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## **Black Skin, White Coats: Nigerian Psychiatrists, Decolonization, and the Globalization of Psychiatry (New African Histories)**

*Matthew M. Heaton*

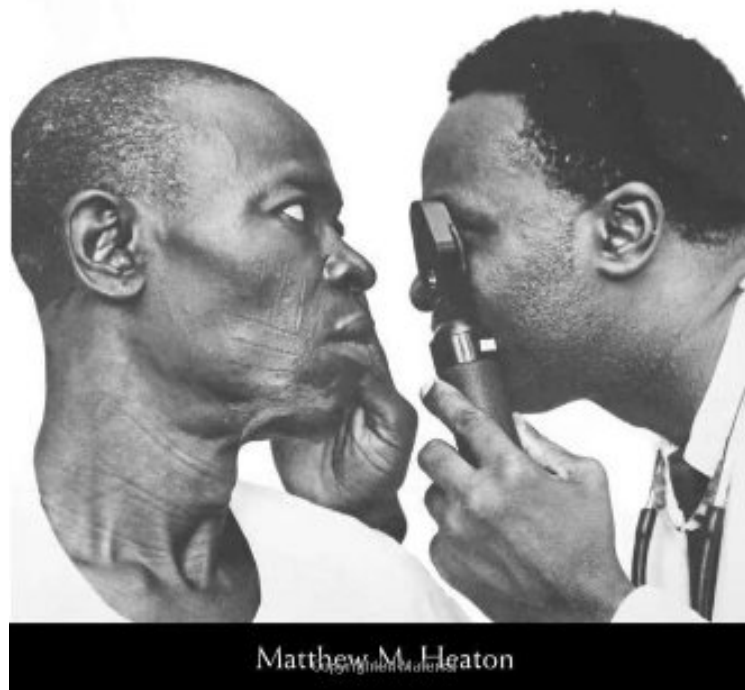
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Nigerian Psychiatrists, Decolonization,  
and the Globalization of Psychiatry



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**Matthew M. Heaton : Black Skin, White Coats: Nigerian Psychiatrists, Decolonization, and the Globalization of Psychiatry (New African Histories)** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Black Skin, White Coats: Nigerian Psychiatrists, Decolonization, and the Globalization of Psychiatry (New African Histories):

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Eye opening  
By Adam Alcorn  
Very eye opening account of psychiatry in a colonial context that identifies complex cultural processes not readily understood in a solely European framework.  
0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Excellent!  
By John Heaton  
Professor Heaton's book is a must read for anyone interested in decolonization and psychiatry. It is well written and engaging.

*Black Skin, White Coats* is a history of psychiatry in Nigeria from the 1950s to the 1980s. Working in the contexts of decolonization and anticolonial nationalism, Nigerian psychiatrists sought to replace racist colonial psychiatric theories about the psychological inferiority of Africans with a universal and egalitarian model focusing on broad psychological similarities across cultural and racial boundaries. Particular emphasis is placed on Dr. T. Adeoye Lambo, the first indigenous Nigerian to earn a specialty degree in psychiatry in the United Kingdom in 1954. Lambo returned to Nigeria to become the medical superintendent of the newly founded Aro Mental Hospital in Abeokuta, Nigerias firstmodern mental hospital. At Aro, Lambo began to revolutionize psychiatric research and clinical practice in Nigeria, working to integratemodern western medical theory and technologies with traditional cultural understandings of mental illness. Lambos research focused on deracializing psychiatric thinking and redefining mental illness in terms of a model of universal human similarities that crossed racial and cultural divides.*Black Skin, White Coats* is the first work to focus primarily on black Africans as producers of psychiatric knowledge and as definers of mental illness in their own right. By examining the ways that Nigerian psychiatrists worked to integrate their psychiatric training with their indigenous backgrounds and cultural and civic nationalisms, *Black Skin, White Coats* provides a foil to Frantz Fanons widely publicized reactionary articulations of the relationship between colonialism and psychiatry. *Black Skin, White Coats* is also on the cutting edge of histories of psychiatry that are increasingly drawing connections between local and national developments in late-colonial and postcolonial settings and international scientific networks. Heaton argues that Nigerian psychiatrists were intimately aware of the need to engage in international discourses as part and parcel of the transformation of psychiatry at home.

*Black Skin, White Coats* contributes to a rich strand of work in the history of psychiatry that highlightsand in fact insists uponnot just the transnational nature of colonial and postcolonial psychiatric discourses, but the fact that these transnational flows traveled in many directions and crossed borders in surprising ways, often bypassing the Metropole altogether[Heatons book] will rightfully be regarded as an important contribution to the history of psychiatry in Africa.*Journal of the History of the Behavioral Sciences*