugardian discourses celebrate different traits of the Fulani: “The Fulani rule has been maintained as an experiment . . . and I am anxious to utilize, if possible, their wonderful intelligence, for they are born rulers, and incomparably above the negroid tribes in ability;” (p. 13) and again “their ceremonial, their colored skins, their mode of life and habits of thought, appeal more to the native populations than the prosaic business like habits of the Anglo-Saxon can ever do.” This then makes it necessary to readjust the respective positions of the two ruling races of the Fulani and the Anglo-Saxon in the hierarchy of races. The impact of the Indian experience on British imperial imagination and how its impact

⁴⁴ Lugard, *Collected Annual Reports*, 84.

came to Northern Nigeria can only be noted here as an interesting topic for further research.

On the two related themes of "rapacious slave-raiders" and "fanatical Muslim Fulbe," it should be noted that in 1904, when the shibboleth of first Lugardian discourses was appearing in the British press, Lugard himself was already revising the relationships between slavery and Islam in Northern Nigeria. He wrote that "the rulers of Sokoto and Kano and the other great towns appeared to have acquiesced without much difficulty in the prohibition of the sales of slaves."⁴⁵ In his annual report for 1905-6, Lugard records that the "the trade in slaves has entirely ceased," and that Muslim rulers were enforcing the "absolute right [of a slave] to redeem himself even against the will of his master."⁴⁶ As a result, slaves were not running away, but appealing to the native courts administered by Muslim judges. Lugard notes satisfactorily that when a master refused to grant the demand of his slave for redemption, "the Sultan [of Sokoto] offered the liberation of the slave without ransom," and that the Sultan had also "taken great pains to restore enslaved populations to their deserted towns."⁴⁷ For Lugard, "this was a remarkable course of action for the highest Mohammedan authorities in the country to take," and its positive effect was that: "the gradual extinction of domestic slavery through the initiation of the Head of the Moslem religion, supported by the Moslem jurists . . . is, in my judgment, a much greater achievement than the forcible manumission by the Government."⁴⁸ This runs counter to the hyperbolic claim in the British press that Lugard "put an end by armed force . . . to the awful miseries and depopulation which the Fulani slave-raiders were causing throughout Northern Nigeria." In fact, Lugard decided not to forcefully end the awful miseries of slavery. Rather, he pursued gradualist policies that required a rhetoric different from the one that proclaimed abolition as justification for conquest. By the end of Lugard's tour of duty as High Commissioner of Northern Nigeria in 1906, the second Lugardian discourse was already claiming the entire cessation of slave-raids and the slave trade, as well as the gradual extinction

⁴⁵ Lugard, *Collected Annual Reports*, 180.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 362.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 363.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

of domestic slavery. However, this gradualism was to last for nearly four more decades, for according to Lovejoy and Hogendorn, the course of slavery and abolition in colonial Northern Nigeria was the tortuous one of a "slow death."

Similarly, it took decades to fully elaborate the second version of the Lugardian discourses before it could effectively replace the first version. Of course, Lugard himself led the way in a number of official publications. These include Lugard's *Political Memoranda*, first published in 1906, revised and enlarged during his tenure as Governor-General of Nigeria, 1913–1918. Whereas the *Political Memoranda* gives a "user guide" for the application of the second Lugardian discourses, Lugard's memoir, *The Dual Mandate in British Tropical Africa* (1929), presents theoretical constructions and reflections, where Lugard once again invoked Barth, among other nineteenth-century proponents of the European discourses on the "dark continent."⁴⁹ Also combining theory and reflections on the application of the second Lugardian discourses, are the memoirs of Lugard's ablest and most loyal lieutenants, who continued to dominate the senior echelon of the colonial administration of Northern Nigeria through the 1940s, the end period of this study.

In particular, the reconfiguration of hierarchy of races and the respective positions of the two ruling races, Fulani and Anglo-Saxon, is the subject-matter in C.L. Temple's *Native Races and Their Rulers* (1918, reprint 1968). Charles Orr's *The Making of Northern Nigeria* (1911) demonstrates how the regeneration of the Fulani ruling race, in consequence of British mentoring, transforms Northern Nigeria into a country "immeasurably better governed than it was before." This aspect of the second Lugardian discourses is significant, especially because it features prominently in the engagement of the western educated Muslims with the second version of the Lugardian discourses, as will be shown below. Apart from these two titles, and numerous official colonial publications, many other titles espouse the second version of the Lugardian discourses. Foremost among the classics are: G.D. Hazzledine, *The White Man in Nigeria*, (1904); Flora Shaw (Lady Lugard) *A Tropical Dependency*, (1905); J.A. Burdon, *Historical*

⁴⁹ Lugard (1929), especially chapters x and xi on "methods of ruling native races," pp. 193–229; the index on pp. 621–43 provides the list of nineteenth-century authorities quoted in the work.

Notes on Certain Emirates and Tribes (Northern Nigeria), (1909); A.J. Tremearne, *Hausa Superstitions and Customs*, (1913); C.L. Temple, *Notes on Tribes, Provinces, Emirates and States of the Northern Provinces of Nigeria*, (1919); C.K. Meek's *The Northern Tribes of Nigeria*, (2 vols., 1925) and *Tribal Studies in Northern Nigeria*, (2 vols., 1931); S.J. Hogben, *The Muhammadan Emirates of Nigeria*, (1929), etc. In addition, there were numerous articles in periodicals. These extensive publications, appearing continuously through the first three decades of British colonial rule, ensured the popularization of the second version of the Lugardian discourses.

More particularly relevant to the contention of this chapter are the Hausa publications that could be said to have been specifically targeted towards the western educated Muslims, for Hausa was their lingua franca. More than a dozen titles in Hausa were published in the nineteenth-century, including Christian missionary tracts, lexicons, and specimens of Hausa oral literature and folk-lore.⁵⁰ Significantly, one of these nineteenth-century publications in Hausa was the narrative of Dorugu, a slave purchased, freed, and then taken to Britain by Heinrich Barth. Dorugu then worked with J.F. Schon, who collected, edited and published Dorugu's experiences as *Magana Hausa*, (1866). Abbega was another slave who shared Dorugu's experiences. Both returned to Northern Nigeria at the time of the British conquest, and worked as interpreters for nascent colonial administration. In fact, Dorugu taught under Hanns Vischer at the Kano School started in 1908. Until his death in 1912, Dorugu was a live link between the Lugardian discourses in the Hausa language and the western educated Muslims.

Another vital link was the Translation Bureau established by the Department of Education in 1929 with C.E.J. Whitting as director, and renamed in 1931 the Literature Bureau. This was the agency that in 1939 started the Hausa vernacular newspaper, *Gaskiya Ta Fi Kwabo*, another important link between the Lugardian discourses and the western educated Muslims.⁵¹ It was also under the auspices of the Literature Bureau that East organized the essay competition that led to the publication of the "first Hausa novels" that I will be presently interpreting as the discourses of the western educated

⁵⁰ Yahaya (1988), 72-82.

⁵¹ Husami Hayatu (1991), 9-13.

Muslims on colonialism in Northern Nigeria. Various aspects of the nineteenth-century European discourses on the “dark continent” relating to pre-colonial Northern Nigeria, as well as the Lugardian versions of those discourses on colonial Northern Nigeria, are easily discernible in the Hausa publications that Literature Bureau translated, authored, or sponsored. These include *Mungo Park Mabud'in Kwarar*, (1948), and *Zuwan Turawa Nigeria ta Arewa*, (1956): the former is a translation of excerpts from the journals of Mungo Park, the explorer who perished in the Niger River in 1806; and the latter is a history of the advent of Europeans in Northern Nigeria compiled almost entirely from colonial official reports.

Clearly, there was a vast literature in both English and Hausa which reproduced various aspects and versions of the European discourses on pre-colonial and colonial Northern Nigeria. There is no doubt that western educated Muslims of Northern Nigeria read such literature, for by the 1940s some of the educated Muslims were already authoring their own versions of the European discourses. As noted above, some of the publications by the western educated Muslims are essentially translations into Hausa from the nineteenth-century European travelogues, colonial reports, as well as the classics of the Lugardian discourses mentioned earlier. But even the first literary compositions by the western educated Muslims could be shown to be critical engagements with the long established European discourses on both pre-colonial and colonial Northern Nigeria.

Bello Kagara's Gandoki: Islam Triumphant

The reproduction of, and critical engagement with, the Lugardian discourses in the literary compositions of western educated Muslim elite are more obvious in Bello Kagara's *Gandoki* than in Balewa's *Shaihu Umar*, and Imam's *Ruwan Bagaja*. Beginning here with *Gandoki*, the rest of this chapter demonstrates the critical engagements by these authors with aspects of the Lugardian discourses by analyzing the settings, plots, characters, themes, and narrative perspectives in each of the three titles.

As already noted, a number of critics have highlighted the treatment of the British conquest of Northern Nigeria in *Gandoki*. On the character of *Gandoki*, which is both the title and the name of the hero, East contrasts Kagara's positive depiction of Sarkin Sudan

Ibrahim Nagwamatse as the model for the hero in *Gandoki*, against the image of Nagwamatse as “slaver-raider and tyrant” in the Lugardian discourses. Extended excerpts will help to make the contrast clearer. In the first Lugardian discourses that justified the conquest of Northern Nigeria, Lugard wrote to the yet unconquered Sultan of Sokoto on March 18, 1901, claiming that “the Emirs of Bida and Kontagora have during many years acted as oppressors of the people and shewn themselves unfit to rule. More especially in these latter days they have raided the towns and villages in the districts close to their own cities, and have depopulated vast areas.” For these reason, Lugard “found it necessary to depose both Emirs, and to place troops near their respective cities, to keep the peace and protect the people,” and adding that “in the case of Kontagora, many evil people tried to burn the town. It may have been the slaves who had been ill-treated by their masters or it may have been the carriers with my troops.”⁵²

But in his annual report for 1904, written in the characteristic tone of the second Lugardian discourses, Lugard revisits the circumstances of the deposition of Sarkin Sudan Ibrahim Nagwamatse as the Emir of Kontagora, by tracing the history of how “Imoro (grandson of Othman dan Fodio) with the aid of Masaba Emir of Nupe [i.e. Bida], conquered the eastern tribes and founded the city of ‘Kwanta-gora’ about 1864.”⁵³ As a result of subduing the Yauri and Dakakari tribes, “the fame of Imoro’s conquest caused the Sarikin Sokoto to confer on him the title of ‘Sarikin Sudan,’ which is still retained by his son Ibrahim, the present Emir, who succeeded him in 1897.” (p. 280.) Furthermore, Lugard notes that “like his father, Ibrahim spent many years in traversing the country from north to east with a conquering army . . . For 20 years his restless love of war kept him ever on the move till the province was desolated and almost entirely depopulated” (p. 280). But no sooner had the British put an end to the warring carrier of Ibrahim Nagwamatse than they were confronted with the unintended consequences. Lugard now writes that after defeating Ibrahim Nagwamatse in early in 1902:

The old Yauri dynasty had been re-established, but they were unable to assert authority and begged to be allowed to return to Yellua. On

⁵² Lugard, *Collected Annual Reports*, 158.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 280.

the capture of Ibrahim, his followers, estimated at 20,000, returned to their homes while the Fulani chiefs fled to Sokoto. Ibrahim was sent for trial to Lokoja on a charge of murdering a Mallam in Wushishi, and for a short time was deported to Yola. The Province [of Kontagora] was at first held in a military occupation till Major Sharpe assumed charge of it in April, 1902. The Yauri dynasty had proved useless, and no Fulani would take Ibrahim's place while he lived. Judging, therefore, that his adversities would have taught him a salutary lesson, I reinstated him early in 1903 after the fall of Sokoto and Kano, as I have described in my report for 1902. This gave the most lively satisfaction at Sokoto, and throughout the Fulani emirates, where Ibrahim was held in great repute as Othman's great-grandson.⁵⁴

Against this background, Kagara develops the setting, plot, character, and theme of *Gandoki*. The narrative opens with *Gandoki*, the protagonist, giving the story of his famous adventures to the youth of Kontagora. The plot centers on the campaigns of Sarkin Sudan, and is narrated from *Gandoki's* perspectives as the war chief of Sarkin Sudan Ibrahim Nagwamatse, and a leading participant in the armed confrontation with the British. The theme of the narrative is the celebration of the brave character of *Gandoki* as a professional warrior. No less gallant was, of course, the Sarkin Sudan himself, who even as he was being deported after capture by the British, proved invincible, as could be seen in the following excerpt from *Gandoki*:

On this journey to (to Yola) the English saw signs and wonders, magic and strange happenings, in the Sarkin Sudan. If they locked him into an iron-roofed house, they would presently see him outside, saying his prayers, though the door was still bolted, and the sentries and police were at their posts. If they came to a river which must be crossed to the other side, he would refuse to enter the canoe, but if they left him and cross to the other side, they would find him sitting there, waiting for them. If he were angry, he would put forth his tongue, and wrap it round his head like a turban . . . When indeed they saw that it was beyond their power, they hushed up the matter, and restored him perforce to his house, and to his throne. . . Since the time that the English conquered this country, we have never known them to restore a chief whom they had deposed, save only the Sarkin Sudan. Therefore there was great rejoicing at Kontagora, the like of which had not been known for many years. To the Sarkin Sudan God granted prosperity and victory from his youth up. Though all men were afraid, he feared not. Though everyone fled, he would go on. His kindness and patience

⁵⁴ Lugard, *Collected Annual Reports*, 280–81.

were wide as the earth, his prowess in battle equaled that of Antaru. Never have we seen a ruler as humble as he. Son of Garba, Miraculous Fetish, the Old Hyena who seizes his prey lying down!⁵⁵

First, two points regarding diction should be noted. *Kirari*, the praise-epithet in the last sentence of the above passage, is an important feature of the Hausa language, and its recurrent use throughout *Gandoki* adds significantly to the beauty of the diction for Hausa native speakers. More than that, *kirari* has important historical and political functions in Hausa culture, as I have earlier pointed out in Chapter Two with reference to how Hadejia armed confrontation with the British was memorialized cryptically in the *kirari* for the Emir of Hadejia: "Muhammadu ba ka bi Nasara," i.e. "Muhammadu did not submit to the Christians." In addition, the imagery of animal behavior in *Gandoki's kirari* above compares with the imagery in Emir Aliyu dan Sidi's poems conceptualizing the colonial moment in the allegory of the relationship between predator and prey—this comparison will be further explored later. The second point about diction relates to the mention of Antaru. This is the Hausa rendering of the Arabic 'Antara b. Shaddad, the Arabic poet whose compositions are regarded as one of the "Golden Seven," i.e. the best Arabic poems ever composed. The fame of 'Antara lies chiefly in his poetical celebration of bravery and prowess in battle, hence *Gandoki's* invocation of 'Antara to highlight its theme, the celebration of the military virtues of its protagonist.

As for the substantive points in the above passage, it should be noted that right from the out-set, *Gandoki's* narrative engages critically with the Lugardian discourses. Compared to the previous excerpts from Lugard's reports, this passage reveals also the reproduction of the Lugardian discourses. In the first Lugardian discourses, Ibrahim Nagwamatse is a mere adventurer whose "restless love for war" kept him for twenty years on the path of a destructive war that depopulated the territories he subdued. Nagwamatse's adventurism was terminated ignominiously: defeated, captured, and exiled by the British. But *Gandoki* celebrates Ibrahim Nagwamatse as a fearless warrior, possessing the military virtues of unsurpassed bravery and prowess in battle. He is equally incomparable in his kindness and patience.

⁵⁵ Bello Kagara (1956). This passage was translated by East (1936), 355. All subsequent translations are mine.

All these virtues are of course in addition to the divine favors Nagwamatse enjoys from the Almighty. The Ibrahim Nagwamatse that Lugard had earlier found "unfit to rule," appears in *Gandoki* as a "humble ruler," the like of whom had never been seen in Kontagora. In the second Lugardian discourse, the restoration of Nagwamatse as the Emir of Kontagora was rather reluctantly allowed to pass, because the available option "proved useless." In *Gandoki*, Nagwamatse's restoration is the result of the miraculous powers that God granted him, which had scandalized the British by exposing the temporal limits of their power, hence they "hushed up the matter." This echoes a recurrent theme earlier noted in the discourses of the emirs and *ulama*, which seeks to render the British powerless even while not denying their otherwise superior military might. Usually, this theme is expressed through the invocation of the Islamic mantra: there is no power, no strength except Allah's. Before further treatment of religious issues in *Gandoki*, its critical engagement with Lugardian discourses should be clear in the contrasting portrayals of the character of Ibrahim Nagwamatse.

Apart from these obvious differences in the purpose, meaning and significance of the warring carrier of Ibrahim Nagwamatse, it should also be obvious that the fundamental outline of Kagara's narrative is identical with Lugard's accounts. This point can be further buttressed by the prose of *Gandoki* which shows the rendering into the Hausa language of the phraseology of Lugardian discourses. For example, laying out the setting for his narrative, *Gandoki* opening sentence reads: "Gandoki the war chief was destined to live long, and with the love of war and braving danger. Gandoki is said to have participated in the campaigns of Uthman b. Fodiye and Sultan Muhammad Bello, and in all the campaigns of the jihad through which the Fulani conquered Hausaland" (p. 1). Gandoki also fought in the campaigns of Ibrahim Nagwamatse and his father Umaru [i.e. the Imoro of Lugard's accounts] when both warred against the tribes of Bassa, Kamuka, Dakakari etc. Of all these campaigns, the one Gandoki relishes the most is the battle against the British, for which he gains the *kirari* personifying him as "the War against the Christians" (p. 7). Thus with hyperbole and rhetorical excess, *Gandoki* emerges as the protagonist of the narrative, cast in the character of a professional warrior that never tires of the endless battles that form the plot of *Gandoki*. After the British routed his forces, Nagwamatse retreated, and on approaching Birnin Gwari, Gandoki analyzes the

stark options facing his defeated political master. Here is Gandoki in the first voice:

Here we were: chased by the British and facing Barau, the ruler of Gwari. You know that enmity exists between us and him, and since it was our superior might that subdued him, he would not welcome us. The enemy of your enemy is your friend [i.e. Barau will side with the British.] Given the opportunity, Barau will seek to avenge the defeat we had earlier inflicted upon him, which will now mean disaster. Pressed between the rock and a hard place, the only option is to fight to the bitter end (p. 18).

This passage comes in the context of highlighting the fearless character of Gandoki. But by its recurrent treatment of war, the narrative of *Gandoki* reproduces the image of pre-colonial Northern Nigeria in perpetual warfare and endemic insecurity. This image forms the governing vocabulary of the nineteenth-century European discourses on the "dark continent," and is construed as a marker of the ineffectual rule of the Fulani. Lugardian discourses articulate the ideological justification of the imposition of British colonialism within the framework of ending the perpetual warfare and endemic insecurity that characterized pre-colonial Northern Nigeria under the ineffectual rule of the Fulani. Thus by emphasizing the numerous campaigns of "Fulani jihad that conquered Hausaland," the narrative of *Gandoki* repeats the tropes and typologies in which the Lugardian discourses characterized the Fulani as a "conquering race," with seemingly endless passion for war. In Lugardian discourses, Fulani wars amount to no more than ignoble slave-raiding. But by presenting the campaigns as testimony to bravery, *Gandoki* subverts the notion of the ineffectual rule of the Fulani, and thereby critically engages an important premise of the ideological justification of British colonial rule.

I have already pointed out some of the critical aspects in Kagara's positive depiction of the character of Sarkin Sudan, which contrasts with the demonization of the Fulani rule in Lugardian discourses. Kagara's further critical engagement with the Lugardian discourses comes out in the treatment of religious issues. Following the completion of the British conquest, Gandoki is spirited into the world of the jinn. Once there, he relentlessly wages jihad against demons, converting them to Islam. Fighting alone, he is "as strong as lion" (p. 64), and "like a force of a thousand troops" (p. 67). He becomes the war chief of Muslims against demons by distinguishing himself in battle. Often aided by angelic forces, or invoking the Islamic con-

fession of faith as magical chant that instantly disables demonic forces, Gandoki marches on to victory after victory in his many campaigns against demons. The narrative returns Gandoki to the human plane only after he had completed the Islamization of the world of jinn.

Skinner sees a clear discontinuity in the narrative of *Gandoki*, which he interprets as movement from realism to fantasy and back to realism again. Skinner adds that "in *Gandoki* the blend of realism and fantasy is not very artfully managed, if indeed it can be said to be managed at all."⁵⁶ For Cosentino, the seeming discontinuity between the domains of humans and jinns "juxtaposed diverse narrative images for thematic purposes." Cosentino's interpretation is even more insightful when he remarks:

In *Gandoki*, the second set of images compensates the hero for the losses he suffers to the infidel in the first. It also reaffirms on a metaphysical level the power of Islam over the heathen, the spiritual edge Gandoki has over the otherwise victorious British. The last set of images contains elements of the two previous ones; it synthesizes the newly glorious Gandoki and the magic world of the new Nigeria, and it comments on what was won and what was lost in the colonial transformation.⁵⁷

This interpretation could be pushed even further: the demons Gandoki vanquished allegorize the British colonial army of conquest. This point is supported by a sub-plot in the course of Gandoki's campaigns against demons, where he rescues Goriya, a Sokoto princess, who was kidnapped and held hostage by Hambama, the powerful king of demons. After setting her free, Gandoki returns Goriya to Shaihu Talha, her father who lives in the Sudan (pp. 35–42). It should be recalled that after Sultan Adfahiru II was killed by the British in the battle of Burmi in 1903, the remnants of his army made the *hijra* towards Mecca, with the majority settling in the Sudan. Shaihu Talha is the name of their settlement which developed under the leadership of Sultan Adfahiru's son. On his way back to the human domain, Gandoki stops over to see Shaihu Talha and his kinsmen, "[the] Torankawa who were exiled from Sokoto. Gandoki discovered that they had downed their weapons and taken to farming" (69–70.) Thus Gandoki's successful rescue of the Sokoto princess

⁵⁶ Skinner (1971), 173.

⁵⁷ Donald J. Cosentino (1978), 24.

could be seen as allegorically proclaiming the liberation of the Sokoto caliphate from the British. Once again, we can see Gandoki as a critical discourse on British colonialism.

Furthermore, some of the demonic kingdoms Gandoki conquered resemble very clearly the non-Muslim chiefdoms against which both Umaru Nagwamatse and his son Ibrahim waged jihad during the nineteenth-century. In one battle, Gandoki prevailed only after the intervention of Zalzal, one of the angels fighting on his side. After saving the day, Zalzal unveils himself to Gandoki: "I had a dream last night, in which I saw you encircled by pagans. That is the reason why I came to the rescue" (p. 67). The most protracted of Gandoki's campaigns was the one he waged against King Koringo Karon Yafi, chief of the pagan tribe of Inkwai (pp. 8-69). Karon Yafi has been harassing Shaihu Talha, and his alliance with Hambama, King of the Demons, poses an even graver menace to Shaihu Talha. Only the unsurpassed prowess of Gandoki, aided by angelic forces, saved Shaihu Talha by defeating the alliance between pagans and demons. With the defeat of that unholy alliance, Gandoki also saves many other kingdoms, ordering their rulers "to convert their peoples to Islam, and to execute all those who refuse. . . . that was my policy towards all the peoples and towns that I subdue" (p. 56) Gandoki adds: "As for Koringo Karon Yafi who refused to convert to Islam, I ordered him hanged in the market, stoned to death by children" (p. 56). The defeat of the pagan-demon alliance could also be seen as allegory for the victory of Kontagora over the Royal Niger Company and its "friendlies/allies" among the non-Muslim communities. But the gruesome execution of Karon Yafi is almost identical to what Lugard described as Emir Kwasau's "peculiar method of execution." Gandoki's general policy of "convert to Islam or be executed" re-echoes the phraseology of Lugardian discourses: "Fulani were merely rapacious foreign conquerors whose regime had degenerated at present day into one of unlimited massacre, pillage, and slave-raiding." And again, the Fulani jihad of the nineteenth-century created "state of chronic war and unrest" leading to "the depopulation of the country not merely by the reason of the numbers captured vast as they were but by the numbers killed in these raids or left to starve in the bush." The affinity between the narrative of *Gandoki* and the standard phraseology of Lugardian discourses are once again quite clear.

This affinity is also present in the concluding sections of *Gandoki*.

Following the completion of his Islamization of the domain of jinn, Gandoki returns to colonial Northern Nigeria, where he found well established “a style of rule without parallel, and under which justice is firmly grounded” (p. 70). Gandoki concludes that “rulers who stand firm for justice and avoid oppression, are hard to defeat,” and advises his son on the benefit of education (p. 70). The son heeds the advice and heads to Katsina, “the gathering place of the learned,” and Gandoki’s last statement was: “only out of ignorance does one dare to fight the Christians” (p. 73). Apart from the allusion to the Katsina College, the narrative of Gandoki concludes with the image of colonial Northern Nigeria being justly ruled by the British, an image widely acclaimed in the second Lugardian discourses. For example, Charles Orr, one of Lugard’s senior lieutenants, concludes his analysis of the making of colonial Northern Nigeria in the recognizable vocabulary of the second Lugardian discourses. Orr poses what must be regarded as a rhetorical question: “If we, as a nation, are called to account for our rule in Northern Nigeria, can we say that we have replaced misrule by good government?” He then responds: “Surely the question can have but one answer,” adding that: “Judged by European standards, the country is immeasurably better governed than it was before. And judged by native standards, we can say the same with some confidence, because the government is still carried on by native rulers,” Orr also remarks again: “In Northern Nigeria, it seems to me, an entirely new experiment is being tried. British and native officials rule side by side. . . . [etc.]”⁵⁸ The point to note is that *Gandoki’s* conclusion with the favorable image of colonial rule over Northern Nigeria is identical to the image celebrated in second Lugardian discourses.

Perhaps recalling the deposition of Emir Aliyu dan Sidi will be the most germane comment on the supposed partnership that was indirect rule. Also relevant here is *Qāḍī* Abu Bakr’s argument that without Muslims’ participation in indirect rule, the British could not know what is right from what is wrong (Chapter Three). Similarly, the *‘ulama* see British colonial rule in terms of *tughyān* and *zulm*, two Qur’anic tropes with the strong negative connotations of iniquity, transgression, oppression etc. (Chapter Four). These sharply con-

⁵⁸ Charles Orr (1911), 277.

trasting perspectives of emirs and *ʿulama* on British colonial rule bring into bold relief a contention of this chapter, namely: the reproduction of the colonialist image of Northern Nigeria marks off the discourses of western educated Muslims from the discourses of emirs and *ʿulama*.

The interpretation of *Gandoki* can now be briefly recapitulated. The plot of Bello Kagra's *Gandoki* is a series of wars, including the British conquest of Northern Nigeria. The plot is cast in the image of pre-colonial Northern Nigeria first constructed by Clapperton and Lander, then fully elaborated by Barth in the vocabulary of the nineteenth-century European discourses on the "dark continent." *Gandoki's* theme speaks about the glories of military virtues of bravery, prowess, and conquest; its protagonist is a victorious Muslim warrior. While *Gandoki's* plot reproduces the colonialist discourses on Northern Nigeria, its theme and character celebrate allegorically the triumph of Muslims over the British colonialists. This interpretation shows *Gandoki* as a voice in the discourses on colonialism by western educated Muslims. However, *Gandoki* does not engage all the aspects of Lugardian discourses, particularly the important aspect of slavery. But Abubakar Tafawa Balewa takes adequate care of that important issue.

Balewa's Shaihu Umar: Islamic Antidote to Enslavement

Abubakar Tafawa Balewa's *Shaihu Umar* is totally focused on slavery. Its plot is the capture and enslavement of four-year old Umar, its hero, with details on how he was bought and sold in Kano to an Arab slave merchant, Abdulkarim, who then transported Umar along with eighty other slaves in the trans-Saharan trade. Umar grew up in Egypt as a slave in the household of Abdulkarim, who took a special liking to Umar, and sponsored Umar's education at the local Islamic school. Having distinguished himself in Islamic learning, Umar becomes the local shaykh (whence Shaihu Umar) upon the death of his teacher, and attains more scholarly fame as an unrivaled authority on Islamic learning. Abdulkarim grants Umar's requests to visit his homeland, Northern Nigeria, and in fact, Abdulkarim agrees to travel along with Umar. They traveled through Tripoli, where Umar met with his mother, who had been waylaid by slave merchants in her quest to find her son. Already exhausted by grief

and suffering, she dies shortly after reuniting with Umar in Tripoli. Still Umar and Abdulkarim continue their journey to Northern Nigeria, but a sandstorm in the Sahara desert wipes out their caravan. Only Umar survives to reach Hausaland, narrowly escaping capture by marauders and raiding bands, including those of Rabeh who had adopted a scorched earth policy in his confrontation with the French for the control of the Lake Chad region. The plot concludes with Shaihu Umar established as a "thoughtful, pious and vastly learned Islamic scholar. . . . one of the few Allah had chosen to endow with comprehension of things." Shaihu Umar now lives contentedly in Rauta, near Bauchi, where the narrative of the plot begins in Shaihu Umar's voice responding to a query by one of his disciples regarding the life-history of the great teacher.⁵⁹ Thus on the surface, *Shaihu Umar* says explicitly nothing about colonialism. Not surprisingly, previous interpretations of *Shaihu Umar* reveal no connection with colonialism. Neither the earlier noted interpretation of Hiskett, nor in Trevor Clark's interpretation of *Shaihu Umar* as a sort of an autobiography by Balewa, do we find any appreciation of even the impact of British colonialism on the narrative of *Shaihu Umar*. Still, I contend that *Shaihu Umar* is better understood as a critical engagement with the theme of slavery that is so prominent in the colonialist discourses on Northern Nigeria.

To begin with, the narrative proceeds from a setting that alludes to the calm condition of colonial Northern Nigeria, which allows Shaihu Umar to enjoy contentedly his illustrious life of Islamic piety and learning. We know that Umar is living in colonial Northern Nigeria, because his return from Egypt was delayed due to the Mahdist revolution in the Sudan, led by Muhammad Ahmad (d. 1885) who had aggravated the insecurity on the route across the Sahara (p. 36). When Umar eventually traveled through Tripoli, he narrowly escaped capture by Rabeh's bands, who were roaming about after the French had defeated Rabeh's army c. 1900s. Clearly then, the calm conditions under which we see Umar subsequently settled down to teaching were those of colonial Northern Nigeria. Their calmness contrasts sharply with the pervasive insecurity that characterized the earlier period of Umar's childhood when he was kidnapped in broad daylight while playing with other children

⁵⁹ Abubakar Tafawa Balewa (1971), 1-49.

(pp. 18–19). Similarly, slave merchants in Kano misled Umar's mother into believing they were transporting her across the Sahara to find her son, only for her to discover later that she had been sold as a slave. Other harrowing descriptions of slave raids (pp. 13–14, 24–25) emphasize how insecure life was in the pre-colonial Northern Nigeria in which Umar was born. Therefore, the subtle juxtaposition between that insecure Northern Nigeria, and the secure one to which Umar returns, reproduces the same images of colonial and pre-colonial Northern Nigeria that had been constructed in Lugardian discourses.

Furthermore, *Shaihu Umar* highlights another key feature of the Lugardian discourses: the ineffectual rule of the Fulani that had to be rightfully replaced by British colonial rule. The narrative elaborates on this feature of the first Lugardian discourses within the development of its plot on slavery. Born an orphan, Umar was adopted by Makau, whom Umar's mother remarried. He is an aristocrat enjoying great favor and influence at the court of Sarkin Kagara, located near Kontagora on the southern borders of the Sokoto caliphate and the non-Muslim communities that were raided for slaves. One day, Sarkin Kagara announces that he had a great need to buy clothes, guns, and saddlery for his horses. To obtain more slaves to pay for the royal needs, Sarkin Kagara orders Makau, along with other title-holders, to raid the Gwari (i.e. pagans) for slaves. The title-holders are pleased to go slave-raiding, their usual business, because "they will get their own share of raided livestock and slaves, in addition to their reward of one-quarter of what they are able to bring back" (p. 3). Makau was able to capture two slaves. However, the other aristocrats, envious of his influence at court, conspire to inform the Sarkin Kagara that Makau captured four slaves but was defrauding the ruler by bringing only two. Sarkin Kagara stripped Makau of his title and exiled him. He also dispossessed Makau of all his property, including the livestock Umar inherited from his father (pp. 3–10). Here, the narrative of *Shaihu Umar* reveals not only the capricious motivation for slave-raiding, but also the political corruption that led to the downfall of Makau, who is described as an able and loyal aristocrat. The capriciousness of Sarkin Kagara echoes the "rapacious Fulani slave-raiders" of the first Lugardian discourses, and what these discourses termed "ineffectual Fulani rule" could be seen in the gullibility that blinds Sarkin Kagara to court intrigues, making him incapable of discerning a trustworthy lieutenant from the self-serving crowd at his court (cf. p. 25).

In addition to its plot and character, the theme of *Shaihu Umar* highlights the evils of the various aspects of slavery: from the brutality of the slave-raiders, to the heartless and fraudulent participants in the slave trade, including the Muslim judge who was bribed to dismiss the complaint of Umar's mother that she was waylaid by the person who claimed to own her (pp. 38–40). Rampant slave-raids do not allow the non-Muslim communities to farm enough grains for their subsistence, implying famine and starvation as a consequence (p. 4). While traveling in the bush after his exile, Umar's stepfather took cover in a tree when he heard slave-raiders approaching. He then overheard them chatting about a lean day when they were able to capture only one victim, a seven-year old boy. They quarreled over how to divide their loot, and one of them unsheathed his sword and beheaded the boy, offering the body to the person claiming to have captured the hapless victim, and the head to the rest of the raiding party (pp. 12–14 Cf. 23–25). Of the eighty slaves transported along with Umar, twenty-five perished in the tortuous trek across the Sahara desert (p. 36). Calmly, Shaihu Umar depicts all this pain and suffering in the concise diction that has been popularly acclaimed by the literary experts of the Hausa language. Skinner observes that the hero Shaihu Umar “never shows passion of any sort, never despairs.”⁶⁰ Cosentino holds that “Balewa seems to have created a prose biography which successfully overcomes the meandering style. . . . [and that] *Shaihu Umar* is likely to remain a singular example of a successful prose homily in Hausa.”⁶¹ Similarly, Trevor Clark notes that in the narrative of *Shaihu Umar* “the intrigue and despotism of elite court life is described dispassionately. . . . Slavery is a fact of life, accepted as part of the society described, without emotional distortion through outsider's spectacles.”⁶² Perhaps no where is this clinical detachment so striking as in the description of Umar's reunion with his mother. Enraged by the injustice of her enslavement, Umar's mother refused to render any service, and was mercilessly chained and beaten. Thus at the moment of the reunion of the mother and her long separated son, Umar writes:

⁶⁰ Skinner (1971), 174.

⁶¹ Cosentino (1978), 21–22.

⁶² Clark (1991), 27.

Her strength already gone on account of the suffering she endured, she is overcome with joy upon seeing me. After that, she never rose again. Allah destined that we should meet, and after a few days she passed away. On the seventh death after her death, we moved on. I kept traveling, though my heart keeps pondering over what had happened to me. We arrived Murzuk slowly and without any event." (p. 46).

This rather cryptic description of a major moment in the narrative contrasts sharply with the graphic details on the brutalities of enslavement. But the relevant point to note is that by simply outlining the gruesome realities of slavery in a "dispassionate" style and "without emotional distortion," *Shaihu Umar* powerfully indicts the disreputable characters that wickedly perpetuate, and heartlessly profit from, the unspeakable miseries they inflict upon their enslaved victims. No condemnation is strong enough against slave-raiders who decapitate a seven-year old! Presenting this horrifying act without any comment implies a moral imperative against the bestiality of the slave-raiders, far more compelling than any anti-slavery rhetoric in Lugardian discourses. *Shaihu Umar's* moral indictment against wicked slaver-raiders reinforces the ideological justification of imposing colonialism as the way to end the horrors of slavery.

Yet even while reproducing aspects of Lugardian discourses, *Shaihu Umar* shows a critical engagement with those discourses. For one thing, none of the many slave-raids yielded more than a handful of captives, a point highlighted by the fact that Umar's stepfather lost his aristocratic title on the false allegation that he had defrauded Sarkin Kagara of two slaves. The decapitated seven-year old was the sole victim captured that day by a whole party of slave-raiders, who also complained of returning empty-handed on other lean days. The young age of that victim, and also Umar's age when he was captured, is important. The caravan that took him to Egypt had eighty slaves, which is about the largest number of slaves mentioned in any one place in the narrative. Thus rather than the vast numbers of whole towns and villages being captured and enslaved, as emphasized in Lugardian discourses, *Shaihu Umar* suggests that it is mostly children, and some few individuals, that are enslaved. In particular, the fraudulent enslavement of Umar's mother highlights another subtle way of procuring victims other than the endless wars that "devastated the country." It should be stressed here that enslavement remains cruel and detestable by what means it is accomplished.

The point to note here is that the limited number of the enslaved in *Shaihu Umar* subverts the Lugardian characterization of the Sokoto caliphate as a the largest slave society in Africa.

Another critical way *Shaihu Umar* engages Lugardian discourses could be seen in the treatment of Islam. In Lugardian discourses, "Islamic fanaticism" inspires and justifies the enslavement of "pagans." In contrast, *Shaihu Umar* stresses what I term the Islamic antidote to enslavement. For example, had the Muslim judge in Murzuk not been corrupt (pp. 39–40) he would have freed Umar's mother because Islamic law does not condone the fraudulent way she was enslaved. Furthermore, divine retribution is suggested by the way hyena devoured Umar's kidnapper while hiding in the bush at night, but the innocent Umar escaped unhurt (pp. 21–22). Similarly, Umar alone survives the sandstorm that killed all the slave merchants while their caravan was crossing the Sahara, thus suggesting divine intervention in favor of Umar, and against those slave merchants. As Islamic law upholds slavery, the pious and learned Umar does not explicitly state the need to end slavery, rather he alludes to Islamic injunctions against the harsh treatment of slaves by highlighting how divine retribution punishes the wicked masters who abuse their slaves. Thus *Shaihu Umar* differs once again from the Lugardian discourses on slavery in a rather paradoxical way. Lugard's abolitionism appears in its gradualism morally inadequate in the face of the powerful indictment against slavery that *Shaihu Umar* articulates: the bestiality of slave-raiders dictates the moral imperative for instant, not gradual, abolition. Yet whereas Lugardian discourses are explicit in support of abolition, *Shaihu Umar* is reticent about abolition, perhaps as suggested above, in order not to explicitly contradict aspects of Islamic law allowing slavery.

The generous and kind treatment Umar receives from his master could be interpreted as *Shaihu Umar's* proclamation of the Islamic model of how to treat a slave. Abdulkarim takes Umar into his household, and to a local Islamic school to acquire the great Islamic learning that serves Umar well. Abdulkarim's wife treats Umar like her own son, granting him whatever he requests (p. 36). Abdulkarim agrees to Umar's request to visit home, and buys and sets Umar's mother free in Tripoli. Umar never has a reason to complain against his master. This rosy picture of Umar as the fortunate slave contrasts sharply with the wickedness that characterizes his mother's enslavement with so much suffering. The logical conclusion is that,

if followed, Islamic injunctions for the kind treatment of slaves are an effective antidote to the outrageous abuses and injustices of slavery, but if disregarded, divine retribution visits destruction on wicked slave-masters. The first version of Lugardian discourses does not recognize such a fine distinction, but the second version seems to do so in its proclamation of the mildness of domestic slavery. Compared to the "fanaticism of the Muslim Fulani" which inspires them to slave-raids, *Shaihu Umar's* Islamic antidote to slavery shows subtle criticism in its engagement with Lugardian discourses.

Rhetorically, *Shaihu Umar's* most forceful articulation of the Islamic antidote to slavery is perhaps the saintly character of its hero, the learned Shaihu Umar. Critics have complained that "viewed objectively, Shaihu Umar, the hero and narrator, is almost too good to be true. He is almost too good a Muslim . . . never does anything contrary to what his religion lays down."⁶³ Another critic speculates on the inspiration for the saintly character of Shaihu Umar: "[Balewa] has created the perfect image of the Hausa *mallam*, just as Shaihu d'an Fodio created the perfect image of the Muslim prince in his autobiographical poem *Sifofin Shaihu*. The relationship between the two works is not fortuitous."⁶⁴ Balewa's biographer remarks on "Shaihu's Islamic education and character, his humanity and acceptance by the community as a "mallam' . . ."⁶⁵ Clearly, the Islamic character of Shaihu Umar is impeccable. Its rhetorical significance in the narrative lies in illustrating how the moral force of his Islamic character enables Shaihu Umar not only to survive the horrendous adversities of enslavement, but also to attain fame as a great Islamic scholar. He earns the affection of his master by being thoughtful, calm, and obedient. Above all, he regains his freedom by patience and endurance. A point to be noted here for further comparison later is the resemblance to the earlier analyzed discourse of the passage of time, which views patience and perseverance as conferring a staying power to overcome colonial adversity. While contesting the moral claims of Lugardian discourses, the Islamic moral force of both the character and theme of *Shaihu Umar* indicts also the disreputable Muslims implicated in the abuses of slavery and political

⁶³ Skinner (1971), 173-74.

⁶⁴ Cosnetino (1978), 22.

⁶⁵ Clark (1991), 27.

corruption. Thus the “fanatic Muslim Fulbe” of the first version of Lugardian discourses are here exposed as not upright Muslims.

The singular narrative focus of *Shaihu Umar* is on slavery; its plot, character, theme, perspective and setting, all cohere together to dictate a compelling moral imperative against the horrors of slavery. In this respect, *Shaihu Umar* reiterates Lugardian discourses in the ideological justification of colonialism as an end to slavery. But the powerful moral sensitivity of *Shaihu Umar* is an Islamic one, and that is the perspective from which it critically engages the moral claims of Lugardian discourses.

Abubakar Imam's Ruwan Bagaja: Colonialism as Peripheral

In contrast to *Gandoki's* explicit engagement with the British conquest of Northern Nigeria, and *Shaihu Umar's* implicit contestation of the Lugardian ideology for that conquest, *Ruwan Bagaja* is a comic narrative that simply ignores colonialism in its portrait of Northern Nigeria at the turn of the twentieth-century. The narrative of *Ruwan Bagaja* is given from the perspective of its hero, Alhaji Imam. He grew up as the adopted son of Mallam Na-Bakin-Kogi, the learned adviser to Sarkin Sudan, the ruler of Kontagora. Mallam Na-Bakin-Kogi falls out of favor as a result of prescribing *ruwan bagaja*, the Water of Cure, for the ailment of Sarkin Sudan's favorite son. Because the ailment had defied all treatment, and because “the water of cure” is not readily available, Sarkin Sudan construes Mallam Na-Bakin-Kogi's prescription as jesting wickedly with the predicament of His Highness, hence Mallam Na-Bakin-Kogi loses favor with Sarkin Sudan. To redeem the honor of his adopted father, Alhaji Imam, the hero, embarks on a quest for the “water of cure.” (pp. 1–7) This establishes the theme of the narrative as the familial duty of an adopted son, who dutifully labors to restore his step-father to the royal favor of Sarkin Sudan.

The plot of the narrative is Alhaji Imam's quest for the water of cure. The story unfolds in episodes of comic adventures, often involving duels between Alhaji Imam and Mallam Zurke dan Muhamman, the second main character. Both are tricksters, eking out a precarious existence by whatever means necessary, frequently by outwitting each other and landing in troubles. The story ends when Alhaji

Imam, aided by jinn, finds the object of his quest, the water of cure, and returns home triumphantly. Thus like Shaihu Umar, *Ruwan Bagaja* says explicitly nothing about colonialism. But by its silence, *Ruwan Bagaja* could be interpreted as a discourse that regards colonialism as peripheral to the traditional life of Muslims in Northern Nigeria.

This interpretation is supported by the nature of the encounters with the colonizer in two episodes that explicitly mention Europeans. In one episode, the trickster hero of the narrative, Alhaji Imam, swindles a European of £100, a huge sum of money in the setting of the narrative. Alhaji Imam comes to the market with a parrot he had taught to say only a single sentence announcing its price. A European wants to buy the parrot, but is shocked by the price, and he tells Imam: "Go away, you poor fool!" Speaking in Hausa, Imam responds: "Do not insult me. You know that I do not speak English. If you doubt the price I told you, why don't you ask the bird?" The European asks the bird, and it utters the only sentence it has been taught: "Oh dear gentleman! By the look of me, would you not say that I am worth £300?" Bursting with laughter, the European decides to give Alhaji Imam £100 (pp. 33-35). Here, *Ruwan Bagaja* portrays the European colonizer as no better than any of the native mortals that had come to market to buy and sell. The only notable difference between the European and the natives is that the European had vast amount of money, and he could be cajoled by a native trickster to part with a hefty sum. Though this seems to be a compliment to the generosity of a European, it is in fact a parody of his lack of sense of proportion, for the narrative context focuses on Alhaji Imam's cunning as a trickster who lives on his wit. The episode reveals Alhaji Imam outsmarting the European, just as Imam had outsmarted many other natives. Clearly, *Ruwan Bagaja* is here critiquing colonialism by making a jest of one particular European.

Ruwan Bagaja's critique of colonialism through caricature of individual Europeans comes out unmistakably in the second episode of the narrative explicitly mentioning Europeans. Alhaji Imam finds the object of his quest on the mythological plane with the aid of the King of Jinns, who then returns Imam to the human plane via "a big city of a people predicted to rule the whole world: they are called Europeans" (p. 40). Alhaji Imam is now on his own and he had to figure out how to reach home safely with the water of cure

he had now secured. Here is Imam's voice at the sea-port of the big European city (London?):

I inquired from the Christian (*banasare*) in charge of the ships if he could transport me to West Africa. He said he did not like me, I was too dirty. He imagined the blackness of my skin was due to sheer dirt, not knowing I was created that way. I tried again and again without success. In the end, they pretended that I smelled bad, and chased me away in order not to infect them with lice. The following day, I found a rickety boat and sailed into the Atlantic Ocean alone . . . (p. 40).

In contrast to the benign caricature of the European in the first episode, here *Ruwan Bagaja* exposes crude racism as stark ignorance of the fact that black skin is natural. Neither *Gandoki* nor *Shaihu Umar* tackles race matters so bluntly. Thus by its frontal assault on crude racism, *Ruwan Bagaja* stands out of the three narratives as the one that subverts the hierarchy of races that forms part of the ideological justification of colonialism. *Ruwan Bagaja's* conflating of the "Christian" and the "European" re-echoes the linkage of race and religion that appears as inseparable in Muslim discourses on colonialism. It will be recalled that in the nineteenth-century, Barth wrote of "Christian government" as a synonym for "colonial rule." Yet although Lugardian discourses view Islam always as part of the identity of the "Fulani conquering race," they do not conflate "Christian" and "European" in proclaiming the superior position of the Anglo-Saxon in the hierarchy of races. In fact, Paden notes that while racial categorization was not new, "the colonial period in Kano reinforced the idea of skin color as a criterion for differentiating communities. The British administrators preferred to be called *turawa* which originally referred to the light-skinned Arabs of Tripoli and was later extended to persons from Europe (Turai) as a whole, rather than *Nasara* (Christian).⁶⁶ In Muslim discourses, it would be a distinction without a difference to separate "Christian" from "European." *Ruwan Bagaja's* brief expose of crude racism should be seen as Muslim critique of the doctrine of hierarchy of races that is central to the indirect rule of British colonialism in Northern Nigeria. *Ruwan Bagaja's* brief expose could therefore be interpreted as a critical engagement with the racism in the ideology of British colonial indirect rule.

⁶⁶ Paden (1973), 39.

If not for this critique, it would have stretched the point too far to interpret *Ruwan Bagaja* along the same line that reveals *Gandoki* and *Shaihu Umar* as critical engagements with Lugardian discourses. Whereas *Gandoki* treats explicitly the British conquest of Northern Nigeria, and *Shaihu Umar* focuses entirely on slavery that is so important in the ideology of that conquest, *Ruwan Bagaja* narrates the comic adventures of a trickster on a quest. Colonialism is simply not a concern in *Ruwan Bagaja*, for in all the towns and villages it depicts, no trace of colonial presence is discernible, but for the two episodes discussed above. The narrative presents an image of Northern Nigeria with traditional life proceeding unaffected by colonialism. But this image is consistent with the second Lugardian discourses. For example, Orr's characterization of indirectly ruled Northern Nigeria is: "The government is still carried on by native rulers . . . Changes have been made, but the foundations remain as before: the alterations are not structural."⁶⁷ The point can now be made that *Ruwan Bagaja* is a discourse on colonialism that not only reproduces but also critically engages the image of Northern Nigeria portrayed in Lugardian discourses, albeit not to the same degree as *Gandoki* and *Shaihu Umar*.

Conclusion

Bello Kagara's *Gandoki*, Abubakar Tafawa Balewa's *Shaihu Umar*, and Abubakar Imam's *Ruwan Bagaja*, all reveal critical engagements with various aspects of colonialist discourses on Northern Nigeria. Within the context of nineteenth-century European discourses on Africa as the "dark continent" the travelogues of the expeditions of Denham, Clapperton, and Lander began, and Heinrich Barth's *Travels Discoveries* completed the construction of a particular image of pre-colonial Northern Nigeria. In its fully elaborated form, the image presents a pre-colonial Northern Nigeria ineffectually ruled by the Fulani conquering race, inspired by their Islamic fanaticism to wage a jihad that was no more than perpetual slave-raiding, creating endemic insecurity and depopulating pagan communities. The doctrine of hierarchy of races accounts for Fulani dominance by conflating race and religion to make sense of Muslim Fulani's position as a con-

⁶⁷ Orr (1911), 276.

quering and ruling race over the pagan tribes. This image was then invoked in what I have termed the first Lugardian discourses to ideologically justify British conquest of Northern Nigeria as the termination of miseries perpetuated by the ineffectual rule of the Fulani. This was followed by the second Lugardian discourses which present the image of colonial Northern Nigeria being justly ruled by the British and the capable Fulani rulers, whose born ability to rule was regenerated by the British. The hierarchy of races now places the (Christian) British at top, the Muslim Fulani in the middle, and pagan tribes at the bottom. By their reliance on various aspects of these images of Northern Nigeria, *Gandoki*, *Shaihu Umar*, and *Ruwan Bagaja* reproduce the colonialist discourses on Northern Nigeria. On the other hand, their positive portrayals of Islam critique those colonialist discourses.

Comparisons with the discourses of emirs and 'ulama illustrate their similarities and differences with the discourses of western educated Muslim elite. Some of the comparisons have already been noted for further elaboration here. The substantive similarities of all the three sets of discourses are their privileging of Islam in their various ways, while the profound differences are notable in the preoccupation in each set of the Muslims' discourses: relations of power for emirs; moral and religious issues for 'ulama; and enthusiastic reception of colonial innovations for western educated Muslims. Substantive similarities can also be recognized in the normative imperatives advocated in the different discourses. The legal discourses justify the subordinate position of emirs under indirect rule in terms of the necessity to avert self-destruction by the continued resistance against the superior military might of the British. *Gandoki* makes the same point in concluding that only out of ignorance does one dare to confront the British. Similarly, the 'ulama's discourse on the passage of time preaches that patience and perseverance will confer a staying power to survive colonial adversity; *Shaihu Umar* alludes to an identical strategy being the secret for its protagonist surviving enslavement to regain freedom. Yet differences abound, perhaps best dramatized in the sharply opposed characterizations of colonial rule and western education: for the 'ulama, colonial rule is oppressive and western education is nothing more than lies and confusion; for the western educated Muslims colonial rule is unparalleled in its justice and western education is knowledge to be proud of, etc.

Employing the diverse vocabularies of legal, scriptural, historical, and poetical discourses, the various sets of Muslim discourses reveal differences also in modes of argumentation, rhetoric, and imagery through which Muslims articulated their responses to British colonialism. The differences of vocabulary are too obvious to be recounted here. But some of the striking similarities are worth highlighting. The legal discourse of Abu Bakr b. Ahmad Sa'd (Chapter Three) saw colonial Northern Nigeria in the legal status of Muslims as prisoners of war. *Gandoki's* sub-plot of the captivity of a Sokoto princess at the hand of the King of Demons alludes to the British conquest of the Sokoto caliphate. Aliyu dan Sidi's poems allegorize the colonial moment in the imagery of predator and prey; *Gandoki's* protagonist is the brave Muslim warrior who fought like a lion against the unholy alliance of pagans and demons. This unholy alliance alludes to another alliance: between the Niger Company and the non-Muslim tribes. Clearly, the complexities of Muslims' discourses on British colonialism documented thus far challenge previous understandings of both the nature of British colonialism in Northern Nigeria, and Muslims' responses thereof.

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSIONS

This study has revealed the relationships between British colonialism and Islam in Northern Nigeria in new light. For example, in his analysis of "the colonial administration and Islam", Michael Crowder accepts the assumption of British colonial support for the spread of Islam, and states that "once Lugard had secured the cooperation of the Emirs in Northern Nigeria, and the Sultan of Sokoto had shown his loyalty after the 1906 Satiru uprising, Islam was seen as an ally rather than the potential enemy."¹ This study shows more complex interactions than Crowder's arguments allowed. By viewing the entire spectrum of British colonial policies towards Islam, the study concludes that different imperatives kept pulling those policies into the different orientations of appropriation, containment, and surveillance. This conclusion means that we should understand the interface between Islam and colonialism in more dynamic terms that do not allow one stable direction to dominate the interface one way or the other. This instability of colonial policies towards Islam was because the imperatives for the different policy orientations remained at work throughout the colonial period. The recurrent paucity of British personnel that led to the appropriation of Islamic institutions and the Muslims who ran them never allowed the colonial regime totally to dispense with both. At the same time, the discourses of the 'ulama that remained openly critical of the colonial regime dictated the continued application of surveillance on those 'ulama and also the containment of their Islamic opposition to colonialism. Hence we should think of colonialism not as a unified whole heading clearly in one direction but as a process pulled in different directions by competing imperatives.

Similarly, as the British colonial policies towards Islam are less stable than previously thought, Muslims' responses to colonialism are also considerably more varied than once understood. For example,

¹ Michael Crowder (1968), 359.

Crowder asserts that Lugard retained the loyalty of emirs "because he deliberately abstained from any interference with their religious authority, and only placed the minimum of limitation on their political authority."² This study has demonstrated that emirs' attitudes towards the colonial regime were less loyal, more varied, and constantly changing. Apart from the opposite attitudes of Emir Aliyu dan Sidi of Zazzau and Emir Muhammadu Dikko of Katsina, the attitudes of the majority of emirs were more passive resistance than loyalty to the British. Islamic legal discourses advocated this passive resistance as the necessary corrective response to the moral deficiency of the colonial regime.

Even Emir Muhammadu Dikko, who can apparently be regarded as the model of emirs' loyalty to the British, emerged from this study more engaged in domesticating colonial innovations. His acquisition of colonial medals of honor is more symbolic of his own mastering of the colonial order than the reward for his loyalty to the colonial regime that these medals were meant to be. His astute affiliation with British colonial authorities allowed him to rejuvenate his declining political fortunes on the eve of the advent of the British, and to become the Emir of Katsina and consolidate his power in the four decades of his reign. Similar strategic considerations informed the decision of Sarkin Kebbi of Argungu, Sama dan Yakubu Nabame, to welcome the British conquest of Sokoto. Whereas Emir Dikko and Sarki Sama appear almost legendary in their loyalty to the British, critical examination of their own perspectives reveal that both were actually taking advantage of the colonial regime to neutralize formidable oppositions to their respective political fortunes. Thus as British colonial authorities appropriated the emirs into indirect rule, the emirs also appropriated the colonial regime to their own advantage. The relevant conclusion here is that, if viewed from both the perspectives of the colonizer and the colonized, colonialism emerges less as a unilateral imposition by the former over the later, but more as an historical process of appropriation and counter-appropriation. Understood in this light, the apparent loyalty of emirs to the colonial regime becomes less relevant, if not meaningless altogether.

Far more interesting is to unravel the role of Islam in the complicated negotiations between the British and the emirs. Here we see

² *Ibid.*, 72.

one contention of this study in clearer relief. All the Muslims' discourses on colonialism analyzed [in this study] constantly invoked the Islamic belief that there is no power and no strength except in Allah, usually in the context of both acknowledging and denying the superior power of the British. I have argued that this indicates Muslims' realistic appreciation of the power imbalance that undergirded colonialism. This rather simple finding acquires importance by revealing the dynamics of power relations in the interface between Islam and British colonialism in Northern Nigeria. While equipping Muslims with the necessary precaution in relating to the more powerful British colonial authorities, the belief also bolstered Muslims' confidence to engage the British without allowing the apparent imbalance of power to foreclose the outcome of the engagement. Islamic belief in the ultimate power of God leads Muslims to a realistic appreciation of both the extent and the limits of the power of the British. It follows from this conclusion that both the objective and the perceived parameters of the power imbalance that was central to colonialism need to be reconsidered. The dependence of British colonial authorities on Muslim personnel and institutions calls attention to the constraints on the initiatives of the colonizer. The important implication here is what has been termed the "double impact,"³ i.e. colonialism has consequences for both the colonizer and the colonized.

The significance of two other seemingly simple conclusions of this study come out in comparison with Muslims' responses to colonialism in other parts of the world. This study has found a prominent concern with moral and religious issues in the discourses of the 'ulama, and a preoccupation with Islamic legal bases for the legitimacy of emirs' position under indirect rule. The finding that Muslims in Northern Nigeria sought to ground their responses to colonialism on Islamic normative bases is consistent with what John Voll found in the global context of Muslims' experiences of "continuity and change in the modern world." Voll demonstrates that "specific local conditions," and "the basic dynamics of modern world history" are important but inadequate considerations for understanding Muslims' experiences in the modern world.⁴ In addition to these two considerations, Voll argues that "the necessary third dimension to be exam-

³ G.W. Johnson (1985).

⁴ John O. Voll (1994), 4-23.

ined, therefore, is Islam itself." He holds that while Islamic movements in the twentieth-century have "underlying similarities because they are responding to issues of modernization, . . . they also can be seen as a part of a continuing Muslim tradition. They must be viewed in their Islamic as well as the modern contexts."⁵ As in Northern Nigeria, the modernization of most Muslim countries resulted directly out of colonialism, hence the importance of the Islamic issues in Muslims' responses to colonialism in Northern Nigeria is identical to the continuing relevance of Islam that Voll demonstrates in the responses of other Muslim countries to "the dynamics of modern world history."⁶

The prominence of Islam that Voll found in the global context has also been discovered in studies of specific colonial experiences of Muslims. Among the various studies of Muslims' responses to British colonialism in India,⁷ Barbara Metcalf has shown that while the modernist Aligarh movement under Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan sought to accommodate Islam to British colonial policies, the Deobandi 'ulama continued to emphasize the integrity and centrality of Islam over and above the British pretensions to moral and cultural superiority. Metcalf concludes that "Muslim culture was thus understood to be the equivalent of the British culture in its ability to generate a coherent and inclusive system, and superior to that culture in divine sanction and scope."⁸ Metcalf's conclusion compares very well to the oppositional discourses of 'ulama that viewed British colonialism in Northern Nigeria as morally deficient. Similarly, Allan Christelow's study of Islamic law under French colonialism in Algeria finds a "sudden and quite drastic subordination of the Muslim judicial system to the French courts," and that the 'ulama "began to assume a critical role in the relationship between Algerian Islam and the French colonial state, accepting the French stress on formal rules, but insisting that the Muslim judicial and educational systems retain a degree of autonomy."⁹ The drastic subordination of Muslim judicial system to the French courts resembles the British appropriation and

⁵ *Ibid.*, 5.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 24 ff.

⁷ For example, see: Ahmad Aziz (1967); Ahmad Aziz and G.E. von Grunebaum (1970); Peter Hardy (1972); David S. Powers (1989), 535-71.

⁸ Barbara D. Metcalf (1982), 253.

⁹ Allan Christelow (1985), 263.

containment of the Islamic law and the shari'a courts in Northern Nigeria. The critical roles, of the Algerian 'ulama in retaining the autonomy of Islamic judicial and educational systems compare with the oppositional discourses of the Northern Nigerian 'ulama against western education, as well as the tendency of Muslim judges towards what the British called "strict application of Islamic law." The comparable preoccupation of the 'ulama of India, Algeria, and Northern Nigeria with moral and religious issues, and their demand for the application of Islamic law under different colonial regimes suggest strongly that the normative implications of colonial rule were very important in Muslims' responses to colonialism.

An important conclusion from the legal discourses on colonialism invites a reconsideration of the nature of Islamic legal thought. This study has demonstrated a recurrent duality in Islamic law between categorical rules definitively establishing legal obligations, and acceptable exemptions to those categorical rules. Although most legal systems do recognize exemptions to their canons, the duality of categorical rules and acceptable exemptions could be said to be a pervasive feature of the entire legal system of Islam. The conclusion of this study in this respect contributes to the emerging literature on the flexibility of Islamic law,¹⁰ and has important implications for ways of reforming Islamic law in the modern world. Some of the exempting doctrines analyzed in their applications in various legal discourses invite comparison with casuistic resolution of ethical dilemmas in other systems of thought.

In a very interesting study on Islam and colonialism, Peters concluded that "during the first stages of colonial expansion into the Islamic world, the doctrine of jihad provided a suitable ideology for movements of resistance."¹¹ But where armed resistance failed, Muslims invoked *hijra* as the relevant ideology for avoidance. This is identical with the progression of Muslims' responses to colonialism in Northern Nigeria and the wider West African context, as could be seen during the confrontation between the Umarians and the French in Senegal. After the French defeated their forces in 1862, the Umarians continued on their *hijra* eastward till 1903 when they even-

¹⁰ For example: see: W.B. Hallaq (1984), 3-41; Peter D. Sloane (1988), 743-66; Sherman. A. Jackson (1993), 71-90, etc.

¹¹ R. Peters (1979), 159.

tually joined Sokoto forces against the British in the battle of Burmi, and the subsequent *hijra* of the Sultan of Sokoto.¹² Clearly then, this study relates to the literature on Muslims responses to colonialism, and by focusing on Northern Nigeria, the study reaches conclusions with significant implications for comprehending the global interface between Islam and colonialism, and studies of responses to colonialism in other regions of the world.

Studies on responses to colonialism in other cultural contexts have also discovered results similar to Muslims' responses.¹³ For example, Adu Boahen has identified confrontation, submission, and alliance as three strategies of "African initiatives" on colonialism. He argued that while some African leaders held on to one strategy throughout the colonial period, several others changed from one strategy to another, or combined different strategies over time. Thus Boahen contends that "it is this variation in strategies that makes the classification of African rulers into resisters and so-called collaborators so prevalent in the 1960s and 1970s very misleading and, indeed, erroneous."¹⁴ Reaching identical conclusions, this study has uncovered what may be termed the *paradox of colonialism in Northern Nigeria*. The emirs' apparent acceptance of colonialism that was once thought of as "collaboration" is revealed as a strategy of containing the negative features of colonialism that the emirs knew could not be otherwise resisted. Thus "collaboration" for the emirs was in fact the site of "resistance."

As scholars focus attention on African initiatives on colonialism, it is also becoming clear that "religion was indeed one of the weapons used against colonialism".¹⁵ In a critical survey of the roles of religion in the various African initiatives on colonialism, Ranger has pointed out that religious symbols and ideas were crucial in the prophetic movements that arose in response to colonialism in southern Africa.¹⁶ Other studies have also demonstrated the comprehension of colonialism within the categories of indigenous African religions, and the invocation of deities, spirits and ancestors for protection

¹² David Robinson (1985), 204 ff.; David Robinson and John H. Hanson (1991), 251 ff. See also John H. Hanson (1994), 37-60. Cf. M.K. Mas'ud (1990).

¹³ For example, see A. Adu Boahen (1985), 45 ff.

¹⁴ A. Adu Boahen (1987), 39.

¹⁵ Boahen (1985), 5.

¹⁶ T.O. Ranger (1986).

against colonialism. Specific examples from West Africa include Stoller's study of the Hauka movement in Niger,¹⁷ Robert Baum's analysis of the Diola prophetess, Alinesitoué,¹⁸ and J.D. Peel's examination of the encounter between Yoruba *babalawo* priests and Christian missionaries.¹⁹ However, while these studies reveal recognizable similarities to the conclusions of this study, important differences exist between Islamic and other religious responses to colonialism.

Perhaps even more interesting are the differences within the Muslims' responses to colonialism. Two contrasting examples will suffice here to illustrate the relevance of what Voll terms "specific local conditions" for understanding the varieties of Muslims' responses to colonialism. First, several studies on the interface between Islam and French colonialism in West Africa have continued to show the striking differences with the British colonial interactions with Islam in the region. For example, the French policy of assimilation devastated Islamic political institutions in Senegal, leading to the expansion of Sufi orders and their leading marabouts as the Islamic alternatives to the French colonial institutions. This contrast with how British indirect rule left the emirates and shari'a courts to function alongside the British colonial institutions in Northern Nigeria. Thus whereas John Paden's study shows the popularization of Sufi orders to be less directly concerned with the colonial regime in Northern Nigeria,²⁰ other studies show direct linkage between French colonialism and twentieth-century development of Sufi orders in Senegal. Martin Klein demonstrates the French destruction of jihad states of pre-colonial Senegal,²¹ while Lucy Berhman shows clearly that the emergence of Sufi orders in Senegal as veritable Muslim political institutions was directly connected to the French destruction of pre-colonial political institutions.²² The studies of Berhman and Klein have been supplemented by, among others, the studies of Cruise O'Brien,²³ Christian Coulon,²⁴ and Leonardo Villalon.²⁵ Simi-

¹⁷ Paul Stoller (1995).

¹⁸ Robert M. Baum (1992). See also Robert M. Baum (1990), 371-98.

¹⁹ J.D.Y. Peel (1990), 338-69.

²⁰ John N. Paden (1973).

²¹ Martin A. Klein (1968).

²² Lucy C. Berhman (1970).

²³ Donald B. Cruise O'Brien (1971).

²⁴ Christian Coulon (1985), 346-66. See also: Christian Coulon (1981).

²⁵ Leonardo A. Villalon (1995).

larly, Whitaker's study on the politics of decolonization in Northern Nigeria during the 1950s–1960s, shows the western educated Muslims contending with the emirs on who should be the guardians of the Islamic heritage. In contrast, Sufi orders and their marabouts were the contending political forces in the nationalist politics and decolonization in Senegal. Thus among the important differences in the interfaces between Islam and colonialism in Northern Nigeria and Senegal, are the different Islamic institutions that provided a counterweight against the respective British and French colonial policies on Islam.

On a more micro-level, William Miles has also demonstrated differences in the interfaces of Islam with French and British colonialisms in the border region between Nigeria and Niger. His findings illustrate very clearly that while the traditional political institutions of the emirates remained actively operative under British colonialism in Northern Nigeria, similar institutions in Niger were thoroughly eroded by French colonialism. As a consequence, Miles finds profound differences in the respective responses of Muslims to the French in Niger, and to the British in Northern Nigeria, including more revered attitudes to colonial authorities in Niger, as well as memories of British colonialism as “soft” and French colonialism as “harsh”.²⁶ Thus while Muslims' responses to colonialism are comparable in many respects, the obvious difference can not be ignored.

The reproduction of colonialist discourses by western educated Muslims provides the second contrasting example. Chapter Five argued that western educated Muslims built their discourses on colonialism in Northern Nigeria by critically reproducing the Lugardian colonialist discourses that articulated the ideology of British colonialism. This point compares to Leila Ahmed's analysis of Qassim Amin's *Tahrir al-Mar'a* (Liberation of Woman) as a reproduction of orientalist discourses on “Islamic degradation of women,” which Lord Cromer appropriated for the ideological support of British colonialism in Egypt.²⁷ Thus in contrast to the “slave-raiding, Islamic fanaticism, and misrule of the Fulani race,” Islam and gender are the dominant themes in colonialist discourses on Islam in Egypt, and the Muslims' responses thereto. The centrality of what Leila Ahmed

²⁶ William F.S. Miles (1994). Cf. Finn Fuglestand (1983).

²⁷ Leila Ahmed (1992), 144–68.

terms “the discourse of the veil” in the colonialist discourses on Islam in Egypt brings out the importance of gender in the interface between colonialism and Islam.

This study has made important discoveries that shed new light on both the nature of British colonial policies towards Islam in Northern Nigeria, and Muslims’ responses. The conclusions of this study point to other important questions for further investigation. The panoramic view of the whole of Northern Nigeria presented here could be supplemented with further studies targeting more narrowly focused issues, areas, and periods. As pointed above, gender should be among the first issues for further research. The focus here has been on men’s voices only, and therefore, we do not know what Muslim women’s responses were to British colonialism in Northern Nigeria. The narrative of Baba of Karo suggests that Muslim women were affected differently by colonialism,²⁸ and it seems obvious that their responses to colonialism would also be different. Only further specialized studies will bring out the differences, and the specific contours of Muslim women’s responses to colonialism in Northern Nigeria. Another important area for research is what could be termed popular discourses on colonialism. Emirs, ‘ulama, and western educated Muslims are all elite groups, whose privileged status undoubtedly affected their experiences of, and responses to, colonialism. Popular songs, proverbs, stories, riddles, and other forms of folklore could all reveal ordinary peoples’ conceptions of colonialism. Focused studies on these modes of popular discourses will yield additional insights into Muslims’ intellectual responses to colonialism. The allegorical and allusive discourses on colonialism analyzed in this study are particularly germane for deciphering popular discourses of the colonized. But even as we await further research on some of the areas noted above, it is clear that uncovering and analyzing those allegorical and allusive discourses on British colonialism on Northern Nigeria, are among the most significant results of this study. These allegorical discourses have relevance for understanding “how natives think” about the colonizer,²⁹ while the analyses of the reasoning that informed Muslims’ responses to colonialism relate to the “subaltern studies” that enriches our

²⁸ Mary Smith (1964), 66 ff.

²⁹ Gananath Obeyesekere (1992); and Marshall D. Sahlins (1995).

understanding of colonialism from the perspective of the colonized.³⁰ In the light of the on-going debate on the nature of the colonial encounter globally,³¹ the conclusions of this study have far reaching implications for understanding the agency and voices of the colonized not only in Muslim and African countries, but also in other colonized regions of the world.

³⁰ Gyan Prakash (1994), 1475–90 and 1516–1545.

³¹ For example, see: Terry Boswell (1989), 180–96; Robert van Niel (1990), 109–23; and David Strang (1991), 429–54.



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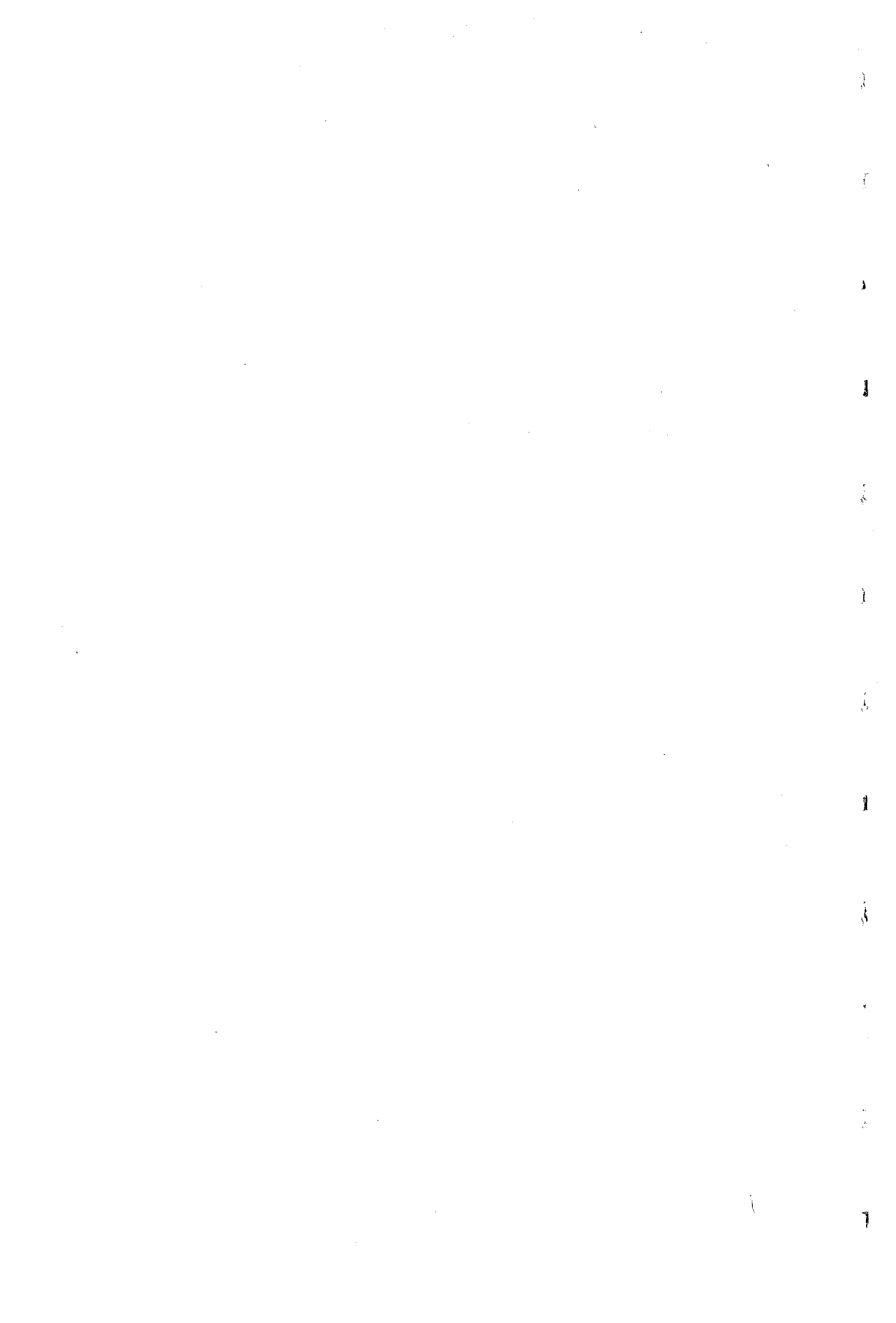
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