



NIGERIAN MODERNISM (S) 1900 - 1960 AND THE CULTURAL RAMIFICATIONS OF THE FOUND OBJECT IN ART

Clement Akpang

This is a digitised version of a dissertation submitted to the University of Bedfordshire.

It is available to view only.

This item is subject to copyright.

**NIGERIAN MODERNISM (S) 1900 - 1960 AND THE CULTURAL
RAMIFICATIONS OF THE FOUND OBJECT IN ART**

**CLEMENT EMEKA AKPANG
Ph.D**

2016

UNIVERSITY OF BEDFORDSHIRE

**NIGERIAN MODERNISM (S) 1900 - 1960 AND THE CULTURAL
RAMIFICATIONS OF THE FOUND OBJECT IN ART**

By

CLEMENT EMEKA AKPANG

A thesis submitted to the University of Bedfordshire in partial
fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

July 2016

NIGERIAN MODERNISM (S) 1900 - 1960 AND THE CULTURAL RAMIFICATIONS OF THE FOUND OBJECT IN ART

CLEMENT EMEKA AKPANG

ABSTRACT

This thesis explored the phenomenon of Modernism in Twentieth Century Nigerian art and the cultural ramifications of the Found Object in European and African art. Adopting the analytical tools of postcolonial theory and Modernism, modern Nigerian art was subjected to stylistic, conceptual and contextual analysis. The avant-gardist context of the form was explored for two reasons; first in an attempt to distinguish the approaches of named artists and secondly, to address the Eurocentric exclusion of the *'Other'* in Modernist discourse. The works of Nigerian modernists - Aina Onabolu, Ben Enwonwu and Uche Okeke whose practices flourished from 1900 - 1960, were interrogated and findings from detailed artists case studies proved that during the period of European Modernism, a parallel bifurcated Modernism (1900-1930 / 1930 -1960) occurred in Nigeria characterised by the interlacing of modern art with nationalist political advocacies to subvert colonialism, imperialism and European cultural imposition. This radical formulation of modern Nigerian art, constituted a unique parallel but distinct avant-gardism to Euro-American Modernism, thus proving that Modernism is a pluralistic phenomenon. To valorise the argument that Modernism had multiple avant-garde centres, this thesis analysed the variations in philosophies, ideologies and formalism of the works of Nigerian Modernists and contrasted them from Euro-American avant-gardes. The resultant cultural and contextual differences proved the plurality of Modernism not accounted for in Western art history. Furthermore, by adopting comparative analysis of the Found Object in European and African art, this thesis proved that, the

appropriation of mundane objects in art differ from culture to culture, in context, philosophies and ramifications. This finding contributes to knowledge by addressing the ambiguity in Found Object art discourse and problematic attempts to subsume this genre into a mainstream framework. The uncovering/theorisation of this parallel bifurcated Nigerian Modernism, contributes to expanding understanding of Modernism as a pluralistic phenomenon thus, contributing to debates for the recognition of the different Modernisms which cultures outside Europe gave rise to. The recognition and situation of Nigerian avant-gardism and modernism and interpretation of the Found Object as being culturally specific will subsequently contribute to the reconstruction of modernist discourse and Nigerian/African art histories.

AUTHOR'S DECLARATION

I declare that this thesis is my own unaided work. It is being submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy at the University of Bedfordshire.

It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination in any other University.

Name of Candidate: **CLEMENT EMEKA AKPANG**

Signature: 

Date: 28 July 2016

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to GOD ALMIGHTY.

LIST OF CONTENTS

Abstract.....	iii
Author’s Declaration.....	v
Dedication.....	vi
List of Content.....	vii
List of Figures.....	xiii
Acknowledgement.....	xviii

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1	Background – Modernism: General Overview of Modernist Theory.....	1
1.1	The Ideology of Modernism and Modernist Art.....	2
1.1.2	Modernism as an Analytical Tool.....	10
1.1.3	The Postcolonial Turn – The Black Other/Blackness.....	13
1.1.4	African Literature as Gateway to Alternative Afro-Centric Modernism.....	16
1.2	Ramifications of the Found Object in European Modernism.....	18
1.3	Literature Review.....	25
1.4	Methodology.....	32
1.4.1	Postcolonialism.....	32
1.4.2	Artistic Methodology.....	40
1.5	Objectives and Structure of Thesis.....	43
1.6	Conclusion.....	47
	Chapter One Figures.....	49

CHAPTER 2: THEORETICAL CONTEXT

2	Modernist Discourse and Nigerian Modernism.....	55
2.1	Introduction.....	55
2.2	Modernism Discourse.....	57
2.3	The Problematic of Modernism Discourse: European Modernism and Africa.....	66
2.4	Nigerian Bifurcated Modernism – Concept and Context.....	74

2.4.1 Conditions that gave rise to Nigerian Modernism.....	76
a). Missionary Anti-art, Anti-culture and Ant-traditionalism Propaganda.....	76
b). Imperial Discrimination and Cultural Imposition.....	79
c). Rise of Colonial Elites and Nationalism Movement.....	80
2.5 The Found Object in Nigerian Art.....	83
2.5.1 Found Object in Pre-modern Nigerian Art – Cultural Ramifications.....	83
2.6 Conclusion.....	86
Chapter Two Figures.....	88

CHAPTER 3: PHASES OF NIGERIAN BIFURCATED MODERNISM (S) 1900-1927 / 1927-1960

3 Phases of Nigerian Bifurcated Modernism (S) 1900-1927 / 1927-1960....	98
3.1 Introduction.....	98
3.2 Modernism Phase One 1900-1930.....	100
Anti-Stereotype, Anti-Discrimination and Anti-Racism Advocacies	
3.2.1 Historical Context.....	100
3.2.2 Avant-gardism of the First Phase 1900 - 1930.....	101
a) Anti-Stereotype, Anti-Racism Advocacies and Battle for Equality.....	102
b) Foster the Battle against Colonial Subjugation.....	103
c) Battle for the Renaissance of Art in Modern Nigeria.....	106
3.3 Problems of the First Phase of Nigerian Modernism.....	107
3.4 Modernism Phase Two 1930-1960.....	109
Anti-Europeanization, Cultural Revivalism and Anti-Colonial Advocacies	
3.4.1 Historical Context.....	109
3.5 Avant-gardism of the Second Phase 1930 – 1960.....	112
a) Anti-Europeanization and Cultural Revivalism Advocacies.....	112

b) Anti-colonial, Decolonization and Nationalism Advocacies.....	118
c) Battle to Reconstruct Nigerian Cultural Identity for Postcolonial Selfhood.....	121
3.6 Contrasts between Nigerian and European Modernisms.....	124
3.7 The Found Object in Nigerian Art - Modernist Context.....	129
3.8 Conclusion.....	130
Chapter Three Figures.....	133

CHAPTER 4: ARTIST CASE STUDY I

4 Aina Onabolu, Pioneer Nigerian Modernist: Ideologies and Avant-Gardism.....	143
4.1 Introduction.....	143
4.2 Historical Overview of the Cultural and Socio-Political Conditions which Launched Onabolu’s Modernist Art.....	145
a) Ijebu Kingdom’s Policy of Isolationism and Battle against British Government.....	145
b) The Rise of the Lagos Elites, their Resistance to Racist Policies and Battle for Autonomy.....	149
4.3 Onabolu’s Modernist Ideologies and Art Practice.....	152
4.4 Onabolu’s Portraiture as Resistance/Subversive Tool for Political Activism.....	160
4.5 The Problematic of Onabolu’s Modernist Art Ideology (<i>Onaboluism</i>) - Europeanization of Nigerian Art.....	166
4.6 Conclusion.....	168
Chapter Four Figures.....	170

CHAPTER 5: ARTIST CASE STUDY II

5 The Second Phase of Nigerian Modernism: Ben Enwonwu’s Hybrid Aesthetics and Radical Cultural Politics.....	178
--	-----

5.1	Introduction.....	178
5.2	Conceptual/Theoretical Inspirations to Enwonwu’s Modernist Art.....	180
	a) Igbo Traditional Philosophy of Art.....	180
	b) Kenneth Murray’s Cultural Revivalism/Anti-Europeanization Advocacies.....	182
	c) Diaspora Influence: Western Training, and Exposure to <i>Pan-Africanism</i> , and <i>Negritude</i> Movements.....	184
	d) Nationalist Politics and Nigeria’s Independence.....	187
5.3	Enwonwu’s Modernist Art style: Appropriation/Aesthetics of Cultural Hybridization.....	188
5.4	Aesthetics of Radical Politics: The Foci of Enwonwu’s avant-Gardism....	193
	a) Anti-Europeanization and Cultural Renaissance/Revivalism Activism.....	193
	b) Fostering Nationalist Political Battle for Decolonization.....	202
5.5	Conclusion.....	208
	Chapter Five Figures.....	210

CHAPTER 6: ARTIST CASE STUDY III

6	The Second Phase of Nigerian Modernism: Uche Okeke and the Integration of <i>Natural Synthesis</i> , Interculturalism and Cultural Renaissance into a Modernist Avant-Garde Manifesto.....	224
6.1	Introduction.....	224
6.2	Historical Context.....	226
6.3	Conceptual/Ideological Inspirations for Okeke’s Modernist Ideologies and Art.....	228
	a) Igbo Philosophy of Art, <i>Uli</i> Painting and Folktales.....	228
	b) Nationalism and <i>Pan-Africanism</i> and Nigeria’s Independence	230

6.4	Okeke's Modernist Art Style: <i>Natural Synthesis</i> , Visualising Traditional Folktales and Modernising <i>Uli</i> Art.....	232
6.5	Uche Okeke's Avant-gardism: Aggressive Cultural/Art Renaissance through <i>Natural Synthesis</i>	239
	a) Institutionalisation of <i>Cultural Revivalism</i> and <i>Interculturalism</i> Advocacies to Foster Anti-colonialism Activism and Dismantle Cultural Imperialism.....	240
	b) Fostering Nigerian Nationalism and Independence Political Advocacies.....	245
	c) Deployment of <i>Natural Synthesis</i> and <i>Cultural Revivalism</i> to Define the Conceptual Framework for Postcolonial Modernism in Nigerian Art.....	248
6.6	Conclusion.....	253
	Chapter Six Figures.....	255

CHAPTER 7: CULTURAL RAMIFICATIONS OF THE FOUND OBJECT IN EUROPEAN AND AFRICAN ART

7	Cultural/Contextual Analysis.....	269
7.1	Introduction.....	269
7.2	Found Object in Postcolonial Nigerian Art: Context, Origin and Framework.....	271
7.2.1	Political Imperatives of The Found Object in Postcolonial Nigerian Art.....	273
	a) Interrogation of Colonial Legacies and Neo-colonialism.....	274
	b) Socio-Political Commentary on Societal Conditions.....	278
7.3	Found Object Appropriation as Visual Metaphor for Societal Interrogation: Reflection on Personal Practice.....	283
7.4	Differences between African and European Genres of Found Object Art.....	291
7.5	Conclusion.....	295

Chapter Seven Figures.....297

CHAPTER 8: CONCLUSION

8 Nigerian Modernism: Contextualisation and Summary of Findings.....324

8.1 Introduction/Overview.....324

8.2 Theoretical/Methodological Implications.....328

8.3 Limitations and Direction for Future Research.....331

Chapter Eight Figures.....334

Bibliography.....335

Notes.....372

LIST OF FIGURES

Chapter One

Figure 1.1: Pablo Picasso Violin and Bottle on a Table 1915 – 1916. Wood, string, nails, oil paint and charcoal.....	49
Figure 1.2: Man Ray, Gift 192, painted flatiron and tacks, 15.3 x 9 x 11.4 cm.....	50
Figure 1.3: Marcel Duchamp, Fountain 1917. Urinal porcelain.....	51
Figure 1.4: Raoul Hausmann, Mechanical Head 1918 (The Spirit of Our Time), assemblage circa.....	52
Figure 1.5: Vladimir Tatlin, Corner Relief 1914-15, iron, copper, wood, rope.....	53
Figure 1.6: Vladimir Tatlin, Model for the Monument to the Third International 1920.....	54

Chapter Two

Figure 2.1: Pablo Picasso, Head of a Sleeping Woman 1907, oil on canvas, 61.4 x 47.6 cm.....	88
Figure 2.2: Pablo Picasso, Les Demoiselles d'Avignon 1907, oil on Canvas	89
Figure 2.3: Henri Matisse, Portrait of Mlle Yvonne Landsberg 1914 oil on canvas.	90
Figure 2.4: Benin Art Shrine.....	91
Figure 2.5: Mbari Shrine.....	92
Figure 2.6: Ancestral figures as example of cumulative sculptures.....	93
Figure 2.7: Ancestral figures as example of cumulative sculptures.....	94
Figure 2.8: Ancestral figures as example of cumulative sculptures.....	95
Figure 2.9: Ijan Masquerade from Akure Ondo state.....	96
Figure 2.10: World-renowned Ijele masquerade of the Igbos. Assembled fabric off cuts, and objects locally sourced.....	97

Chapter Three

Figure 3.1: Ben Enwonwu, Fulani Girl of Rupp 1949.....	133
--	-----

Figure 3.2: Yusuf Grillo, Blue Moon 1966, oil on board 60 x 60cm.....	134
Figure 3.3: Demas Nwoko, The Wise Man 1963, wood.....	135
Figure 3.4: Oseloka Osadebe, Yam Festival Dancers 1963, oil mural.....	136
Figure 3.5: Uche Okeke, 'The Unknown Brute 1959 – lithograph of an ink drawing on paper, 30 x 20cm.....	137
Figure 3.6: Adebisi Fabunmi, Missionary Activity in West Africa.....	138
Figure 3.7: Twin Seven Seven, Father of Oshogbo.....	139
Figure 3.8: Akinola Lasekan, Freedom Sea.....	140
Figure 3.9: Akinola Lasekan, Mocking Imperialism.....	141
Figure 3.10: Akinola Lasekan, Zik.....	142

Chapter Four

Figure 4.1: Aina Onabolu, Portrait of Chief Dr. Sapara 1920.....	170
Figure 4.2: Aina Onabolu, Portrait of Mrs Spencer Savage 1902.....	171
Figure 4.3: Leonardo da Vinci, Mona Lisa 1503-1506.....	172
Figure 4.4: Aina Onabolu, Portrait of Bishop Melville-Jones 1935 - Pastel on Paper.....	173
Figure 4.5: Aina Onabolu, Portrait of Dr Randle 1910, oil on canvas.....	174
Figure 4.6: Aina Onabolu, Portrait of a Barrister, oil on canvas.....	175
Figure 4.7: Aina Onabolu, Portrait of Rev Oluwole 1925 oil on Board.....	176
Figure 4.8: Aina Onbaolu, Portrait of Holy Johnson undated, oil on canvas.....	177

Chapter Five

Figure 5.1: Ben Enwonwu, Negritude 1957.....	210
Figure 5.2: Ben Enwonwu, African Dances 1954.....	211
Figure 5.3: Ben Enwonwu, The Circumcision 1946.....	212
Figure 5.4: Ben Enwonwu, Crucified gods Galore 1946.....	213
Figure 5.5: Ben Enwonwu, Queen Elizabeth II 1957.....	214
Figure 5.6: Ben Enwonwu, Seven Wooden Figures 1959.....	215
Figure 5.7: Ben Enwonwu, Seven Wooden Figures 1959.....	216

Figure 5.8: Ben Enwonwu, Anyanwu 1957.....	217
Figure 5.9: Ben Enwonwu, The-Durbar-of-Eid-ul-Fitr-Kano-Nigeria 1955, oil on canvas.....	218
Figure 5.10: Ben Enwonwu, Crowd figures 1951.....	219
Figure 5.11: Ben Enwonwu, The movement of Agbogho Mmuo 1951-2.....	220
Figure 5.12: Ben Enwonwu, The movement of Agbogho Mmuo 1951-2.....	221
Figure 5.13: Ben Enwonwu, Negritude Series.....	222
Figure 5.14: Ben Enwonwu, Negritude Series.....	223

Chapter Six

Figure 6.1: Uche Okeke, Onalu 1959, Ink on Paper.....	255
Figure 6.2: Uche Okeke, Head of a Girl 1959, Charcoal on Paper.....	256
Figure 6.3: Uche Okeke, Uko The Warrior 1959, ink on paper.....	257
Figure 6.4: Uche Okeke, The Beast Omalido 1958, ink on paper.....	258
Figure 6.5: Uche Okeke, Nza The Smart 1958, ink on paper	259
Figure 6.6: Uche Okeke, Illustration of Confrontation in <i>Things Fall Apart</i> 1958.....	260
Figure 6.7: Uche Okeke, Oja Suit, Monster 1962, ink on paper.....	261
Figure 6.8: Uche Okeke, Wild Joy 1958.....	262
Figure 6.9: Uche Okeke, Okpaladike and his Obu 1961.....	263
Figure 6.10: Uche Okeke, Ana Mmuo 1961.....	264
Figure 6.11: Uche Okeke, Oja Suit, The Edge of the Virgin forest 1962.....	265
Figure 6.12: Uche Okeke, Agwoi 1960.....	266
Figure 6.13: Uche Okeke, Primeval Forest 1962.....	267
Figure 6.14: Uche Okeke, Fabled Brute, 1959, etching, 10x7.5 inches.....	268

Chapter Seven

Figure 7.1: El Anatsui, Earth's Skin 2007, found object aluminium bottle cap.....	297
---	-----

Figure 7.2: El Anatsui, Man's Cloth 1998 – 2001, found objects aluminum liquor bottle caps.....	298
Figure 7.3: El Anatsui, Peak Project 1999, found tin cans, copper wire.....	299
Figure 7.4: El Anatsui, Crumbling Wall 2000, zinc, copper wire.....	300
Figure 7.5: Bright Ugochukwu Eke, Acid Rain 2005.....	301
Figure 7.6: Bright Ugochukwu Eke, Drowning 2008.....	302
Figure 7.7: Olu Amoda, Attachment 2006, welded steel, scrap metal.....	303
Figure 7.8: Olu Amoda, Politicians Polygraph 2007, found steel objects, keys, nails 55x81 inches.....	304
Figure 7.9: Olu Amoda, Global Warming Fake Drugs 2007, found steel objects, keys, nails, 57 inches.....	305
Figure 7.10: Taiye Idahor, Change of Name 2012.....	306
Figure 7.11: Dilomprizulike, The Face of the City.....	307
Figure 7.12: Dilomprizulike, Waiting for the Bus 2010, 2003.....	308
Figure 7.13: Dilomprizulike, The Politicians 2010.....	309
Figure 7.14: Dilomprizulike, Journey Out of Africa 2005.....	310
Figure 7.15: Nnenna Okore, No Condition is Permanent 2013.....	311
Figure 7.16: Nnenna Okore, Age Lessons 2011.....	312
Figure 7.17: Clement Akpang, Beast of Burden 2007, scrap metal, found objects, old tires.....	313
Figure 7.18: Clement Akpang, Adaptability 2012, found objects, discarded wood, foam plastics etc.....	314
Figure 7.19: Clement Akpang, Excessive Individualism 2015.....	315
Figure 7.20: Clement Akpang, Excessive Individualism 2015.....	316
Figure 7.21: Clement Akpang, Price of Modernity 2015.....	317
Figure 7.22: Clement Akpang, Price of Modernity 2015.....	318
Figure 7.23: Clement Akpang, Haze 2015.....	319
Figure 7.24: Clement Akpang, Interstice/Fragmentation I 2015.....	320
Figure 7.25: Clement Akpang, Interstice/Fragmentation II 2015.....	321
Figure 7.26: Clement Akpang, Clusters 2015.....	322

Figure 7.27: Clement Akpang, Clusters 2015.....323

Chapter Eight

Figure 8.1: Illustration of European Modernism parallel to that of Nigeria, with variations in avant-garde philosophies/stylistic formalisms.....334

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

My utmost thanks goes to the supreme GOD whose benevolence has enabled the completion of this study. I also owe and express deep feelings of gratitude to my director of studies, Colin Davies Senior Lecturer of Contemporary Design/Art History and Head School of Arts and Design, University of Bedfordshire for his academic guidance throughout this research program. His cross-disciplinary approach to contemporary art and design studies as well as broad knowledge of modernist and historical discourses, inspired me to engage in rigorous contextual and stylistic reading of historic and contemporary art forms, which helped shaped the topic of my thesis. Many thanks to Colin Davies for his immense help and continued support.

I am also deeply grateful to my second supervisor Dr Victor Ukaegbu Associate Professor of Theatre and Performance and Principal Lecturer University of Bedfordshire for his detailed feedback on my thesis. His comprehensive knowledge of postcolonial discourse and practices was vital in structuring the methodology and conceptual framework of this thesis. I am grateful for his continuous support.

I am particularly grateful to staff of the School of Arts & Design especially Hannah Birkett, Becky Ford, Dr Janet Emmanuel and others, whose valuable comments, inspired and improved the quality of my research and practice. I extend my sincere thanks to all of them.

I am thankful to the Cross River State Government for financial assistance, which supported this research program. I also like to thank the management of the Cross River University of Technology for granting me study leave during the

period of my research studies. I extend my gratitude particularly to Professor Babson Ajibade, Professor Ben Ekanem and Professor Chike Aniakor my former university teachers who contributed through their lectures to inform the ideological and conceptual framework that defined my practice methodology during my undergraduate studies, and for their continues support.

My profound gratitude also goes to my family for their love, kind care, and financial help throughout my research studies. I am grateful to all of them and my friends for their warm kindness and encouragement.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Background - General Overview of Modernist Theory

Introduction

This thesis explores the concept of Nigerian Modernism and the cultural ramifications of the Found Object in art. This introductory chapter is structured to answer the following questions:

- a) What is the ideology of Modernism and modernist art?
- b) What is the Found Object in Art?
- c) What is the role of African literature in the formation of alternative Afro-centric Modernism?
- d) What extent of work has been done on modern Nigerian art and what are the current gaps?
- e) What is the methodology and theoretical framework adopted in this study?
- f) How is the thesis structured?

This chapter will address the questions above in different sections, structured to present a coherent theoretical and contextual background for the study. Section 1.2 will examine the ideology of Modernism and modernist art, exploring the main theories propagated by modernist movements in their trenchant search for alternative realisms (new notions of artistic expressionism). The next section will explore Modernism as an analytical tool, analysing its ideological/conceptual framework as an alternative tool for interpreting the creative and philosophical

worlds. The postcolonial turn – that is the interrogation of the black *Other* and otherness which began in the 1920s (in America) to oppose European oppressive philosophies will be interrogated in 1.1.4 especially its alteration and subversion of European thoughts and creation of a new discourse and representation for emerging postcolonial African societies opposed to Western racist constructions/narratives of the black *Other*. Section 1.1.5 will examine the creation of an alternative Afro-centric Modernism that evolved from the invention of Afro-centric literature inspired by *Harlem Renaissance* and black power movements that eventually spread to colonised African countries such as Nigeria, Senegal, Ghana, Algeria, and Egypt to mention a few. The subversive formalism of the Found Object in European avant-gardism will be explored in 1.2, while Literature on modern Nigerian art will be surveyed in 1.3. This will be followed by analysis of the methodologies employed in this study, and discussion of the objectives and structure of this study in 1.6, then followed by the chapter conclusion.

1.1 The Ideology of Modernism and Modernist Art

The Twentieth Century instigated radical transformations in Western Europe, impelling rapid socio-political, technological and industrial revolution that transformed many societies from classical to modern civilizations. Culture, psychology, literature, the arts etc., were all altered by the powerful force of modernity as artists sought appropriate visual idioms to capture the rapidly changing world around them. Varying radical theories, for instance *Nihilism* - the rejection of religion and refutation of every norm/value held sacred, the belief that reason transcends and exists independently of human existence (historical and cultural context) and leads to civilization/freedom, as well as the enthronement of individualism - belief that the existence of stable, coherent self is independent of culture and society, transformed modern Europe at the time

into the age of interrogation/criticism, which provoked varying inventions, theories, philosophies and modern ideas.

These radical theories/philosophies gave rise to Modernism as a reaction to modernity and its economic, cultural, political, social and scientific problems (Brettell 1999, Whitworth 2007). Inspired by the new culture of interrogation, artists engaged in rigorous search for new realisms by critically questioning the context of art, classical conventions, the authorities of the bourgeoisie and its notions of high art in modern society. This subsequently led to the creation of revolutionary art driven by the philosophy of '*Art for Art's Sake*' as a counter-aesthetic to the then dominant modes, especially classical art and thought. Modernists challenged traditional conventions, and classical values,¹ criticised political/social order and art salons for their bourgeois affiliations. As a result of its opposition to bourgeois conventions and philosophy, and faith in the new, modernist art became strongly associated with avant-gardism, then modern artists were regarded as avant-gardes and were at the forefront of the battle for societal change.

Modernism in Western art history is used to describe styles, ideologies and philosophies of modern art produced between 1850 - 1950 the age of modernisation (Atkins 1993: 139). This linking of Modernism with modernity reveals that, the phenomenon is time-specific and references a particular historic period/timeframe during the development of modern arts (Brettell 1999, Luo 2011). Although conflicting dates exists, the late Nineteenth and early Twentieth Centuries are widely accepted as the flourishing period of Modernism, this suggests that, for art to be defined as modernist, it must first fall within this historic timeframe. The emergence of Modernism as a direct response to societal alterations/conditions makes this phenomenon a cultural product, and "an

¹ Modernism is the application to all realms of human life of forms of structural rationalization - that is, finding rationally structured ways of being and doing regardless of consequences and, more especially, rationalizing away the mysteries and questions which have to do with meaning, morality and ethics – areas that lie outside the purely rational (Rochberg 1984: 318).

intellectual force of cultural change” (Crouch 1999: 5), which as Wollaeger & Eatough (2012) opines, borrows its logic from “the socio-political demands for cultural revolution” (Wollaeger & Eatough 2012: 157). As a cultural product, Modernism refers to a modern artistic phenomenon informed by varying socio-political societal issues that it sought to address. Modernism thus, assumes a culture-specific status,² which explains its theorisation in Euro-American art history as a Western cultural product. However, the location of Modernism specifically in European cultural and artistic landscapes is problematic as elucidated in Chapter two. The argument against the location of Modernism specifically in Europe is premised on the fact that, as a cultural phenomenon, Modernism emerged as a reaction (artistic, scientific, social etc.,) to modernity – that is the transformation of societies from traditional or classical state into modern civilisation, which was also experienced by cultures beyond Europe and America, hence it cannot be restricted as exclusively European. This thesis questions the Eurocentric location of Modernism in Western discourse and its construction to exclude the ‘*Other*’,³ which inevitably impede understanding of the phenomenon. Peter Childs in *Modernism 2007* argues that Modernism is an international art phenomenon which encompasses all avant-garde styles,

² Modernism is culture – a constellation of related ideas, beliefs, values, and modes of perception, that came into existence during the mid and late Nineteenth Century, and that has had a powerful influence on art and thought both sides of the Atlantic since 1900 (Singal 1987: 7).

³ ‘*Other*’ refers to a binary logic developed in Western thoughts, a system of representation, construction of identities and differentiation. “Otherness is the result of a discursive process by which a dominant in-group (the Us, self) construct one or many dominant out-groups (them or Other) by stereotyping a difference real or imagined – presented as a negation of identity and thus a motive for discrimination” (Staszak 2008: 2). The self constructs its identity by constructing the ‘*Other*’, which the self intends to devalue, by “setting itself apart and giving itself an identity - the ‘*Other*’ only exist relative to the self and vice versa” (op cit 2008: 2, Schalk 2000). This binary logic developed through Western thoughts and philosophies was imposed on other cultures through religion and colonization. Otherness became used in colonial conquest of cultures outside Europe, as logic of differentiation to construct identities or frame the colonised in imperial discourses and draw upon such stereotyped differentiation as powerful mechanism to exercise control over the ‘*Other*’. Homi Bhabha has opined that the creation of Otherness in colonial discourse was predominantly strategized to “create a space for a ‘subject peoples’ through the production of knowledge in terms of which surveillance is exercised and a complex form of pleasure/unpleasure is incited. It sought authorisation for its strategies by the production of knowledges of coloniser and colonised which are stereotypical but antithetically evaluated. This Otherness in colonial discourse construed the colonised as a population of degenerate types on the basis of racial origin, in order to justify conquest and to establish systems of administration and instruction” (Bhabha1996: 23). Africa and the Orient under colonial imperial domination outside European mainstream-self constituted the ‘*Other*’. The use of the ‘*Other*’ in this study thus is adapted to refer to Africa and the Orient - former colonies of Western empires.

philosophies and movements of modern art characterised by radical desire to create a tradition of the new with an unconventional aesthetic appeal through the subversion of classical and traditional or established conventions (Childs 2007: 14).

Childs' theory that modernism is an international avant-garde phenomenon is authenticated by studies, which have identified avant-garde tendencies in various cultures outside Europe. In Japan for example, Roy Starrs (2011) identifies a *Japanese modernism*, which was a reactionary movement against the radical reconstruction of Japanese culture by aggressive modernization and westernization. Japanese modernism Capkova (2014) observes, was an extension of an international activity, simultaneously inspired by European modernist philosophies of Cubism, Futurism, and German Expressionism which Japanese accorded specific narratives during the *Meiji* (1868-1912) and *Taisho* (1912-26) periods. Pioneered by Kuroda Seiki and Kume Keiichiro, from the 1900s, Japanese avant-gardism questioned *Meiji* institutions and government, and adopted European approaches of Euro-American *Japonisme* to reinvigorate Japanese pre-modern art. Japanese avant-garde groups from 1910 to the late 1950s rejected the radicalism of Euro-American art philosophies and movements that were replicated in Japan, in order to promote national rebirth to restore the nation to its pristine pre-modern state of divine innocence and purity uncorrupted by westernization (Starrs 2011). *Chinese Modernism* during the same historical period on the other hand was inspired by Parisian modernism as its founders Lin Fengmian and Xu Beihong trained in Paris, and then returned to China at the turn of the Twentieth Century with two distinct styles and philosophies of modern art (Realism and Expressionism). The first generation of Chinese avant-gardes imported *Expressionism*, which became a symbolic reflection of Japanese modernity and rejection of traditionalism. Expressionism in this period of Chinese history served the bourgeois *Literati* tradition and class particularly as a reflection of their modern advancement. In contrast, the re-

invention of realism in Japan by the Xu Beihong movement rather served the masses as proletarian art, this was incidentally used to stir nationalist consciousness by encouraging the masses to join the anti-Japan war and later the war of liberation in the 1920s (Feng 2014). After the 1949 revolution, a new generation of Chinese modernists fostered the ideology of '*Art for the People*' in contradiction to Europe's *Art for Art's Sake*. The avant-gardism of the post-revolution group centered on subverting Europe's conventionality and re-inventing modern arts molded on traditional aesthetics, as a "tool against socialist realism and ideology" (Feng 2014: 148).

Indian Modernism also corroborates Childs' views that modernism is an international phenomenon; birthed in the 1930s, Indian modernism encompasses a proliferation of avant-garde groups – *Calcutta Group 1943, The Progressive Painters' Association of Madras 1944, the Progressive Artists' Group of Bombay 1947, the Delhi Shilpi Chakra 1949 and the Tiveni Kala Sangam 1951* etc., which were connected in their nationalist resistance to imposed Western influences on artistic expression and rejection of the romanticization of Indian reality and culture by the West. Concerned by the misconstrued reconstruction of their culture and identity through colonial acts of destruction, avant-gardes like those in the Bombay movement engaged in the '*Indegenism*' of modern expression, this produced metaphorical illusions and rhetoric of new modern *Indianess* as counter narratives to European narratives of Indians. They appropriated traditional Indian creative philosophies and styles of miniature painting and sculpture to create a new artistic vocabulary that was international, indigenous and interdependent, in order to reimage/reconstruct their modern nation (Osborne et al 2010). *Mexican modernism* on its' part emerged at the turn of the Twentieth Century, with the invention of modern art from the 1910s that was original, savage, carnivaliques, folkloristic, macabre, independent and totally rejected all external influences. Mexican modernism or '*Mexicanism*', emerged out of chaos and violence thus, it is firmly rooted in the revolution of 1910. It was

a unique avant-gardism defined by the interlacing of modern art with government propaganda to foster the socialist revolutionary manifestoes of *Partido Revolucionario institucional* which pushed for the rejection of European traditions in order to re-define the Mexican people. Mexican modernism became a propaganda and resistance mechanism. In its practice, modernists such as Los tres Grabdes, David Alfaro Siqueiros etc., created revolutionary murals that coaxed public feelings/emotions into public opinions and glorified Mexican revolution by creating storyboards to stir nationalist consciousness/uprising. Mexican modernist developed counter-aesthetics which broke with European aesthetic traditions by their use of bold indigenous images and depiction of the masses in opposition to the solemn and detached art of Europe.

The manifestation of these anti-authority, anti-institutional and anti-order avant-garde tendencies in cultures cut across Asia, North America, etc., their cross-cultural influences (as in the case of Japan and China), as well as marked differences in philosophies, stylistic configurations and avant-gardism during the historic timeframe of Euro-American modernism, points to the possibilities of multiple modernisms rather than the problematic/monolithic narrative provided in Western art history. This thus authenticates Childs' theory and other debates that call for modernism to be re-considered as an international phenomenon. Child's encompassing approach in his theorisation of Modernism thus problematizes the Eurocentric claims and narration of modernist discourse as well as provides a discursive multi-perspective framework through which new discoveries about the pluralism of Modernism can be made and analysed. This theory will be drawn upon in this study to explore Modernism as a multi-cultural pluralistic phenomenon by uncovering and establishing a parallel but distinct *Nigerian Modernism* to that of the West.

Modernism is also defined by its philosophy of radical experimentation, which became the tradition of the new in Twentieth Century arts impelled by the

avant-garde quest to transgress classical conventions, create alternative realisms and invent a new creative language that is reflective of the socio-political and cultural conditions of modernity (Childs 2000). Avant-garde movements such as *Impressionism, Post-impressionism, Cubism, Futurism, Dadaism, Abstract Expressionism, Fauvism* etc., (discussed in details in Chapter Two section 2.2) resulted from this new avant-garde experimental ideology through which modernists fostered their resistance and opposition to order, authority, and art institutions. According to Richard Weston, “experimentation was the means of developing new styles and forms capable of representing the experience of modernity, from the intoxication of the modern metropolis to the teeming inner life of the individual psyche (Weston 1996: 62-65). In most cases this experimentation was pushed to the extreme (like the Dada movement which challenged the fundamentals of Western civilization by producing art framed in chaos/anarchy), and the resultant art forms, captured avant-gardes’ “deliberate cultivation of the perverse and decadent, and the flaunting of outrageous behaviour designed to subvert authority” (Singal 1987: 8). This search for new realisms through radical experimentation led to appropriation from other cultures and across disciplines and art forms – a dominant philosophy of Modernism. As Christopher Crouch succinctly opines, “modernism emerged through European thoughts supplemented by ideas and artefacts from other cultures (Crouch 1999: 6). Artefacts, unconventional creative lexicon and visual idioms from ‘Other’ cultures inspired and propelled the radical experimentalism of European avant-garde. This appropriation from cultures dubbed ‘primitive’ was central to the evolution of Twentieth Century modern arts in Europe and America. For instance, French avant-gardes (the *Fauves*) such as Henri Matisse, Andre Derain, Maurice de Vlaminck etc., appropriated African art as a release from Western restrictions and as creative launch-pad into the subjective self (Rodrigues & Garratt 2001: 71). Also Piet Mondrian’s paintings emerged as a deviation from European aesthetics through the appropriation of primitivism, while arguably the most revolutionary painting of the Twentieth Century, Pablo

Picasso's *les demoiselle's d'avignon 1907*, epitomizes the height of appropriation and its revolutionary impact on European (and indeed, *Other*) modernist art. Through the appropriation of primitive forms, Western avant-gardes created a bohemian counter-culture/aesthetics employing the perceived unconventionality of the '*Other*' to infiltrate the conventional order and sanctity of European elitist art. However, as will be explored in Chapter Two, while appropriation defined the avant-gardism of European modernist art in Western art history, it problematically accounts for the misconstrued dismissal and exclusion of the '*Other*' from European Modernist discourse. This is because Modernism flourished during the crescendo of capitalism, imperialism and colonialism when ideologies such as primitivism⁴ were constructed in European philosophies to legitimize its occupation and subjugation of the Orient and Africa. This colonial thinking informed by imperial philosophies accounts for the dismissal of modern arts from '*Other*' cultures and their cultural products in Modernism discourse. This dismissal is contested in this thesis, which also regards modernist appropriations as creative philosophy and so used in exploring modernist art in Nigeria in order to establish a parallel Modernism outside European mainstream where the radical ethos of appropriation was also employed as a subversive mechanism to resist colonial order and subvert Western racist sensibilities.

Modernism is equally characterized by the ideology of anti-historicism proclaiming a total break from tradition. As Williams and Pinkney (1989) in *The Politics of Modernism: Against the New Conformists* succinctly observes, what marks and defines both Modernism and avant-gardism "is a defiance and violent rejection of tradition...the insistence on a clean break with the past" (Williams & Pinkney 1989: 52). The modernist obsession with creating a new culture, new art language and aesthetics, to liberate arts and culture from the conservativeness of ancient traditions was paramount to the modernist regime; modernist art

⁴ Primitivism refer to the judging of all things, people's and their values from your own socially and culturally defined standpoint predominantly used in colonial discourse (Rodrigues & Garratt 2001: 70)

therefore refers to art that displaced traditional concepts, practices, and styles. In other words, art that exhibited cultural disruptiveness and transgressed the paradigms of existing society; and exhibiting peculiarity and exceptionality from any previous cultural and historical art, culture or condition (Crouch 1999, Rodrigues & Garratt 2001, Luo 2011). While the radical break from tradition in Europe is used as the hallmark for defining modernist art, the case for the 'Other' is paradoxical as European scholars often describe the departure from indigenous creative conventions by Africans through the appropriation of European aesthetics, as marking the loss of the African self. Such Eurocentric ideas, different from the general views of African artist and cultural commentators, is a misconstrued viewpoint drawn upon by the West to legitimize the exclusion of African arts and societies from modernist discourses which this thesis strongly contest.

1.1.2 Modernism as an Analytical Tool

The ideological, philosophical and conceptual framework of Modernism constitute an analytical tool for the critique of Twentieth Century society, as it provides an alternative and abstract mode of interpreting the creative/ideological worlds. Many theorists have employed Modernism as an analytical tool to interpret society and aesthetic paradigms. Clement Greenberg for instance, opines that, modernist avant-garde culture (a superior consciousness) marked the initiation of "a new kind of criticism of society made possible by the quest to transcend *Alexandrianism*...and this criticism examined the forms that lie at the heart of every society" (Greenberg 1986: 7). Modernism as demonstrated by Greenberg's theory, provides a critical framework through which the core and structures of societies can be analyzed and interpreted; this view is shared by Harold Rosenberg who argues that Modernism constitutes a visual critique that enables the interpretation of subjects such as language, representations, ideologies, structures, aesthetic paradigms and philosophies

that sit at the base of modern societies (Rosenberg 1983). Both Clement Greenberg and Harold Rosenberg regard Modernism as an analytical framework/tool and used it to establish contrasting intellectual theories in the 1950s in their interpretation of American society, modern art, avant-gardism and culture.

Greenberg asserts that Modernism is a form of criticism that questions the essence and nature of art in order to attain the absolute truth of artistic expression. In *Modernist Painting* Greenberg (1988) submits that modernist scepticism enabled the realisation of the self and the absolute of a particular art genre and its authentication.

I identify Modernism with the intensification of self-critical tendency that began with the philosopher Kant. The essence of Modernism lies, as I see it, in the use of the characteristic methods of a discipline to criticize the discipline itself - not in order to subvert it, but to entrench it more firmly in its area of competence (Greenberg 1988: 5).

Greenberg believes that modernist self-criticism is used to purify and authenticate art and this he employed to interpret modern society; he applies Kant's laws of modernism in his interpretation of the creative world which informed his theory that art assumes modern status when it sheds away all that is not necessary to that genre, capturing only its essential features in order to justify its existence, autonomy and authenticity through that genre's means (Greenberg 1982).⁵ In Greenberg's theory, modernist art is art that overhauls conventions in order to renew the vitality of that genre. In *Avant-garde and*

⁵ The law of modernism applies to almost all art that remains truly alive in our time. That the conventions not essential to the viability of a medium be discarded as soon as they are recognized... it is understood, I hope, that conventions are over-hauled, not for revolutionary effect, but in order to maintain the irreplaceability and renew the vitality of art in the face of a society bent in principle on rationalizing everything, and that, the devolution of tradition cannot take place except in the presence of tradition (Greenberg 1982).

Kitsch, Greenberg (1939) employs Modernism as an analytical tool to interpret European creative and ideological world. Adopting Kantian and Marxist theories, he differentiated between two creative worlds based on their ideological disposition to modern art. Greenberg described avant-garde art as modernist expression of high culture, and contrasted this with the low decadent mass culture termed modernist Kitsch a threat to European high culture. Greenberg's abstract interpretation of modernist art criticizes capitalism and the collapse of bourgeois cultural order resulting from the production of Kitsch that the avant-garde sought to salvage (Clark 1982, Greenberg 1986). His theories are firmly opposed by his contemporary Harold Rosenberg, who proffered an alternative approach to employing Modernism as an analytical tool to interrogate modern art and society.

Rosenberg developed a contrasting interpretation of the American creative world and its Modernism. His theory shifts attention away from the formal analysis and progressive historical narrative put forward by Greenberg (O'Riordan 1957). Rosenberg defined Modernism as a critical reflection on the psychological, the intellectual, the spontaneous, and the evocative; he emphasises the motives and actions, which influence the use of a particular medium or style in modern expression as the defining feature of avant-garde art. Rosenberg posits that the action involved in the making of modern art supersedes its formalism. The canvas he opines, only "appeared as an arena in which to act rather than a space to represent or analyze an object real or imagined"; what was to go on the canvass he continues "was not a picture but an event" and that the marks emerging from such spontaneous action constituted gestures of "liberation from value – political, aesthetic, moral, which comprised the hallmark of Modernism" (Rosenberg 1952: 22). Rosenberg's interpretation of Twentieth Century creativity stipulates that avant-garde art is defined by the action authenticated only by discarding all traditional aesthetics, focussing on the psychological, processes, emotional and intellectual energies of art as an

event (Rosenberg 1952). Rosenberg thus uses Modernism as a tool to analyse psychological paradigms in modern society and how such psychological changes impacted the formalism and reception of modern art. His approach shifted the focus and notion of modern art away from aesthetic pleasure to the expression of artist's psychological state (O'Riordan 1952: 2).

The use of Modernism as an analytical tool enabled Rosenberg distinguished European avant-gardism from that of America. He opines that although American Avant-garde and Modernism embrace traces of Parisian ideologies, they are separated by the Modernism they fostered; he argues that Paris avant-garde formed schools which juxtaposed practice and terminology, and paintings were defined by such terminologies whilst in American avant-garde, the terminologies belonged instead to the individual artists and their common thoughts were represented by their separate individual practices (Rosenberg 1952: 22). Through this modernist analysis, Greenberg differentiates two creative worlds or models; on the one hand is Paris defined by a collective sense of resistance and on the other, the American individualistic interpretation of collective avant-garde thoughts.

The contrasts between Greenberg's and Rosenberg's interpretation of Twentieth Century creative and ideological worlds validates Modernism as an analytical tool through which the world can be interpreted in certain defined contextual/ideological, cultural and historic frameworks. The different analytical and theoretical frameworks on Modernism will be used to interpret Twentieth Century Nigerian art, culture and society.

1.1.3 The Postcolonial Turn – The Black Other/Blackness

The 1920s and 1930s ushered in radical interpretation/understanding of the universe, concepts, psychology and human relations with the emergence of

postcolonial discourse, which questioned European philosophies, modernist discourse and racist construction of the black 'Other'. This interrogation of European philosophies was fostered by critics, writers and activists from former colonies and marginalised groups oppressed by the West. These groups instigated the deconstruction of European discourses like Modernism, literature, philosophy, epistemology etc., and opened up new knowledge and philosophical systems such as Afro-centric perspectives for interpreting reality and the world different from European constructions. In Africa and North America, the question of the black 'Other' became central to the emergence of new discourses that countered the imaging of blacks in European ideologies and theories that facilitated Western subjugation of the black 'Other'. Ralph Ellison's (1947) *Invisible Man* for instance, contested the creation of *Otherness* on racial stereotypes and the dehumanization of marginalised blacks in Eurocentric literature. *Invisible Man* deconstructs hierarchical relations between blacks and whites, racial oppression and social invisibility of blacks and rejected the othering of black peoples. Ellison exposed the "hypocrisy and racist attitudes of the white society" (Culda 2014: 175), interrogating the problem of centre/margin relations the reflection of the racial social order monopolised by white-dominated social thoughts and institutions (Azad 2012).

This interrogation of the black 'Other', established the foundations of postcolonial theory by African, Afro-American, and Caribbean scholars who battled against the devaluation of blacks through European creation of *Otherness*. Writers such as Franz Fanon, Henry Louis Gates, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, Homi Bhabha, Edward Said etc., deconstructed European philosophies, imperial colonial discourses and the monocentrism responsible for the devaluation of cultures outside European mainstream. These commentators highlight the misrepresentation and use of discourse/knowledge as oppressive mechanism during and after colonialism and the results of their findings have led to the invention of counter discourses that question European representations

and philosophies. In *The Signifying Monkey: A Theory of African-American Literary Criticism*, Gates (1988) employed Jacques Derrida's concept of *difference* to interrogate and distinguish black as oral and white as literary, thus emphasizing the problematic creation of differences by the West through racial segregation. Spivak who is influenced by poststructuralist theory, criticized European modernist discourse's exclusion of the *Other* as well as marginalization of women. In *Other Worlds: Essays in Cultural Politics*, Spivak (1987) challenges the construction of European discourses along lines of gender, race, and class; she called for an alternative literature that recognizes the contributions of the *Other* and women to Modernism as means to address the problematic exclusivism of Euro-modernism discourse. This postcolonial interrogation of gender exclusion in Modernism alludes to early feminist battle against the genderisation, and class discrimination of European philosophy, which became central in the late Eighteenth Century to the formation of Modernism (Huysen 1986, Kaplan 1995, Harrison & Peterson 1997, Deepwell 1998).

Homi Bhabha's (1994) *The Location of Culture* draws upon the poststructuralist theories of Jacques Lacan, Derrida, Barthes etc., but he accords poststructuralism a postcolonial etymology that questions the radical logic of European representations of the *Other* (Peterson 1999). In *The Other Question: Stereotype, Discrimination and the Discourse of Colonialism*, Bhabha (1994) insists that European construction of the black '*Other*' is faulty as it is based on misrepresentations, racial discrimination and stereotypes. He offers an alternative discursive framework for articulating cultural differences based on recognition and appreciation of cultural peculiarities, as he believes such interrogation "provides the terrain for elaborating strategies of selfhood, that initiate new signs of identity, in defining the idea of society itself" (Bhabha 1994: 2). This postcolonial criticism of Eurocentric philosophies and cultural hegemony from the 1920s and its introduction of alternative modes of realism (new perspectives on the universe and philosophy) initiated a distinct Afro-centric

theoretical/conceptual framework for framing contemporary studies from the *Other's* perspective in order to reconstruct history, modernism, literary discourses and race relations. This thesis draws upon these features of postcolonial theory as an analytical tool, and the role of African literature in laying the foundation for the development of Afro-centric Modernism.

1.1.4 African Literature as Gateway to Alternative Afro-Centric Modernism

Postcolonialism emerged from the invention of African/Afro-American literature, which from the 1920s laid the foundations of Afro-centric Modernism. This began with Afro-American writers questioning the derogatory representations of black people in European literature and philosophies, its exclusivism, as well as inability to account for diverse styles, languages, and cultural productions of '*Other*' cultures. This resulting Afro-centric literature became an alternative/genuine representation of blacks in modern society. In their widely read book, *The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Post-colonial literatures*, Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin (2003) observe that postcolonial theory is a product of Afro-centric literature which proposed alternative modernism and national/regional consciousness as means to "assert difference from the imperial centre" (Ashcroft *et al* 2003: 4). This new literature subverted European assumptions about the universe and its features, language, epistemology, value systems etc., and produced a new realism (Afro-centric perspective of the universe) with nationalist/cultural identity, which became the model for all postcolonial writings (*Op. Cit.* 2003: 15).

African writers criticised black *Otherness* in European philosophies; they interrogated race as the main strategy for economic and political domination and discrimination by the West and clamoured for the creation of literature for reinvigorating national traditions essential to definitions of new modern blacks.

This was a vital stage in Afro-American's rejection of European hegemony and claims of the centre and beginning with the writings of Langston Hughes and Richard Wright in the 1920s and 1930s, the black nationalist consciousness this new Afro-centric literature provoked went on to influence *Negritude* developed by Aime Cesaire and Léopold Senghor, which became the symbol and concept of resistance in colonial Africa. This structuring of Afro-centric literature to reflect the "consciousness of black power movements in the assertion of the unique and distinctive features of black thoughts and emotions" resulted in the creation of an Afro-centric modernism (Ashcroft *et al* 2003: 21).

In *Modernism and the Harlem Renaissance*, Houston Baker (2013) argues that Afro-centric nationalist literature influenced Negro resistance consciousness that mobilized African missions of liberation, it became a reference for black identity and led to the emergence of a new *Renaissancism* as expression of Afro-centric Modernism (Baker 2013). This Afro-centric modernism he continues, hinged on the validation of cultural roots, folk and vernacular Negro cultures as the expression of the modern renaissance that captured the new black discursive modernism.⁶ This view is shared in James D Jongh's (1990) *Vicious Modernism: Black Harlem and the Literary Imagination* in which the emergence of a distinct African literature and its provocation of black consciousness are theorized to have constituted a form of radical modernism. He foregrounds the emergence of Harlem renaissance on the creation of an Afro-centric literature which subverts European philosophies, and makes connections between Harlem, African literature and the emergence of a racially self-aware international generations of young black writers engaged in cultural revivalism as an expression of black renaissance and revolution at the turn of the Twentieth Century (De Jongh 1990). According to De Jongh, the invention of a national literature, provided

⁶ The Harlem Renaissance he argues, gave way to *Renaissancism* – a spirit of nationalistic engagement that began with intellectuals, artists, and spokespersons at the turn of the century and revived extensive definition and expression during the twenties...this renaissance hinged on the realization that authentic modern expressionism derives from black artists' formal mastery and sounding deformation, and the New Negroes validation of the folk and the vernacular (Baker 2013: 108).

Afro-centric interpretation of philosophies and realities, which became the '*locus classicus*' of the new psychology and a distinct perception of Black subjectivity, that went on to inspire *Negritude* aesthetics and modern African art/literature (*Op. Cit.* 1990: 15, 60).⁷

These writers demonstrate the influence of African literature in the formation of Afro-centric Modernism thus, establishing an alternative discursive framework for representing the black '*Other*' in terms that subvert European philosophies and domination. Postcolonial theory, which is firmly rooted in this Afro-centric modernism, constitutes a conceptual/theoretical framework for rethinking Twentieth Century art, culture and practices thus informs the methodological/analytical tool used in this study. The interrogation of the concept of Nigerian Modernism, in Chapters Three and Four, draws upon postcolonial theory and demonstrates how the nationalist consciousness impelled by African literature influenced the works of Nigerian avant-gardes and West African writers such as Chinue Achebe, Wole Soyinka, Femi Osofisan, Buchi Emecheta, Ngugi wa Thiong'o etc., who developed a distinct postcolonial⁸ literature interrogating colonial occupation and Africa's battles for emancipation.

1.2 Ramifications of the Found Object in European Modernism

Avant-gardes' search for alternative realisms (that is, new stylistic expressions and notions/philosophies of modern art opposed to established Renaissance convention of mimesis, and as subjective interpretations of fragmented reality,

⁷ Its racial transformation, became an embodiment of an idea...it posed a challenge to contemporary limits and cultural terms within which personal being for both blacks and whites were imagined and defined... providing an invigorating contrast to the submission of European literary models, and constituted a distinct perception of Black subjectivity (De Jongh 1990: 15, 60)

⁸ "We use the term postcolonial to cover all culture affected by the imperial process from the moment of colonization to the present day because there is continuity of preoccupations throughout the historical process initiated by European imperial aggression" Ashcroft et al (2013) *The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Post-colonial Literatures*. London: Routledge. pp2

culture and information overload in modern society)⁹ and their questioning of philosophies and historical notions of art through radical experimentalism gave rise to the genre of Found Object in 1912. Found Object refers to the genre of modern art created from the dislocation and manipulation of mundane objects from popular culture into art. This avant-garde genre originated from the *Construction Sculptures* of Picasso and Braque's *Cubism* philosophy/manifesto of appropriating primitive visual idioms as a form of anti-aesthetics to subvert classical European artistic conventions. The invention of the Found Object in Europe by Pablo Picasso was inspired by the inorganic structures, abrupt transitions, and non-mimetic / representational formal structures and technique of construction/assemblage in traditional African Kru Mask, which seemed to Picasso to subvert Western notions of authenticity/purity in painting and sculpture (Poggi, 2012: 274, Bois 1987, 1999). Picasso's exploration of the unconventionality, non-mimetic and relational structure of traditional African sculptures led to the creation of *Guitar 1912*¹⁰ one of the most revolutionary Twentieth Century sculptures or art forms in concept, materials and execution (Smith 1971). Informed by the anti-conventional avant-garde ideology of 'Art for Arts' Sake,¹¹ modernist movements such as *Dadaism*, *Futurism*, *Russian Avant-garde*, *Surrealism*, *Fauvism*, *Impressionism*, *Russian Cubo-Futurism*, *Suprematism*, *Abstract Expressionism*, *Minimalism* etc., (see Chapter Two section 2.2 for detailed analysis of these movements) employed the radicalism of object assemblage to foster anti-art and anti-order advocacies. The Found Object in

⁹ New/Alternative Realism refers to the styles and philosophies of modern arts invented as alternative/subjective interpretations of the fleeting modern society and culture by different avant-garde movements. New Realism is the collection of distinct forms of modern expressionism inspired by radical avant-garde philosophies/manifestoes, which provided new perspectives on art, the universe, culture and society, as resistance to established conventions of mimesis and representationalism institutionalized in Classicism and Renaissance. Twentieth Century art idioms (styles/philosophies) such as *Cubism*, *Expressionism*, *Fauvism*, *Abstract Expressionism*, *Dadaism*, *Surrealism*, *Futurism*, *Impressionism*, *Pop Art* etc., (elucidated in Chapter Two page 52) constituted new realisms, which provided alternative notions of art in modern society.

¹⁰ Picasso was inspired by the discovery of the Kru mask and embarked on the exploration of the non-mimetic, relational structure of visual signs leading to the creation of the *Guitar 2012*" (Poggi, 2012, p274).

¹¹ 'Art for Art's Sake' was a call for release from the tyranny of meaning and purpose. It was a further exercise of freedom. It was also a ploy, another deliberate affront to bourgeois sensibility which demanded art with meaning or that had some purpose such as to instruct, or delight, or to moralize, and generally to reflect in some way their own purposeful and purpose-filled world. (Witcombe, C. L.C. E (2000).

European Modernism thus had revolutionary ramifications as it altered European art, culture and aesthetics in two main ways. Firstly by,

a). Jettisoning European Aesthetic Conventionality, Art Salons and the Art-world

The appropriation of Found Object in European Modernism jettisoned the conventionality of bourgeois culture, classical traditions and Victorian moralism. The incorporation of objects from the decadent mass culture and the appropriation of the unconventional formalism of so-called '*primitive*' African culture was antithetical to European creative philosophies and thus, destabilizing to European conventions and notions of high art in bourgeois culture. Diane Waldman (1992) in *Collage Assemblage and the Found Object* observes that, by appropriating flimsy materials in modern art, Found Object genre subverted European art/culture and "jettisoned the hierarchical form and content of conventional painting and sculpture" (Waldman 1992: 16). By appropriating mundane objects in modern art, modernists such as Picasso and Braque dismantled the one point perspective enshrined in European creative convention since its invention in European Renaissance 1300-1700 and initiated a radical departure from established creative order. Avant-gardes used the abruptness, inartistic, flimsy and subversive bohemian forms of objects from mass culture to interrogate the fragmentation of reality in modern society, and reject its bourgeois hierarchical values, defiling and challenging the supposed sanctities of established European cherished conventions and artistic processes such as unity, purity, beauty, mimesis, authenticity and nobility (Krammer 1973: 205, Waldman 1992: 62, Poggi 2012: 289).

Picasso's *Violin and Bottle on the Table 1915-16*, Man Ray's *Gift 1921* (figures 1.1-1.2), capture the radical anti-conventionalism of avant-garde's appropriation of mundane objects to foster the departure from then conventional European

aesthetics and their embrace of modern subjectivism during Modernism. These works subverted Western ideas of perspective, compositional unity, purity and authenticity of art by the deliberate juxtaposition of flimsy objects in radical compositions without respect for aesthetic principles of art and design. Dadaist Marcel Duchamp's invention of the *Readymade*¹² advanced this anti-aestheticism in Europe and its attack of the elitism of European art. Duchamp was driven by his philosophy of *Infrathin* (disinterested art), and engaged in the dislocation and elevation of ordinary manufactured objects into works of art through 'dislocated inscription' as a direct affront on the authority and authenticity of art. His work *Fountain 1917*, (figure 1.3) exemplifies an extreme anti-art expression in which the institutions of art, the notion of art, as well as the role of the artist are all undermined thus, engineering a radical shift from aesthetic considerations to challenging the philosophy of art and its bourgeois social stratification (Reed 1985, Jouffroy 2000, Iversen 2004, Fontaine 2010).

Fountain 1917 is arguably the most iconic works of Twentieth Century Euro-American modernism. The subject and object of the art was a standard urinal purchased in New York, which Duchamp turned 90 degrees to sit on its back rather than upright. The piece was a simple manufactured object with no artistic intervention except for the inscription *R Mutt 1917* on the bottom left rim, as well as its installation on a pedestal. Duchamp entered *Fountain* for the *Society of Independent Artists'* planned exhibition at the Grand Central Palace in April 1917, but the board rejected it. It was rejected on the premise that it was an ordinary piece of plumbing that was immoral and vulgar. As the board argued, "the Fountain may be a very useful object in its place, but its place is not in an art exhibition and it is, by no definition, a work of art" (Naumann 2012: 72).

¹² Readymade is an artwork that is not an artwork made by the hand of the artists. It is an artwork that becomes an artwork because I declare or the artists declares it is an artwork without any participation of the hand of this very artist to make it" (Marcel 1960 to Guy Viau) "A readymade is a work of art without an artist to make it, if I may simplify the definition. This was not the act of an artist but of a non-artist, an artisan if you want. I wanted to change the status of the artist or at least to change the norms used for defining art and artist" (Duchamp 1963 to Francis Robert quoted in Fontaine 2010: 5)

Duchamp intentionally entered the urinal as art, to express his anti-art ideologies of 'Infratin' (disinterested art) by dislocating objects from their original context in popular culture to create new thought for the objects. This appropriation and re-contextualization of ordinary objects into art exemplified by the *Fountain 1917* became a protest against salons and institutional restrictions on freedom of expression and intolerance for new conceptions of art. Its vulgarity was also a protest against the moral restrictions imposed on artists to create arts that serve moral duty in society. The unconventionality of the *Fountain* (a mere industrial object) undermined traditional notions of craftsmanship and authorship in Western aesthetics used as defining features of what constitutes art.

The absence of artistic intervention or craftsmanship on the *Fountain 1917* challenged and overturned institutional notions and values associated with the concept of art and aesthetics (beauty, authorship, unity, authenticity, mimesis, conventionality, purity etc.) established since the Renaissance, as well as undermined the role of the artist in the creative process. Duchamp's re-contextualization of a urinal into an art object (*Fountain 1917*) radically shifted the reading of art from aesthetics and conventionality to intellectual consideration, where the hand of the artists is rendered irrelevant in invoking art. By turning the urinal on its back, and placing it on a pedestal, Duchamp altered the viewers' perceptions of an object that is otherwise familiar to them, thus drawing them into contemplation. This way he distorted conventional rules regarding the value and definition of art and extended the creative process to include viewers' engagement and interpretation. He launched modern art into a new paradigm in which artists retain the right to choose and confer art-hood on objects based on subjective perceptions rather than institutionalized norms (Duchamp 1964). *Fountain 1917* constitutes a good example of avant-gardes' appropriation of industrial objects to jettison European conventionality and art institutions.

b). Subverting Authority by Protesting Political/Social Values and Order

The appropriation of mundane objects from popular mass culture also advanced avant-garde's battle against bourgeois authority and socio-political order. The radical formalism of the Found Object and Readymade constituted a visual protest against bourgeois excesses, capitalism, the displacement of man in modern society, and especially the role of the ruling class in the destruction caused by World War I. Dadaists in particular used Found Objects to protest against state sponsored violence; the conceptualism of their works was anti-authority and according to Max Ernst the anti-authority ideologies of their works, derived from;

A rebellious upsurge of vital energy and rage resulting from the absurdity of the war...we came back from the war in a state of stupefaction and our rage had to find expression on the foundations of the civilization responsible for the war...
(Ernst quoted Waldman 1975: 21)

Dadaist rage against the actions of the ruling class in the war and state sponsored violence, found expression in the subversive form of the Found Object, which they appropriated to express anti-social, anti-political, anti-authority propaganda. They fragmented and destroyed all artistic forms, reconfigured it in anti-aesthetic compositions as a political propaganda designed to alter social order, bourgeois authority and political structures. Dadaism was a tool of protest used to criticise the time the artists lived in, and the Found Object provided the visual platform for that protest (Ball 1916, Richter 1965: 35). The Czech born Dadaist Raoul Hausmann, used object construction and collage for political protest, contesting the excessive control of German capitalist forces, and the loss of the self to machines as evident in his *Mechanical Head 1918* (figure 1. 4). Vladimir Tatlin of the Russian avant-gardes believed in the use of

Found Object for socio-political protest against social power in order to transform modern society (Waldman 1992). His *Corner Relief 1914 -15*, *Model for the Monument to the Third International 1920*, etc., (figure 1.5 - 1.6) reflect his use of inartistic, unconventional materials to challenge and subvert the political hierarchy, by producing anti-art forms opposed to the artistic and culturally accepted conventions determined by the ruling class.

Like Modernism, discourse on Found Object appropriation in art has been essentially Eurocentric. This genre is described as a creative product of European avant-garde art; this construed claims places Europe at the centre, while dismissing similar genres outside European mainstream as mimesis. This Eurocentric approach is both narrow and problematic and impedes understanding of the ramifications of the Found Object beyond European Modernism context, and this constitutes a grey area investigated in this study. Stephanie Guasp has muted the idea that Found Object extends beyond and predates its institutionalisation in European art history but maintains that it was avant-gardes such as Duchamp and the Dadaist that deployed its formalism in modern art as a tool to subvert art salons (Guasp 2013: 1). Guasp's assertion hints at the possibility of cultural differences regarding the genre of Found Object which Western art history ignored until recently. This thesis will interrogate this possibility and use the cultural peculiarities and ramifications of Found Object as the form's universality and as another original contribution to African art history and contemporary art discourse/knowledge. It will draw upon comparative analysis and localised stylistic/contextual reading of forms to prove that the appropriation of mundane objects in art creation, is distinguished by cultural context and ideologies, which will then address the problematic dismissal of this genre of African art in European mainstream discourse as mimesis.

1.3 Literature Review

Modern Nigerian Art: A Review of Related Works

Modern Nigerian artists from the 1900s explored issues of identity, cultural imposition and colonial subjugation and developed varying modern art styles characterised by radical experimentation and the intersection of art with political activism in the battle for liberation. Western training, nationalism and Pan-Africanist advocacies energised Nigerian artists, resulting in the emergence of distinct aesthetic/ideological paradigms in the evolution of modern Nigeria art. Varying scholars, African and European, have explored modern tendencies in Nigerian art and arrived at both insightful and problematic conclusions. Some scholars have chronicled the historical development of modern Nigerian art, others employing colonial discourse, have paradoxically theorised modern Nigerian art as a product of colonialism while some studies have used postcolonial discursive frameworks in attempts to locate Nigerian art and artists in modernist context.

Godwin Iriwieri (2010) in 'An Appreciation of the State of Visual Arts in Nigeria 1900 – 1970' traces the origin of modern Nigerian art to the 1900s and credits Aina Onabolu as pioneer. He explores paradigm shifts in the development of modern Nigerian art, arguing that two notable paradigms occurred, the first defined by academic realism of Onabolu's school, and the second by Kenneth Murray's cultural revivalism ideologies from the late 1930s (Iriwieri 2010). Iriwieri posits that, the emergence of the second aesthetic paradigm in the 1930s was inspired by the indigenous politics of cultural parity, identity and pride in African arts/cultural heritage (Iriwieri 2010: 114). Chinedu Chukueggu (2010) in 'Modern Artistic Tendency in Nigeria: its Influence on the Creative Development' supports this viewpoint that modern Nigerian art experienced two stylistic transformations but provides two contrasting creative paradigms - *Neo-*

Traditional Expression and the Colonial or European Academic Realism (Chukueggu 2010). He argues that the emergence of Onobolu's academic realism from 1900 with its anti-traditionalism instigated the rejection of traditional creative conventions to embrace a new culture and artistic language. Chukueggu highlights the cultural and hybrid aesthetics that Kenneth Murray's ideologies gave rise to as a new creative mechanism employed by Nigerian modernists to propagate nationalism and especially by the *Zarianists* to subvert European aesthetics hegemony. He posits that, the *Zarianists* were motivated by "the political tempo, the agitation for Nigerian independence, thus, sharpened Murray's cultural revivalism advocacies and used their resistance art to challenge European cultural imposition" (Chukueggu 2010: 173). Chukueggu hints here of a cultural resistant art impelled by the ideology of cultural revivalism that this thesis will expatiate and establish further.

Chidum Onuchukwu (1994) in 'Art Education in Nigeria' explores the emergence of modern Nigerian art as a product of socio-political radicalism in Lagos at the time and a rejection of missionary/colonizers anti-culture, and anti-art propaganda. He argues that modern Nigeria art derived from opposition to colonial authority and thus undermined imperial sensibilities, anti-art propaganda and flourished against colonialism (Onuchukwu 1994: 56). Olubukola Gbadegesin (2007) in 'The Intersection of Modern Art, Anthropology, and International Politics in Colonial Nigeria', provides in-depth account of aesthetic resistance in modern Nigerian art. Focusing on the works of Chief Aina Onobolu, Gbadegesin argues that, Onobolu's re-appropriation of realism (Western mimetic convention of pictorial verisimilitude) and portraiture constituted a political strategy with which he fostered indigenous resistance to colonialism and initiated the proselytization of nationalism through art in Nigeria (Gbadegesin 2007: 31). By venturing into and mastering European realism Onobolu is believed to have exposed and subverted the fallacious narratives and ideologies behind colonial histories and colonialism, as well as overridden the racist stereotypes

and derogatory imperial theories used by colonizers in their construction of the colonized 'Other' (Beier 1960: 416).

Modern Nigerian art was influenced by indigenous political propaganda engineered by Nigerian elites, and modern Nigerian artists resorted to this through appropriation discussed in 1.1, as creative mechanism to champion nationalist aspirations. In *Appropriation as Nationalism in Modern African Art*, Olu Oguibe (2002) explores the cultural and nationalist political implications of appropriating European art convention by artists such as Aina Onabolu, Akinola Lasekan, Ben Enwownwu, Uche Okeke etc., and how such appropriations and creation of subversive art forms enabled Nigerian and African artists to foster anti-colonial and decolonization advocacies. He believes that, through appropriation of imperial cultural conventions, Nigerian artists invalidated European assumptions about African artists' incompetence and crossed out Western exclusivity, supposed superiority and cultural domination (Oguibe 2002: 245 -7). O'Brien *et al* (2011), in *Modern Art in Africa, Asia and Latin America: An Introduction to Global Modernisms*, re-enforces this argument; they posit that through appropriation and the invention of hybrid aesthetics from the 1930s, Nigerian artists stole the all-too evident power of Europe and used its own cultural forms to subvert its racist sensibilities in order to facilitate decolonisation (O'Brien *et al* 2011). Evelyn Nicodemus (2010) re-echoes the power of appropriation in modern Nigerian art in *Bourdieu Out of Europe*, observing that through appropriation, Nigerian artist were empowered to subvert European racist construction of the colonized 'Other', revolt against the imperialist, and foster the battle for autonomy (Nicodemus 2010: 8).

As a result of this nationalist inclination of modern Nigerian art, Nikiru Nzegwu (1999) in 'The Concept of Modernity in Contemporary African Art', establishes a link between the emergence of modern Nigerian art and indigenous socio-political activism. She argues that the rise of Nigerian intelligentsia in Lagos

during the early decades of the Twentieth Century established the conceptual and ideological framework from whence modern Nigerian art derived. She goes further to debunk the faulty assumption that modern Nigerian art emerged from colonial benevolence,¹³ instead argues that despite the overlap in time frame, modern Nigerian art was not dependent on colonialism but flourished against it (Nzegwu 1999: 406). Nzegwu faults scholars such as Rasheed Araeen who problematically dismiss modern Nigerian art by theorising modern cultural, social and artistic phenomena/events in former colonies using colonialism as point of departure. She argues rather that modern Nigerian art from the 1900s was instigated by Lagos political activism and became visual propaganda for cultural assertion, with its validatory images extolling black African aspirations against the colonial order (Nzegwu 1999: 173). Ola Olodi (1989) buttresses Nzegwu's arguments in 'Art and Nationalism in Colonial Nigeria', observing that modern Nigerian art derived from the political resistance energies of Lagos and emerged as a visual manifestation of indigenous political agitation to foster Nigerian battle for equality (Olodi 1989). In 'Uche Okeke: An Endearing Embodiment of Art Revolution in Nigeria', Olodi (2012) posits that the intersection of modern Nigerian art with local politics, empowered Nigerian artists to contribute to decolonization. Exploring the works of Uche Okeke, and the Zarianists, he points out that, modern Nigerian art was radical aesthetically and fought politically against imperial authority as Nigerian modernists joined the invisible army of Nigerian nationalist revolution (Olodi 2012: 2). The radical structuring of modern art in traditional formalism during the late 1950s expressed indigenous artistic rebellion against imperial colonialism, this Olodi argues, was firmly rooted in local political activism.

¹³ Araeen disregards the view that Aina Onabolu is the first modern African artist. For him Onabolu was basically mimicking Western realism and as such his works are products of the genealogy of colonialism. He argues that because the works of Onabolu, Sokoto, Mohl etc., were mimicry, they were unable to interrogate colonial views on art and thus lack any quality of Modernism to liberate the African image and create a new African post-colonial identity (Araeen 2010).

In *Ben Enwonwu: The Making of an African Modernist*, Sylvester Ogbechie (2008) adopts a monographic approach focusing on and examining the impact of Ben Enwonwu's hybrid aesthetic art informed by Kenneth Murray's anti-Europeanization ideologies. Ogbechie explores the interstitial creative space Nigerian society was launched into as a result of colonialism (Bhabha 1996), and how modern artists exploited cultural hybridization as creative mechanism to subvert European cultural imposition. He observes that, "modern African artists appropriated European conventions to create a space of representation within which the negative colonial discourse was challenged on their own terms" (Ogbechie 2008: 11). By examining the political and cultural implications of Enwonwu's hybrid art as a driving force for cultural decolonization, Ogbechie demonstrates that Enwonwu is an avant-garde who represented a class of modern African artists at the forefront of the battle for autonomy and self-expression (Ogbechie 2008: 118). However, by attempting to situate Enwonwu in Western mainstream context, Ogbechie's approach devalues Enwonwu's avant-gardism by dislocating him from his cultural context, and situating him in a foreign context, where the validity and recognition of his art are unfortunately reduced.

Okonkwo and Akhogba (2013) adopt a similar monographic approach in 'Uche Okeke as a Precursor of Contemporary Nigerian Art', focusing on the radicalism of Uche Okeke's anti-Europeanism advocacies. Examining the conceptual/philosophical ideologies of the 1958 avant-garde *Zaria Art Society* they posit that, Okeke instigated the radical departure in Nigerian art from orthodox Western academic art to violent structuring of modern art in rebellious indigenous formalism that define him as an avant-garde who contributed to the decolonisation of Nigeria and instituted the framework for postcolonial identity in art and culture (Okonkwo and Akhogba 2013: 58). Chika Okeke-Agulu (2010) advances this focus on Okeke and the *Zarianist* in 'The Art Society and the Making of Postcolonial Modernism in Nigeria'. He explores their politics of

identity, cultural revivalism, imaging of the autonomous self that characterised their pre- independence art as a unique expression of nationalism in modern art. Okeke-Agulu argues that, by forcing “the conservative models of colonial art practice to a radical epistemological shift”, the Zarianists subverted European authority and aesthetic hegemony (Okeke-Agulu 2010: 505-7). He believes that Okeke’s philosophy of *Natural Synthesis* was a countermeasure against the threat of loss of Africa’s self, unleashed by Western cultural imperialism and a creative battle to recapture Nigeria’s image, art and culture (Ogbechie 2008). In *Postcolonial Modernism: Art and Decolonization in Twentieth-Century Nigeria*, Okeke-Agulu (2015) refers to the avant-gardism of the *Zarianists* as Postcolonial Modernism which he argues, manifested as the intersection of art and politics for the imaging of the post-colonial independent self. He further re-emphasizes his submission that, the *Zaria Art Society* was the only modern avant-garde movement in Nigeria with its translation of decolonization politics into distinct stylistic formalism that contributed aesthetically to defining a new culture for the emergent state (Okeke-Agulu 2010: 524). While his findings are detailed and insightful, the concept of postcolonial modernism raises a few unanswered questions. By focusing on the *Zarianists* in the 1950s, “as the first concerted articulation of artistic modernism in post-independence Nigeria” (Okeke-Agulu 2015: 1), Okeke-Agulu like most scholars alienate avant-gardism in Nigeria from the 1900s which expressed even greater radicalism than the Zarianists. This emphasis on 1950s art problematically crosses out the strong evidences and occurrence of avant-gardism prior to the independence decade. Okeke-Agulu does this by constructing a discourse that frames earlier modern artistic tendencies as forerunning practices only relevant for enabling the emergence of avant-gardism in the 1950s. The emphasis on 1950s is exclusivist; there is an under-theorized gap from 1900 -1949 that limits understanding of the extents of modernist art tendencies in Nigeria of the period. This gap will be addressed in this study.

This literature review points to the existence of grey areas that impedes understanding of modern Nigerian art resulting from the diverse approaches adopted by the scholars surveyed above. This highlights the absence of a comprehensive theoretical discourse on modern Nigerian art and the avant-gardism it manifested from 1900 – 1960s. The emphasis on selected periods as interrogated above, has led to contradictory submissions on modern Nigerian art; while scholars such as Oguibe, Iriwweiri, Oloidi, Nzegwu etc., credit Onabolu as founder of modern Nigerian and African art, others Ogbechie 2008, Beier 1960 etc., place Enwonwu at the epicentre of modern artistic tendencies in Nigeria, while on the other hand, Okeke-Agulu credits Okeke and the *Zarianists* as the only avant-gardes who manifested Modernism in Nigeria. These ambiguities interfere with a sophisticated understanding of Twentieth Century modernist art in Nigeria, thus indicating the urgent need for the reconstruction of modern Nigerian art history (Iriwieri 2010), through an inclusive theoretical discourse as proposed in this study.

Significantly, despite these contradictory submissions, the surveyed literature reveals the manifestation of creative ideologies, concepts and aesthetic paradigms associated with Modernism in Nigerian arts and cultural contexts. The foci of modernist art discussed in 1.1 and 2.1 such as experimental radicalism, anti-authority, anti-traditionalism, anti-aesthetics, counterculture and bohemianism etc., are traced in the works of pioneering Nigerian artists such as Onabolu, Enwonwu, Lasekan, Okeke, Onobrakpeya etc., but culturally tailored to address socio-cultural and political conditions particular to Nigeria of the time. The identification of avant-garde tendencies in modern Nigerian art as indicated in several literature sources underpins the argument put forward in this study that, Nigerian artists through interrogating issues of identity cultural/societal reconstruction, nationalist politics, cultural subjugation etc., expressed a unique form of cultural avant-gardism parallel but distinct from that of Europe which is ignored in European Modernism discourse and narratives. It will thus, benefit

modern art history, to examine and situate modern Nigerian art in modernist context as this will further advance the case for multiple and plural Modernisms, as well as address the problematic Eurocentric exclusion of *'Other'* modernisms. The lack of a coherent inclusive study of Modernism in Nigerian art, and the existing quandaries/gaps in available literature, underpins the rationale for this study. It will suffice to employ the analytical tools of Postcolonialism and Modernism as well as artistic methodology as appropriate theoretical/conceptual frameworks in the quest to theorise and establish this unique expression of cultural Modernism in Nigeria. The next section presents some theoretical frameworks on which this thesis is structured.

1.4 Methodology

1.4.1 Postcolonialism – Postcolonial Discourse as Analytical Tool

Postcolonialism has emerged as a leading field of study, a theoretical framework which challenges colonial discourse and imperialism, and that is used to overturn Eurocentrism as well as the construed European construction of the *'Other'* (Young 2003). Late Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries saw the domination of the *Third World* by Western Europe, which spread its empire to other cultures through colonialism. Colonialism became a strong political, economic, cultural and epistemological force with which non-European cultures were forced into imperial subjugation. Colonial empires exploited both the material and human resources of non-European nations by drawing the colonised into a complex disadvantaged relationship that opened up their resources to the West (Lomba 1998). Accompanying colonialism's economic and material exploitation and domination, was cultural destruction; colonized nations suffered identity loss through the destruction of their cultural structures, customs, values and cosmology. This is because colonialism often involved the willful fragmentation,

distortion and re-forming of existing indigenous cultures through warfare, genocide, plunder or enslavement, using perverted logic to distort, destroy and disfigure the past and historical forms of the colonized (Fanon 1961). This cultural destruction instigated social, cultural, aesthetic and dialectical disfiguration that completely altered colonies and colonized peoples under imperial rule. As a result of intense decolonization propaganda after World War II, many colonized nations began gaining freedom from colonial subjugation; in Africa for instance, the 1950s marked the age of emancipation and reconstruction of the social, cultural, aesthetic, and political structures of emergent sovereign nations. However, in view of the violent impact of colonialism and European cultural imposition, almost all former colonies still suffer the adverse legacies of colonialism, these manifest in contemporary society in varying social, cultural and political conundrum.

Because the domination of non-European cultures was facilitated by the derogatory construction of the colonized through colonial discourse,¹⁴ Postcolonialism or postcolonial theory focuses on interrogating colonial discourse, colonial text, the political and power imperatives of knowledge construction, and contest European subordination of the 'Other' through its imperialist philosophies (Young 2003). Postcolonial theorist such as Loomba, Young, Fanon, Said, Bhabha, Mitter, Perry etc., have dedicated great amounts of work to unmasking the subjugating and exploitative tactics of imperialism, colonial discourse/ideologies, the effects of European cultural imposition on indigenous nations, and the anti-colonial activism and efforts in former colonies to reconstruct their battered cultures.

¹⁴ Colonial interactions are an effect of power relations inscribed in cultural and linguistic forms...colonial representational practices draw on strategies of naming and classifying as implicit modes of political and territorial domination...In examining this language of colonization, it will enable an interrogation of the West's colonial past, and the adversities caused to former colonies, thus forcing Western readers to renegotiate their relationship to the history of colonialism (Singh 1996: 4)

Ania Loomba interrogates the strategy of cultural destruction employed during colonization to de-identify the colonized in order to re-image them in construed representations that facilitated European intervention and subjugation. In *Colonialism and Postcolonialism* Loomba (1998) unravels the power/political imperatives behind colonizers/missionaries anti-culture propaganda. Loomba believes that, the destruction of indigenous cultural structures, customs and values, contributed to the dehumanization of the colonized by the imperialist in order to re-construct them in colonial terms and legitimize Western oppression, occupation and exploitation of the natural/human resources of the colonized (Loomba 1998). Aime Cesaire refers to this cultural destruction strategy as *Thingification* - the deliberate destruction of the cultural past of the colonized, through which the West turned the colonized "Other into barbarians" (Cesaire 1972: 9). To address this, the colonized had to reject European stereotypes and anti-culture propaganda; they reconstructed their cultural identity in order to subvert imperialist authority and imposition.

Edward Said's (1978) *Orientalism* is central to postcolonial studies because of its groundbreaking insight into how imperialists formulated discourses to exert power and control. Edward Said exposes the schema of image/knowledge construction in colonialism arguing that the imaging of the colonized as barbaric, intellectually incompetent and sub-humans gave power to the colonizers and enslaved the colonized subjects. Said (1978) deconstructs colonial discourse through the concept of 'Orientalism', a dominating political framework and intellectual power which enslaved non-western cultures (Said 1978: 20). This is because as Michel Foucault points out, discourse formation and the construction of knowledge is a powerful tool and mode of oppression, subjugation and suppression of people by forcing them into submission through measures of separation, deformation, and imposed mystifying representations (discourse), which subsequently governs, influence and directs the conduct of such groups (Foucault 1982: 781). To transcend these oppressive representations, the colonized challenged imperial stereotypes of the 'Other', and engage in the

proselytization of cultural pride in order to defend themselves as humans of equal rights and intellectual competence. This resistance to colonial racist stereotypes of the 'Other' is evident in the resistance art of varying Nigerians who challenged imperialism and colonialism through visual arts. Artists such as Onabolu, Lasekan, Ewonwu, Okeke, Simon Okeke etc., particularly expressed anti-colonial and anti-Europeanization sentiments through radical aesthetics in their resistance to Western stereotypes.

In *The Other Question*, Homi Bhabha (1996) supports Edward Said's submission that non-western cultures were held in Western subjugation through European philosophical constructions and stereotypes of the 'Other' and that colonial discourse became an apparatus of power used to control the constructed renegade 'Other' (Bhabha 1996: 19). Bhabha believes that, colonial discourse was predominantly strategized and designed to,

Create a space for a subject peoples through the production of knowledge in terms of which surveillance is exercised...it sought authorisation for its strategies by the production of knowledges of coloniser and colonised which are stereotypical but antithetically evaluated. Colonial discourse construction of *otherness*, construed the colonised as a population of degenerate types on the basis of racial origin, in order to justify conquest (Bhabha 1996: 23).

However, while Bhabha supports the idea that to dehumanise and oppress the colonized, imperialist employed racist discourses, he disagrees with Said's submission that colonialism totally disregarded the colonized; he argues instead that colonial discourse is not characterised by monolithic homogeneity but by ambivalence, interstice and contradictions. In *Of mimicry and Man: The Ambivalence of Colonial Discourse* Bhabha (1984) unmasked the contradiction in colonial discourse, observing that colonial discourse is characterised by ambivalence, mimicry, stereotypes and hybridity (Bhabha 1994: 70), and that colonial mimicry transforms into ambivalence in its production of 'Otherness' as

it “fixed the colonial subject into partial presence - (incomplete and virtual)” (Bhabha 1984: 127). This double vision, recognises and dismisses the colonised as both “a social reality which is at once an *‘Other’* and yet entirely knowable and visible” (Bhabha 1984: 130) desired for labour and derided culturally and socially as savage. This ambivalence creates fleeting identities for the colonized, exposing the ambiguity and uncertainty of colonial discourse and imperialism. Bhabha posits that this colonial mimicry led to hybridity which “combines/articulates the colonizers discourse with a range of differential knowledge and positionalities that both estranged the identity of that discourse and produced new forms of knowledge, new sites of power that enabled the rise of anti-colonial resistance” (Bhabha 1994: 112). Hybridity enabled the colonised to successfully retain their difference and resist the colonizers’ imposed culture and demand/command to be the same – that is European (Prasad 2003: 22). These elements of hybridity, ambivalence, fissure, appropriation, interstices, which Bhabha unmasked, is significant in postcolonial subjects’ capacity to overturn the binary relationship between western and *Others*, the basis for African nationalist struggles for decolonization. As well as enabling re-readings of the political imperatives of the material culture, an understanding of colonial mimicry and how the colonized could harness hybridity to foster their resistance to colonialism and European cultural imposition was important in the emergence of Nigerian avant-garde art.

Through their interrogation of colonial text and practices, postcolonial theorists brought about new knowledge and understanding of imperialism and colonialism in Africa, Asia and Latin America and most importantly, defined new theoretical/conceptual frameworks for interrogating colonial discourse and practices. Their thoughts and writings led former colonized societies to re-engage with their historiography and yielded new knowledge by challenging misconceptions and European hegemony and exclusivism in their marginalization from discourses and centers of power. As a theoretical/analytical framework,

postcolonialism according to Henry Schwarz,

Unmasks the inequality of imperial domination and power, with the goal of ending it. In this sense, postcolonial theory is the radical philosophy that interrogates both the past history and on-going legacies of European colonialism in order to undo them. Thus it is not merely a theory of knowledge but a theoretical practice, a transformation of knowledge (Schwarz 2000: 4).

Postcolonialism is concerned with issues of identity, deconstruction, revision of history, asserting cultural integrity, reclaiming spaces and places, reclaiming the past, and is designed to “displace the Eurocentric premises of a discursive apparatus which constructed the Third World not only for the West but also for the cultures so represented” (Parry 1981: 172). This deconstruction begins with interrogation of the discrimination, racism, and exclusivism that derived from the political and cultural monocentrism of the colonial enterprise and construction of the ‘*Other*’ (Ashcroft et al 2003: 11). Postcolonial discourse thus, provides a platform for the viewing of historical and cultural experiences as uncentred, pluralistic and multifarious. It challenges the idealised mainstreamism in European thoughts; it dismisses the stereotypical representation of the colonized and situates the colonized in perspectives previously denied as a crucial counter hegemonic strategy (Barker et al 1996: 10).

As a counter hegemonic strategy Postcolonialism’s rejection of monocentrism, Eurocentrism and its exclusivism, is employed in this thesis to examine how imperialist’s (colonizers and missionary) derogatory stereotypes, subjugation, cultural imposition etc., affected Nigeria and provoked indigenous resistance that gave rise to the avant-gardism that defined modern Nigeria art between 1900 and 1960. Postcolonial discourse constitutes a theoretical and analytical tool for analysing issues of identity, resistance activism, cultural revivalism, anti-Europeanization, and the anti-colonial thrust in the visual arts in Nigeria that is omitted in colonial discourse and European art history. It foregrounds discourse

on Nigerian Modernism in this thesis and establishes the cultural ramifications and peculiarities of the Found Object in art, as well as addressing the Eurocentric dismissal of the presence of this genre in Africa as mimesis.

Nigerian modernists - Onabolu, Enwonwu and Okeke are especially chosen in this thesis to explore this parallel Modernism because of their pivotal roles in instigating different aesthetic paradigms and proclamation of creative radicalism in West Africa. Onabolu's art challenged colonial racist policies, discrimination, and missionary anti-art / anti-culture propaganda in Lagos from the 1900s. His works/activism gave rise to modern art in Africa and marked the divorce between art and life in the continent. Enwonwu's art signalled the emergence of a new aesthetic paradigm in Nigeria and West Africa from the 1930s, launching a new avant-gardism, inspired by anti-Eurocentrism, cultural revivalism and affirmation advocacies promulgated by Murray. His art, characterised by aesthetic hybridisation and appropriation captured the interstice/hybridity described in Bhabha's postcolonial theory, and epitomised the intersection of modern art and indigenous politics. Okeke on the other hand addressed issues of identity cultural reconstruction and interculturalism at the apotheosis of Nigerian Nationalism. His art with its anti-colonial and anti-European formalism contributed to the dismantling of colonial rule in Nigeria and defined a new identity for postcolonial selfhood. These modernists epitomize the creative ideologies and driving forces of avant-gardism in Nigeria and Africa at large at the time. They are central in this thesis, for the establishment of Nigerian Modernism, and in advancing the argument that Modernism is a plural phenomenon.

In summary, three main analytical features of postcolonial theory are drawn upon in this study; firstly, postcolonial discourse provides alternative/counter narrative to European imperial narratives (Parry 1981, Young 2003) and this is significant in this study because it facilitated the interrogation/countering of

European construed theorisation of modern African art as *'Primitive'* and *'Exotic'*. Since it (postcolonial discourse) constitutes a theoretical framework for counter-narratives, colonial records on African/Nigerian art were re-evaluated in order to unearth and establish avant-gardism in Twentieth Century Nigerian art. This new theoretical perspective on modern Nigerian art postcolonial analysis gave rise to, contributed to validating the argument promulgated in this thesis that modern avant-garde tendencies occurred in Africa, which are not accounted for in Imperial narratives of the colonised *'Other'*. Secondly, Postcolonialism analyses the processes by which the colonised resisted the colonisers (Loomba 1998). This feature of postcolonial discourse is an effective tool used to unmask resistance struggles and anti-imperial battles in various colonies at the turn of the Twentieth Century. The re-evaluation of colonial records and practices through postcolonial analysis, enabled this research identify and establish all art-political activisms in Nigeria from the 1900s, as well as the role of Nigerian avant-gardes such as Onobolu, Lasekan, Enwonwu, Okeke and others in fostering decolonisation propaganda in West Africa at large. Significantly, this enabled the location of Twentieth Century Nigerian art in modernist context as well as theorisation of its unique cultural avant-gardism defined by nationalist aspirations, which contributed to Nigerian modernity and liberation. Finally, postcolonial theory rejects Europe's false idea of *'The Universal'* and its mainstream hegemonic centre narratives. It contests such Eurocentric centre assumptions by interpreting experiences and phenomenon in culture/context-specific frameworks (Braker et al 1996). This contestation and decentring of imperial mainstreamism/monocentrism constitute a key feature of postcolonial discourse adopted in this study; it provides the conceptual/theoretical framework drawn upon to decentre Modernism discourse and enabled an alternative culture-specific reading of the phenomenon in Nigeria which in turn proved the pluralism of Modernism validated by the new phenomenon/discourse of Nigerian Modernism uncovered and theorised in this study.

1.4.2 Art Methodology

Art-based research method is defined as the systematic use of artistic processes, the making of artistic expressions and inventions in all of the different forms of the arts, as a primary way of understanding and examining experiences and society (McNiff 1999: 75). Artistic methodology is a new research method developed to provide researchers in art and design the appropriate analytical tool with which to reflect on the intersection of practice and theory, and to provoke meanings from analysing formal/stylistic configurations and contexts of artefacts. Carol Gray and Julian Malins (1993) propose this new methodology against the backdrop of lack of appropriate methodologies in art and design research, which often force artists and designers to adapt established methods in Science and Social Sciences, with some proving disastrous (Malins, 1993: 3). They argue that, “art and design research requires a distinctive approach and the use of procedures which are appropriate and sympathetic to the nature of the discipline...” (Gray & Malins 1993: 3). Their proposal of art-processes as methodology derives from the peculiarity of the discipline, which needs a distinct research method to effectively link practice, processes, contents and contexts. Gillian Russell (1993) supports this argument asserting that, the processes of art creation have strong parallels with scientific research, thus “art is already research” (Russell 1993), hence emphasising the need for employing the creative process as a distinct art based research methodology. Artistic methodology enables detailed research into art practices, processes, contents, influences and context from whence art forms derive and is a conceptual/methodological/theoretical tool for the interrogation of formal/stylistic expressions. It serves as basis for deducing and advancing knowledge systems, constructing histories and defining the socio-political and cultural contexts of artefacts.

The conceptual/theoretical framework of artistic methodology was significantly adopted in this study as an appropriate tool for culture-specific reading of Modernism in Twentieth Century Nigerian art. It enabled the demonstration that the conditions of nationalism and yearning for postcolonial selfhood extended beyond psychological/political consciousness, intellectual debates and activisms, but equally influenced creative processes, materiality and visual configuration of modern Nigerian art from the 1900s resulting in the emergence of a unique cultural avant-gardism which fostered the battle against imperialism. As demonstrated/elucidated in detailed artist case studies (Chapters Four, Five and Six), which analysed the styles, contexts and inspirations of the works of Onobolu, Enwonwu and Okeke, artistic methodology (through formal and contextual analysis) validated the theory that nationalism politics and postcolonial consciousness influenced the making of modern Nigerian art, and defined its subject matter, themes and formalism during the period of Nigerian Modernism.

Materiality is a main feature of artistic methodology that is employed in this thesis. Interrogation of materiality in modern Nigerian art proved that the abandonment/rejection of traditional materials of wood, terracotta and clay by Onobolu from the 1900s to embrace European medium of oil paint and canvas was inspired by nationalist consciousness especially the desire to reject European hegemony and debunk its derogatory stereotypes about Africans. This change from pre-modern African creative materiality, and subsequent appropriation/mastery of European materials/conventions was a subversive mechanism/strategy which helped cross out Europe's discrimination and claims to intellectual/creative superiority over the colonised African '*Other*' as demonstrated by Onobolu's avant-gardism discussed in Chapter Four. Another power of artist methodology is its reconstruction of historical contexts and socio-political conditions of societies through detailed evaluation of the stylistic/formal compositions of art forms; this enabled this study conduct detailed reading of

modern Nigerian art, which authenticated the argument that the invention of hybrid art (aesthetic hybridisation) in Nigeria from the 1930s by Enwonwu and advanced in the 1960s by Okeke and the *Zarianist*, was inspired by decolonisation, anti-imperial and anti-Europeanization propaganda. This is because stylistic/content/contextual reading of the invented hybrid art structured in indigenous cultural formalism unearthed the radical subversive inclination of its form/themes, which became a direct affront on Western culture and conventionalism at the time and contributed to cultural decolonisation in Nigeria. This stylistic and contextual analysis of modern art through art methodology proved that the yearning for postcolonial selfhood defined the visual formalism and aesthetics of modern Nigerian art during the second phase of Nigerian Modernism and that its rejection of European conventionalism in favour of African abstractionism was political, avant-gardist and revolutionary. Thus, through this culture-specific reading of modern art using art as methodology, the objectives of this study to establish a parallel avant-gardism in Twentieth Century Nigerian art defined by radical cultural aesthetics were achieved.

This methodology was further adopted in Chapter Seven, to interrogate my art practice as well as for analysing the works of other postcolonial Nigerian artists especially with regards to the use of the Found Object to interrogate the legacies of colonialism, and as visual metaphors for socio-political commentary. In this context, artistic methodology helped in defining the postcolonial consciousness that influences object appropriation in contemporary African/Nigerian art expressions, as well as in establishing the cultural ramifications and peculiarities of the Found Object in African and European art respectively.

1.5 Objectives and Structure of Thesis

The preceding sections provided an overview of the features of Twentieth Century avant-garde art, identified the philosophies and ideologies that define Modernism/modernist art, and established the foci of Modernism and avant-gardism in Twentieth Century modern Nigerian art. It also underpinned the rationale for this study by demonstrating that modern Nigerian art is still an ambiguously understudied area with conflicting submissions and theories in need of urgent reconstruction through a comprehensive discourse. This thesis thus, has as its main contribution to knowledge, introduced a new discourse on Nigerian Modernism that will contribute to the understanding of Modernism beyond European centres. The thesis aims to achieve the following objectives:

1. Subject modern Nigerian arts from 1900 - 1960 to modernist analysis and reveal the occurrence of a unique Nigerian cultural avant-gardism in a new discourse (Nigerian Modernism).
2. Interrogate Euro-American Modernism discourse especially its Eurocentric exclusion of modernist tendencies of *'Other'* cultures.
3. Advance the argument that Modernism is a pluralistic phenomenon with multiple avant-gardes centres and interrogate the manifestation of a parallel Nigerian Modernism that is distinct from that of the West.
4. Propose a new theoretical framework/model inspired by culturally tailored analysis of modern art that would encourage and facilitate research into African Modernism as a whole.

5. Explore the cultural ramifications and peculiarities of Found Object in art through a comparative analysis of the cultural contexts, stylistic formalism and philosophies of this genre in Nigerian and European art.

To achieve these objectives, this thesis is divided into eight chapters each structured to address specific topics and issues. It is hoped that the chapters will explore and then help to uncover/establish the presence of a parallel Modernism in Twentieth Century Nigeria. The contents of the different chapters are presented below.

Chapter One explores Modernism and modernist art providing a background to Twentieth Century avant-garde art, it highlights the factors leading to the development of Modernism including the role of feminism, as well as explores the postcolonial invention of African literature which instigated the creation of Afro-centric Modernism. It also provides an overview of the genre of Found Object, identifies gaps in knowledge/literature on modern Nigerian art, as well as modernist tendencies in Twentieth Century Nigeria. Postcolonialism (postcolonial discourse) and artistic methodology are examined in sections 1.4.1 and 1.4.2 as part of the methodological/theoretical/conceptual frameworks on which this study is framed to interrogate colonial discourse and enable the re-reading of modern Nigerian art from the 1900s in modernist perspective.

Chapter Two discusses the major theories and characteristics of Modernism with emphasis on anti-historicism, aesthetic subversion, and experimental radicalism as the foci of Twentieth Century avant-gardism. It proceeds to explore the problems surrounding the Eurocentric exclusion of the African '*Other*' from Modernism discourse. Section 2.4 uncovers and analyses the phenomenon of Nigerian Modernism 1900-1960, while the conditions that gave rise to Nigerian

Modernism are interrogated in 2.4.1. The chapter concludes by examining the pre-modern context of the Found Object in Nigerian art/culture in 2.5.

Chapter Three discusses Nigerian Modernism as a bifurcated form of modernist expression. Section 3.1 explores the modernist philosophies, art styles and manifestoes of modern Nigerian art 1900 - 1927 inspired by the practice of Chief Aina Onabolu. The impact of Lagos elites on the political inclination of his art, its opposition to colonialism and subversion of European discrimination and stereotypes, are theorised as a unique reflection of cultural avant-gardism, which defined the first phase of Nigerian Modernism. Section 3.2 explores the creative and philosophical paradigm shift in Nigerian art initiated by Kenneth Murray's anti-Europeanization and cultural revivalism advocacies and the hybrid aesthetics it gave rise to as an avant-garde resistance to then indigenous art practices, to imperial subjugation and cultural imposition. It examines the manifestation of modernist ideologies in the works of Nigerian modernists from 1927 – 1960 especially their battles for cultural revivalism, identity reconstruction, and decolonisation through art as the conceptual foci of the second phase of Nigerian Modernism. The chapter concludes by analysing the differences between this parallel Nigerian Modernism and those of Europe and America, as well as examining the modernist context of the Found Object in Nigerian art.

Chapter Four provides a detailed case study of Onabolu, exploring his art practice as pioneer of modern art in Africa. Section 4.3 examines how through the reverse-appropriation of imperial cultural convention (realism) Onabolu hacked into the supposed Western superior culture, localised its creative language as a subversive mechanism to undermine European sensibilities and stereotypes. It interrogates the impact of Onabolu's art revival crusade in subverting colonizers' and missionary's anti-art and anti-culture propaganda. It further explores the part played by the patronage of elite Lagosians on the emergence of modern

Nigerian art and how their influences spurred Onobolu's realistic art into a radical aesthetic form of political resistance. It concludes by identifying the problems of Onobolu's art, especially its overarching glorification of realism (Western mimetic convention), which contributed to the Europeanization of Nigerian art and culture in section 4.5.

Chapter Five explores Ben Enwonwu's role in the emergence of the second phase of Nigerian Modernism from the 1930s. In a detailed artist case study, it analyses his inspirations, ideologies, philosophies and style in sections 5.2 and 5.3. The next section examines the political implications of Enwonwu's cultural/aesthetics appropriation and how his hybridization of European and indigenous conventions fostered anti-Europeanization, anti-colonialism and nationalism advocacies in visual form. Enwonwu's rejection and subversion of imperial realism and the cultural/artistic decolonization his art initiated is theorised and situated in the context of the pioneering stages of the second modernist movement in Nigeria.

Chapter Six presents another artists case study examining the radicalism of Uche Okeke's *Natural Synthesis* philosophy and formation of the avant-garde *Zaria Art Society* in the late 1950s during the apotheosis of the second phase of Nigerian Modernism. Identity reconstruction, postcolonial imaging, cultural revivalism, anti-Europeanization propaganda etc., which characterised Okeke's art are explored in sections 6.3 and 6.4, and deployed to articulating the impact of his avant-gardism in facilitating decolonization and nationalism ideologies. The influence of Okeke's *Natural Synthesis* in constructing a new cultural identity and art language that launched Nigeria into postcolonial selfhood is elucidated in 6.6, followed by the conclusion of the chapter.

Chapter Seven establishes the cultural peculiarities and ramifications of the Found Object in art by examining the conceptual/ideological context and

formalism of postcolonial Found Object appropriation through the works of postcolonial artists such as Nnena Okerie, Olu Amuda, El Anatsui, Delumprizulike, in section 7.2 and examining the context of my personal practice in 7.3. The rationale behind postcolonial appropriation of mundane objects in art creation, especially the use of the Found Object to interrogate colonial legacies, is drawn upon to frame the cultural differences that set aside this African genre from those of the West. It proceeds to advance the argument that Found Object genre is separated from one culture to another by practices informed by specific cultural ideologies in Section 7.4; this is followed by the conclusion.

Chapter Eight is the conclusion of the thesis. It summarizes the main findings, and key issues discussed in the preceding chapters. The theoretical implications of the findings of the thesis are synthesized around the research questions and objectives in 8.2. Detailed contributions of the study to the body of knowledge with regards to modern Nigerian art discourse, African art history and Twentieth Century modernist art are established. The chapter concludes by enumerating the limitations of the study and recommending directions for further research in section 8.3.

All figures are placed at the end of each chapter were references are made to them before the commencement of the next chapter.

1.6 Conclusion

This chapter has provided an overview of Modernism and modernist art, defined key concepts and outlined two main approaches to Modernism discourse – as a historic phenomenon and as a cultural artistic product. It went further to assert that as a cultural product, Modernism is a pluralistic phenomenon yet its dynamic characteristic is ignored in European art history as a result of European aesthetic and philosophical hegemony. The chapter surveyed available literature

on modern Nigerian art, identified various gaps and ambiguities, and argued for the significance, premise, context, and rationale for this current study. The next chapter will explore modernism in details and European Modernist discourse, with emphasis on its exclusion of the '*Other*'. It will then introduce Nigerian Modernism as a phenomenon and new discourse.

Chapter One Figures



Figure 1.1: Pablo Picasso Violin and Bottle on a Table 1915 – 1916. Wood, string, nails, painted and charcoal (Source: Tate Britain 2009). The piece captures avant-gardes subversion of European established contentions, through the appropriation of mundane objects from low mass culture to defy the sanctity of bourgeois sensibilities and art authenticity.



Figure 1.2: Man Ray, *Gift*, 1921. Painted flatiron and tacks, 15.3 x 9 x 11.4 cm (Source: The Museum of Modern Art). This piece equally captures the anti-conventional radicalism of the avant-gardes in their subversion of European established creative contentions, through the appropriation of mundane objects from low mass culture to defy the sanctity of bourgeois sensibilities.



Figure 1.3: Marcel Duchamp's Fountain 1917. Urinal porcelain (Source: Tate Britain 1999). This piece captures avant-gardes in their subversion of European established creative conventions, as well as the institution of art and art salons, through the appropriation of mundane objects from low mass culture to defy the sanctity of bourgeois sensibilities and authenticity of art.



Figure 1.4: Raoul Hausmann Mechanical Head 1918 (The Spirit of Our Time), assemblage circa (Source: Patrick Bade, Joseph Manca, Sarah Costello). Hausmann's piece demonstrates Dadaist protest against modernity especially the mechanization of modern society occasioned by industrialization with machines replacing men.



Figure 1.5: Vladimir Tatlin Corner Relief 1914-15 - iron, copper, wood, rope (Source: Rex Halterman 2013). Russian avant-gardes protest against social order using the unconventional and decadent inartistic objects to challenge and subvert the political hierarchy.



Figure 1.6: Vladimir Tatlin's Model for the Monument to the Third International 1920 (Source: CCA Architecture). An example of Russian avant-gardes protests against social order using the unconventional and decadent inartistic objects to challenge and subvert political hierarchy.

CHAPTER 2: THEORETICAL CONTEXT

Modernist Discourse and Nigerian Modernism

2.1 Introduction

Modernism as an artistic, scientific and philosophical phenomenon, provoked radical transformations and inventions that transformed Twentieth Century Europe; however, its Eurocentric construction in Western art history, has made it (Modernism) an intensely contested discourse in the humanities and social sciences. European art history adopts two viewpoints in the theorisation of Modernism a) in reference to a historic art context and timeframe, and b) as a Euro-American culture-specific art phenomenon. This location of Modernism in the West is problematic; the problematic of this Eurocentrism highlighted in Chapter One, will further be analysed in 2.2, because the quest for creative freedom to break free from the hegemonic constraints of classical creative traditions and the deployment of the subversive powers of arts to alter authority and social order, which characterised Twentieth Century avant-gardism, manifested in cultures beyond Europe and traditionally ignored in Western art history.

African creative philosophy of abstractionism - the conceptual interpretation of realism/the universe in metaphoric abstract forms, elicited the emergence of European Modernism as evidenced in its influence on the works of Pablo Picasso, Georges Braque, Henry Matisse, Maurice de Vlaminck Andre Derain, Constantin Brancusi, Amedeo Modigliani, Karl Schmidt-Rottluff and others, yet, derogatory representations of 'primitivism' and 'exoticism' are deployed in European art

history to legitimize the exclusion of modern African art from European Modernism. This is because, the West created its own parameters of authentication and attest ethnic identification of African art framed in primitivism; this unfortunately became the framework for categorising all African art and within which it situate modern African art to exclude it from the modernist considerations of high or avant-garde artistic expression (Sanyal 2002, Oguibe 2004, Odiboh 2009). This chapter contest this Eurocentric exclusivism and the construed ideology of Western mainstream art discourses, in order to prove the pluralism, and cultural specificity of Modernism.

To address this exclusivism, this research introduces the phenomenon of Nigerian Modernism as a neglected discourse and conceptual framework that interrogates European mainstream hegemony, and foster the recognition of Twentieth Century avant-gardism in Nigeria as parallel Modernism but distinct from that of Europe. Modernism manifested according to Daniel Singal (1987) in “avant-garde sense as radical experimentation in artistic style, deliberate cultivation of the perverse and decadent, and the flaunting of outrageous behaviour designed to subvert authority or the ruling class” (Singal 1987: 8). The perversity and radical activism through experimental arts, which defines Modernism alluded to in Singal’s theory, is evident in modern arts of other cultures but ignored in Western modernist discourse, thus underpinning the rationale for introducing the concept of Nigerian Modernism to interrogate such exclusivism.

This chapter is divided into seven sections; it begins by exploring Modernism as philosophy and style of modern art; proceeds to analyse the nature of European Modernism discourse, detailing the problematic of exclusivism occasioned by the Vasarian model of mainstreamism.¹⁵ Section 2.3 introduces the

¹⁵ Vasari established an imposed standard and norm of art history defined by classical arts and by the recuperation of classical culture perfected in the Renaissance...this classical paradigm created hierarchy of insiders and outsiders, defined Renaissance of central Italy as art with the greatest value and successfully

discourse/phenomenon of Nigerian Modernism to theorise avant-garde art created in Nigeria during the flourishing years of Modernism 1900-1960. The social, political and cultural conditions that gave rise to Nigerian Modernism are further theorised in section 2.4.1. The Found Object in Nigerian art is explored in section 2.6, examining its pre-colonial Nigerian context/ramifications. The chapter concludes with a summation of key arguments discussed in preceding sections.

2.2 Modernism Discourse

Modernism 1850-1950¹⁶ was instigated by the reactions of modern artist to cultural, social and political conditions of post enlightenment Europe. The philosopher Charles Baudelaire (1863) who first used the term in 'The Painter of Modern Life' deployed it to describe the complexity of modernity and its chaotic uncertainties at the time. Baudelaire submits that Modernism emerged as a changed consciousness in artistic perception in response to the transient/fleeting nature of modernity, and the overarching dependence of man on machine (Baudelaire 1863). The changed consciousness Baudelaire alludes to, was impelled by the belief in Science to save the world proclaimed in Isaac Newton's theories and belief in reason to establish progress and social change proselytised in Kantian theories;¹⁷ these theories became doctrines which informed

marginalised all other artistic traditions as manual craft. Vasari/Janson's preference and establishment of classical forms as the basis of an absolute system of aesthetic evaluation enabled them to judge all other art traditions on how close they come to accepting classicism as a paradigm. Europe thus became the centre of art and European aesthetics the absolute determinant of high arts to which 'Other' cultures must be defined by (Preziosi 1998: 348-9).

¹⁶ The exact timeframe of Modernism is controversial as varying scholars have put forward different dates based on the considerations of specific ideologies and modern transformation in art, science, literature and society at large. William Everdell for example, posits that Modernism began in the 1870s with first modernist painting believed to have occurred in 1885. Clement Greenberg and Immanuel Kant however situate the origin of Modernism around the mid Nineteenth Century (the 1850s) originating from Baudelaire's literature and the paintings of Eduard Manet one of the first to instigate the deviation from realism in the quest to capture the essence of modern life. The 1890 is also theorized by some scholars as the beginning of Modernism as it marked the end of Victorianism and the Century, as well as the beginning of the revolutionary tradition and belief in the new - the radical experimental/critical ideology that drove modernist art

¹⁷ Kant's theory of the power of reason, the liberty of expression and equality, revolutionized the understanding of Modernism and modern art. His propounded aesthetic theory of art established the

modernist thinking, and incited artistic revolutions as evidenced in the case of France (Barrett 1997: 17). The complexities of Modernity and imperialism which had exposed Europeans to alternative cultures, their ethics and societal structures, opened up fresh grounds for interrogation, which enabled modernists question, several long held notions about life, religion, culture, art and social progress (Childs 2007: 17). The philosophy of 'Art for Art's Sake', and the formation of modern art movements such as *Impressionism, Expressionism, Futurism, Cubism, Abstractionism, Dadaism, Surrealism, Minimalism* etc., derived from this new ethos of interrogation and the radical quest to challenge and transgress old values and norms.

These avant-garde movements challenged all traditional, classical and established values and conventions by promulgating differing radical manifestoes. *Impressionism 1874* for example rejected the monopoly and conventionality of art institutions, by creating art that focused on the depiction of visual impressions of what the eye sees rather than what the artist is compelled to paint. Its philosophy was anti-classical/anti-renaissance – it rejected Renaissance single-point perspective and mimesis, insisting rather on the use of impressions to capture fleeting moments of modern life. *German Expressionism 1909* was anti-impressionist and anti-classical as well; its modernist ideology promoted the use of colour and line symbolically and emotively. Instead of recording impressions or mimicking nature, these avant-gardes imposed their own ideological temperaments and views on the world around them. To subvert classical mimetic conventions, they emphasized expression of subjective emotions, the power of pure colour and exaggerated imagery as evident in Paula Modersohn-Becker *Self Portrait on her sixth Wedding*

philosophical foundation for artistic Modernism. In 1770 Kant posited that art should be created for itself and reflective of the artist's subjective interpretations of experiences and the universe, devoid of external and associational demands and or societal conventions. He further argued that the judgment and interpretation of art should be contemplative, and viewers should experience and consider art independently of any purpose or utility other than its aesthetics and content (Kant quoted in Barrett, T. 1997) *Modernism and postmodernism: An overview with Art examples. Art Education: Content and Practice in a Postmodern Era*, 17-30.

Anniversary 1906. Fauvism 1905 shared artistic ideology and sensitivities of symbolism and anti-mimesis; the movement insisted on the creation of art that evokes emotional sensations through form and colour with a positive embrace of life as well as the rejection of western mimetic conventions and bourgeois restrictions. *Cubism 1907* challenged and rejected the one-point perspective in Classical and Renaissance aesthetics; instead, it proffered and championed the use of multiple viewpoints and perspective to capture the fragmentation of reality in modern society. *Cubism* became a new kind of realism, an alternative perspective for viewing the world from multiple viewpoints, which conveyed the 'real' more convincingly and intelligently than the illusionistic representations of Renaissance and classical art. Characterised by subdued monochromatic palettes and the fragmentation of still life (paintings and drawings) into quasi-abstract compositions of interpenetrating planes, the philosophy and style of Cubism, became an affront on and resistance against Western notions of artistic purity, unity, perspective and authenticity. *Futurism 1909* insisted on a total break from the past, the invention of art in disarray, chaos, anarchy etc., as well as militarism against authority, order, galleries, museums, and to fight against moralism, feminism and utilitarianism. These avant-gardes declared themselves the 'primitives' of a new completely transformed sensibility focused on re-ordering modern society by rejecting all established conventions. *Dadaism 1916* was an international phenomenon across New York, Zurich, Paris, Berlin, Hanover, Cologne, Barcelona etc.; it was characterised by the expression of anger at the state, the hypocrisy of established political, social, religious and artistic institutions and their values. Dadaists championed chaotic, anarchical, irrational and anti-order art as the appropriate mechanism for society to destroy all establishment and values. With deliberately outrageous anti-art themes, they violently attacked the received traditions of art, philosophy and literature as exemplified by Marcel Duchamp's 'disinterested art' (*Readymade*).

Andrea Breton launched *Surrealism* in 1924 as a new movement and its manifesto called for subjective projection into the future in advance of their time as well as total revolt against society. Surrealism according to Breton, expressed “the absence of any control exerted by reason, and outside all moral and aesthetic considerations” (Breton 1924: 15). In surrealist ideologies, the idea of beauty was to be found in unexpected chanced encounters as opposed to slavish adherence to conventionality. Surrealists sought to change peoples’ perception of reality by breaking the barriers between their inner and outer worlds and to free mankind from the shackles of logic and reason, as well as from imposed classical and renaissance ideals/values. *Abstract Expressionism 1920* provided an alternative interpretation of art and modern society based on the sublime expression of man’s inner emotions as the true subject of art rather than mimetic representation promulgated in western classical aesthetic conventions. Abstract expressionists exploited the symbolic fundamental aspects of the painting process – gestures, colour, form, line, texture etc., to create a new type of art to confront the irrational, absurd world. *Minimalism 1963* on the other hand, thrived on the concept of simplicity. Minimalists saw the work of art as distraction from the art object itself, and sought to demystify art, and make bare its materials and processes in order to draw the viewers into contemplation (Dempsey 2010). Being the product of anti-aestheticism advocacies, minimalist simplistic formalism subverted Europe’s notions of high and authentic art/culture by rejecting bourgeois aesthetic structures in favour simplistic non-mimetic expression.

These avant-garde movements shared similar radical anti-institutional/anti-order sentiments. In their battle for freedom, they emphasised the importance of self as the starting point of all knowledge and as a powerful force beyond any higher authority or institutions. They rejected the restrictive control by political, social, religious and other institutions, choosing rather to experience the modern world inhered in “the transient, fleeting and contingent sensations of urban life”

(Charvet 1972: 395). Their manifestoes promoted *Anomie* - the annihilation of all standards of values, and glorification of the profane. By promoting anomie and normlessness, which had become the spirit of progress, moral transgression and rebellion, they subverted conventionality, rationality, Victorianism, Classicism, bourgeois culture etc., and overturned the monopoly of art institutions.

Modernism is thus defined by an intellectual quest, led by avant-garde artists and writers to transgress the present time and project into the future by subverting the status quo through anti-art aesthetic formalism that engaged (socially, politically and culturally) with modern society/modernity. In their resolve to engage and transform their societies, modernists constituted themselves into avant-garde¹⁸ movements (discussed above), using the subversive power of art to pursue strong social ideologies, leading to the migration from modernity to bohemianism as a form of counter-culture revolt.¹⁹ Ven den Berg et al (2012) describes this revolt expressed through the decadence culture of bohemianism as a political strategy aimed at subverting and influencing power especially the “core of the hegemonic culture like the bourgeois, in order to overturn their authority” (Ven den Berg et al 2012: 12). Through this expression of bohemianism, Modernism constituted a form of anti-establishment, anti-aesthetics, anti-art and anti-culture propaganda tailored to transgress the past (Katsiaficas 1999)

¹⁸ Avant-garde is a French word, (Vanguard); the term was developed in France with the promotion of radical socialism and first appeared in arts, in Henri de Saint-Simon Rodrigues' essay '*L'artiste, le savant et l'industriel 1825*', in which he defined a new revolutionary purpose for arts in modern society...“We artists will serve you as an avant-garde, the power of the arts is most immediate...when we want to spread new ideas we inscribe them on marble or canvas. What a magnificent destiny for the arts is that of exercising a positive power over society, a true priestly function and of marching in the van [i.e. vanguard] of all the intellectual faculties...” (Saint-Simon 1825).

¹⁹ Bohemianism is the culture and artistic attitude of intentional flouting of historical consciousness and mindfulness upheld by authorities as well as the activities that criticize such historiography. In its counterculture activism, bohemianism became a culture characterised by individualism, which became a requisite of modern art. It fostered liberalism the spirit of rebellion against the tyranny in government and art institutions with the bohemian honour of antagonism to conventions. Bohemianism is a social habit at variance with those of society, aiming for practical anarchy. Their revulsive social life manifested in unconventionality and opposition/objection to discipline and its implications - conventions, standards, and values (Josephs & Snyderman 1939, Sell 2007).

Modernism therefore, translates as the intersection of art with politics and social concerns, to facilitate social reforms and interrogated different notions of power, since avant-gardes' aimed to overturn bourgeoisie association with materialism, narrowness and conventional attitudes, which constituted hindrances and served to maintain its position of predominance. Modernist art became a propaganda (itself a modernist phenomena) to "draw attention to troubling aspects of modern society ignored by a complacent middle class...to educate the public, to keep alive in the face of conservative forces, and uphold the enlightenment ideals of freedom and equality through which the world would be made a better place" (Witcome 1995: 5). This led to the radicalisation of forms to create awareness, trigger political/social sentiments, alter power, and create a new order of society. This propagandist ethos of Modernism, is most evinced in post-war European art, which saw a heightened sense of artistic revolt against authority and institutions in view of the aftermaths of the war. *Dadaism* for example, proclaimed anti-bourgeois orderliness by inventing art in disarray to subvert culture and institutions. Dadaist expressed repulsion with the "civilized barbarism" of European culture using unconventional and to many at the time repulsive materials: collage, music, film, photography, sculpture etc., for their anti-aesthetics, anti-bourgeois, and anti-order activism (Tzara 1918: 2). Avant-gardes became enemy of order (Cox 2000) and according to Clement Greenberg (1939), "detached themselves from society, and formulated alternative paths to keep culture moving in the midst of violence by inventing revolutionary art" (Greenberg 1939: 30), thus resulting in the creation of a counter-culture in their quest to subvert authority/institutions, and re-order modern society.

Modernism is also characterised by the promulgation of a complete divorce with past traditional, classical or established conventions, through the rejection of the old order of religion, arts, music and morals etc. This anti-historicism activism expressed modernist's battle against restrictions and the tyranny of classical

institutions (Barret 1997). In his book *Modernism*, Peter Childs (2007) describing the works of Pablo Picasso, Marcel Duchamp and others of the modernist vanguard, assert that, this anti-historicism fostered in modernists art, had immense creative and political implications as it led to creative subjectivism and the creation of a new art characterised by stylistic complexities with which bourgeois sensibilities and art Salons²⁰ were subverted (Childs 2007: 4). Art salons had become subsumed in bourgeois conventionality, thus, releasing art from their ritual use, and in Peter Burger's words, "dissociated art from the praxis of life to serve bourgeoisie benefits and political use" (Burger 1984: 24). The institutional, religious and social role of arts in classical civilization was perceived by avant-gardes as hindrances to the realisation of the absolute form in modern context hence, the proclamation of anti-historicism, anti-traditionalism and ant-classicism advocacies as an affront on bourgeois culture and European aesthetics. Krauss et al (2004) opined that,

Avant-Garde strategies focused on reversing the bourgeois hierarchy of aesthetic exchange-value...Anti-aesthetics dismantled the aesthetic autonomy on all levels: replaced originality with technical production, destroyed works aura and the contemplative mode of aesthetic experience...situating the work of art in a social context where it assumed a variety of productive functions such as information, education, political enlightenment, and opposition... (Krauss et al 2004: 25).

This anti-historicism of European Modernism subverted and dismantled European aesthetic conventions, culture and bourgeois authority. To achieve this, some modernists such as Piet Mondrian, Wassily Kandinsky, Franz March

²⁰ Salons in the 19th Century constituted of a select group of artists, intellectuals and politicians who regularly gathered in the residence of a wealthy and influential person with control over society. It afforded artists a meeting point and platform for discussion on art, literature, politics, culture and modern life. In Paris and London, it was the official sponsor of art exhibitions backed by royal patronage, as was the case of Academie des Beaux-Arts in Paris and the London Royal Academy. Salons comprised of a jury system made up of Academy members and previous winners of Salon medals, and this institution had "virtual monopoly on public taste and patronage" (Jason 2004). It regulated art, defined its parameters of authenticity based on its own determined conventions and principles; the jury system decided what art was deemed acceptable hence resulting in what is termed Salon art or academic art that avant-gardes rebelled against.

and others employed abstract minimalism while others such as Pablo Picasso, Georges Braque, and Henri Matisse, explored and appropriated the abstract world of 'primitive' cultures because it was culturally loaded with meaning, to invent a subversive art vocabulary antithetical to European aesthetics. Donald Egbert (1967) notes that, avant-garde's works became radical socially, politically, as well as artistically, with hostility towards all forms of establishments (bourgeoisie, academic traditions and classical conventions), hence leading to a counterculture that gave rise to new realisms – alternative notions of modern artistic expression (Egbert 1967), underpinning why anti-institutionalism and anti-historicism constitutes key features of Modernist discourse.

Scholars often draw upon the ideology of radical experimentalism to theorise avant-garde art and Modernism. This is because, the doctrine of '*Art for Art's Sake*' proselytised creative freedom, which favoured experimentation instigating the emergence of new art styles invented by different avant-garde movements in their interrogation of the very nature of art. Pather Mitter (2008), in '*Decentering Modernism*', observes that experimentation was the crux of Modernism resulting from modernist "ideology of emancipatory innovation, and its oppositional relation to tradition, thus releasing new energies in artists" (Mitter 2008: 533). This transgression of classical conventions through rigorous experimentations altered the form and function of art from the ancient dominant modes of mimesis, verisimilitude and realism, to "increased sophistication, profound introversion, self-scepticism and general anti-representationalism" (Childs 2007: 22), through which avant-gardes attained creative subjectivism in their battle against bourgeois conventionality, authority and social order.

Edwin Aubrey (1935) describes Modernism as an attitude - a changed psychological consciousness in individual's perceptions and interpretation of the universe, occasioned by radical theories and enlightenment ideals. Aubrey (1935)

asserts that, “modernism is an attitude and thinking which seeks self-expression in modern world” (Aubrey 1935: 434), and such subjective self-expressionism altered modern European culture, as it was antithetical to Western institutionalised conventions. This changed psychological attitude informed by modern theories, empowered modernists with the theoretical and conceptual frameworks to interrogate the past, and subject knowledge and concepts once considered definitive, to subjective analysis. In *Modernism an Incomplete Project* Jurgen Habermas (1985) observed that, “it is this change in psychological consciousness and attitudes, the desire to transgress the present age, to project into the future, the faith in the revolutionary etc., that inspired the invention of modernists art” (Habermas 1985: 15). Enlightenment and modernist ideologies of freedom and individualism instigated the sense of freedom from whence anti-institutionalism, anti-establishment, anti-authority consciousness in Modernism derived, as modernist saw bourgeois institutionalised restrictions as stifling freedom.

The sceptic attitude in Modernism was inspired by modern philosophies such as Albert Einstein’s theory of relativity, which questioned the concept of ‘absolute’ arguing that everything is subjective and relative (Einstein 1905). His theory translated in the arts that realism is subjective, hence inspiring avant-garde’s rejection of institutionalised European convention of mimicry and representationalism as authentic realism and absolute expression of art. European avant-gardes’ migration into bohemian disarray, attitudes of radicalism, unconventionality, counter-culture etc., reflects the spirit of rebellion, of total anarchy, revulsive social life, opposition to order and discipline, all instigated by psychological paradigm shifts (Joseph & Snyderman 1939, Sell 2007). It is this changes in psychological consciousness that led to the rebellion against institutionalised social order and bourgeois conventionality that defined Modernism.

To summarise, Modernism thus, represent the set of Twentieth Century art styles, manifestoes, movements and philosophies, occasioned by the conditions of modernity, tailored to alter or influence institutions/authority, challenge political, artistic and religious hegemony in order to facilitate societal transformation. In this sense, Modernism encompasses the efforts of many individuals across the arts that according to Childs (2007), turned away from established conventions of representational and traditional arts to find alternative realisms through the invention of new radical aesthetics and modern art philosophies (Childs 2007). It also refers to all modern arts that fostered a) socio-political critique b) aesthetic/institutional subversion and c) artistic force-work (Zairek 2004: 189). The next section will explore the problematic of Modernism discourse.

2.3 The Problematic of Modernist Discourse: European Modernism and Africa

European Modernist discourse situates Modernism within Euro-American cultural context, as a cultural product of Europe's intellectually, scientifically and psychologically advanced civilization. This construed viewpoint is problematic, as it has led to the paradoxical ideology of a superior mainstream and the exclusion of the '*Other*' from such Eurocentric discourse. Modernist art movement and avant-gardes outside Western institutionalised mainstream are constantly ignored and dismissed. According to Partha Mitter (2008),

Modernism created its own tacit exclusions and inclusions so that other modernism outside western European mainstream of the metropolis of Paris, Post-war England or New York, are silenced as derivatives and or dismissed...(Mitter 2008: 540).

Mitter alludes to the Eurocentrism that characterises Modernism discourse and its direct links with European philosophies of cultural superiority. Euro-American

Modernism is framed in such Occidental superiority logic to preserve European cultural and aesthetic hegemony,²¹ thus underpinning the dismissal and exclusion of modern arts of *'Other'* cultures even when such cultures as Africa actuated the emergence of European Modernism. This Eurocentric exclusivism served imperial purposes; it was as Jacob Preminda (1999) argues, philosophically framed to legitimise and enable Europe extend colonisation and cultural domination long after decolonization. Preminda posits that,

Although the direct political hegemony of imperialism ended during the 1940s, 1950s and 1960s, that cultural hegemony of the West was maintained via the discourse of modernism...Art historical discourse of the 1950s and 1960s summarily dismissed the contemporary art production of Third World nations as at best a mildly interesting spin-off of avant-garde explorations that had already reached their full articulation in the West (Preminda 1999: 50).

The construction of European Modernism discourse as Preminda points out is strategically designed to subvert the identities of *'Other'* cultures, enabling the continued oppression and devaluation of their cultural products especially art and literature as derivatives.

Africa for example occupies a negative space outside Western European mainstream despite its role in European Modernism, hence creating tension between Europe and Africa. The anti-conventional revolution in modern arts that led to the emergence of Euro-American Modernism was inspired by artistic tendencies barrowed from Africa and the Orient. In their quest for creative freedom, capture the ambiguity of modernity, as well as subvert bourgeois culture/conventionality, European modernists such as Pablo Picasso, Henry

²¹ Eurocentrism forces cultural heterogeneity into a single paradigmatic perspective in which Europe is seen as the unique source of meaning, as the world's centre of gravity, as ontological reality to the rest of the world's shadow. Eurocentric thinking attributes to the West an almost providential sense of historical destiny...Like Renaissance, Eurocentrism maps the world in a cartography that centralizes and augments Europe while literally belittling other cultures like Africa. Eurocentrism bifurcated the world into the West and the Rest (Ahohat & Stam 2014: 2).

Matisse, George Braque and others, appropriated African abstractionism, thus resulting in the invention of the new anti-mimetic art formalism that defined early Euro-American Modernist art. Picasso's '*Head of a Sleeping Woman 1907*', '*Les Demoiselles d'Avignon 1907*' as well as Matisse's '*Portrait of Yvonne Landsberg 1914*' (see figures 2.1-2.3) are defined by the abstract formalism of African sculptures they encountered in 1907 at *Palais de Trocadero* - Paris. *Les Demoiselle d'Avignon 1907* signaled the beginning of modernist painting with its revolutionary anti-conventional stylistic configuration and complete disregard for Western laws of perspective and proportion; it initiated the break from and defiance of European aesthetic conventions and classical taste.

The painting (*Les Demoiselles d'Avignon 1907*) consists of five nude women depicted in flat, fragmented planes with masklike faces exhibiting elements of Picasso's appropriation of traditional African art. The two figures to the right of the canvas wear masks for head – their facial features reflect African abstract ideology of distortion and construction of form by juxtaposing heterogeneous materials in multiple planes, as well as exaggeration of proportions to emphasize peculiar qualities of a thing, person, animal or cosmic reality. The eyes and nose of the figures are exaggerated; while their forms are geometrically distorted which reflects features of the African Kru mask that inspired Picasso. As Pericles Lewis (2007) points out, the geometricized construction of the faces is a reflection of traditional African abstractionism whose creative philosophy emphasised “formal qualities of the work of art, rather than its accuracy as a representation of reality which was important to Picasso's development of modernism” (Lewis 2007: 75). This appropriation of the unconventional visual idioms of African abstractionism enabled Picasso developed new subversive parameters for modern European art, thus, marking a radical departure from traditional Western compositions and perspective in paintings. Picasso abandoned all established forms of representations by depicting the figures in flat planes than the rounded volumes that dominated then European mimetic

conventions. The features of the female body are abruptly and brutally distorted thus challenging the expectation that paintings will offer idealized and romanticized representations of female beauty as seen in both classical and Renaissance paintings. Rather than classical and Renaissance single-point or pyramidal perspectives, in defiance, Picasso employed multiple perspectives. The ladies appear detached from each other, concentrating singularly on the viewer, all painted in dissimilar styles to advance the power of their fixed gaze. The radical application of colors creates a sense of clash/disharmony within the composition, which emphasize multiple planes and perspectives rather than the principle of harmony promoted in Western aesthetics. This distortion of forms, geometric fragmentation of the picture plane inspired by African art, constituted a subversive unconventional idiom with which Picasso defined the parameters of modernist art. By implication, as Hilton Kramer (1973) points out in *The Age of the Avant-garde*, traditional African abstract expressionism provided visual/conceptual references with which pioneering European modernists defined the radical parameters of Modernism;²² African ethnographic art thus, contributed immensely to the emergence of Euro-American Modernism and the definition of modern art.

However, despite Africa's role in European Modernism, modern African art is ignored or dismissed in Modernist discourse. Western art history adopts derogatory discursive frameworks to situate Africa outside its Eurocentric mainstream and devalue its cultural products; '*Primitivism*' and '*Exoticism*' are often deployed to describe African art and such terminologies are designed to foster Western aesthetic and cultural hegemony over Africa. '*Primitivism*' suggests crudity, naivety and lack of creative wherewithal to produce high art;

²² Picasso was inspired by the discovery of Kru Masks and embarked on the exploration of non-mimetic, relational structure of visual signs and this inspiration from African sculpture not only inaugurated the invention of constructed sculpture and the series of Picasso's collages but also synthetic cubism, Twentieth Century sculpture and to a large extent, the semiological investigation that launched Abstraction...the inorganic structures, abrupt transitions, and non-mimetic or arbitrary qualities of African art collusion in Picasso's Guitar proved very auspicious for modern art...Picasso responded to the diacritical formal structures: its reliance on mutually defining elements of the Kru mask...(Kramer 1973: 274-5).

while 'Exoticism' is used as reference to art stumbled into without rationale/content, and these European construed philosophical framing of African art to devalue it, is problematic.²³

Modernism exclusivism is extended through the dismissal of modern African art as mimesis of European avant-garde art. Artefacts produced by African modernists at the turn of the Twentieth Century are dismissed as mimesis on account of Africa's geographical location as opposed to lack of creative sophistication in such art forms; William Fagg and Margaret Plass (1964) for example, dismiss modern and contemporary African art with all its merits as a simple "extension of European art by an involuntary cultural colonialism" (Fagg & Plass 1964: 6). They further dismiss *Negritude* the concept of African modernism, and symbol of Africa's revolt against colonialism and Western cultural imposition, as "blanchitude" a mimetic extension of Parisian existentialism ideology with no roots and context in Africa (Op. Cit. 1964: 7). Harding and Rouse (2010) assert that such dismissal of modern African art in Modernism narratives derives from European imperial philosophies of white superiority even when African modernist art was far revolutionary than those of Europe. They argue that,

Picasso invested modern European art with the help of Africa. Nigerian artists Aina Onabolu in 1903 invented modern African art with the help of Europe. Which of the two made the more revolutionary move? In most accounts, Picasso only gets the nod by default, because Onabolu doesn't exist for western art history, nor does the modern African art that followed him. The artistic valorisation of Picasso's primitivism comes at the expense of Onabolu's achievement because Picasso's rebellion is within the system, on the leading edge of the white mainstream, while Onabolu is not (Harding & Rouse 2010: 44).

²³ As in the Romantic Movement appeal to the folk art of marginal people, there is also a sidelong reference in modernism. Art seen as primitive or exotic is superficially accepted as art but at same time dismissed as non-art. These appeal to the 'Other' – in fact highly developed arts of their own places – are combined with an underlying association of the 'primitive' and the 'unconscious' (Williams 1989: 53).

In European modernist discourse, Twentieth Century modern African art is non-existent as colonised Africans fell outside Western mainstream²⁴ and were considered incapable of creating high art worthy of the epithet modern. Harding and Rose (2010) unmask this Eurocentric superiority construction of Modernism discourse; while the appropriation of African 'primitivism' is celebrated in Picasso's modernism, at same time, appropriation is deployed to discredit and dismiss modern African art as mimesis. This Western dismissal of modern African art, disregards the efforts and contributions of modern African artists to Twentieth Century art-world, and further dismisses the possibilities of parallel Modernisms given rise to by the creative impetus of cultures whose visual idioms inspired Euro-American Modernism. As Shohat and Stam (2014) succinctly observe in *Unthinking Eurocentrism*, "Eurocentrism appropriates the cultural and material production of non-Europeans while denying both their achievements and its own appropriation..." (Shohat & Stam 2014: 3). This Eurocentric exclusivism driven by imperial philosophies, makes it impossible to inscribe other Modernisms into Western mainstream, since it is as John Clark (1993) observes, constructed as "a closed system which cannot accommodate new modernist discourses to which the regions beyond the West have given rise to" (Clarke 1993), hence underpinning the need for developing alternative parallel Modernist discourses to account for Modernisms outside Europe.

This exclusivism has created tensions between European Modernism and the 'Other', providing marginalized cultures such as Africa with the contextual platform to interrogate imperial oppression, discrimination, cultural imposition and colonialism. The relationship between Africa and Western Modernism is both fraught and complex; the tensions resulting from this Eurocentrism, has prompted new Afro-centric discourses focused on challenging/subverting Africa's

²⁴ This means that Africa like 'Other' cultures was theorised in European philosophies and narratives of modern art to be outside European centres of Paris, New York, Zurich, Post-war England etc., thus not qualified for inclusion in modernist discourses.

exclusion and dismissal in Western art history. This is because African Modernists from the 1900s aware of the power of appropriation employed by European modernists in interrogating bourgeois culture, appropriated/localised external artistic influences to challenge colonial racism, subjugation and discrimination, as well as subvert the idealised concept of white mainstream superiority; their practices are now subjected to postcolonial interrogation and re-reading in order to address the monocentrism/exclusivism of European philosophies and discourses. As Mitter (2008) observes,

Modernism spread worldwide because of the West's dominance, and yet modernism's radical message inspired non-Western regions to create their own art of resistance against the colonial order; modernism's ideology of emancipatory innovation, and its agonistic relation to tradition and authority released new energies in artists outside Europe...its revolutionary message furnished ammunition for cultural resistance to colonial empires, as each colonized nation deployed the language of modernism to fight its own particular cultural corner (Mitter 2008: 533-534).

Interrogating Twentieth Century modern African/Nigerian art reveals that African modernist reciprocated the radical message of European avant-gardism to revolt against Western subjugation. Aina Onabolu, Ben Enwonwu, Uche Okeke, Akinola Lasekan of Nigeria, Amon Kotei and Oku Ampofo of Ghana, Ibrahim El-Salahi of Sudan and others, appropriated European aesthetics, juxtaposed it with cultural nationalist advocacies to interrogate the West and fight against colonial domination, subjugation, racism, discrimination and cultural imposition. In Nigeria for example, modern art created from the 1900s expressed indigenous resistance and revolt against the colonial regime which reflects the socio-political critique, as well as anti-authority ideologies which Krzyztof Zairek (2004) in *The Force of Art* theorise as the defining characteristics of Modernism.

African modernist equally invented modern art to subvert European aesthetic

hegemony and ideologies of superior white mainstream. As elucidated earlier in this chapter, Eurocentric exclusion/dismissal of the arts of Africa derived from imperial superiority philosophies and this subsequently prompted African modernist to revolt against Western dismissal of their creative/cultural products. Avant-garde groups emerged with radical manifestoes against European imposition - the *Zaria Rebels* of the 1950s in Nigeria for instance, rejected the Eurocentric concept of a monolithic approach to art making esoterically European to which all 'Other' cultures must abide. These modernists and others across the African continent, began "refusing the self-alienated position of imposed receptivity and used their position as a site of resistance" (Pratt 2002: 21), which resulted in the creation of new modernist art antithetical and opposed to Western aesthetic conventions.²⁵ The rejection of the imposed imagery of receptivity by African artists led to anti-Europeanization advocacies that defined the creative and conceptual framework of African cultural avant-gardism. Just like Picasso and European avant-gardes, African artists appropriated Western aesthetics and revolutionary creative ethos, to facilitate decolonisation and incite societal transformation particular to their cultural context. It is this manifestation of avant-gardism in the arts of cultures such as Nigeria resulting from the tension between Africa and European Modernism, and the ambiguities in contemporary discourses such as *Alternative Modernism*, *Peripheral Modernism*, *Modernism Outside Europe* etc., especially the unwitting allusion to Eurocentric mainstreamism,²⁶ which inspires this current study and the framing of a new discourse that will appropriately theorise and contextualise modernist art produced in Nigeria between 1900 - 1960 as an expression of a unique parallel Modernism.

²⁵ "There are peripheral modernisms standing in relations of contradiction, complimentary, and differentiation with those of the centre. Their emancipatory power, lies chiefly in refusing the self alienated position of imposed receptivity and using their position as a site of creative authenticity and resistance..." (Pratt 2002: 47).

²⁶ There has been in recent scholarship the now-fashionable tendency to theorize non-European modernist art or actually those modernist practices that fell outside the centres of Paris, New York's will-to-abstraction as alternative, vernacular, or cosmopolitan Modernism. The problem with these propositions, however, is that they invariably insinuate Paris and New York as the site of modernism, while the others represent, at best, the 'Other', and in some sense not-quite-the-real Modernism...(Okeke-Agulu 2006: 15).

The ideology of Modernism as summarised in section 2.2 and Chapter One 1.1, centres on the invention of modern art driven by radical philosophies, to subvert or influence power, alter perceptions, formulate new knowledge, to incite change and bring about transformation; it is therefore implausible to think of Modernism as an entirely European cultural phenomenon, because such avant-gardism manifested in *'Other'* cultures outside Europe, with each culture evolving specific modernist expressions in reaction to their social, cultural and political conditions that differ remarkably from others and those of the West. Childs (2007) refers to the proselytization of the ideology of mainstream Modernism in European art history, as controversial, undesirable and faulty because influences from the complex arts of cultures such as Africa influenced the emergence of Euro-American Modernism (Childs 2007: 13). Alluding to Child's submission, it is plausible that such cultures must have developed high modernist arts, which the West blatantly dismisses; this premise, theory and postcolonial quest to shift the gravity of Modernism discourse from European mainstreamism by exploring Twentieth Century avant-garde arts of excluded cultures, is the underpinning conceptual framework upon which Nigerian Modernism is conceived and established in this thesis.

2.4 Nigerian Modernism – Concept and Context

Varying scholars have adopted the ideologies of Modernism as analytical tool (discussed in 1.3 and 2.2) to theorise the manifestation of this phenomenon in cultures outside European mainstream; this is because, modern artists practicing in different countries at the turn of the Twentieth Century created their unique cultural Modernisms, making it implausible to sustain any argument for a universal mainstream Modernism (Herf 1984: 1). This new discourse of Nigerian Modernism derives from the synthesized theories in 2.1 and 2.2, which establishes the possibilities and necessity for alternative Modernist discourses to

shift the linearity of Western art history.

As conceived in this study, Nigerian Modernism is defined as the philosophies and styles of modern art produced in Nigeria under imperial rule at the turn of the Twentieth Century as a direct artistic reaction to modernization, colonial subjugation, missionary anti-art advocacies and European cultural imposition. It refers to avant-garde art of resistance invented as visual propaganda to foster nationalist battles for decolonisation by interlacing modern creative expressions with political activisms impelled by the doctrines of *Negritude*, *Pan-Africanism*, and *Pan-Nigerianism*. Nigerian Modernism also refers to the invention of modern art from the 1900s, which initiated the break from traditional creative philosophies in the search for new realisms (new notions, styles, perspectives and philosophies of modern art) reflective of the revolutionary new culture of the emergent modern state. Modernism as Lewis and Childs opines, reflects the quest for creative freedom, search for new realisms, and break from the past (Lewis 2000, Childs 2007);²⁷ in this context, the concept of Nigerian Modernism encompasses the rejection of historicism in modern art in the quest to define a new cultural and nationalist identity for the emergent modern state, capturing the creative migration from the predominant abstract expressionism in pre-colonial culture, to modern forms of subjective realism in the works of Onabolu and Lasekan, as well as the hybrid anti-Europeanization aesthetics of Enwonwu, Okeke, Onabrokpa, Twin Seven Seven, Nwoko, and Wangboje in the modernising spirit of their age.

Critical analysis of both styles, contexts and concepts of modern art created in Nigeria from the 1900s has revealed varying conceptual and ideological paradigms driven by different socio-political and cultural circumstances; these

²⁷ What we can now identify of Modernism in its active and creative years, underlying its many works, is a range of diverse and fast-moving artistic methods and practices, and at the same time a set of relatively constant positions and beliefs...what marks out this emphasis in both Modernism and the avant-garde is a defiance and finally violent rejection of tradition: the insistence on a clean break with the past...(Lewis, 2000).

variations in art styles, philosophies and manifestoes, informs the theory put forward in this thesis that Nigeria experienced a bifurcated Modernism with two distinct periods driven by different avant-garde ideologies and characterised by different creative formalisms. The first phase of this bifurcated Modernism flourished from 1900 – 1930 and was characterised by the rejection of traditional aesthetic conventions as well as the reverse-appropriation of European realism to foster resistance to stereotypes, racism and discrimination. The second phase flourished from 1930 - 1960 and was characterised by anti-Europeanization activism driven by cultural revivalism/affirmation ideologies, and nationalist decolonisation politics; as well as the battle to reconstruct Nigerian identity.²⁸ This bifurcated Modernism was given rise to by certain Nigeria-Specific social, religious, political and cultural conditions, which also defined its avant-gardism, as opposed to being a product of colonial benevolence ambiguously claimed by colonial theorist. Unlike European Modernism, the unique conditions and societal problematic that gave rise to Nigerian Modernism are discussed in the next section.

2.4.1 Conditions that gave Rise to Nigerian Modernism

a) Missionary Anti-art, Anti-culture and Ant-traditionalism Propaganda

At the of the turn of the Nineteenth Century, it dawned on Britain that the evil of slave trade “had exposed Africans to the worst miseries that ever defiled or desolated the earth” (Goldie 1901: 6), thus to atone for its part in the desolation of Africa, and establish a surreptitious means of exploiting its resources, missionaries were sent as imperial forerunners to cajole Africans using evangelicalism. This ploy is captured in the recommendations of Sir Thomas Fowell Buxton who in 1835 recommended the following to the British

²⁸ Refer to chapter three for detailed analysis of these two phases of Nigerian Modernism.

parliament, “we must elevate the minds of her people and call forth the resources of her soil...let the missionaries and schoolmasters, the plough and the spade, go together and the arenas to legitimate trade will be opened”(Buxton 1835: 7). Thus, coached in imperial philosophies, missions became part of Western colonial symbol of power (Horton 1971: 91); hence while they arrived Africa with codified messages of salvation, their minds were firmly fixed on exploiting the material resources of the continent (Galloway 1960).

As part of the imperial project, from 1845 missionaries set out to constitute a new social order in Africa using evangelicalism and their first step was to erase all aspects of the colonised customs, perceived as stumbling blocks. This presupposition led to traditional African art the propelling force of African religion and the symbolism of the people’s cosmology which missionaries perceived as a hindrance to colonial rule, subjected to extreme Western attacks (Goldie 1890). To overcome this supposed hindrance, missionaries adopted a negative propaganda of stereotyping African religion and its paraphernalia as evil, barbaric, ritualistic, idolatry and superstitious (Bascom 1953: 495). This research argues that through this strategy of stereotyping which is another form of crediting an oppressive discourse of the ‘Other’, missions contributed immensely to the facilitation of colonial rule; this is because, according to Sander Gilman (1985), “stereotyping was a political rhetoric to gain and exercise control over the stereotyped” (Gilman 1985: 126). Power encourages stereotypes and stereotypes in turn helps to enforce and maintain such power (Fiske 1993: 621), thus, the formulation of stereotypes by missionaries facilitated the colonisation of Nigeria by enabling the West gain control over the colonised.²⁹

Missions’ stereotypical condemnation of African art and religion, facilitated

²⁹ When people are stereotyped, they are situated in a system of representation and made to accept whatever imagery is projected on them. Thus, this accords power to those formulating such stereotypes as they assume control over the stereotyped whose way of life, behaviour and functionality in their respective societies become determined by such stereotypes. Projecting negative imagery unto the ‘Other’ became a form of power, of control and of domination associated with colonialism. See Fiske, S. T. (1993) ‘Controlling Other People: the Impact of Power on Stereotyping’, *American Psychologist*, Vol. 48.6, p: 621.

colonialism by prompting the following: a) obliteration of traditional religion through the destruction of art forms - the fulcrum and potency of African spirituality, philosophies and determinant of communal unity, hence enabling the imposition of colonial rule. b) It led to the destruction of traditional institutions of authority/governance and the subversion of traditional rulers powers, paving the way for wheedling of Africans into imposed colonial rule, and finally c) It led to the erasure of Nigeria's identity and cultural heritage; as Frantz Fanon (1961) observes, to facilitate colonialism, imperialist often "turned to the past of oppressed people, and distort, disfigure and destroy it" (Fanon 1961: 4). By instigating the destruction of traditional Nigerian art forms, the West distorted and destroyed Nigerian past cultural heritage hence facilitating the erasure of its cultural identity and the Europeanization of Nigerian society. Furthermore, by condemning art, missionaries initiated the dislodgment of subjective thinking and activities capable of challenging imperial occupation of Nigeria. Through missionary propaganda, art was exterminated from Nigerian society from the 1840s and traditional customs and cultural values were destroyed. This problematic missions' anti-art/anti-culture propaganda constituted a major factor that led to the emergence of Nigerian Modernism; this is because the realisation from the 1900s of the imperial power imperatives interlaced in missionary evangelicalism as the rationale behind missions' condemnation of African art and culture using derogatory stereotypes designed to subdue Nigerians and legitimise Britain colonial subjugation,³⁰ sparked revolts in Lagos which established the roots of resistance activism in modern Nigerian art.³¹

³⁰ Imperial relations may have been established initially by guns, guile, etc., but they were maintained in their interpolative phase largely by textuality both institutionally and informally. Colonialism like its counterpart racism, is a formation and operation of discourse which interpellates colonial subjects by incorporating them in a system of naming and representation...colonial interactions in its power relations, draws on strategies of naming and classifying as implicit modes of political and territorial domination' (Tiffin and Lawson 1994: 3, Singh 1996).

³¹ During the period of colonial occupation in Nigeria, a complex power relationship ensued that was central to the emergence of Nigerian Modernism. At the center of this power relation was the imperial colonial government; they exacted oppressive influence on indigenous Nigerians through varying strategies. The second power group constituted of those referred to as colonial apologists who were used to further extend colonial policies and rule. They included local warrant chiefs, and traditional rulers used by the colonialist to

b) Imperial Discrimination and Cultural Imposition

To achieve colonisation, imperialist adopted various strategies including force, psychological manoeuvring and stereotypes, to force the colonized into submission. Western occupation of Nigeria was characterised by subjugation, racism, discrimination, and cultural imposition as well as manoeuvring in trade, which consequently resulted in uprisings against Europeans in Lagos from the 1890s. Although Nigerians contributed to the colony's economy, they were excluded from the 1888 white dominated *Lagos Chamber of Commerce* in order for the imperialist to maintain control over the colonized.³² Nigerians were equally excluded for same reasons from *The Legislative Council* of 1862, 1901 and *The West African Land Commission* of 1912 (Colenmen 1958: 80). To further oppress and subdue the colonized, several colonial policies with racist undertone were enacted and imposed on indigenous peoples - *The house and land Tax 1907, Lagos Island Acquisition Ordinance 1908, Water Rate Levy 1909, the Seditious Offenses Ordinances 1912* etc., were all designed to suppress the colonized. Nigerians found this imperial discrimination and institutionalised subjugation unacceptable as it deprived them of their rights to contribute to

administer indirect rule in the colonies, hence were integral parts of the dialectical power relationship that oppressed Nigerians. Another influential group were the local merchants who had accumulated wealth through the exportation of cotton, palm oil, palm kernel, rubber and groundnut, hence had strong economic and commercial influence in the colonies. They were the trade intermediaries between European traders and farmers in the interior hinterlands; from the 1900s, they began revolting against attempts by Europeans to bypass them and deal directly with indigenous farmers and their resistance to this colonial/European strategy to undermine their position resulted in intense commercial conflict. The last force of the colonial power relationship in Nigeria was the emergent intellectual colonial elites who joined forces with local merchants to battle against the oppression of indigenous peoples by the colonialist and their African agents. Their intellectual exposure equipped them to resist their strategic dismissal and omission from the governing of the colony by colonial authorities, as well as engaged in the battle to reclaim the land and accord Africans a sense of pride and involvement in the modernization and development of their Land. It is their efforts and activism during the early period of colonialism that foregrounded the emergence of artistic resistance and avant-gardism explored in this research. See Ekeh, P. P. (1975) 'Colonialism and the two Publics in Africa: A Theoretical Statement', *Comparative studies in society and history*, 17(01), 91-112, and Ehiedu Iweriebor, E. G. (2011) 'The Colonization of Africa' *Africana Age* [Online] Available at: <http://exhibitions.nypl.org/africanaage/essay-colonization-of-africa.html> (Accessed: 11 December 2015).

³² During this period, European oligarchies began pursuing non-competitive business in an effort to force African merchants out of business...overt discrimination blocked advancement in many fields, while hardening racial attitudes deprived Africans of easy access to Europeans (Mann 1985).

policies that affected their future; this resulted in anti-discrimination sentiments/rallies, which quickly transformed Lagos into a radical town - the hub of agitation against colonialism in West Africa (Nicodemus 2008: 14). Soon, this anti-racism, anti-discrimination sentiments transformed into battles for autonomy fostered by elite Nigerians. To attain this autonomy, Nigerian elites employed all forms of anti-colonial propaganda including visual arts to foster their political agitation / battles against imperialism and this socio-political activism informed the conceptual framework of modern Nigerian art and the avant-gardism of its pioneers (Nzegwu 1999).

The most devastating effect of colonialism in Nigeria was cultural imposition. Missionaries established the foundations of cultural impositions in Nigeria; traditional arts and aesthetics were displaced by imposed Western aesthetic conventions; the supposed Western pure/authentic religion, forcefully displaced traditional belief systems. Military invasions justified as punitive expeditions by different colonial administrations were launched against tribes which attempted to preserve their cultural values; the destruction of Benin in 1877, the Ijebus in 1901, the Aros in 1902 etc., demonstrates cases of violent imposition of Western culture on Nigeria.³³ This imposition of Western cultural values (cultural imperialism), led to the Europeanization of Nigeria and subsequent lose of indigenous cultural identity, which provoked intense revolt by Nigerian elites, intelligentsia and artist thus informing the anti-Europeanization advocacies of the second phase of Nigerian Modernism.

c) Rise of Colonial Elites and Nationalism Movement

³³ More aggressive measures to extend British control in the interior came with the arrival of Governor Carter in 1891 who took to the view that, the key to controlling trade routes, relied on curtailing the resistance of the Egba and Ijebu who operated at the time a cultural policy of isolation and zero tolerance to Europeans. The result of such imperialist new aggressive approach was the Ijebu expedition of 1892 (Ayandele 1966, p54-69, Smith 1971).

The emergence of an active political/financial colonial elite in Lagos from the late 1890s, equipped with western training, led to the formation of pressure groups whose activism provoked widespread nationalism consciousness, that contributed to the ideological/conceptual framework of Nigerian Modernism. These politically conscious elites, comprising of lawyers, doctors, businessmen, and chiefs, made Lagos the centre of Nigerian revolution; they accumulated wealth and with their education and global experiences, became a strong force, which altered the economic and political power structure in Lagos at the turn of the Twentieth Century (Mann 1985: 33-4). Their rise as vanguards of change and tireless advocacies for autonomy constituted muddles for colonial administrations; firstly, they fought and succeeded in separating Lagos from the Gold Coast Colony, then organised themselves into pressure groups for instance *The People's Union 1902* to challenge what they noticed were derogatory/oppressive ordinances of Colonial administrations. According to Kristin Mann (1985), their resistance to “heightened imperialism and racial discrimination provoked the emergence of cultural nationalism and political opposition” (Mann 1985: 34); thus, their activism instigated nationalism consciousness³⁴ and revolt against imperialism in Nigeria and became the rallying point for indigenous resistance propaganda.

These elites proselytised progressive aspirations to define the Nigerian self, by breaking free from colonial subjugation; their nationalist advocacies led to the formation of political parties as a coalition of modernist and intellectuals defending indigenous interest. They instigated the formation of the *Nigerian National Democratic Party NNDP 1922*, *Nigerian Youth Movement 1936*, *National Council of Nigeria and the Cameroons NCNC 1944* etc., and majority of these political parties employed the subversive form of visual and liberal arts to propagate their decolonization ideologies by sponsoring various revolutionary

³⁴ Nationalism is the “sentiments, activities, aimed directly at the self-governance and independence of Nigeria as a national state on the basis of equality in an international state system” (Coleman 1965: 97).

art commissions. This nationalist political consciousness influenced the ideologies and conceptualism of Twentieth Century Nigerian Modernism as reflected in the works of Onabolu, Enwonwu, Lasekan, Okeke, Twin Seven Seven, and Nwoko. Nationalist such as Dr J K Randle, Mojola Agbebi (formerly D. B. Vincent), Herbert Macaulay, Akinwande Savage, Ernest Ikoli, W. B. Euba, Rev. S. M. Abiodun, Babington Adebayo, Dr Nnamzi Azikiwe and others, called on modern artists to direct their art towards the urgent problem of national emancipation and cultural reconstruction, and their rallying call for collective battle against colonial domination, influenced the political/nationalist inclinations, radical themes and formalism of modern Nigerian art (Ogbechie 2008: 117). Besides the commissioning of nationalist art projects, these emergent elites established varying printing presses and newspapers to further engage colonial regimes and Imperial Britain in battles for decolonisation; *The Lagos Weekly Record* 1890, the *Lagos Observer* 1882, *Lagos Weekly Times* 1890, *Eagle and Lagos Critic* 1883, *Lagos Standard* 1894, *Holy Trinity Church Parochial Magazine* 1908, *West African Mail*, *Samadu Press* and the *West African Pilot* (Omu 1974: 521), all provided added anti-imperial platforms for the promotion of the new subversive modern art idioms invented and tailored to facilitate decolonisation.

Furthermore, Western training home/overseas as was the case with artists such as Onabolu, Enwonwu, Okeke, Nwoko, Wangboje and others, as well as contact with transnational black power movements like *Negritude* and *Pan-Africanism*, exposed Nigerian modernist to the ills of colonialism, and Afro-centric activism against the imperial order, and such exposure influenced Nigerian modernist to heighten their interrogation of colonialism and missionary anti-culture propaganda (Nzegwu 1999, Oloidi 2003). These aforementioned conditions are responsible for the emergence of the phenomenon of Nigerian Modernism and the varying avant-gardism it gave rise to from 1900 to the 1960s.

2.5 The Found Object in Nigerian Art

As explained in Chapter One section 1.2, Found Object was given rise to as a genre of avant-garde art in European Modernism and characterised by the appropriation and contextualisation of objects from popular culture into art. Found Object originated from *Cubism* with the inventions of Picasso and Braque³⁵ and became widely explored by different modernist movements. The term was subsequently inscribed in European art discourses in the Twentieth Century as unifying rubric to describe all works of art created through such appropriation ethos. This Eurocentric generalization is problematic as it disregards cultural specificities and more so dismisses this genre in Nigeria/Africa as time-lag manifestation of European avant-garde art.

This thesis contest and seeks to address this misconception by employing a localized contextual reading of the Found Object in Nigerian art, and draw upon comparative analysis to establish the cultural peculiarities and ramifications of the Found Object in Africa and Europe. Found Object in Nigerian art-space predates the invention of the term in European Modernism which invalidates the misleading claims in European art history that it is mimicry of Western art. To valorise this theory, this thesis will explore the Found Object in Nigerian art, in three distinct contexts: Pre-modern, Modern and Postcolonial contexts.

2.5.1 The Found Object in Pre-modern Nigerian Art - Cultural Ramifications

³⁵ In 1912, Picasso and Braque began their experimentation with construction sculptures using cardboards and their new methodology (paper colle' and constructions) had a lasting effect on American art of the Twentieth Century. In the decades that followed, the mediums of collage, assemblage and the Found Object influenced the course of Futurism in Italy, constructivism in Russia Dada in Europe and the United States, surrealism in France, abstract expressionism in the United States, and pop art in North America and Britain. See Waldman, D. (1992) *Collage, Assemblage, and the Found Object*. pp. 42

Traditional African cosmology and belief system promulgated intrinsic connection with nature and the ideology of 'chanced encounter', which played a vital role in the formation of its material culture.³⁶ Traditional Nigerian art was defined by traditional philosophies and belief systems, thus its entire gamut is characterised by an eclectic appropriation and composition of Found Objects reflective of the traditional ideology of chanced encounter. Careful stylistic and conceptual analysis of traditional Nigerian art proves that, from prehistory Found Objects have long been integral in indigenous creative ethos though Africans lacked the appropriate terminologies in Western perspectives to name this art genre. According to Chike Aniakor (2013),

Appropriation has been an important principle of African traditional art practice; if you talk about multimedia and found object art, it is the core of traditional African art and creativity. You find the use of all kinds of materials from the environment present in traditional art forms... (Aniakor 2013: 1).

Traditional shrines are visual references that valorise this argument. Shrines in pre-modern Nigerian societies were installations composed of varieties of materials; found objects, ancestral figures, mask etc., installed as, "constituent elements of shrine beautification for various homes before written records surfaced" (Odiboh, 2013). Objects in shrine installations were assembled over several decades as extending parts of existing art forms; when members of a community encountered different objects during placation of gods, they juxtaposed such objects with other shrine forms. For Africans, the dislocation of such objects from popular culture and their installation in traditional temples occasioned a transfiguration of the ordinary into the spiritual, infusing found objects with both cultural and spiritual contents requiring intellectual interpretation. Benin, Oshogbo, Mbari shrines etc., (figures 2.4-2.5), epitomise

³⁶ Africans believe that life doesn't end with life that life is continuous, that life is in circles and that life and materiality is recycled naturally. They believe that you can pick a thing and make another thing out of such thing and that such found objects can become reference for concepts, realism or metaphysical beings. Ajibade 2013

the appropriation of found object in pre-colonial Nigerian art installations thus underpinning the argument that this art genre and the creative ethos of material appropriation/assemblage has long been a feature of Nigerian creativity before the coinage of the term in European Modernism.³⁷

This pre-modern context of the Found Object in Nigerian art is equally evinced by the formalism of *Accumulative Sculptures* (deities). Traditional Nigerian and African shrines, contained effigies which acted as relics of gods and ancestral spirits. These temple sculptures are very loose archetypes, which change over time as a result of accumulation of objects on such forms. As generations unfold, these ancestral figures become what is termed '*Accumulative Sculpture*' formed by the layering of objects such as cowries, stones, nails, feathers, bones, sticks, leaves etc., which creates different layers of the sculpture to induce art of the highest order (see figures 2.6).

Masks and masquerades costume further validates the incorporation of the Found Object in pre-modern Nigerian art as objects of beautification and spiritual reference. Most traditional masks are assemblages of heterogeneous materials in unique abstract formalism. Masquerades costumes were designed by employing the creative ethos of appropriation; leaves, stones, bones, pieces of old cloth, jute, raffia, metal rods and sheets, plates etc., were all juxtaposed according to traditionally defined conventions and stylisation, in the creation of such costumes and its paraphernalia. Ekpo masquerade of Creek town Calabar, the Ekong Ikon Ukom of Calabar as well as the world-renowned Ijele masquerade of the Igbos, all appropriate varying objects from popular culture in their construction (figures 2.9 - 2.10).³⁸ This pre-modern context of the Found Object

³⁷ Because Found Object and installation is now grafted into the vocabulary of Modernism, people think that there was no Found Object or installation in Africa before this contemporary age. Africa before western invention of the term had begun object appropriation and installation in artistic expressionism. For instance shrines were installations of various materials sacrificed to gods and ancestors cowries, bracelets, metals, beads, wood etc. piling up overtime...(Aniakor 2013).

³⁸ The mask is about four metres tall - so large that it takes a hundred men six months of work to prepare the costume and build an outdoor house to hold it before a performance. Divided into upper and lower

in Nigerian art indicates cultural peculiarities not yet explored in contemporary scholarship, which this thesis interrogates as original contribution to knowledge. While European modernists such as Duchamp, Warhol, Tatlin and others, interrogated modernity by appropriating flimsy inartistic, anti-aesthetic forms of the Found Object to express agitation against industrial revolution and the dehumanisation of man in European context, the pre-modern Nigerian context Found Object exist differed considerably from this European's. In pre-colonial or pre-modern Nigerian art-space, Found Object do not exist as magnum opus deployed to subvert modernity, but rather are employed as heterogeneous parts to extend existing sculptures and served religious/cultural purposes to define the identity of select community types and kingdoms. This pre-modern context of the Found Object in Nigerian art changes as Nigeria advanced into modern civilization³⁹ and postcolonial existence, which is explored in details in Chapters Three and Seven respectively to further establish the separateness and cultural specificity of the Found Object in European and African art.

2.6 Conclusion

This chapter has demonstrated through the introduction of this parallel Nigerian Modernism that different cultures evolved specific modernist art and avant-garde creative tendencies parallel but in contradiction to those of Europe and America. It proved that the Eurocentrism of Modernism discourse that denies the occurrence of *'Other'* Modernisms outside European centres is faulty, thus underpinning Peter Childs' dismissal of the ideology of a mainstream Modernism (Childs 2007). The introduction of this new under-researched phenomenon/discourse of Nigerian Modernism, provides a culturally oriented

segments by a large python at the centre, the Ijele is constructed with colourful fabric and found objects on a skeleton of bamboo sticks and decorated with figurines and depictions of every aspect of life (Odekanyin et al 2008)

³⁹ The phrase modern civilization is used in this context to refer to the historic period that marked the transformation of the diverse ethnic entities Nigeria into a unified nation state and the adoption of Western systems from the late 1890s to replace traditional systems of government, education, security, economy, transportation etc.

theoretical framework that interrogates the problematic Vasarian construction of modernist discourse and enables the uncovering and contextualisation of Twentieth Century avant-gardism given rise to in Nigeria. The chapter established the foundations of the central argument of this study, which seeks to prove that Modernism is a pluralistic phenomenon with multiple avant-garde centres extending beyond those institutionalised in European discourses/narratives.

This chapter also established that Found Object appropriation in pre-modern Nigerian art predates the invention of the term and genre in European Modernism. Analysing the pre-modern context of the Found Object in Nigerian art-space, informed the submission that Found Object genre has diverse cultural ramifications and peculiarities, which cannot be generalised or centralised. While Found Object and Readymade genres of European avant-gardes such as the cubist, Dadaist, surrealist etc., served as anti-art formalism to subvert art salons, European conventions and bourgeois culture, the context of found object appropriation in pre-colonial Nigeria rather served distinct cultural and religious purposes. This thus, establishes the first point of departure in distinguishing the Found Object in Nigerian/African art from those of Euro-American avant-gardes, which is fully established in Chapter Seven.

Chapter Two Figures

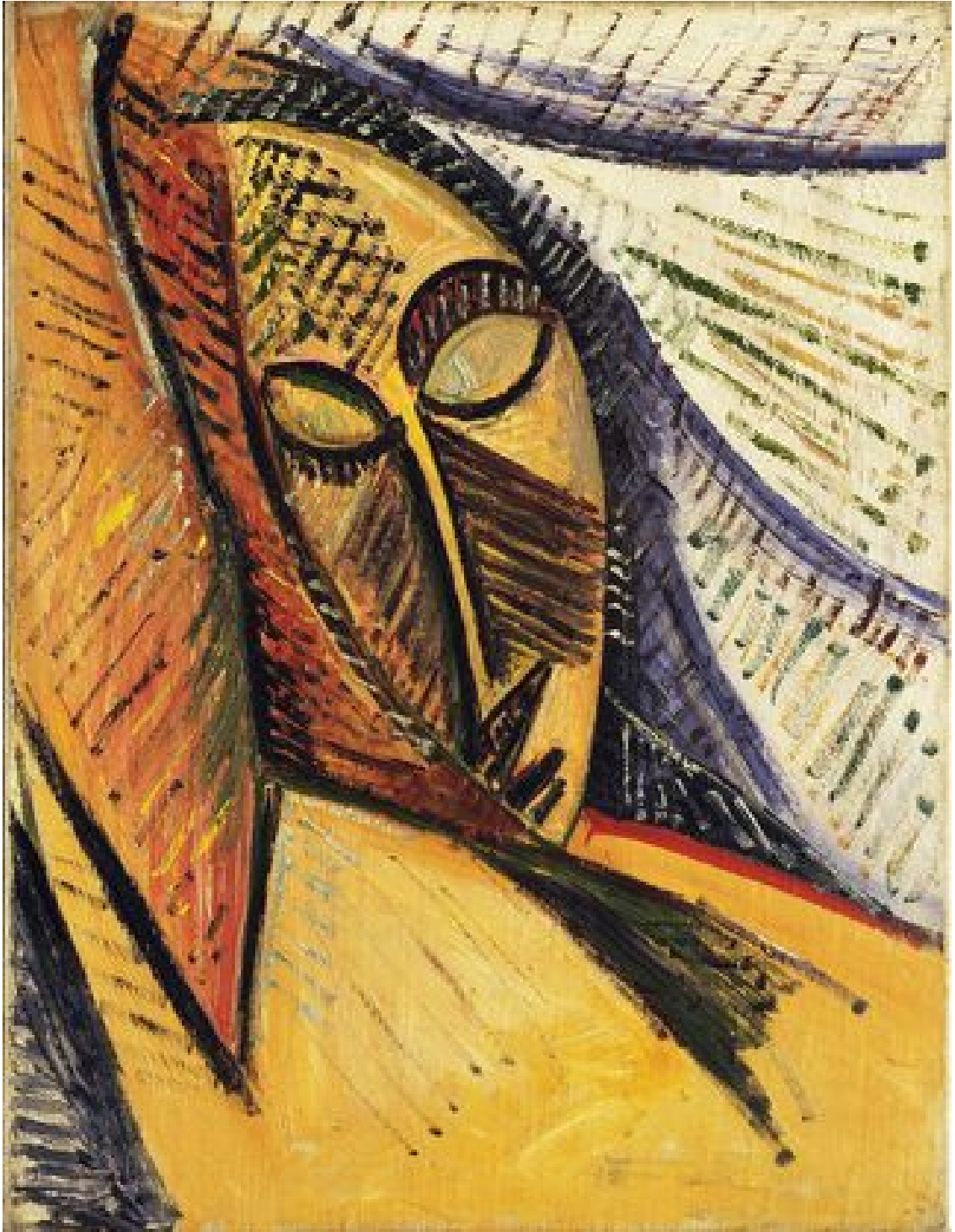


Figure 2.1: Pablo Picasso *Head of a Sleeping Woman* 1907, oil on canvas, 61.4 x 47.6 cm, (Source: The Museum of Modern Art, New York). European modernist painting which demonstrate evidence of traditional African abstract expressionism influencing the formalism of avant-garde art that led to the emergence of Euro-American Modernism. The features of this painting draw heavily upon the stylistic configuration of African traditional Kru masks.



Figure 2.2: Pablo Picasso Les Femmes d'Alger 1909, Oil on Canvas (Source: MoMA). Another modernist painting (Cubism movement), evincing the appropriation of traditional African abstract expressionism in Euro-American Modernism



Figure 2.3: Henri Matisse *Portrait of Mlle Yvonne Landsberg* 1914 oil on canvas (Source: Philadelphia Museum of Art). Evidence of the appropriation of traditional African abstract expressionism in modernist painting as seen in the works of Matisse at the turn of the Twentieth Century.



Figure 2.4: Benin Art Shrine (Source: Ekhaguosa Aisien 2011). Traditional African shrine showing evidence of the appropriation of mundane objects as part of traditional art installations. It shows metals, bells, gongs, rods, sticks, and feathers incorporated in creative processes in pre-colonial Nigeria.

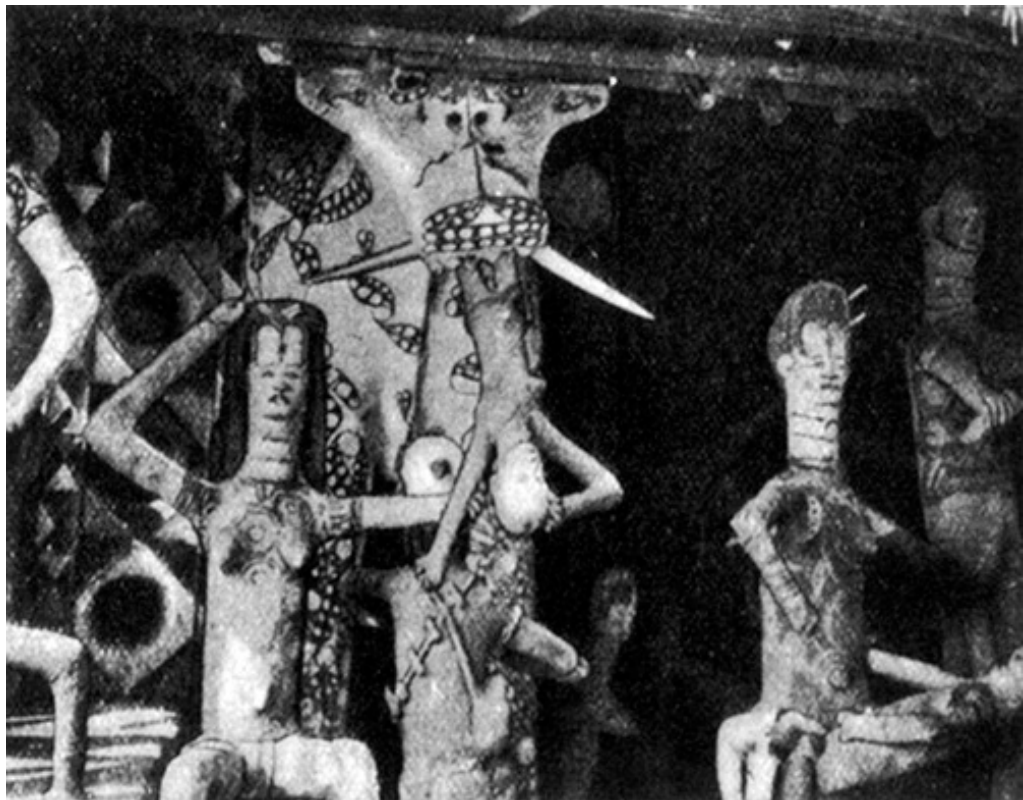


Figure 2.5: Mbari Shrine (Source: Ezeagu 2012). Traditional African shrine showing evidence of the appropriation of mundane objects as part of traditional art installations. It shows metals, bells, gongs, rods, sticks, and feathers incorporated in pre-colonial Nigerian and African creative ethos.



Figure 2.6: Accumulative Sculpture from Yombe Tribe showing the use of discarded nails, old fabric, leather etc., all juxtaposed over time as extension of existing sculptural forms.



Figure 2.7: Accumulative Sculpture showing the use of discarded nails, old fabric, leather etc., all juxtaposed over time as extension of existing sculptural forms.



Figure 2.8: Accumulative Sculpture showing the use of discarded nails, old fabric, beads, leather etc., all juxtaposed over time as extension of existing sculptural forms, to extent cultural, social and religious meanings and context.



Figure 2.9: Ijan Masquerade from Akure Ondo state (Source: ugoagadauyah 2013). Traditional African masquerade showing evidence of the appropriation of mundane objects such as leaves, stones, bones, and pieces of old cloth, jute, raffia, metal rods, feathers etc., assembled in the creation of masquerade costumes and masks. This demonstrates that appropriation has long been an integral creative ethos in pre-colonial Nigeria and Africa as this masquerade and mask are a continuation of ancient held traditions and creative practices.



Figure 2.10: World-renowned Ijele masquerade of the Igbos. (Source: Ugoagadauyah 2013). This masquerade created by the appropriation and assemblage of fabric off cuts, objects locally sourced, leaves, stones, bones, and pieces of old cloth, jute, raffia, metal rods, feathers etc., valorises the argument put forward that the incorporation of Found Object in art has long existed in Africa than theorised in European art discourses.

CHAPTER 3: PHASES OF NIGERIAN BIFURCATED MODERNISM 1900-1930 / 1930-1960

3.1 Introduction

Chapter Two 2.4 provided an introduction to the concept of Nigerian Modernism theorised to have manifested in a unique bifurcated form of cultural avant-gardism. A review of different literarily sources in Chapter One, indicated the occurrence of varying aesthetic/creative paradigms in Nigeria between 1900-1960 giving rise to different art styles and philosophies, as artistic reaction to the social, political and cultural conditions of Nigeria at the time (outlined in 2.5). Impelled by such societal conditions as well as colonial, missionary and imperial opposing discourses, modern Nigerian art was defined by specific ideologies and radical artistic tendencies: this study views this as constituting the elements of the avant-garde phenomenon of Nigerian Modernism.

The socio-political and cultural activism in Lagos from 1900 provoked by Nigerian elites (the new modernist)⁴⁰ who invested in all forms of propaganda to foster the battle for liberation, inspired a revolutionary consciousness of revolt against the colonial order from whence Onabolu's art emerged, and gave rise to the first

⁴⁰ This refers to elite Nigerians such as Dr J K Randle, Mojola Agbebi, Herbert Macaulay, Akinwande Savage, Ernest Ikoli, W. B. Euba, Rev. S. M. Abiodun, Babington Adebayo and others who equipped with education training and global experiences became the exponent of indigenous resistance to imperial rule. They organised themselves as discussed in Chapter Four, into pressure groups and resisted the racist policies and discrimination of the colonial regime which excluded elite Africans from the running of the colony as evinced in the exclusion of Nigerians from the Legislative council, Lagos chamber of commerce etc. They organised protest matches against colonial policies and became the representative of the colonised at the forefront of the battle against imperial Britain.

phase of Nigeria's bifurcated Modernism (1900-1930). A new creative/aesthetic paradigm emerged in Nigeria from the late 1920s with the arrival of Kenneth Murray whose anti-Europeanization advocacies instigated a new cultural avant-gardism, leading to the emergence of the second phase of Nigerian Modernism (1930-1960). The avant-garde ideologies and stylistic formalism invented during these two distinct modernist waves, underpins the theory in this study that Nigeria experienced a unique bifurcated Modernism that was specific to the Nigerian cultural/artistic context, and that this unique Nigerian Modernism was parallel but different from the established Euro-American Modernism in Western art history.

This chapter is divided into eight sections beginning with the introduction. It then proceeds to discuss the conceptual framework of the first phase of Nigerian Modernism in section 3.2, establishing the context, political imperatives and philosophies behind the reverse-appropriation of realism by Nigerian modernists from 1900 as radical visual idiom to subvert colonialism. Section 3.3 explores Murray's anti-Europeanization and cultural revivalism/affirmation advocacies, and examines the influence of his cultural propaganda on the invention of the hybrid art formalism that propelled the avant-gardism of the second modernist period. This is followed by comparative analysis of the differences between Nigerian and European Modernisms, to establish their contextual, cultural and formal separateness in 3.6. Section 3.7 discusses the absence of the Found Object in Nigerian Modernism 1900 - 1960, using such absence as crucial differentia in establishing the cultural peculiarities and ramifications of the Found Object in European and African art respectively. The chapter concludes with emphasis on the argument/theory put forward in this study that Twentieth Century Modernism had multiple avant-garde centres, across Europe, America, and Africa etc., which should be fully embraced in contemporary scholarship.

3.2 Modernism Phase One 1900 - 1930

Anti-Stereotype, Anti-Discrimination and Anti-Racism Advocacies

3.2.1 Historical Context

Modern Nigerian art was given rise to in the 1900s through the creative efforts of Onabolu inspired by socio-political activism in Lagos at the time. Lagos elites fostering the battle against colonial racism, European cultural imposition, missionary stereotypes etc., enlisted the power of visual propaganda to facilitate their anti-colonial agitations hence providing the conceptual framework/patronage system upon which the new modern art flourished. These elites such as Dr J K Randle were keen on debunking the stereotypical and derogatory imagery of inferiority, incompetence and sub-humans⁴¹ projected on Africans, hence began patronising modern art and encouraging creative radicalism, which contributed in defining the concept/context/content of the emergent modern Nigerian art. Olabukola Gbadegesin (2007) observes that, this politically aware intelligentsia informed the intersection of visual arts and politics, which helped in mobilizing anti-colonial and anti-imperial movements in Lagos and Nigeria at large in later years (Gbadegesin 2007: 6). Onabolu the pioneer of this first modernist movement, derived impetus from this resistance to colonial oppression in Lagos and the new art he invented became antithetical to the colonial project which it later contributed to dismantle.

Realism defined the stylistic formalism of this first phase of Nigeria's bifurcated Modernism, and its introduction in Nigeria, completely altered aesthetics, art and culture in Africa at large. Realism in this context refers to the artistic

⁴¹ This was a period in the colonial history of African-European relations when so-called scientific racism flourished in Europe, branding black Africans as sub-humans and hardening the colonizers' attitudes against them. Indigenous Africans, according to the "science" of Europe at this time, were not intellectually capable of producing fine art in Western sense; they were fit only for craft (Nicodemus 2007).

convention of representing objects, scenes, places and peoples in exact pictorial verisimilitude as they appear in real life through the mastery of perspective, proportions and principles of pictorial composition such as unity, purity and balance (Ruckstuhl 1917). It refers to the art style that emphasises absolute photographic truth or truth-to-likeness as its stylistic ethos, and mastery of the skill to duplicate/mimic the outside world was considered the hallmark of artistic/creative profundity and authenticity in classical and Renaissance Europe prior to the emergence of modernism. Onobolu's mastery and reverse-appropriation of this European art convention was informed by the quest to develop the appropriate visual language with which to interrogate colonialism and Western stereotypes. His awareness of the problematic of colonialism suggested to him the best revolutionary aesthetics with which to subvert Western sensibilities, and foster the clamour for equality proselytised by Nigerian elites and intelligentsia.⁴² Onobolu establish the *Onobolu School* on the philosophy of '*Onobolism*', which this thesis argues, had deep rooted political imperatives that greatly impacted Nigerian society and the first phase of Nigerian Modernism.

3.2.2 Avant-gardism of the First Phase 1900 - 1930

As a product of indigenous agitation, the first phase of Nigerian Modernism, fostered anti-stereotypes, anti-racism and anti-colonial advocacies reflective of the cultural and political tempo of Lagos at the turn of the Twentieth Century. Through the reverse-appropriation of realism,⁴³ modern Nigerian artists,

⁴² While association with influential Lagosians ensured that Onobolu learned about the deleterious features of colonialism and how these must be combated, it also suggested to him the best stylistic tool for exposing the falsity of the colonial maxim that Africans were biologically inferior to the white man (Nzegwu1999).

⁴³ This reverse-appropriation of realism is fully demonstrated in the works of Akinola Lasekan and those of Aina Onobolu discussed in Chapter Four, which marked the first instance in Africa of artists appropriating European techniques, materials and portrait convention in modern art. As elucidated with regards to Onobolu's avant-gardism, the mastery of realism an exclusively European creative convention at the time, was inspired by nationalist battles to debunk Western stereotypes of Africans as incompetent and incapable of pictorial verisimilitude. The mastery and institutionalisation of realism as the creative ethos of modern African art from the 1900s, proved the falsity of European philosophies and representations of colonised Africans. See Examples of Onobolu's Portrait of Dr Randle figure 4.4.

ventured into European culture, adapted its supposed superior aesthetic convention and directed such forms to interrogate imperialists in their own terms. According to Olu Oguibe (2002),

For the new African artists there were two options one was to persist with the indigenous forms which colonialism condemned and sought to obliterate. The other was to hack, to use a most appropriate colloquialism, into the exclusive space of the antipode, in other words to possess the contested territory by mastering the forms and techniques of Western artistic expression in order to cross out the ideological principles resident in its exclusivity (Oguibe 2002: 245).

The convention of realism became for the first generation of Nigerian modernists, a subversive mechanism deployed to overturn European oppression and subvert imperial racist sensibilities. It flourished against colonialism, propagated several indigenous activisms and its avant-gardism is identified in the following advocacies, ideologies and battles it help advanced in the emerging modern state:

a) Anti-Stereotype, Anti-Racism Advocacies and Battle for Equality

Firstly, the reverse-appropriation of realism and the re-invention of modern art in Nigeria from the 1900s were directed at fostering resistance to racism, discrimination, and Western derogatory stereotypes about Africans. Onabolu's mastery of realism was pivotal in subverting imperial stereotypical representations of the African '*Other*' as incompetent and inferior, as well as in rejecting the artistic authority of Europe, and the construed ideals of primitivism in Euro-American Modernism and art discourses (Nzegwu 1999: 420). The invention of modern Nigerian art constituted a direct confrontation with

colonialism in order to subvert and overturn the projected imagery of primitivism on Africans and prove the fallacy in European stereotypes and philosophies about Africans. In painting realistically, pioneering modernists of this movement such as Onobolu and Lasekan subverted Western assumptions of Africans' incompetence and in doing so, proselytised in visual form the battle for equality propagated by elite Lagosians to tackle imperial discrimination. Also, with this reverse-appropriation of European mimetic convention, modern Nigerian artists further subverted European aesthetic hegemony over *'Other'* cultures. As demonstrated in Chapter Four, Onobolu's re-invention of realism (mimetic or representational art expression) in Africa resisted the construed claim of White aesthetic/cultural superiority and challenged the branding of Africans as sub-humans lacking intellectual/creative capabilities as framed in European philosophies. Representational art pursued during this movement became a political ploy, which challenged/subverted racism and the derogatory discriminative frameworks on which colonial missions in Africa were based. The artist case study on Onobolu in Chapter Four, elaborates clearly how the mastery of realism (thought of as the highest expression of high sophisticated art only mastered by the intellectually/creatively advanced whites at the time), and the focus on portraiture that celebrated Nigerian nationalists dubbed rebels by colonial administrations, contributed immensely to facilitating the battle against colonial domination, discrimination and racial stereotypes.

b) Foster the Battle against Colonial Subjugation

The invention of radical art forms to undermine authority and subvert social order, discussed in Chapter Two, constitutes a defining ideology and feature of Modernism and this characterised the avant-gardism of Nigerian modernists during this first period. Inspired by local resistance and activism, modern art that emerged in Nigeria from the 1900s was politically inclined and its engagement in Lagos resistance politics marked the crucial turn in the use of art to foster anti-

colonialism in modern Africa at large. The appropriation and mastery of realism, provided modernist such as Onobolu and Lasekan the appropriate visual idiom to interrogate and debunk the demeaning imagery of sub-humans projected on Nigerians by proving otherwise to the colonizers that Africans “had a capacity for greater achievement than the colonisers thought possible” (Gbadegesin 2007: 6). By mastering this European ‘exalted’⁴⁴ art convention and directing it for celebrating Nigerian nationalists through portraiture, it constituted a direct political affront on the colonizers. According to Ola Oloidi (1989), this language/convention of realism became a political tool, which propagandized nationalism⁴⁵ in defiance of imperial Britain authority and its domination of the African continent. He observes that,

Onobolu’s choice of easel painting and academic realism was deeply political, an act of defiance against the bigotry that oppressed all Africans, thereby fostering nationalism in the form of opposition to racial prejudice and anti-African stereotyping and discrimination (Oloidi 1989: 193).

By appropriating and establishing realism as the creative ethos of the first modernist period, it is argued that, Onobolu and the artists his school produced, demonstrated through modern art that Africans possess same creative and intellectual capabilities as the colonizers, hence challenging the construed fallacy behind colonial discrimination on accounts of Africans’ supposed incompetence.

⁴⁴ Before Renaissance and modern arts, portraiture was an exclusive art form reserved in ancient civilizations (Roman Empire, Spanish monarchy, ancient Greece etc.,) up until the enlightenment period for the powerful, affluent and royals of European cultures. This is because portraiture often served as visual metaphors of the power, social stratification, philosophies etc., of exalted monarchs, emperors, warlords and those occupying the upper echelon of society. Portraiture served to emphasize the authority of represented subjects in European civilizations. The association of portraiture and power in ancient civilizations accorded this creative convention an exalted position revered as the highest mastery and display of artistic profundity. See Jean, S. (2000) *Portraiture in Renaissance and Baroque Europe*.

⁴⁵ Nationalism is used in this early state of Nigerian development in line with John Breuilly’s theory of nationalism as an expression of sentiments (Breuilly 1993). In this sense with regards to Onobolu’s art and the avant-gardism of the first phase of Nigerian Modernism, nationalism refers to anti-racism, anti-stereotypes, and anti-discrimination sentiments instigated by elite Lagosians in their battle against the racist policies and domination of colonial administrations and their battle for the recognition of Africans as equals with whites or any other continent in the World. It is used to describe the early resistance movement and political condition of Lagos from the 1890s and the nationalist sentiments it gave rise to. See Breuilly, J. (1993) *Nationalism and the State*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.

By painting realistically, these modernist “balanced talent, sophistication, and African-ness that Lagosian elites sought to project to the rest of the world; in being seen to embrace modernity and progressive thought, in order to dispel the label/epithet of the black savage” (Gbadegesin 2007: 30-1). By painting realistic portraits of elite nationalist and intelligentsia promoting the battle against Western subjugation, modernists of the first phase of Nigerian modernism flaunted the intellectual and material achievement of Lagos elites as well as their political philosophies; hence through such portraits, they propagandised their resistance and revolt against imperial Britain and contributed to the early stages of decolonisation in Nigeria.

The reverse-appropriation of realism during this modernist wave, questioned the ideology of white superiority and black inferiority in imperialist domineering philosophies. Like Gertrude Stein in posing as a patroness of Modernism, commission Picasso to paint her portrait, Nigerian elites who commissioned Onobolu’s paintings, posed as African modernist and nationalist in order to prove their equality, challenged colonial discrimination, and facilitate the attainment of autonomy, through modern art that had proven Africa’s creative/artistic equality with the West (Nicodemus 2000). Thus the language of realism which Euro-American avant-gardes rejected, became for these early Nigerian avant-gardes, a way to steal the fire, and power of Europe and channel it to challenge colonialism and to benefit and foster their cultural and nationalist agitation for self-expression (O’Brien et al 2011: 13).⁴⁶

⁴⁶ Realism plays varying crucial roles depending on culture and context. Firstly, the mimetic ethos of realism was developed as a means of communication, with its visual vividness developed as a universal language of communication that conveys meanings to all tribes and peoples (Ross 2014). But besides mimesis, realism constitute a revolutionary tool for political and social activisms, as well as for resistance/agitation against adversities imposed on the masses by those at the upper echelon of society. A typical example is the case of realism in France, where realist from the 1840s began conveying the objective and true vision and conditions of contemporary life to battle against oppression of the working class. According to Finocchio Ross (2004), “realism emerged in the aftermath of the Revolution of 1848...in the battle for democratic reforms, realists democratized art by depicting modern subjects drawn from the everyday lives of the working class. Rejecting the idealized classicism of academic art and the exotic themes of romanticism, they recorded in often gritty detail the present-day existence of humble people...their elevation of the working class into the realms of high art and literature facilitated social revolution” (Ross 2004: 1). Finocchio Ross alludes to the power of realism, which draws on representationalism as a revolutionary mechanism to battle against

c) Battle for the Renaissance of Art in Modern Nigeria

The emergence of modern Nigeria art was a battle against Western institutions (Church missions and colonial administrations) to ensure the rebirth of art practice in modern Nigeria. This is because, missionaries and imperialists pursued intense anti-art, anti-traditionalism and anti-culture propaganda which resulted in the stereotyping of art as paraphernalia of heathenism and barbarism, and its subsequent condemnation and extermination from the colony and West Africa at large from the 1840s with the arrival of European Church missions (Bascom 1953, Oguibe 2002). The invention of modern Nigerian art defied missionary propaganda, as well as subverted imperial anti-traditionalism and anti-art policies. Onobolu's reverse-appropriation of realism was subversive/revolutionary, as it did not only contravene colonial and missionary anti-culture policies, but translated and reinstated "Nigerian art heritage into new forms in the context of the changing reality and modernity of Africa at the time" (Oguibe 2002: 246). Modern Nigerian art thus, from its inception opposed Western (missionaries and colonizers) anti-African/anti-art propaganda, which had been institutionalised in colonial schools and various mission Churches. This battle to reignite art in modern context, undermined colonial policies and

oppression, poverty, discrimination, and the subjugation of the working class. Ross also demonstrates how the elevation of common men in realistic paintings (high art) subverted the authorities of the ruling class and on the other hand, promoted the activism of the masses in France. Realism for the social realist became a weapon to capture the conditions of and resist political depression, heightened racial conflict, fascism, poverty, capitalism and the exploitation of workers. Thus, realism became a politically charged language for radical social critiques and opposition to authority (Van Meter 1952, TAS 2016).

In Nigerian context at the turn of the Twentieth Century, realism was introduced as the new creative ethos of modern African art by Aina Onobolu (discussed in Chapter Four) inspired by indigenous resistance to Western stereotypes and colonial subjugation. From the 1890s, Onobolu dedicated efforts painting political figures, elite Lagosians, and all those at the vanguard of the battle against imperialism. As elucidated in this study, his realist depiction of the likeness of his modernist subjects was informed by nationalist sentiments and thus, visually propagated their ideologies of resistance to colonial oppression and discrimination. On the other hand, the self-mastery of realism became a subversive mechanism that crossed out Western stereotypes of Africans as incompetent and incapable of pictorial verisimilitude. Through realism avant-gardes of the first phase of Nigerian Modernism proved Africans creative equality with whites and thus subverted the construed ideologies of Western intellectual and creative superiority over the colonized African 'Other'.

philosophies, and was overwhelmingly supported by Nigerian nationalist mobilizing anti-colonial sentiments in Lagos, who turned out in large numbers to the first modern art exhibition in Nigeria in 1920. Onbaolu further jettisoned imperial anti-art policies during this first modernist period, by teaching art against colonial ordinances across Nigeria (Lagos, Benin, Calabar, Enugu etc.), and engaging in a rigorous one-man crusade to force colonial administrations to include art in Nigerian schools. This battle against imperial anti-art, anti-culture and anti-African ideologies and the successful re-invention of art in modern Nigeria against colonial ordinances, marked a distinct feature of the cultural avant-gardism of this first wave of Nigerian Modernism.

3.3 Problems of the First Phase of Nigerian Modernism

The conceptual framework and philosophies of the first phase of Nigerian Modernism, initiated a break from traditional art in Africa, and ushered the continent into modern artistic context; however, its anti-traditionalism ideologies became problematic to the emerging Nigerian state and the budding modern art it gave rise to. Onabolu's introduction of Western realism in Nigeria and West Africa from 1900 followed a rigorous propagation of this art convention throughout Nigeria upon his return from overseas training in the early 1920s. He pressed upon colonial regimes and art was incorporated in colonial schools' curriculum and this completely altered Nigerian aesthetic perceptions and art creation; for example as Uli Beier (1960) in 'Contemporary African Art' observed, as result of Onabolu's propagation of realism from the 1900s, Nigerians began appreciating portraiture as opposed to traditional sculptures and began subscribing to the view that mimesis was the ideal mode and absolute form of artistic expression (Beier 1960). Onabolu's excessive glorification of realism as the only 'true art' (Oloidi 1989) led to the rejection of traditional art, ideas and culture that he and artists of his school came to regard with contempt (Gbadegesin 2007: 15). In declaring the appropriated convention of realism as the only 'true art', Onabolu and his contemporaries during this first

modernist period, disregarded the creative impetus of African art/culture which defined the visual culture and identity of pre-colonial societies and kingdoms. Since European mimetic convention for these modernists was perceived as the only true/highest form of artistic expressionism, African art was problematically undermined as inferior craft, thus leading to its rejection in their practices. This dismissal of traditional art and culture “initiated the divorce between art and life in West Africa” (Onuchukwu 1994: 57); it created a gulf between modern artists at the time and their indigenous customs/philosophies. The rationale behind anti-traditionalism pursued by modernist of this period especially its pioneer Onbaolu, was premised on their quest to belong to a superior modern culture; according to Chukwueggu (2010) “Onabolu’s motivation to excel in his newly found style of art, at the expense of the traditional art, is readily traced to his quest to belong to the superior western culture and civilization” (Chukwueggu 2010: 169). This was the main motivation for his glorification of European art/culture and subsequent development of contempt for traditional concepts/ideas. In his book *A Short Discourse on Art*, Onabolu (1920) described traditional art, ideas and culture as crude destitute and hindrance to development, which must be discarded if Africans intended to embrace modernity (Onabolu 1920).

This contempt for cultural forms and anti-traditionalism advocacies pursued by Nigeria’s pioneering modernists, contributed unwittingly to the destruction of Nigerian cultural heritage, and the Europeanization of Nigerian art and culture by displacing traditional art, and destroying the visual references to Nigeria’s cosmology, philosophies and visual culture. From the 1920s, as result of the proliferation of *Onaboluism* (modern art defined by strict adherence to mimicry), Nigerians had become disenchanted with traditional art, abandoned indigenous customs and ideas to embrace that which was portrayed to them as superior Western civilisation (Beier 1968). In essence, their Modernism became a victim of the very anomalies it sought to address since it facilitated cultural destruction.

These problematic circumstances gave rise to the second phase of Nigerian Modernism 1930 - 1960.

3.4 Modernism Phase Two 1930-1960

Anti-Europeanization, Cultural Revivalism and Anti-Colonial Advocacies

3.4.1 Historical Context

The problematic arising from *Onoboluism* especially anti-traditionalism advocacies and increased imperial cultural imposition on Nigerians provoked intense nationalist agitations and resistance, which informed the avant-gardism of the second wave of Nigerian Modernism. Murray's arrival in 1927 as aforementioned gave rise to a new creative paradigm that was antithetical to Onbaolu's institutionalised realism, thus, revolutionising/re-inventing modern Nigerian art and culture from the late 1920s. Murray believed that the overarching glorification of Western realism at the expense of traditional culture/concepts, contributed to the destruction of Nigerian cultural heritage and identity. Prior to his arrival, art like Nigerian culture and society had problematically become too Europeanised (Beier 1960), thus, he was driven by a strong desire to overturn cultural imperialism, revive indigenous culture, give Africans a modern voice and a new realistic art framed in Nigerian tradition (Chukueggu 2010: 170). His cultural revivalism advocacies promulgated the reinstatement of culture through appropriation in modern art and this, "stimulated cultural rehabilitation, parity and pride to arts and Nigeria's entire cultural heritage" (Oloidi 1995: 116). Murray's cultural revivalism propaganda significantly instigated anti-Europeanization activism that informed the conceptual/ideological framework of modern Nigerian art from the 1930s, as well as defined the avant-gardism of the second phase of Nigerian Modernism.

Modernist of this second movement such as Ben Enwonwu, Uche Okeke, Demas Nwoko, Simon Okeke etc., derived impetus from Murray's European antagonism, hence were preoccupied with the task of inventing a new artistic creed, a revolutionary art to overturn European cultural imposition, subvert colonial subjugation, as well as one that will contribute to the battle for autonomy and recapturing of the Nigerian self (Enwonwu 1950). Murray's anti-Europeanization and cultural revivalism ideologies discussed in details in Chapter Five 5.2, resulted in the creation of hybrid art/aesthetics, which became the stylistic configuration and creative ethos of modern Nigerian art between 1930 – 1960 and beyond. This hybrid art formalism, constituted a form of counter-aesthetics, a cultural/artistic weapon invented to overturn European cultural oppression; this is because, Murray believed that cultural hybridization involving the juxtaposition of European and African art/aesthetic elements, structured to facilitate indigenous cultural revival, was a crucial mechanism for recapturing Nigeria's cultural self/identity lost to the cruelty of colonialism, and a tool to foster decolonization.⁴⁷ His ideologies were fully implemented in art by Enwonwu discussed in Chapter Five and radically advanced in the late 1950s for anti-colonial/anti-imperial agitations by members of the *Zaria Art Society* led by Uche Okeke discussed in Chapter Six.

Outside the academy, workshop-trained artists emerged during the apotheosis of the second phase of Nigerian Modernism who through cultural oriented art as argued in this study, proselytised same cultural and nationalist advocacies propagated by their academy-trained counterparts.⁴⁸ European expatriates

⁴⁷ Kenneth Murray promulgated the philosophy that "real creative impulse is stimulated by close association with visible experiences in one's immediate environment and not by imagined ones one has not personally experienced or felt. He proceeded to assert that it is more proper for pupils to be able to draw 'themselves' first before drawing 'others', and that Nigerian experiences are by far, richer than Western ones" (Kenneth Murray quoted in Oloidi 1989)

⁴⁸ During this period, two distinctive artists emerged namely: the college trained and self-trained. The self-trained artists were given the opportunities to teach themselves by the expatriates in Nigeria who established workshop centres such as Oye-Ekiti workshop placed under the guidance of Reverend Fathers Sean .O. Mahoney and Kevin Carroll, the Mbari Workshops which were manned by Ulli Beier and Georginia Beier in the 1960s and later co-ordinated by Susanne Wenger in Oshogbo, and the Ori-Olokun Workshop, which was set up by Micheal Crowder. In these workshops, the organizers/co-coordinators provided

concerned by the damage to traditional art and culture caused by colonial onslaught, established various experimental workshop centres such as *Oye-Ekiti Workshop* by Reverend Fathers Sean .O. Mahoney and Kevin Carroll, *Mbari Workshop* manned by Ulli Beier and Georginia Beier, *Oshogbo* by Susanne Wenger, the *Ori-Olokun Workshop* by Micheal Crowder etc., from the 1950s and the early 1960s, all driven by the manifesto of cultural revivalism. These workshops produced artists such as Adebisi Fabunmi, Muraina Oyelami, Jimoh Buraimoh, Taiwo Olaniyi (Twins Seven Seven), Bruce Onobrakpaya and others, who although operating outside the art academy, propagated the ideals of cultural appropriation and reinvigoration in modern Nigeria as creative strategy to reclaim Nigerian lost culture, and in the process, contributed to undermining imperialist anti-art/anti-culture propaganda, and fostering anti-Europeanization activism by subverting European academic realism institutionalized in Nigeria by the *Onabolu School*.⁴⁹

This interlacing of Murray's anti-Europeanization ideologies with nationalism⁵⁰ political consciousness by the aforementioned modernist (Enwonwu, Okeke, Onabropeya, Buriamoh, Nwoko and others) during the second wave of Nigerian Modernism, made 1930 - 1960 the most radical period in Nigerian art history as a result of the intense/radical rejection of imposed European values and imperial policies. This opposition to colonialism, and battle to reclaim Nigeria's lost

working materials and allowed people to freely participate in the visual aspects of their cultural arts (Ngumah 2014).

⁴⁹ Ulli Beier was one of the few expatriates involved in the pre- and post- independence ferment in art that crystallized into what we can today describe as the modern Nigeria Art...As a great teacher, mentor and role model, he helped develop artistic freedom, drew our attention to Nigerian values and aspirations by recourse to our past and traditions as well as to look beyond our immediate environment for inspiration...Ulli drew our attention to materials and themes around us...this became the foundation for the great art pieces by Twin Seven-Seven, Jimoh Buraimoh, Asiru Olatunde, Nike Okundaiye, Rufus Ogundele, Muraina Oyelami and my metal foil plastograph" (Onobrakpeya Bruce Onobrakpeya Foundation).

⁵⁰ Nationalism in this second modernist movement, refer to anti-colonial propaganda (anti-colonial nationalism). It is used to refer to the political movement instigated by Nigerian intelligentsia and political activists in their battle against colonialism and imperialism to foster decolonisation. It refers to the political movement, which emerged with the development of the Nigerian state, that reached its crescendo in the late 1950s with the dismantling of colonial rule and the instalment of a government manned by indigenous Nigerians. This sense of nationalism alludes to Gellner and Breuilly's theory of nationalism as a political doctrine driven by the battle to attain power and change social order/the world. See Gellner, E., & Breuilly, J. (2008) *Nations and nationalism*. New York: Cornell University Press.

culture and identity from the 1930s, reflected a complex cultural agitation particular to Nigeria, which differed considerably from those of the West and the first modernist movement. This cultural agitation inspired by nationalist sentiments defined the avant-gardism of the second modernist movement elucidated in the next section.

3.5 Avant-gardism of the Second Phase 1930 - 1960

a) Anti-Europeanization and Cultural Revivalism Advocacies

The conceptual/philosophical frameworks that gave rise to the second phase of Nigerian Modernism were aesthetically and politically radical, and intensely fostered opposition to colonialism and the Europeanization of Nigeria. Murray's cultural revivalism advocacies, promulgated the rejection of European aesthetics and culture by reviving/modernising indigenous cultural forms, and this new creative ethos subverted imperialist anti-traditionalism propaganda and cultural imposition that was destroying Nigeria's cultural heritage and identity. By producing art antithetical to European conventions through indigenous cultural appropriation, modernist such as Enwonwu, Okeke, Nwoko and others, defied colonial order, and the resultant art they created, constituted a form of defiance and counter-acculturation against Europe and its subjugating philosophies and policies; "their revival of indigenous culture inspired by *Negritude* creed in broad historical perspective, was a battle against western cultural domination" (Irele 1965: 348). By reviving traditional art and culture destroyed by colonialism and *Onabulism*,⁵¹ and rejecting European imposed aesthetics in their practices, they expressed anti-institutionalism associated with Twentieth Century Modernism

⁵¹*Onabulism* – refers to a very rigid and exultant subservience to and acceptance of naturalism/realism, that is the British Academy tradition of art as the creed of modern Nigerian art propagated by Aina Onabolu from the 1900s (Oloidi 2002: 244).

but in a distinct Nigerian context.⁵² This rejection of European aesthetics and culture in modern Nigerian art was first expressed in the works of Enwonwu as evinced in his *Begger 1951* (Figure 3.1), which captures the anti-Europeanization manifesto of the second modernist movement. The piece exemplifies the rejection of European representationalism and strict adherence to laws of perspective imposed in Nigerian schools/colleges, in favor of a stylized expressionism in modern art informed by cultural appropriation/hybridization. The theme and subject matter of the painting reflects Africanesse, the color scheme derives from African color pallet of predominantly earthly hues and the figures are stylized – elongated and distorted, resonating the idealized formalism of traditional African creative philosophies, but rendered through European medium of oil and canvas. This re-contextualization of indigenous creative philosophies and forms in modern art to ensure its revival undermined and subverted imperial authority's anti-culture and anti-art propaganda in West Africa (Lawal 1977: 148). Through this cultural revivalism avant-gardism, these modernists, contributed to dismantling imposed European rule and aesthetics in Nigeria, and their invention of hybrid art through appropriation of traditional African and European forms/aesthetics, demonstrated that a “uniquely Nigerian modernism was possible by drawing upon the wider fields and forms of its artistic inheritance...” (Picton 2006: 37). Their revival and affirmation of indigenous artistic forms initiated cultural decolonisation from the 1930s and in a broader perspective, fostered the nationalist battle against imperialism.

This anti-Europeanization activism in modern Nigerian art reached its crescendo in the late 1950s with the formation of the avant-garde *Zaria Art Society* at the Nigerian College of Arts, Science and Technology Zaria. At Zaria, Murray's anti-Europeanization and cultural appropriation ideologies were sharpened through

⁵² By opposing the acquisition of the skills of observation and representation that Onobolu insisted on, Murray produced a new realism of appropriation and domestication of European principles, which subverted Western realism, and by extension cultural forms (Oguibe 2002: 250).

the radical manifesto of '*Natural Synthesis*'⁵³ (Chukueggu 2010). The continued omission of traditional forms and aesthetics in modern art curriculum taught in the academy, incited radical revolts by a new breed of Nigerian modernists keen on overturning European domination over Africa. They were particularly concerned by ignorant attitudes to traditional art caused by imperialist anti-art propaganda, missionary stereotypes and discourtesies, as well as Nigerian societal disdain for art, the uninformed acceptance of artistic parasitism, and white expatriate dominance in the academic staff, and this energised their radical agitations and revolt against the West (Oloidi 2002: 242). To subvert and overturn Western aesthetic hegemony, imposed culture and authority, the *Zaria Rebels* in the 1950s advocated total rejection of European art curriculum in Nigerian colleges and schools, and the urgent modernisation of cultural forms to reflect Nigeria's pre-independence political consciousness and aspirations. In 1958, the *Zaria Art Society* through Okeke announced its first manifesto calling for the re-invention of modern art in cultural terms, interlacing of modern art with nationalist battles for emancipation and total subversion of European authority in order to reclaim Nigeria's identity/culture and attain selfhood. This

⁵³ Young artists in a new nation that is what we are! We must grow with the new Nigeria and work to satisfy her traditional love for art or perish with our colonial past. Our new nation places huge responsibilities upon men and women...much heavier burden on the shoulders of contemporary artists. I have strong belief that with dedication of our very beings to the cause of art and with hard work, we shall finally triumph. But the time of triumph is not near, for it demands great change of mind and attitude toward cultural and social problems that beset our entire continent today...therefore the great work of building up new art culture for a new society in the second half of this century must be tackled by us. This is our age of enquiries and reassessment of our cultural values. This is our renaissance era! We must not allow others to think for us in our artistic life, because art is life itself and our physical and spiritual experiences of the world. It is our work as artists to select and render our reactions to events...Nigeria needs a virile school of art with new philosophy of the new age. Whether our African writers call the new realization Negritude, or our politicians talk about the African Personality, they both stand for the awareness and yearning for freedom of black people all over the world. Contemporary Nigerian artists should champion the cause of this movement. The key work is synthesis, and I am often tempted to describe it as *Natural Synthesis*, for it should be unconscious not forced...I do not agree with those who advocate international art philosophy; I disagree with those who live in Africa and ape European artists. Future generations of Africans will scorn their efforts. Our new society calls for a synthesis of old and new, of functional art and art for its own sake...Western art today is generally in confusion. Most of the artists have failed to realize the artists' mission to mankind. Their art has ceased to be human. The machine, symbol of science, material wealth and of the space age has since been enthroned. What form of feelings, human feelings, can void space inspire in a machine artist? It is equally futile copying our old art heritages, for they stand for our old order. Culture lives by change. Today's social problems are different from yesterdays, and we shall be doing disservice to Africa and mankind by living in our fathers' achievements. For this is like living in an entirely alien cultural background (Okeke (1958) *Natural Synthesis* Manifesto of the Zaria Art Society: 1-2)

manifesto informed and defined the creative ethos of their resistance art, as well as the parameters of their avant-gardism.

Whilst advancing Murray's anti-Europeanization activism, the *Natural Synthesis* manifesto of 1958 more importantly emphasised the urgent need for cultural renaissance through violent structuring of modern art in African traditional formalism as an expression of total rejection of Europe's subjugation and oppression of Africans, as well as the need to use art to address Nigeria's immediate socio-political problems and promote nationalism (Okeke 1958: 1). This resulted in the creation of anti-academic and anti-imperial imageries that were both aggressive and rebellious to counter and overturn European art conventions and cross out Western aesthetic hegemony in Africa as a whole (Oloidi 2012). They out-rightly rejected imposed imperial culture and European staff anti-culture teachings at Zaria by producing art antithetical to their (European) curriculum, and radically modernising indigenous forms as leitmotifs and language of modern art expression; thus, they emancipated arts from the enslavement of Europeanization, and contributed to reclaiming Nigeria's identity. According to Okeke-Agulu (2010), they "subjected the conservative models of colonial art practice to a radical epistemological shift, thus creating a new conceptual language that valorised and reinserted pan-Nigerian aesthetic traditions and political agitations within the contemporary conditions of postcolonial subjectivity..." (Okeke-Agulu 2010: 505). Through the appropriation and modernisation of indigenous forms, the *Zaria Rebels* successfully overturned European art conventions in Nigeria and reinstated traditional forms in modern art/society, thereby fostering subjectivism and cultural pride proclaimed in pan-Africanism as essential mechanism in the battle for decolonization.

The visual configuration of the works of Enwonwu, Okeke, Grillo, Nwagbara, Nwoko, Odita, Onobrakpeya, Osadebe and others inspired by the doctrine of *Natural Synthesis*, effectively captures the violent structuring of modern art in

traditional African formalism in order to dismantle colonialism in the late 1950s. Their works are characterized by the rejection of European academic orthodox conventions in favor of the new ethos of stylization inspired by the resistance to colonialism and imperialism as well as cultural/aesthetic appropriation, in compositions structured to promote Nigeria's diverse culture and nationalist advocacies. Yusuf Grillo's *Blue Moon 1966* (figure 3.2) reflects this rejection of academic realism, and the reinstatement of traditional *Nok* formalism, appropriated to define the language of modern painting. The piece draws heavily from the stylization of *Nok* sculptures - geometricized facial features, combination of realism and abstraction and elaborate hairdos, capturing in modern context the essence of traditional creative philosophies re-invented as opposition to European conventionalism. The female figure is heavily stylised which was against the principles of proportional/perspective accuracy institutionalised through European education in colonial Nigeria at the time. The neck is exaggerated and elongated to give the figure idealised elegance and beauty; the facial features are rendered in minimalist geometric formalism reflective of the creative philosophy of traditional *Nok* art in North-Central Nigeria. The nose, eyes, mouth and ears are rendered as simple geometric forms on a full profile face, creating a simplistic stylised impression of the human form rather than an accurate mimetic representation. The draperies are indicative of high-class elegance and suggested with fragmented planes, while the figure is painted in flat colours rejecting the rounded volume of academic realistic art. Blue hue is mirrored in different sections of the canvas to give the painting an overarching blue dominance, which suits the title '*Blue Moon*'. This minimalist representation of the female form using the geometricized aesthetics of traditional *Nok* art was part of Yusuf Grillo's revival of indigenous creative ethos/idioms in modern painting, his aim was to foster the nation-wide battle for cultural decolonization through anti-Europeanization art, to overturn imposed Western aesthetics/values in Nigeria.

Demas Nwoko's *The Wise Man 1959-1960* also captures Nigerian avant-gardes' rejection of mimesis institutionalized at the Zaria College in pursuance of a modern stylized expressionism inspired by *Nok* art and African abstractionism. The form of this piece demonstrates the return to traditionalism and modernization of African concepts in modern context; it resonates Africa's creative philosophies, which demands capturing the innate quality of a thing, object or concept as the foci of artistic expression as opposed to mimesis. In his painting *Nigeria 1950*, Nwoko subjects the colonizers captured in the composition to creative transformation in which this re-invented hybrid modern African art conventions are imposed on the colonizers' form, as a visual subversion of supposed Western superiority and rejection of its aesthetic hegemony (figure 3.3).

Zarianist's chauvinistic glorification of traditionalism in modern art led to a unique stylized interpretation/visualization of traditional folklore, tales, mythologies and proverbs in idealized imagery of African modernity inspired by Afro-centric Modernism whose roots derived from Harlem *Renaissancism* of the 1920s discussed in Chapter One section 1.1.5. Folkloric inspired artworks resulting from *Zarianist* pursuance of cultural revivalism such as Nwoko's '*The Wise Man*', Oseloka Osadebe's '*Yam Festival Dancers*' 1963, Ibo Life 1963, Okeke's '*The Unknown Brute 1959*' etc., (figures 3.4 – 3.6) existed in the interstices between traditionalism and modernity, a creative space Nigerian modernists located themselves as a reflection of the new Africa modernity/culture in order to interrogate European cultural domination and the negativism of colonial discourse, so as to contribute to the liberation of Nigerian art and culture through their anti-Europeanization aesthetic formalisms (Ogbechie 2008: 11).

Workshop-trained artists equally energized by the nationalist quest to reconstruct Nigerian identity and cultural pride, also fostered this resistance to cultural imposition through anti-Europeanization art forms. Works produced

from experimental workshops such as Adebisi Fabunmi's *Missionary Activity in West Africa*, Twin Seven Seven's *Father of Oshogbo*, Muriana Oyelami's *Legend* etc., captured the structuring of modern arts in traditional formalism during the late 1950s to subvert imposed European aesthetics and challenge colonialism. These works equally draws heavily from traditional folk tales, graphic systems, mythologies and African proverbs (figure 3.7-3.8), and through their trenchant revival of indigenous forms in modern art, these workshop-trained artists fostered the avant-gardism of the second phase of Nigerian Modernism thus contributing to the art-political battle against colonialism at the time.⁵⁴ Salah Hassan (2013) alludes to the impact of workshop-trained artists on Nigeria's modernity and decolonisation asserting that, "the development of the Mbari club's interdisciplinary orientation was among the most provocative episodes against colonialism in the history of modern African art and the battle for decolonisation" (Hassan 2013: 1). This viewpoint is underpinned by the fact that, at workshop centres like the Mabri Mbayo, there were interactions between nationalist politicians, visual artists, poets, dramatists and others, who all shared pre-independence intense anti-imperial sentiments and consciousness, thus coalescing efforts to advance the battle for cultural decolonization by indigenising art, literature and drama with themes that exposed colonial excesses and problematic (such as oppression, discrimination, societal deconstruction etc.) in order to overturn them.

b) Anti-colonial, Decolonisation and Nationalism Advocacies

Avant-gardes of the second wave of Nigerian Modernism were politically conscious of the nation's battle against imperialism, thus, used their art to proselytise ant-colonial and decolonisation propaganda. The anti-

⁵⁴ "While works produced by workshop-trained artists were rooted in indigenous culture, it was also reflective of the postcolonial and modernist conditions of the pre and post-independent era" (Okeke-Agulu 2013 :155).

Europeanization formalism of their works, expressed revolt against the hegemonic colonial system, opposed imperial authority and manifested anti-institutional/anti-order tendencies that defined the crux of Modernism (Aubrey 1935, Ven den Berg et al 2012). 1950s marked the apotheosis of nationalism advocacies in Nigeria, with heightened opposition to the West, and this in turn informed anti-colonial themes and subject matter of modern art, as Nigerian modernists engaged fully in the battle for emancipation. Nationalist and elite intelligentsia championing the war against colonialism invested in modern art to propagate their opposition to Britain's oppression and encouraged modern artists to be radical in their forms in order to facilitate the battle for decolonisation. Inspired by this anti-colonial political tempo, Enwonwu for example called for the intersection of art and politics to address Nigeria's political problems and contribute to the facilitation of Africa's emancipation (Enwonwu 1956). Nkiru Nzegwu (1998) opines that, the opposition to European domination and realisation of the power of visual representations in either illuminating or distorting people's reality or facilitating their emancipation, underpins the rationale for the re-invention of the radical forms of modern Nigerian art during the late 1950s with which Nigerian modernists contributed "to combating, the psychological effects of colonialism, imperialism and racism" (Nzegwu 1998: 49).

Preoccupied with Nigeria's political problems, Nigerian avant-gardes during this movement challenged imperial authority and European domination by producing anti-colonial art antithetical to European conventions and the colonial project. Their modernisation of indigenous cultural forms is argued in this study to have constituted defiance to imperialism and a visual assertion of the nation's clamour for self-expression and autonomy. This is because as John Picton (2006) posits, cultural revivalism act as a political mechanism which results in self-rule and emancipation, and that by "emphasizing one's ethnicity, as Okeke and several politicians and Nigerian artists before him did, it reflects a dual gesture of

securing one's cultural base and asserting one's claim to sovereignty" (Picton 2006: 37). Thus, by devoting their energy to cultural revivalism, and opposing Western domination, Nigerian modernists created a counter-culture against the culture of the colonialist, which in turn, defied imperial authority and contributed to dismantling it. Their intersection of art and nationalist politics, in its resistance context, hence contributed to the decolonization of Nigeria (Ogbechie 2008, Chukueggu 2010).

Akinola Lasekan who played a vital avant-garde role during the second phase of Nigerian Modernism than in the first, for instance, was confrontational in his anti-imperial propaganda. Adopting the subversive form of painting and illustration (cartoons), he challenged colonial administrations and Britain for their disruption of Nigerian culture and society. Employed by Nigeria's leading nationalist Dr Nnamdi Azikiwe, Lasekan created a series of images that didn't stop at cultural revivalism but subverted the authorities of various colonial administrations, he questioned Britain's oppressive rule, the alienation of Nigerian elites and the problematic system of indirect rule imposed on Nigerians. According to Evelyn Nicodemus (2000), "Akinola Lasekan attacked the abrasive experiences of British colonial rule through radical and vitriolic cartoons. His nationalism was directed towards political freedom, social justice and mental decolonisation" (Nicodemus 2000: 194). As a gifted painter, Lasekan used the platform of the *West African Pilot* (a leading anti-colonial and anti-imperial propaganda newspaper) to propagate his resistance and antagonism towards the colonizers and his works as Oloidi (1989) observed, became the most powerful weapon employed by the nationalist to fight colonial masters, colonialism and their Nigerian puppets (Oloidi 1989). Lasekan's cartoons and paintings were rebellious, radical and revile;⁵⁵ in *Freedom Sea 1949* for example, Lasekan

⁵⁵ "Akinola Lasekan's vitriolic attacks on the then-colonial government often attracted the attention, fury, and censorship of that government, which, many times, threw him into jail...he defined the parameters of political radicalism and antagonism that those who came after him were to emulate" (Medubi 2009: 198).

mocked colonialism as the unsettling storm, which posed great danger to the wellbeing and unity of Nigeria. Through the satirical configuration of this piece, he reiterated the clamor for freedom, visually postulating that Nigeria could only attain its heights if liberated from the stormy seas of colonialism. In *Enemies we Guard Against 1951*, Lasekan ridiculed the Macpherson Constitution of 1951 as an enslaving document, designed to foster Britain's subjugation of Nigerians and stifle indigenous quest for freedom. In this anti-colonial composition, the Macpherson constitution and British colonial policies are portrayed as drifting Islands which threatens to drag Nigeria into uncertainties and destruction; he emphasized that Nigerians must stir clear the veiled oppressive strategies of colonialism in order to attain independence (the political land of advancement). In *Zik 1952*, Lasekan proselytized the ideologies and political aspirations of his employer Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe who at the time was one of the most vociferous nationalists keen on dismantling colonial rule; Lasekan portrayed him as the emblem and political force to liberate Nigeria from the enslaving grip of imperial subjugation (figures 3.9 – 3.11).

With this intersection of politics and modern art Lasekan and other Nigerian avant-gardes from 1930 – 1960, contributed to the battle for decolonization through the dissemination of ant-European and anti-colonial propaganda and stirring nationalism consciousness amongst the citizenry; "their art was thus instrumental both in the wining of independence and in the de-colonising of the country and its cultural heritage" (Oloidi 1989: 194). The anti-colonial avant-gardism these modernists fostered, expressed the force-work of modernist art - anti-institutionalism and opposition to authority, theorised by Krzyztof Zairek and Peter Burger as the hallmark of Twentieth Century Modernism.

c) Battle to Reconstruct Nigerian Cultural Identity for Postcolonial Selfhood

The battle to reconstruct Nigeria's national identity was pivotal to the emergence of the second phase of Nigerian Modernism. Africans as a whole during this period were keen on redefining themselves, and reclaiming their identity shattered by colonialism. As elucidated in Chapter Two, the violent Europeanization of Nigeria through evangelicalism and colonial imposition, led to the loss of cultural identity, and constituted a crucial socio-political issue, which Nigerian modernists set out to address. Thus, anti-Europeanization ideologies promulgated during this second modernist period were designed to battle against Western culture/ideas, in order to reclaim Nigeria's image, culture, voice and identity. Murray's cultural revivalism advocacies started this process by reigniting cultural pride in the African self, which led to the re-invention of modern art in indigenous formalism and the subsequent creation of a new identity for Nigerian arts/culture (Oloidi 1989).

This battle to reclaim Nigerian culture and identity heightened during the late 1950s (the independence decade), with the *Zarianist's* pursuit of self-expressionism and cultural affirmation through the creation of culturally oriented patronising art forms reflective of pre-independence consciousness, to launch the nation into postcolonial selfhood. In 'The Art Society and the Making of Postcolonial Modernism in Nigeria', Okeke-Agulu (2010) observed that modern Nigerian artists during the late 1950s were driven by the politics of identity, thus focused on imaging the autonomous self and nation through radical art;

They were motivated by the necessity of imagining the postcolonial self as the manifestation of a compound consciousness...their art was a countermeasure against the threat of loss of self in the maelstrom unleashed by Western cultural imperialism and its enduring aftermath. It manifested as a variegated aesthetic in which formal elements and conceptual modes derived from African cultures were complexly combined in defining postcolonial artistic/cultural identity (Okeke-Agulu 2010: 522-525)

Their appropriation and modernisation of African traditional forms thus, constituted a cultural-political mechanism deployed firstly to foster anti-colonialism agitation, and later to facilitate the reconstruction of Nigerian identity by freeing Nigerian art and culture of imposed foreign values. Okeke the leader of the *Zaria Rebels* explained in 'Uche Okeke and Chinua Achebe: Artist and Author in Conversation' (2007) that they were incited by the nationalist clamour to create a new identity for the emergent Nigerian state to reflect the nation's battles for independence and global recognition of Africans as equals.⁵⁶ The *Zaria Art Society* was inaugurated out of this political ferment and the avant-gardism pursued by its members focused on defining that new identity for Nigerian arts, culture and society, and the avant-garde philosophy of *Natural Synthesis* provided them the suitable conceptual framework to re-construct pre-independent and post-colonial Nigerian identity (Clark 2007: 143-153).

It is argued therefore in this study that, the rigorous pursuit of cultural revivalism and affirmation during this second phase of Nigerian Modernism 1930 - 1960s through aesthetic/cultural hybridisation combining African and European creative conventions, was political and radical as it contributed to the dislodgement of European cultural imperialism, and created a new art language that effectively captured the hybrid conditions of pre-independence Nigeria, its modern civilisation and cultural pride to project the nation into selfhood. Modernist of this movement created plethora of public monuments in the new hybrid art/creative ethos to express their vision of modern Nigeria and postcolonial culture/image, and as Enwonwu proclaimed, they saw such celebration of national culture and pride in indigenous forms through patronising art, as a crucial art-political mechanism to foster Nigeria's battle for autonomy, as well as for creating a new visual culture and identity for its modern existence

⁵⁶ Modern Nigerian art was deeply associated with local resistance to subjugation by colonial forces and joining artistic and political interests together was one way to assert a Nigerian identity that was anti-colonial, anti-domination and independent of British imperialism (Gbadegesin 2007: 9).

(Enwonwu 1956). Enwonwu's submission summarises the political/cultural avant-gardism of modern Nigerian art during this period, which was characterised by the intersection of modern art with nationalist politics to facilitate decolonization, reconstruct Nigerian identity and reclaim its lost culture/pride.

3.6 Contrasts between Nigerian and European Modernisms

Although Nigerian Modernism is conceived and theorised in this thesis as parallel with that of the West, however, Euro-American Modernism is set apart from Nigeria's by plethora of features. The circumstances which instigated the emergence of European and Nigerian Modernisms - that is the socio-cultural and political conditions of their respective historic cultural context, as well as the styles and philosophies of modern art produced during these distinct periods in both sides of the Atlantic (Africa and Europe/America), constitute as argued in this study, the context for their differentiation. Driven by radical theories and philosophies, European Modernism culminated in a sense of bohemian counter-culture to subvert Victorian moralism, classicism and bourgeoisie tendencies which according to Jacob Singal (1987), "had become perilously artificial, over-civilized and stultifying the personality" (Singal 1987: 10); hence, in its bohemianism, Euro-American Modernism was a form of cultural interrogation and revolt against Victorian and bourgeois restrictions and conventionalism. European Modernists fused reason and unreason, intellect and personal emotions as well as creative subjectivism to break free of bourgeois constraints in order to experience/interpret the world from subjective perspectives (Bradbury 1983, Lears 1994). In this sense, European Modernism is characterised by anti-bourgeoisie, anti-establishment, anti-art, anti-authority tendencies formulated to overturn social order, authority and all traditional mimetic conventions of art, culture and society at large (Singal 1987: 11).

Euro-American Modernism was also a critique of modernity as modernist in Paris, Berlin, Zurich, and New York, created radical art to interrogate and criticise the machine dependence of modern society and the displacement of man in such industrialised civilization. Zygmunt Bauman (1991) argues that this specific rationale for Twentieth Century Western avant-gardism, differentiates Euro-American Modernism from all other modernisms (Bauman 1991: 7). European modernists reacted to the dehumanization of man as a result of industrial revolution, information overload, and fragmentation of reality, as well as the many uncertainties industrial revolution gave rise to in modern Europe and America. Their interrogation of modernity and its problematic reshaped European societies by influencing power, and authority, formulating new knowledge and fostering revolutions through bohemianism that provided an alternative space from whence they criticised bourgeois society, and carved out an alternative culture and space where the masses dehumanised by bourgeoisie social stratification, found recognition and connection with modern existence.

On the contrary, Nigerian Modernism was actuated by cultural aspirations and ideologies rooted in nationalism consciousness, and fostered artistic/political activism that differ from those of Europe – although they share an opposition to notions of power structures. Nigerian Modernism emerged out of the revolt against colonialism, the clamor for independence and quest to reconstruct Nigerian identity shattered by colonialism and cultural imperialism. The emergence of the first phase of Nigerian Modernism from the 1900s, derived from the revolt against stereotypes, oppression and racial discrimination by imperial Britain. While both Nigerian and European Modernisms were aimed at altering power by manipulating authority through radical art formalism in order to instigate social change, Nigerian Modernism from its inception involved a process of selective subversion of the colonial agency and not a battle against modernity, bourgeoisie and Victorianism as was the case in the West. Firstly, peeved by racial stereotypes of primitivism, intellectual/creative incompetence,

and barbarism projected on Africans, pioneering Nigerian modernists revolted against such derogatory construction and maneuvering of the colonized African 'Other' by the imperialist. Their avant-gardism subverted imperial policies and racist stereotypes in order to battle for equality - that is the recognition of Africans as humans of equal intellectual and creative abilities not just as inferior sub-humans in Western philosophies. It also aimed to subvert the racial policies of the colonial project, and force colonial regimes to include elite Africans in the running of the Nigerian colony. This indigenous activism aligned with nationalism advocacies and defined the conceptual framework of the Modernism pioneered by Onbaolu from the 1900s. Rather than invent a bohemian counter-culture to subvert bourgeoisie, as was the case in Europe, Nigerian Modernists invented subversive art forms to battle against stereotypes, racism, and cultural imperialism, in order to facilitate decolonization from the 1930s as demonstrated in the avant-gardism of Enwonwu and Okeke (discussed in Chapters Five and Six).

The contrast between European and Nigerian Modernisms is equally defined by the styles and philosophies of modern art produced in their specific cultural contexts. European Modernism was driven by radical avant-garde ideologies – for instance *Anomie*, *Nihilism* etc., leading to the concept/philosophy of 'Art for Arts Sake', which was characterized by radical experimentations resulting in the invention of varying new realities. Avant-garde movements such as *Symbolism*, *Suprematism*, *Surrealism*, *Minimalism*, *Pop Art*, *Expressionism*, *Dadaism*, *Impressionism*, *Futurism*, *Fauvism*, *Cubism*, *Abstract Expressionism* etc., (discussed in Chapter Two) impelled by the desire to subvert conventionalism and artistic restrictions associated with bourgeois and classical cultures, in their manifestoes propagated distinct creative ideologies and languages of modern art in defiance of established European aesthetics and art salons. This quest to transgress European conventions was also inspired by radical philosophies like Oscar Wilde's *Theory of Artistic Freedom 1891*, which asserted that, works of art

should be the result of unique temperament, a reflection of the artist's subjectivism free from external demands of aesthetic conventions and social/religious functions or obligations (Wilde 1891).⁵⁷ This philosophy of creative freedom and subjectivism employed by European avant-gardes, resulted in the invention of new art styles at the turn of the Twentieth Century characterized by appropriation and sublime abstraction tailored to subvert the mimesis of European conventionalism and in a broader sense undermine bourgeoisie and Victorian constraints on artists and the masses.

On the contrary, the stylistic configuration of modern arts during the two phases of Nigeria's bifurcated Modernism differs considerably from Euro-American avant-garde abstractionism. Modern Nigerian art from 1900 - 1930 was characterized by the reverse-appropriation of Western realism (the representation of things and peoples in exact pictorial verisimilitude) as the creative ethos of the movement. As discussed in Chapter Four, the appropriation and localization of this exalted European art convention in Nigeria by Onabolu was politically inspired and deployed to subvert Western stereotypes of Africans as creatively and intellectually incompetent. While Europe appropriated Africa's abstract formalism to subvert European mimetic culture, Nigerian modernists during the same period, appropriated European realism to subvert imperial stereotypes and break free from traditional creative philosophy of abstraction. A new aesthetic paradigm and art style was invented from the 1930s informed by the conceptual and philosophical frameworks of the second phase of Nigerian Modernism. Inspired by *Nationalism*, *Negritude*, and *Pan-African* political creed of cultural revivalism/affirmation as strategy to foster decolonization, the stylistic configuration of modern Nigerian art during this second modernist period was characterized by the unique language of stylization resulting from

⁵⁷ "A work of art is the unique result of a unique temperament. Its beauty comes from the fact that the author is what he is. It has nothing to do with the fact that other people want what they want. Indeed, the moment that an artist takes notice of what other people want, and tries to supply the demand, he ceases to be an artist, and becomes a dull or an amusing craftsman, an honest or dishonest tradesman. He has no further claim to be considered as an artist" (Wilde 1891).

aesthetic/cultural hybridization. Aesthetic/cultural hybridization involved the synthesis of Western art idioms with indigenous cultural forms to promote cultural revivalism and nationalism and this created a unique stylization in modern Nigerian art that captured the interstice between traditionalism and modernity with overarching features of modern Africaness.

In summary, these Modernisms are separated by modernist styles and avant-garde philosophies and ideologies. Although both contributed through radical aesthetics to transforming their respective societies, it is argued that, the maneuvering of the subversive power of art towards revolutionary propaganda in their cultural contexts had unique peculiarities that set these parallel Modernisms apart. European and Nigerian Modernisms therefore cannot be interlaced or absorbed into a universal frame as is problematically attempted in some recent studies proselytizing the ideology of global/universal Modernism. While European Modernism through its avant-gardism invented counter-culture a sense of decadence and opposition to order, to interrogate modernity, subvert bourgeoisie culture, Victorian morality and art salons, Nigerian bifurcated Modernism on the contrary, fostered resistance to imperial domination, racism, and discrimination. It derived from and contributed to nationalist battle for the reconstruction of Nigerian cultural identity and emancipation from Western subjugation. Also European avant-gardes in their radical aesthetics according to Greenberg (1939), detached themselves from society, the past and praxis of life in order to interrogate and influence society from a counter position outside of society (Greenberg 1939); on the contrary, Nigerian Modernists within their society and cultural matrix contributed directly to Nigeria's transformation, thus re-inventing the traditional social function of art in new modernist context. This study thus, drawing upon these differences, submits that, employing the concept of universal/mainstream Modernism to lump all modernist tendencies into a central modernist discourse is misleading because of marked cultural, stylistic, conceptual and ideological differences as demonstrated by this uncovered

parallel Nigerian Modernism.

3.7 The Found Object in Nigerian Art - Modernism Context

The context and ideologies surrounding the invention of the Found Object in European modern art discussed in Chapter One section 1.2 did not occur throughout Nigeria's bifurcated Modernism. Extensive research proves that, from the emergence of modern art defined by *Onabulism*, through *Aesthetic Hybridisation* of the Murray's school to the radicalism of Zarianist *Natural Synthesis*, while multimedia paintings abound, no trace of Found Object appropriation is found in Nigerian Modernism context.

This thesis argues that, the rationale for the absence of the Found Object during Nigerian bifurcated Modernism stems from the conceptual/ideological framework upon which these movements derived. Firstly, its absence during the first phase of Nigerian Modernism is traced to the dominant use of found object in pre-colonial traditional art, which was rejected by Onabolu's anti-traditionalism ideologies. The break with indigenous past and opposition to traditional creative philosophies initiated by Onabolu's Modernism in order to embrace European realism led to contempt for traditional art, which extended to rejection of its processes, methodologies and materials. Thus, the prominence of the Found Object in traditional Nigerian art-space subsequently accounted for the intense contempt for material appropriation and the genre of Found Object during the first phase of Nigerian Modernism. The second reason borders on oblivion at the time of the subversive powers of this art genre as a radical visual mechanism for cultural interrogation and socio-political critique. This only dawned on Nigerian artists from the 1990s when Found Object became radically deployed as elucidated in Chapter Seven to interrogate the legacies of colonialism and political corruption in Africa.

This absence of the Found Object in Nigerian Modernism constitutes the second point of departure for differentiating Found Object in Africa from those of Euro-American Modernism. The Found Object in Euro-American avant-garde context discussed in Chapter One, emerged out of the radical invention of bohemian counter-culture, anti-aestheticism, anti-art and general revolt against bourgeois institutions and European conventionalism, and this genre became the most radical art of Twentieth Century Europe deployed by avant-gardes in their battles against institutions and authority. The absence of this genre and its European context during Nigerian Modernism and the varied/unique postcolonial context it will resurface indicates clearly that, the appropriation of the Found Object in Nigerian art first proven in its pre-modern context (discussed in Chapter Two section 2.5.1) differs considerably from those of European avant-garde art. This contributes to buttressing the argument put forward in this study that, the Found Object in art is differentiated by cultural ramifications and contextual peculiarities, which cannot be subsumed into a universal discourse as problematically attempted in Eurocentric discourse of '*Global Recycla Art*'. This argument is further advanced in Chapter Seven, as another key contribution of this thesis to contemporary knowledge and art discourses.

3.8 Conclusion

Nigerian Modernism emerged out of resistance and opposition to colonialism and European domination; thus the avant-gardism fostered by Nigerian modernists derived from clearly defined cultural philosophies, ideologies and advocacies instigated by the clamour for liberation. Alluding to assertions by Onuchukwu 1994, Ogbechie 2008, Iriwieri 2010, Ngumah 2014 etc., that various creative paradigms occurred in Nigeria, this chapter has demonstrated that the socio-political activisms of anti-colonialism, anti-Europeanism, anti-missionary propaganda etc., fostered by Nigerian emergent intelligentsia/elites in Lagos from the 1890s, led to two unique aesthetic paradigms with distinct art styles

and philosophies which were then subjected to modernist analysis and theorised to have resulted in the emergence of a bifurcated Modernism in Nigeria. The chapter demonstrated that, the avant-gardism fostered by Nigerian modernists during these movements, provoked a unique form of cultural aesthetic rebellion distinct from European and American avant-gardism, thereby constituting a contrasting parallel Twentieth Century Modernism in Nigeria. Analysis of the cultural peculiarities and context of this bifurcated Nigerian Modernism contrasted from that of Europe and America validates the argument supported in this study that Modernism is a pluralistic phenomenon with multiple avant-garde centres, which should be acknowledged in contemporary art discourses. As O'Brien et al (2011) points out, the radical arts of Nigerian artists such as Onabolu, Enwonwu, Akinaola, and those of European avant-gardes such as Picasso, Duchamp, Warhol, Kandinsky and others, responded in equal revolutionary measures to the conditions of modernity and contributed in the transformation of their respective cultures (O'Brien et al 2011: 14), this chapter has thus proved and advanced this theory by demonstrating that, alongside European and American centres, cultures outside Europe engaged in avant-garde art that gave rise to their specific cultural Modernisms which although parallel to Euro-American Modernism, until recently are either dismissed or ignored in Western art history.

This study thus posits that art history will benefit from abandoning the exclusivism of the Vasarian concept of artistic centre and embrace the pluralism of Modernism and its multiple avant-garde centres beyond the West. As theorised in sections 3.2 and 3.4, Nigerian modernist in their subversion of colonialism and cultural imperialism, fostered a unique cultural avant-gardism defined by anti-aesthetics, anti-authority and counter-culture advocacies, reflective of the radicalism Childs, Aubrey, Barrett, Burger, Greenberg, Rosenberg and other modernist scholars establish as the defining features and foci of Modernism, thus proving that Nigeria at the time was a vibrant avant-

garde centre just like Paris, Zurich, Berlin London or New York. This chapter further established that the absence of the genre of Found Object in Nigerian Modernism impelled by anti-traditionalism advocacies of *Onabolusim*, further contributes to differentiating found object appropriation in European Modernism from those of African/Nigerian artistic expressionism.

Chapter Three Figures

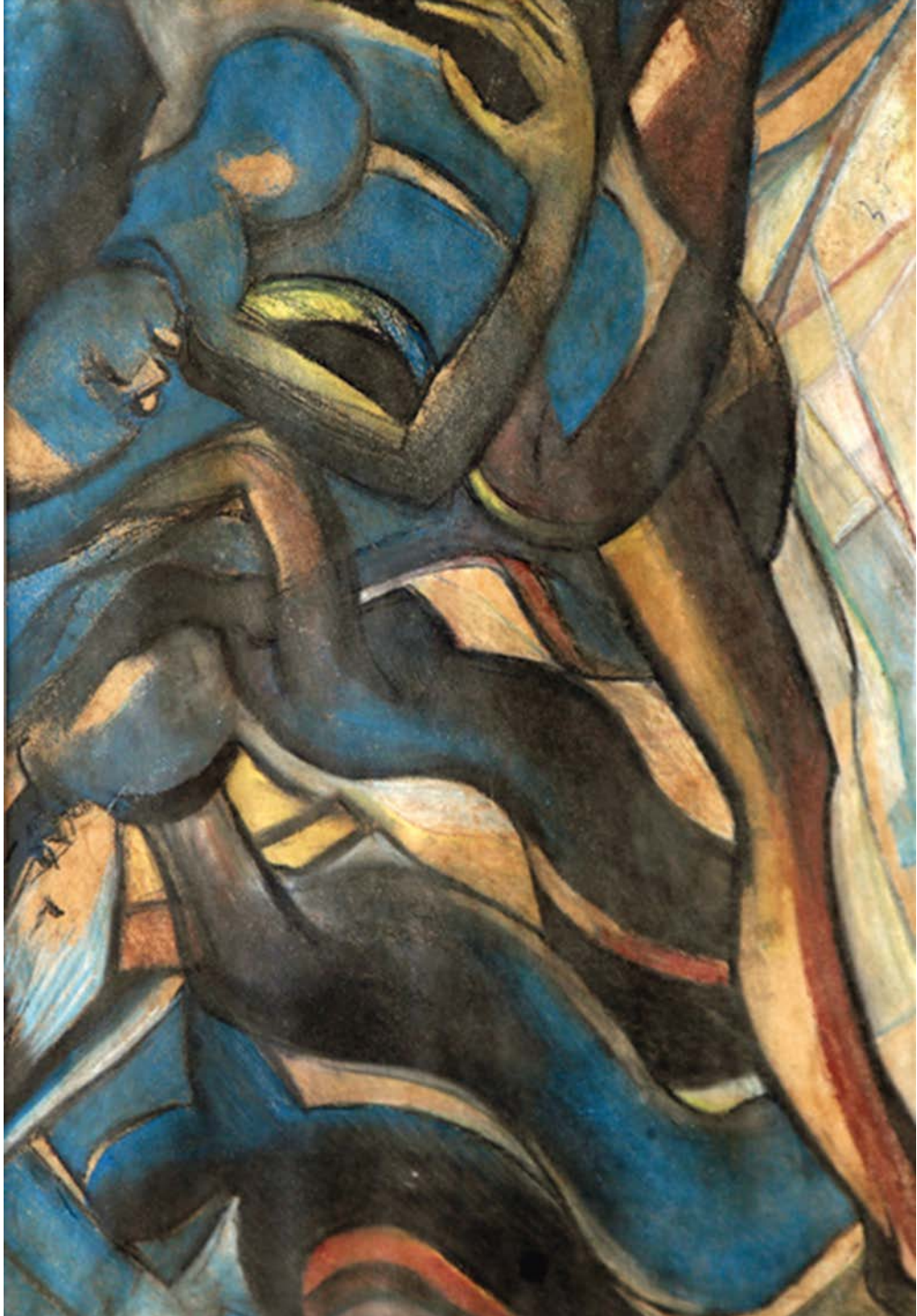


Figure 3.1: Ben Enwonwu *Begger* 1951 (Source: OYASAF). This piece captures the rejection of European representationalism fostered by Onabolu's school from the 1900, in favor of a stylized realism derived from aesthetic hybridization to promote cultural revivalism and visual culture.

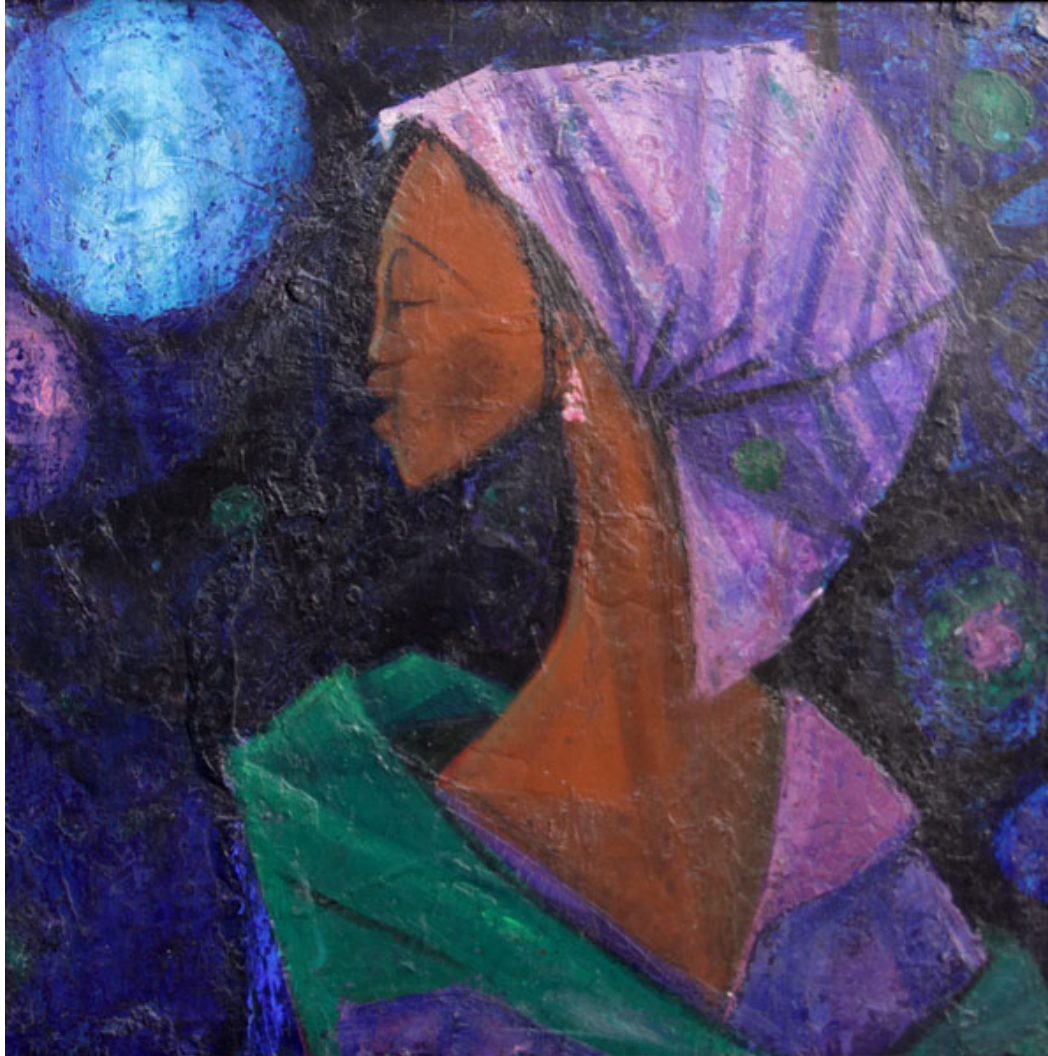


Figure 3.2: Yusuf Grillo Blue Moon 1966 - Oil on board 60 x 60cm (Source: ArHouse) reflects the abandonment of academic realism, and reinstatement of traditional African creative formalism in Nok art, as leitmotif for modern paintings antithetical to European realism institutionalized in Nigeria by Onaboluism.



Figure 3.3: Demas Nwoko The Wise Man 1963 (Source: OYASAF). This piece captures the new art language resulting from the rejection of European realism and representationalism by the Zairianists pursuing the avant-garde ideology of Natural Synthesis.



Figure 3.4: Oseloka Osadebe *Yam Festival Dancers' 1963*, "Ibo Life (festivals)," oil mural (Source: Mbari Centre, Enugu, Nigeria 1963). This piece captures the new art language resulting from the rejection of European realism and representationalism by the *Zairianists* pursuing the avant-garde ideology of *Natural Synthesis* and the creative methodology of aesthetic and cultural hybridism.

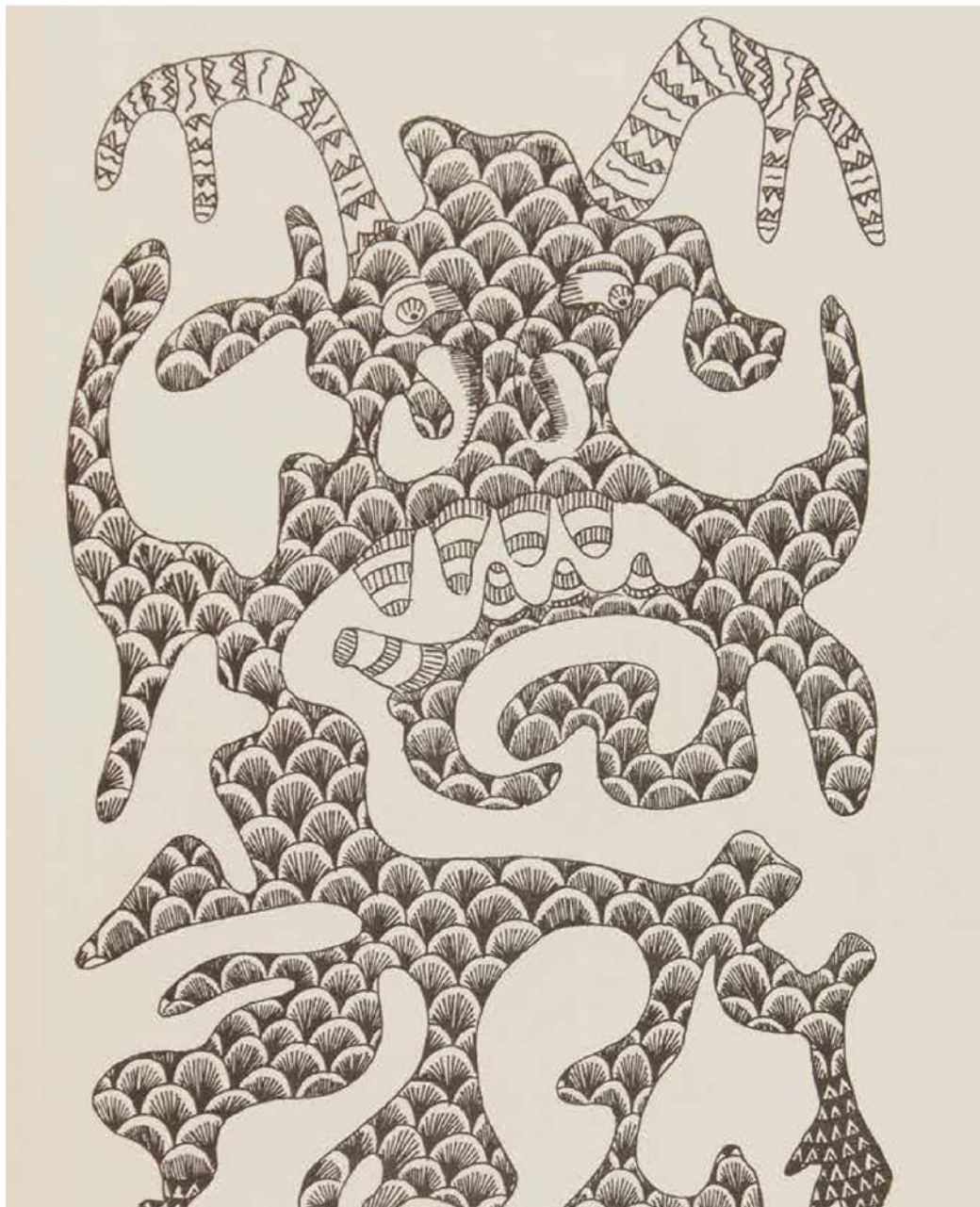


Figure 3.5: Figure 23: Uche Okeke *The Unknown Brute* 1959 – lithograph of an ink drawing on paper, 30 x 20cm (Source: The Simon Ottenberg Collection, the Newark Museum, 2012). This also reflects the new art language resulting from the rejection of European realism and by the Zairianist pursuing the avant-garde ideology of *Natural Synthesis* and cultural revivalism.



Figure 3.6: Adebisi Fabunmi Missionary Activity in West Africa (Source: The Simon Ottenberg Collection, the Newark Museum, 2012). This piece reflects the structuring of modern arts in workshop centers outside the academy to foster the ideologies of anti-colonialism and cultural revivalism in order to subvert European aesthetic and cultural imposition in Nigeria and Africa at large.



Figure 3.7: Twin Seven Seven Father of Oshogbo, (Source: The Simon Ottenberg Collection, the Newark Museum, 2012). This piece also reflects the structuring of modern arts in workshop centers outside the academy to foster the ideologies of anti-colonialism and cultural revivalism as creative mechanism to subvert European aesthetic and cultural imposition.

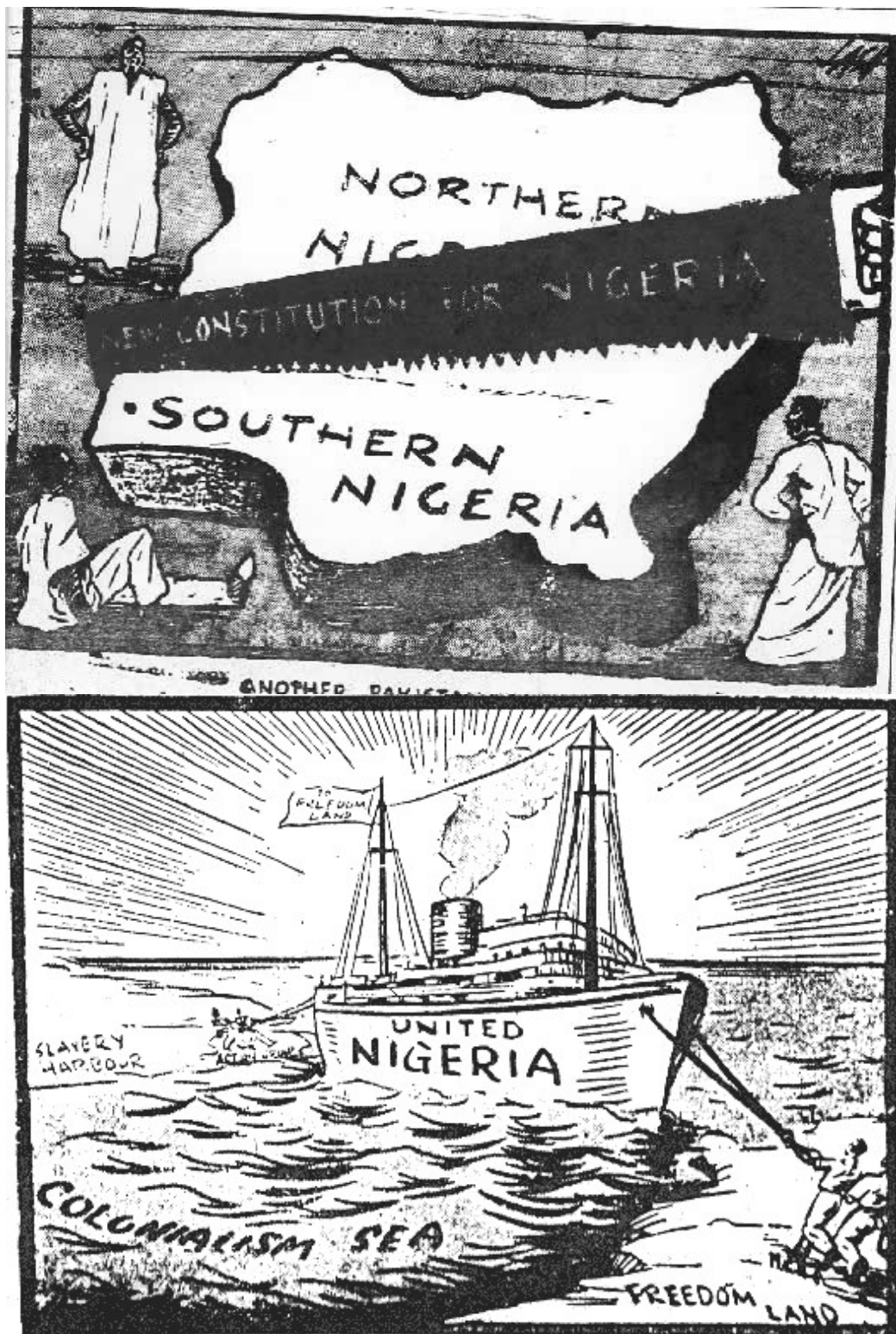


Figure 3.8: Akinola Lasekan Cartoons *Freedom Sea* (Source: African Cartoons 2013). Demonstrating the intersection of art and nationalist politics as Lasekan employed the subversive power of art and visual propaganda to foster anti-colonial and anti-imperial activism in Nigeria.

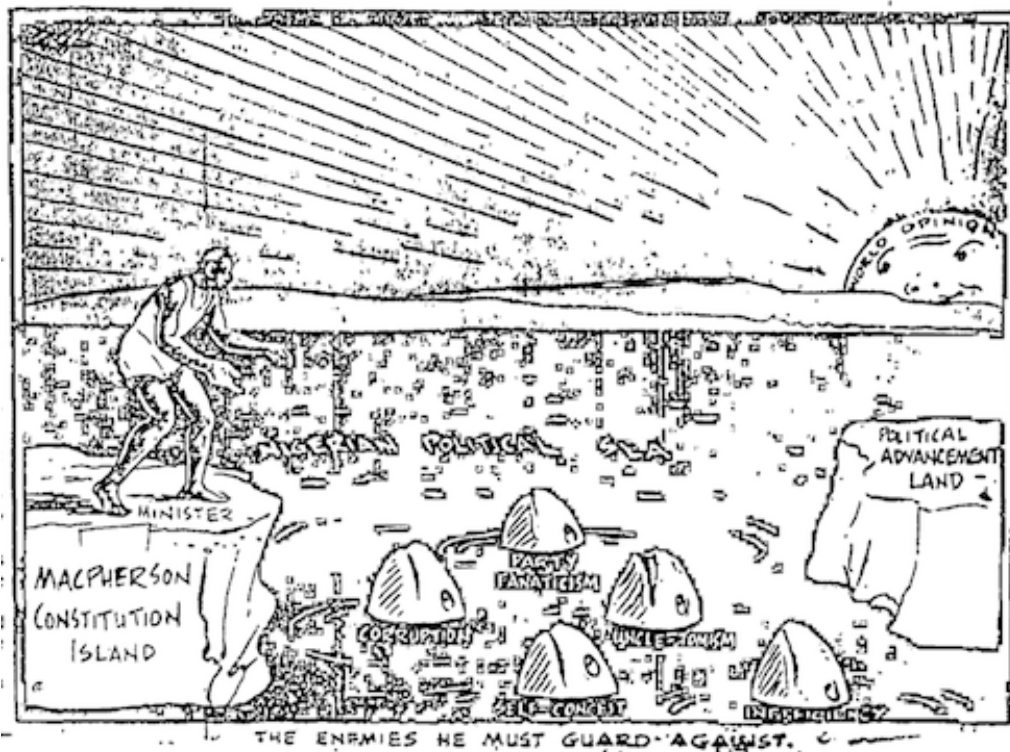
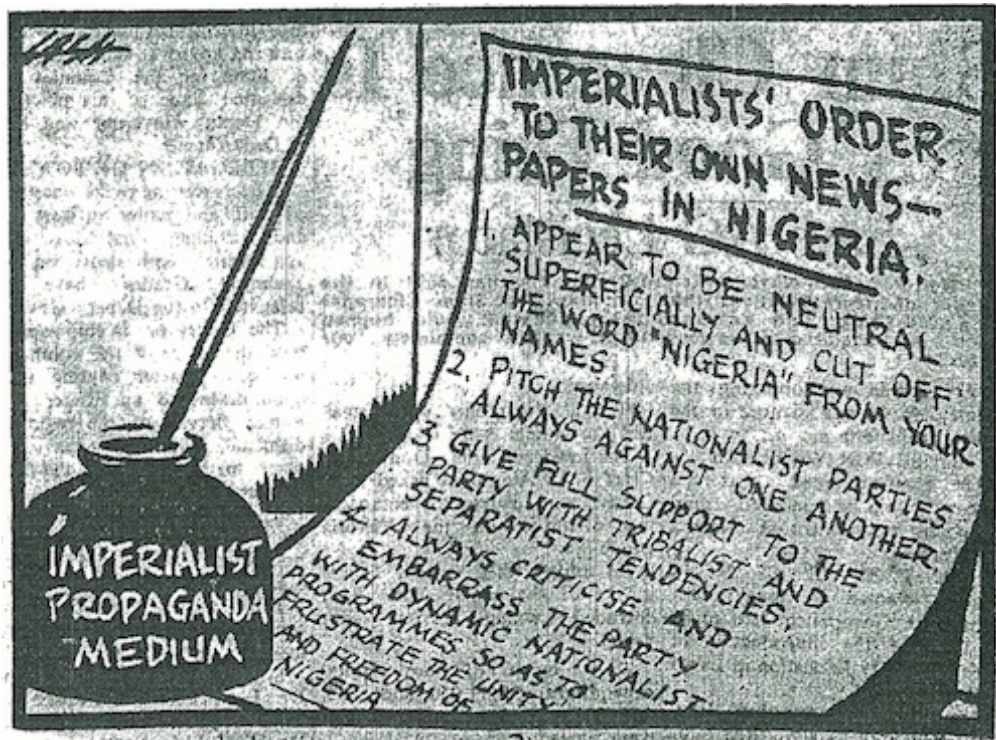
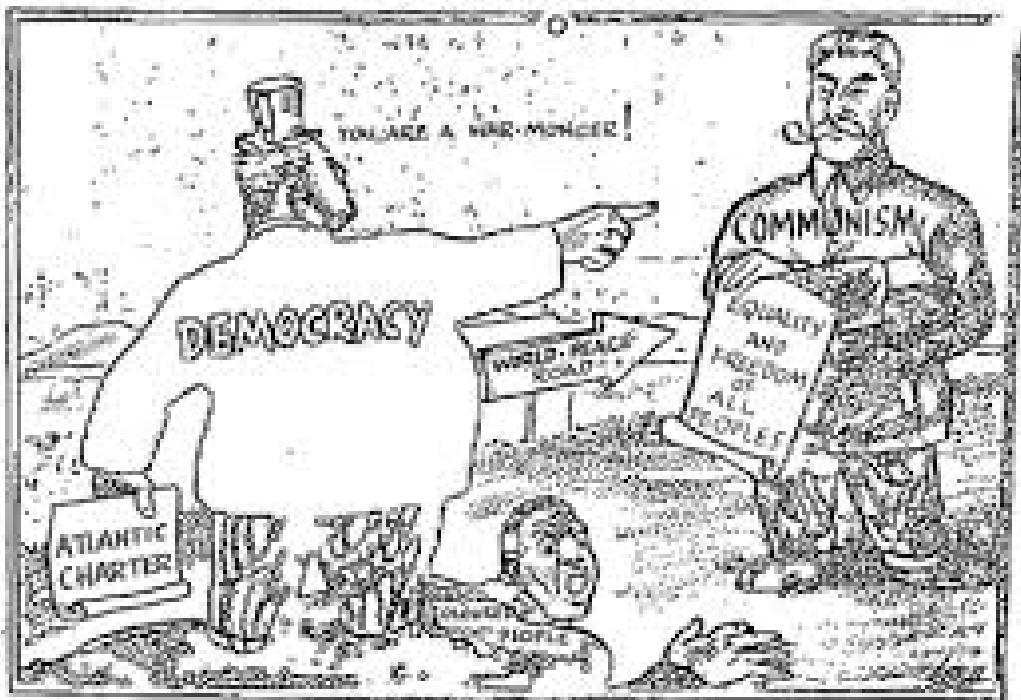


Figure 3.9: Akinola Lasekan *Enemeis Within* (Source: African Cartoons 2013). Demonstrating the intersection of art and nationalist politics as avant-garde mechanism to foster anti-colonial and anti-imperial propaganda in Nigeria through the *West African Pilot* Newspaper by subverting the authority of the colonial regimes in Nigeria.



DEMOCRACY VERSUS COMMUNISM.



Figure 3.10: Akinola Lasekan Zik (Source: Africa Cartoons 2013). Demonstrating the intersection of art and nationalist politics to foster the battle for the decolonization of Nigeria and Africa at large.

CHAPTER 4: ARTIST CASE STUDY I

Aina Onabolu, Pioneer Nigerian Modernist: Ideologies and Avant-Gardism

4.1 Introduction

Chief Aina Onabolu was born in Ijebu Ode in 1882. He pioneered the first art revolution in colonial Nigeria (1900) and is widely acclaimed as founder of modern art in Africa (Oloidi 1991, Oguiibe 2002, Nicodemus 2008, Ugiomoh 2009). However, some scholars problematically dismiss Onabolu's art as crude imitation of Western realism and a product of the legacy of colonialism (Araeen 2010, Okonkwo & Akhogba 2013). The implications of submerging Onabolu's art into the project of Britain's colonisation of Nigeria by these scholars is paradoxical as it implies that Onabolu's art was not driven by modernist ideologies and was unable to interrogate colonialism, thus undermining his pioneering role as the first African modernist. Contrary to these claims by scholars such as Araeen (2010), Okonkwo & Akhogba (2013) etc., that his art legitimates British colonial enterprise in Nigeria and the later western arts imperialism, Onabolu's works sowed the seed of what was to later become the genesis of an anti-colonial posture in Nigeria.

This chapter contests and subverts the alignment of Onabolu's art with colonialism, and establishes him not just as pioneer of modern Nigerian art, but as an avant-garde whose art practice and ideologies spearheaded the first phase of Nigerian Modernism from 1900 - 1930. To validate this view point, this

chapter will interrogate Onabolu's cultural background (Ijebu Origin) and socio-political climate in the Lagos Colony where he studied and practiced, in order to demonstrate how such contexts informed the avant-garde ideological framework upon which his new found visual language, although drawing its energies from indigenous idioms, created a paradigm shift in modernising Nigeria society. This chapter will demonstrate that, divorcing Onabolu's art from colonialism and exploring the tensions and socio-political conditions in Lagos and Ijebu that launched his art, will establish his position as Nigeria's first avant-garde.

Firstly, Ijebu Ode was a powerful Yoruba kingdom with a well organised traditional political system, government and independent cultural identity, which the kingdom's ruling and merchant classes protected and used for imposing their dominance on neighbouring Yoruba towns. They (Ijebus) were noted for their contempt and distaste for whites, British colonial government and all external forces, which could destabilize their socio-political system, cultural identity and or adulterate their religion (Ayandele 1983: 90, Eades 1980: 5). As a child Onabolu was raised in this cultural credo, which contributed immensely in defining his modernist ideologies in later years. The Ijebus equally had an established stylised art tradition, which dates back to several centuries before the arrival of the colonizers in Nigeria. Ijebu's creative ethos exhibit similarities with other Yoruba traditional artistic centers like Ife, Benin etc., characterized by a distinct stylized representationalism, which combines realism with abstract expressionism (Beier 1986).

Secondly, the socio-political and economic climate of the Colony of Lagos from the 1890s, continuing through the 1900s when Onabolu arrived to further his secondary education, was charged with local internal cultural uprising and anti-colonialism movements formed by the Lagos elites to battle against colonial administrative racism. These factors contributed in informing Onabolu's modernist, nationalist and political ideologies; the concerted resistance of the

Lagos elites against the cruelty of colonialism and the oppression of African indigenous institutions (such as the Ogboni), ritual practices (such as Egungun and related masquerade forms), dominated the Lagos socio-political terrain in the 1900s, and Onobolu who lived with his mentor, J K Randle a frontline elite, was drawn to this indigenous activism. Onobolu and Randle were both acquainted with the advocacies of the elites; they were privy to and participated in the resistance agencies that these circumstances generated on a wider scale. Onobolu's exposition to and involvement in the vanguard of these activities gave birth to his modernist art.

In section 4.2, the socio-political and cultural background (cultural independence) of the Ijebu kingdom as well as their running battles with the British colonial government will be explored. Its established art tradition and ideologies from whence Onobolu's art equally derives will be detailed. It will proceed to examine the influence of the Lagos elites on Onobolu's art. Section 4.3 will explore Onobolu's modernist ideologies and practice, it will interrogate his avant-gardism and how he initiated the transformation of modern Nigerian / African art in general. Section 4.4 will discuss some of Onobolu's major works, theorising the political imperatives of his reverse-appropriation of realism (portraiture) as an avant-garde idiom of resistance to Western stereotypes of Africa and for challenging colonial oppression in Nigeria. Section 4.5 explores the problematic of Onobolu's art, and the chapter concludes with emphasis on Onobolu's influence on the first phase of Nigerian Modernism.

4.2 Historical Overview of the Cultural and Socio-Political Contexts which Launched Onobolu's Modernist Art

a) Ijebu Kingdom's Policy of Isolationism and Battle against British Colonial Government

The Ijebus emerged as a powerful Yoruba force in the late Nineteenth Century with a strong economic, religious, military, political and cultural system which offered resistance to all forms of subjugation, especially from British colonial rule. Ijebus constitute the largest sub-ethnic group in Yoruba land consisting of five major towns: Ijebu-Ife, Ijebu-Igbo, Ijebu-Ode, Ijebu-Ososa, and Ijebu-Remo (Ogunkoya 1956: 52). In the early Fourteenth Century, they were the first Yoruba speaking nation to establish contact with Europeans⁵⁸ and as early as the Fifteenth Century, were already established as a highly organized and powerful nation, and defended itself against enemies. Already established and organised as a polity and regional force by the time of the trans-Atlantic slave trade and colonialism, the Ijebus' early contact with the West accounted for their might in warfare, and domination over other Yoruba towns. They were the first to manufacture weapons of war in the history of Nigeria, and equally practiced a traditional form of democracy long before the colonialists knew Africa (Lloyd 1959, Bascom 1963, Peel 1977, Law 1986).⁵⁹

Ijebu's organised system and advancement in war made their kingdom a fort that was difficult for the British to break into and impose colonial rule. For want of preservation of their cultural identity and religious values/belief systems, the Ijebus denied people of other ethnic extractions entry into their territory and cultural institutions (Ogunkoya 1956: 58), and such exclusivist stands were enshrined as traditional laws, and cultural policies which Ayandele calls stratagem of '*Isolationism*'. Ayandele (1983) observes that, "the Ijebus pursued a policy of splendid isolation in which they treated British agents, missionaries, and

⁵⁸ As early as the 1500, Ijebu Ode featured in the Portuguese map and Pacheco Pereira writings in 1507-1508

⁵⁹ Evidences of Ijebu military and economic might and organisation is recorded as early as the Fifteenth Century in various Portuguese explorers' records; Castello Branco in 1620 for example stated that the Ijebus were a warlike Kingdom and very powerful, while Edward Bold in 1822 provided details of the Ijebus' advancement in clothe making which were exported to different parts of Africa. See, e.g. Edward Bold, *The Merchants' and Mariners' African Guide* (London, 1822), 62, 68, 94; and John Adams, *Remarks on the Country Extending From Cape Palmas to the River Congo* (London, 1823), 89, 96, 108. Ijebu cloth was also sent into the interior to Nupe as remarked in Clapperton, H. (1829) *Journal of a Second Expedition into the Interior of Africa*. London: Ryder

non-Ijebu Yorubas as strangers thus were denied access to Ijebuland” (Ayandele 1983: 90-94). This contempt for Europeans and what they stood for (Western oppression of Africans) enshrined in Ijebu’s policy of isolationism, helped them retain their religious system, socio-political structures, art and cultural identity. With this Isolationist policy and resistance to Western infiltration, the Ijebus alongside their kins (Saro, Egba, Oyo, Ijesha, Ibadan) emerged as the “third new powerful force in the political equation that existed between the British and Indigenous rulers of Lagos, and saw themselves as creators of a new society that was to be equal of other nations in the world” (Nzegwu, 1999: 408). Ijebus became a dominant economic force in the colony, controlled major markets in Yorubaland, attributing their peace and prosperity to their religion and resistance to Western interference (Op Cit 1999: 407). However, Ijebu policy of isolation resulted in conflicts between them and British colonial governments; they became sworn enemies of the British government who perceived the Ijebus as hindrances to their extension of colonial rule and material exploitation to the interiors of Yorubaland. By preventing the colonizers from entering and passing through their territory, the Ijebus obstructed the flow of palm oil and palm kernel from the interiors to Liverpool and other Western ports thus stifling British trade. In May 1891, the Ijebus rejected Governor Denton’s ‘Open Road’ treaty, which then deepened the grievances of the British Imperial government towards the Ijebus. The height of aggression followed when Governor Carter became head of the colonial administration in Lagos, and ordered attacks on Ijebu in 1892, resulting in the Ijebu expedition of May 19 (Ayandele 1966, Smith 1971, Eades 1980, Beck 2010). The gruesomeness of the attack in which over 1000 warriors were killed and the town destroyed, were all witnessed by young Onabolu and as Evelyn Nicodemus has suggested, such traumatic experiences played a vital role in Onabolu’s search in later years, for visual idioms that were appropriate for challenging and subverting the supposed display of Western supremacy in that expedition (Nicodemus 2008).

Ijebu's established stylised art tradition⁶⁰ was not just pivotal to Ijebu religious system, but was symbolic of Ijebu kingdom's cultural identity and civilisation. Onabolu's creative sensibilities were informed by the traditional art ideologies of his kin (Ijebus), as he was from an early age, exposed to the creative conventions of Ijebu Ode long before the introduction of European artistic forms in Nigeria (Nzegwu 1999: 407). Onabolu's art therefore, began independent of colonialism and flourished outside and irrespective of Western condemnation and sanctions on traditional Yoruba art practice. Onabolu's art practice working alongside other artists, continued African art and through the application of techniques, re-branded it as a new avant-garde as will be explored in details later, it also created a new art audience in Nigeria, changed the patronage system of African art and became a creative mechanism for resistance to colonialism.

This insights into the socio-political and cultural context of Ijebu kingdom, contradicts the erroneous⁶¹ perceptions by scholars who have either dismissed or situated Onabolu's art as dated or as imitation of colonial European art and who argue that no form of social or artistic resistance existed in Africa to validate Onabolu's art as modernist. From the above discussion of influences from his town of origin, it is apparent that Onabolu's fostering of the clamour for equality of creative abilities discussed in 4.3, derived from Ijebu cultural ethos of creating an independent nation equal to every other, while his views of debunking

⁶⁰ Ijebu Ode art is a direct product of the people's religion and traditional philosophies; as a result, its forms are characterised by stylization symbolic of traditional perceptions of metaphysical realism. Ijebu art ranged from abstract to stylised forms, which combine realism and abstraction. Modelled or carved forms had large heads, long torsos, conical wide eyes, small hands which in most occasions are stretched out, while the legs often taper and fade into the wood trunk not clearly defined. Some figures combine human and animal forms while others are compositions of human gestural forms with no heads. These figures often appear in groups carrying out some religious, customary or abstract spiritual function. One feature that stands out in Ijebu Oshogbo Art is the incorporation of tribal marks as surface scarification on sculptures and textile designs.

⁶¹ Here, references are made to scholars who dismiss Onabolu's art as product of colonialism without modernist ideologies. Example, Araeen (2010) who argued that, "the perception of modernity ascribed to Onabolu's work, is actually the modernity of a surrogate class, which can only mimic but is unable to penetrate what it mimics" (Araeen 2010: 279). See also Okonkwo, I. E., Akhogba, A. E. (2013) 'Uche Okeke as A Precursor of Contemporary Nigerian Art Education' AFRREV IJAH Vol. 2 (3), S/No 7, Beier, U. (1968) *Contemporary Art in Africa*. FA Praeger and Mount, M. W. (1989). *African Art: The Years Since 1920*. Da Capo Press.

Western European hegemony originated from the anti-European sentiments which his forefathers started. Thus, the combination of an atmosphere of resistance, the tensions between an established cultural and ideological base and a new and foreign one that sought to supplant it, and the reactions against all forms of imperialism and foreign impositions contributed in launching Onobolu's modernist art into existence.

b) The Rise of the Lagos Elites, Resistance to Racist Policies and Quest for Autonomy

From the 1880s, the emergence of a politically aware bourgeois elite class which comprised of lawyers, doctors, businessmen, and elite traditional chiefs, made Lagos one of the biggest concentration of elite Africans who channelled their efforts into defining the identity of the modernizing colony and (Nigeria). Howard Becker (1982) has captured succinctly the influences of bourgeois elite on art and what he termed '*Art Worlds*', opining that, art flourishes and art worlds are formed when there is sufficient political / economic freedom and patronage (Becker 1982). As such every emerging art convention will use materials deeply imbedded in the culture they exist in, Onobolu's art was not different from this general rule. This relationship and the influences of bourgeois elite, wealth, knowledge and patronage in the formation of new art conventions is evident and pivotal in the emergence of Onobolu's modernist art as will be explored in the next section. With the introduction of legitimate trade, Western Education, and Religion, a group of mostly Western-educated Africans among them being Onobolu, established themselves as strong new elite, thereby altering the economic and political power in Lagos, as well as patronising the emergence of a new aesthetic idiom and taste (Mann 1985: 33-4).

Elite Lagosians had immense influence in the Colony and contributed to its modernisation through their activism and modernist views about themselves and their society. From the 1890s these Nigerian elites and other Africans in the

Colony of Lagos were embroiled in European-induced acts of racism, oppressions and manoeuvring in trade and commerce. These elites were at the forefront of resistance movements, they facilitated and took part in various protest and strikes against racist policies enacted by the colonizers to oppress Africans (discussed in 2.4.1) and established pressure groups to channel their grievances (Coleman 1958: 180). The pressure groups and movements worked individually and occasionally together towards, counteracting various new policies instituted by British administrators, lobbied successfully for the creation of, and inclusion of an African in the Lagos *Legislative Council*. Using the council and other avenues, Lagos elites attempted to exercise some of their influence in the governing of the region, and fought for a more autonomous Nigeria (Gbadegesin 2007: 11).

Onobolu arrived Lagos amidst these social, economic and political climate, and when the racist policies of Governor MacCallam (1897-1904) were causing major unrest amongst indigenes. Onobolu lived with his mentor Dr. J. K Randle who was one of the leading Lagosians at the forefront of resistance to colonial oppression. Through his mentorship, Onobolu was made aware of the ills of colonialism; he therefore grew to develop patriotism for his homeland and a strong desire to see Africa and Africans liberated from European oppression. Through Dr J K Randle, Onobolu became affiliated with the influential political Lagos elites placing him in the hub of the upper echelon of Lagosian society, and sharing their modernist values, which in turn informed his modernist ideologies (Nzegwu 1999: 413, Gbadegesin 2007: 9). Influential associates of Dr J K Randle such as, Mojola Agbebi, Herbert Macaulay, Akinwande Savage, Ernest Ikoli, W. B. Euba, Rev. S. M. Abiodun, Babington Adebayo and others, who actively campaigned for Nigeria's independence and self-governance, became Onobolu's patrons whose ideologies he (Onobolu) projected through modern art; as Herbert Macaulay later posited, Onobolu's works were "a clear marvellous vindication of the elite nationalist struggles" (Macaulay cited in Oloidi 1989: 98) that colonial Nigeria and Africa waged against colonialism.

Contrary to submissions which have aligned Onabolu's art with mainstream colonialism, this study opines that, the emergence of Onabolu's art was prefigured by the political climate of Lagos which he captured as a visual reflection of the political advocacies of elite Lagosians; such modernist and political affiliations launched his modern art into existence. For Onabolu, having learned about "the deleterious features of colonialism and how such must be combated, it also suggested to him the best stylistic tool for exposing the falsity of the colonial maxim that Africans were biologically inferior to the white man"(Nzegwu 1999: 410). Onabolu's art was thus deeply rooted in local resistance to subjugation by colonial forces, and represented a jab at the colonial administrators,⁶² and by joining artistic and political interests together he asserted a new and modern Nigerian artistic expressionism that was anti-colonial and independent of British imperialism. Onabolu and his representational art formalism formed part of an African current of modernization from which emerged the advocates of African Nationalism and progress (Oloidi 2008: 4, Gbadegesin 2007: 9). As John Clark (1998) points out in *Modern Indian Art*, modernism in cultures outside Western European cultures, were "connected to and carried by ideologically progressive movements within intellectual classes" (Clark 1998: 107). This was the case with Onabolu's modernist art; being one of their number there is an evident connection of his ideologies with those propagated by elite Lagosians as well as those of the radical philosopher, theologian and nationalist Edward Wilmot Blyden who argued for the intellectual equality of Africans and Europeans, a view that is reflected in Onabolu's revolt against European prejudices and stereotyping of Nigerians/Africans (Nicodemus 1997).

Tracing these very important socio-political contexts, brings to the fore the fact that, Onabolu's art bristled with a climate of modernity in which the social, political, and economic milieu of the emerging Nigerian society was witnessing

⁶² Onabolu's painting of the colonizers was a projection of the poor judgement of the West, debunking their stereotype of Africans as incompetent - this is elaborated further in 4.3.

power shifts and overarching transformation. Onobolu contributed in defining that modernity as his ideologies became the cataclysm, which launched the first phase of Nigerian Modernism. Onobolu's art in modernist terms both influenced and interacted with the emerging Nigerian state and fostered nationalist ideologies in defining the modernity of Lagos society and Nigeria at large. He ventured into a new uncharted territory to conquer foreign artistic conventions through reverse appropriation, he localised such idioms and employed them to create a vanguard for visual arts throughout Africa that is characterised by and rooted in indigenous resistance to colonialism; in this sense, his works reflect aesthetic avant-gardism Jürgen Habermas theorise as the transforming power of artistic Modernism (Habermas 1985: 5).

4.3 Onobolu's Modernist Ideologies and Art Practice

Sharing the nationalist aspirations of elite Lagosians and the cultural ideologies of his kin (the Ijebus), Onobolu's art can be defined within two major modernist frameworks. Firstly, Onobolu propounded the argument that,

Art as a universal human language goes beyond ethnic and cultural barriers. God has given creative abilities to all irrespective of race, colour, tribe and culture...no single person or culture holds monopoly over art or creativity (Onobolu 1960: 102)

This declaration defined his avant-garde manifesto and constituted Onobolu's attempt to debunk the view by the West that Africans were inferior sub-humans incapable of creating high art like Europeans. This race stereotype of Africans by the West was coined to emphasise and construct Africans as uncivilized primitives, intellectually deprived, creatively incompetent and incapable of civilisation, in order to justify imperial colonial project. Aware of such derogatory racial stereotypes, Onobolu's modernist art was built on complex, intellectual and politically motivated philosophies designed to challenge, subvert

and invalidate these derogatory racist stereotypes that were even inscribed in European medical theories. For instance, 'insanity' was used to categorise blacks as a result of their rejection of the institution of slavery (Gilman 1985: 139), It was also enshrined in European medical theories and philosophy that the "black blood chains the mind to ignorance, superstition...and bolt the door against civilisation and intelligence" (Szasz 1971: 47), in order to enforce slave trade and maintain Western domination over the colonized African 'Other'. This assertion that Africans lacked intellectual and creative abilities to create high art, stressed later by Governor Sir Hugu Clifford in the Blackwood Advertiser of January 1918, infuriated Onabolu who with his mentor Dr J K Randle, read about such stereotypes in foreign newspapers and were keen to debunk them (Nicodemus 2009: 12). His philosophy of creative equality and universality of artistic skills, and the modern art he produced became a symbol of resistance to such Western stereotypes about Africa and Africans.

Onabolu chose the ethos and visual idiom of realism (mimetic art convention) consciously to visually express his resistance to racism and stereotyping, because realism as John Clark (1998) opined, outside Western European cultures, "functioned as a marker of modernism" (Clark 1998: 79). His choice of easel painting and academic realism was deeply political, an act of defiance against the West - an expression of opposition to anti-African stereotyping (Oloidi 1989, Oguibe 2002, Nicodemus 2005). Through realism, Onabolu's ideology of universal creative equality, were codified in visual form and fostered his battle against imperial aesthetic hegemony. Onabolu's *Portrait of Dr Sapara 1920* (figure 4.1) for example, exhibits his mastery of realism which Europe considered as an expression of high art during the Renaissance. The painting exhibits qualities of mimetic art (realism) especially truth-to-likeness. The subject is depicted in three-quarter profile; the features and contours of the face are clearly defined in accurate proportions thus creating a realistic representation of Dr Sapara's likeness. By skilfully defining the contours of the face with *sfumato*

technique, and raising the cheek muscles, Onabolu inscribe on his subject a gentle smile/facial expression reflecting his persona. The hat, forehead, nose, cheek muscles and chin, as well as the chest region and knuckles are all lit with a gentle light, which are contrasted with a darker colour palette used in depicting the ear region, neck and lower sections of the subject's attire. Through the artist's mastery and application of chiaroscuro, the intricate patterns, designs and contours of Dr Sapara's cloth are perfectly captured which contributes to creating a realistic appearance. The background is treated with bright colours thus projecting and emphasizing the subject in the foreground, reflecting the light effect technique developed by European Renaissance masters.

His exhibition of mastery of this extoled creative convention self-taught fostered his argument that Africans possess same creative and intellectual capabilities as the colonizers. Onabolu thus challenged and collapsed Europe's supposed superiority in art and especially Western categorisation of African art and visual culture as 'primitive'. Onabolu's reverse-appropriation of realism as an avant-garde statement (modernist idiom) did not aim to imitate Western art conventions or to gain validation from the west rather, he deconstructed and invalidated European racist assumptions upon which the civilizing missions in the colonies were founded. According to Olu Oguibe (2002), his "appropriation and mastery of European realist tradition in painting and the graphic arts was a significant part of a process of crossing out Europe's texts of exclusivity, rather than merely imbibing forms and surfaces" (Oguibe 2002: 247-8). Ideologically and practically Onabolu de-stabilized Western exclusivity, the core upon which colonialism was built as evidenced by their discriminatory treatment of the colonised. Just like Elite Lagosians who channelled their resistance and protests against Western exclusion of Africans from the affairs of their land, and whose various acts of resistance challenged racism and sought to overturn it, Onabolu's ideology of universal creative ability/equality irrespective of race demonstrated

in his mastery of realism became a visual campaign reflective of the nationalist struggles, resistance, protests and aspirations in Lagos at the time.

To valorise his ideology, challenge the West, and prove Africans' creative competence, the ideal move was to enter the very core of Western art culture and challenge its supposed exalted position as creators of high art. Thus, Onobolu's reverse-appropriation of realism fostered African's modernist protest; he used this European academic painting language to challenge Western self-acclaimed ingenuity, superiority and hegemony, thus dismantling Western assumptions about the inferiority of African arts and artists. In the same way that Picasso took inspiration from African art to challenge the conventions of European art, Onobolu appropriated the medium of realism for his modernism to challenge western philosophies and sensibilities about the colonised African 'Other'. Onobolu's portrait of '*Mrs Spencer Savage 1902*' (Figure 4.2) demonstrates total break from traditional abstractionism and marked the beginning of a new creative paradigm in West Africa with his introduction and mastery of realism. The contrast of Onobolu's new art from traditional art forms, and the level of mastery of pictorial verisimilitude achieved in this early 1902 painting, subverted European label of incompetence projected on the colonized.

In this portrait of *Mrs. Spencer Savage 1902* Onobolu's mastery of pictorial verisimilitude is demonstrated through a detailed and unbellished depiction of the form of his subject in photographic precision. It captures the subject in accurate anatomical proportions - the features and composition of the face are proportional to each other and her hands in relation to the whole body. Onobolu captures the asymmetrical qualities of the subject's face using a subtle right-left difference, with ambiguous facial gestures and intense fixed gaze, to visualize her subtle and calm disposition. She looks directly at the viewers, arms holding an item not clearly defined; her arms, body, torso etc., face a different direction from her head, thus showing some movement. The painting exhibits the

principle of stability in Western mimetic convention in its expression of this gentle motion and calmness without dramatic curves, rich decorations or harsh lighting. It employs techniques reminiscent of Renaissance and Baroque Europe where subjects were depicted in the Three-quarter face profile which allows for greater engagement between the subject and viewer as exemplified by Leonardo da Vinci's *Mona Lisa 1503-1517* (figure 4.3). In this painting, Onobolu demonstrates mastery of *Sfumato* the smoky blurring techniques of brushwork on the face and hair as well as features such as the eyes and lips which soften its appearance and confer on the subject a real facial expression one open to interpretations. Onobolu skillfully manipulates his paint to express a soft light, with a seamless transition between light and dark shades, which points to his mastery of chiaroscuro, deployed to draw the viewers' attention to certain parts of the painting. The lower part of the composition is treated with dark hues, in contrast with the portions of high light at the top right corner of the canvas to highlight the left side of her face against a soft gray backdrop. The use of oil paint and gentle brush strokes enabled the artist to effectively capture the soft folds of the drapery, textures of skin, contrasting chiaroscuro and fine details (contours of the hands, facial features and line patterns on the fabric etc.), leading to a realistic representation of Mrs Savage. In this early display of truth to likeness in painting, Onobolu's mastery of pictorial verisimilitude self-taught is demonstrated.

By identifying himself with modernity and progressive thoughts of the elites, and proving Africa's creative/intellectual equality to the West through his mastery and exhibition of European convention of realism, Onobolu like other elite Lagosians, hoped to dispel the label/epithet of the black savage and incompetent primitives projected on Africans (Nzegwu 1999: 422, Gbadegesin 2007: 30). In producing representational portraiture, Onobolu became more avowedly pan-African and nationalist in feeling, using his portraiture as a means of celebrating and immortalising all those, Europeans and Africans, helping the nationalist

battles for freedom from colonial oppression and racial discrimination (Oloidi 1989: 193). Portraiture became for Onabolu a resistance art form, which he drew upon for his avant-gardism.⁶³ Onabolu's portraiture was politically nationalist and subversive which explains why British colonizers and missionaries sternly rebuked him and his modern art. His newfound art was an affront to Europe's acclaimed superiority because they thought of Africans as incompetent, incapable of and unworthy of the iconic and philosophically laden art form he produced. In section 4.4, Onabolu's use of portraiture to foster his resistance to colonialism and propagate the political advocacies of his patrons will be expounded.

The second modernist feature of Onbaolu's avant-gardism was the battle to revive art practice in Nigeria, and ensure the renaissance of African art in the unfolding modernity. As discussed in Chapter Two section 2.4.1, varying attempts by Church missionary enterprises and successive British colonial administrations were made to destroy and erase the influences of established traditional African arts and policies were subsequently enacted to completely exterminate art practice in the colony. Thus, Onabolu's new modern art subverted such ordinances in order to ensure the renaissance of art practice in the country. In the words of Uche Okeke (1979) who himself, also deployed traditional arts for postcolonial destabilisation of European misinterpretations of African arts;

Onabolu believed that African art was a living, developing phenomenon, not an activity, which had come to an end with the achievements of the sculpture of earlier periods and the emergence of colonialism (Okeke 1979: 14)

⁶³ Avant-gardism is used in this thesis to refer to the process and phenomenon of interlacing art with social and political concerns in order to instigate societal transformation, subvert authority and instigate Cultural Revolution. A good example is the Dadaist movement which through radical anti-authority, anti-institution aesthetics, subverted bourgeois social order and authority. It refers to the use of modern art as a form of antagonism to authority, as a form of resistance to institutions and for political activism through the invention of new counter-aesthetics. See Katz, L. G. (1974) 'Art and Avant-Gardism', *The Hudson Review*, 145-150.

Onobolu believed that African art must be revived and fought against policies and imperial practices which condemned, attacked and destroyed traditional art as paraphernalia of barbarism, ritualism and primitivism (Bascom 1953: 493).

In Chapter Two, 2.4.1, the political imperatives for Western condemnation of traditional African art was detailed, with the prime motivation for such attacks being to destroy its base and erode its influence on the pretext of evangelical zeal. Colonial administrators knew full well that, in condemning traditional African art and ending all forms of art practice through Ordinances interlaced in church missionary evangelicalism, British administrators were sure to wipe out existing traditional social and religious beliefs. Their second aim was to destroy traditional leadership structures in order to impose on indigenous people, a form of subjugating colonialism that was actively supported by missionaries and colonial administrations who occasionally employed military force to enforce their imperial policies. The combined effects of these onslaughts led to the exclusion of art from the curricula of colonial and missionary schools thus, effectively exterminating traditional art and art practice in Nigeria. Unfazed by the threat of both church missionaries and colonial officials with their concerted plans to thwart his efforts, Onobolu, defied their authority, ensuring the birth of a new, avant-garde movement for African art whose objective was to ensure the continuation of the rich artistic culture of Africa. He faced antagonism from colonizers and missionaries and to such a degree that after observing the hostility of the West towards him, an associate Holloway advised Onobolu to desist from creating art in order to avoid the wrath of the British imperial government.⁶⁴ Ignoring various warnings and hostilities, Onobolu not only persisted with practicing art, but engaged in the first recorded ideological crusade in Nigerian colonial art by spreading his new-found visual idiom in various schools across the regions, thus defying the authority of the colonizers.

⁶⁴ "I am happy that you yourself realize the danger of going your forefather's way by creating the type of art that our Church can quarrel with...I came back from Abeokuta a few days ago, and I must here bring to your knowledge what the Rev. in our Church said. This Rev. gentleman strongly rebuked the congregation for their stubborn devotion to their idols, which he regarded as heathen objects. They were considered ungrateful people who could not appreciate what God had done in their lives" (Holloway 1910).

For instance, Onobolu taught art informally in Lagos at the Kings College and CMS Grammar School; however, on many occasions he was denied access to deliver his art lessons as the notion of modern art and artistic freedom at the time was considered antithetical to the ethos and project of colonialism more so because modern artistic subjectivism and avant-gardism was linked to revolution and political independence (Okeke-Agulu 1945, Oguiibe 2004).

Onobolu's crusade gained a large audience which comprised of elite Nigerian doctors, lawyers, clergy, engineers, political activist and businessmen who had emerged as the influential intellectual class and became his patrons; he organised his first exhibition in 1920 which was widely attended by this intellectual class; amongst those in attendance were Mojola Agbebi, Herbert Macaulay, Dr J. K. Randle, Savage, Ernest Ikoli, W. B. Euba, Rev. S. M. Abiodun, Babington Adebayo, Shyngle, Ajasa, Rev. J. G. Campbell, and Adebayo Deniga and others. Onobolu believed that art was part of any nation's civilisation and could play a vital part in defining the emerging modern Nigeria, explaining why against all odds, he began prevailing upon the colonial regime to include art in colonial schools but his petitions were sternly rebuffed from 1900 - 1923 (Okeke 2001, Oguiibe 2002), but his continues opposition to imperial anti-art stands, contributed to the avant-gardism of the first phase of Nigerian Modernism. Onobolu's battle against the colonialist to revive art, coincided with the resistance struggles of elite Africans and his art captured the spirit of the age and fostered the revolution of Nigerian art and society at large (Nicodemus 2008). It is apparent therefore from the synthesized theories above that, rather than being a product of colonialism, Onobolu's art became a means of resistance in the struggle against colonial extermination of art, cultural imposition and the quest to culturally define Nigeria as an autonomous modern nation. Onobolu's exhibition of 1920 was both artistic and political, it was used to raise funds for his further training in the West as a way of subverting the colonizers and their racist views; by 1923, upon his return from London and Paris where he had gone to further his studies "basically for decorative purposes" (Onobolu 1963, Oloidi

1989: 5), Onabolu succeeded in coercing the colonial government to include art in colonial schools, a decision which the colonial government reluctantly took having been also influenced by the *Stoke-Phelps Report of 1922* (Adeyinka 1988: 5). Art was subsequently recognised officially as a subject in school curriculum and Aina Onabolu vigorously promoted his modernist ideologies throughout the emergent state, resulting in the formation of the *Onabolu School*.

4.4 Onabolu's Portraiture as Resistance/Subversive Tool for Political Activism

Beyond the portrayal of likeness, portraits can function in varying ways; as works of art, as visual biography, as means of documentary, as proxy and gifts, as commemoration and memorial and more so, portrait can function as political tools (West 2004). The political power of portraiture lies in its reflection of the social status, inner life, aspirations, advocacies, and ideologies of its subjects. This is why from prehistory, portraits have come to be associated with resistance, revolution, renaissance and as an expression of conviction/power, and a tool for change, because portraits reflect the human character, the resurgent recognition of those factors which make human beings individual, that lay at the centre of Renaissance life (Pop-Hennessy 1966: 3, Freund 2014). These sample theories above outline the power in portraiture and sheds light on why Onabolu's use of portraiture as aesthetic and metaphoric idiom, asserted his modernist ideologies and fostered indigenous political advocacies. Drawing upon the socio-political activism that informed Onabolu's avant-gardism this thesis opines that besides the subversion of European aesthetic hegemony as theorised in section 4.3, Onabolu's portraits were avant-garde forms deployed for nationalism purposes to foster political advocacies and anti-imperial activism. As pointed out by Harding and Rouse (2010), both "Picasso and Onabolu revolutionised Western and African art respectively through appropriation, but Onabolu's revolution of Africa goes beyond that of Picasso who only gets the nod

over Onobolu because his (Picasso's) rebellion is within the system of the white mainstream, while Onobolu is not" (Harding & Rouse 2010: 44). By interrogating the context in which this portraits were made and the purposes they served, the views espoused by Harding and Rouse can be clearly established, and one will ideally find that Onobolu's art modernism was far more revolutionary in an African context than has been accounted for in Western art history. Arguably, while Picasso's interrogation of established Western art traditions was an internal socio-cultural contest, Onobolu's battle was simultaneously internal and external; he faced the combined onslaughts of the local agents of colonialism and destruction of African values in the forms of colonial education and the Church, and took on the external agents of colonialism and imperialism on the political front.

Onobolu's early paintings for instance, *The Colonial Officer' 1896, Portrait of Bishop Melville-Jones 1935* (Figure 4.4) is situated in his resistance to European hegemony and colonial authority. "If we look closer into Onobolu's paintings, we will find that they were not a colonial implant but an appropriation made in revolt against the imperial masters" (Nicodemus 2000: 8). Onobolu did not just break into the domain of a supposed Western supreme painting tradition, but he appropriated and localised it. He did this by using European personalities and authoritative figures as his subject in order to reflect, comment on and deconstruct a medium that could be termed as Europe's category of 'high art' as means to resist racial stereotyping of Africans as incompetent and incapable of creativity and subvert imperial authority. In painting colonial officers and missionaries, the very propagators of European racist stereotypes, anti-African propaganda and forces against art practice in Nigeria, Onobolu drew the attentions of his subject to the fact that Africans' creative competence transcends their imagination and that Africans are equals to any other civilisation. He thus challenged the self-acclaimed superiority of the colonizers over the colonized (Ogbechie 2008: 119), and in doing so, questioned and

subverted the ideological core of colonial thinking; the perception of the West as a superior and super-civilised culture over the inferior colonized '*Other*' (Fanon 1961, Said 1979, Loomba 1998). By using the colonizers and missionaries opposed to African art and art practice in Nigeria as the subjects of some of his portraits, Onobolu further stressed his resistance to the anti-African, anti-culture and anti-art propaganda they pursued in Nigeria, and directed a jab at the West. In his hands, European subjects were not 'imitated' as those who accuse him of colonial art would argue, they were preened apart and exposed as normal rather than high, a thematic approach that made him raise his African subjects from the so-called 'primitive and other category' to the same level as the European norm. In a mathematical sense, his actions changed the formula of African-other relations and balanced the racial equation.

Furthermore, Onobolu's modernist art challenged European authority of art. Western construction of art history, places Western art forms in the exalted position of 'high art' while those of '*Other*' cultures are reduced to 'low art', as products of primitivism, but Onobolu's art destabilised this hegemonic relations. His modern art was shaped in a complicated, intellectual environment of "resistance that rejects the artistic authority of Europe and the primitivizing ideals of Euro-modernism..." (Nzegwu 1999: 420). The Eurocentric model for art history ascribed powers to Western culture as the hub for framing the conventions of art, hence the exclusion of and categorisation of art from other seemingly uncivilised cultures that transcend European categories of art as primitive. Africans whom the West considered unintelligent savages, whom nature did not endow with the capabilities to create high art, fell within the Western construction of the '*Other*' as primitive. However, it is argued that by painting realistically, Onobolu's portraiture subverted this Eurocentric art authority; his mastery of realism (the depiction of peoples, scenes and things in accurate proportions and perspectives as they appear in real life) began the process of questioning Western mainstream art concepts, thus contesting the

supposed superiority of Western art and at same time, promoting the African cause.

One of such African cause at the time was indigenous political battle for equality and recognition of African elites, to which Onobolu's avant-gardism contributed. During his stay in Lagos and involvement in the activities of elite Lagosians, Onobolu's modernist art reflected the resistance ideologies, political advocacies and nationalist struggles, which characterised the activities of various pressure groups in the colony. Those who seldom featured in Onobolu's portraits are political activists, businessmen, and professionals etc., at the forefront of resistance against imperial Britain, and the prominent black Nigerian personalities and advocates of African nationalism who "wanted to position themselves within the current of modernising African nationalism" (Nicodemus 2000: 8). They were promoters of African modernism in Lagos, clamouring for autonomy and freedom from colonial subjugation; they became the main subjects of his painting, his main patrons and financial fulcrum on which his modernist art anchored. But the question has been asked regarding why Onobolu engaged in the painting of these notable activists at the time and how such portraits contributed to political advocacy. To understand why this was an avant-garde political strategy, it will suffice to elucidate the social, political statuses of his subjects and why their portraits possessed revolutionary powers, and contributed to indigenous political uprising at the time.

Since portraits can reflect conventions of behaviour that originate in the sitter's social and cultural milieu, portraits are less about likeness and more about the typical, the conventional or the ideal, and can constitute a form of revolution, by articulating a new form of selfhood, evocating through the image of the subject those abstract principles and ideologies he/she stands for (West 2004: 24, Fruend 2014: 10). This surreptitious function of portraits was a veritable tool for Onobolu's modernist art tailored to foster indigenous political aspirations. Onobolu's paintings from 1910 featured prominent Lagosians who actively

protested against British colonial administrations and campaigned for Nigerian self-governance. His portrait of *Dr Randle 1910* (Figure 4.5), *Holy Johnson 1917* (Figure 4.8), *Dr Sapara* (refer to figure 4.1) etc., and those with antithetic views to the colonizers, speak volumes about Onobolu's political affiliation and the political inclination of his art. In visual form, Onobolu, became a proponent of the political ideologies and nationalist struggles his sponsors (subjects) espoused. He subverted the authorities of the British colonizers as well as the self-confessed superiority of European cultures by wilfully celebrating Africans through an art form reserved in Western European civilisations for royalties, geniuses, philosophers, and revolutionist. His art was also an affront on the colonial government's concerted efforts at undermining Nigerian elites through discrimination and exclusion from the affairs of the nation. By exalting elite Africans as the epicentre of his modernism, Onobolu's art represented a subversive jab at the colonial administrators of Nigeria and by extension British imperial government (Gbadegesin 2007: 14).

Lagos elites who feature in Onobolu's portraits were the emerging faces of modernity and nationalism who wanted to transform their society and create a new identity for the emerging autonomous Lagos (Nigeria). Just like Gertrude Stein commissioned Pablo Picasso to paint her portrait as a revolutionary patroness of modernity in the West, in the Nigerian context, these elites who commissioned Onobolu to paint their portraits, posed as modernisers to symbolically connect to modernism and as the prime movers of the new age. Onobolu's portraiture projected the civilised and modernistic images of elite Lagosians reflective of their newfound status, affluence and influence in the colony. He painted his subjects (the nationalist elite) in scenes with accoutrements indicative of their profession and aspirations, thus, visualising their ideologies as well as new found modernist grandeur; his portrait of '*Dr Randle 1910*' (refer to figure 4.5) epitomises his projection of political activism by flaunting the likeness of political nationalists and activist in modern art. Dr. J. K. Randle was a famous Lagosian and an elite, a medical doctor who alongside Dr O.

Obasa founded the '*People's Union 1902*' the first distinctly political organisation in Lagos to challenge the anomalies of colonial rule, and address the welfare of the Lagos community (Ayandele 2005: 158). The '*People's Union*' under Randle's presidency became the leading public opinion pathway and by the end of 1910, the Union protested whatever was deemed inimical to the interest of the country in order to promote a unified nationalist interest (Randle 1910, Ayandele 2005). As the president of the Union Dr Randle was at the forefront of the battle against the British Empire and was a pivotal force in the emerging Nigerian nation. By painting and flaunting his portraits as a modernist, Onabolu propagated the ideals his mentor Dr Randle upheld, especially his political resistance to the vicissitude of colonialism.

Another example of Onabolu's politically inspired portraiture is the portrait of '*Holy Johnson 1917*' (refer to figure 4.8). James Johnson popularly known as Holy Johnson for his activism is described as the pioneer of African nationalism and undoubtedly the pioneer of Nigerian nationalism. He was a Superintendent, Legislator, Politician, Half Bishop, and Apostle of African personality and considered by the imperial British government as a Rebel (Ayandele 1970: 40). He fought the African course and his activism was tailored towards addressing the concerns of Lagosians and especially Ijebu nation where his work is most prominently felt; he campaigned against British racial subjugation of Nigerians and imperial discrimination. Onabolu's portrait of Holy Johnson showcases this shrewd activist in a calm serene pose, celebrating his philosophical intelligence, profession and influence, and through this portrait, Onabolu projected the activism of Holy Johnson as a visual aesthetic form of defiance. In this use of portraiture for fostering political advocacies, Onabolu asserted his own claim to the promotion of African nationalism and modernism and clamour for an independent, self-governed Nigeria free from the shackles of colonialism enshrined in the statements and thoughts of the activist, Holy Johnson. Onabolu equally painted portraits of elite traditional rulers and religious figures including

Westerners who backed Africans' quest for autonomy through their resistance to racist policies of British colonial administrations (figures 4.4 and 4.7). His portraiture and realism convention were therefore deeply rooted in Lagos politics, and resistance ideologies against colonial rule; thus his art penetrated the core of colonialism, challenged and attempted to undo its racial stereotypes and oppressive claws on the colonised. His modernist art, which subverted the hegemony of Western/Europe art authority and challenged British colonial oppression, undoubtedly contributed to the formation of modern Nigerian identity and became the pivot of modern African art at large. However, Onobolu's realism equally constituted some problematic(s) of the first phase of Nigerian Modernism discussed in Chapter Three section 3.3 and further detailed in the next section.

4.5 Problems of Onobolu's Modernist Art Ideology: Europeanization of Nigerian Art

Although Onobolu's modernist ideology and approach to realism interrogated colonialism and Western European racist stereotypes of Africans, transformed African and Nigerian art by situating it in a modernist context, it raised some problems. His choice of easel painting and his unwavering glorification of Western academic art entailed a detachment from his cultural background and rejection of his people's philosophy of art and customs in general, which he later described as "crude" (Onobolu 1920). With his missionary training in secondary school, "Onobolu came to regard traditional arts with contempt" (Gbadegesin 2007: 15), thus, he distanced himself from the traditional art of Africa and sort the actualisation of academic realism through painting, which he described as 'the only true art' (Oguibe 2002). Such proclamations meant that Onobolu implicitly dismissed the entire gamut of traditional African art as being 'Untrue/inferior.' Herein lies the problem with Onobolu's avant-gardism; by such declaration, he joined the West in condemning and derogatorily dismissing the

inherent creativity in African art and the very racial stereotypes that his modernist art set out to subvert. Onobolu's ideology was further implicated and associated with colonial thinking as he thought of African art as primitive and a sign of backwardness. This rejection of historicism and contempt for the tradition of his people drew Onobolu into the same condemnation of traditional African customs and cultural paraphernalia like the colonizers.⁶⁵

Onobolu's eulogising of Western art styles, and the fact that he categorised African traditional art and ideologies as crude and uninventive, meant that his modernist art crusade not only showed heightened distaste for African art traditions, but defied the sacred aura of traditional art. According to Chukueggu (2010), this disdain for traditional African material culture by Onobolu's modernist philosophies resulted in skirmishes between Onobolu and traditional/neo-traditional African artists (Chukueggu 2010: 169). Before the advent of the West, art in Africa was a sacred activity reserved for special craftsmen and commissioned by traditional rulers and leaders of social groups, for very specific purposes. African art was interlaced with religion, and traditional philosophies, but Onobolu's art upset the traditional context of art and society in Africa, as his art "marked the beginning of the divorce between art and life in Nigeria" (Onuchukwu 1994: 57). Onobolu's dismissal of traditional art as primitive, thus clandestinely projected the very Western racial ideologies on which colonialism emerged and thrived.

This rejection of historicism and enthusiastic propagation of Western academic art conventions from 1923 resulted in the Europeanization of Nigerian art. Having gained permission to teach art in Nigeria, Onobolu spread his modern art ideology driven by Western ideals and distaste for traditional African art/values to a new emergent class of modern artists of the *Onobolu School*, and this led to

⁶⁵ "What have we done to promote Art and Science? Our Geledes, Alapafajas, the Ibejis (sculptures) and our drawings are still crude destitute of Art and Science; our canoes remain as they were since the day, when first they came into use without the slightest improvement..." (Onobolu 1920)

the loss of Nigeria's different cultural identities/art and dissolving the cosmology upon which the identities of the various traditional kingdoms that constituted Nigeria derived. In essence, Onobolu's Europeanization project promoted Western image by suppressing African identity. At a period when socially, politically and even with the use of military force, British colonial administrations were dismantling traditional structures and customs in various colonies in order to impose colonial rule and Western values, through the propagation of Western art styles, Onobolu fostered colonial ideals unknowingly as his new academic art dominated Nigeria from the 1920s, and "cowed the Nigerian creative spirit into a crippling form of subservience" (Oloidi 2003: 2). Onobolu's Europeanization of Nigerian art not only resulted in the loss of traditional identity, but also contributed in some ways in erasing and distorting the cultural heritages, which defined the various ethnic groups in Nigeria and this constituted the major problem of the first phase of Nigerian Modernism.

4.6 Conclusion

This chapter synthesised influences from the socio-political and cultural contexts of Ijebu Ode and elites' political activism in Lagos, which inspired and informed Onobolu's modernist art and the avant-gardism he fostered. Ijebu's policy of isolationism and desire to create an independent nation that was equal to any other in the World, influenced Onobolu's modernist resistance to Western racial construction of Africans as inferior and intellectually incompetent humans; also the Ijebu worldview and resistance to colonial rule informed his rejection of racial stereotyping and ambivalent anti-hegemonic cultural aesthetics. On the other hand, this chapter established that, the political content of Onobolu's art derived greatly from his affiliation with the upper echelon of Lagos society through his mentor Dr J K Randle. The activism of elite Lagosians, their advocacy for self-governance, resistance to British colonial rule, and quest for Nigerian autonomy, which he fostered through art, positioned Onobolu's portraiture

within a modernist context, defined by a unique cultural avant-gardism that promoted political nationalism.

Rather than being a product of colonialism this study submits that Onobolu's art flourished as an avant-garde formalism to challenge colonialism, subvert Western racial stereotype and Europe authority of art. The active position of Onobolu's art in the emerging modernity of the Lagos colony, as well as his projection of the ideologies of self-governance and anti-colonialism in consonance with the advocacies of elite Lagosians, and leading African crusaders like Edward Wilmot Blyden and John Payne Jackson positions Onobolu as the first of Nigerian and African modernist.

This chapter equally established that, Onobolu's glorification of Western academic art and distaste for his tradition (African art, values and ideas), resulted in the Europeanization of Nigerian art and led to varying levels of confusing colonial Nigerian art and distorting the significance of his actual legacy and in doing this, Onobolu unwittingly abated colonialism and Nigerian cultural oppression.

Chapter Four Figures



Figure 4.1: Aina Onabolu, Portrait of Chief Dr. Sapara, early Twentieth Century, (Source OYASAF). Example of Onabolu's portraiture used as an avant-garde mechanism to subvert colonial order and imperial authority by promoting elite Lagosians/religious/traditional leaders at the forefront of the battle against colonialism as the new modernist thereby fostering their political and nationalist ideologies.



Figure 4.2: Aina Onabolu Portrait of Mrs Spencer Savage 1902 (Source: BOF 2010). Earliest examples of Onabolu's reverse appropriation of realism to subvert European stereotypes of Africans as incompetent and incapable of pictorial verisimilitude like Whites.

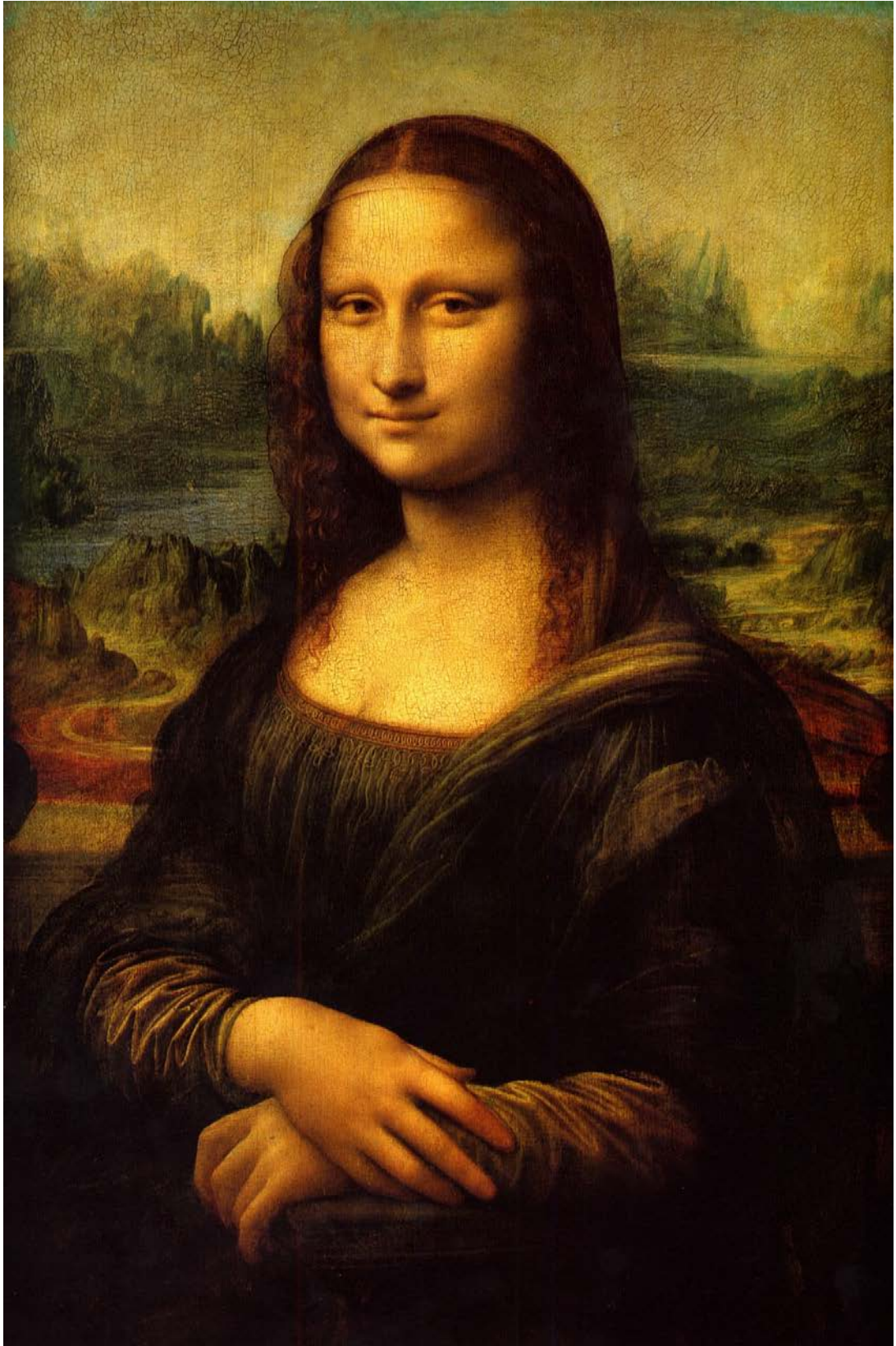


Figure 4.3: Leonardo da Vinci, Mona Lisa 1503 – 1506, Size: 77x53cm (Source Tate Modern). Example of Renaissance painting showing the use of three-quarter-face profile and fixed gaze to engage the viewers and the subject more.

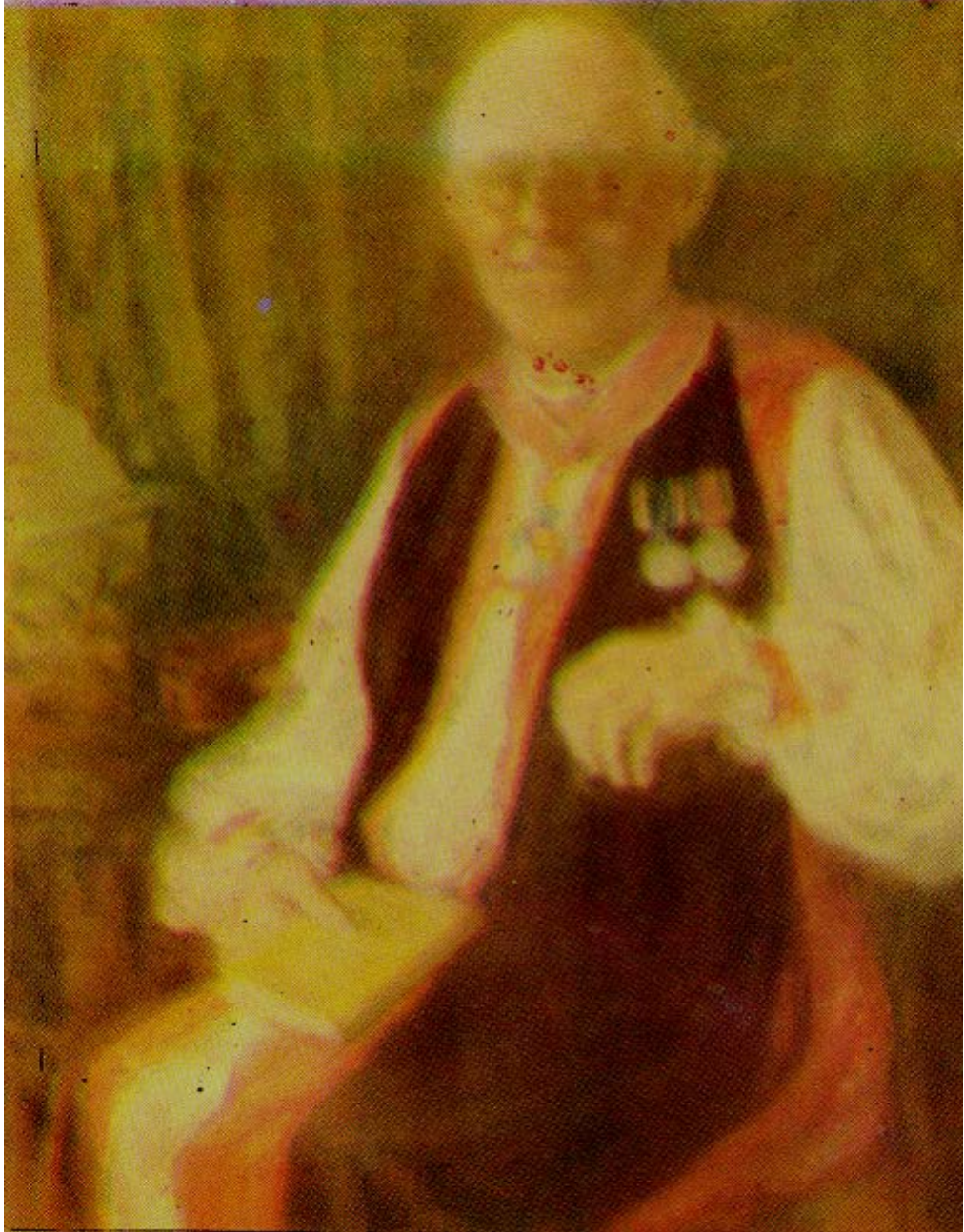


Figure 4.4: Aina Onabolu Portrait of Bishop Melville-Jones 1935 - Pastel on Paper (Source: Olubukola Gbadegesin 2002). Example of Onabolu's portraiture used as an avant-garde mechanism to subvert colonial order and imperial authority by promoting elite Lagosians/religious/traditional leaders at the forefront of the battle against colonialism.



Figure 4.5: Aina Onabolu Portrait of Dr Randle 1910 (Source: Olubukola Gbadegesin 2010). Example of Onabolu's portraiture used as avant-garde mechanism to subvert colonial order and imperial authority by promoting elite Lagosians/religious/traditional leaders at the forefront of the battle against colonialism as the new modernist, and fostering their political and nationalist ideologies.

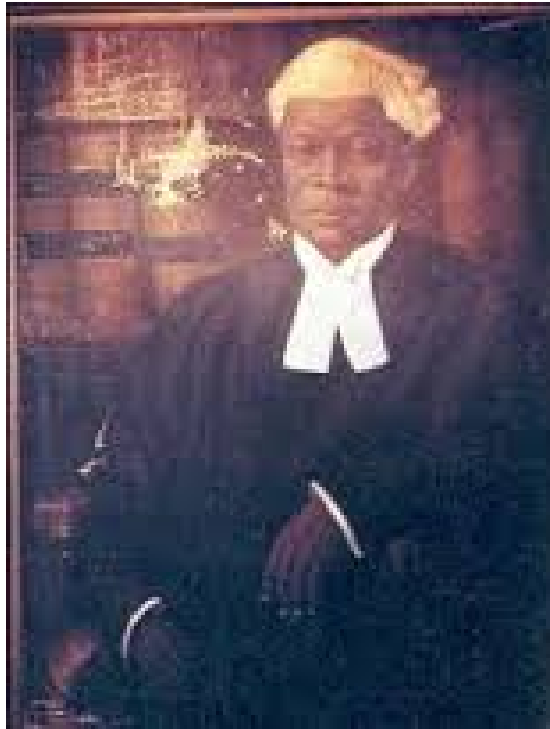


Figure 4.6: Aina Onabolu Portrait of a Barrister (Source: Olubukola Gbadegesin 2002). Example of Onabolu's portraiture used as avant-garde mechanism to subvert colonial order and imperial authority by promoting elite Lagosians/religious/traditional leaders at the forefront of the battle against colonialism as the new revolutionary modernist.

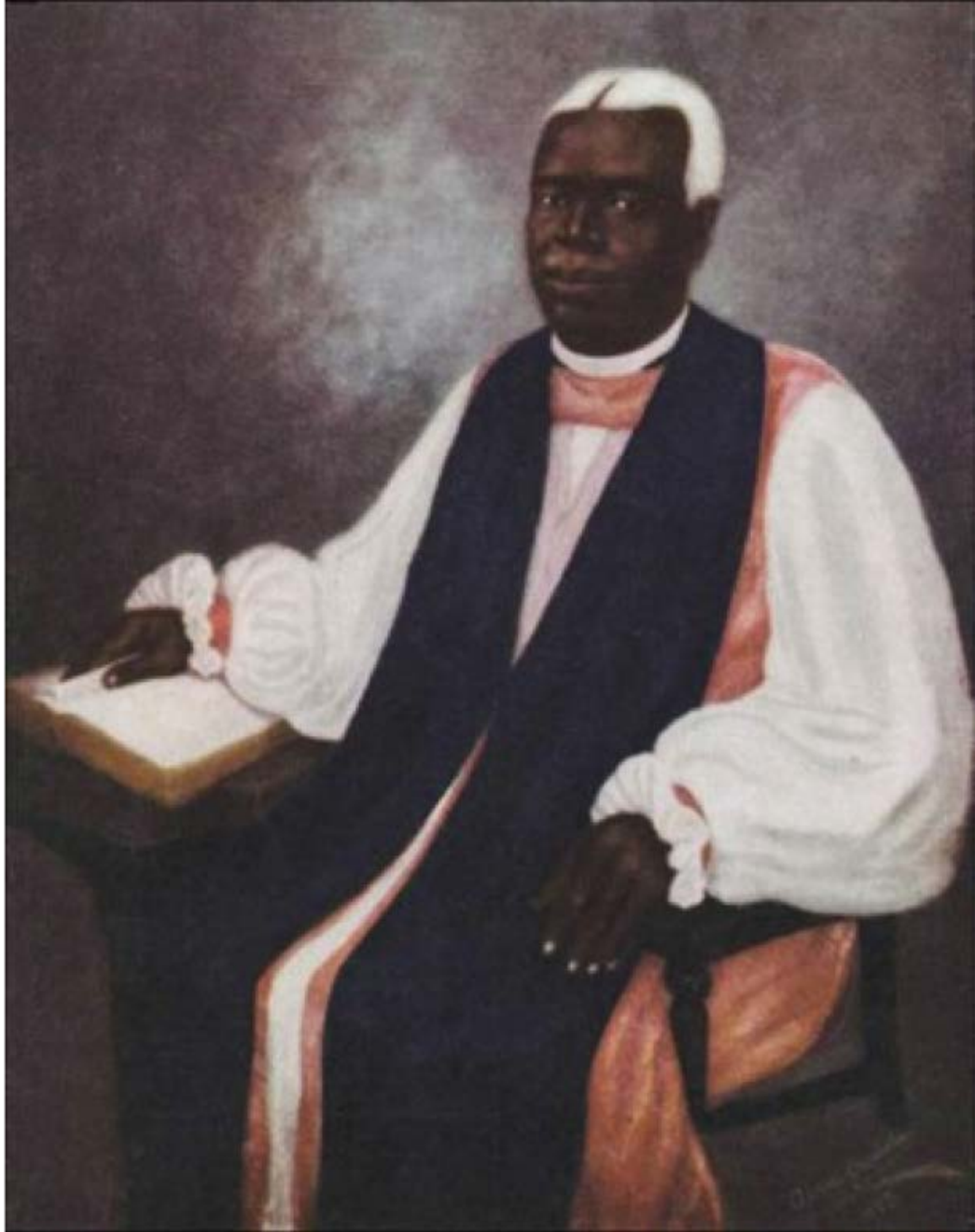


Figure 4.7: Aina Onabolu Portrait of Rev Oluwole 1925 Oil on Board (Source: Olubukola Gbadegesin 2002). Example of Onabolu's portraiture used as avant-garde mechanism to subvert colonial order and imperial authority by promoting elite Lagosians/religious/traditional leaders at the forefront of the battle against colonialism and Western subjugation of Africans.



Figure 4.8: Aina Onbaolu Portrait of Holy Johnson 1917 (Source: Source: Olubukola Gbadegesin 2010). Example of Onabolu's portraiture used as avant-garde mechanism to subvert colonial order and imperial authority by promoting elite Lagosians/religious/traditional leaders at the forefront of the battle against colonialism as the new revolutionary modernist.

CHAPTER 5: ARTIST CASE STUDY II

The Second Phase of Modernism in Nigerian Art: Ben Enwonwu's Hybrid Aesthetics and Radical Cultural Politics.

5.1 Introduction

Ben Enwonwu is the most influential Nigerian modernist who effectively juxtaposed modern artistic expression with the politics of nationalism as a form of cultural avant-gardism. Enwonwu was born in July 1917 to the noble family of Umueze-Aroli in Onitsha, Nigeria. His father, Omenka Odigwe Emeka Enwonwu was a technician with the Royal Niger Company, and a renowned traditional sculptor, while his mother, Ilom was a successful cloth merchant (Ben Enwonwu Foundation 2010). Enwonwu started his educational training in 1926 at St Joseph's Elementary School Onitsha, and his academic sojourn took him to Umuahia, Port Harcourt and to Government College Ibadan where he studied Art under Kenneth Murray. In 1937, Murray exhibited the works of his students at Zwemmer Gallery, London from 6 July - 7 August, during which Enwonwu was recognized as the most creative of all the exhibited artists. Later in 1938, Enwonwu's works were shown at the Glasgow Empire exhibition, and in 1939 he was awarded a prize money and bronze medal for his artwork. Through the efforts of Mr L. N. Harford, director at Shell Company of West Africa, Enwonwu was awarded a joint scholarship from Shell and the British Council to study Art in the United Kingdom. He furthered his studies at Goldsmiths College and Slade School of Art, and the University College London from 1944 – 1948 where he graduated with a Slade Diploma in Fine Art, first-class honours in Sculpture, and

a postgraduate in Anthropology. In 1954, Enwonwu became a member of the Order of the British Empire (MBE).

Enwonwu was the pioneer of the second phase of Nigerian Modernism (1930-1960); the era characterised by anti-Europeanization and radical anti-colonial activism discussed in Chapter Three. The focus of this chapter is to establish Enwonwu as a modernist whose practice and ideologies engaged with and contributed to modernity in Nigerian arts and to cultural nationalism. The second phase of Nigerian Modernism during which his art flourished, coincided with continent-wide movements of *Nationalism*, *Pan-Africanism* and *Negritude*, and Enwonwu emerged as one of African modernist fostering an art-based version of the radical politics and activism propagated by these movements for Africa's emancipation from colonial and Western subjugation. To establish Enwonwu as a modernist and situate his art practice within the matrix of the second phase of Nigerian Modernism, this chapter will interrogate the cultural, theoretical and political frameworks upon which the hybrid aesthetics of his art derived and propagated. The politics of cultural revivalism postulated as emancipatory creed by Africa's nationalist movements, the conceptualism of Igbo traditional art and Murray's anti-Europeanization campaign all contributed immensely in the formulation of Enwonwu's modernist ideologies, avant-gardism and the visual configuration of his art. These multifaceted influences culminated in Enwonwu's invention of a unique modern art characterised by aesthetic hybridisation, which defined the formalism of modern Nigerian art during the second modernist period.

Firstly Section 5.2 explores the major influences on Enwonwu's modernist art; the role of traditional apprenticeship⁶⁶ and exposure to Igbo art (*nka*) philosophy in which the content of art as spirit receptacle is considered more important

⁶⁶ Traditional apprenticeship is the system of training employed in pre-colonial Africa to educate indigenous peoples. It involved the pupil (apprentice) spending years learning and honing his or her skill by watching the master practice such trade. The apprentice then masters the skills by repeatedly practicing the observed skills and techniques.

than its visual form will be interrogated. It will elucidate how the time-lag impact of this traditional context of the artist's societal role later informed the premise for Enwonwu's antagonism of Euro-modernism's '*Art for Art's Sake*'.⁶⁷ Murray's anti-Europeanism and cultural revivalism ideologies which led to the emergence of hybrid aesthetics in Nigeria, overseas training, which exposed Enwonwu to *Pan-Africanism* and *Negritude*, will all be discussed. The chapter proceeds to analyse Enwonwu's art style in Section 5.3, while Section 5.4, will establish the modernist avant-gardism of Enwonwu's art, theorizing the political and nationalist activism propagated through his hybrid aesthetics of radical cultural politics, which emerged out of nationalist anti-colonialism advocacies. Section 5.5 concludes the chapter, with brief summary of key findings and central arguments, establishing the impact of Enwonwu's hybrid aesthetics on the second phase of Nigerian Modernism and its propagation of anti-colonial aspirations during the rise and development of the several nationalist movements leading to Nigeria's independence.

5.2 Conceptual/Theoretical Inspirations to Enwonwu's Modernist Art

a) Igbo Traditional Philosophy of Art

Enwonwu was first exposed to art as a child through the African apprenticeship system, and the conceptualisation of Igbo art as both spiritual and physical entities and this later informed the artist's modernist ideologies. As a child of the village sculptor '*Okpala*' (the spiritual male guardian and keeper of the family essence and sanctuary), Enwonwu was exposed to both his father's traditional creative methodologies and a plethora of sculpted objects. What he learnt from

⁶⁷ Enwonwu contended with euro-modernism for its invention of *Art for Arts Sake*, which he believed, created a distance between modern artists and their societies...he viewed the euro-modernist ideology of *Art for Arts Sake* as a self-defeating ideal (Ogbechie 2008: 118).

his father, and the impact of the images he saw, instilled lasting impressions on him, which resonated in his modern art. On the influence of Igbo traditional philosophies of art on his modernist ideologies, Enwonwu (1989) posited that,

My art began when my father was carving in the shrine at Onitsha. It began as I watched him carve images such as okwachi (vessel of the soul), osisi (staff of office for members of Agbalanze society in Onitsha), ikenga (symbol of identity) for the shrines at Onitsha...my father did lots of images which, as I recall, had a very strong impact on me...I did not choose art as a profession, I was born an artist...I recall that I started by making images and speaking to them, that went on for years...After my father died I became more conscious of the outer world...the sanctuary was transferred to another head of the family and my father's images were removed. I couldn't tell where they went, but my memory of them still remained...I began to try to make my own images in the likeness of what I saw of my father's...(Enwonwu 1989: 1).

In traditional Igbo context, art creation was considered sacred and artistry/creativity was believed to be a special gift that runs in family lineage, hence the remark by Enwonwu that "he was born an artist". Enwonwu's assertion above equally provides details into the philosophical context and the role of arts in Igbo culture; Igbo philosophy holds that art is a spirit receptacle, the form (artwork) is an embodiment of resident spirits and through the visual and physical interpretation of cultural concepts and philosophies, art forms symbolise and localise Igbo cosmology. "In Igbo culture, the practical purpose of art is to channel its spiritual force into an aesthetically satisfying physical form that captures the presumed attributes of rising forces...art must interpret all human experience"(Cole & Aniakor 1984: 141); in this traditional context, art is strongly integral to and channelled for the benefit of society as the visual symbolization and localization of the spirit world. Because of this religious and culture-oriented philosophical tenet, the artist has a moral and social duty to create art that reflects the socio-cultural values, cosmology and thought systems of his people. The notion of *Art for Art's Sake* was inconceivable in traditional

Igbo context as all art (*nka*) which bonds the spirit and material worlds had to stem from and benefit the larger community or kindred. Enwonwu was greatly influenced by this cultural philosophy of art, which in the long run, informed his critique of Western European modern art (Modernism). He grew up coached in traditional philosophies believing that art (*nka*) is a spiritual activity and that through creativity, religious belief systems, concepts, ideologies, aspirations and feelings of a people, could be objectified for the good of society and this became the theoretical core of his modernist practice.⁶⁸ As will be explored later, it is in employing this traditional, spiritual and philosophical context in his modern avant-garde art, that Enwonwu fostered his cultural revivalist advocacies, and nationalist political activism. According to Nkiru Nzegwu (1998), the inspirations drawn from Igbo art philosophy enabled Enwonwu successfully rescue for posterity the transformative element of creation that is central to Igbo conception of creativity in modern context, as well as establish a base for artistic resistance (Nzegwu 1998: 4). What this illustrates is that, much of Enwonwu's avant-gardism in later years as will be demonstrated in further sections in this Chapter, especially the critique of Euro-modernism's conception of art, was partly influenced by the cultural ideologies surrounding artistic creation in Igbo culture.

b) Kenneth Murray's Cultural Revivalism/Anti-Europeanization Advocacies

Murray's anti-Europeanization ideologies that gave rise to the conceptual framework of the second phase of Nigerian Modernism had unprecedented impact on Enwonwu. Murray began his anti-Europeanization campaign as soon as he arrived Nigeria in 1927 as he became keen to revive Nigerian cultural identity, restore it to status of parity with other art traditions and to create a

⁶⁸ "Art (*nka*) does not imply good colors, lines and shapes, nor do these make up art...Art is not a quality of things, but an activity that objectify (ies) the artist's beliefs, his feelings, meanings or significance, and volition" see Enwonwu, B. (1949) 'The Evolution, History and Definition of Fine Art (3)', *West African Pilot*, Tuesday, May 11, p.2.

new distinctly modern art for the nation. Murray's propagandizing of radical cultural revivalism and rehabilitation were occasioned by the adversities of colonialism on Nigerian culture. He began the *Murray Art School* with its cardinal manifesto being anti-Europeanization, anti-imperialism and the construction of nationhood, thus instilling a nationalist consciousness in his students. Murray postulated the theory that,

The real creative impulse is stimulated by close association with visible experiences in one's immediate environment and not by imagined ones...true modernity can only be achieved if Africans returned to their roots and modernise their cultural values, which is the only way to create a modernising society that is African in identity...(Murray cited in Oliodi 1989: 107).

Fostering this philosophy, Murray revolutionised Nigerian art; he did not just teach Enwonwu, but he mentored him and promoted his art to become the new modern visual idiom couched in radical cultural politics. Reflecting on the pre-eminent role that Murray played on his modern art, Enwonwu opined that,

I studied art under Murray at Ibadan...he focused attention on me, and in a sense, groomed me to become a professional. He inspired me to grow within my roots, giving me bits and pieces of Western art, which allowed for the continuance of native inspiration without destroying it; he gave me the necessary educational grounding. In fact, Murray's philosophy of non-interference with native inspiration was what kept my art alive (Enwonwu 1994: 96).

Murray's influence on Enwonwu can be analysed from two perspectives; firstly, he instilled in Enwonwu the consciousness of cultural revivalism and nationalism by reminding him of the role of art as part of the cultural nucleus of modern society/nationhood that he has a responsibility to sustain. While Enwonwu was aware of the role of art (*nka*) in his Igbo cosmology, it was Murray who inspired him to reengage with his culture and revolutionize it, taking into cognisance the conditions of Nigerian modernity. Murray made him aware that through artistic

revolution, European cultural imposition and the excesses of colonialism could be subverted and in the process, the eroding cultural values of the nation will be restored as a mark of modernity. Enwonwu was influenced by this Murray's modern art manifesto, which was characterised and reflective of nationalism "stimulated by the urge to bring cultural rehabilitation, parity and pride to art and indeed the entire cultural heritage of Nigeria" (Oloidi 1989: 109). Thus, Enwonwu's art became a symbolic-formal signification of Murray's anti-Europeanization agenda, Nigerian modernity, cultural affirmation and pride in the artistic identity of the emerging modern Nigerian state. Secondly, Murray provided the platform, which facilitated the flourishing of Enwonwu's modern art. He exposed Enwonwu to the West by organising several exhibitions of his works abroad and writing consistently about the new modern art ideology, as a way of reviving Nigerian culture. In doing so, Murray created a transnational reception for Enwonwu's art as well as a chain of Western patronage. He equally drove the artist's cultural revivalism aesthetics by exposing him to the works of Western artists who appropriate their cultural roots, "and this opening into a larger world of artists gave Enwonwu a sense of connectedness to a professional community that enhanced his self-worth" (Nzegwu 1999: 158). This exposition provided Enwonwu with a conceptual paradigm within which the modern art he invented was contextualised and could flourish.

c) Diaspora Influence: Western Training, and Exposure to *Pan-Africanism, and Negritude Movements*

Western training and exposure to the intellectual conventions underpinning modern artistic creation in the West equally exerted considerable influence on Enwonwu, because other than engaging with new and foreign ideas, education generally provided Africans with the framework to critique colonialism (Salami & Visona 2013). Through his overseas training, Enwonwu became aware of how academic disciplines are structured to manipulate the representation of cultures

outside Europe as inferior primitives to enable Western oppression and domination. Armed with this knowledge, Enwonwu became even more determined to defend and protect his cultural image, identity and values which eventually led to him studying anthropology to question the rhetoric of racism in the United Kingdom education setting with regards to 'Other' cultures.⁶⁹ Most importantly, Enwonwu's training in the West led to his affiliation with nationalist movements fighting for African liberation. He was exposed to black power movements such as *Pan-Africanism*, *Negritude*, *West African Student Union WASU*, *Oxford Union* and the *West African National Secretariat (WANS)*, which all derived their impetus from the Afro-centric Modernism and cultural nationalism explored in 1.3. The ideologies and political manifestoes of these movements, defined aesthetics and cultural formalism through which Africans articulated nationalist and cultural affirmation as political propaganda to portray modernising Africa as equal to any other continent in the world. Enwonwu who became a member of these political groups, was greatly influenced by their ideologies; for instance, *Negritude*, which was the, "culmination of the complete range of reactions provoked by the impact of western civilisation and domination of black people," (Irele 1965: 322). It emerged as an international intellectual movement, a revolt against hegemonic Western thinking and oppression of blacks, which modern Africans such as Enwonwu were keen to challenge and overturn. *Negritude* as its leading exponent Leopold Sedar Senghor opined was "violently opposed to the European reason, which is discursive but dichotomic" (Senghor 1974: 272); it provided a unifying, fighting, and liberating instrument for the black students in search of their identity and liberation. It was an expression of a new humanism that positioned black people within a global community of equals.

⁶⁹ "Enwonwu entered the program principally because he was disturbed by the racist rhetoric in England in the 1940's, and anthropology seemed to offer a space for the scientific study of the races, their physical and mental characteristics, customs, and social relationships. After enrolling in the program, he discovered the invidious dimension of the discipline and that the emphasis was on "primitive peoples and their cultures." The real objective of anthropology was the facilitation of the colonial agenda; "to create an intellectual barrier which makes it extremely difficult for most Africans to be considered qualified to play an important part in the development and preservation of their art". See Nzegwu, N. (1998) 'The Africanized Queen: Metonymic Site of Transformation', *African Studies Quarterly*, 1(4).

African students in the West at the time who aligned their thoughts with *Pan-African* movements believed that through arts, literature, and self-expression, a new identity for modern Africa could be created to liberate the continent from Western oppression and colonialism. Conversely, this *Pan-African* consciousness led to the formulation of various revolutionary creeds in modern art, music, literature, politics etc., in pursuance of African freedom. In the arts for instance, the expression of the ideals of *Negritude* became the cultural-arm of *Pan-Africanism*, stressing “the need to capture the self-expressive manner of African cultural life, and under-scored the importance of self-pride as a basis for personal/cultural liberation” (Nzegwu 1998: 50). Conceptually and practically, “every work of art created by these African modernists, became an image-with-a-sign, with a signification of the black consciousness for emancipation” (Op cit 1998: 270). That signification was embedded in the activism/battle for liberation and self-expression, and Enwonwu was greatly inspired by these Pan-African doctrines, which alluded to his earlier influences especially cultural revivalism introduced to him by Murray; he then drew upon the movements’ ideological and political manifestoes for his avant-gardism. Through his membership in these politico-cultural unions, Enwonwu was inspired by leading African liberation activists such as George Padmore, Jomo Kenyatta and Kwame Nkrumah, whose political activism offered Enwonwu an “alternative intellectual space for critiquing the European construction of creativity, art, aesthetics, political structures, and reality” (Nzegwu 1999: 49). He (Enwonwu) thus, merged these political beliefs with his invented visual idiom to create a new modern art formalism as an avant-garde aesthetics of radical cultural politics to challenge colonialism. Recollecting the influence of these black power movements on his emergent art and avant-gardism, Enwonwu posited that,

We were all so conscious of the struggle against colonialism, and of nothing else. We just wanted the colonial empire to end in Africa...If we painted any picture it was about this

freedom. If we sang a song, if like Senghor we wrote or recited poems, we philosophized... (Enwonwu 1989: 117).⁷⁰

It is apparent therefore that the ideologies of Pan-African movements for African liberation in the 1920s and 30s, contributed immensely to the radical political dimension of Enwonwu's modernist art and by interpolating this Afro-centric intellectual/political activisms with his hybrid aesthetics, his contribution to Nigerian nationalism, politics and modernity is located.

d) Nationalism Politics and Nigeria's Independence

The avant-garde ideologies of Enwonwu's art were equally influenced by Nigerian nationalist movement's, which fostered "sentiments, activities, aimed directly at the self-governance and independence of Nigeria as a national state on the basis of equality in an international state system," (Coleman 1965: 49). This political consciousness influenced the political inclination of Enwonwu's artistic philosophies and practice; according to Sylvester Ogbechie (2008), nationalism was a pivotal aspect of political and cultural developments in Nigerian art and an integral aspect of its emergent modernity, influencing the formalism of all modern art produced during the pre-independence period (Ogbechie 2008: 117). Nationalism embodied the aspirations of elite Nigerians whose anti-imperial sentiments manifested in varying forms: political activism, protest, mass media campaigns, poetry, and propagandist visual arts. Enwonwu was encouraged by leading political figures in this movement to direct his art towards the urgent problem of national emancipation (Op cit 2008). Thus, he accepted the challenge set before him and his role as an avant-garde, tailoring

⁷⁰ During my time at Oxford, certain important events began to unfold; this was the merger of my political position with my art education. I became a member of the Oxford Union, a political organisation. I remember when Kwame Nkrumah and Nnamdi Azikiwe preached in London about African freedom and independence. That was the first stage of Africa's political struggle for freedom and we took part in it...I became inspired as an artist and some of the things I did at that time marked the yearning for freedom from colonial servitude...our art was all tied up with our political motivation. It was phrased in political terms" (Enwonwu 1989).

his art towards Nigerian political struggles and the task of emancipation from Western subjugation. This quest for autonomy, liberation, and re-affirmation of African roots and identity as well as the desire to reconstruct Nigeria's cultural identity disrupted by colonialism, defined the nationalism of Enwonwu's modern art, as well as the entire gamut of modern Nigerian art from 1930 - 1960 and beyond. It is in this structuring and directing of his art towards nationalist politics and contribution to the battle for nationhood, that Enwonwu's avant-gardism is defined in Nigerian context.

5.3 Enwonwu's Modernist Art Style: Appropriation/Aesthetics of Cultural Hybridization

Enwonwu developed a unique modern visual idiom for Nigerian art reflective of the aforementioned creative, political and cultural influences. Enwonwu's art appropriated and hybridized Western and African artistic conventions; he juxtaposed the realism of Western art, with the abstract expressionism of his father's traditional art and such hybridization led to the invention of a symbolic-stylization of realism with intrinsic cultural political imperatives. Enwonwu was not merely concerned with mimicking Western art conventions, as this proved to be the problematic of the *Onabolu School*, rather he was concerned with revolutionizing foreign artistic values within African cultural systems of representation in order to create a new modern art, a visual aestheticizing and philosophical interpretation of the ideologies of cultural revivalism. According to Enwonwu (1989),

When I use the pure art form of my father's images and I use my experience, academic knowledge, and my political motivations, I arrive at a point where realism and symbolism can meet. That to me is art. What will result and survive is the continuation of the aspirations of African people, their dignified way of life, their beliefs, their dreams, and their yearnings for intrinsic lasting values that are encapsulated in

the new form (Enwonwu 1989: 22).

He had earlier maintained that, “Art is not static” and that, artistic revolution does not occur merely by the capacity to adapt one form of art to another, “but through revolutionary ideas” (Enwonwu 1950: 2). Beyond adaptation of Western techniques and conventions, Enwonwu believed that through appropriation and revolutionizing of Western and African aesthetic conventions, a new modern art philosophy; a creed would emerge and a new visual image that will embody the political aspirations of the nation would result. This aphorism thus, became the conceptual framework of his artistic experimentation/expression. In reference to Enwonwu’s art style and the visual configuration of the art which pioneered the second phase of Nigerian Modernism, Chris Ikwemesi (2010) observes that, influenced by Murray’s cultural revivalist advocacies and anti-Europeanization campaign, Enwonwu “pursued in his work a realist-symbolic vision whose epicentre was vigorously fortified by a sustained culture consciousness” (Ikwemesi 2010: 1). This sustained cultural consciousness became the cataclysmic force of his cultural revivalism advocacies resulting in the invention of a hybrid stylized aesthetic formalism in Nigeria from the 1930s and leading up to the independence decade.

Enwonwu constantly sought direction from the spirits in order to foster his cultural revivalism ideals (Enwonwu 1949: 3), and his revolutionary art inspired by indigenous creative ethos / cultural values, focused on the visualisation of African mythology and conceptions of the metaphysical, into rhythmic abstract qualities reflective of African philosophies and cosmic reality. He drew heavily from the world of the spirits, masquerades and traditional dances and revolutionized these cultural forms in his quest to recover Nigeria’s lost cultural image, as well as capture the essence/ideals of modern society in line with nationalist and *Negritude* manifestoes. Rhythmic formalism and fluidity inspired by African dances/music and traditional graphic systems, stylization of forms (involving the abstraction of human forms, exaggeration of proportions and

transmogrification of the mundane to convey idealised meanings), especially of the female figure, the use of earth colour etc., are the main features of the hybrid aesthetics that typifies Enwonwu's stylized modern art. In the words of his mentor Kenneth Murray (1944),

Enwonwu's works represents the exuberance that is characteristic of modern Nigeria...more significantly there is a strong rhythmic sense that recalls African music. In the treatment and choice of subject matter, there is in one direction a rather hard matter of factness, in the other a poetic feeling...a poetic sense by which the artist extracts from a common scene some feeling that is latent...creating a specifically African form of feeling and expressionism...(Murray 1944: 72).

Rhythmic movement, poetic expressions and idealized stylization of the African image, music, dances, religious beliefs etc., became the visual configuration, creative ethos and aesthetic paradigm of the new modern art which the artist invented as aestheticized propaganda for cultural revivalism and nationalism in modern Nigeria. His works caught the imagination for two main reasons; firstly because of its unique rhythmical qualities, and secondly, for other than marking a significant re-visioning and interpretation of traditional pre-colonial ritual spaces and forms, patterns and stimuli in Igbo art, it highlighted the undoubted evidence of how these elements could be depicted imaginatively through the radical and political re-imagining and application of form, content and exploration of materialism. According to Sylvester Ogbechie (2008),

Enwonwu developed a personal aesthetic that increasingly focused on the temporal and spiritual forms engendered in the context of indigenous rituals...his artworks increasingly concentrated on ritual spaces, depictions of dances in the context of ritual and daily life, explored through different formalist strategies (Ogbechie 2008: 57).

His works, *Negritude 1957*, *African Dances 1952*, *Maiden Dances 1954 etc.*, (figures 5.1 – 5.3) encapsulate an advance mastery of creative hybridization that has been revolutionarily adopted and adapted to create the unique new art formalism of hybrid art deployed by Enwonwu to fight his battle against colonialism and Western oppression. His painting *Negritude 1957* (figure 5.1) for example celebrated the modern African image, identity and pride in consonance with the ideals of *Pan-Africanism*; it exhibits a juxtaposition of Western realism and African stylization to create the idealized modern image symbolic of the rise of Nigerian nation and its modernity. Enwonwu asserted that,

The painting - *Negritude 1957* was an expression of blackness, a celebration of the black image...my own negritude was particularly characterised in the movement of dancing figures, in the beauty of the black woman, in black forms because at the time in London, Black beauty was an essential and recognized image of the black power movement (Enwonwu 1989: 97).

The treatment of the forms in *Negritude 1957* reflects the symbolic inscription of the battle for African freedom and cultural decolonization in modern Nigerian art. The painting is a composition of female figures of which two are more prominent, both treated in two distinct styles. The figure in the background clad in western fabric, shows movement in her dancing pose, and is depicted in flat colours with strong black outlines in an illustrative representational style. This is contrasted by the dominant figure in the foreground on which Enwonwu had discarded principles of proportional/perspective accuracy associated with Western aesthetics, rather drawing upon African abstract philosophy of formal distortion and exaggeration. The figure which faces the opposite direction from that in the background is depicted in flat black silhouette, it leans backwards and

is curved excessively, while the right hand motions upwards. The head, buttocks and breast are heavily enlarged to reflect African concept of ideal womanly beauty, as well as their significance as source of life and continuance of the human race. This distortion and exaggeration of the female form was symbolic at the time the painting was made - Enwonwu opined that, it chimed with the trans-national black power movement at the time for which black beauty/woman had become the image for African liberation. The painting represent a clash of two styles, conventions, and cultures, on the one hand imposed Europeanization (mimetic art) and on the other, indigenous art/culture (African abstractionism) which Enwonwu, Murray and nationalist politicians sought to revive. Enwonwu's juxtaposition of Europe's realism with Africa's abstractionism in this piece was a visual commentary on the ideals of aesthetic/cultural hybridization he fostered as the appropriate mechanism for cultural revivalism. By super-imposing the idealised African form of modern expression/liberation in the foreground of the painting (the black exaggerated female form), on the representational western style art of the figures in the background, Enwonwu pointed to the direction of modern Nigerian art - one defined by the appropriation of African and European aesthetics/culture to promote African image, and dismantle Western imposed values in Nigeria.

This conceptual idealization of the modern African image as a form of modernist engagement with the transforming continent, and also as an aesthetic mechanism to subvert and overturn Western oppression, defined the formalism of Enwonwu's hybrid art. Furthermore, besides juxtaposing western and African visual idioms, Enwonwu appropriated various cultural elements from the diversified ethnicities that constitute Nigeria in order to create a new cultural identity and art language for the modernising nation, and this immensely contributed to Nigerian nationalist politics and modernity, which constituted part of his avant-gardism explored below.

5.4 Aesthetics of Radical Cultural Politics: The Foci of Enwonwu's Avant-gardism

Enwonwu's avant-gardism was embodied in the stylistic configuration of his modern art and the cultural/political ideologies that informed his creative philosophies. The theoretical framework upon which his modern art derived, and the stylistic symbolism of his art, coalesced to form what has been referred to as 'aesthetics of radical cultural politics'.⁷¹ The avant-gardism of Enwonwu's artistic practice this thesis argues, manifested in two distinct forms in view of the divergent ways it engaged with, challenged, and restructured the political status quo of colonial Nigeria. Enwonwu's practice, in cognizance and alignment with the ideologies of the second phase of Nigerian Modernism, transformed the political, aesthetic and social landscape of Nigeria, as his revolutionary art fostered: a) Anti-Europeanization and cultural revivalism advocacies, and b) Nationalist battle for emancipation, and as theorised below, these avant-garde advocacies, valorise his position as one of Africa's influential Twentieth Century modernist.

a) Anti-Europeanization and Cultural Revivalism Activism

Enwonwu's modernist ethos fostered the ideologies of the second phase of Nigerian Modernism detailed in Chapter Three. Its main focus was to challenge the adverse destruction of Nigerian cultural and social structures occasioned by imperial imposed Europeanization on Nigeria. The Europeanization agenda of the imperial regime facilitated colonialism, and led to the loss of Nigerian identity and destruction of its cultural heritage. Buoyed by Murray's opposition activism to this cultural imperialism and those of the advocates of *Pan-Africanism* and

⁷¹ Aesthetics of Radical Politics refers to the invention of a new aesthetics to foster political activism especially one inspired by anti-colonial ideologies as in the case of Enwonwu avant-gardism.

Nationalism, Enwonwu directed his art to advance the battle against the Europeanization of Nigeria.

Enwonwu's hybrid aesthetic which rejected European academic realism in modern context, challenged the role of the British colonial administration in the Europeanization of Nigeria, since the imposition of foreign conventions on the colony, facilitated the destruction of indigenous political, economic, religious and social structures, and erased the cosmological framework and cultural philosophies upon which the different groups that make up the nation existed in pre-colonial context. Furtherance to the imposition of alien (European) values on Nigeria was the spawning of high levels of ethnocentrism, racism, and discrimination around the 1930s, and these signifiers of colonialism, instigated anti-colonialism and anti-Europeanization campaigns and the nationalist movements with which Enwonwu aligned his art. Enwonwu was also unimpressed with the stylistic and conceptual paradigm of Onabolu's art school (*Onaboluism*) because of its rejection of traditional values, promotion of Western art conventions, and unconscious fostering of imperial aesthetic/cultural imposition; his hybrid art was therefore tailored to subvert Onabolu's art school for its facilitation of the destruction of Africa's rich artistic tradition and visual culture. Enwonwu, as a nationalist and like those in the political movements believed that, through cultural affirmation and pride in African identity, a subversive rejection of the Europeanization of Nigerian arts/culture could be expressed and only then will African artists develop a modern voice and visual language to contribute to the modernity and liberation of their homeland. Enwonwu's hybrid aesthetic art became a subversive form of resistance to Onabolu's academic art, and by creating a new modern art antithetical to that of the West, he "subverted the formal academic style of Onabolu's portraits and European realism by transforming the physical features of his subjects, elongated and idealized their forms, giving them a serene African character" (Ogbechie 2009: 119). Enwonwu's new modern art drew heavily from traditional

forms and his adoption of indigenous techniques of abstract stylization invalidated the representational realism of European academic art, which Onabolu's school and the colonial administration espoused.

The concept of *Art for Art's Sake* born out of the bohemianism of Euro-modernism was challenged by Enwonwu who found in such European modern art philosophy, a devaluation of the social role of the arts and artists in society. Through his hybrid aesthetics, designed to foster cultural revivalism and anti-Europeanization advocacies, Enwonwu challenged "the underlying physicalist philosophy of the popular European modernist ideology of 'Art for Art's Sake', which was antithetical to African creative philosophies, thus indicting European modernist for the abdication of their moral responsibility" (Nzegwu 1998: 50). Enwonwu denigrated some modern Nigerian artist especially those trained in the Onabolu's school for adopting Euro-modernism's *Art for Art's Sake* because for him (Enwonwu), art is more than mastery or expression of trivial technical skills but a pivotal force at the core of any society.

Enwonwu's retention of and recourse to indigenous cultural visual idioms was an expression of his opposition to Western European academic art. By employing abstract stylization for his visualisation of the spirit of modern Africa, Enwonwu displaced the earlier artistic conventions of Onabolu's school and the formalism/conventionalism of the art curriculum which the colonial government had lent support from 1923. His indigenously structured art formalism debunked the language of representational realism propagated by Western European art as the true test of artistic excellence, creative competence and 'pure art' as Onabolu later described it (Onabolu 1920). Enwonwu rejected this position and his abstract idealization of modern Africa through the juxtaposition of African themes with Western art techniques flaunted such creative subjectivities and subversions. As Ogbechie (2008) has noted, Enwonwu's intersection of African and Western cultures/aesthetics, "precipitated the evolving political statement

and revealed Enwonwu's critique and subversion of colonial power, its subjugation and imposition" (Ogbechie 2008: 64).

Enwonwu's works from 1940 were framed in this subversion of the authority of those who oversaw and continued to impel the destruction of Nigerian culture by producing culturally oriented modern art antithetical to European culture and imperial anti-culture propaganda. In *The Circumcision 1946*, *Crucified gods Galore 1946* and *Negritude Series 1951* (figures 5.3-5.5), Enwonwu subverted the principles of academic realism (pictorial verisimilitude) and European conventions of mimesis, purity, perspective etc., institutionalised in Nigeria at the time as the authentic aesthetics form of modern expression and high art. Enwonwu rather distorted his forms, employed minimalism that resonated with the artistic conventions of his forefathers. He invented a distinct form of superimposition of imagery and distortion of the female figure as leitmotif in these paintings in tandem with the ideals of *Negritude* for the idealization of modern Africanness as a visual rejection of Eurocentrism, colonial subjugation and oppression. These paintings do not adhere to the laws of perspective or proportional accuracy upheld in European aesthetics, which had become the creative benchmark of modern Nigerian art from 1900. This anti-European stylization, idealisation of concepts and distortion of forms, transformed the images in each of his paintings and accorded them a stylised quality characterised by elongation, and exaggeration of selected features, and occasional juxtaposition of human and animal forms; in turn, this paintings assumed a mythical quality that evoke a sense of the metaphysical, a feature that resonates with Africa's traditional abstract interpretation of realism as evinced in the stylization of traditional sculptural forms. The paintings referred to in figures 5.3 - 5.5, indicate clearly the artist's distaste for imposed European conventions, and his desire to invent an antithetical modern art language for Nigeria that will subvert and dismantle such Western creative philosophies. *Crucified gods Galore* (figure 5.4) for instance, is entirely composed of visual

imagery from African culture, fully abstracted and stylized but expertly rendered in European painting techniques – the composition and title metaphorically captured the destruction of African roots and revered religious/cultural systems by aggressive colonization. It exhibits features of modernism; the appropriation, dislocation or re-contextualization of traditional arts into modern arts as Picasso, Braque, Matisse and others did in the West but in Nigerian-specific context. This hybrid appropriation methodology constituted an avant-garde revolt against the colonialist artistic construct and disregard for indigenous cultural values. It was a conscious transfiguration of that which was sanctioned as barbaric by the West, into the core of modern art as a challenge to the colonialists and imperial powers that sanctioned traditional arts.

On the transnational level, Enwonwu rejected the concept of Western mainstream hegemony, and his opposition to this mainstreamism according to Nkiru Nzegwu (1998) was his “most significant achievements as it successfully countered art history’s disregards for the complexity of modern African art, thereby securing international acknowledgement of his/African modernist practice” (Nzegwu 1998: 224). Enwonwu extended his anti-Europeanization campaign beyond the shores of Africa to challenge European hegemonic philosophies. As Nzegwu observed, the problematic Eurocentric construction of Western art history projected an unchanging, uncivilised, uninventive and inferior image unto modern African art and culture hence Enwonwu’s opposition to European conventions supposedly classified as superior, challenged European powers and imperial authority. He was more infuriated by the fact that the construction of western art history and the theories of colonialism were ideologically/philosophically designed to discredit African artists and their modern art at the global art-space, by situating them in discourses that further oppressed them. Expressing his disgust for the hegemonic exclusivity of Western art history and primitivism label pinned on modern African art and artists, Enwonwu asserted that,

I will not accept an inferior position in the art world. Nor have my art called primitive African because I have not correctly and properly given expression to my reality. I have consistently fought against that kind of philosophy because it is bogus. European artists like Picasso, Braque and Vlaminck were influenced by African art. Everybody sees that and is not opposed to it. But when they see African artists who are influenced by their European training and technique, they expect that African to stick to their traditional forms...I do not copy traditional art or Giacometti because he was influenced by my ancestors (Enwonwu 1989: 2).

Enwonwu's art did not just tackle this European aesthetic hegemony by challenging its impositions in Nigeria, but carried his avant-garde ideologies to the global stage by making bold statements of a deliberate subversive nature when he was commissioned in London to create public sculptures like the portrait of *Queen Elizabeth II 1957* and the *Seven Wooden Figures 1959*. In these commissions, Enwonwu imposed his modern idealized African aesthetics and African traditional conventions on the global art-scene to foster his rejection of imposed European superiority over the African 'Other'. The artist's reverse-imposition of African conventions on these European commissions in London constituted a radical avant-gardism indicative of "resistance to an alleged centre, and traditions that are seen to be at the core of a hegemonic culture" (Backstrom et al 2014: 13). Enwonwu's reverse-imposition of his idealised African conception of modern art aesthetics on Western subjects as a rejection of Europe's hegemony was a visual symbolism of his revolt against imperial Britain and European mainstreamism.

Commissioned in 1957 by the colonial government, Enwonwu sculpted a portrait of Queen Elizabeth II (at Maida Vale Studio of Sir William Reid-Dick) which later became a very 'controversial piece' stirring significant amount of altercations and debates especially from the West (Okeke 1945, Scharfstein 2009: 348). The controversies surrounding the bronze portrait were premised on the subtle

imposition of African aesthetic conventions on a white subject and the constitutional head of the Imperial power and commonwealth. In his resolve to subvert Western superiority claims Enwonwu inscribed African aesthetic conventions of ideal womanly beauty on the Queen. He side-lined Western conventions of beauty/truth-likeness and his employment of African forms and abstract creative ethos in sculpting the Queen's portrait led to an idealized representation of the Queen's form, resulting in criticism from Western Press with headlines such as 'Africanisation of the Queen', 'the Queen in African eyes', 'Africanised Queen' etc.⁷² This is because in line with African creative ethos and *Negritude* modern African symbolism, Enwonwu idealised the features of the Queen, which then gave her face the graceful radiance of ideal womanhood in African cosmology; the breast like the hips were emphasized to reflect African traditional concept of beauty, in which broad hips and voluptuous breasts are instituted as the characterisation of the ideal woman indicative of her fertility/cardinal role in the continuance of the human race as well as the glamour of her femininity (figure 5.5). In this subtle revolt against Western aesthetic hegemony, skilfully inscribed in a deliberate critical aesthetic reverse-imposition, Enwonwu's modernist avant-gardism was expressed for the nationalist good of Nigeria. According to Nzegwu (1999),

In modeling the features of the young Queen, Enwonwu had taken liberties with the royal lips. Widening them, he gave them a fuller, sensuous more becoming pout. In so doing, he boldly inscribed an African aesthetic ideal of womanhood on the Queen's visage, the fountainhead of British imperial rule...what many then, and now, have failed to grasp in responding to this portrait of the Queen is the subversive metaphysical message which Enwonwu expressed...this was merely a physical protest against aesthetic imperialism (Nzegwu 1999: 52).

⁷² Reactions to Enwonwu's portrait of the Queen in the West were expressed in *The Empire Telegraph London*, *Otago Daily Times*, and in New Zealand 1957 etc.

This imposition of African aesthetics and concept of ideal womanly beauty on the Queen of England was a subtle resistance to imperial subjugation and European aesthetic hegemony and constituted a form of socio-cultural revolt/criticism reflective of nationalist attitudes to colonialism. According to Ogbechie (2008), “Enwonwu’s sculpture of Queen Elizabeth II was implicated in the rhetoric of resistance, and the ensuing art object became site of contention between different rhetoric imperatives and fostered African nationalist aspirations” (Ogbechie 2008: 133). Enwonwu’s reverse-imposition of African ideals on the head of the British Empire, surreptitiously expressed his resistance to and revolt against Western European cultural hegemony and the racist philosophies on which colonialism thrived.

This subtle expression of resistance to imperial authority through the reverse-imposition of modern Africanised art language on Western subjects, was also expressed in a commission by the *Daily Mirror* in 1959 to produce ‘*Seven Wooden Figures 1959*’ (figure 5.6 – 5.7). In this piece, as in the portrait of the Queen, Enwonwu imposed African aesthetic conventions on Western art-space and white subjects as a form of revolt. The artist employed the traditional technique of carving in creating the figures, which exhibited his hybrid aesthetic and stylised combination of realism and abstract expressionism traditional to African art. The figures represent an elite group as five of the figures are depicted reading newspapers (presumably *Daily Mirror*), rendered in a distinctly African style. This reverse-imposition of African aesthetic formalism on Western subjects, made Enwonwu’s avant-gardism more impactful on the transnational stage as his creative activism embodied political undertones that questioned Western dismissal of modern African art, and in political perspectives challenged imperial subjugation.⁷³ Since Bacstrom et al (2014) succinctly postulate that, the rejection of a supposed hegemonic centre evinces a variant of the ideologies of

⁷³ “Art history disregard the complexity of modern African art by using notions of primitivism to affirm the unchanging nature of African cultures and her art...Enwonwu’s most significant achievements is to have successfully countered this kind of inscription during his lifetime, and thereby secured international acknowledgement of his modernist practice” (Ogbechie 2008: 224)

Modernism, Enwonwu's imposition of African aesthetic conventions in Western context during the 1950s, as a form of resistance to Western hegemony, and ideas of white superior mainstream, reflected a cultural avant-gardism informed by nationalist consciousness and African's battles for equality. Enwonwu's art thus, asserted "his belief in the vitality and even superiority of African culture..." using it as a "sound ideological platform to contest Euro- American pretensions to primacy and superiority in modern art" (Osinbajo 2009: 6). This contestation manifested in different ways but more significantly, in his imposition of African aesthetics on western European art-space and subverting it's claims to modernism as means to fight his own corner since such subversive use of traditional materials and visual forms in modern context constituted "weapons for political fights".⁷⁴

Through this avant-garde ideology and creative ethos, Enwonwu did in a Nigerian context what Western European avant-gardes did when they appropriated ideas, forms and patterns from 'Other' cultures as subverting tools for attacking bourgeois culture. As James Harding (2006) writes of Euro-American avant-garde, the appropriation from primitive and oriental cultures was a subversive tool for vociferously attacking the bourgeois culture as it provided an alternative position to "analyse, and criticize or reject the hegemonic culture of Old Europe from the outside" (Harding 2006: 40). Enwonwu's avant-gardism took on this framework; his Western training and appropriation of traditional and European cultural forms positioned him in an interstitial space in which he developed a hybrid art whose visual configuration subverted European aesthetic hegemony and the authorities of those at the heart of colonialism.

⁷⁴ "The subversive form of art is used as weapons for political fights...such revolutionary language of art is not just invented but depends on the use of traditional material and the possibilities of this subversion are naturally sought where it is permitted..." see Marcuse, H (1972) 'Art and Revolution' in *Counterrevolution and Revolt*. Boston: Beacon Press.

b) Fostering Nationalist Political Battle for Decolonisation

Arguably for Enwonwu (1956), art may be overtly cultural but it is also unquestionably political. As he pointed out,

The epochs of high artistic achievements of any country have been those of comparative political stability, and of great national pride. It is in such a period in the life of a country that art assumes its role of great national importance. Then the artist is able to devote his energy freely, to the creation of national art, to the glory of his country. The political function of art can therefore be determined by the subject matter of art... every true artist is bound to express the political aspirations of his time. And for expressions to be true, they must be an embodiment of the struggle of self-preservation and expression... (Enwonwu 1956: 29).

The extract above highlights the political inclination of Enwonwu's modern art philosophy. Through the alignment of his modernist ideologies with the political aspirations of Nigerian and African nationalist movements, his art became an avant-garde mechanism for nationalist political propaganda. Such juxtaposition of artistic vision and mission and socio-politics contributed in fostering Nigerians' clamour for independence and the ideals of black self-pride extolled in *Negritude*. Politics of nationalism, pride in African cultures and systems of thought / expression, were Africa's greatest political platform from the 1930s in the battle for liberation and as Daniele Conversi (2012) has pointed out, nationalism and cultural affirmation was not just a chaperon of modernity, "but a tool used by elites to consolidate their power, while imposing their modernizing views and spreading the ideology of progress among the masses" (Conversi 2012: 28). By modernizing indigenous cultural forms in modern art, Enwonwu celebrated African identity as well as extolling the ideals of African pride and equality. His appropriation of artistic and political ideas from the West and Africa to foster nationalist politics through cultural affirmation reflected resistance to Western acclaimed superiority/colonialism, as well as documenting and disseminating

nationalist anti-imperial propaganda for emancipation from foreign oppression. Enwonwu's promotion of African culture and identity aligned with the radical social, politico-cultural ideologies of *Pan-Africanism* the underpinning theoretical and ideological framework upon which nationalist struggles for independence in Africa derived, contributed immensely to Nigeria's nationalist politics and subsequent decolonization.

Enwonwu's body of works produced from 1940 – 1960 were firmly rooted in nationalism politics of the period; *Negritude* series for example, (figure 5.8 -5.9) reflects recurrent appropriation of traditional symbols and graphic systems for celebrating Africa's modernity and self-expression. More importantly, his resistance aesthetics made an even greater political statement in rejecting Western European acclaimed superiority over Africans, (African culture, religion, art, aesthetics, social values, society etc.). Exposed to international nationalist figures such as Mahatma Ghandi and Pandit Nehru of India, Gamel Nasser of Egypt, Kwame Nkrumah of then Gold Coast, Nnamdi Azikwe of Nigeria, Jomo Kenyatta of Kenya, Kenneth Kaunda of Zambia and Julius Nyerere of Tanzania etc., their political activism revealed to the artist the complexities of colonialism (Nzegwu 1998: 4) and this further convinced Enwonwu that *Negritude* and *Pan-African* ideologies were both appropriate mechanism for dismantling British colonialism in Nigeria and for promoting African self-pride. Enwonwu's new art, which sought to dismantle European aesthetic hegemony as well as the perceived superiority of the West over Africa, captured this black power movement's ideals and contributed to the dismantling of Britain's grip on Nigerian culture and the political emancipation of the Nigerian state. Eugene Ionesco (1960) opines that, "one becomes an avant-garde when he or she expressed a rupture, a new departure, and an opposing force" (Ionesco 1960: 46), the expression of a rupture to the cultural and political status quo and opposition to hegemonic force rooted in Western thinking were avant-gardist for African nationalists. In the African context, Enwonwu expressed such modernist

tendencies and his art contributed to the opposition of European political, cultural and aesthetic domination of Nigeria. Since the ideals of *Pan-Africanism* extolled the importance of self-pride and self-expressivity as the basis for liberation, in appropriating and re-contextualizing traditional forms and myths in modern artistic production, Enwonwu merged his political beliefs with his art and such art-politics merger fostered Nigerian battle for liberation. The events of the period, at cultural and socio-political levels, which the new modernist idiom contributed to, thus, established Enwonwu as an avant-garde modernist.

Most significantly, Enwonwu's new modernist ideologies and art style was directed as a cataclysmic force to bridge ethnic boundaries and level barriers of differentiation by juxtaposing diversified indigenous cultural idioms together in creative compositions to forge a new nationalist identity for Nigeria suggestive of modern unity. His iconic piece *Anyanwu 1957* is a classic example of his appropriation / juxtaposition of varying local influences to foster nationalist unity, to advance the battle against colonial subjugation. The sculpture combines realism and abstract anthropomorphism traditional to Igbo cosmic association of strength of kings or warlords with mystical or powerful animals. Enwonwu borrows this Igbo visual idiom in his combination of human and mystical form to represent the *Anyanwu* figure. On the other hand, the adornment of the form with coral beads, derived from traditional Benin aesthetic conventions epitomised in the decoration of chiefs and Obas (figure 5.10). Another piece, which demonstrates the artist's fusion of different ethnic visual idioms in modern art, is the painting *The Durbar of Eid ul Fitr Kano Nigeria 1955* (figure 5.12). The composition depicts a jubilant crowd in the city of Kano, showing Hausas adorned in traditional attires; the piece exhibits a distinct creative fusion of Hausa traditional textile with decorative motifs derived from Igbo *Uli* symbols. This juxtaposition of ethnic influences was consciously political, and aimed at subverting the ethnic distrust and skirmishes which colonialism gave rise to particularly between the Northern and Southern protectorate at the time. In

Agbogbho Mmuo (figure 5.13 – 5.14), he demonstrates the re-contextualization and modernization of cultural forms in the effort to revive Nigeria's past culture and foster the clamor for national unity. *Agbogbho Mmuo* one of his masquerade paintings is overtly decorated with Igbo traditional *Uli* graphic system but also combines Efik Nsibidi symbols, which in pre-colonial Nigeria were painted on walls of shrines or bodies of young ladies. By adapting traditional graphic symbols such as Akaraka/Akuraku (spiral for growth), Ije Eke (movement pattern), Otutu (dots), Onwa (moon) etc., Enwonwu transformed the traditional context of their existence by dislocating them from the wall and body plane and locating them in a new context were these traditional ideographs whilst retaining their cultural identity, assume the exalted position of high modern paintings. Enwonwu's incorporation of indigenous art forms from the diversified ethnic entities in Nigeria as evinced in this piece, became strongly associated and indicative of the unity of the nation and its people; a sign of collective and unified reasoning/aspirations that came to characterise the emergent modern state. According to Anthony Smith (2013), "nationalism is a modernist movement and ideology which broke down the various localisms of region, dialect, custom and clan, and helped to create large and powerful nation-states with centralised systems..." (Smith 2013: 47); Enwonwu's appropriation and hybridization of visual influences from diverse ethnicities in Nigeria, enabled the artist to advance nationalism as it contributed to breaking down ethnic barriers and project a united front against the onslaught of the common enemy – colonialism. Alluding to Smith's submissions, Enwonwu's attempts to dissolve ethnic barriers and local sentiments was a strong tool used in achieving independence and building nationhood as demonstrated in this painting - *The Durbar of Eid ul Fitr Kano Nigeria 1955* (refer to figure 5.12), which both captured and preached the ideals of unity in diversity the creed of *Pan-Nigerianism* at the time.

Furthermore, Enwonwu's appropriation and unification of elements from the *Hausa Fulani* cultures of Northern Nigeria, from the *Yorubas* of the West, from the Middle belt (*Tiv and Idoma*) and Niger Delta regions (*Efik, Ibibio, Itsekiri, Delta*) and predominantly from the East (*Igbo*) the clan of his origin in paintings and sculptures such as *Still Life Benin 1957, Zaria 1955, Yoruba Women Pounding Cassava 1957 and African Dances Series* etc., heralded and celebrated the new modern Nigerian identity and unity nationalist clamoured for and such hybridisation of "disparate cultural tendencies yet maintaining the uniqueness of each, pointed to the propitious direction that a critical mass of such diversity could go in modern Nigeria" (Osinbajo 2009: 7). This bridging of local and ethnic barriers and differences as Smith posits, is a variant of modernism/nationalism, which the artist effectively achieved in his hybrid aesthetic art thus, contributing to the modernizing Nigerian state.

Enwonwu's invention of hybrid aesthetics art also emerged out of the avant-garde clamor to create a new identity and art language for the emergent modern nation. At the peak of Nigerian nationalism politics,⁷⁵ Enwonwu was commissioned by many leading politicians to infuse nationalist aspirations in his art; he used his designated position as an avant-garde in tandem with the ideologies of the political class to create various monuments with themes that celebrated Nigeria and created a new modern identity for the nation. In the national monuments Enwonwu created, for example *Anyanwu 1954* (refer to figure 5.10) which was a symbolization of the coming of age of the nation, its emancipation, and African right to self-expression, the visual configuration of the sculpture appropriated cultural idioms and ideographs from diversified ethnicities and this creative juxtaposition led to the formulation of a new visual art language distinctly modern and Nigerian. Describing the formalism of *Anyanwu 1954* arguably the most symbolic of all revolutionary forms of modernist art during the independence decade in Nigeria, Sylvester Ogbachie

⁷⁵ "...Nationalist movements were in fact efforts at cultural as well as purely political autonomy...cultural nationalism became a distinctive part of the liberation movements" (Irele 1965: 321).

(2008) has written that, through its stylized form and diverse cultural appropriation, Enwonwu expressed “the aspirations of the Nigerian nation and the artist’s personal intercession for its survival and growth” (Ogbechie 2008: 114). The symbolism expressed in the piece, combined traditional influences from *Igbo, Edo, Yoruba* and the *Niger Delta* (Negri et al 2008), transforming the sculpture as it was later seen, into a symbol of the emancipation of the emergent modern African continent and its identity and rights to self-expression; more significantly, the piece defined a new culture of hybridism and art language that came to symbolize pre-independent Nigeria. From Igbo culture he appropriated the conceptualism of anthropomorphism in which human and animal forms are combined for representing divine power; from Edo the artist adapted the elaborate bead decorations of kings and chiefs; while from Yoruba culture, he drew upon the symbolism of women as the powerful force of every society etc., and combined all into a political statement of what a Nigeria strengthened and nurtured on diversity could possibly be and which it later became despite the many social upheavals. Recounting the political symbolism of *Anyanwu 1954*, Enwonwu posited that,

My aim was to symbolise our rising nation. I have tried to combine materials, crafts, and traditions, to express a conception that is based on womanhood – woman, the mother and nourisher of man. In our rising nation, I see the forces embodied in womanhood; the beginning, and then, the development and flowering into the fullest stature of a nation, a people! This sculpture is spiritual in conception, rhythmical in movement, and three dimensional in its architectural setting; these qualities are characteristic of the sculpture of my ancestors and symbolic of the identity of the new Nigeria (Enwonwu 1989: 47).

This illustrates the ideological frameworks, firmly rooted in nationalist discourse upon which the artist’s works derived and were designed. His invention of hybrid art fostered the political clamour for nation building, self-expressionism and

creation of a modern identity for the modernising state. *Anyanwu 1954*, while being an idealized representation, was symbolic of the new nation (heterogeneous in diverse ethnicities but unified in aspirations and vision); its visual configuration was symbolic of the unified modern nation, and as its title *Anyanwu* (awakening - the rising sun) reflects, it became an expression of the aspirations of that generation, the new Nigerian culture and nation.

5.5 Conclusion

What concerns the African artist today is to find a new aesthetic creed or philosophy as a guide to his revolutionary ideas. Artistic revolution do not occur merely by the capacity to adapt one form of art to another, but through revolutionary ideas (Enwonwu 1956: 10).

It is apparent therefore that, the epicentre of Enwonwu's art was based on revolutionary ideas tailored towards Nigeria's independence and this manifested in his invention of hybrid aesthetics, which provided him the conceptual and philosophical framework upon which his anti-colonial/anti-European advocacies were proselytised. As Enwonwu (1956) observed, his modernist philosophy was impelled by the rigorous search for a new artistic creed, a new revolutionary visual language for the emerging modern state, and his appropriation of both African and Western aesthetic forms, led to his creation of a unique hybrid art with which he expressed and achieved such revolutionary ideas. By combining western and African cultural idioms/aesthetics, this chapter has proven that Enwonwu engaged with modern realities/cultures and created revolutionary images that contributed to Nigerian emancipation and modernity. The new modern visual language of Enwonwu's aesthetics embodied *Pan-Africanism* and *Negritude* ideologies of cultural affirmation as a form of political activism to foster Africa's liberation and autonomy, hence his artistic experimentation and new modern formalism became more political as it was visual, more conceptual

and metaphorical as it resonated with the modernist aspirations of the entire continent. Enwonwu's avant-gardism is thus located in this radical anti-colonial propaganda, resistance to European hegemony and cultural renaissance ideologies; his aesthetics of radical cultural politics (the visualising and aestheticizing of Nigerian nationalism) and approach contributed to dismantling imperial rule in Nigeria, and defined the stylistic configuration and modernist ideologies of the early stages of the second phase of Nigerian Modernism.

This chapter further validated the theory put forward in this study that, Enwonwu revolutionised modern Nigerian art with his new art formalism, as he re-contextualized the modern role of artists in the emerging nation and the role of arts in political activism in Africa through his politically laden hybrid aesthetics. Although most scholars have failed to recognise the avant-gardism in Enwonwu's art as a result of the subtle nature of its subversion of the colonial order, this chapter has established the fact that, Enwonwu's art was the most politically engaging artistic phenomenon in the modernising Nigerian state and he was the first artist to fully express in visual form, anti-colonial, anti-European, and anti-Euro-modernism sentiments as part of Nigerian modernist art. The conceptualism of Enwonwu's hybrid aesthetics influenced the *Zarianist* from 1958 who institutionalised the advocacy for cultural revivalism in Nigerian universities and colleges. In the next chapter, the works and avant-gardism of Uche Okeke whose art flourished at the apotheosis of the second phase of Nigerian Modernism spawned by the aesthetics/cultural hybridisation ideologies of Murray and Enwonwu from the 1930s will be explored in details.

Chapter Five Figures

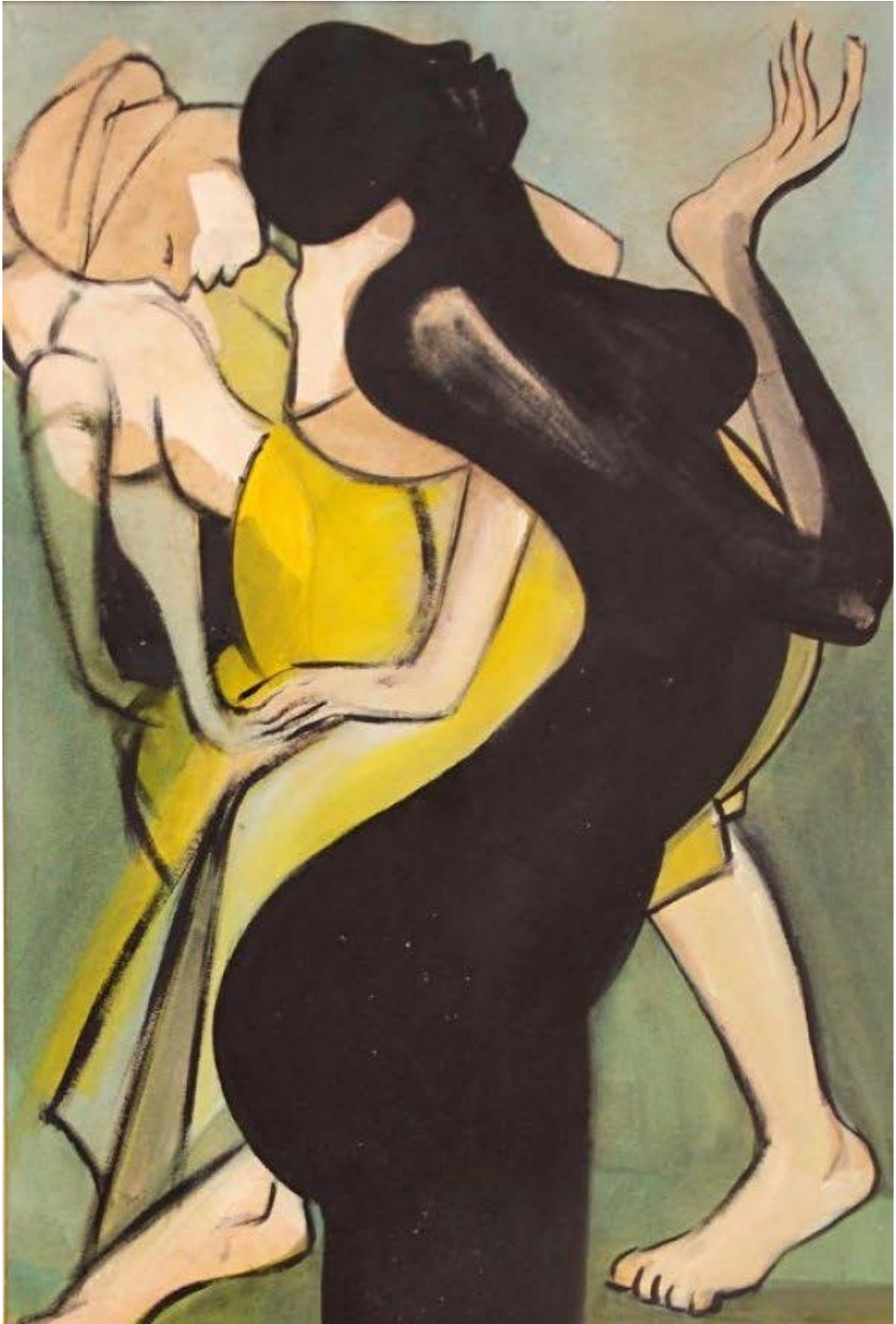


Figure 5.1: Ben Enwonwu Negritude 1957 (Source: The Simon Ottenberg Collection, the Newark Museum, 2012). This piece captures Enwonwu's anti-Europeanization ideology that resulted in the invention of hybrid aesthetic art structured in indigenous cultural formalism as avant-garde rejection of imposed European aesthetics/culture on Nigeria.



Figure 5.2: Ben Enwonwu African Dances 1954 (Source: The Simon Ottenberg Collection, the Newark Museum, 2012). This piece also captures Enwonwu's anti-Europeanization ideology that resulted in the invention of hybrid aesthetic art structured in indigenous cultural formalism as avant-garde rejection of imposed European aesthetics/cultural values on Nigeria.



*Figure 5.3: Ben Enwonwu *The Circumcision* 1946 (Source: The Simon Ottenberg Collection, the Newark Museum, 2012). This demonstrates Enwonwu's subversion of European aesthetic conventions and academic realism instituted in Nigeria by Onobolu from the 1900. It captures the return to traditional artistic formalism during the second phase of Nigerian Modernism by appropriating and modernizing indigenous cultural idioms as an affront on imperial culture and art.*



Figure 5.4: Ben Enwonwu *Crucified gods Galore* 1946 (Source: Kwekudee 2013). This demonstrates Enwonwu's subversion of European aesthetic conventions and academic realism instituted in Nigeria by Onobolu from the 1900. It captures the return to traditional formalism during the second phase of Nigerian Modernism by appropriating and modernizing indigenous cultural idioms as an affront on imperial culture and art.

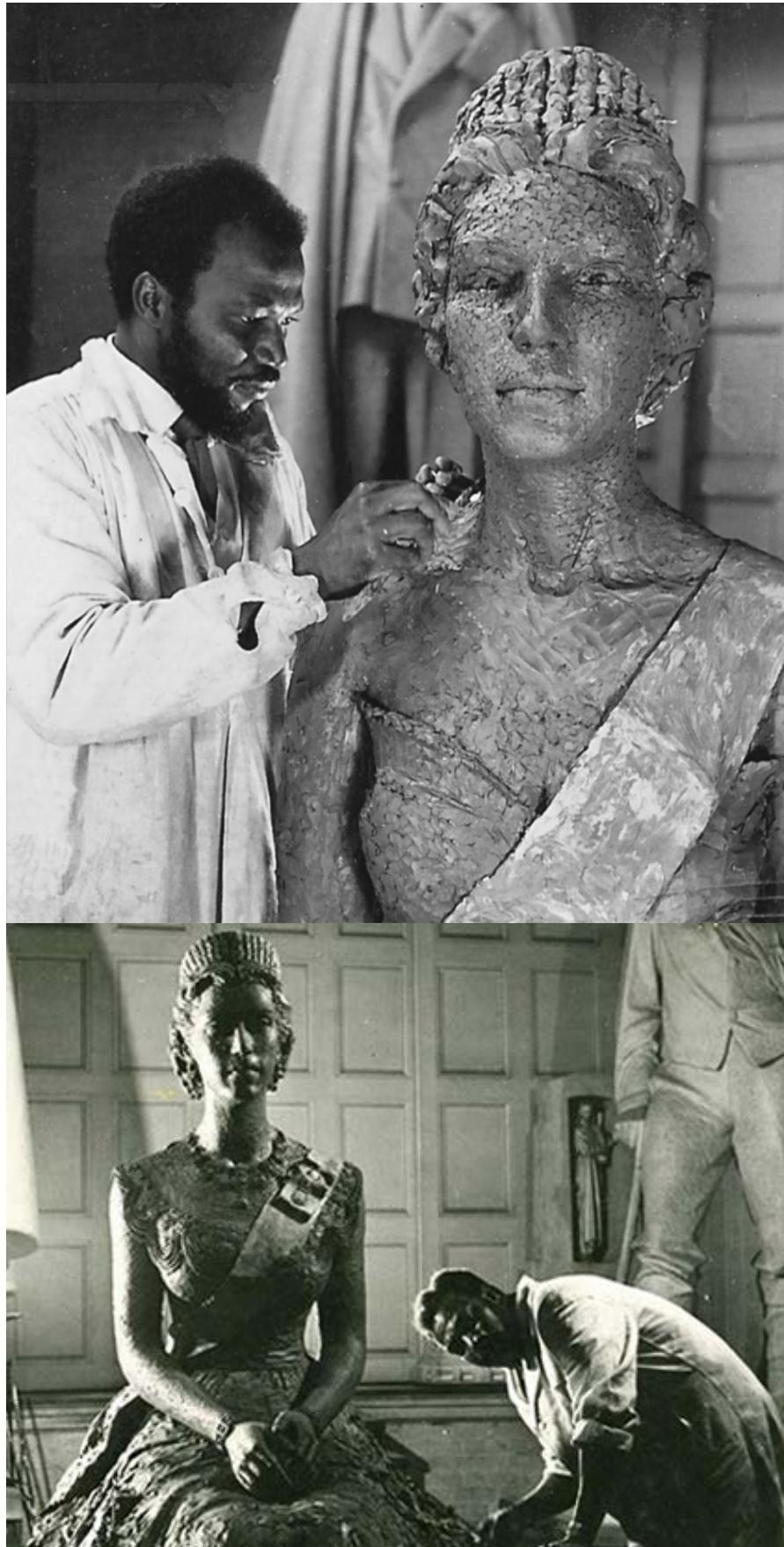


Figure 5.5: Ben Enwonwu *Queen Elizabeth II* 1957 (Source: Kwekudee 2013). Enwonwu's reverse-imposition of African aesthetic conventions on the head of the commonwealth as an avant-garde revolt against the supposed superiority of European art and culture over 'Other' cultures, as well as revolt against colonial imposition and cultural imperialism.



Figure 5.6: Ben Enwonwu Seven Wooden Figures 1959' (Source: Kwekudee 2013). Enwonwu's reverse-imposition of African aesthetic conventions on European art-space as a form of resistance and rejection of the supposed superiority of European art and culture over 'Other' cultures. It captures his resistance to European colonial imposition and imperialism.



Figure 5.7: Ben Enwonwu Seven Wooden Figures 1959' (Source: Kwekudee 2013). Panoramic view.



Figure 4.8: Ben Enwonwu Anyanwu 1957 (Source: Kwekudee 2013). This piece captures Enwonwu's visualisation of Pan-African and Pan-Nigerian advocacies of unity in diversity as a weapon against colonialism. It exhibits his intersection of varying cultural influences from diverse ethnic nationalities in Nigeria to foster the political clamour for unity against the common enemy (imperial Britain) at the time.

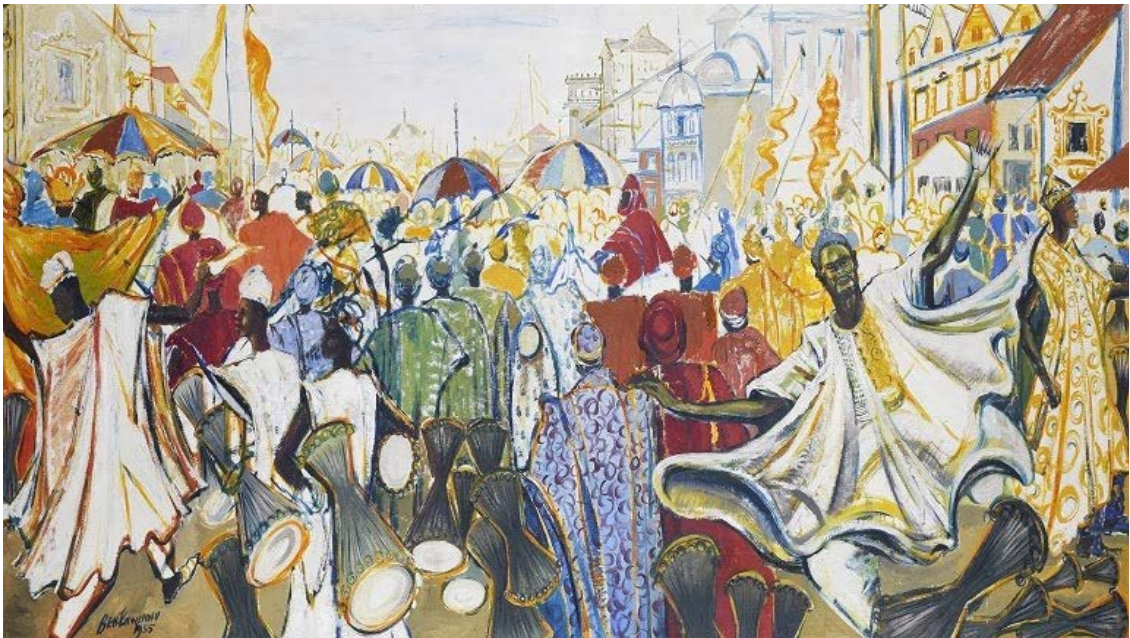


Figure 5.9: Ben Enwonwu The-Durbar-of-Eid-ul-Fitr-Kano-Nigeria 1955 (Source: Kwekudee 2013). This piece captures Enwonwu's visualisation of Pan-African and Pan-Nigerian advocacies of unity in diversity as a weapon against colonialism. It also exhibits his appropriation of varying cultural influences from diverse ethnic nationalities in Nigeria to foster the nationalist political clamour for unity against the common enemy (imperial Britain) at the time.



Figure 5.10: Ben Enwonwu Crowd figures 1951 (Source: Kwekudee 2013). This piece also demonstrates Enwonwu's visualisation of Pan-African and Pan-Nigerian advocacies of unity in diversity as a weapon against colonialism and the common enemy (imperial Britain) at the time.



*Figure 5.11: Ben Enwonwu *The Movement of Agbogho Mmuo* 1951-2 (Source: Kwekudee 2013). This piece captures Enwonwu's modernisation of traditional Igbo symbols, cultural forms and myths to foster cultural revivalism/renaissance and subvert European aesthetic/cultural imposition.*



Figure 5.12: Ben Enwonwu The Movement of Agbogho Mmuo 1951-2 (Source: Kwekudee 2013). This piece demonstrates Enwonwu's modernisation of traditional Igbo symbols, cultural forms and myths to foster cultural revivalism/renaissance and subvert European aesthetic/cultural imposition.



Figure 5.13: Ben Enwonwu *Negritude Series* (Source: Kwekudee 2013). Expression of Enwonwu's new visual art language structured in indigenous cultural formalism and hybrid appropriation inspired by *Negritude* and Afro-centric black power movements as the new image of modern African pride, culture, identity and resistance.



*Figure 5.14: Ben Enwonwu Negritude Series (Source: Kwekudee 2013). Expression of Enwonwu's new visual art language structured in hybrid appropriation inspired by *Negritude* and Afro-centric black power movements as the new image of modern African pride, culture, identity and*

CHAPTER 6: ARTIST CASE STUDY III

The Second Phase of Nigerian Modernism: Uche Okeke and the Integration of *Natural Synthesis* and Cultural Renaissance into a Modernist Avant-Garde Manifesto

6.1 Introduction

Uche Okeke's modernist art flourished at the height of Nigerian nationalism and the historical context of the period positioned him at the climax of the second phase of Nigerian Modernism. Okeke emerged as one of Nigeria's most influential avant-gardes, propagating the ideals of cultural renaissance, anti-colonialism and *Pan-Nigerianism* - the creative ethos of the second modernist movement in Nigeria. His avant-gardism, which advanced Murray and Enwonwu's ideologies, took on a more radical formalism and political significance as a result of the historic context (height of nationalism politics) during which his art flourished.

Although Nigeria was at the verge of political independence, imperial domination and the impositions of European cultural values, evidences of the colonial administration's efforts to displace Nigerian culture were still widespread throughout the colony in the late 1950s. Consequently, the heightened and intensive anti-colonial posture and agitations by nationalism-minded politicians and social commentators it gave rise to, inspired Okeke's modernist avant-gardism. As a revolutionist himself, Okeke instigated the formation of the *Zaria Art Society*, promulgating the ideology of '*Natural Synthesis*'. *Natural Synthesis*

was launched as an avant-garde manifesto; a propaganda for radical cultural revivalism and promotion of nationalism, it embodied the creative methodology of appropriation from both indigenous and foreign cultures in modern expression. In proselytizing the ideologies and political imperatives of aesthetic/cultural hybridisation, Okeke's *Natural Synthesis* captured the political consciousness of the late 1950s, thus, inscribing political and nationalist aspirations into his modern art, which contributed to Nigeria's modernity and emancipation. Okeke's avant-garde art impacted on Nigerian polity and art-spaces in varying revolutionary ways, underpinning why he is "overtly canonized as one of the heroes of Modernism in Nigeria" (Okonkwo & Akhogba 2014: 67). His cultural renaissance advocacy, led to the re-contextualization of indigenous forms in modern art, resulting in a new/unique Nigerian artistic expression, which visualised and captured the conditions of pre-independence euphoria at the time. Through this re-invention of the traditional as modern art, and the criticality (the climax of political activism) of the historical context during which his modernist art flourished, his avant-garde advocacies exerted significant time-lag effects on national cultures and polity and were pivotal in establishing the anti-colonial and nationalistic theoretical/conceptual framework which instigated postcolonial Nigerian modernism. This chapter is divided into six sections and tailored to synthesize the argument foregrounded above, as well as interrogate some of the theories proposed in this study.

Sections 6.2 and 6.3 will provide historical background of Okeke, detailing his education training and inspirations especially from Igbo *Uli* art, a form of visual expression and writing based on Igbo traditional art conventions, as well as influences from the nationalist political movement of the 1950s. Furtherance to this, the formulation of the avant-garde *Zaria Art Society*, which became the hub of anti-colonial agitation would be analysed. This is followed by analysis of Okeke's modernist art, and the impact of his newfound visual idiom on Twentieth Century Nigeria polity, culture and social aspirations/activism. Section

6.4 explores as the central focus of this chapter, Okeke's avant-gardism inscribed in his *Natural Synthesis* manifesto as an advance of the ideals of the second phase of Nigerian Modernism. In addition, the time-lag influence of Okeke's avant-gardism in defining the theoretical/conceptual framework of postcolonial modernism, culture and identity from 1960, will be established. This chapter concludes with summary of key findings, with emphasis on the revolutionary effect of Enwonwu's art especially its proselytization of Pan-Nigerianism,⁷⁶ and nationalist decolonization propaganda which contextualise and establish him as one of Nigeria's revered avant-gardes.

6.2 Historical Context

Okeke was born on April 30, 1933 in Nimo, Njikoka Local Government Area of Anambra State, Nigeria. His father, Isaac Okonkwo Chukwuka Okeke was a teacher and a craftsman and his mother, Mgboye Okeke, a trader. Okeke began his primary school education at St. Peter Claver's Catholic School, Kafachan, Nasarawa State, between 1940 and 1947, during which he exhibited great artistic talent and creative enthusiasm, thus was encouraged to pursue a career in art by his mother (Chukueggu 2011). In 1945 while at primary school and on the invitation of his school, he drew and painted teaching illustrations on school walls (Nwana 2004). Okeke enrolled for his secondary school training at the Metropolitan College Onitsha in 1948; in 1949 he gained admission into the Bishop Shanahan College, Orlu where he advanced his creative talents, developed literary interest and started writing Uli songs. Okeke spent his holidays studying various cultures and dialects of different cities in Igboland from which he gained great insights into ethno-cultural diversities in Nigeria. He concluded his secondary education in 1953 and took up appointment with the department of Labour and Employment Exchange, Jos (Plateau State) as a clerk,

⁷⁶ Pan-Nigerianism is used to refer to the ideologies and movements that encouraged the solidarity of Nigerians as a unified nation. This included all activities tailored towards achieving unity, political progress, and independence from colonial domination and oppression.

and was later transferred to Labour Department Headquarters in Lagos where he met Kenneth Murray, the curator of Nigerian Museum and Eke Okaybulu, Graphic artist at the Federal Ministry of Information. Okeke worked in the federal civil service from 1955-1957; earlier in 1954 he enrolled in Akinola Lasekan's correspondence school, the *Lash Studio*, which exposed him to artistic professionalism and contact with professionally trained artists in Nigerian such as Akinola Lasekan, Kenneth Murray etc. (Chukueggu 2011). By 1955, because of his artistic and literary curiosities, he met Bernard Fagg, archaeologist at Jos Museum and Dennis Duerden, art teacher at Keffi Government secondary school (Oloidi 2002). He proceeded in 1957 to the Nigerian College of Arts, Science and Technology, Zaria, (now Ahmadu Bello University), where he sharpened his modernist ideologies. During his years at Zaria, Okeke pioneered the formation of the revolutionary *Zaria Art Society*, which became the centre of resistance against the imposition of European artistic conventions on Nigeria as the only superior/absolute mode of creative expressionism.

In 1959 he established the *Asele Institute* a cultural centre to further propagate his avant-garde ideologies; the philosophy of the institute as Okeke (1981) opined, "...was deeply rooted in the concept of creative development that seeks to utilize traditional and modern techniques of production in order to effect change social and cultural" (Okeke 1981: 53). Upon Nigeria's independence, Okeke along with Bruce Onobrakpeya and Demas Nwoko, designed the Art/Craft pavilion, painted murals for the Independence celebration on October 1, 1960, and organized the *Nigerian Independence Art Exhibition* in Lagos to capture the spirit and euphoria of Nigeria's emancipation and autonomy (Ikhwemesi 2003).

6.3 Conceptual/Ideological Inspirations for Okeke's Modernist Ideologies and Art

Varying cultural, political, social and transnational factors coalesced to inform/define Okeke's revolutionary / modernist ideals; this thesis identifies the following cardinal influences responsible for the cultural renaissance concept, resistance formalism and avant-gardism of Okeke's modernist art:

a) Igbo Philosophy of Art, *Uli* Painting and Folktales

Traditional Igbo creative philosophy was pivotal in the formulation of Okeke's modernist ideologies. In Igbo traditional creative context, art '*nka*' is central to societies' existence, and that which manifest as physical form (art object) is considered an embodiment of the spiritual, the conceptual and the cosmological (Okeke 1989). Okeke learnt art from his father who exposed him to Igbo traditional creative ethos (Nwana 2004), and was fascinated by the cultural demands in pre-colonial Igbo art, to incorporate a people's cosmology into creativity and manifesting such in visual forms tailored for the good of society. He was especially inspired by Igbo folklore and proverbs, which embodied in metaphoric structures/narratives, the myth of the people's existence, as well as Igbo body/wall painting of *Uli*.⁷⁷ From an early age in his career, an insatiable appetite for Igbo stories, proverbs, songs, and *Uli* visual expression drove Okeke, and this creative enthusiasm elicited the formulation in later years, of the concept of *Natural Synthesis* the conceptual/ideological framework of his avant-garde art (Salami 2005: 84). He was particularly intrigued by indigenous Nigerian art forms from different ethnic groups; their characteristics, societal contexts

⁷⁷ "*Uli* was an important women's art form in South-eastern Nigerian...decorations were made with dyes from *Uli* pod, and painted murals incorporating *Uli* idioms with regular movements, arch shapes or concentric circles, repeated movements. *Uli* painting is ephemeral..."see Peri, E. A. (2002) 'Varieties and Qualities in *Uli* Painting Based on Drawings from the Igbo Ozo and Igbo Abamaba Areas, Collected in the 1930s' in Ottenberg, S. (Ed.). *The Nsukka Artists and Nigerian Contemporary Art*. Smithsonian National Museum of African Art. Washington DC: University of Washington Press.

and ethnic peculiarities and this influenced his modern art. Okeke posited that, “I made regular visits to Nigerian art centres, Bida, Jebba Island and the Niger River, Ile Ife, Esie, Benin City, Abeokuta, and Lagos. These traditional art forms inspired my poems and modern art” (Okeke 2002: 47). The traditional context that defined indigenous art forms and their ethnic peculiarities, provoked in Okeke the realisation that as art contributed to the construction of cultural identity of community types in pre-colonial Africa, it can constitute a creative mechanism for defining the identity of the emergent modern Nigeria and the artist drew upon this in his modernist activism from the 1950s.

Igbo *Uli* art sits at the core of Okeke’s influences; its visual form, inspired the visual configuration (style) of Okeke’s modernist art. As Okeke observed, “Igbo ethno-aesthetics of drawing and painting provide deep insight into the art and life of the people and constitute in a deeply meaningful way the bare bones of their creativity” (Okeke 1976: 15). Okeke came to the realisation that *Uli* painting and drawing afforded insights into his people’s life and existence and through its embodiment of Igbo cosmology constituted a creative medium for documenting and celebrating a society’s wellbeing, beliefs and civilization. This realisation that art traversed the physical and spiritual and is an embodiment of a society’s entire socio-cosmos inspired the artist to intrinsically study Igbo *Uli*, which he later adopted as leitmotif for his avant-gardism. On the crucial influence of *Uli* on him, Okeke (2002) acknowledged that he was taught the basic conventions that later propelled his modern art formalism by his mother;

My mum gave me demonstrations of *Uli* visuals, she used *Uli* motifs and symbols to make pictures while I observed keenly her general comportment and approach to the visual representation...from my mum’s demonstration, I learnt the following about *Uli*: a) concentration, b) effective utilization of the two-dimensional format through the deposition of *Uli* element (motifs and symbols) in pictorial space, c) economy of means – bold and sparing application of *Uli* elements...I saw in *Uli* limitless expression, and was continually reminded of its

dual meaning as a form of writing and drawing (Okeke 2002: 95).

Okeke found in this traditional creative idiom (*Uli*) a unique form of visual expressionism which offered varying possibilities through which the ideals of cultural affirmation and renaissance could be explored, he also cognised through its dual metaphorical context, that *Uli* visual idiom could sustain and inform modern nationalist advocacies and through it, a new modern visual art language and identity for the nation could be constructed; hence the artist's adoption and development of the conceptual and presentational essences of *Uli* art (*Uliism*) whose core is brevity, and masterful, authoritative control and domination of space using the agency of varying lines (Jegede 2002), as the leitmotif for his avant-garde art.

b) Nationalism, *Pan-Africanism* and Nigeria's Independence

The climax of the second phase of Nigerian Modernism coincided with the climax of anti-colonial agitations and nationalism advocacies, with Nigeria on the verge of emancipation from colonial subjugation. This political consciousness inspired Okeke and influenced the formalism of his avant-garde art. Ola Oloidi (2012) observes that, the struggles and agitations of political propagandism by Nigerian nationalists such as Dr Nnamidi Azikiwe, Obafemi Awolowo, Aminu Kano, Anthony Enahoro, and Eyo Ita, energised and influenced his (Okeke) expression of nationalist sentiments and decolonization politics in modern arts (Oloidi 2012). Africa throughout the 1950s was driven by the doctrine of *Negritude*; the search for a unique modern African identity and agitations for self-expression, and Kevin Shillington (2013) has asserted that the ideologies promulgated through *Negritude* inspired *Nationalism* to become a modernist movement in Africa, subsequently influencing Okeke's invention of '*Natural Synthesis*' as a distinct conceptual and subjective expression of modernist thoughts and as an avant-garde methodology of creativity (Shillington 2013: 104). The peak of

nationalism politics in the late 1950s infused Nigerian political climate with intense anti-colonial agitations, the quests to reconstruct society and device a new identity to launch the nation into postcolonial selfhood. Cultural revivalism and affirmation ideologies thus, became the creed adopted as creative/cultural mechanism to foster nationalist decolonisation propaganda especially as artists realised that seeking and reviving aspects of their cultures discredited by the logic of colonialism, was capable of leading Nigeria to independence and this Okeke employed fully in his art (Okeke 1945: 35). The ideologies of the second phase of Nigerian Modernism reflected the then nationalist political advocacies, this chimed logically with the ideal of reconstructing Nigerian cultures, the creation of a modern unified national identity, and with the concept of a revolutionary art and cultural renaissance as an avant-garde expression of anti-colonialism and resistance to Western socio-cultural hegemony. Hence, Okeke became keen on proselytizing anti-colonialism ideals through culturally structured modern art to contribute his quota to the decolonization of the Nigerian state, and this intense anti-colonial sentiment led to Okeke's formation of the rebel avant-garde group dubbed *Zaria Art Society*, which he pioneered as philosophical king.

Inaugurated in 1958, the group became a force and symbol of rebellious agitation against European lecturers and the Euro-tailored art curriculum at the Zaria College and other Nigerian schools. This was because no aspect of Nigeria's rich art traditions and cultures was included in the college's art curriculum (Chukueggu 2010: 73), and the formation of this group and the ideologies its members fostered as elucidated in further sections, were also directly influenced by events on the bigger nationalist political platform (Irivwei 2007: 27). According to Chika Okeke-Agulu (1999), "we may recall that the members of the *Zaria Art Society* derived much impetus from the euphoric pre and post-Independence nationalism at the time" (Okeke-Agulu 1999: 145); this euphoria of Nigeria's impending independence influenced their activities and the art they

produced which Okeke as the founding father oversaw to ensure it fostered the nationalist political and cultural aspirations of the emergent nation. Reflecting on the inspirations drawn from nationalism politics, on his formation of the avant-garde society, Okeke (2007) comments that, “the *Zaria Art Society* was inaugurated out of the political ferment and desire for self-rule and national independence...the formation of the society was engendered by the nationalism political movement...we disliked the imposition of western European ideas on Nigerians” (Okeke cited in Clark 2007: 149). The desire for self-rule, emancipation and resistance to Western imposition instigated the establishment of the society, which turned out to be Nigeria’s most influential avant-garde group. The many influences highlighted so far, political and philosophical point to the ideological imprint underlining the concept of *Natural Synthesis* as avant-gardist and political, as its aesthetic configuration was rooted in the quest for political/cultural emancipation. Hence in developing and applying this concept (*Natural Synthesis*) to his modern art, Okeke as well as espoused an avant-garde posture, advanced the ideologies formulated by Murray and pioneered by Enwonwu during the early stages of the second phase of Nigerian Modernism.

6.4 Okeke’s Modern Art Style: *Natural Synthesis*, Visualizing Traditional Folklores and Modernizing *Uli* Art

Okeke’s creative methodology was driven by the concept of *Natural Synthesis*, and subsequently, in both form and content, his works embodied the ideals of cultural renaissance and aesthetic hybridism. As Okeke pointed out, his art was focused on “aggressive cultural renaissance” (Okeke cited in Chukueggu 2011: 91), hence his emergent forms were characterised by and rooted in indigenous cultural formalism. Okeke appropriated elements from Igbo traditional art especially *Uli* painting/line art, which he deployed as leitmotif for his avant-garde expression. The desire to modernize indigenous culture as a reflection of the new modernism, underpins Okeke’s preoccupation with the exploration of

traditional forms and the interweaving of literary expression with visual arts; the kind he found and was inspired by in Igbo *Uli* expressionism.⁷⁸ His art exhibits a high level of creative profundity driven by experimentation, designed to visualize indigenous cosmology and mythology through lines and colour, as well as capture the conditions and Euphoria of pre-independence colonial modernity. In pen/ink drawings and paintings, Okeke's art, incorporated themes and subject matter that commented on the sociological, metaphysical and mundane etc., depicting legendary mythical figures, all expertly rendered in rhythmic expressive stylization that is the signature *Uli* traditional line art,⁷⁹ as a unique form of interpreting the modern Nigerian state and conditions.

By focusing attention on the visualization of Igbo folklores, and modernization of *Uli* symbols in modern art, Okeke's art became overtly characterised by lyrical lines, poetic movements, floral motifs and distinct symbolic patterns, evolved as the stylistic formalism of his modern expression. In his paintings and drawings, *Uli* traditional aesthetics and ideographs are deployed; the use of natural forms and motifs as well as the depiction of balance/unity are strictly adhered to in Okeke's compositions. The artist used a limited range of *Uli* ideographs; the most recurrent of which are: *isinwaq̄ji*, *oloma*, *q̄nwa*, *mbq̄ agu*, and *agwq̄lagwq̄* throughout in his works (Okeke-Agulu 2010), all of which have distinct cultural meanings and their deployment in pre-modern context resonated such traditional philosophical meanings interpreted through lines and symbols. *isinwaq̄ji* for example refers to kola nut which in Igbo culture is a sign of peace, *Oloma* symbolises fertility, *q̄nwa* the moon symbolise light source as direction

⁷⁸ Expressionism as used here in relation to *Uli* art, refers to the cultural symbolic abstract representation of reality, and non-naturalistic technique of *Uli* unconventional rhythmic and lyrical movements deployed to externalize Igbo philosophies and cosmology.

⁷⁹ Characteristic motifs in the *Igbo Ozo* area are circles and spirals, triangles, four-sided shapes, moon shapes. Variations and interest are achieved by placing a filled-in shape against a fine line, straight lines against curved lines and short lines against long lines, and by rotating shapes (Op Cit.). The *isinwaq̄ji* is a motif adapted from the space between the three or four lobes of the kola nut (*cola acuminata*). *Oloma* is orange fruit (citrus), and *q̄nwa* is moon, while *agwq̄lagwq̄* is an onomatopoeic term for spiral. The *agwq̄lagwq̄* motif refers not only to the snake (*agwq̄*) but to a particular variety, *eke*, the sacred python revered in many parts of the north-central Igbo area. A variant of this motif, *q̄dy eke* (python's tail), shows a short line ending in a spiral. See Jegede, D. (2002) 'Globalizing Ulism: Trick or Treat'

for human race, *agwɔlagwɔ/eke* motif - a spiral line symbolises the sacred python revered in Igbo land - the symbol for growth. *Ntupo* stippled dots symbolizes progress, movement, individual's journeys through the cycle of life - achievements and successes (Smith 1986: 58, Ottenberg 1997: 59, Smith 2010). *Uli* creative philosophy also promulgated the concept of minimalism and selective application and composition of *Uli* elements to achieve a simplistic expression of cultural mythologies and proverbs as the most appropriate reflection of ideological and cosmological concepts and narratives.⁸⁰

This minimalism and symbolism of *Uli* ideographs and art, are drawn upon in Okeke's paintings and drawings; in '*Onalu 1959*', for example the artist employs symbols such as *Akika* (feminine beauty/hairdo) for decorating the head of the figure, *Otutu* and *Ije Eke* (spiral snakelike lines) to create the illusion of movement in the piece, also as ornaments for accessorising the ears, wrist, and neck of the figure. The piece in its minimalist formalism captures a sense of self-criticism and re-evaluation of 'our cultural roots' as he stated in his 1958 manifesto. '*Head of a Girl 1959*' also draws upon the minimalism of *Uli* graphic system and employs ideographs, which resonate a sense of deep reflection on the African self, altered by imperial cultural impositions and to express anger at the colonial status quo (figures 6.1 -6.2).

The use of these traditional symbols and their contextualization in modern art rooted the artist's work in indigenous culture and in a modern interstitial space; according to Marshal Mount (1973), "Okeke's drawings show preoccupation with Ibo folklore and tribal life...his works have a freedom and expressiveness of line in addition to a marked interest in pattern, and a condition of interstice in

⁸⁰ Chike Aniakor opines that, "in its rhythmic temper, line dances, spirals into diverse shapes, elongates, attenuates, thickens, swells and slides, thins and fades out from a slick point, leaving an empty space that sustains it with mute echoes by which silence is part of sound. At once cursive, it creates taut boundaries, which it simultaneously relieves with dotted textures, curls up and resolves into a blocked shape hemmed with a contrasting color boundary" (Aniakor quoted in Ottenberg 1997: 59).

colonial Nigeria...” (Mount 1973: 138). The artist’s extensive appropriation from cultural forms extended the hybrid aesthetic formalism initiated by Enwonwu, and reflected the hybrid cultural condition Nigeria experienced at the time. His late 1950s works (*Asele Period*), such as ‘*The Beast Omalido 1958*’, ‘*Nza the Smart 1958*’, ‘*Greedy Mbe 1958*’ etc., (figures 6.3 – 6.5) reflects Okeke’s dedicated efforts at modernising *Uli* art as a modern visual idiom; these works, employing expressive and continuous lines, are rhythmical, free-flowing, symbolic, and pattern-based, while the depicted figures are mythical in their form, expressing varying rapid movements reflective of their mystical existence and power in Igbo folktales, legendary proverbs and cosmology, but expertly constructed in modern context to capture the political and cultural activism in Nigeria during the independence decade. Through manipulation of symbols, lines and patterns, Okeke interpreted Igbo metaphysical world into abstract realisms, and his interplay of negative and positive spaces according to Kris Ikwemesi (2010), unveiled a poetic quality alluding to the profundity encapsulated in Igbo proverbs.⁸¹ *Uli* is symbolic, it replicates the traditional verbal phrase through the visual record of characters that live in fictitious worlds using lines and distinct compositions, and this traditional aesthetic convention influenced Okeke’s style, with the majority of his drawings and paintings resonating *Uli* ideographs contextualized in modern forms and patterns (Ikwemesi 2010: 241). According to Okeke (1959),

My drawings and paintings are symbolic. They are based upon traditional plastic art and especially upon old Nigerian sculptured pieces. I have tried to depict the haziness and traditional tales, which often confuse man and beast and mix up real life with the dream world and I have attempted to capture the spirit of the dim and distant past of which Igbo folk tales are representative, a condition which now reflects Nigerian colonial society... (Okeke 1959: 16).

⁸¹ Artistically and ideologically Okeke “fully engaged in the interpretation of folktale characters into *Uli*, and such characters come in form of supernatural beings, members of the animal kingdom, some magical objects, as well as inanimate objects” (Ikwemesi 2010).

In capturing the interstices between the real and abstract worlds, of metaphysical and mundane realities, and the haziness of the abstract realm within which Igbo traditional tales and cosmology are based, Okeke's art also assumed a unique quality of stylization characterised by an admixture of realism and abstraction. This creative hybridization manifested as an organic fusion of spirits and humans, of the past and the present, rendered in an overarching rhythmic, lyrical and pattern-like style the first of its kind in modern Nigeria. Okeke's illustration in *Things Fall Apart*, of the confrontation of Umuofia indigenes with their masquerade and the foreign British missionaries (figure 6.6), exemplifies this element of organic fusion and stylization, with all features and elements in the composition rendered with the same lyrical stroke manipulated in consonance with *Uli* graphic system and painting (Afuba 1992, 2003).

Using the medium of ink and paper, with his stylized fusion technique, Okeke depicts a crowd in intense altercation, with indigenous peoples and their masquerade confronting European missionaries on account of their anti-culture, anti-art and anti-African advocacies that had resulted in the destruction of indigenous customs and traditions. The piece captured the continent-wide battles in the late 1950s to revive indigenous culture through the rejection of imposed Europeanization - a nationalist consciousness that *Things Fall Apart* focused on by presenting a well ordered and peaceful pre-colonial Umuofia in contrast to the chaos and violence orchestrated by European colonialists whose presence created disharmony on every sphere of indigenous life and art. The illustration is characterised by fusion of forms and poetic expression of lyrical fluidity in which both the forms of the humans, the masquerade, the buildings and forest in the background are rendered in the same lyrical line, with forms dissolving and running into each other to create a sense of tension, balance and unity inspired by *Uli* art in which lines replicate verbal phrases. This poetic lyricism is distilled in this piece through elements of repetition, rhythm, rhyme and fluidity, all of which characterises the stylized leitmotif of Okeke's modern art. He masterfully combines semi-figurative representationalism in the

depiction of the people, capturing various gestural postures in minimalist expression using simple lines, and skilfully juxtaposes these with the abstractionism of *Uli* traditional painting techniques as evident in his symbolic depiction of the masquerade in the foreground and the trees/building, which dissolves into each other in the background. In this illustration, the artist combines human and mythical or spiritual forms inspired by Igbo traditional folklores and folktales, and such juxtaposition was symbolic and ideological as it aligned with nationalist uprising/*Négritude* ideologies which promulgated the revival of indigenous values in order to reconstruct cultural identity and dismantle western cultural imperialism. The artist's manipulation of negative and positive spaces, accords the composition multiple perspectives rather than the single-point perspective of Western academic conventions, which it sought to dismantle. Through its juxtaposition of figurative art and abstractionism, the composition appears divided in two parts – the left foreground receding into the left background is abstracted with mark makings and *Uli* lines/symbols, while the right foreground receding into the right background is representational in its minimalist sense. The combination of two visual idioms (realism and abstractionism) in this piece using traditional *Uli* techniques of minimalism and lyricism, defines the stylization of Okeke's art. This fusion is equally expressed in his '*Oja Suit, Monster 1962*', '*Wild Joy 1958*', '*Okpaladike and his Obu 1960*' etc., which exhibits a fusion of mundane and cosmic realities, as well as fusion of human and environmental forms flowing with lyrical movements (figures 6.7 – 6.9).

Through this cultural renaissance advocacy, Okeke's art championed creative hybridism of aesthetic and cultural idioms from varying regions, to "facilitate Nigerian modernity" (Clarke 2007: 150). Thus, his *Natural Synthesis* art which drew heavily from African ideographs that is *Uli* motifs, and rendered in European canvass painting and ink drawing techniques, advanced the creative ethos of the second phase of Nigerian Modernism which from the 1930s,

promulgated the appropriation of Western aesthetic conventions and materials in interpreting indigenous themes as a conscious avant-garde strategy for cultural revival, and dismantling of imposed Western conventions. Through vigorous visual research and experimentation with Igbo *Uli* graphic system, as well as the hybridization of indigenous and foreign cultural values, he defined a new modern art for Nigeria (Diogu 2012). Okeke-Agulu (2010) observes that, “Okeke’s work, exploits the formal potentials of Igbo *Uli* art, based on a sensibility that comes from his internalization of the experimental approach to image making associated with Twentieth Century modern art” (Okeke-Agulu 2010: 516-8). Okeke’s ‘*Ana Mmuo 1961*’ (figure 6.10) embodies this element of hybridity, reflecting a synthesise of African Igbo traditional *Uli* symbols juxtaposed with modern artistic conventions such as the abstract philosophy of the sublime in painting, informed by his formal academic training to translate the traditional into a syntactical modernism formulated in an abstract language that epitomizes contemporary African consciousness of the time.

This vigorous interrogation and modernisation of *Uli* visual idiom captured a sense of hybridity of cultures or a conscious act of appropriations and combinations into a new form that is both distinct and different from its parts. The resulting interculturalism in Okeke’s modern art is a logical consequence of different civilizations coming together and is both reflective of the resistance to the then dominant colonial status quo and the salient elements of modernity, *Pan-Nigerianism*, self-expression and *Nationalism* in the emergent Nigerian state and African continent at the time. For instance, in ‘*Wild Joy 1958*’, while Western canvass and oil paints are used, the theme captured in abstract expressionism style composed with *Uli* symbols, the euphoria of 1950s pre-independent Nigeria - the joy of the anticipated and much-heralded emancipation from western subjugation. ‘*Forest 1962*’ juxtaposes African themes and symbols with western techniques and media. The painting captures the independence spirit of the decade; the bright yellow, light blue forms emerging from the dark blue-black

background into the foreground treated in *Uli* style is symbolic. Okeke in this piece visualizes the revival of Nigerian culture, and the emergence of the anticipated sovereign state from the dark ages of colonialism symbolized in the painting with dark colours. These works also draw upon Western conventions and techniques of mark-making and ethos of experimentalism/expressionism but localised using *Uli* lines and symbols to foster the ideology of *Natural Synthesis* and objective of modernising indigenous cultural forms to dismantle imposed European aesthetics/culture in Nigeria. Flourishing at the apotheosis of nationalism politics, the radical philosophy/manifesto of *Natural Synthesis* constituted an art-politics avant-garde mechanism (integration of modern art into nationalist politics), with which Okeke fostered his culture-oriented avant-gardism explored in the next section.

6.5 Uche Okeke's Avant-gardism: Aggressive Cultural/Art Renaissance through *Natural Synthesis*

Young artists in a new nation that is what we are, we must grow with the new Nigeria and work to satisfy her traditional love for art or perish with our colonial past. Our new nation places huge responsibilities upon men and women in all walks of life and places, much heavier burden on the shoulders of contemporary artists...the very fabric of our social life is deeply affected by this inevitable change. Therefore the great work of building up new art culture for a new society in the second half of this century must be tackled by us... (Okeke 1958: 1).

Okeke's 1958 manifesto highlights the artist's avant-garde quest for artistic and cultural revolution, as well as the call for modern artists to engage in Nigeria's politics and modernisation. It underpins the leading argument in this chapter that Okeke's *Natural Synthesis* was an avant-garde mechanism deployed to propagate varying indigenous advocacies reflective of the political tempo of the period. Okeke classified the period leading up to independence as the age of renaissance; it was the period of societal reconstruction, hence he structured his

art in the spirit of political revolution of pre-independence Nigeria. Long before Okeke's enrolment at the Zaria College, he began developing various thoughts on how modern art could facilitate Nigerian modernity and overturn imperial imposition and domination. As he recounts,

When I entered the Nigerian College of Arts, Science and Technology at Zaria, at the close of 1957, three major concerns were uppermost in my mind: first how to become a Nigerian artist; second, how to marry my visual and literary arts experiences; and third, what to do to stimulate the growth of contemporary Nigerian art, culture and society through appropriate organization arrangements (Okeke 1989: 93).

This interrogation and exploration of the identity/language of modern art and artists, and strategies through which modern art could be renegotiated to facilitate Nigerian modernity and foster its political/cultural aspirations, were inspired in Okeke by nationalist sentiments and by 1958 such concerns informed the resistance manifesto for his avant-garde art. It is apparent therefore that, Okeke's art and conceptual approach as contained in his manifestoes, fostered varying culture-specific modernist ideals peculiar to Nigerian Modernism, which he contributed to. Through detailed analysis of the context of his modernism, this study establishes that Okeke fostered the following advocacies:

a) Institutionalisation of Cultural Revivalism and Interculturalism Advocacies to Foster Anti-colonialism Activism and Dismantle European Cultural Imperialism

The history of Okeke's modern art coincides with events in the heydays of the second phase of Nigerian Modernism and nationalism politics. Okeke's art did not simply fit into this conceptual paradigm but advanced it to encapsulate the

nationalist political consciousness of the late 1950s. The ideology of cultural revivalism clamoured for the revival and promotion of indigenous Nigerian culture through modern art as a form of counter-culture and resistance to colonial cultural imposition. Through appropriation, the exponent of the second modernist movement, Murray, and the pioneering artist Enwonwu, successfully promoted Nigerian/African culture and in doing so, visually propagated their anti-colonial stance from the 1930s. Cultural revivalism was antithetical to the colonial project and became an avant-garde attack on the imperial West and its excesses, as well as an aesthetic devise tailored to facilitate the reconstruction of Nigeria's cultural identity/heritage. Okeke fostered these modernist ideals through his *Natural Synthesis* philosophy/formalism and admonished other Nigerian modernists of every persuasion to assume strategic positions with their art in Nigeria's political and nationalist battle against colonialism (Okeke 1958).

Okeke recognised the power of cultural affirmation preached in *Negritude* and Afro-centric black power movements as the ideal modernist mechanism for affirming black power to subvert colonialism and Western stereotypes; he also believed that through appropriation and promotion of indigenous cultural values, Western impositions will be rebuffed and Nigeria's eroded culture revived. As he declared, "we must not allow others think for us in our artistic life" (Okeke 1958), he detested colonial imposition of European art conventions on Nigeria and was driven by a strong desire to employ the revolutionary powers of art in Nigeria's pre-colonial societies for the good of the modern state. This is what resulted in, and inspired his formation of the avant-garde *Zaria Art Society*. By establishing the *Zaria Art Society*, to propagate the manifesto of *Natural Synthesis*, Okeke institutionalised cultural revivalism advocacies in Nigerian college systems and institutions of higher learning, as the contextual and stylistic paradigm of a re-invented modern Nigerian art. Okeke's *Natural Synthesis* ideologies were highly anti-European, leading to the Society's revolt against the then institutional policy to mimic Western European art and aesthetic

conventions throughout Nigerian schools and colleges. He believed that in revolting and overturning the Europeanised curriculum at the college, a platform for modern change would be established, that will instigate the promotion of indigenous culture to facilitate nationalism. As argued in this thesis, by pursuing this cultural renaissance activism, Okeke fostered the anti-colonial propaganda of the second phase of Nigerian Modernism, thus expressing the unique cultural avant-gardism peculiar to Nigeria at the time. According to John Picton (2006),

For Uche Okeke and his companions it was time to move on, by demonstrating that a uniquely Nigerian modernism was possible by drawing upon the wider fields and forms of its artistic inheritance...In other words, emphasizing one's ethnicity, as Okeke and several politicians before him did, reflects a dual gesture at securing one's cultural base and asserting one's claim to the sovereign nation-state (Picton 2006: 37).

Nationalist political activism espoused cultural affirmation as a political strategy to rebuild Nigerian culture disrupted by the imperial West. As a nationalist himself, Okeke's modernist art and its elated recourse to a still putative and emerging intercultural consciousness, interrogated Nigeria's encounter with the West in varying logics of politics, arts and culture (Okeke-Agulu 2010: 524). By modernising Igbo *Uli* and traditional Nigerian art forms through selective appropriation and hybridizing such indigenous influences with Western stylistic conventions, Okeke's *Natural Synthesis* institutionalized counter-aestheticism in Nigeria that proselytised cultural renaissance thereby promoting Nigerian image, art and culture at large. Thematically, stylistically, methodologically and contextually his modern art constituted a well-defined avant-garde approach and form, opposed to Western aesthetic conventions and culture.

Okeke's avant-gardism differs from that of Enwonwu by his emphasis on interculturalism to foster the battle for cultural decolonisation and reconstruction of the postcolonial Nigerian self-hood. Interculturalism was upheld in Pan-African propaganda as a strategy to foster unity and a unified affront

against colonial onslaught; influenced by this Pan-African creed, Okeke's *Natural Synthesis* manifesto, instigated interculturalism in modern Nigerian art and society to facilitate decolonization. This is because he was aware that Interculturalism as both philosophy and aesthetics, promotes cultural inclusiveness, which is necessary for nation building (Chin 1989: 166), and provides "a progressive model as a conceptual and policy framework which underpins cohesive communities" (Cantle 2012: 17). Okeke's propagation of the ideals of interculturalism was impelled by the fact that varying colonial administrations had inculcated Western philosophy of 'Otherness' in Nigeria, formulating a rather divisive concept of difference amongst the different ethnic groups and protectorates through their imposed system of governance. The 'Otherness' colonialism invented in Nigeria at the time, resulted in skirmishes between the North, South, West and Eastern regions of the country, which favoured the colonial project (and its destructive philosophy/strategy of divide and rule) as it dismantled all forms of unified opposition to imperial authority. This ideology of difference caused severe tensions and constituted a stumbling block in the battle against colonialism hence the clamour by intellectuals, nationalist politicians and modernist to eradicate such ethnic and cultural differences. By promoting cultural revivalism through the appropriation of traditional visual idioms from different ethnic groups in order to cross out ethnic boundaries/differences as the main objective of the *Zaria Art Society*, Okeke through art, started that process of interculturalism in Nigeria which began breaking down ethnic barriers, thus fostering the nationalist call for unity in diversity in order to undo colonial rule.

Okeke's aggressive cultural renaissance avant-gardism, which appropriated, contextualised and modernised traditional artistic forms considered primitive by the West, rejected the paradoxical self-acclaimed superiority of western art and culture over 'Other' cultures. Like politicians of the period, he contributed to the battle against the branding of Africans as inferior primitives. This he achieved

through his promotion of African culture as a statement of self-pride and claim to equality. As Picton (2006) succinctly opines, cultural revivalism constitute a form of political activism propagating the clamour for sovereignty as well as the maintenance of a nation's cultural roots, heritage and identity, which underpins the fact that, in modernising Igbo *Uli* and other traditional art forms, Okeke as an avant-garde, contributed to nationalist political advocacies especially the rejection and revolt against inferiority and primitivism projected on the colonised African 'Other'. The conscious subverting of Western conventions in works such as *The Edge of the Virgin Forest 1961*, *Agwoi 1960*, *Primeval Forest 1960*, etc., (figures 6.11 – 6.14) defined by stylized abstractionism, capture Okeke's re-contextualisation of the traditional in modern art as a form of cultural affirmation to dismantle European domination in Africa. In these works, the artist interprets realism in portraiture and landscape paintings through *Uli* lines according such pieces a modern quality that is however, still defined by the minimalism associated with *Uli* aesthetics. The masterful deployment of elements borrowed from diverse ethnic groups in Nigeria, and manipulation of colours, expresses a symbolic reflection of the interculturalism propagated in Pan-Nigerian battle against the divisive *Otherness* created within Nigeria by the imperial West. This study thus asserts that, in choosing to re-contextualize traditional folklores and *Uli* graphic system that underlie and sustain the cosmology and myths of his people, and in deploying such forms as the visual idiom of his modernist art, Okeke revived traditional visual culture, according them new meanings and unique places in modern society, thus, contributing to the reconstruction of Nigeria and overturning of imperial cultural hegemony/imperialism. In doing so, Okeke subverted colonial authorities' insistence on mimesis of Western art/cultural values in Nigeria as the universal superior model for art creation and expressionism, which 'Other' cultures must adopt.

b) Okeke Fostered Nigerian Nationalism and Independence Political Advocacies

Nigeria needs a virile school of art with new philosophy of the new age...Whether our African writers call the new realization *Negritude*, or our politicians talk about the African Personality, they both stand for the awareness and yearning for freedom of black people all over the world. Contemporary Nigerian artists should champion the cause of this movement (Okeke 1958: 2).

Okeke's modernist art as encapsulated in his manifesto, was rooted in cultural politics and expressed avant-garde aspirations, which advanced nationalist clamour for decolonization and autonomy. The 1950s and 1960s was the age of emancipation in Africa with nationalism at its crescendo and artist in their various countries contributed to that African political revolution in varying ways, as was the case with Okeke in Nigeria. *Nationalism* and *Pan-Africanism* espoused the doctrines of self-pride and promotion of African culture to facilitate emancipation from Imperial domination and liberation from Western derogatory socio-cultural and philosophical ideologies; Okeke tapped into this nationalist call and tailored his art appropriately for national interest.

Okeke's *Natural Synthesis*, which derived from and expressed anti-colonial and anti-European sentiments, fostered these Pan-Nigerian aspirations in varying ways and levels through his rejection and subversion of imposed European supposed 'superior' conventions on Nigeria. Okeke (2007) maintained that, fostering Nigeria's nationalism politics was the nucleus of his art practice and the rationale behind the formation of the *Zaria Art Society*,

The formation of the *Zaria Art Society* emerged out of the political ferment and desire for self-rule and national independence...the formation of the society was engendered by the nationalism political movement...we doubted that there must be a monolithic approach to engaging what was aesthetically good, and disliked the imposition of western European ideas on Nigerians... (Okeke cited in Clarke 2007: 143-153).

The crux of nationalist political activism in Nigeria at the time was the rejection of Western authority and cultural imposition as a superior mainstream civilization, as this was the main strategy adopted by imperialist to facilitate colonisation of 'Other' cultures (Said 1978). It is this Nationalist political agitation for decolonization by revolting against European imposition, which inspired *Natural Synthesis* as an avant-garde counter-aesthetics adopted by Okeke and the *Zarianist* to propagate cultural/political activism. By abandoning the Western oriented art curriculum enthroned at the Zaria College in order to explore African art and culture, Okeke and the *Zarianists* revolutionised their art, radicalised their forms and indigenised their themes; and this portrayal of *Nigerianism* in modern art opposed European distortions of Nigerian and African arts, thus affirming their anti-colonial and anti-European sentiments. In like manner, by appropriating and modernising Nigerian traditional art forms, Okeke rejected all appeals to Eurocentric aesthetic constructs and supposed superiority over 'Other' cultures. Okeke affirmed that, he "was naturally conscripted into the invisible army of nationalistic revolution that was targeted at a non-physical war against colonisation" (Okeke cited in Oloidi 2012: 17); thus, by flaunting African self-pride, self-expression through cultural renaissance and anti-Europeanization propaganda, his art became an avant-garde tool in Nigeria and Africa's fight for freedom from enslavement to foreign culture.

It is apparent therefore that, driven by such modernist and political sentiments, Okeke's invention of *Natural Synthesis* was aimed at galvanizing widespread cultural renaissance across Nigeria and the African continent and this had political implications that contributed immensely to Nigerian modernity. He posited that his anti-European art served to "stop the promotion of European art tradition which was fast destroying the Nigerian aesthetic appeal, culture and art appreciation" (Okeke 2011: 5). By conscious and ideological designs the concept of *Natural Synthesis* became a political mechanism in consonance with the political aspirations of nationalism that contributed to fostering pan-Nigerian consciousness and facilitated decolonisation in Nigeria (Pissarra 2013).

Nigerian nationalist movement like elsewhere in Africa equally advanced the argument for devising a new cultural identity for emergent modern states and reconstruction of traditional social structures, an aspiration that Okeke captured in his modern art. Driven by the political consciousness of the decade Okeke's formulated avant-garde ideology of *Natural Synthesis* constituted a conceptual framework with which he interrogated the academic art status quo, subverted and subsumed its parameters, and re-contextualized indigenous visual culture to create a new art and new visual identity for the emergent modern Nigerian state reflective of the conditions of modernity and cultural hybridity. Okeke's rejection of Western academic art conventions imposed on Nigerians, whilst it challenged the art curricula, created a unique common Afrocentric ideology and new culture-oriented art form that positions Okeke as one of the vanguards of Nigerian Modernism (Ikwemesi 2010). In varying degrees, Okeke's works exhibited the unique qualities that had come to characterise art during the 1950s - the juxtaposition of African and Western creative conventions albeit tailored towards promotion of Nigerian culture. Okeke's piece titled '*Wild Joy 1959*', captures this sense of pre-independence cultural promotion; the piece reflects the celebration of Nigerian culture, pride and identity, through the artist's

modernization of *Uli* graphic system as the new modernist visual language, and new Afrocentric identity for Nigerian art and culture.

This study thus submits that, Okeke contributed to devising a new modern Nigerian identity that reflected and promulgated the ideals of autonomy and Nigerian-self pride through the vigorous exploration of traditional forms and its contextualization into modern arts. Since Okeke's *Natural Synthesis* manifesto advocated the projection of Nigeria's multi-cultural traditions to the outside world (Chukwueggu 2011), his modernist art was pivotal in fostering Nigeria's political advocacies for unity, and aspirations of decolonisation, nationalism and self-rule through the celebration of cultural pride and affirmation of indigenous cultural forms as avant-garde aesthetics and identity of the new age.

c) Deployment of *Natural Synthesis* and *Cultural Renaissance* to Define the Conceptual Framework for Postcolonial Modernism in Nigerian Art.

Our great devotion to the study of African art idioms and art forms have opened up new worlds of thought to us all...art should be based on our past, present and possibly on our future ways of life in the country. In all, we are fully aware of our responsibilities as Nigerian artists. We know that art is a fallow field in the country and one that has unfortunately suffered from the hands of the short-sighted schemers of our inadequate educational system. The unfortunate position into which we are thrown, calls for hard work, the dedication of our very being to champion the cause of art in Nigeria and indeed Africa (Okeke 1959, 1982: 1).

Nigerian art, culture and identity suffered adversely from colonial policies and missionary propaganda as elucidated in Chapter Two; thus one pivotal

preoccupation of Nigerian modernist was the reconstruction of a modern art language and identity for the emergent new state. In the extract above from his second manifesto 1959, Okeke reiterated the need for renegotiating the role of arts in modern and postcolonial Nigeria, which had been relegated to the background by colonial and imperial anti-art propaganda. Okeke envisaged a future for the arts as one that will benefit from a solid conceptual framework rooted in a modern African consciousness and as an artist inspired by nationalism, Okeke and many of the artists of his age took this responsibility on their shoulders. This desire to re-contextualize the position of art in modern and Nigeria's postcolonial future became vital in Okeke's avant-gardism from 1960. While Okeke's modernist art engaged with Nigeria's pre-independence artistic activism, the historical context, during which his art flourished, was vital in projecting into the future of post-independent Nigeria. Okeke believed that art should be central to the postcolonial state hence his proselytization of anti-Europeanism and cultural renaissance ideologies. As he pointed out, the need for the formulation of a new art philosophy and a new cultural identity for the emerging independent state was eminent and *Natural Synthesis* became an ideological framework upon which the new art idiom/cultural identity for postcolonial Nigeria could be based. In this sense, Okeke's *Natural Synthesis* established the template and parameters for postcolonial Nigerian modernism.⁸²

Through the concept of *Natural Synthesis*, Okeke established a conceptual/ideological framework for postcolonial Nigerian art that will continue fostering the ideals of autonomy, and self-expression beyond their current age.

⁸² "Postcolonial Modernism refers to a set of formal and critical attitudes adopted by African and black artists at the dawn of political independence as a countermeasure against the threat of loss of self in the maelstrom unleashed by Western cultural imperialism and its enduring aftermath. That is to say, it is manifest as a variegated aesthetic in which formal elements, technical procedures, and conceptual modes derived from African, Arab, and Western art and cultures are complexly combined, depending on the individual artist's perspective on the meaning of postcolonial artistic identity". See Okeke-Agulu, C. (2010) 'The Art Society and the Making of Postcolonial Modernism in Nigeria', *South Atlantic Quarterly*, 109 (3), p.522-523.

His advocacy for creative hybridization of African and European Western culture/aesthetics, of the old and new, to facilitate the modernisation of indigenous cultural forms as a statement of pride, renaissance and cultural affirmation, laid the foundation for what was to become a postcolonial Nigerian art paradigm rooted in the nation's cultural/political aspirations. Designed to further strengthen and promote Nigeria's independence, "*Natural Synthesis* constituted a new artistic canon for the newly independent nation" (Okeke-Agulu 2010: 520); it defined the formalism of modern art from the 1960s and till date, Nigerian art is still framed in these conceptual/stylistic paradigm. As a visionary avant-garde, Okeke is celebrated as Nigeria's most influential modernist in view of the time-lag effect of his ideas on postcolonial art. *Natural Synthesis* postulated the hybridisation of cultural and aesthetic influences from varying cultures, thus it defined a new kind of postcolonial art formalism in which the excesses of Western culture/aesthetics were repudiated while selected features are carefully appropriated and juxtaposed with indigenous forms to express and capture cultural hybridity which had come to characterise the modern Nigerian state. As Okeke (1958) opined,

Our new society calls for a synthesis of old and new, of functional art and art for its own sake...it is equally futile copying our old art heritage, for they stand for our old order. Culture lives by change. Today's social problems are different from yesterdays, and we shall be doing great disservice to Africa and mankind by living in our father's achievements (Okeke 1958: 2).

Okeke pointed out that a synthesis was needed, a juxtaposition of the new and old, African and European for creating the new art; he reckoned such admixture will lead to a new cultural identity that will encapsulate independent and postcolonial Nigeria as a country that maintained its cultural values but equally embraced modern civilisation. According to Krydz Ikwuemesi (2010), through his

rejection of Western art curriculum, and creation of a new art structured in indigenous forms, Okeke instigated a common Afrocentric ideology and modern art language which became the vanguard of Nigerian modernism leading to the post-independent era (Ikwemesi 2010). By aligning his vision of a new art with important anti-colonial ideas fostered in nationalism politics as well as the visionary projection into Nigeria's post-colonial future, Okeke "defined and affirmed a new modern art form in the soon-to-be-independent colony as a form of political practice within the discursive terrain of postcolonial national culture; thus, Okeke defined the formal/conceptual framework and parameters of postcolonial art and identity in Nigeria and Africa" (Okeke-Agulu 2010: 506). As well as constituting a modernist avant-garde doctrine, *Natural Synthesis* served postcolonial aspirations, establishing both theoretically and artistically, the future of postcolonial art, which was motivated by the desire to define and image the postcolonial self. Thus, through his cultural renaissance and affirmation art and advocacies defined by the selective appropriation of Nigerian and Western forms in order to encapsulate Nigeria's post-independence culture/civilization, Okeke contributed to defining postcolonial art, culture and identity.

Besides imaging the postcolonial self and identity, Okeke's avant-gardism was equally characterised by his battle to revolutionize the role of arts and artists in postcolonial Nigeria. He was perturbed by the fact that as a result of imperial anti-art propaganda and the overarching imposition of western culture on Nigeria, the role of arts/artist was relegated to the background and problematically construed as superfluous to Nigerian modernisation. Okeke's resistance art was thus, aimed also at correcting this misconstrued conception and to reposition the artist at the centre of modern/postcolonial Nigerian civilization just like artists were in pre-colonial Nigeria. According to Chukueggu (2010), "besides the issue of Western imposition, Okeke remarked that his avant-garde activism was also prompted by the fact that art was not given its proper

place as an important aspect of our national identity he thus pursued the expediency of giving the art profession its proper place in the national polity” (Chukueggu 2010: 97). This thesis establishes therefore that, Okeke’s rejection of the superiority tag ascribed to Western art was a revolt against Western disdain towards Nigerian art and artists occasioned by missionary and imperial anti-art, anti-traditional propaganda. Thus, Okeke’s propagation of the ideals of cultural renaissance and clamour for the reintegration of art in Nigeria politics became a battle against the colonial status quo in order to create a new platform for the engagement of art and artists in postcolonial society. Okeke was more concerned that European art and tradition was enthroned in Nigeria as a superior culture/civilization to that of Nigeria during colonial rule and that those misconceptions would continue to advance the rot of Nigerian culture, demotion of Nigerian arts and the exclusion of artists from the affairs of the modernising state after the attainment of independence. The artist “felt that at the national levels, European art tradition was given too much prominence and might be super-imposed eventually as a national art culture if not resisted” (Chukueggu 2011: 98). In view of this, the concept of *Natural Synthesis* and the anti-Europeanization avant-gardism it proselytised became a political mechanism employed by Okeke to renegotiate the position of art in society as well as the role of modern artists in Nigerian politics as the nation ventured into postcolonial nationhood. Okeke (2001) opined that his avant-gardism was aimed,

To attract the attention of the federal government to give art a proper national reckoning...To push for a proper cultural policy by the government based on Nigerian cultural heritage...to stop the promotion of European art tradition which was fast destroying the Nigerian aesthetic appeal and art appreciation...to ensure that members of the art movement were involved in the formation of cultural policies and programmes in post-independent Nigeria... (Okeke 2001: 109).

It is thus argued in this study that by championing this course during the late 1950s/early 1960s, Okeke began inscribing on Nigerian society the template for

the integration of arts in politics, nation building and postcolonial modernity. Furthermore, following the establishment of more art departments in various Nigerian universities and colleges, Okeke's modernist ideologies were inscribed in school systems, thus establishing his philosophies, practice and style, theoretically and practically as the mainstay of postcolonial art ethos and identity; Okeke alongside the *Zarianist* are thus directly responsible for the formalism and philosophies of postcolonial Nigerian art.

6.6 Conclusion

The crescendo of the second phase of Nigerian Modernism during which Okeke's art flourished, coincided with Nigerian independence and his art contributed to cultural decolonization and Nigerian modernity. Okeke's art advanced the ideologies of Murray and Enwonwu that promulgated cultural revivalism and anti-Europeanization as creative mechanism to foster nationalism. This chapter established that the artist's avant-gardism is located in his cultural renaissance art, which he aligned with the political ideals of Pan-Nigerian Nationalism; his *Natural Synthesis* Ideology contributed to the dismantling of colonial authority and promoted Nigeria's quest for autonomy on the one hand and on the other, enabled the formulation of a new cultural identity for Nigeria. *Natural Synthesis* was thus, an avant-garde ideology motivated by nationalist political consciousness to abate colonial rot; Okeke's re-contextualisation of traditional visual forms in modern art reflected a conscious revolt, rejection and resistance to Western supposed aesthetic/cultural superiority over the colonised '*Other*'. Through *Natural Synthesis* therefore, Okeke successfully devised a modernist framework that promoted Nigerian self-hood, pride and independent aspiration.

This chapter further established that, Okeke's modernist ideologies exacted an influential time-lag effect on postcolonial Nigerian art-space as it defined the theoretical and conceptual framework for postcolonial Nigerian art/modernism.

Through *Natural Synthesis*, the artist renegotiated the role of art and artists in postcolonial Nigeria. As a creative convention *Natural Synthesis* conceived by Okeke and located within the cultural and political ambits of postcolonial Nigeria was designed to signal Nigeria's modernity, cultural interplay/renaissance, self-expression and autonomy. This conceptual and ideological paradigm Okeke instigated, defined modern art from the late 1950s and continued through 1970s after the Civil War, as *Natural Synthesis* became institutionalized throughout Nigeria's creative landscape as the new aesthetic ethos from his base at the University of Nigeria Nsukka.

Conclusively, findings from this study strongly indicate that Okeke's modernist art advanced the ideals of cultural revivalism central to the manifestos of the second phase of Nigerian Modernism, and as one of Nigeria's influential avant-gardes, Okeke revolutionised Nigerian art far more than any other artist of his period and style, influencing art practice from the late 1950s to this contemporary age. In advancing the ideologies of aggressive cultural renaissance and interculturalism, Okeke's avant-gardism is located which sits at the heart of the phenomenon of Nigerian modernism (Picton 2006). The next chapter will explore the stylistic and conceptual frameworks of the Found Object in postcolonial Nigeria art, and reflect on the context of my personal practice to establish the cultural ramifications and peculiarities of the Found Object in European and African art, as the second key contribution of this research to contemporary knowledge.

Chapter Six Figures



Figure 6.1: Uche Okeke Onalu 1959 Ink on Paper (Source: Skoto Gallery 2015). This piece exhibits Okeke's adaptation of Igbo Uli traditional graphic systems as leitmotif for his resistance art. It also draws upon the minimalism of traditional African body and wall painting adapted for the artist's rejection of European conventionality.



Figure 6.2: Uche Okeke Head of a Girl 1959 Charcoal on Paper (Source: Skoto Gallery 2015). This piece exhibits Okeke's adaptation of Igbo Uli traditional graphic systems as leitmotif for his resistance art. It draws upon the minimalism of traditional African body and wall painting to create a new avant-garde visual idiom to subvert European conventionality.



Figure 6.3: Uche Okeke Uko The Warrior 1959 (Source: Skoto Gallery 2015). Reflect Okeke's trenchant modernization of Uli art as new modern visual idiom to foster the revival of Nigerian culture and identity and advance the battle for imperial cultural decolonization.



Figure 6.4: Uche Okeke *The Beast Omalido 1958* (Source: Skoto Gallery 2015). Reflect Okeke's trenchant modernization of Uli art in modern creative expression to advance the battle for cultural decolonization.

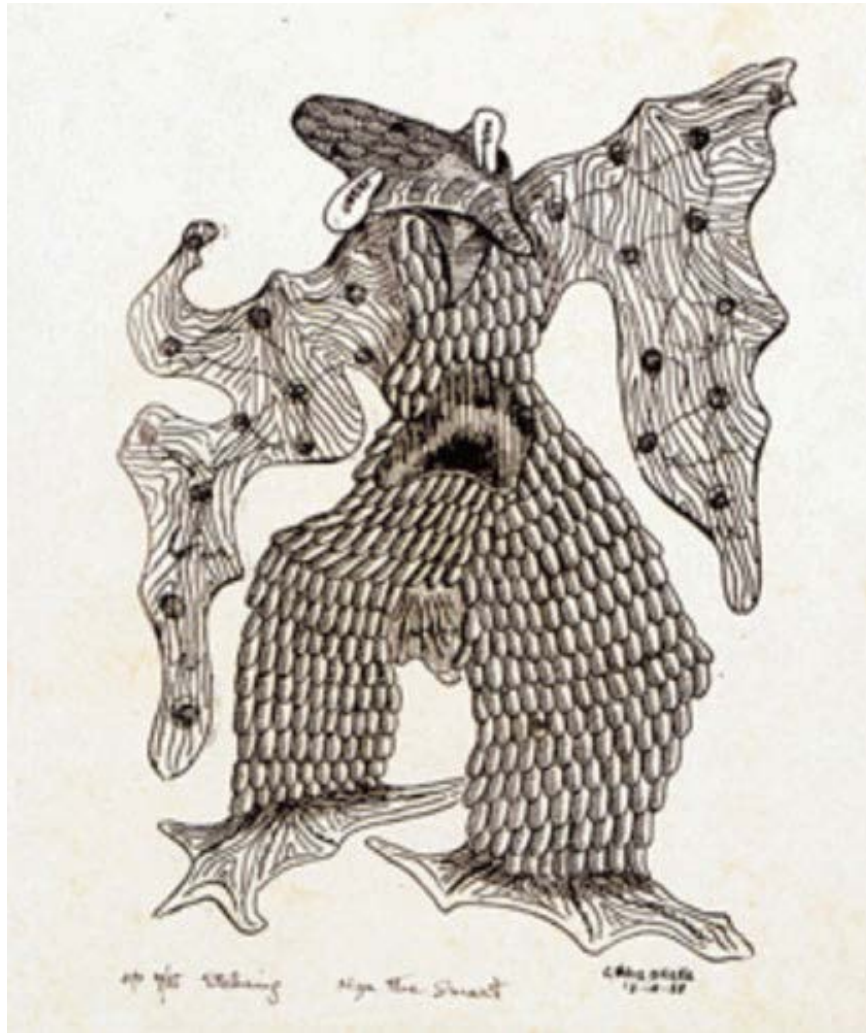


Figure 6.5: Uche Okeke Nza The Smart 1958 (Source: Skoto Gallery 2015). Also captures Okeke's trenchant modernization of Uli art in modern Nigerian art-space to revive Nigerian culture and foster cultural decolonization.



Figure 6.6: Uche Okeke Illustration in Things Fall Apart 1958 (Source: Skoto Gallery 2015). Exhibits fusion of two visual languages – realism and abstractionism, as well as elements of mundane and cosmic realities to create a distinct stylization that define the visual configuration of his modern art.



Figure 6.7: Uche Okeke *Oja Suit, Monster* 1962 (Source: Skoto Gallery 2015). Exhibits a fusion of two visual languages, elements of mundane and cosmic realities, as well as fusion of human and environmental forms in Okeke's ethos of modernising indigenous cultural roots to foster imperial cultural decolonization.

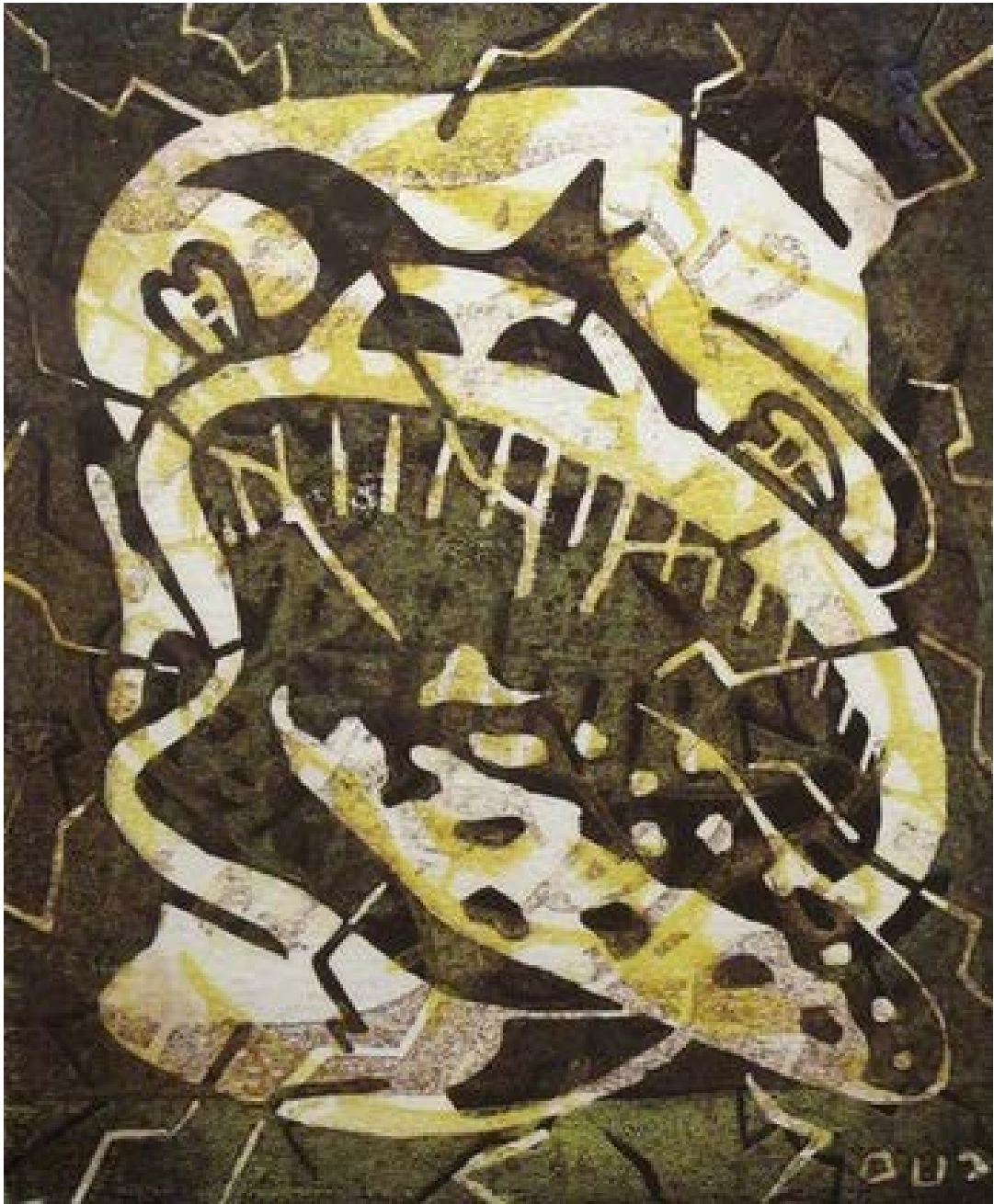


Figure 6.8: Uche Okeke *Wild Joy* 1958 (Source: Skoto Gallery 2015). Also exhibits fusion of two visual languages, elements of mundane and cosmic realities, as well as human and environmental forms in line with Okeke's cultural revivalism advocacies tailored to dismantle European cultural and aesthetic imposition in Nigeria.



Figure 6.9: Uche Okeke Okpaladike and his *Obu* 1961 (Source: Skoto Gallery 2015). This piece equally exhibits fusion of elements of mundane and cosmic realities, as well as human and environmental forms in Okeke's modernisation of indigenous culture to advance the battle for cultural decolonization.



Figure 6.10: Uche Okeke Ana Mmuo 1961 (Source: Skoto Gallery 2015). Captures the development of a new hybrid aesthetic language by modernising Uli idioms in modern Nigerian art antithetical to institutionalized realism in order to overturn European aesthetic imposition in Nigerian schools.



Figure 6.11: Uche Okeke *Oja Suit, The Edge of the Virgin forest* 1962 (Source: Skoto Gallery 2015). Captures Okeke's appropriation and re-contextualisation of the traditional (supposed primitive) in modern art as a form of cultural affirmation.



Figure 6.12: Uche Okeke Agwoi 1960 (Source: Skoto Gallery 2015). Captures Okeke's appropriation and re-contextualisation of the traditional (supposed primitive) in modern art as a form of cultural affirmation and anti-imperial propaganda.



Figure 6.13: Uche Okeke *Primeval Forest* 1962 (Source: Skoto Gallery 2015). This piece captures Okeke's symbolic visualisation of the political condition of Nigeria pre/post-independence Euphoria.



Figure 6.14: Uche Okeke *Fabled Brute*, 1959, etching, ed. 8 of 15, 10x7.5 inches. (Source: Skoto Gallery 2015). Captures Okeke's appropriation and re-contextualisation of the traditional in modern art as a form of cultural affirmation and resistance to imperial cultural domination.

CHAPTER 7: CULTURAL RAMIFICATIONS OF THE FOUND OBJECT IN EUROPEAN AND AFRICAN ART

7.1 Introduction

Chapter one provided an overview of the genre of Found Object in Western art, and highlighted the construed dismissal of this genre from *'Other'* cultures as mimesis of European avant-garde art. This thesis contests the problematic Eurocentric construction of the Found Object Fine Art discourse in Western art history, by employing a rather localised cultural reading of Found Object appropriation in Nigerian context. The point of departure in establishing the cultural ramifications and distinctiveness of the Found Object in artistic expression has been foregrounded in Chapter Two by discussing its unique cultural context in pre-colonial Nigerian art as a product of traditional philosophies inscribed in mundane objects to facilitate traditional religion and social values. This pre-modern context dating back to over 5000bc, informed the submission in this study that, Found Object in Nigerian art predates its European invention during Modernism, hence indicating the existence of cultural and contextual differences which this chapter will validate further.

The appropriation of objects from popular culture in art production, dominates postcolonial Nigerian art-space as many contemporary artists turn to discarded forms as their preferred visual idiom for artistic expression driven by specific and subjective artistic/ideological reasons. This genre of contemporary Nigerian/African art is problematically theorized as time-lag manifestation of

European avant-garde art (Akpang 2013), but this chapter will demonstrate that the re-emergence of the Found Object in postcolonial Nigeria/Africa instigated by El Anatsui's material/conceptual exploration, exist in a cultural context that differ remarkably from that of Europe and America. Anatsui's appropriation of discarded objects in his art practice, led to the re-emergence of this genre in postcolonial Nigeria after its absence during the period of Nigerian Modernism; however, his works alongside other contemporary African artists are often contextualised by European scholars as global *Recycle Art* and an extension of Twentieth Century avant-garde art in contemporary society. This construed theorisation of postcolonial Nigerian Found Object genre as mimesis of Western avant-garde art reveals the ambiguity in Found Object discourse, because the invention of this postcolonial art genre in Nigeria happened on an independent level without encounter with European modernists (Aniakor 2013). This attempted absorption of some postcolonial Nigerian/African artists who transform found object into art, into European mainstream indicates a selective system of acceptance that is misleading and stifles understanding of the dynamism of this genre of art. Sunanda Sanyal (2014) questions this selective acclaim of some African artists by the West as a reflection of the politics of inclusion in European hegemonic framework of multiculturalism designed to disregard the cultural peculiarities and complexities of this genre.⁸³ This selective inclusion and exclusion of the 'Other' in Found Object discourse is aimed at blurring out cultural differences in order to maintain European aesthetic and cultural hegemony. This thesis contests the framing of Found Object genres from all cultures into a unified mainstream discourse as it impedes understanding of the cultural ramifications, contexts and peculiarities of this art genre. Employing postcolonial analytical tools and comparative analysis, this chapter will analyse

⁸³ "The selective reception of Anatsui as a 'global' artist has a hegemonic agenda. It is grounded in the politics of inclusion, which uses multiculturalism as an excuse to uncritically include Anatsui in the genealogy of modern Western art. By equating the notion of 'global' with the older rhetoric of 'universal', the critics ignore the unevenness of global exchanges; and by treating 'local' as largely irrelevant, they trivialize the question of difference, which is crucial to gaining insight into the complexities of temporality and spatiality in the discourse of contemporary art" see Sanyal, S. K. (2014) 'Critiquing the Critique: El Anatsui and the Politics of Inclusion', *World Art*, 4 (1), 89-108. Pp 89.

Found Object in postcolonial (contemporary) Nigerian art and proceed to synthesize this with the established pre-modern and modern contexts, to establish the separateness of the Found Object in European and African art creation respectively.

Section 6.2 will explore the conceptual and creative context of the Found Object in Postcolonial Nigerian art, its origin and political/social imperatives in contemporary Nigeria and Africa will be fully examined. References will be made to the works of El Anatsui, Nnenna Okorie, Olu Amoda, Delumprizulike, Bright Ugochukwu Eke, and Taiye Idahor. The chapter will proceed to explore my personal practice, examining my appropriation of discarded objects in art as visual idiom for social commentary in 6.3. Section 6.4 will explore the dissimilarities of the Found Object in European and Nigerian/African arts, and draw upon its conceptual/ideological differences to establish the cultural ramifications and peculiarities of this art genre. The chapter concludes with emphasis on the cultural separateness of the Found Object in art, arguing for the re-construction of its discourse in European and African art histories/discourses.

7.2 Found Object in Postcolonial Nigerian Art: Context, Origin and Framework

During the period of Nigerian Modernism 1900 - 1960, as established in Chapter Three, Found Object did not occur in modern art practice, only resurfacing in postcolonial Nigeria in the early 1990s. Its postcolonial re-emergence is credited to El Anatsui who through his conceptual/material exploration developed a technique of assemblage working with shattered clay, discarded wood and Found Objects, hence giving rise to this genre in postcolonial Nigeria. Anatsui encountered piles of discarded liquor bottle-caps on his material scavenging at Nnsukka, and using his newfound creative methodology of assemblage, experimented with them in his works to express his views on modern African

conditions, thus sparking radical material experimentation in Nigeria (Cotter 2013, Binder 2010). Anatsui's appropriation of waste and found object, inspired by the ideology of *Ulism* fostered by Chike Aniakor and cultural revivalism ideologies of the Nnsukka school established by Uche Okeke, informed the conceptual/contextual framework that defined the formalism of Found Object genre in postcolonial Nigeria; Anatsui is thus, the founder of this art convention in postcolonial/contemporary Africa at large (Reintjes 2009).

Anatsui's invention of this art genre was inspired by the piles of discarded objects he encountered, which reminded him of the issue of rising waste in Nigerian cities and this problem energised and inspired the artist's appropriation of discarded objects to interrogate the destruction of Nigeria/Africa with waste generated from the West, thereby informing the new context of this genre in postcolonial Nigeria. Found Object appropriation for art expressionism by many Nigerian and African artists now derives from this identified context, with discarded objects constituting visual metaphors drawn upon by postcolonial artists to induce art of the highest order in their interrogation of contemporary societal conditions (Binder 2006, Whiteley 2010, Swigert-Gacheru 2011, Odiboh 2013). These objects are manipulated with preconceived themes and subject matter influenced by the adverse conditions of their societies and directed to convey the artists' reactions to such societal problems. Unlike in European modernist context were avant-gardes contextualised manufactured objects as art often un-manipulated or without any artistic intervention, for postcolonial Nigerian artists, discarded objects are not passed as art but employed as materials that lead to the actualisation of preconceived ideas/concepts in visual form. Indiscriminate dumping of waste in Nigeria as a result of globalisation and its adversities, furnishes postcolonial Nigerian artists with ideal forms to interrogate socio-political issues in order to instigate societal transformation. European global influences on third world countries, the problematic legacies of colonialism especially materialism, hyper consumerism which accounts for the

rapid proliferation of waste in Nigerian/African cities, as well as its impact on contemporary society, constitutes the problematic which informs and defines the appropriation of the Found Object in postcolonial/contemporary Nigerian/African art.

The postcolonial context of the Found Object instigated by Anatsui's practice, can thus be defined as one in which objects from popular culture are appropriated and manipulated in art, driven by cultural sentiments and societal concerns to critique and comment on Western neo-imperialist domination of Africa, the plight of Africans in modern society and the socio-political adversities instigated by colonial ideologies upon which governance in most African nations are structured. This indicates a culture-specific context of found object appropriation in postcolonial art, which is completely ignored in Western Eurocentric art history;⁸⁴ the next section explores this Nigerian-specific cultural context and political imperatives/ramifications of Found Object appropriation in postcolonial art.

7.2.1 Political Imperatives/Cultural Ramifications of the Found Object in Postcolonial Nigerian Art

The postcolonial re-emergence of the Found Object in Nigerian art draws upon the subversive power of art to interrogate societal problems and challenge the legacies of colonialism through radical formalism. Different artists address different issues of preference pertinent to the Nigerian state using discarded objects and driven by specific artistic/ideological reasons and what is referred to in this thesis as the postcolonial conceptualism of the Found Object in art. This

⁸⁴ With the arrival of modernism there is the tendency to assume that the 'Other' is a subject of encounter; that Africa is a subject of the encounter not the other way round...even most contemporary African scholars have toed European view on Africa problematically absorbing African practices and products into European mainstream and thinking process in order to gain prominence and recognition from the West in doing so, they have become contained speaking the language of the West with a problematic view on their homeland (Aniakor 2013).

study identifies two political imperatives fostered through object appropriation and manipulation in postcolonial Nigerian/African art: a) to challenge Colonial Legacies / Neo-colonialism⁸⁵ and b) for socio-political commentary on adversities in contemporary Africa.

a) Interrogation of Colonial Legacies and Neo-colonialism

In the detritus forms of discarded objects, postcolonial Nigerian artists from the 1990s found the appropriate visual metaphors with which to interrogate the legacies of colonialism and neo-colonialism. Although colonialism ended in the 1960s, its adverse effects still manifest in contemporary Nigeria/Africa and artists through the manipulation of discarded objects, interrogate the social, economic, political, and cultural problematic it has given rise to (Ajibade 2013, Okore 2013). Colonialism left Nigeria in a state of confusion, fragmentation, and uncertainty with its destruction of traditional structures, and forceful amalgamation of northern and southern Nigeria, which stirred ethnic distrust, hate, sentimentalism and discrimination that resulted in the Nigerian civil war of 1967 (Atofarati 1992). The most adverse effect of colonialism was the transformation of the colonized into dependent beings with total reliance on the West - a problematic orientation that still manifest in contemporary Nigeria/Africa. Various artists discussed in this chapter have dedicated their practices to interrogating these legacies of colonialism and impact of neo-colonialism using discarded objects the physical products of Western overbearing economic and political influence on Third World countries.

El Anatsui's early appropriation of Found Object in art was inspired by the

⁸⁵ Neo-colonialism is still a big problem for Africa. It is an extension of imperialism in former colonies by world powers that exercise economic and even political control over their former territories...the result of neo-colonialism is that foreign capital is used for the exploitation rather than for the development of the less developed parts of the world. Investment under neo-colonialism increases rather than decreases the gap between the rich and the poor countries of the world. They control the political, economic and social existence of former colonies from a distance by influencing their governments and exploiting their resources.

conditions of fragmentation, uncertainty, confusion, cultural clash etc., of post-independence West Africa deformed by colonial brutality. Subsequently, Anatsui's works became fierce, agitated responses to his displacement, the fragmentation of African societies/culture and reflection of disillusioning times in post-colonial Africa (Cotter 2013). His works as he comments emerged from this particular African situations, which defined its formalism (Anatsui 2002); he therefore tailored his works to "engage the cultural, social and economic histories of West Africa...to provide commentary on globalization, consumerism, waste and the transience of people's lives in West Africa and beyond" (Binder 2010: 59). He interrogates colonial legacies in modern Africa and makes connections between waste, consumerism and neo-colonialism, which are the fastest growing problems of the African continent. Imperial conditioning of former colonies to depend on the West is responsible for the new culture of hyper consumerism of Western products, which has resulted in Africa becoming the dumping ground of European and American waste,⁸⁶ hence, Anatsui for the past two decades through appropriation of discarded objects, has dedicated efforts calling for redress of this rising issue in contemporary Africa.

His works such as *Earth's Skin* 2007, *Man's Cloth* 1998 - 2001, *Peak Project* 1999 etc., (figures 7.1 – 7.3) are installations of appropriated aluminum, copper wires, liquor bottle tops, discarded metal sheets etc., which besides their visual appeal, are coded with deep political statements on the social/political conditions/adversities of Africa. Through these works, Anatsui draws attention to the damaging impact of hyper consumerism on Nigerian society, culture and development. In *Peak Project 1999*, Anatsui challenges Africa's dependence on the West and how over consumerism has and is transforming the continent into a pile of waste, thus, questioning this colonial induced culture in Nigeria and its

⁸⁶ "The UK generates almost two million tons of electronic waste. Disposing of this in America and Europe costs money, so many companies sell it to middle merchants, who promise the computers can be reused in Africa, China and India. Each month about 500 container loads, containing about 400,000 unwanted computers, arrive in Nigeria to be processed. But 75 per cent of units shipped to Nigeria cannot be resold. So they sit on landfills, and children scabble barefoot, looking for scraps of copper wire or nails. And every so often, the plastics are burnt, sending fumes up into the air" (Selva 2006).

adverse physical landmark. In *Wastepaper Bag 2003*, an installation of aluminum plates and copper wires, Anatsui continues his interrogation of colonial legacies; through exaggerated proportions, the artist's inflated oversized waste paper bags capture the rapidly rising amount of waste generated in city centers and its effects on inhabitants. With *Crumbling Wall 2000* (figure 7.4), Anatsui comments on the destruction of Africa, the fragmentation of its culture, customs and traditions as well as Africa's futile struggles to reconstruct its society long after the attainment of independence as a result of Europe's continuous neo-imperialist domination. As Sylvester Ogbechie (2012) observes, the work serve as a metaphor for the destruction evident in modern African society and politics and the decay of the once-beautiful structures that decorated and pride Africa's cultural landscape (Ogbechie 2012). Anatsui's use of flimsy ephemeral discarded objects makes visual references to the frailty, uncertainty and fragmented state of postcolonial Nigeria/Africa damaged by colonialism and colonial thinking on which modern politics/governance in Africa are based. This appropriation of discarded objects to proselytize political and revolutionary views, defines the political inclination and imperatives of his art and his overwhelming influence at the University of Nigeria Nsukka, inspired many Nigerian/African artists to pursue same revolutionary ideologies and creative ethos which manifest in their art practices till date.

Bright Ugochukwu Eke's works are framed in this politically inclined context as it questions neo-colonialism and continued Western dominance in Africa. His works particularly questions the destruction of the Niger Delta region of Nigeria by industrial waste generated from multinational European companies who continue exploiting Nigerian resources whilst impoverishing indigenous peoples, and destroying numerous communities. The operations of European multinational companies such as Chevron, Shell, ExxonMobil, Addax etc., has led to the destruction of the Niger Delta region, and forced indigenes to flee their homes as a result of widespread pollution occasioned by oil spillage and gas

flaring (Eweje 2006, Aluko 2004, Okwuosa 2013). This adverse impact of Western influence on developing countries through economic oppression and exploitation constitute the main themes of Eke's works. Having experienced what he described as acid rain working in Port Harcourt Nigeria, it instigated his questioning of Western exploitation in contemporary Nigeria by European companies. Eke uses water, strings, plastic bottles, old metal plates, discarded cellophane bags etc., as his preferred medium, to question environmental destruction, negligence, domination and ecological devastation (Matthews 2009). On the inspiration behind his appropriation of mundane objects for contemporary art expressionism, Eke recounts that,

I was working outside the rain...I discovered skin irritation from toxic chemicals that go into the atmosphere from the industries. The emissions from especially the manufacturing and the oil production industries come down when it rains. Then I came to think about not just myself but the people who live around the area. What about the aquatic life? What about the vegetation?" (Eke cited in Weintraub 2012: 161).

This experienced resulted in the creation of his work *Acid Rain 2005* (figure 7.5), a conceptual installation of acidified water, in discarded plastic bags, installed hanging from tree branches and gallery roofs as a metaphoric visualization of the problematized living condition of the inhabitants of the Niger Delta region (Okwuosa 2013: 65). For the Ijo people, water is significantly "synonymous with life, spiritual sustenance, wealth and prosperity, and especially with communication and identity" (Berns & Roberts 2002: 10); thus, the consequences of the contamination of Niger Delta Rivers and environment extend to cultural destruction of the life of the people. Eke interrogates this destruction in his installations, challenging the adversity of industrialisation, which defy the sanctity of water and society at large (Eke 2008). His *Acid Rain 2005* comments on Western oppression, contemporary exploitation and manoeuvring of Third World countries and how indigenous peoples are rendered helpless and faceless through such actions, supported by corrupt African leaders.

Eke's *Drowning 2008* (figure 7.6) on the other hand interrogates the problem of hyper consumerism culture in Africa, as a major adversity that is clandestinely drowning the continent. The installation is an assemblage of discarded plastic bottles, conceptually assembled to create a visual impression of ocean tides with a drowning black person in the middle arms raised in distress. Through this piece, Eke draws attention to the effects of hyper consumerism on contemporary Africa, which manifest in waste generation, environmental destruction, and displacement of indigenous communities and people.

b) Socio-Political Commentary on Societal Conditions

Most postcolonial artists in their appropriation of discarded objects in art, do not directly interrogate colonial legacies and neo-colonialism, but rather, draw upon the subversive power of art for socio-political commentary on the state of contemporary society. They employ the detritus forms of discarded materials as metaphors to question authorities, political corruption and environmental degradation. As Lisa Aronson (2012) observes, "these artists incorporate found objects into their work, to create provocative works that address ecological, political and economic conditions...offering a broader view of contemporary African conditions, rejecting the romanticized perceptions of Africa" (Aronson 2012: 1). Olu Amoda for instance has long engaged in the manipulation of discarded objects as visual metaphors for social commentary. He interrogates societal issues occasioned by technological advancement, political corruption, obsession with self-image and the rapid loss of African cultural identity through pursuit of idealised westernised imagery. Through his appropriation of mundane objects, Amoda creates compositions that provide commentaries and observations on the social, economic and political realities and problems of modern Africa (Ogidan 2014). Amoda's work *Attachment 2006* (figure 7.7) for example captures/comments on the obsession with the self and the overzealous copying of Western cultural values in the quest for recognition, which results in

the loss of the African self. *Attachment 2006* is a female bust constructed with found/discarded metal sheets, rods, and car engine parts. The facial features are rendered in minimalist geometric style. The hair is the dominant feature of the piece – it is extensive and elaborate. Through skilful manipulation of metal rods and sheets, the hair is constructed to mimic the new culture of hair extension/artificiality now dominant in contemporary African female fashion. It comments on the trenchant attempts by African ladies to look like whites by attaching synthetic hair to mimic the appearance of Europeans. This new Western inspired fashion appeal has replaced the skilfully braided natural hair that defined feminine beauty/identity in traditional African context. The figure is also adorned with multiple/elaborate earrings, necklaces and shoulder accessories fashioned out of scrap metal. Amoda's exaggeration of the hair, necklaces, earrings and shoulder adornments in this piece is symbolic – it captures the loss of African ideals/cultural identity as a result of excessive copying of Western culture, which attaches a false westernized identity on Nigerians.

Politicians Polygraph 2007 (figures 7.8) through satirical formal composition, comments on the political cacophony in Nigeria, excessive accumulation of power by select politicians, as well as the chaos political corruption has plunged Nigeria into. The sculptural piece plays upon the uncoordinated actions, dishonorable nature and untrustworthiness of politicians whose actions and promises are at best chaotic, fragmented and mirages. The convoluted and complex composition of found metal rods, nails, metal sheets etc., manipulated to create a visual impression of chaos in the piece, effectively captures Nigerian corrupt polity and actions of politicians. His work *Global Warming Fake Drugs 2007* (figure 7.9) is a social reminder of the issue of forgery, the escalating fakery in Africa caused by poverty resulting from political corruption. Amoda draws attention in this piece to the menace of such fraudulent practices especially with its harmful implications in Africa; the piece serves as a protest against forgery

and its adverse implications.

Taiye Idahor explores the fleeting nature of African culture continually disrupted by Western influences and the effects of the new materialism culture on Nigeria. Her appropriation of the Found Object in art draws attention to the lost of self, cultural values, pride and identity in contemporary Nigerian society and the enslavement of Nigerians by their constant craving for westernization. She opines that, “with these mundane waste objects, I am examining the relationship between women, beauty, tradition, waste materials and modernity...as the line that differentiates them in Nigeria is gradually fading, creating new cultures...” (Idahor cited in African Artist’s Foundation 2012: 1). Her work *Change of Name 2012* (figure 7.10), explores the materiality that now defines contemporary Nigerian culture, questioning the alteration of perceptions, aesthetic appeal, norms and customs by such materialistic culture and the constant copying of Westernised standards in contemporary Nigeria/Africa. The piece, which shows women’s obsession with materiality created through the appropriation of discarded objects, captures the artist’s use of found objects to challenge and question the reasons behind the loss of cultural values and identity in her society (Idahor 2012).

Dilomprizulike’s found object appropriation in art is radically political as he transforms waste into visual metaphors for political protest and commentary on the travails of modern Africa highlighting issues of corruption, miss-management and political impositions. For Dilomprizulike (Junkman of Africa), these discarded objects the bye-product of modernity and corruption, symbolises the problematic conditions of contemporary Africa. He opines that his appropriation of waste in art derives from such societal problems, which also defines its formalism.

I make statements and talk about things, about the city...I talk about the uncertainties, the frustrations, agitation, the

overflowing and overwhelming chaos faced in Nigerian cities...these works are a political protest match, a reaction to societal problems, oppression of the masses by leaders the drivers driving the nation on the journey of uncertainties (Dilonpriizulike 2007: 2)

Driven by these socio-political concerns, Dilonpriizulike's transformation of discarded objects into postcolonial art is characterised by radical formalism that captures the chaos of modern Nigeria and Africa and the suffering of its masses. His works interrogates the expansion of postcolonial African cities, excessive consumerism, and decline in morality, environmental degradation and oppression by political caucuses. His installation *The Face of the City 2005* expresses the rot in contemporary Nigeria, which has become the dumping ground for European waste. The installation captures a busy city scene with all the figures engage in one activity or the other typical of everyday hustling that defines Nigerian cities like Lagos. But significantly, all the figures are created through the assemblage of varieties of discarded objects – old jute bags, clothes, pates, tires, metal sheets/rods, plastic bottles, and paper bags etc., generated from the city. By constructing his many subjects and the city with discarded objects in this installation, the artist questions the degradation of postcolonial cities by the rising problem of indiscriminate waste generation and dumping in Africa (Figures 7.11). In *Waiting for the Bus 2010*, Dilomprizulike interrogates the poor state of transportation in Nigeria which hampers mobility and by extension the economy, a problem occasioned by urbanisation and corruption - financial siphoning by corrupt politicians (figure 7.12). Through the configuration of this installation made with discarded metal, cloth, plastic plates etc., he captures the chaos in Nigerian bus stops, and the daily travails of the common man in commuting from one place to the other in Lagos and other cities. *The Politicians 2010* employs subversive satirical expressions to comment on the oppression of Nigerians by politicians who have seized control of the constitution and set themselves above the law. The artist captures this problematic phenomenon by representing the politicians in expensive reclaimed materials reflective of their

extravagance funded by the tax payer, while the masses in tatters, reflective of their helplessness and oppressive social state (figure 1.13).

His *Journey Out of Africa 2005* is an extensive installation; it comprises of an old car filled with every kind of discarded objects – old metal, plates, cloth, wood, cans etc., to the point of overflow. The car is then driven down town with the boot open, and garbage strapped to the its roof, allowing some waste objects to drop along the way; this performance installation with a completely damaged car filled with waste, captures the effect of Africa's materialistic culture and Western economic domination. The piece comments on the saturation of Africa with Western waste and how the transformation of Africa into a dumping ground has resulted in the displacement of indigenous peoples alienating them from their communities and forcing them away from the continent into foreign lands as refugees (Figure 7.14). Junkman's works are visually impactful and act as visual protest against political corruption, oppression and neo-imperialism.

Nnenna Okore's works are equally tailored to address societal issues especially hyper consumerism, materiality and waste in Africa. She is dedicated in her transformation of detritus waste into art to instigate a recycling culture in modern Africa in order to abate the effect of waste generation on society. In an interview with Okore, she commented that her appropriation of discarded objects in contemporary art expression is inspired by the clamour for societal preservation and environmental sustainability which waste destroys (Okore 2013). She critically interrogates the consumerism culture and lack of recycling in Nigeria/Africa and uses her works to enlighten the public on the adversities of uncontrolled generation and dumping of waste (Okore 2014). Beyond this cultural concern of her immediate society, her recent works as a diaspora artist, explores materiality of objects (Kronika 2009). Works such as *No Condition is Permanent 2013*, *Age Lessons 2011*, *Dry Season 2009* etc., (Figure 7.15 – 7.16) captures Okore's appropriation of discarded objects and waste in unique creative

formalism, drawing upon the configuration of their materiality for social commentary on Africa, to promote urban societal sustainability.

7.3 Found Object Appropriation as Visual Metaphor for Societal Interrogation: Reflection on Personal Practice

My practice methodology and creative ethos has long been based on the appropriation of Found Object in art to address social concerns in postcolonial Africa. This creative philosophy and methodology of manipulating discarded objects was instigated by economic hardship (lack of resources to purchase paints, graphic inks etc.), which had resulted in my specialisation in sculpture during my undergraduate studies to make do with found objects in Nigerian cities as ready materials for sculptural exploration. This context since defined the conceptual/ideological framework for my art tailored to interrogate poverty and the helpless conditions of the poor in Nigeria occasioned by corruption. Discarded objects in Nigerian cities for me are metaphorical; on the one hand, they reflect the extravagance of the wealthy and on the other the adversities of the poor who turn to such discarded scraps to make meaning out of life. Experimenting with these everyday objects provided an appropriate platform to comment on the socio-political gulfs created between the rich/privilege and the poor/underprivileged in Nigeria. Varying theories also inspired the creative ethos of my appropriation of found objects for social commentary; for example, Ezra Pound's theory that "art is like a fountain rising and falling under the varying pressures of social conditions blown into an infinite sequence of forms by the winds of destiny" (Pound 1951: 22) as well as Chike Aniakor's theorisation of art as a visual documentation of societal circumstances, constituting an unannounced senator of the human race (Aniakor 2007). These theories inspire my art practice, which derives from social conditions and such conditions, which it questions and address often defines its formalism.

My creative process involves intense experimentation; discarded objects are often formed, reformed, deformed, constructed and manipulated to express certain defined themes/ideas that reflect on social problems and issues. The ideologies and social conditions that inspire each concept, define its visual configuration often characterised by stylized abstraction or representationalism. Whichever formal configurations my artworks assume, it often draws on the subversive power of art to comment on issues such as modernity, social ills, the dehumanization of the poor in Africa, the adverse legacies of colonialism, and neo-colonialism. The resultant art forms are designed to trigger curiosity, educate and influence perceptions and behaviour with the aim of instigating change and societal transformation.

Beast of Burden 2007 for example, is constructed entirely from scrap metals, discarded tires and old car parts. The composition depicts a man pulling a heavy truckload of objects, which are all fashioned out of discarded metal as well. The figure pulling the truck shows considerable strain in its forward pull-motion as captured in its contraposture and the tension in the flat metal bar strapped to the handles of the truck, which he pulls over his right shoulder. This depiction of strain and suffering in this piece is deliberate – to express the adverse conditions of the poor in contemporary society. This piece comments on the plight of the poor in Nigeria. It interrogates the resultant effect of corruption, which has transformed the poor into economic slaves, and reduced them into beast of burden. The piece captures the sufferings of the poor in their quest for survival in a society where the demographic gulf of social stratification ensures that the efforts of common men, fetches but scraps hence the truck full of trash and the depiction of strain in the contra-posture of the man pulling it (Figure 7.17). Another piece *Adaptability 2012* (figure 7.18) interrogates the challenging conditions faced by diaspora Africans in their trenchant efforts to excel in the West. Using lizards as symbolism for adaptability in traditional African philosophy (a leitmotif which occur frequently in my works), this installation

comments on the struggles of Africans in the United Kingdom, the menial service position they find themselves in, continuous clamour for acceptability and quest to thrive against all odds.

My most recent body of works derive directly from a synthesis of identified issues emerging from my research into Nigerian Modernism and postcoloniality; these pieces equally draw upon the subversive power of art to interrogate pressing issues in contemporary society. The issues addressed in these works include neo-colonialism - especially the oppressive phenomenon of 'excessive individualism' resulting in the exiling of Africans; the enslavement of man by the demands of modernity and the fragmentation of reality in idealised perceptions of civilisation in Nigeria/Africa. These three problematic constitute the major themes explored in my recent works discussed below.

The installation *Excessive Individualism 2015* interrogates one of the biggest political problems of contemporary Africa, stemming from the problematic system of governance introduced during colonialism. *Excessive Individualism* refers to the phenomenon in Africa where nations' wealth and natural resources are colonised by a privileged few, who use such accumulated wealth to manoeuvre power, and develop strategies to enslave their fellow citizens under democratic-dictatorship. Underdevelopments, corruption, wars, displacement of communities etc. that now define Africa are products of this contemporary menace. This phenomenon stemmed from colonial activities in West Africa, which for self-gain exploitative aims created a bourgeois class to extend its control of former colonies after the attainment of independence. Most African leaders today emerged from a genealogy of this colonial bourgeois class, and adopt colonial ideologies in leading African nations. According to Samba Diop (2013),

The force labor of capitalism and bureaucratic class nurtured during the colonial era was promoted as the new instrument of

exploitation in the era of neocolonialism...this was the genesis of Africa's comprador bourgeoisie whose function is to facilitate the continuing exploitation of Africa's resources (Diop 2013: 224),

This system of force, authoritarian rule employed during colonialism, constitute the political system used by a select group of Africans to dominate their fellow less privileged Africans because "colonialism implanted the notion that authoritarianism is an appropriate mode of political rule and that force is an acceptable instrument of that rule" (Saylor Foundation 2012: 2). In 'Colonialism and the Two Publics in Africa: A Theoretical Statement', Peter Ekeh (1975) contends that "this bourgeois groups influenced colonial Africa and continue to influence post-colonial African politics operating ideologies routed in colonial thinking as weapons and mechanism for legitimating their hold on their own people" (Ekeh 1975: 97). This legacy of colonialism is the main scourge of Africa; Nigerians for example like most Africans are not led but ruled, majority of the masses are treated like slaves with a few individuals controlling state resources and according themselves unchallenged powers. The installation interrogates this problematic - it employs the visual power of exaggeration to express the gulf created between the poor in African and dictatorial bourgeois politicians, between the rulers and the ruled, between the privileged and the underprivileged. It captures the excessive extravagance, growth/material expansion etc., of the rich, in contrast with the penury of the masses (figure 7.19). My use of lizards to represent the masses in small scale while representing the dictators in large scale is a metaphoric device commenting on political-dictatorship empowered by excessive individualism and funded by widespread corruption, which is impoverishing and exiling Africans to the West (Ayittey 1999, Houngnikpo 2006).⁸⁷ This installation is inspired by the adversities of

⁸⁷ "Corruption is endemic in Africa. It is common knowledge that highly placed African government officials extort nation's wealth and commissions on foreign loan contracts and deposit them in overseas banks. The very people who are supposed to defend and protect the peasants' interests have instead been responsible for institutionalized looting. Dishonesty, thievery and peculation pervade the public sector in Africa. Public servants embezzle state funds and high-ranking ministers are on the take. The extent and magnitude of this scourge is difficult to estimate, owing to its illegality and the painstaking efforts the culprits take to conceal

excessive individualism and political-dictatorship resulting in the crises in Nigeria, Egypt, Libya, Tunisia Kenya, etc., which have all stemmed from the enslavement of indigenous peoples by select African political-dictators.

Price of Modernity 2015 is inspired by the constraints placed on man by industrialisation and modernisation. In an increasingly industrialised, digitised and materialised world, man's identity and power is defined by his financial and economic capabilities, which in turn determines his modern persona. In modern societies such as Africa, social stratification and demographic is defined by materiality and man is increasingly controlled by the demands of modernity and his ability to pay. Money has become the password for modernity and bills now constitute tides that drown and enslave men. The struggles to pay for and enjoy modernity by attaining wealth define one's actions and thoughts in contemporary age. This adverse condition in contemporary society is reflective of the challenges modernisation engineered in Europe at the turn of the Twentieth Century as industrialisation displaced and dehumanised man. Why this is not the direct situation in this contemporary era, however, the demands of modernity still conditions man who's self is determined by his ability to pay the price of modernity, which he seizes to experience if bankrupt. The visual configuration of this installation, which represents a man drowning in bills and receipts, captures and comments on the overwhelming pressure of financial demands in our contemporary age and the continues struggles to partake in modernity; the conraposture⁸⁸ of the deconstructed figure, expresses pains, stress and exhaustion from societal demands and economic challenges (figure 7.20). It visualises the conditions of contemporary man transformed into a slave by the constraints of modern existence which conditions ones thought processes, actions and disposition.

it". See Ayittey G. B. N (1999) 'Combating Corruption in Africa: Analysis and Context' in Hope Sr, K. R., & Chikulo, B. C. (Eds.) *Corruption and Development in Africa*. Palgrave Macmillan. pp 104-118.

⁸⁸ Conraposture in sculpture refers to the manipulation of the human form in sculpting to convey or express disposition and meaning through movements. See Honour, H., & Fleming, J. (2005) *A World History of Art*. London: Laurence King Publishing.

The series of works in the installations *Interstice Perception and Fragmentation 2015*, addresses the fragmentation of reality and idealised perceptions of things in contemporary Africa, a problematic manifestation of colonial legacies. As Olu Oguibe (2002) argues in 'Appropriation as Nationalism in Contemporary African Art', Africans were only granted a quasi-slippage into civilisation as the colonizers did not totally expose indigenous peoples to Western civilization but rather accorded them quasi slippage as they aimed to produce semi-civilised tools for colonial use (Oguibe 2002). Through this quasi slippage into civilisation, imperialist created an interstitial culture and space occupied by Africans partially exposed to Western civilisation (Bhabha 1996); this group were neither primitive nor totally civilised but existed in an intervening space, which conditioned their thought processes and actions in fleeting locus between civilisation and primitivism; this constituted a problematic during the colonial period and continues to this contemporary age. These installations interrogate the manifestation of this colonial legacy in Africa; this is because, civilisation in Africa is a haze, an idealised fragmented reality that exist in a fleeting state; while Africa like the rest of the world exist in contemporary civilised context, yet, actions of political corruption, sentimentalism, ethnic chauvinism, religious gullibility/enslavement, unaccountability, excessive individualism etc., which defines the continent, defeats its supposed literacy and civilization. This idealisation in Africa reflects a society whose supposed civilization is both present and at the same time absent, real and imagined and this affects/influences judgment and behavioural patterns hence the resultant crises that has blighted a continent with such abundant resources (Bannon & Collier 2003, Alder & Sumaila 2004).

These installations interrogate this fragmentation; *Haze 2015* (figure 7.21) for instance, comments on the haziness and fragmentation of ideas, concepts, perceptions and reality in contemporary Africa. Its convoluted composition

metaphorically comments on the ambiguity of contemporary society and its idealised civilisation that in reality is convoluted and hazy. Appropriating discarded wood, the piece makes reference to the confused situation in a continent whose contemporary culture and existence is both concrete and ephemeral, real and idealised, present and absent. The appropriation of discarded wood in this installation, equally questions human perception as being a subjective construct that exist in an interstitial locus that changes with contextual alterations. The Wood Panels titled *Interstice and Fragmentation I/II 2015* (figure 7.22 – 7.23) created from discarded scaffolding boards, equally interrogates the fragmentation of reality in Africa. These pieces are created by appropriating discarded wood boards, manipulating them using marks adapted from old wood textures and African ideographs, as leitmotif for inscribing designs on certain parts of the panels to transform their context. This juxtaposition of aesthetic appeal and the mundane rot of old wood is metaphorical; the inscribed portions reflect a sense of beauty (visual appeal) and representation as symbolism for the idealised notion of civilisation in Africa, while the untouched (rot parts) in their degraded conditions, reflects a sense of absence of that said/idealised civilization. The sculptural forms captures the existence of two realities in contemporary Nigerian and African societies and this juxtaposition of aesthetic appeal flanked by the rot of discarded wood is employed to interrogate this postcolonial condition.

The installation *Clusters 2015* (figure 7.24) interrogates the fallacy of globalism/universalism (Petito 2000, Suzuki 2001, Mallavarapu 2007) as an idealised political concept of convenience that barely extends beyond its theoretical context. The installation explores the veiled discrimination that exists in the contemporary world despite the claims of equality and universality. Inspired by institutionalised segregation in varying countries' immigration laws, this piece cajoles universalism and globalism as an idealised non-existent concept constructed for Western economic gains. The piece draws attention to

fact that people's acceptability and their ability to reside in different parts of the world are still largely determined by race, colour and religious orientation. Using matchsticks of varying colours, the installation visualises the residence of people by colour/racial types, and cajoles the concept of globalism by installing scanty minor races in smaller groups within dominant supper cultures. The composition of the installation reflects the map of the world, with matchsticks installed in clusters of different colours to represent various continents. Large blocks of white matchsticks are used to represent Europe and Australia, brown for Asia, mixture of yellow and black for North and South America, while black matchsticks represent Africa. The dominant matchstick-colour of each of these continents is then punctuated by matchsticks in very small quantities from other continents or cultures, installed in such a way that they do not blend but stand in isolation within the dominant host culture. This way, the configuration of the installation interrogates and exposes globalism as a mere mirage. *Clusters 2015* questions the continued segregations against certain cultures, race, and religion in modern society as is evidenced in the selective acceptance and rejection of refugees in the current migration crisis.

The ideological, methodological and conceptual framework of my practice with regards to the appropriation of discarded objects is thus contextualised within this postcolonial context of Found Object in African art as a result of its socio-political commentary on the travails of the legacies of colonialism and societal challenges occasioned by political-dictatorship, neo-colonialism and corruption in Africa. This postcolonial context of the Found object in contemporary Nigerian/African art stands in position of contradiction to that of Europe and America. The next section will explore such contradictions and establish the main differences of Found Object appropriation in Europe and Africa.

7.4 Differences between European and African Genres of The Found Object

The status of a work of art results from the ideas a culture applies to it...cultural interpretation is therefore constitutive of an object's arthood (Danto 1988: 26)

Art historians must resist the temptation to lump together all those from Africa who work with objects that are found under the rubric of recycling in contemporary art (Binder 2008: 27)

Lisa Binder writing on El Anatsui works touches upon the problematic generalisation in contemporary scholarship regarding this genre of art in postcolonial Africa hence the call to refrain from generalisation and employ specific cultural reading of artists and their societal milieu in order to determine the context in which their practices are based. This viewpoint is elaborated in 'Found Object, Recycled Art, Readymade or Junk Art? Ambiguity in Modern African Art 2013', which contends that lack of contextual and cultural understanding of found object appropriation in the arts of cultures outside European mainstream, is responsible for the problematic dismissal of this genre in Africa as time-lag manifestation of Western avant-garde art and that such dismissal and attempt at submerging this postcolonial African genre in European mainstream, impedes understanding of its cultural ramifications and peculiarities (Akpang 2013). Furthermore, as Arthur Danto (1988) opines, the true value and status of art can only be attained by situating such objects within their cultural context and interrogating the cultural ideologies, philosophies and conditions that informed their creation; this has been the conceptual/analytical framework employed in this study which has engaged a localized cultural reading of Twentieth Century modern Nigerian art and the Found Object in different contexts of art expressionism in the country. This section will establish the cultural ramifications and separateness of the Found Object in art by drawing upon its context in the West analyzed in 1.2 and contrasts such European

contextual ramifications from the pre-modern, modern and postcolonial contexts of the Found Object in Nigerian art.

It is my contention that the dismissal of Found Object appropriation in African art in Western art history as mimesis, is misleading – detailed contextual/content/formal analysis so far has proven that the genre is differentiated by cultural peculiarities, ramifications, philosophies and ideology. Section 2.5 established that, Found Object in Nigerian art predates its invention in European Modernism thus invalidating its dismissal as time-lag manifestation of avant-garde art. This submission is premised on the fact that the appropriation of discarded objects in pre-modern Nigerian art, was influenced by traditional philosophies, cosmology and religion, thus the Found Object in pre-modern Nigeria was infused with cultural, philosophical, religious meanings and significance. Heterogeneous objects were incorporation in the creation or re-contextualisation of ancestral figures, masks, accumulative sculptures etc., to add depth, layers, content and context, which extended the form, religious symbolism and cultural associations of pre-existing sculptures. The appropriation of Found Objects in traditional creativity, served firstly religious purposes - facilitating traditional religion as focal points of resident placated spirits and secondly, served cultural purposes to define the clan, community, kingdom or society by documenting its genealogy through the stacking of Found Objects in installations as visual records of unfolding generations. This pre-modern context of the found object in Nigerian art differs remarkably from European Found Object and Readymade; even though Africa's traditional constructivism inspired the emergence of this genre in Euro-American Modernism, Found Object in Euro-American avant-garde art, did not serve religious purpose neither did it derive from traditional philosophies as was the case in pre-modern Nigeria. On the contrary, European invention of the Found Object and Readymade emerged out of the radical quest to transgress and subvert established artistic traditions, modernity and project into the future. The

contrasting traditional pre-modern context from those of Euro-modernism which the Found Object exist in Nigeria and Africa, establishes the first differentia element marking the separateness and cultural ramifications of the Found Object in European and African arts respectively.

From 1900 – 1960 the period of Nigerian Modernism there is a curious gap - a period when Found Object did not surface in Nigerian art as elucidated in Chapter Three. This clearly indicates that the modernist context, in which European avant-garde genres of Found Object and Readymade were framed, did not manifest in Nigeria hence establishing the second perspective of differentiation. The emergence of the Found Object in Euro-American Modernism was rooted in avant-gardes radical interrogation of modernity and bourgeois culture/authority through the creation of a bohemian counter-culture. Thus, anti-aestheticism, anti-art, anti-order, anti-institution and anti-authority ideologies/formalism promulgated by different avant-garde movements, defined the context of the Found Object in Euro-American Modernist art, which was invented to oppose and subvert various notions of power systems. As discussed in Chapter One, Found Object invention in Twentieth Century Europe, altered Western art and society by a) Jettisoning established aesthetic conventions, art salons and undermining bourgeois culture and Victorian moralism; b) subverting the ruling class by protesting political/social values and order. The absence of this Euro-American context and ramification of the Found Object during Nigerian Modernism valorises the argument that the dismissal of Found Object in postcolonial Nigeria and Africa as mimesis of Western avant-garde art is misleading and faulty. This is because scholars make such submissions oblivious of the pre-modern occurrence of the Found Object in Nigerian art and unaware of its total absence during the period of Modernism in Nigeria. The fact that Nigerian modernist did not experiment with found object in their modernist practices as well as the unique postcolonial context it resurfaced elucidated in 7.2 clearly indicates the existence of differences impelled by cultural/creative

philosophies and socio-political conditions traditional to their particular societies at given times. This thesis thus argues that European genres of Found Object and Readymade of avant-gardes such as Pablo Picasso, Marcel Duchamp, Andre Breton, Vladimir Tatlin, Man Ray etc., and its ramifications in Euro-American context, which was absent during Nigerian Modernism, firmly differentiates this genre in Africa from that of Euro-modernism.

The postcolonial context Found Object re-emerged in Nigeria characterised by intense interrogation of colonial legacies, neo-colonialism, political corruption and exploitation, as well as environmental degradation, differs considerably from that of European Modernism. The political imperatives of the appropriation of Found Object in postcolonial Nigerian art from the early 1990s till date, is given rise to by peculiar societal adversities and the resultant art works are structured to interrogate such postcolonial problems. Findings from several artist's case studies and interviews proved that the postcolonial context of the Found Object in Nigerian art is specifically tailored to a) challenge colonial Legacies and neo-colonialism, and b) comment on political and social travails caused by corruption and hyper consumerism. This postcolonial context of appropriating and manipulating Found Object in art to battle against neo-imperialism, neo-colonialism and neo-capitalism in Africa, further differentiates it from that of European avant-gardes. While Dadaist subverted bourgeois culture by protesting against policies/order and challenged the role of the ruling class in the destruction caused during WW1 using the detritus flimsy forms of discarded manufactured objects, their avant-gardism stand in position of contradiction to that which transpires in postcolonial/contemporary African art. This study thus advances the argument that the Found Object in Western art (its formalism and ideology) is unique to that historic cultural context, thus cannot and should not be employed to theorise Found Object in '*Other*' cultures as has been problematically attempted.

This comparative analysis of the peculiarities of European Readymade/Found Object and Found Object in Nigerian/African art, proves the existence of differences impelled by culturally specific art-political-social conditions traditional to both cultures but different in contexts, thus highlighting and subverting the misleading falsity in studies framed to blur such cultural ramifications and peculiarities by employing discourses inspired by Eurocentric philosophies. This chapter has demonstrated from its analysis of the pre-modern, modern and postcolonial contexts of the Found Object in Nigerian and African art, contrasted from those of Euro-American avant-garde genres, that the Found Object in art is distinguished by cultural context, formalism and philosophies particular to the culture where it is created. It further contends that, though African art history borrows European terminologies, the use of the phrase Found Object in the discourse of object appropriation in fine art, should not be deployed to cross out important cultural peculiarities necessary for understanding the cultural ramifications and dynamism of this genre in cultures beyond Europe. This is because this chapter has proven that cultures such as Africa have long engaged in the appropriation of mundane objects in art creation driven by specific cultural circumstances/ideologies long before the institutionalisation of the term in Western art history. Thus, in discussing this genre of art, it will suffice to employ localised reading/narratives as demonstrated in this chapter to analyse the formalism, philosophies, and contexts of Found Object genres in order to establish their cultural distinctiveness, ramifications and the formal/stylistic dynamism.

7.5 Conclusion

This chapter has examined the cultural contexts and ramifications of the Found Object in art, exploring this genre in Europe and Africa especially Nigeria. Findings from the analysis of the postcolonial context of the Found Object in Nigerian art synthesised with its pre-modern and modern contexts, led to the

submission that the appropriation of mundane objects in art expressionism in Nigeria, predates the emergence of the genre and term in European Modernism. The conclusion drawn from comparative analysis of European Found Object and Readymade and those of Nigeria/Africa is that, this genre of art is context-specific and differentiated by peculiar cultural ramifications and ideologies. It is further contested in this thesis that the dismissal of this genre in contemporary Africa as mimesis of European avant-garde art is a misleading results of hasty and uninformed generalisations. This chapter proved the falsity of such claims by employing a localised reading to analyse the formalism, philosophies, and context of the Found Object in art, which resulted in a broader appreciation of the ramifications and distinctiveness of this genre in cultures beyond Europe and America. The next chapter is the conclusion of the thesis, it will summarise the main findings and refocus the arguments made in previous chapters as well as provide recommendations for further studies.

Chapter Seven Figures



Figure 7.1: El Anatsui *Earth's Skin* 2007 – found object aluminium bottle caps (Source: Brooklyn Museum). This piece demonstrates Anatsui's use of discarded objects in art production as creative mechanism to interrogate the problematic legacies of colonialism in postcolonial contemporary Africa especially the problem of hyper consumerism.



Figure 7.1: El Anatsui Man's Cloth 1998-2001 – found object aluminium bottle caps (Source: Brooklyn Museum). This piece demonstrates Anatsui's use of discarded objects in art production as creative mechanism to interrogate the problematic legacies of colonialism in postcolonial contemporary Africa especially the problem of hyper consumerism.



Figure 7.3: El Anatsui Peak Project 1999 - found tin cans, copper wire (Source: El Anatsui). It demonstrates Anatsui's appropriation of discarded objects as creative mechanism to interrogate hyper consumerism and waste disposal in postcolonial Africa.



Figure 7.4: El Anatsui Crumbling Wall 2000 – found objects, copper wire (Source: October Gallery). With this piece, Anatsui appropriates discarded objects as creative mechanism to interrogate the problematic fragmentation of African society as a result of corruption and continued Western domination.



Figure 7.5: Bright Ugochukwu Eke Acid Rain 2005 (Source: Okwuosa, Tobenna 2013). The piece reflects the postcolonial appropriation of Found Object in Nigerian art to interrogate neo colonialism and Western continues imposition in Africa.

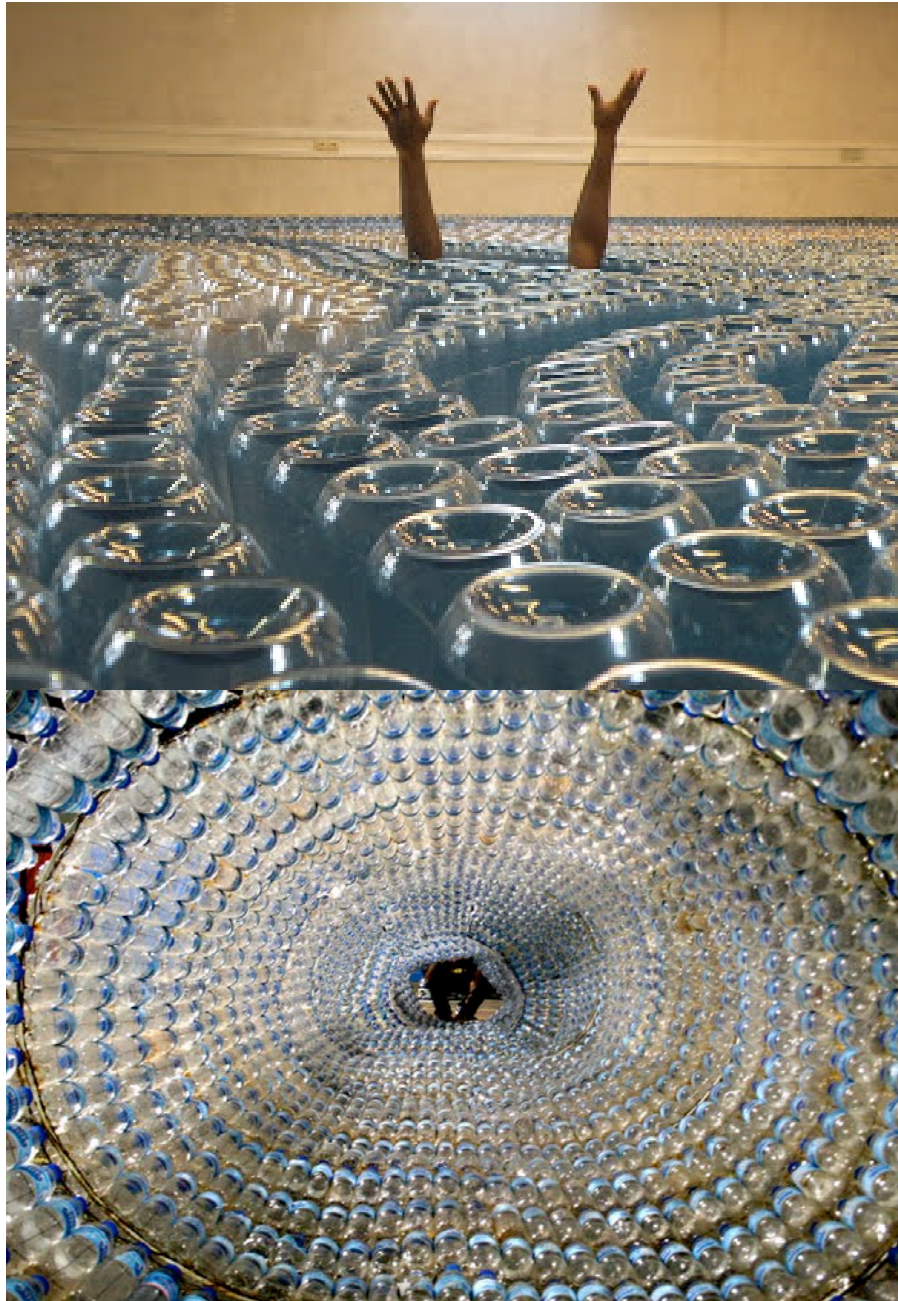


Figure 7.6: Bright Ugochukwu Eke *Drowning* 2008 (Source: Okwuosa, Tobenna 2013). The piece captures the appropriation of Found Object in postcolonial Nigerian art to interrogate neo colonialism as well as hyper-consumerism that are destroying Africa at an alarming rate.



Figure 7.7: Olu Amoda Attachment 2006 – welded steel, scrap metal (Source: Skoto Gallery). Captures the obsession with the self and the overzealous consumerism of Western cultural values in the quest for recognition, which results in the lost of the African culture/identity. Expressing the postcolonial context of object appropriation for socio-political/cultural commentary.



Figure 7.8: Olu Amoda Politicians Polygraph 2007 – Found steel objects, keys, nails 55x81 inches (Source: Skoto Gallery). Captures in satirical formalism the political cacophony in Nigeria, excessive accumulation of powers by select politicians, as well as the chaos political corruption has plunged contemporary Nigeria into. It is a visual form of socio-political commentary.



Figure 7.9: Olu Amoda Global Warming Fake Drugs 2007 – found steel objects, keys, nails, 57 inches (Source: Skoto Gallery). Here Amoda appropriates found object for social commentary as a social reminder of the issue of forgery, and escalating fakery in Africa caused by poverty resulting from political corruption.

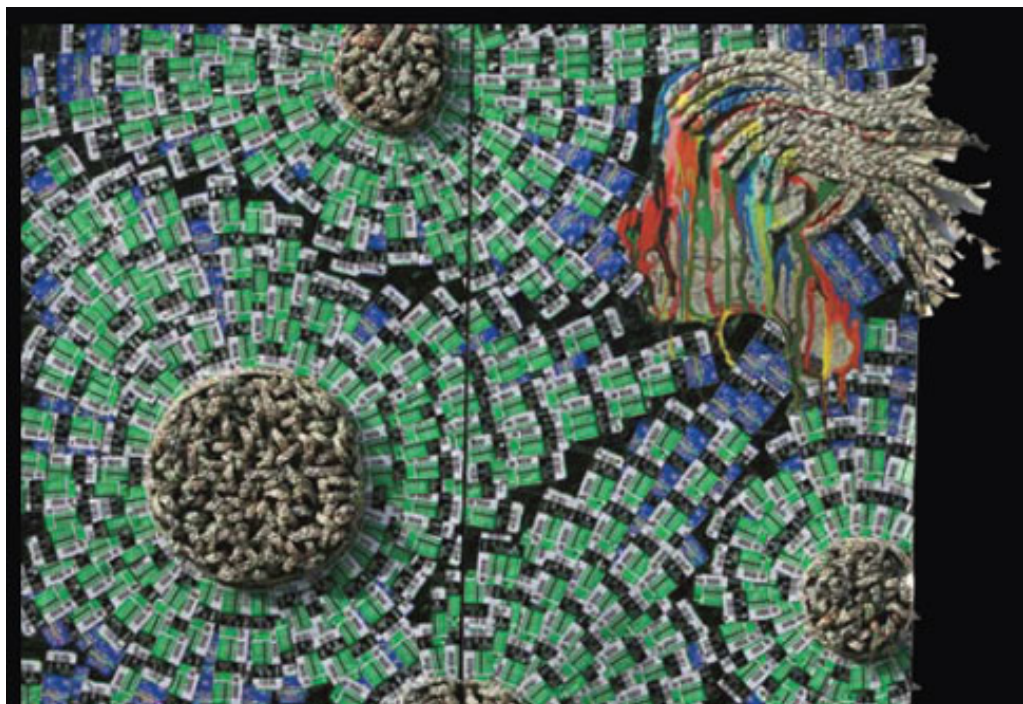


Figure 7.10: Taiye Idahor *Change of Name* 2012. (Source: Africana.org 2014). Explores the materiality that now defines contemporary Nigerian society and culture, questioning the alteration of perceptions, aesthetic appeal, norms and customs by such materialistic culture and the constant mimicking of Western standards in contemporary Nigeria.



Figure 7.11: Dilomprizulike The Face of the City (Source: ArtCo 2010). This piece captures the artist appropriation of found object in art for social and political commentary on the adversity of modern Africa caused by corruption, neo-colonialism and colonial legacies.



Figure 7.12: Dilomprizulike Waiting for the Bus 2010, 2003 (Source: ArtCo 2010). Demonstrating the artist's appropriation of found objects in postcolonial artistic expressionism for socio-political commentary on the adversity of modern Africa.



Figure 7.13: Dilomprizulike *The Politicians 2010* (Source: ArtCo 2010). Found object appropriation in postcolonial art for socio-political commentary on the legacies of colonialism, corruption, neo-colonialism and economic devastation.



Figure 7.14: Dilomprizulike Journey Out of Africa 2005 (Source: Henry Moore Institute 2015). This piece exemplifies the artist's appropriation of found object to interrogate neo-colonialism, as well as the adverse effect of hyper-consumerism and rising waste in Africa.



Figure 7.15: Nnenna Okore No Condition is Permanent 2013 (Source: Nnenna Okore). Nnenna appropriates found object in contemporary art, to comment on environmental degradation, and lack of recycling culture in Nigeria/Africa.



Figure 7.16: Nnenna Okore Age Lessons 2011 (Source Miranda). Also showing Nnenna's appropriation of waste to interrogate issues bordering on environmental degradation, and lack of recycling culture that is gradually destroying the African continent.



*Figure 7.17: Clement Akpang. **Beast of Burden** 2007 – scrap metal, found objects, old tires (Source the artist 2007). My appropriation of found object in postcolonial art to interrogate corruption in Africa which is plunging majority of Africans into in penury, and alienating the poor in their own homeland.*



Figure 7.18: Clement Akpang. Adaptability 2012 – found objects, discarded wood, foam plastics etc. (Source: the artist 2012). Also demonstrating my appropriation of found object in postcolonial art to comment on the conditions and struggles of diaspora Africans in the West, their rejection, adaptation, struggles and successes.



Figure 7.19: Clement Akpang Excessive Individualism 2015 – discarded wood, old plastic, discarded form etc. (source: the artists). The installation appropriates discarded wood to comment on the problematic phenomenon of excessive individualism in contemporary Africa where a privileged few colonise and oppress their own people.



Figure 7.20: Clement Akpang *Excessive Individualism* 2015 (close-up).



Figure 7.21: Clement Akpang Price of Modernity 2015 - discarded receipts and casting plaster, (Source: the artist). This piece comments on the financial constraints that enslave man in contemporary society. It reflects on the cost that comes with being or enjoying modernity and its impact on modern man.



Figure 7.22: Clement Akpang Price of Modernity 2015 (close-up).



Figure 7.23: Clement Akpang Haze 2015 – discarded wood (source: the artist). This piece comments on the fragmentation of contemporary Africa, the uncertainties that becloud its modern existence. It captures a civilization that is both real and imagined, present and absent at same time, and a convoluted culture that is continually altered and influenced by external forces from the West.



Figure 7.24: Clement Akpang Wood Panels 2015 I – discarded scaffolding boards (Source: the artist). This piece continues the interrogation of the idealised fragmented civilization in contemporary Africa.



Figure 7.25: Clement Akpang Wood Panels 2015 II – discarded scaffolding boards (Source: the artist). This piece also interrogates the idealised fragmented civilization in contemporary Africa as a mirage.



Figure 7.26: Clement Akpang Clusters 2015 – used and discarded matchsticks (Source: the artist). This installation questions the idealism of globalisation and universalism as a mirage only invented for the economic convenience of Western powers. It comments on the clandestine segregation and discrimination on accounts of race and colour that still defines human relations.



Figure 7.27: Clement Akpang Clusters 2015 (close-up).

CHAPTER 8: CONCLUSION

Nigerian Modernism: Contextualisation and Theoretical Implications

8.1 Introduction/Overview

The major part of this study has been dedicated to exploring modernism in Twentieth Century Nigerian art, which until now has been under researched. Modern art created in Nigeria between 1900 and 1960 was subjected to modernist / postcolonial analysis and cross-cultural comparison with European Modernism. This revealed a unique cultural avant-gardism that manifested itself during the development of modern Nigerian art, and which differs considerably from European Modernism. Chapter Three provided in-depth analysis establishing the differences between the identified parallel Modernism in Nigeria from that of Europe and America. The second part of this study focused on exploring the cultural ramifications of the Found Object in art; again a cross cultural comparative analysis was adopted to interrogate the variations in stylistic formalism and the ideological and contextual difference of object appropriation in European and African arts. This approach and resultant findings informed this study's theoretical view that the Found Object in art is separated by cultural ideologies, ramifications, and contextual peculiarities.

This unique parallel Modernism in Nigeria was uncovered and established through the adaptation and application of the theoretical, analytical and conceptual tools of Modernism and postcolonial theory to re-reading modern

Nigerian art. It involved a concentrated localised analysis of aesthetic paradigms, stylistic formalism, avant-garde ideologies and political imperatives of Nigerian art from 1900 – 1960, which was informed and defined by radical resistance to colonialism, European cultural/aesthetic imposition and nationalist battles for decolonisation. Detailed artists case studies conducted in Chapters Four, Five and Six examined the radical political and cultural implications of varying aesthetic paradigms and ideological concepts in the modernist arts of Nigeria's pioneering avant-gardes such as Chief Aina Onabolu, Ben Enwonwu and Uche Okeke. The uniqueness of their avant-gardism instigated a culturally oriented Modernism impelled by indigenous resistance to imperial order, rejection of Western derogatory stereotypes, and defined by politics of nationalism. The radical formalism of their works when interrogated in light of the societal conditions that gave rise to them captured in visual form the clamour for liberation, and the rejection of imposed European stereotypical constructions of primitivism/incompetence on the African '*Other*'. The conditions of colonial modernity and the cultural avant-gardism both gave rise to in Nigeria, defined modern Nigerian / African art at the turn of the Twentieth Century.

The study has established the occurrence of Modernism beyond European boundaries, which Eurocentric Vasarian construction of Western art history and imperial philosophies ignored. Findings from this study especially the identification of a unique Nigerian Modernism parallel to the West valorises this argument and contributes to scholarship dedicated to proving this theory. The results from artists case studies proves that modern Nigerian art during the modernist periods, expressed the determinant features and ideologies that have been used in the West to define and qualify modern art as modernist and avant-garde - aesthetical radicalism, anti-historicism, experimentalism and the use of art for subverting order and authority through the creation of anti-conventional/anti-institutional forms etc., which characterise the works of these selected Nigerian modernists. The differences in contrasting conceptual and

ideological implications impelled by specifically Nigerian conditions are discussed in Chapter Two; Onobolu's reverse-appropriation of European realism in West Africa from the 1890s expressed a conscious hacking into imperial culture and mastering its artistic convention in order to subvert and overturn European racial stereotypes of the colonized African 'Other' as degenerate primitive sub-humans. In this appropriation of realism, Onobolu invented an alternative form of representation in Nigeria that is divorced from traditional creative philosophies, and that also captured Nigeria's early resistance to colonialism and imperial racist philosophies and policies. On the other hand, the invention of hybrid aesthetics art in the works of Enwonwu and Okeke explored in Chapters Five and Six epitomised the creation of alternative realisms and rejection of imposed Western academic art and culture, and subversion of imperial hegemony. The hybrid aesthetic art created by these avant-gardes, culminated in an African version of counter-aesthetics and counter-culture, which fostered Nigerian nationalism and anti-imperial propaganda. These selected modernists also derived inspirations from *Pan-Africanism* and *Afro-centric modernism* instigated by Harlem *Renaissance* and *Negritude* movements, which emphasised pride in African cultures as a mechanism to foster decolonisation. Onobolu, Enwonwu and Okeke were particularly chosen as central figures in this thesis to explore the phenomenon of Nigerian Modernism because, though their works were informed by different ideologies, context and concepts, the modern art they created are unified by their philosophy of appropriation and art-politico activism resulting from their juxtaposition of modern art and politics driven by nationalism and the colonial tensions in Nigeria during different stages of its encounter with imperial Britain.

The stylistic, conceptual and ideological formalism of the works of Nigerian modernists expressed varying theories of modernist art and Modernism; in modernist analytical terms, their works reflected the avant-garde quest for alternative forms of representing realism and the world as a creative strategy to

overturn stifling conventionalism of institutions and ruling authorities (Burger 1984, Childs 2007: 2). Onabolu's reverse-appropriation of realism and the creation of hybrid art by Enwonwu and Okeke/*Zarianist*, yielded *Natural Synthesis* art which was a new mode of interpreting their world, the conditions of colonial modernity and their deformed culture in an avant-garde sense. The conceptual and ideological frameworks of the two phases of Nigeria's bifurcated Modernism discussed in 3.2 and 3.3 are uncovered and constructed based on the theories of Clement Greenberg and Harold Rosenberg in their theorisation of the defining qualities and conceptualism of what constitutes avant-gardism through contextual interpretation of Twentieth Century art and culture. Nigerian modernists (Onabolu, Lasekan and members of Onabolu's school), from the 1900s broke with traditional African creative conventions and invented a subjective modernist expressionism in modern Africa. The avant-garde they fostered, especially anti-historicism reflects a prerequisite Rosenberg identifies as a defining features of Twentieth Century modernist art (Rosenberg 1952). Their rejection of traditional African creative philosophies captured the spirit of modern Nigeria at the time – their quest and faith in the revolutionary tradition of the new, a creative credo associated with progressive artists of the early Twentieth Century (Weston 1996: 7). The works of Enwonwu, Okeke and the Zarianists on the other hand reflect in Nigerian cultural context, Clement Greenberg's theory of Modernism, which stipulates the revival and reinvigoration of cultural forms and established creative conventions in modern art to "entrench it more firmly in its area of competence" as the main feature of Modernism (Greenberg 1988: 5). The ideology of cultural revivalism proselytised during the second phase of Nigerian Modernism, re-contextualised traditional art forms/visual culture and this modernisation of indigenous cultural idiosyncrasies as an expression of African pride, facilitated cultural decolonization through modern art. This identification of Greenberg and Rosenberg's theories with two distinct phases of modern Nigerian art substantiates Williams and Pinkney's (1989) assertion that Modernism manifested in two creative and ideological

paradigms - the defiance and radical rejection of tradition insisting on a departure from past traditions which manifested in Nigerian 1900 - 1930, and on the other hand, the insistence on the revival of ancient creative conventions as stimuli for new creative possibilities against a deformed and exhausted present modern art order (William & Pinkney 1989: 52), which was the ideological preoccupation of avant-gardes during the second phase of Nigerian Modernism 1930 - 1960. The juxtaposition of art with nationalist politics and the subversion of the colonial order by Nigerian modernists reflect the revolutionary spirit of avant-gardes inspired by the logic and political demands for radical counter-culture against capitalism and colonialism. The Nigerian artists whose works have been interrogated in the thesis did not only challenge the then colonial legacy, their anti-colonial and nationalist leanings drew significantly on the subversive power of art in their objectives to reorder society.

8.2 Theoretical/Methodological Implications

Adopting postcolonial theory and Modernism as analytical tools in interrogating Twentieth Century Nigerian art led to the development of a new theoretical framework - a new discourse of Nigerian Modernism that will alter the reading of modern art in a new perspective, different from western imperial constructions of the African *'Other'* in Western art history. From the 1900s Modern Nigerian arts and artists were driven by avant-garde philosophies and ideologies inspired by nationalism politics and *Pan-Africanism* advocacies as opposed to being products of colonial benevolence. Because of its comprehensive/inclusive approach this new reading addresses the ambiguities in literature on modern Nigerian art surveyed in Chapter One, which have often problematically ignored art from 1900 – 1940s, focusing instead on modern art created around the 1950s by the Zarianists as the only manifestation of Modernism in Nigerian art.⁸⁹

⁸⁹ This is the case for instance in Chika Okeke-Agulu's 'Art Society and the Making of Postcolonial Modernism 2010', and *Postcolonial Modernism: Art and Decolonization in Twentieth Century Nigeria 2015*,

Because of their emphasis on 1950s art at the expense of earlier modernist expressionism authors whose scholarship dominate modern Nigerian art discourse, as observed in the literature review, provide insightful but selective and incomplete accounts of modern Nigerian art. While they contribute to history on modern Nigerian art they also impede full understanding of modernist tendencies and avant-gardism in Twentieth Century Nigeria. The new discourse introduced in this study, provides an expanded theoretical and discursive framework that bridges the gaps in these literature sources, and is a contribution to the growing writings and analysis of Nigerian Modernism. The alternative reading of modern art in Nigeria in modernist terms through a postcolonial construct contributes to the re-construction of modern Nigerian art history and discourse which at the moment is chaotic and disjointed especially with contemporary artists/scholars still problematically fixated in their subscription to Eurocentric constructs, which continue to validate modern and contemporary art by situating it in a European context that only leads to the devaluation of Nigerian artists/artworks that are unnecessarily associated with or equated with European art models.

This thesis borrows but adapts Western terminologies, which are subjected to localized cultural reading and this approach offers an alternative framework that could solve one of the problems of postcolonial theory often criticized for its overt dependence on European terminologies which critics believe impedes its effective subversion of the Eurocentrism it seeks to overturn (San Juan 1995, Kandiyoti 2002). The localization of borrowed terminologies applied in this study for reading modern Nigerian art, demonstrates that if borrowed terminologies are adapted to contextual cultural analysis, rather than used to invalidate the authenticity of such discourse, borrowed and appropriated terms contribute to defining the cultural peculiarities and validity of certain phenomenon such as Modernism in every culture or society. Also, the application of this theoretical

Sylvester Ogbachie's 'Ben Enwonwu, Zairianist Aesthetics, and the Post-Colonial Criticism of Modern Nigerian Art 2003', and Osa Egonwa's 'The Evolution of the Concept of Natural Synthesis 2001', etc.

approach has itself generated a theoretical template that could be adapted or applied to new discourse on African Modernism. As Rasheed Araeen (2005) opines, what is needed in postcolonial studies to subvert the Eurocentricity of Western philosophies, is a new body of philosophical ideas, which presents an interpretation of modernism and modernity offering a unique trajectory that is African and liberated from European hegemonic discourses (Araeen 2005: 417). Postcolonial theory is used in this thesis to formulate an alternative Afro-centric narrative/reading of modernist art, as a new model that will help reshape African and Nigerian art histories. It thus contributes to the debates and submissions of postcolonial theorists such as Freeborn Odiboh, Olu Oguibe, Rasheed Araeen, Partha Mitter, Nkiru Nzegwu and others, who as elucidated in 1.6, argue for the reconstruction of modern African art history, as well as substantiating Harold Rosenberg's assertion that Modernism is culture specific.

One of the contested views of European modernist discourse as explored in section 2.3 is the exclusion and dismissal of modern arts from '*Other*' cultures as mimesis. The interrogation of an established and distinctly parallel Nigerian Modernism during the period of European Modernism proves Peter Child's theory that Modernism extended beyond European culture and further contributes to subverting the Eurocentrism of Western art history and its exclusion of the '*Other*'. Findings from this study contribute to the expansion of the body of knowledge that theorise Modernism as a pluralistic phenomenon with multiple avant-garde centres beyond Europe (see figure 8.1 illustration). It extends understanding of Modernism as a cultural creative manifestation of radical and subversive art influenced by social and ideological contexts that were specific and traditional to particular cultures, which occurred in Africa as well as in Europe. This thesis thus, proves Mary Louise Pratt's submission that there existed other modernisms unaccounted for in European art history (Pratt 2002: 42), and further underpins Jeffrey Herf's theory that European concept of mainstream Modernism is misleading and faulty (Herf 1984: 1).

A cross-cultural comparative analysis was applied to stylistic and contextual interrogation of appropriation formalism/ethos and the Found Object in African and European arts, which resulted in interesting findings. This led to the realization that the appropriation of mundane objects in art production differs from one culture to the next, in terms of their cultural ramifications, contexts and the ideologies impelling their appropriation. Secondly that the Found Object in art of cultures such as Africa, predates the emergence of the term in European Modernism as this thesis proved that in pre-modern Nigeria, the genre of Found Object was already an established practice and creative philosophy in traditional art-space. This thesis thus contributes to global contemporary art discourse with regards to the genre of Found Object in order to address the problematic attempts at subsuming this genre from '*Other*' cultures into a construed universal mainstream discourse. In both Nigeria and Africa at large this cross-cultural analysis and the findings it gave rise to, introduces a new theoretical and conceptual framework that will improve understanding of the pre-colonial, modern and postcolonial contexts of the Found Object as a cultural product with distinct African peculiarities. More importantly, interrogating my personal practice, helped in identifying/theorizing a distinct postcolonial context for this art genre in contemporary Nigeria and subsequently subverting the problematic dismissal of this genre in Africa by European scholars as a time-lag; it proved that this genre in Africa is not the mimesis of Euro-American avant-garde art as claimed in Western discourses.

8.3 Limitations and Direction for Future Research

Although the modernist and postcolonial theoretical approaches applied in this study contributed in identifying and establishing the occurrence of a unique parallel Bifurcated Modernism in Nigeria, the focus of this research on visual arts alone, meant that although it recognised the role of colonial and pre-independence literature in the emergence of the aforementioned Modernism with the invention of a distinct Nigerian literature, the works by writers such as

Chinua Achebe, Wole Soyinka etc., who interrogated the coloniser/colonised relations in Nigeria and used their literature to foster the battle for liberation, are not analysed in details in this study. This thesis thus suggests further research that will concentrate on exploring the emergence of colonial and postcolonial literatures in Nigeria from the 1920s and its contribution to Nigerian Modernism, nationalism and modernity.

Also, through comparative analysis exploring the formalism, context and concepts of found object appropriation, this study established that the Found Object in African and European arts are differentiated by cultural ramifications, peculiarities and context; however, the emphasis of this study was on pre-modern, modern and postcolonial Nigerian art-space, which although validates this submission could be further strengthened by applying this theoretical framework to exploring Found Object in African art at large. Such a broader approach will result in an encompassing discourse on Found Object in African art. Furthermore, my interviews and analysis of postcolonial diaspora artists working with found objects indicated that in contemporary context, global influences and Africans' quest to belong to a larger inclusive socio-cultural order is gradually blurring the cultural identity and idiosyncrasies of this African art genre produced by diaspora artists living in the West. This new trend is beyond the purview of this current study; thus there is room for further studies, to investigate how such subsuming of African diaspora art into globalism discourse of *Recyclia Art* affects or misconstrues European perceptions of this genre produced in contemporary Africa by artists resident in Africa.

Furthermore, the new theoretical approach and use of localized cultural reading as basis for establishing a parallel Nigerian bifurcated Modernism is itself a model that could be applied in developing research into African Modernism. This recommendation is based on the fact that, the development of Twentieth Century modern art in Africa was often influenced by aesthetic paradigms

stemming from Nigerian avant-gardism. The entire West African sub-region was united in the battle against colonialism and European cultural imposition; the clamor for self-realization and the modern arts created across the region at the turn of the Twentieth Century, share common features and therefore exhibited similar influences, principles and avant-garde ideologies. This study thus, recommends further research that will interrogate Twentieth Century African avant-gardism in a unified and integrated discourse of African Modernism.

Chapter Eight Figures

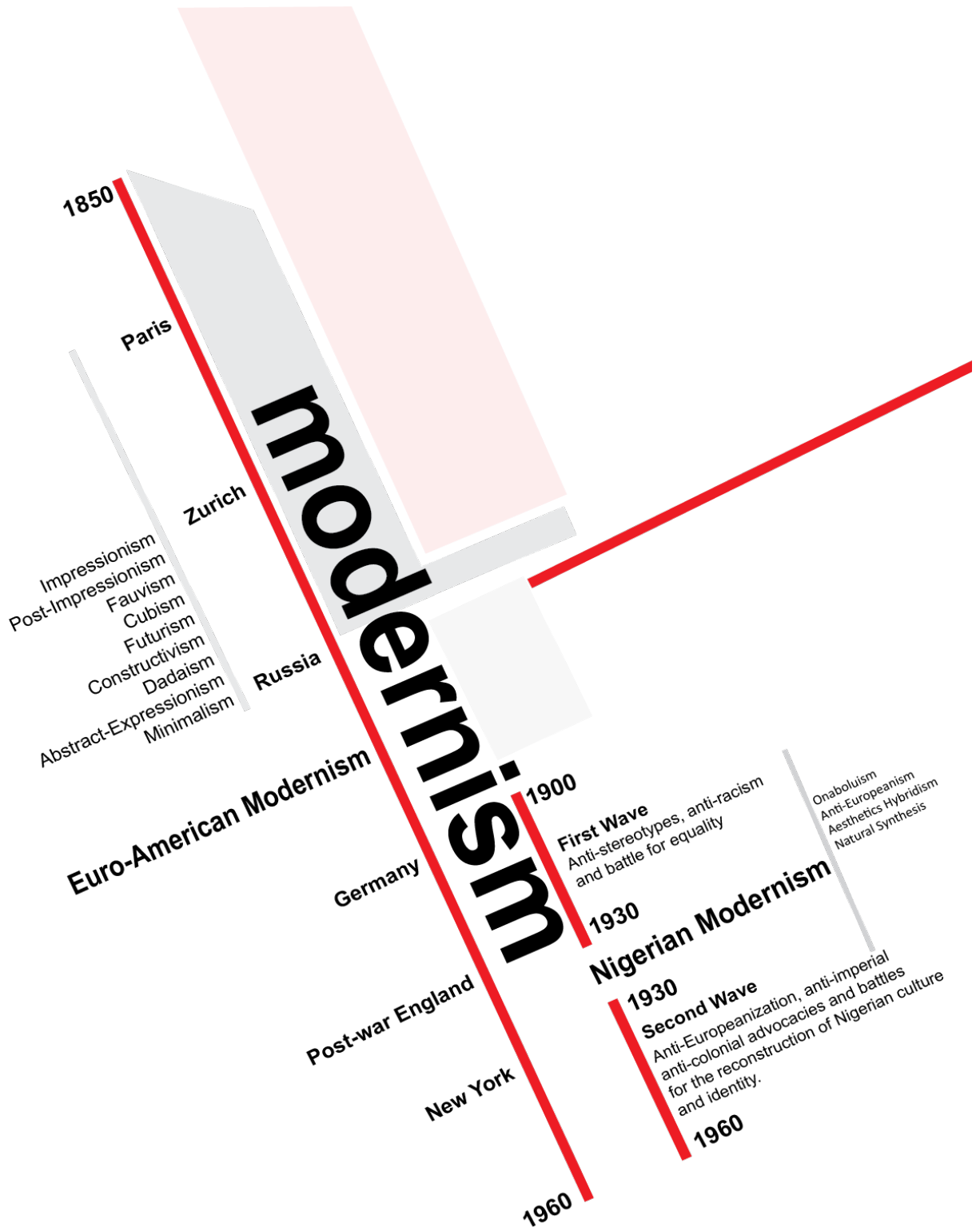


Figure 8.1: Illustration of European modernism in parallel with that of Nigeria as well as their variations in avant-garde philosophies/artistic formalisms (Source: The Artist 2016).

Bibliography

- Abayi, E. & Ene-Orji, C. (2003) *The Triumph of a Vision An Anthology on Uche Okeke and Modern Art in Nigeria*. Lagos: Pendulum Art Gallery
- Abdallah-Pretceille, M. (2006) 'Interculturalism as a Paradigm for Thinking about Diversity', *Intercultural Education*, 17 (5), pp. 475-483.
- Abiodun, R. (2001) 'African Aesthetics', *Journal of Aesthetic Education*, pp. 15-23.
- Abodunrin, J. A., & Oladiti, A. A. (2015) 'Growth and Development of Styles of Painting in Contemporary Nigeria', *Research on Humanities and Social Sciences*, 5 (5), pp. 190-198.
- Achebe, C. (1958) *Things Fall Apart*. Ibadan: Heinemann.
- Adepegba, C. O. (1998) 'The Zaria Rebels and the Spirit of their Rebellion in Modern Nigerian Art', in Dike, P. C., & Oyelola, P. *The Zaria Art Society: A New Consciousness*. Nigeria: National Gallery of Art.
- Adepegba, C.O. (1995) *Nigerian Art: Its Traditions and Modern Tendencies*. Ibadan: Jodad Publishers.
- Adewunmi, A. (ed) (2008) *Art is Everything 7: International Waste-to-art Workshop Catalogue*. Nigeria: Timex Press
- Adeyinka, A. A. (1988) 'Major Trends in Curriculum Development in Nigeria', *Ilorin Journal of Education*
- Afigbo, A. E. (1991) 'Background to Nigerian Federalism: Federal Features in the Colonial State', *Publius: The Journal of Federalism*, 21 (4), pp. 13-29.
- Afuba, C. (1992, 2003) 'Uche and I, Okeke in My Work: A Linear Infection' in Abayi, E. & Ene-Orji, C. *The Triumph of a Vision An Anthology on Uche Okeke and Modern Art in Nigeria*. Lagos: Pendulum Art Gallery
- Ajayi, J. A. (1961) 'Nineteenth Century Origins of Nigerian Nationalism', *Journal of The Historical Society of Nigeria*, pp. 196-210.
- Ajibade, B. (2013) 'Found Object in African Arts and its Differences from European Readymade'. Interviewed by Clement Akpang. Personal. Nigeria: 2nd September 2013.
-

- Akpang, C. E. (2013) 'Traditionalism in Contemporary Art: Re-contextualizing African Ideographs through Hybrid Aesthetics', *Arts and Design Studies*, Vol. 11 pp. 25-36.
- Akpang, C. E. (2013) 'Found Object, Recycled Art, Readymade or Junk Art? Ambiguity in Modern African Art', *Arts and Design Studies*, 12 (1), pp. 41-48.
- Alder, J., & Sumaila, U. R. (2004). Western Africa: a fish basket of Europe past and present. *The Journal of Environment & Development*, 13(2), 156-178.
- Alfranseder, J. (2007) *The 'Art for Art's Sake' Movement*. Munich: GRIN Verlag
- Aluko, M. A. O. (2004) 'Sustainable Development, Environmental Degradation and the Entrenchment of Poverty in the Niger Delta of Nigeria', *Journal of human ecology*, 15 (1), pp. 63-68.
- Anatsui, E. (2002) 'Recent Installations/Sculptures'. In *The Nsukka Artists and Nigerian Contemporary Art*, Ed. Simon Ottenberg, pp. 117-22.
- Anatsui, E., Appiah, A., Oguibe, O., Okeke-Agulu, C., & Storr, R. (2010) *El Anatsui: When I Last Wrote to you about Africa*. L. M. Binder (Ed.). Museum for African Art.
- Anderson, B. (1991) *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. London: Verso.
- Anderson, T. (1990) 'Toward a Cross-cultural Approach to Art Criticism', *Studies in Art Education*, pp. 198-209.
- Aniakor, C. (2007) 'African Art and Architecture' *Lecture Series*, Calabar – Nigeria.
- Aniakor, C. (2013) 'Found Object in African Arts and its Postcolonial Proliferation'. Interviewed by Clement Akpang. Personal. Nigeria: 16th September 2013.
- Antliff, A. (2001) *Anarchist Modernism: Art, Politics, and the First American Avant-garde*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Araeen, R. (2005) 'Modernity, Modernism, and Africa's Place in the History of Art of Our Age', *Third Text*, 19 (4), pp. 411-417
- Araeen, R. (2010) 'Modernity, Modernism and Africa's Authentic Voice', *Third Text*, 24 (2), pp. 277 – 286.
-

- Aronson, L. (2012) 'Environment and Object: Recent African Art' *Middlebury College Museum of Art* [Online] Available at:
<http://museum.middlebury.edu/exhibitions/node/742> (Accessed: 26 November 2014)
- Ashcroft, B., Griffiths, G., & Tiffin, H. (2003) *The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Post-colonial Literatures*. London: Routledge.
- Atkins, R. (1993) *Art Spoke: A Guide to Modern Ideas, Movements, and Buzzwords, 1848-1944*. New York: Abbeville Press. pp. 139
- Atofarati, A. A. (1992) 'The Nigerian Civil War: Causes, Strategies and Lessons Learnt', *Global Security* [Online]. Available at:
<http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/library/report/1992/AAA.htm>
 (Accessed: 10 March 2015).
- Aubrey, E. E. (1935) 'What Is Modernism?', *The Journal of Religion*, 15 (4), pp. 426-447.
- Ayandele, E. A (2005) *Nigerian Historical Studies*. London: Routledge
- Ayandele, E. A. (1966) *The Missionary Impact on Modern Nigeria, 1842-1914: A Political and Social Analysis*. London: Longmans.
- Ayandele, E. A. (1970) *Holy Johnson, Pioneer of African Nationalism, 1836 -1917*. Abingdon Oxon: Frank Cass & Co Ltd.
- Ayandele, E. A. (1983) 'Ijebuland 1800-1891: Era of Splendid Isolation', *Studies in Yoruba History and Culture: Essays in Honour of Professor SO Biobaku*, pp. 88-93.
- Ayers, M. R. (1975) 'The Ideas of Power and Substance in Locke's Philosophy', *The Philosophy Quarterly*, 25 (98), pp. 1 – 27.
- Ayittey G. B. N (1999) 'Combating Corruption in Africa: Analysis and Context' in Hope Sr, K. R., & Chikulo, B. C. (Eds.) *Corruption and Development in Africa*. Palgrave Macmillan. pp 104-118
-

- Azad, S. (2012) 'Ralph Ellison's Invisible Man and Postcolonialism', *International Journal of Social Sciences & Education*, 3 (2).
- Azikiwe, N. (1965) 'Essentials for Nigerian Survival', *Foreign Affairs*, pp. 447-461.
- Bäckström, P., & Hjartarson, B. (2014) 'Rethinking the Topography of the International Avant-Garde Introduction', *Avant Garde Critical Studies*, 30 (1), pp. 7-32.
- Bäckström, P., & Hjartarson, B. (Eds.). (2014) *Decentring The Avant-garde* (Vol. 30). Amsterdam: Rodopi.
- Baker, H. A. (2013) *Modernism and the Harlem Renaissance*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Baker, H. A. (1987) 'Modernism and the Harlem Renaissance' *American Quarterly*, pp. 84-97.
- Baker, P. H. (1974) *Urbanization and Political Change: the Politics of Lagos, 1917-1967*. Chicago: University of California Press.
- Ball, H. (1916, 1974) *Dada Manifesto Flight Out of Time: A Dada Diary*. California: University of California Press.
- Balogun, A. M. (2013) 'The Rationale for Postcolonial Appropriation of the Found Object', Interviewed by Clement Akpang. Phone. Nigeria: 23rd September 2013
- Bannon, I., & Collier, P. (Eds.). (2003). *Natural Resources and Violent Conflict: Options and Actions*. World Bank Publications.
- Barker, F., Hulme, P., & Iverson, M. (1996) *Colonial Discourse/Postcolonial Theory*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.
- Barr, J. (1846) *Anglican Church Architecture: With Some Remarks Upon Ecclesiastical Furniture*. Edinburgh: JH Parker.
- Barrett, T. (1997) 'Modernism and Postmodernism: An Overview with Art Examples', *Art Education: Content and Practice in a Postmodern era* pp. 17-30.
- Barson, T. (2010) 'Introduction: Modernism and The Black Atlantic' in Barson, T., Gorschlüter, P., & Archer, P. *Afro Modern: Journeys through the Black Atlantic*. London: Tate Publishing.
-

- Bascom, W. (1953) 'African Culture and the Missionary', *Civilisation* 3 (4), pp. 491-504
- Bascom, W. (1963) 'The Urban African and His World', *Cahiers d'Études Africaines*, pp. 163-185.
- Bassey, O. M. (1999) *Missionary Rivalry and Education Expansion in Nigeria 1885 – 1945*. New York USA: The Edward Meller Press.
- Baudelaire, C. P. (1863) *The Painter of Modern Life*. United Kingdom: Penguin.
- Bauman, Z. (1991) *Modernity and Ambivalence*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Beck, S. (2010) *Mideast & Africa 1700-1950 Ethics of Civilisation*. USA: World Peace publishers.
- Becker, H. S. (1982) *Art Worlds*. California: University of California Press.
- Beier, U. (1960) *Art in Nigeria*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Beier, U. (1968) *Contemporary African Art*. New York: New York University Press.
- Beier, U., & Krausmann, R. (1986) Long Water: Aboriginal Art and Literature (Vol. 34). Australia: Robert Brown & Associates Pty. Ltd.
- Ben Enwonwu Foundation (2010) *BEF* [Online] Available at: <http://www.benenwonwufoundation.org> (Accessed: 2014).
- Berman, M. (1983) *All that is Solid Melts into Air: The Experience of Modernity*. USA: Penguin Books.
- Berns & Roberts (2002) Eds. Anderson, M. G., & Peek, P. M. 'Ways of the Rivers: Arts and Environment of the Niger Delta', *African Arts*, 35(1), pp. 12-93.
- Bhabha, H. (1984) 'Of mimicry and Man: The Ambivalence of Colonial Discourse', *October*, 28, pp. 125-133.
- Bhabha, H. (1996) 'The Other Question: Difference, Discrimination, and the Discourse of Colonialism', *Black British Cultural Studies: A Reader*, pp. 87-106.
- Bhabha, H. K. (1994) *The Location of Culture*. New York: Psychology Press.
- Bhabha, H. K., Back, L., & Solomos, J. (1999) *Colonialism, Race and the Other: 'Race' Time and the Revision of Modernity*. London: Taylor & Francis.
- Binder, L. M. (2008) 'El Anatsui: Transformations', *African Arts*, 41 (2), pp. 24-37.
-

- Blier, S. P. (1985) 'Kings, Crowns, and Rights of Succession: Obalufon Arts at Ife and Other Yoruba Centers', *The Art Bulletin*, 67 (3), pp. 383-401.
- Blocker, H. G. (2001) 'Non-western Aesthetics as a Colonial Invention', *Journal of Aesthetic Education*, pp. 3-13.
- Bois, Y. A. (1993) *Painting as Model*. London: MIT Press.
- Bois, Y. A., & Streip, K. (1987) 'Kahnweiler's Lesson', *Representations*, pp. 33-68.
- Booth, A. (2008) 'Twentieth Century Britain: Economic, Cultural and Social Change', Ed. Carnevali, F. & Strange, J. *The Economic History Review*, 61(1), pp. 251-252.
- Bourriaud, N., Pleasance, S., Woods, F., & Copeland, M. (2002) *Relational Aesthetics*. Paris: Les presses du reel.
- Bradbury, M. (1930, 1978) *Modernism: 1890-1930*. Sussex: Harvester Press
- Bradbury, M. (1983) *The Modern American Novel*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Breton, A. (1924) *Manifestoes of Surrealism*, translated by Richard Seaver and Helen R. Lane, Ann Arbor Paperbacks. Michigan: University of Michigan Press, pp. 1 - 26.
- Brettell, R. R. (1999) *Modern Art, 1851-1929: Capitalism and Representation*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Breuilly, J. (1993) *Nationalism and the State*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.
- Brooker, P. (2014) *Modernism/Postmodernism*. London: Routledge.
- Brown, G., & Yule, G. (1983) *Discourse Analysis*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Buchan, J. (1980) *The Expendable Mary Slessor*. Edinburgh: The Saint Andrew Press
- Bürger, P. (1984) *Theory of the Avant-garde (Vol. 4)*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.
- Burns, A. C. (1921) Colonial Annual Report for Southern Nigeria 1920. Lagos
-

- Burns, A. C. (1923) Colonial Annual Report for Southern Nigeria 1922. Lagos. No. 1155
- Buxton, T. F. (1839) *The African Slave Trade and it's Remedy*. London: Frank Cass
- Camp, C. (2005) 'Objects and Meaning: New Perspectives on Art and Craft', *Western Folklore*, 64 (3/4), pp. 360.
- Cantle, T. (2012) *Interculturalism: the New Era of Cohesion and Diversity*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Čapková, H. (2014) 'Japanese Cubist Body-Mapping Modern Experience in the Pre-WWII Japanese Artistic Network', *ARS*, 47(2), pp. 122 – 133.
- Césaire, A. (1972) *Discourse on Colonialism*. USA: New York University Press.
- Charvet, J. (1972) 'Individual Identity and Social Consciousness in Rousseau's Philosophy', in *Modern Studies in Philosophy: Hobbes and Rousseau. A Collection of Critical Essays*. New York: Anchor Books.
- Childs, P. (Ed.). (2002) *A Routledge Literary Sourcebook on EM Forster's A Passage to India*. London: Routledge.
- Childs, P. (2007) *Modernism*. London: Routledge.
- Chin, D. (1989) 'Interculturalism, Postmodernism, Pluralism', *Performing Arts Journal*, 11, pp. 163-175.
- Chukueggu, C. (2010) 'Modern Artistic Tendency in Nigeria: it's Influence on the Creative Development', *Anthropologist* 12, pp. 167-73.
- Chukueggu, C. C. (2010) 'The Asele Period in Uche Okeke's Creativity 1958-1966', *African Research Review*, 4 (3).
- Chukueggu, C. C. (2011) *Uche Okeke: Father of Modernist Art in Nigeria*. USA: Lambert Academic Publishing
- Clapperton, H. (1825) *Journal of a Second Expedition into the Interior of Africa from Bight of Benin to Soccatoo*. London: John Marray
- Clark, J. (1998) *Modern Indian Art*. Honolulu: University of Hawai Press
- Clark, T. J. (1973) 'On the Social History of Art', in *Image of the People: Gustave Caurbet and the 1848 Revolution*. California: University of California Press.
-

- Clark, T. J. (1982) 'Clement Greenberg's Theory of Art'. *Critical Inquiry*, pp. 139-156.
- Clarke, C. (2007) 'Uche Okeke and Chinua Achebe: Artist and Author in Conversation', *Critical Interventions: Journal of African Art History and Visual Culture*, 1 (1) pp. 143-153.
- Clifford, H. (1918) 1917 Colonial Annual Report for Gold Coast. No. 998
- Cohn, B. S. (1996) *Colonialism and its Reforms of Knowledge: The British in India*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press.
- Cole, H. M., & Aniakor, C. C. (1984) *Igbo Arts: Community and Cosmos*. California: University of California Press.
- Coleman, J. S. (1958, 1965) *Nigeria: Background to Nationalism*. California: University of California Press. P180
- Conversi, D. (2012) 'Modernism and Nationalism', *Journal of Political Ideologies*, 17 (1), pp. 13-34.
- Cordwell, J. M. (1983) 'The Art and Aesthetics of the Yoruba', *African Arts*, pp. 56-100.
- Cotter, H. (2013) 'A Million Pieces of Home' *The New York Times*, 8 February [Online] Available at: http://www.nytimes.com/2013/02/10/arts/design/a-million-pieces-of-home-el-anatsui-at-brooklyn-museum.html?_r=0 (Accessed: 10 August 2015).
- Cox, N. (2000) *Cubism*. London: Phaidon Press limited
- Crouch, C. (1999) *Modernism in Art, Design and Architecture*. London: Macmillan.
- Cust, E. (1839) *Reflection on West India Affairs*. London: J. Hatchard and Son.
- Danto, A. (1988) *ART/Artifact. Nation*.
- Danto, A. (1997) 'After the End of Art', *Contemporary Art and the Pale of History*.
- Danto, A. C. (1981) *The Transfiguration of the Commonplace: a Philosophy of Art*. Massachusetts: Harvard University Press.
- De Jongh, J. (1990) *Vicious Modernism: Black Harlem and the Literary Imagination*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
-

- Deepwell, K. (1998) *Women Artists and Modernism*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.
- Delanty, G. (2000) *Modernity and Postmodernity: Knowledge, Power and the Self*. London: Sage.
- Delsigne, J. (2012) 'Reading Catholic Art in Edmund Spenser's Temple of Isis', *Studies in Philology*, 109 (3), pp. 199-224.
- Dempsey, A. (2010) *Styles, Schools and Movements: The Essential Encyclopaedic Guide to Modern Art*. London: Thames & Hudson.
- Dike, I. N. (2012) 'Three and Half Decades of Modernism in Igbo Textile Art (1970 - 2005)', *International Journal of Research in Arts and Social Sciences. IJRASS* 4 pp. 452-463
- Dilomprizulike (2007) Interview with Henry Moore Institute. *Henry Moore*
- Diogu, G. O (2012) 'Development and Growth of Fibre Art in Nigeria', *SRAE* [Online] Available at:http://academicexcellencesociety.com/development_and_growth_of_fiber_art_in_nigeria.html (Accessed: 28 November 2014).
- Diop, S. (2013) 'African Elites and their Post-colonial Legacy: Cultural, Political and Economic Discontent—by Way of Literature', *Africa Development*, 37 (4), pp. 221-235.
- Douglas, R. (1997) *Translation and Empire: Postcolonial Theories Explained*. USA: St. Jerome Press.
- Eades, J. S. (1980) *The Yoruba Today*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Egbert, D. D. (1967) 'The Idea of "Avant-garde" in Art and Politics', *The American Historical Review*, 73 (2), pp. 339-366.
- Egonwa O. (2001) 'The Evolution of the Concept of Natural Synthesis', *Uso-Nigeria Journal of Art* 3 (1 & 2) pp. 52-60.
- Egonwa, O. (2003) 'Uche Okeke in the History and Practice of Nigeria's Contemporary Art', In Agbayi, E., & Ene-Orji, C. *The Triumph of a Vision: an Anthology on Uche Okeke and Modern Art in Nigeria*. Lagos: Pendulum Art Gallery.
-

- Eisenstadt, S. N. (1965) 'Transformation of Social political, and Cultural Orders in Modernization', *American Sociological Review*, pp. 659-673.
- Einstein, A. (1905) 'On the Special Theory of Relativity', *Ann Phys*, 17, pp. 891-921.
- Eke, B. (2008) cited in Okwuosa, T. (2013) 'Environmental Challenges as Creative Muse: The Installation and Performance Art of Bright Ugochukwu Eke', *Academic Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies*, 2(3), pp. 63.
- Eke, B. in Weintraub, L. (2012) *To life!: eco Art in Pursuit of a Sustainable Planet*. California: University of California Press.
- Ekechi, F. K. (1983) 'Portrait of a Colonizer: H. M. Douglas in Colonial Nigeria, 1897 – 1920', *African Studies Review* 26 (1), pp. 25-50.
- Ekeh, P. P. (1975) 'Colonialism and the Two Publics in Africa: A Theoretical Statement', *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 17 (01), pp. 91-112.
- Elena Delgado, L., Mendelson, J., & Vázquez, O. (2007) 'Introduction: Recalcitrant Modernities—Spain, Cultural Difference and the Location of Modernism', *Journal of Iberian and Latin American Studies*, 13(2-3), pp. 105-119.
- Ellison, R. (1947) *Invisible Man*. New York: Vintage.
- Elvin, M. (1986) 'A Working Definition of Modernity?', *Past and Present*, pp. 209-213.
- Emgin, B. (2012) 'Trashion: The Return of the Disposed', *Design Issues*, 28 (1), pp. 63-71.
- Enwezor, O., & Achebe, C. (2001) *The Short Century: Independence and Liberation Movements in Africa, 1945-1994*. New York: Prestel Publishing.
- Enwonwu (1994) Interview with Nkiru Nzegwu
- Enwonwu, B. (1946) 'The Evolution, History and Definition of Fine Art (2)', *West African Pilot*, 3 (6)
- Enwonwu, B. (1949) 'The Evolution, History and Definition of Fine Art (3)', *West African Pilot*, 11 May, Vol.2
- Enwonwu, B. (1949) 'The Evolution, History and Definition of Fine Art (1)', *West African Pilot*, 5 May, Vol. 2
-

- Enwonwu, B. (1950) Interview with the Harmon Foundation, December 8.
- Enwonwu, B. (1956) 'The Problems of the African Artist Today', *Ijele: Art eJournal of the African World*, 1 (2)
- Enwonwu, B. (1989) Interview by Nkiru Nzegwu J
- Enwonwu, B. (1991) 'The Battle for Cultural Freedom'
- Evelyn, B. (1996) *Contemporary African Arts and Artists*. New York: Harman Foundation Inc.
- Everdell, W. R. (1997) *The First Moderns: Profiles in the Origins of Twentieth-century Thought*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Eweje, G. (2006) 'Environmental Costs and Responsibilities Resulting from Oil Exploitation in Developing Countries: The Case of the Niger Delta of Nigeria', *Journal of Business Ethics*, 69 (1), pp. 27-56.
- Eysteinnsson, Á. (1992) *The Concept of Modernism*. New York: Cornell University Press.
- Fagg, W. B., & Plass, M. (1964) *African Sculpture: an Anthology* (Vol. 8). Studio Vista.
- Fanon, F. (1961) 'On National Culture', *Postcolonialisms: An Anthology of Cultural Theory and Criticism* pp. 198-219.
- Feng, P. (2014) 'Modernism in China: Too Early and Too Late', *Filozofski Vestnik*, 35(2), pp. 141
- Filani, E. O. (1998) 'Form and Content as a Basis for the Classification of Contemporary Nigerian Art', *USO: Journal of Art, National Gallery of Art, Lagos*, pp. 33 – 44.
- Filani, E.O. (2003) 'Zaria Art Society and the Imperative of Historical Articulation' in Abayi, E. & Ene-Orji, C. *The Triumph of a Vision An Anthology on Uche Okeke and Modern Art in Nigeria*. Lagos: Pendulum Art Gallery
- Fiske, S. T. (1993) 'Controlling Other People: the Impact of Power on Stereotyping', *American Psychologist*, 48 (6), pp. 621.
- Fiske, S. T. (1993) 'Stereotyping and Power', *American Psychologist Association*. 48 (6), pp. 621-628
-

- Fontaine, C. (2010) 'Readymade: Genealogy of a Concept', *Flash Art International*, 43 (270), pp. 56
- Fontaine, C. (2014) 'Ready-Made Artist: The Genealogy of a Concept', *Qui Parle: Critical Humanities and Social Sciences*, 22 (2), pp. 57-68.
- Fosbery, W. (1906) Colonial Report for the Protectorates of Nigeria 1905.
- Foster, H., Krauss, R., Bois, Y. A., & Benjamin, H. D. (2004) *Art since 1900: Modernism, Anti-Modernism, Postmodernism*. New York: Thames & Hudson.
- Foucault, M. (1982) 'The Subject of Power', *Critical Inquiry*, 8 (4), pp. 77 – 795:
- Fowler, G. (1938) Remarks in Aina Onabolu's Visitors Book. Lagos August 13th
- Frascina, F., Harrison, C., & Paul, D. (Eds.). (1982) *Modern Art and Modernism: a Critical Anthology*. London: Sage.
- Freund, A. (2014) *Portraiture and Politics in Revolutionary France*. Pennsylvania: Penn State University Press
- Friedman, S. S. (2006) 'Periodizing Modernism: Postcolonial Modernities and the Space/time Borders of Modernist Studies', *Modernism/Modernity*, 13 (3), pp. 425-443.
- Frisby, D. (1985) 'Fragments of Modernity: Theories of Modernity in the Work of Simmel, Kracauer and Benjamin', *Polity, Cambridge*, pp. 4.
- Frohne, U. A. (2012) 'Appropriation: Back then, in Between, and Today', *Art Bulletin*, 94(2), pp. 172—174.
- Galenson, D.W. (2008) 'Analysing Artistic Innovations: The Greatest Breakthroughs of the Twentieth Century', *Historical Methods*, 41(3), pp. 111-120
- Galloway, A. D. (1960) 'Missionary Impact on Nigeria', *Nigerian Magazine Independence Edition*.
- Gallwey, H. L. (1900) Colonial Annual Reports for Southern Nigeria 1899 – 1900. No 289. London: Darling & Son, Ltd
- Gaonkar, D. P. (1999) 'On Alternative Modernities', *Public Culture*, 11 (1), pp. 1-18.
- Garratt, C., & Rodrigues, C. (2001) *Introducing Modernism*. Cambridge: Icon.
-

- Gates Jr, H. L. (1988) *The Signifying Monkey: A Theory of African American Literary Criticism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Gates Jr, H. L., & Mitchell, W. J. T. (2014) *The Signifying Monkey: A Theory of African American Literary Criticism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Gbadegesin, O. A. (2007) *The Intersection of Modern Art, Anthropology, and International Politics in Colonial Nigeria, 1910-1914*. Unpublished Doctoral Dissertation. Emory University.
- Gell, A. (1996) 'Vogel's Net Traps as Artworks and Artworks as Traps', *Journal of Material Culture* 1 (1) pp. 15-38.
- Gellner, E., & Breuilly, J. (2008) *Nations and Nationalism*. New York: Cornell University Press.
- Giddens, A. (2002) *Runaway World: How Globalisation is Reshaping our Lives*. London: Profile Books Ltd.
- Gilman, S. (1985) *Difference and Pathology: Stereotypes of Sexuality, Race, and Madness*. Massachusetts USA: Cornell University Press.
- Goldie, H. (1890, 1901) *Calabar and its Mission*. Edinburgh / London: Oliphant Anderson and Ferrier
- Goodman, N. (1976) *Languages of Art: An Approach to a Theory of Symbols*. Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing.
- Gray, C., & Malins, J. P. (1993) 'Research Procedures/Methology for Artists & Designers', *Robert Gordon University*.
- Gray, C. & Malins, J. (2004) *Visualizing Research: A Guide to the Research Process in Art and Design*. London: Ashgate.
- Greenberg, C. (1939) *Avant-garde und Kitsch* (pp. 3-21). na.
- Greenberg, C. (1982) 'American-Type Painting', *Modern Art and Modernism: A Critical Anthology*, 93.
- Greenberg, C. (1983) 'Beginnings of Modernism', *Arts Magazine*, 57(8), pp. 77-79.
- Greenberg, C. (1986) The Role of Nature in Modern Painting. *Clement Greenberg The Collected Essays and Criticism*, 2, 1945-1949.
-

- Greenberg, C. (1988) 'Modernist Painting' in Frascina, F., Harrison, C., & Paul, D. (Eds.) *Modern art and Modernism: a Critical Anthology*. Washington DC: Sage.
- Guasp, S. (2013) 'The Found Object', *SECACA Southeasten College Art Conference Proceedings*.
- Guerard, A. (1936) 'Art for Art's Sake'. *Books Abroad*, pp.263-265.
- Habermas, J. (1985) 'Modernity an Incomplete Project', *Postmodern Culture*, pp.3-15.
- Habermas, J., & Ben-Habib, S. (1981) 'Modernity versus Postmodernity', *New German Critique*, pp. 3-14.
- Hackett, R. I. (1994) 'Art and Religion in Africa: some Observations and Reflections', *Journal of Religion in Africa*, pp. 294-308.
- Hahn, O. (1964) 'Entretien Marcel Duchamp' *Paris-Express*, 23 July pp. 22
- Hall, S., & Gieben, B. (1992) *Formation of Modernity*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Harcourt, L. P. C (1914) Colonial Annual Report for Northern Nigeria 1913. London: Barclay and Fry Limited. No 821
- Harding, J. (2006) 'From Cutting Edge to Rough Edges: On the Transnational Foundations of Avant-Garde Performance', *Not the Other Avant-Garde: Transnational Foundations of Avant-Garde Performance*, pp. 18-40
- Harding, J. M., & Rouse, J. (Eds.). (2010) *Not the other Avant-garde: the Transnational Foundations of Avant-garde Performance*. Michigan: University of Michigan Press.
- Harrison, C., Wood, P. (Eds.) (1998) *Art in Theory 1815-1900: An Anthology of Changing Ideas*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Harrison, E. J., & Peterson, S. (Eds.) (1997) *Unmanning Modernism: Gendered Readings*. Tennessee: University of Tennessee Press.
- Hassan, S. M. (2010) 'African Modernism: Beyond Alternative Modernities Discourse', *South Atlantic Quarterly*, 109 (3), pp. 451-473.
- Hassan, S. M., Adams, S., & El Salahi, I. (2013). Ibrahim El-Salahi: a Visionary Modernist.
-

- Hegel, G. W.F. (1886) *Introductory lectures on Aesthetics*. London: Penguin Books.
- Hera Culda, L. (2014) 'Invisible Power: Electricity and Social Visibility in Ralph Ellison's Invisible Man', *Linnaeus University*
- Herf, J. (1984) *Reactionary Modernism*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Holloway, J. (1910) Letter to Aina Onabolu
- Honour, H., Fleming, J. (2005) *A World History of Art*. London: Laurence King Publishing.
- Hopkins, A. G. (1965) 'The Lagos Chamber of Commerce 1888-1903', *Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria*, pp. 241-248.
- Hopkins, A. G. (1966) 'The Lagos strike of 1897: An Exploration in Nigerian Labour History', *Past & Present*, 35(1), pp. 133-155.
- Horton R. (1971) 'African Conversion', *African Journal of the International African Institute* XLI, 41 (02), pp. 85-108.
- Houngnikpo, M. C. (2006). Corruption in Africa. In *Africa's Elusive Quest for Development* (pp. 75-96). Palgrave Macmillan US.
- Howard, W. (1974) *Urban Politics in Nigeria: a Study of Port Harcourt*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Huyssen, A. (1986) *After the Great Divide: Modernism, Mass Culture, Postmodernism* (Vol. 399). Indiana: Indiana University Press.
- Idahor, T. (2012) cited in *African Artists Foundation's Miami Arts Fair Catalogue*.
- Ijagbemi, A. (1986) 'Christian Missionary Activity in Colonial Nigeria', *Nigeria Magazine*. Lagos.
- Ikwuemesi K (1996) 'Nigerian Art and Politics of Identity', *Nigerian Journal of Arts*, 1(2), pp. 54-58.
- Ikwuemesi, C. K (2010) 'Modern Nigerian Art: A Discursive Sketch' *VANGUARD* 19 August [Online]. Available at: <http://www.vanguardngr.com/2010/08/modern-nigerian-art-a-discursive-sketch/> (Accessed: 10 October 2012).
-

- Ikhwemesi, K. (2003) *The Triumph of a Vision, an Anthology on Uche Okeke and Modern Art in Nigeria*. Lagos: Pendulum Publishers.
- Inkeles, A. (1975) 'Becoming Modern', *Ethos*, 3(2), pp. 323-342.
- Ionesco, E. (1960) 'The Avant-Garde Theatre', *The Tulane Drama Review*, pp. 44-53.
- Irele, A. (1965) 'Negritude or Black Cultural Nationalism', *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, 3(03), pp. 321-348.
- Irivwier, G. O. (2010) 'An Appreciation of the State of Visual Arts in Nigeria (1900-1970)', *Anthropologist* 12 (2), pp. 113-117.
- Iversen, M. (2004) 'Readymade, Found Object, Photograph', *Art Journal*, 63(2), pp. 44-57.
- James, F. S (1908) Colonial Report for Southern Nigeria 1907.
- James, F. S. (1907) Colonial Report for Southern Nigeria 1906. Lagos
- James, F. S. (1911) Colonial Report for Northern Nigeria 1910
- Janes, D. (2009) *Victorian Reformation: the Fight over Idolatry in the Church of England, 1840-1860*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Jason, R. (2000) 'The Salon and The Royal Academy in the Nineteenth Century', In *Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History*. [Online] Available at: http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/sara/hd_sara.htm (Accessed 9th December 2015)
- Jean, S. (2007) 'Portraiture in Renaissance and Baroque Europe', In *Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History*. New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art.
- Jegade, D. (2002) 'Globalizing Ulism: Trick or Treat' in Ottenberg, S. (Ed.). *The Nsukka Artists and Nigerian Contemporary Art*. Washington DC: University of Washington Press.
- Jenkins, M. D. (1947) 'The State Portrait: Its Origin and Evolution (No. 3)'. *Art Bulletin*.
- Jeyifo, B. ed., (2001) *Perspectives on Wole Soyinka: Freedom and Complexity*. Jackson: University Press of Mississippi.
- Jouffroy, A. (2000) 'Object lessons', *Organization* 12 (3) pp. 331-355.
-

- Kalliney, P. (2007) 'Metropolitan Modernism and Its West Indian Interlocutors: 1950s London and the Emergence of Postcolonial Literature', *PMLA*, pp. 89-104.
- Kandiyoti, D. (2002) 'Post-colonialism Compared: Potentials and Limitations in the Middle East and Central Asia', *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 34(02), pp. 279-297.
- Kant, I. (1928) *Critique of Judgement*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Kaplan, C. (1990) 'Women's Writing and Feminist Strategy', *American Literary History*, pp. 339-357.
- Kaplan, C. (1995) 'Rereading Modernism: New Directions in Feminist Criticism', pp. 115-117.
- Karlholm, D. (2009) 'Surveying Contemporary Art: Post-war, Postmodern, and then What?', *Art History*, 32 (4), pp. 712-733.
- Kart, S. (2009) *The Phenomenon of Récupération at the Dak'art Biennale*
- Kasfir, S. L. (1984) 'One Tribe, one Style? Paradigms in the Historiography of African Art', *History in Africa*, 11, pp. 163-193.
- Kasfir, S. L., & Förster, T. (2013) *African Art and Agency in the Workshop*. Bloomington USA: Indiana University Press.
- Kashim, I. B. & Adelabu, O. S. (2010) 'The Current Emphasis on Science and Technology in Nigeria: Dilemmas for Art Education', *Leonardo* 43 (3) pp. 269-273.
- Katsiaficas, G. (1999) 'Aesthetic and Political Avant-Gardes', *The Journal of Aesthetics and Protest*, pp. 1-6.
- Kent, J. (1978) *Holding the Fort: Studies in Victorian Revivalism*. London: Epworth Press.
- King, C. (Ed.). (1999) *Views of Difference: Different Views of Art*. Yale: Yale University Press.
- Kramer, H. (1973) *The Age of the Avant-Garde 1956-1972*. New York: Farrar Straus Giroux.
-

- Krauss, R. E. (1985) *The Originality of the Avant-Garde and other Modernist Myths*. London: MIT Press.
- Krauss, R., Bois, Y. A., Buchloh, B. H., & Joselit, D. (2004) *Art Since 1900: Modernism, Anti-modernism, Postmodernism*. London: Thames & Hudson
- Kreamer, C. M., Roberts, M. N., Harney, E., & Purpura, A. (2007) 'Inscribing Meaning: Writing and Graphic Systems in African Art', *African Arts*, 40 (3), pp. 78-91.
- Kress, G., & Van Leeuwen, T. V. (2001) *Multimodal Discourse: The Modes and Media of Contemporary Communication*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Kronika, J (2009) 'Nnenna Okore's Art Recovered Energies Recycled Material Installation', *The Examiner*, 11, pp. 1
- Lampert, C. (1995) *Seven Stories about Modern Art in Africa*. London: Flammarion.
- Landow G. (1989) 'The Doctrines of Evangelical Protestantism' *Victorian Press*, [Online] Available at: <http://www.victorianweb.org/religion/evangel2.html> (Accessed: 10 November 2013).
- Law, R. (1986) 'Early European Sources Relating to the Kingdom of Ijebu (1500-1700): A Critical Survey', *History in Africa*, pp. 245-260.
- Lawal, B. (1977) 'Africa: The Search for Identity in Contemporary Nigerian Art', *Studio 193*, 986, pp. 145-150.
- Lears, J. (1994) *No Place of Grace: Anti-modernism and the Transformation of American Culture, 1880-1920*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Lewis, P. (2000) *Modernism, Nationalism, and the Novel*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Lewis, P. (2007) *The Cambridge Introduction to Modernism*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Lieberman, C. (1996) 'From Modernism to Postmodernism', *History of European Ideas*, 22 (1), pp. 45-49.
- Lloyd, P. C. (1959) 'The Yoruba Town today', *The Sociological Review*, 7 (1), pp. 45-63.
-

- Locke, A. (1925) 'Enter the New Negro', *Survey Graphic*, 6(6), pp. 631-634.
- Loomba, A. (1998) *Colonialism / Postcolonialism*, London: Routledge
- Lugard, F. D (1917) Colonial Report for Nigeria 1916
- Lugard, F. D (1970) *Political Memoranda 3rd ed.* London: Frank Cass
- Luo, J. (2011) *The Narrative Art of Modernist Fiction: A Corpus Stylistic and Cognitive Narratological Approach*. Unpublished Doctoral Dissertation. University of Birmingham.
- MacClancy, J. (1997) *Anthropology, Art and Contest. Contesting Art: Art, Politics and Identity in the Modern World*. Oxford: Berg
- Mallavarapu, S. (2007). Globalization and the Cultural Grammar of 'Great Power' Aspiration. *International Studies*, 44(2), 87-102.
- Mamza, M. P. (2007) 'Contemporary Issues in Fine and Applied Arts Education in Nigeria', *Multidisciplinary Journal of Research Development*, 8 (4), pp. 1-4.
- Mann, K. (1985) *Marrying Well: Marriage, Status, and Social Change among the Educated Elite in Colonial Lagos*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Marcuse, H. (1972) *Counterrevolution and Revolt*. Boston: Beacon Press
- Marcuse, H. (1978) *The Aesthetic Dimension: Toward a Critique of Marxist Aesthetics*. Boston: Beacon Press.
- Markowitz, S. J. (1994) 'The Distinction between Art and Craft', *Journal of Aesthetic Education*, pp. 55-70.
- Mayer, E. (1975) 'Becoming Modern in Bayt al-Shabāb', *The Middle East Journal*, pp. 279-294.
- Mbiti, J. (1988) 'The Role of Women in Traditional African Religion', *Cahiers des Religions Africaines* 22, pp. 69-82.
- McNiff, S. (1999) *Art-based Research*. London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers.
- Medubi, O. (2009) 'Cartooning in Nigeria: Large Canvas, Little Movement', *Lent, JA*, pp. 198.
- Meštrović, S. G. (1998) *Anthony Giddens: the Last Modernist*. London: Taylor & Francis.
- Metcalf, B. (2000) 'The Problem of the Fountain', *Metalsmith*, 20 (3), pp. 28
-

- Metz, H. C. (1991) 'Emergence of Nigerian Nationalism', *Library of Congress: US Country Studies*.
- Mitter, P. (2007) *The Triumph of Modernism (India's Artists and The Avant-Garde 1922-1947)*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Mitter, P. (2008) 'Interventions: Decentering Modernism: Art History and Avant-garde Art from the Periphery', *Art Bulletin*, 90 (4), pp. 531-548.
- Monatschrift, B., & Aufklärung, W. (1984) 'Michel Foucault. What is Enlightenment?' In Rabinow, P. (ed.) *The Foucault Reader*. New York: Pantheon Books.
- Morris, G. S. (1876) 'The Philosophy of Art', *The Journal of Speculative Philosophy*, pp. 1-16.
- Mount, M. W. (1973) *African Art: the Years Since 1920*. Indiana: Indiana University Press.
- Munonye, J. (1964) *The Only Son*. Ibadan: Heinemann Publishers.
- Murray, K. (1944) cited in Oloidi, O. (1989) 'Art and Nationalism in Colonial Nigeria', *Nsukka Journal of History*, 1(1).
- Mushohwe, K. (2013) 'Zimbabwe: The Lost and Found Art', *The Herald*. [Online] Available at: <http://www.allafrica.com/stories/201210240435.html?viewall=1> (Accessed: 8 April 2013).
- National Organisation of Ijebu Descendants USA (2004) 'Ijebu Origin and History' *NOIDUSA* [Online] Available at: <http://www.noidusa.org/ijebuoriginandhistory.html> (Accessed: 11 April 2014).
- Nedozchiwin, G. A. (1972) 'What is Aesthetics?' in Lang, B., & Williams, F. (Eds.). *Marxism & Art: Writings in Aesthetics and Criticism*. New York: David McKay Company, Inc.
- Negri, A., Kapur, G., & Krauss, R. (2008) *Antinomies of Art and Culture: Modernity, Postmodernity, Contemporaneity*. USA: Duke University Press.
- Ngumah, H. C. (2014) 'Visual Arts Practices in Nigeria: A Historical Approach', *International Journal of the Image*, 4 (2), pp. 1-26.
-

- Nicodemus, E. (2000) *Bourdieu Out of Europe*. London: Sage Publications.
- Nicodemus, E. (2010) 'Bourdieu Out of Europe', *Third Text* (30) pp. 3-12
- Nicodemus, E. (2008) 'The Black Atlantic: And the Paradigm Shift to Modern Art in Africa', *Critical Interventions*, 2 (3-4), pp. 7-20.
- Nicodemus, E., & Romare, K. (1997) 'Africa, Art Criticism and the big Commentary', *Third Text*, 11 (41).
- Nietzsche, F. (1968) *The Will to Power*, trans. Walter Kaufmann and R.J. Hollingdale. New York: Vintage.
- Nodine, C. F., Locher, P. J., & Krupinski, E. A. (1993) 'The Role of Formal Art Training on Perception and Aesthetic Judgment of Art Compositions', *Leonardo*, pp. 219-227.
- Nooter, M. H. (1993) 'Secrecy: African Art that Conceals and Reveals', *African Arts* pp. 55-102.
- Norris, S. (2004) 'Multimodal Discourse Analysis: A Conceptual Framework', *Discourse and Technology: Multimodal Discourse Analysis*, pp. 101-115.
- Nwafor, O. (2014) 'Art-Literary Interface: The Creative Muse of Uche Okeke Through Chinua Achebe's Things Fall Apart', *AJOL African Journal* [Online] Available at; <http://www.ajol.info/index.php/ujah/article/view/102633> (Accessed: 10 May 2013).
- Nwanna, C. (2004) *Life and Works of Uche Okeke as a Contemporary Nigerian Artist*, Unpublished M. Phil Thesis. Institute of African Studies: Ibadan.
- Nzegwu, N. (1998) 'The Africanized Queen: Metonymic Site of Transformation', *African Studies Quarterly*, 1 (4).
- Nzegwu, N. (1999) 'Representational Axis: a Cultural Realignment of Enwonwu' in *Contemporary Textures: Multidimensionality in Nigerian Art*. International Society for the Study of Africa, Binghamton University Press. pp. 158
- Nzegwu, N. (1999) 'The Concept of Modernity in Contemporary African Art', *The African Diaspora: African Origins and New World Identities*, pp. 391-427.
- Nzegwu, N. (1999) 'Introduction: Contemporary Nigerian Art: Euphonizing the Art Historical Voice', *International Society for the Study of Africa*, pp. 1-39.
-

- O'Connor, L., (2013) 'El Anatsui: When I last Wrote to you about Africa', *Reviews*, pp. 30
- O'Brien, E., Nicodemus, E., Chiu, M., Genocchio, B., Coffey, M. K., Tejada, R. (2011) *Modern Art in Africa, Asia and Latin America: An Introduction to Global Modernisms*. London: Wiley-Blackwell
- Obalk, H. (2000) 'The Unfindable Readymade', *Toutfait* [Online] Available at: http://www.toutfait.com/issues/issue_2/Articles/obalk.html. (Accessed: 24 March 2012).
- Odiboh, F (2013) 'Found Object in African Art, its Contrast with European Readymade', Interviewed by Clement Akpang. Phone. Nigeria: 11 September 2013.
- Odiboh, F. O. (2009) 'Creative Reformation of African Art Traditions: The Iconography of Abayomi Barber Art School', *African Arts*, 42 (2), pp. 76-83.
- Odiboh, F. O. (2009) 'Africanizing A Modern African Art History Curriculum from the Perspectives of an Insider', *African Research Review*, 3(1).
- Odoh, G. C., Nneka, S., Anikpe, E. A. (2014) 'Waste And Found Objects as Potent Creative Resources: A Review of The Art Is Everywhere Project', *International Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences (IJHSS)* 3 (6), pp. 1-14.
- Offoedu-Okeke, O. (2012) *Artists of Nigeria*. S. O. Ogbechie (Ed.). 5 Continents.
- Ofori-Attah, K. (2006) 'The British and Curriculum Development in West Africa: A Historical Discourse', *International Review of Education / Internationale Zeitschrift Für Erziehungswissenschaft*. 52 (5), pp. 409-423.
- Ogbechie, S. O. (1995) 'Comrades at Arms: The African Avant-garde at the First World Festival of Negro Arts (Dakar 1966)', *One Million And Forty-Four Years (And Sixty Three Days)*.
- Ogbechie, S. O. (1999) 'Revolution and Evolution in Modern Nigerian Art: Myths and Realities', In Nzegwu, N. (ed.) *Contemporary Textures: Multidimensionality in Nigerian Art*. Binghamton: Binghamton University Press.
-

- Ogbechie, S. O. (2002) 'Zaria Art Society and the Uli Movement, Nigeria', In N'Gone, F & Loup, J (eds) *An Anthology of African Art: The Twentieth Century*. Paris: Revue Noire Editions.
- Ogbechie, S. O. (2003) 'Ben Enwonwu, Zarianist Aesthetics, and the Post-Colonial Criticism of Modern Nigerian Art', In Ikwuemesi, K. (éd.), *The Triumph of a Vision: An Anthology on Uche Okeke and Modern Art in Nigeria*. Lagos: Pendulum Gallery.
- Ogbechie, S. O. (2008) *Ben Enwonwu: The Making of an African Modernist*. USA: University of Rochester Press.
- Ogbechie, S. O. (2009) 'More on Nationalism and Nigerian Art', *African Arts*, 42 (3), pp. 9.
- Ogidan, L. (2014) 'Olu Amoda: FRINGE at Art Twenty One', *Omenka Magazine* [Online] Available at: <http://omenkamag.com/post/olu-amoda:-fringe> (Accessed: 10 August 2015).
- Oguibe, O. (1993) 'The Heart of Darkness', *Third Text*, 23, pp. 3-8.
- Oguibe, O. (2002) 'Appropriation as Nationalism in Modern African Art', *Third Text*, 16 (3), pp. 243-259.
- Oguibe, O. (2004) *The Culture Game*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Ogunkoya, T. O. (1956) 'The Early History of Ijebu', *Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria*, pp. 48-58.
- Okediji, M. (1997) 'Art of the Yoruba', *Art Institute of Chicago Museum Studies*, pp. 165-198.
- Okediji, M. (1999) 'Of Gaboon Vipers and Guinea Corn: Iconographic Kinship Across the Atlantic', In Nzegwu, N (ed.) *Contemporary Textures: Multidimensionality in Nigerian Art*. Binghamton: Binghamton University Press.
- Okeke, C. (1945) 'Modern African Art', *ArtAfrica Info*.
- Okeke, C. (1995) 'The Quest: From Zaria to Nsukka', *Seven Stories About Modern Art in Africa*, pp. 38-75.
-

- Okeke, U. (1981) 'Art in Development A Nigerian Perspective', *Nimo Asele Institute Publication*.
- Okeke, U. (1989) 'History of Modern Nigerian Art', *Nigeria Magazine*, pp. 128, 129.
- Okeke U (1999) 'History of Modern Nigeria Art', In Odimayo, A. (Ed.) *The Chartered Bank Collection: An Artistic European Expression Beyond Space and Time*. Lagos: Academy Press.
- Okeke U. (1975) 'Panorama of Modern Nigerian Art', *Nigerian Magazine*: Lagos.
- Okeke, U. (2007) 'Uche Okeke and Chinua Achebe: Artist and Author in Conversation', *Critical Interventions: Journal of African Art History and Visual Culture*. 1 (1) pp. 143 - 153.
- Okeke-Agulu , C. (1999) 'The Quest for a Nigerian Art: Or a Story of Art from Zaria to Nsukka', In: *Oguibe, O., Enwezor, O., Mudimbe, V., Appiah, K. A., Nicodemus, E., Kasfir, S., & Mulvey, L. Reading the Contemporary: African Art from Theory to the Marketplace*. London: Institute of International Visual Art, pp. 144-165.
- Okeke-Agulu, C. (2006) 'The Challenge of the Modern: An Introduction', *African Arts*, pp. 14-91.
- Okeke-Agulu, C. (2010) 'The Art Society and the Making of Postcolonial Modernism in Nigeria', *South Atlantic Quarterly*, 109 (3), pp. 505-527.
- Okeke-Agulu, C. (2013) 'Rethinking Mbari Mbayo: Osogbo Workshops in the 1960s, Nigeria', In Kasfir, S. L., & Förster, T. *African Art and Agency in the Workshop*. Indiana: Indiana University Press, pp. 154.
- Okeke-Agulu, C. (2015) *Postcolonial Modernism: Art and Decolonization in Twentieth-Century Nigeria*. USA: Duke University Press.
- Okeke-Agulu, C., & Picton, J. (2006) 'Nationalism and the Rhetoric of Modernism in Nigeria: The Art of Uche Okeke and Demas Nwoko, 1960-1968', *African Arts*, 39 (1), pp. 26-93.
-

- Okeke, C. (1945) 'Modern African Art', In Enwezor, O., & Achebe, C. *The Short Century: Independence and Liberation Movements in Africa, 1945-1994*. London: Prestel Publishers, pp. 30-35
- Okeke, D. N., & Onobrakpeya, B. (2003) 'Zaria Art Society And The Imperative of Historical Articulation', In Agbayi, E., & Ene-Orji, C. *The Triumph of a Vision: an Anthology on Uche Okeke and Modern Art in Nigeria*. Lagos: Pendulum Art Gallery pp. 133.
- Okeke, U (2001) Interviewed by Ikwemesi at Asele Institute Nimo April 8
- Okeke, U. (1958) *Natural Synthesis Manifesto I*. Ibadan.
- Okeke, U. (1959) 'Igbo Folk Tales'. *Nigercol Zaria* pp. 16
- Okeke, U. (1959) 'Natural Synthesis Manifesto II quoted in Okeke, U. 'Arts in Development A Nigerian Perspective', Nimo: *Asele Institute* pp. 1
- Okeke, U. (1976) 'Igbo Drawing and Painting', *Ufahamu: A Journal of African Studies*, 6 (2) pp. 10
- Okeke, U. (1978) 'An Introduction to Contemporary Nigerian Art', *New Culture*, 1 (1).
- Okeke, U. (1982) 'Art in Development A Nigerian Perspective', *Nimo: Asele Institute Publication* pp.1-2.
- Okeke, U. (1983) 'Creative Consciousness', *Nimo: Asele Institute Publications*
- Okeke, U. (1983) 'Uche Okeke Biodata', *Nimo: Asele Institute Publication*
- Okeke, U. (1983) *Design Inspiration Through Uli*. USA: University of Minesota Press.
- Okeke, U. (1999) 'History of Modern Nigeria Art', In Odimayo, A. (Ed.) *The Chartered Bank Collection: An Artistic European Expression Beyond Space and Time*. Lagos: Academy Press, pp. 11-51
- Okeke, U. (2002) 'Uli and My Early Art Experience' in Ottenberg, S. (ed.) *The Nsukka Artists and Nigerian Contemporary Art*. Washington DC: University of Washington Press.
-

- Okonkwo, I. E., & Akhogba, A. E. (2014) 'Uche Okeke as a Precursor of Contemporary Nigerian Art Education', *International Journal of Arts and Humanities*, 2 (3), S/No 7, pp. 53-67.
- Okore, N. (2013) 'Found Object in African Arts – its Postcolonial Diaspora Implications', Interviewed by Clement Akpang. Phone. Nigeria/USA: 20 September 2013.
- Okore, N. (2014) cited in 'Taking Shape: Nnenna Okore at the BAM's 2014 DanceAfrica Festival' *ARTINFACT* [Online] Available at: <http://www.artifactmag.com/art-framed/nnenna-okore-bams-2014-danceafrica-festival/> (Accessed 2015)
- Okpewho, I. (1977) 'Principles of Traditional African Art', *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, pp. 301-313.
- Okwuosa, T. (2013) 'Environmental Challenges as Creative Muse: The Installation and Performance Art of Bright Ugochukwu Eke', *Academic Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies*, 2(3), pp. 63.
- Oloidi, O (1989) 'Art and Nationalism in Colonial Nigeria', *Nsukka Journal of History* 1 (97)
- Oloidi, O. (1991) 'Defender of African Creativity: Aina Onabolu, Pioneer of Western Art In West Africa', *Africana Research Bulletin*, 17, pp. 21-49.
- Oloidi, O. (1995) 'Three Decades of Modern Nigerian Art (1960-1990): General Observation and Critique', *Nigerian Journal of Art*, 1(1), pp. 66-73.
- Oloidi, O. (1998) 'Zarianism: The Crusading Spirit of a Revolution in Nigeria', In Dike, P. C., & Oyelola, P. *The Zaria Art Society: A New Consciousness*. Lagos: National Gallery of Art, pp. 34-8.
- Oloidi, O. (2002) 'Ile Ola Uli: Nsukka Art as Fount and Factor in Modern Nigerian Art' in Ottenberg, S. (ed.) *The Nsukka Artists and Nigerian Contemporary Art*. Washington DC: University of Washington Press. pp. 249
- Oloidi, O. (2012) 'Uche Okeke: An Endearing Embodiment of Art Revolution in Nigeria, Art Historian', *Public Lecture: The Fourth Edition of Yusuf Grillo Pavilion Art Fiesta*. Ikorodu
-

- Oloidi, O (2003) 'Art Recentism, Art Currentism and the Physiognomy of Modern Nigerian Art from 1970 to 2003', *AICA PRESS* [Online] Available at: <http://www.aica-int.org/IMG/pdf/12.oloidieng.pdf> (Accessed: 13 November 2013).
- Olukoju, A. (1992) 'Elder Dempster and the Shipping Trade of Nigeria during the First World War', *The Journal of African History*, 33 (2), pp. 255-271.
- Omolewa, M. (2006) 'Educating the "Native": A Study of the Education Adaptation Strategy in British Colonial Africa, 1910-1936', *Journal of African American History*, 91 (3), pp. 267-287.
- Omooba Yemisi Adedoyin Shyllon Art Foundation (OYASAF) (2013)
- Omu, F. I. (1974) 'Journalism and the Rise of Nigerian Nationalism: John Payne Jackson, 1848-1915', *Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria*, pp. 521-539
- Onabolu, A. (1920) *A Short Discourse on Art*. Nigeria
- Onabolu, D. (1963) 'Aina Onabolu', *Nigeria Magazine*, pp. 295-298.
- Onobrakpeya, C. (2011) 'Ulli Beier's Art Legacy: Creator of the Osogbo School' *BOF* [Online] Available at: <http://ovuomaroro.blogspot.co.uk/2011/07/lulli-beiers-art-legacy-creator-of.html> (Accessed: 12 September 2013).
- Onuchukwu, C. (1994) 'Art Education in Nigeria', *Art Education* pp. 54-60.
- Opukri, C. O., & Ibaba, I. S. (2008) 'Oil induced Environmental Degradation and Internal Population Displacement in the Nigeria's Niger Delta', *Journal of Sustainable Development in Africa*, 10 (1), pp. 173-193.
- Osborne, P., Brooker, P., Gasiorek, A., Longworth, D., & Thacker, A. J. (2010) *The Oxford Handbook of Modernisms*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Osinbajo, Y. (2009) 'Enwonwu: The Responsibility of Privilege', *The Sixth Distinguished Ben Enwonwu Annual Lecture*, 18th November pp. 6
- Ottenberg, S. (1993) *The Triumph of a Vision: An Anthology on Uche Okeke and Modern Art in Nigeria*. Lagos: Pendulum Art Gallery.
- Ottenberg, S. (1997) *New Traditions from Nigeria: Seven Artists of the Nsukka Group*. Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press.
-

- Ottenberg, S. (Ed.) (2002) *The Nsukka Artists and Nigerian Contemporary Art*. Washington DC: University of Washington Press.
- Oyelola, P. (1977) 'Everyman's Guide to Nigerian Art', *Nigeria Magazine Special Publication*.
- Oyelola, P. (1998) *The Zaria Art Society: A New Consciousness*. Nigeria: National Gallery of Art.
- O'Riordan, B. (1957) 'Clement Greenberg and Harold Rosenberg: Duelling Critics', [Online] Available at: http://timothyquigley.net/ea/archive/oriordan-dueling_critics.pdf (Accessed: 22 September 2015).
- Parker, D. H. (1953) 'The Nature of Art', *The Problems of Aesthetics*, pp. 90-105.
- Parry, B. (1981) 'Problems in Current Theories of Colonial Discourse', *Oxford Literary Review*, 9(1), pp. 27-58.
- Partington, A. (1986) *Feminist Art and Avant-Gardism, Vol 81*. Birmingham: University of Birmingham Press.
- Passmore, J. (1968) 'Aesthetics and the Philosophy of Art', *Crítica: Revista Hispanoamericana de Filosofía*, pp. 47-70.
- Pate, D. (1995) 'Distinctive Characteristics of Victorian Evangelism', [Online] Available at: www.dipate.freeseerve.co.uk/Evangelicalism.htm (Accessed: 28 December 2013).
- Peek, P. M. (1985) 'Ovia Idah and Eture Egbede: Traditional Nigerian Artists', *African Arts*, pp. 54-102.
- Peek, P. M. (2012) 'Environment and Object: Recent African Art', *African Arts*, 45 (1), pp. 83-85.
- Peel, J. D. Y. (1977) 'Conversion and Tradition in Two African Societies: Ijebu and Buganda', *Past and Present*, pp. 108-141.
- Peri, E. A. (2002) 'Varieties and Qualities in Uli Painting based on Drawings from the Igbo Ozo and Igbo Abamaba Areas, Collected in the 1930s', in Ottenberg, S. (ed.) *The Nsukka Artists and Nigerian Contemporary Art*. Washington DC: University of Washington Press.
-

- Perina, M. (2009) 'Encountering the Other: Aesthetics, Race and Relationality', *Contemporary Aesthetics*, (2).
- Petito, D. S. (2000). Sovereignty and globalization: Fallacies, truth, and perception. *NYL Sch. J. Hum. Rts.*, 17, 1139.
- Pettersson, B. (1999) 'On Narrative in Recent Anglo-American Literature, Literary Theory, Historiography and Science: Referential Versus Interpretive Attitudes', *Approaches to Narrative Fiction. Anglicana Turkuensia*, pp. 18.
- Pettersson, B. (1999) 'The Postcolonial Turn in Literary Translation Studies: Theoretical Frameworks Reviewed', *Canadian Aesthetics Journal*, 4
- Picton, J. (2006) 'Commentary', *African Arts*, 39 (1), pp. 37.
- Pissarra, M. (2013) 'Uche Okeke's Legacy Challenges the Ongoing Decolonization of Art & Art History', *ASAI* [Online] Available at: <http://asai.co.za/uchokekes-legacy-challenges-the-ongoing-decolonisation-of-art-and-art-history/> (Accessed: 7 March 2013).
- Pitcairn, G. D (1929) Colonial Report for Nigeria 1928. Lagos
- Poggi, C. (2012) 'Picasso's First Constructed Sculpture: A Tale of Two Guitars', *Art Bulletin*, 94 (2), pp. 274-198.
- Poggioli, R. (1962) *Theory of the Avant-Garde*, trans. Gerald Fitzgerald: Cambridge: Harvard University Press
- Pöllänen, S. H. (2011) 'Beyond Craft and Art: a Pedagogical Model for Craft as Self-expression', *International Journal of Education through Art*, 7 (2), pp. 111-125.
- Pope-Hennessy, J. W. (1966) *The Portrait in the Renaissance*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Pound, E. (1951) *The Letters of Ezra Pound, 1907-1941*. United Kingdom: Faber and Faber.
- Prasad, A. (2003) 'The Gaze of the Other: Postcolonial Theory and Organizational Analysis', In *Postcolonial Theory and Organizational Analysis: A Critical Engagement* (pp. 3-43). USA: Palgrave Macmillan.
-

- Pratt, M. L. (2002) 'Modernity and Periphery', *Beyond Dichotomies: Histories, Identities, Cultures, and the Challenge of Globalization*, pp. 21-47.
- Preminda S. J (1999) 'Between Modernism and Modernisation: Locating Modernity in South Asian Art', *Art Journal* 58 (3) pp. 48-57.
- Preziosi, D. (Ed.). (1998) *The Art of Art History: A Critical Anthology*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Probyn, L. (1903) Colonial Annual Report for Southern Nigeria 1902, No. 405.
- Procter, J. & Morton, S. (2006) 'Colonial Discourse, Postcolonial Theory', *Year's Work in Critical & Cultural Theory*, 14 (1), pp. 245.
- Rainey, L. S. (Ed.). (2005) *Modernism: An Anthology*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Reed, D. (1985) 'The Developing Language of the Readymade', *Art History*, 8 (2), pp. 209-227.
- Reintjes, B. (2009) *Installing Anatsui: The Politics of Economics in Global Contemporary Art*. ProQuest.
- Rengger, N. J. (1995) *Political Theory, Modernity, and Postmodernity: Beyond Enlightenment and Critique*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Rhoades, E. A. (2011) 'Commentary on Literature Reviews', *Volta Review*, 111 (3), pp. 353-368.
- Richter, H. (1965) *Dada Art and Anti-art*. Trans. David Britt. London: Thames and Hudson.
- Riley, D. (2003) 'Am I that Name?" Feminism and the Category of " Women" in History'
- Rochberg, G. (1984) 'Can the Arts Survive Modernism? (A Discussion of the Characteristics, History, and Legacy of Modernism)', *Critical Inquiry*, 11 (2) pp. 317-340
- Rochfort Rae, E. V (1938) Colonial Report for Nigeria 1927. No. 1385.
- Rochfort, D. (1993) *Mexican Muralists: Orozco, Rivera, Siqueiros*. London: Laurence King.
- Rodrigues C., Garratt, C. (2010) *Introducing Modernism: A Graphic Guide*. Northampton UK: Icon Books Ltd
-

- Rosenberg, H. (1952) 'The American Action Painters', *Art News*, 51 (8), pp. 22.
- Rosenberg, H. (1983) *The De-definition of Art*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Ross, F. (2004) 'Nineteenth-Century French Realism', In *Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History*. New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art.
- Ross, F. (2014) 'Why Realism?' *Society of Portrait Artists* [Online] Available at: https://www.artrenewal.org/articles/Philosophy/Why_Realism/why_realism.php (Accessed: 18th January 2016).
- Ruckstuhl, F. W. (1917) 'Idealism and Realism in Art', *The Art World*, 1(4), pp. 252-256.
- Rule, J. & Robert D. S. (1982) *Methodism, Popular Beliefs and Village Culture in Cornwall, 1800-50*. London: Croom Helm.
- Russell, G. (1993) Seminar Contributions and Notes. *RGU*.
- Said, E. (1979) *Orientalism*. New York: Vintage Books.
- Salami, G. (2005) 'The Nsukka Artists and Nigerian Contemporary Art', *African Arts*, 38 (3), pp. 10-84.
- Salami, G., & Visonà, M. B. (Eds.). (2013) *A Companion to Modern African Art*. New York: John Wiley & Sons.
- San Juan Jr, E. (1995) 'On the Limits of "Postcolonial" Theory: Trespassing Letters from the "Third World"', *ARIEL: A Review of International English Literature*, 26 (3).
- Santayana, G. (1904) 'What is Aesthetics?' *The Philosophical Review*, 13 (3), pp. 320-327.
- Sanyal, S. K. (2014) 'Critiquing the Critique: El Anatsui and the Politics of Inclusion', *World Art*, 4 (1), pp. 89-108.
- Sanyal, S.K. (2002) 'Transgressing Borders, Shaping an Art History: Rose Kirumira and Makerere's Legacy', *Matatu Journal of African Culture and Society*, 25-26, 133-159
-

- Schalk, S. (2011) 'Self, Other and Other-self: Going Beyond the Self/Other Binary in Contemporary Consciousness', *Journal of Comparative Research in Anthropology and Sociology*, (1), pp. 197-210.
- Scharfstein, B. A. (2009) *Art without Borders: a Philosophical Exploration of Art and Humanity*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Schelling, F. W. J. (1978) *System of Transcendental Idealism (1800)*. USA: University Press of Virginia.
- Schwarz, H., Ray, S. (ed.) (2000) *A Companion to Postcolonial Studies*. USA: Blackwell Publishing
- Scotland, N. (1997) 'Evangelicals, Anglicans and Ritualism in Victorian England', *Biblical Studies* [Online]. Available at: http://biblicalstudies.org.uk/pdf/churchman/111-03_249.pdf (Accessed: 10 October 2013).
- Scott, B. K., & Broe, M. L. (1990) *The Gender of Modernism: A Critical Anthology (Vol. 584)*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Seed, P. (1991) 'Colonial and Postcolonial Discourse', *Latin American Research Review*, 26 (3), pp. 181-200.
- Sell, M. (2007) 'Bohemianism, the Cultural Turn of the Avant-garde, and Forgetting the Roma', *TDR/The Drama Review*, 51(2), pp. 41-59.
- Selva, M. (2006) 'Toxic Shock: How Western Rubbish is Destroying Africa', *The Independent Thursday 21 September*, pp. 11
- Senghor, L. S. (1974) 'Negritude', *Indian Literature*, pp. 269-273.
- Shapiro, T. (1976) *Painters and Politics: The European Avant-Garde and Society 1900-1925*. New York: Elsevier
- Shillington, K. (2013) *Encyclopaedia of African History*. London: Routledge
- Shils, E. (1962) 'The Military in the Political Development of the New States', *The Role of the Military in Underdeveloped Countries*, pp. 7-67.
- Shiner, L. (1994) "'Primitive Fakes,' 'Tourist Art,' and the Ideology of Authenticity', *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, 52 (2), pp. 225-234.
-

- Shohat, E., & Stam, R. (2014) *Unthinking Eurocentrism: Multiculturalism and the Media*. New York: Routledge.
- Singal, D. J. (1987) 'Towards a Definition of American Modernism', *American Quarterly* Special Issue: *Modernist Culture in America*, 39 (1), pp. 7-26
- Singh, J. G. (1996) *Colonial Narratives/Cultural Dialogues: "Discoveries" of India in the Language of Colonialism*. London: Routledge
- Singleton, J. (1992) 'The Virgin Mary and Religious Conflicts in Victorian Britain', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, 43 (1)
- Sklar, R. L. (2004) *Nigerian Political Parties: Power in an Emergent African Nation*. New Jersey: Africa World Press.
- Smith, A. D., & Smith, A. (2013) *Nationalism and Modernism*. London: Routledge.
- Smith, Fred T. (1986) 'Male and Female Artistry in Africa', *African Arts* 19 (3), pp. 28- 29.
- Smith, P. J. (2003) 'Visual Culture Studies Versus Art Education', *Arts Education Policy Review*, 104 (4), pp. 3-8.
- Smith, R. (1971, 1974) 'The Lagos Consulate, 1851–1861: An Outline', *Journal of African History*, 15, pp. 393-416.
- Smith, R. H. (1990) 'Intersections between Feminism and Post-modernism: Possibilities for Feminist Scenic Design', *Journal of Dramatic Theory and Criticism*, 4 (2), pp. 153-164.
- Smith, R., Ade Ajayi, J. F. (1971) *The Yoruba Warfare in the Nineteenth Century*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press
- Smith, S. A. (2010) *Uli: Metamorphosis of a Tradition into Contemporary Aesthetics*. Unpublished PhD Thesis: Kent State University.
- Smith, T. (2010) 'The State of Art History: Contemporary Art', *The Art Bulletin* 92 (4), pp. 366-383.
- Smith, T. (2011) 'El Anatsui: When I Last Wrote to You about Africa', *Nka Journal of Contemporary African Art*, (28), pp. 142-145.
- Snyderman, G. S., & Josephs, W. (1939) 'Bohemia: The Underworld of Art', *Social Forces*, pp. 187-199.
-

- Sowole, T. (2012) 'How Nationalists of Pre-independence Era Influenced Okeke's art', [Online] Available at:
<http://africanartswithtaj.blogspot.co.uk/2012/04/how-nationalists-of-pre-independence-16.html> (Accessed: 26 November 2014).
- Spangler, W., & Beier, U. (1968) *Contemporary Art in Africa*. New York: New York University Press.
- Spivak, G. C. (1987, 2012) *In Other Worlds: Essays in Cultural Politics*. London: Routledge.
- Stafford, E. (2009) 'Visualizing Creation in Ancient Greece', *Religion & the Arts*, 13 (4), pp. 419-447.
- Starrs, R. (2011) *Modernism and Japanese Culture*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Staszak, J. F. (2008) 'Other/Otherness', *International Encyclopedia of Human Geography*, pp. 1-7.
- Stevens, G. A. (1930) 'The Future of African Art: with Special Reference to Problems Arising in the Gold Coast Colony', *Journal of the International African Institute*, 3 (2), pp. 150-160.
- Suzuki, E. (2001). Fallacy of Globalism and the Protection of National Economies, *The. Yale J. Int'l L.*, 26, 319.
- Swigert-Gacheru, M. (2011) 'Globalizing East African Culture: From Junk to Jua kali Art', *Perspectives on Global Development & Technology*, 10 (1), pp. 127-142.
- Sylla, A. & Bertelsen, M. (1998) 'Contemporary African Art A Multi-layered History', *Diogenes*, 46 (184), pp. 51-70.
- Szasz, T. S. (1971) 'The Sane Slave: An Historical Note on the Use of Medical Diagnosis as Justificatory Rhetoric', *American Journal of Psychotherapy*.
- Taiwo, O. (2010) *How Colonialism Preempted Modernity in Africa*. USA: Indiana University Press.
- Tamuno, T. N. (1969) 'The Role of the Legislative Council in the Administration of Lagos, 1886-1913', *Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria*, pp. 555-570.
-

- Tancheva, K. (1997) 'I Do Not Participate in Liberations: Female Dramatic and Theatrical Modernism in the 1910s and 1920s', *Unmanning Modernism: Gendered Re-readings*, pp. 153.
- Taylor, B. (1995) *Avant-garde and after: Rethinking Art Now*. USA: HN Abrams.
- Taylor, W. H. (1984) 'Missionary Education in Africa Reconsidered: The Presbyterian Educational Impact in Eastern Nigeria 1846-1974', *African Affairs* 83 (331), pp. 189-205
- The Presbyterian Letter Book, Vol. 1, p. 248 (Manuscript Scottish National Library)
- The Saylor Foundation (2012) 'Overview of Politics in the Post-Colonial Era', *The Saylor Foundation* [Online] Available at: <http://www.saylor.org/site/wp-content/uploads/2012/02/POLSC325-Subunit-2.1-Overview-of-Politics-in-the-Post-Colonial-Era-FINAL.pdf> (Accessed: 10 August 2012).
- Thompson, R. F. (1973) 'An Aesthetic of the Cool', *African Arts*, pp. 41-91.
- Thorburn, J. J. (1909) Colonial Report for Southern Nigeria 1908
- Tiffin, C., & Lawson, A. (Eds.) (1994) *De-scribing Empire: Post-Colonialism and Textuality*. London: Taylor & Francis.
- Tzara, T. (1918) 'Dada Manifesto 1918', trans. Ralph Manheim, in *The Dada Painters and Poets*, (81).
- Udechukwu, O. (1984) *Obiora Uchekwu Selected Sketches 1965-83*. Lagos.
- Udeze, B. (2009) *Why Africa?: A Continent in a Dilemma of Unanswered Questions*. Bloomington, Indiana: Xlibris
- Udoma, E. U. (2010) 'The Art School in the Development of Contemporary Nigerian Art Practice: An Historical Overview & Analysis of Style', *BOF* [Online] Available at: <http://ovuomaroro.blogspot.co.uk/2010/05/art-school-development-historical.html> (Accessed: 12 November 2013).
- Udosen, N. (1993) 'Art Education in Nigeria: Concepts, Norms and Practices' (unpublished) Conference Paper Presented at the International Symposium on Nigeria Art, Lagos.
- Ugiomoh, F. (2009) *Art and Nationalism in Nigeria*. Cambridge MA: MIT Press.
-

- Ugochukwu Uche, C. (1999) 'Foreign Banks, Africans, and Credit in Colonial Nigeria c1890-1912', *The Economic History Review*, 52 (4), pp. 669-691.
- Ukpabi, S. C. (1970) 'British Colonial Wars in West Africa: Image and Reality/Les Guerres Coloniales Menees Par La Grande-Bretagne En Afrique Occidentale— Apparences Et Realites', *Civilisations*, pp. 379-404.
- Uli, B. (1960) *Art in Nigeria 1960*. London: Cambridge University Press.
- Van Camp, J. C. (2007) 'Originality in Postmodern Appropriation Art', *The Journal of Arts Management, Law, and Society*, 36 (4), pp. 247-258.
- Van den Berg, H. (2012) *The Early Twentieth-Century Avant-Garde and the Nordic Countries. An Introductory tour d 'horizon*. Netherland: Rodopi.
- Van Meter, A. (1952) 'The Power of Art', *The Journal of Philosophy* 49 (11), p. 397-399.
- Vansina, J. (1984) *Art History in Africa: an Introduction to Method*. New York: Longman.
- Venn, H. B. D (1865) *West African Colonies*. London: Dalton and Lucy.
- Verwoert, J. (2007) 'Apropos Appropriation: Why Stealing Images Today Feels Different', *Art & Design Research A Journal of Ideas, Context and Methods*, Volume (2).
- Von Blum, P. (1967) *The Art of Social Conscience*. New York: Universe Books.
- Wagner, P. (2002) *A Sociology of Modernity: Liberty and Discipline*. London: Routledge.
- Wahab A. A. (2009) 'Politics without Art Education: The Nigerian Situation' *UNESCO* [Online] Available at: http://www.unesco.org/culture/en/artseducation/pdf/fullpaper2011ademola_azeez.pdf (Accessed: 11 March, 2014), pp. 5
- Walder, D. (1998) *Post-colonial Literatures in English: History, Language, Theory*. Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell.
- Waldman, D. (1992) *Collage, Assemblage, and the Found Object*. London: Phaidon Press Limited.
- Warneck, G. (1883) *Modern Missions and Culture*. London: Gemmell.
-

- Weitz, M. (1956) 'The Role of Theory in Aesthetics', *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, pp. 27-35.
- West, S. (2004) *Portraiture*. Oxford: Oxford University Press
- Weston, R. (1996) *Modernism*. London: Phaidon Press.
- Whiteley, G. (2010). *Junk: art and the politics of trash*. IB Tauris.
- Whitworth, M. H. (2007) *Modernism*. Oxford: Blackwell. pp. 3-61.
- Wiegman, R. (2012) *Object lessons*. USA: Duke University Press.
- Wilde, O. (1891, 1969) *The Artist as Critic: Critical Writings of Oscar Wilde*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Wilde, O. (2013) *The Soul of Man Under Socialism*. New York: Start Publishing LLC.
- Willette, J. S. M. (2011) 'The Found Object: Dada and Chance', *Art History Unstuffed* [Online] Available at: <http://www.arthistoryunstuffed.com/tag/the-found-object/> (Accessed: 29 October 2013).
- Williams, R. (1989) *The Politics of Modernism: Against the New Conformists*. T. Pinkney (Ed.). London: Verso.
- Willis, E. A. (1987) 'A lexicon of Igbo Uli Motifs', *Nsukka Journal of the Humanities*, 1, pp. 91-121.
- Witcombe, C. L.C. E (2000) 'Modernism', [Online] Available at: <http://witcombe.sbc.edu/modernism-b/artsake.html> (Accessed: 27 September 2012).
- Wollaeger, M., Eatough, M. (eds.) (2012) *The Oxford Handbook of Global Modernism*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Wood, P (ed.) (1999) *The Challenge of the Avant-Garde*. New Haven: Yale University Press
- Wrenn, H. (2010) 'The Woman in Modernism', *ELF* pp. 9-13.
- Young, R. J. (2003) *Postcolonialism: A very short Introduction*. Oxford: University of Oxford Publishers OUP.
- Ziarek, K. (2004) *The Force of Art*. California: Stanford University Press.
-

Notes

¹ Modernism is the application to all realms of human life of forms of structural rationalization - that is, finding rationally structured ways of being and doing regardless of consequences and, more especially, rationalizing away the mysteries and questions which have to do with meaning, morality and ethics – areas that lie outside the purely rational (Rochberg 1984: 318).

² Modernism is culture – a constellation of related ideas, beliefs, values, and modes of perception, that came into existence during the mid and late Nineteenth Century, and that has had a powerful influence on art and thought both sides of the Atlantic since 1900 (Singal 1987: 7).

³ 'Other' refers to a binary logic developed in Western thoughts, a system of representation, construction of identities and differentiation. "Otherness is the result of a discursive process by which a dominant in-group (the Us, self) construct one or many dominant out-groups (them or Other) by stereotyping a difference real or imagined – presented as a negation of identity and thus a motive for discrimination" (Staszak 2008: 2). The self constructs its identity by constructing the 'Other', which the self intends to devalue, by "setting itself apart and giving itself an identity - the 'Other' only exist relative to the self and vice versa" (op cit 2008: 2, Schalk 2000). This binary logic developed through Western thoughts and philosophies was imposed on other cultures through religion and colonization. Otherness became used in colonial conquest of cultures outside Europe, as logic of differentiation to construct identities or frame the colonised in imperial discourses and draw upon such stereotyped differentiation as powerful mechanism to exercise control over the 'Other'. Homi Bhabha has opined that the creation of Otherness in colonial discourse was predominantly strategized to "create a space for a 'subject peoples' through the production of knowledge in terms of which surveillance is exercised and a complex form of pleasure/unpleasure is incited. It sought authorisation for its strategies by the production of knowledges of coloniser and colonised which are stereotypical but antithetically evaluated. This Otherness in colonial discourse construed the colonised as a population of degenerate types on the basis of racial origin, in order to justify conquest and to establish systems of administration and instruction" (Bhabha1996: 23). Africa and the Orient under colonial imperial domination outside European mainstream-self constituted the 'Other'. The use of the 'Other' in this study thus is adapted to refer to Africa and the Orient - former colonies of Western empires.

⁴ Primitivism refer to the judging of all things, people's and their values from your own socially and culturally defined standpoint predominantly used in colonial discourse (Rodrigues & Garratt 2001: 70)

⁵ The law of modernism applies to almost all art that remains truly alive in our time. That the conventions not essential to the viability of a medium be discarded as soon as they are recognized... it is understood, I hope, that conventions are over-hauled, not for revolutionary effect, but in order to maintain the irreplaceability and renew the vitality of art in the face of a society bent in principle on rationalizing everything, and that, the devolution of tradition cannot take place except in the presence of tradition (Greenberg 1982).

⁶ The Harlem Renaissance he argues, gave way to *Renaissancism* – a spirit of nationalistic engagement that began with intellectuals, artists, and spokespersons at the turn of the century and revived extensive definition and expression during the twenties...this renaissance hinged on the realization that authentic modern expressionism derives from black artists' formal mastery and sounding deformation, and the New Negro validation of the folk and the vernacular (Baker 2013: 108).

⁷ Its racial transformation, became an embodiment of an idea...it posed a challenge to contemporary limits and cultural terms within which personal being for both blacks and whites

were imagined and defined... providing an invigorating contrast to the submission of European literary models, and constituted a distinct perception of Black subjectivity (De Jongh 1990: 15, 60)

⁸ “We use the term postcolonial to cover all culture affected by the imperial process from the moment of colonization to the present day because there is continuity of preoccupations throughout the historical process initiated by European imperial aggression” Ashcroft et al (2013) *The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Post-colonial Literatures*. London: Routledge. pp2

⁹ New/Alternative Realism refers to the styles and philosophies of modern arts invented as alternative/subjective interpretations of the fleeting modern society and culture by different avant-garde movements. New Realism is the collection of distinct forms of modern expressionism inspired by radical avant-garde philosophies/manifestoes, which provided new perspectives on art, the universe, culture and society, as resistance to established conventions of mimesis and representationalism institutionalized in Classicism and Renaissance. Twentieth Century art idioms (styles/philosophies) such as *Cubism, Expressionism, Fauvism, Abstract Expressionism, Dadaism, Surrealism, Futurism, Impressionism, Pop Art* etc., (elucidated in Chapter Two page 52) constituted new realisms, which provided alternative notions of art in modern society.

¹⁰ Picasso was inspired by the discovery of the Kru mask and embarked on the exploration of the non-mimetic, relational structure of visual signs leading to the creation of the *Guitar 2012*” (Poggi, 2012, p274).

¹¹ ‘*Art for Art’s Sake*’ was a call for release from the tyranny of meaning and purpose. It was a further exercise of freedom. It was also a ploy, another deliberate affront to bourgeois sensibility which demanded art with meaning or that had some purpose such as to instruct, or delight, or to moralize, and generally to reflect in some way their own purposeful and purpose-filled world. (Witcombe, C. L.C. E (2000).

¹² Readymade is an artwork that is not an artwork made by the hand of the artists. It is an artwork that becomes an artwork because I declare or the artists declares it is an artwork without any participation of the hand of this very artist to make it” (Marcel 1960 to Guy Viau) “A readymade is a work of art without an artist to make it, if I may simplify the definition. This was not the act of an artist but of a non-artist, an artisan if you want. I wanted to change the status of the artist or at least to change the norms used for defining art and artist” (Duchamp 1963 to Francis Robert quoted in Fontaine 2010: 5)

¹³ Araeen disregards the view that Ainna Onabulu is the first modern African artist. For him Onabulu was basically mimicking Western realism and as such his works are products of the genealogy of colonialism. He argues that because the works of Onabolu, Soketo, Mohl etc., were mimicry, there were unable to interrogate colonial views on art and thus lack any quality of Modernism to liberate the African image and create a new African post-colonial identity (Araeen 2010).

¹⁴ Colonial interactions are an effect of power relations inscribed in cultural and linguistic forms...colonial representational practices draw on strategies of naming and classifying as implicit modes of political and territorial domination...In examining this language of colonization, it will enable an interrogation of the West’s colonial past, and the adversities caused to former colonies, thus forcing Western readers to renegotiate their relationship to the history of colonialism (Singh 1996: 4)

¹⁵ Vasari established an imposed standard and norm of art history defined by classical arts and by the recuperation of classical culture perfected in the Renaissance...this classical paradigm created hierarchy of insiders and outsiders, defined Renaissance of central Italy as art with the greatest

value and successfully marginalised all other artistic traditions as manual craft. Vasari/Janson's preference and establishment of classical forms as the basis of an absolute system of aesthetic evaluation enabled them to judge all other art traditions on how close they come to accepting classicism as a paradigm. Europe thus became the centre of art and European aesthetics the absolute determinant of high arts to which 'Other' cultures must be defined by (Preziosi 1998: 348-9).

¹⁶ The exact timeframe of Modernism is controversial as varying scholars have put forward different dates based on the considerations of specific ideologies and modern transformation in art, science, literature and society at large. William Everdell for example, posits that Modernism began in the 1870s with first modernist painting believed to have occurred in 1885. Clement Greenberg and Immanuel Kant however situate the origin of Modernism around the mid Nineteenth Century (the 1850s) originating from Baudelaire's literature and the paintings of Eduard Manet one of the first to instigate the deviation from realism in the quest to capture the essence of modern life. The 1890 is also theorized by some scholars as the beginning of Modernism as it marked the end of Victorianism and the Century, as well as the beginning of the revolutionary tradition and belief in the new - the radical experimental/critical ideology that drove modernist art

¹⁷ Kant's theory of the power of reason, the liberty of expression and equality, revolutionized the understanding of Modernism and modern art. His propounded aesthetic theory of art established the philosophical foundation for artistic Modernism. In 1770 Kant posited that art should be created for itself and reflective of the artist's subjective interpretations of experiences and the universe, devoid of external and associational demands and or societal conventions. He further argued that the judgment and interpretation of art should be contemplative, and viewers should experience and consider art independently of any purpose or utility other than its aesthetics and content (Kant quoted in Barrett, T. 1997) *Modernism and postmodernism: An overview with Art examples. Art Education: Content and Practice in a Postmodern Era, 17-30.*

¹⁸ Avant-garde is a French word, (Vanguard); the term was developed in France with the promotion of radical socialism and first appeared in arts, in Henri de Saint-Simon Rodrigues' essay 'L'artiste, le savant et l'industriel 1825', in which he defined a new revolutionary purpose for arts in modern society... "We artists will serve you as an avant-garde, the power of the arts is most immediate...when we want to spread new ideas we inscribe them on marble or canvas. What a magnificent destiny for the arts is that of exercising a positive power over society, a true priestly function and of marching in the van [i.e. vanguard] of all the intellectual faculties..." (Saint-Simon 1825).

¹⁹ Bohemianism is the culture and artistic attitude of intentional flouting of historical consciousness and mindfulness upheld by authorities as well as the activities that criticize such historiography. In its counterculture activism, bohemianism became a culture characterised by individualism, which became a requisite of modern art. It fostered liberalism the spirit of rebellion against the tyranny in government and art institutions with the bohemian honour of antagonism to conventions. Bohemianism is a social habit at variance with those of society, aiming for practical anarchy. Their revulsive social life manifested in unconventionality and opposition/objection to discipline and its implications - conventions, standards, and values (Josephs & Snyderman 1939, Sell 2007).

²⁰ Salons in the 19th Century constituted of a select group of artists, intellectuals and politicians who regularly gathered in the residence of a wealthy and influential person with control over society. It afforded artists a meeting point and platform for discussion on art, literature, politics, culture and modern life. In Paris and London, it was the official sponsor of art exhibitions backed by royal patronage, as was the case of Academie des Beaux-Arts in Paris and the London Royal Academy. Salons comprised of a jury system made up of Academy members and previous winners of Salon medals, and this institution had "virtual monopoly on public taste and

patronage” (Jason 2004). It regulated art, defined its parameters of authenticity based on its own determined conventions and principles; the jury system decided what art was deemed acceptable hence resulting in what is termed Salon art or academic art that avant-gardes rebelled against.

²¹ Eurocentrism forces cultural heterogeneity into a single paradigmatic perspective in which Europe is seen as the unique source of meaning, as the world’s centre of gravity, as ontological reality to the rest of the world’s shadow. Eurocentric thinking attributes to the West an almost providential sense of historical destiny...Like Renaissance, Eurocentrism maps the world in a cartography that centralizes and augments Europe while literally belittling other cultures like Africa. Eurocentrism bifurcated the world into the West and the Rest (Ahohat & Stam 2014: 2).

²² Picasso was inspired by the discovery of Kru Masks and embarked on the exploration of non-mimetic, relational structure of visual signs and this inspiration from African sculpture not only inaugurated the invention of constructed sculpture and the series of Picasso’s collages but also synthetic cubism, Twentieth Century sculpture and to a large extent, the semiological investigation that launched Abstraction...the inorganic structures, abrupt transitions, and non-mimetic or arbitrary qualities of African art collusion in Picasso’s Guitar proved very auspicious for modern art...Picasso responded to the diacritical formal structures: its reliance on mutually defining elements of the Kru mask...(Kramer 1973: 274-5).

²³ As in the Romantic Movement appeal to the folk art of marginal people, there is also a sidelong reference in modernism. Art seen as primitive or exotic is superficially accepted as art but at same time dismissed as non-art. These appeal to the ‘*Other*’ – in fact highly developed arts of their own places – are combined with an underlying association of the ‘primitive’ and the ‘unconscious’ (Williams 1989: 53).

²⁴ “There are peripheral modernisms standing in relations of contradiction, complimentary, and differentiation with those of the centre. Their emancipatory power, lies chiefly in refusing the self alienated position of imposed receptivity and using their position as a site of creative authenticity and resistance...” (Pratt 2002: 47).

²⁵ There has been in recent scholarship the now-fashionable tendency to theorize non-European modernist art or actually those modernist practices that fell outside the centres of Paris, New York's will-to- abstraction as alternative, vernacular, or cosmopolitan Modernism. The problem with these propositions, however, is that they invariably insinuate Paris and New York as the site of modernism, while the others represent, at best, the ‘*Other*’, and in some sense not-quite-the-real Modernism...(Okeke-Agulu 2006: 15).

²⁶ What we can now identify of Modernism in its active and creative years, underlying its many works, is a range of diverse and fast-moving artistic methods and practices, and at the same time a set of relatively constant positions and beliefs...what marks out this emphasis in both Modernism and the avant-garde is a defiance and finally violent rejection of tradition: the insistence on a clean break with the past...(Lewis, 2000).

²⁷ Refer to chapter three for detailed analysis of these two phases of Nigerian Modernism.

²⁸ When people are stereotyped, they are situated in a system of representation and made to accept whatever imagery is projected on them. Thus, this accords power to those formulating such stereotypes as they assume control over the stereotyped whose way of life, behaviour and functionality in their respective societies become determined by such stereotypes. Projecting negative imagery unto the ‘*Other*’ became a form of power, of control and of domination

associated with colonialism. See Fiske, S. T. (1993) 'Controlling Other People: the Impact of Power on Stereotyping', *American Psychologist*, Vol. 48.6, p: 621.

²⁹ Imperial relations may have been established initially by guns, guile, etc., but they were maintained in their interpolative phase largely by textuality both institutionally and informally. Colonialism like its counterpart racism, is a formation and operation of discourse which interpellates colonial subjects by incorporating them in a system of naming and representation...colonial interactions in its power relations, draws on strategies of naming and classifying as implicit modes of political and territorial domination' (Tiffin and Lawson 1994: 3, Singh 1996).

³⁰ During the period of colonial occupation in Nigeria, a complex power relationship ensued that was central to the emergence of Nigerian Modernism. At the center of this power relation was the imperial colonial government; they exacted oppressive influence on indigenous Nigerians through varying strategies. The second power group constituted of those referred to as colonial apologists who were used to further extend colonial policies and rule. They included local warrant chiefs, and traditional rulers used by the colonialist to administer indirect rule in the colonies, hence were integral parts of the dialectical power relationship that oppressed Nigerians. Another influential group were the local merchants who had accumulated wealth through the exportation of cotton, palm oil, palm kernel, rubber and groundnut, hence had strong economic and commercial influence in the colonies. They were the trade intermediaries between European traders and farmers in the interior hinterlands; from the 1900s, they began revolting against attempts by Europeans to bypass them and deal directly with indigenous farmers and their resistance to this colonial/European strategy to undermine their position resulted in intense commercial conflict. The last force of the colonial power relationship in Nigeria was the emergent intellectual colonial elites who joined forces with local merchants to battle against the oppression of indigenous peoples by the colonialist and their African agents. Their intellectual exposure equipped them to resist their strategic dismissal and omission from the governing of the colony by colonial authorities, as well as engaged in the battle to reclaim the land and accord Africans a sense of pride and involvement in the modernization and development of their Land. It is their efforts and activism during the early period of colonialism that foregrounded the emergence of artistic resistance and avant-gardism explored in this research. See Ekeh, P. P. (1975) 'Colonialism and the two Publics in Africa: A Theoretical Statement', *Comparative studies in society and history*, 17(01), 91-112, and Ehiedu Iweriebor, E. G. (2011) 'The Colonization of Africa' *Africana Age* [Online] Available at: <http://exhibitions.nypl.org/africanaage/essay-colonization-of-africa.html> (Accessed: 11 December 2015).

³¹ During this period, European oligarchies began pursuing non-competitive business in an effort to force African merchants out of business...overt discrimination blocked advancement in many fields, while hardening racial attitudes deprived Africans of easy access to Europeans (Mann 1985).

³² More aggressive measures to extend British control in the interior came with the arrival of Governor Carter in 1891 who took to the view that, the key to controlling trade routes, relied on curtailing the resistance of the Egba and Ijebu who operated at the time a cultural policy of isolation and zero tolerance to Europeans. The result of such imperialist new aggressive approach was the Ijebu expedition of 1892 (Ayandele 1966, p54-69, Smith 1971).

³³ Nationalism is the "sentiments, activities, aimed directly at the self-governance and independence of Nigeria as a national state on the basis of equality in an international state system" (Coleman 1965: 97).

³⁴ In 1912, Picasso and Braque began their experimentation with construction sculptures using cardboards and their new methodology (paper colle' and constructions) had a lasting effect on

American art of the Twentieth Century. In the decades that followed, the mediums of collage, assemblage and the Found Object influenced the course of Futurism in Italy, constructivism in Russia Dada in Europe and the United States, surrealism in France, abstract expressionism in the United States, and pop art in North America and Britain. See Waldman, D. (1992) *Collage, Assemblage, and the Found Object*. pp. 42

³⁵ Africans believe that life doesn't end with life that life is continuous, that life is in circles and that life and materiality is recycled naturally. They believe that you can pick a thing and make another thing out of such thing and that such found objects can become reference for concepts, realism or metaphysical beings. Ajibade 2013

³⁶ Because Found Object and installation is now grafted into the vocabulary of Modernism, people think that there was no Found Object or installation in Africa before this contemporary age. Africa before western invention of the term had begun object appropriation and installation in artistic expressionism. For instance shrines were installations of various materials sacrificed to gods and ancestors cowries, bracelets, metals, beads, wood etc. piling up overtime...(Aniakor 2013).

³⁷ The mask is about four metres tall - so large that it takes a hundred men six months of work to prepare the costume and build an outdoor house to hold it before a performance. Divided into upper and lower segments by a large python at the centre, the Ijele is constructed with colourful fabric and found objects on a skeleton of bamboo sticks and decorated with figurines and depictions of every aspect of life (Odekanyin et al 2008)

³⁸ The phrase modern civilization is used in this context to refer to the historic period that marked the transformation of the diverse ethnic entities Nigeria into a unified nation state and the adoption of Western systems from the late 1890s to replace traditional systems of government, education, security, economy, transportation etc.

³⁹ This was a period in the colonial history of African-European relations when so-called scientific racism flourished in Europe, branding black Africans as sub-humans and hardening the colonizers' attitudes against them. Indigenous Africans, according to the "science" of Europe at this time, were not intellectually capable of producing fine art in Western sense; they were fit only for craft (Nicodemus 2007).

⁴⁰ While association with influential Lagosians ensured that Onabolu learned about the deleterious features of colonialism and how these must be combated, it also suggested to him the best stylistic tool for exposing the falsity of the colonial maxim that Africans were biologically inferior to the white man (Nzegwu1999).

⁴¹ "For the new African artists there were two options one was to persist with the indigenous forms which colonialism condemned and sought to obliterate. The other was to hack, to use a most appropriate colloquialism, into the exclusive space of the antipode, in other words to possess the contested territory by mastering the forms and techniques of Western artistic expression in order to cross out the ideological principles resident in its exclusivity" (Oguibe 2002: 245).

⁴² Before Renaissance and modern arts, portraiture was an exclusive art form reserved in ancient civilizations (Roman Empire, Spanish monarchy, ancient Greece etc.,) up until the enlightenment period for the powerful, affluent and royals of European cultures. This is because portraiture often served as visual metaphors of the power, social stratification, philosophies etc., of exalted monarchs, emperors, warlords and those occupying the upper echelon of society. Portraiture served to emphasize the authority of represented subjects in European civilizations. The association of portraiture and power in ancient civilizations accorded this creative convention an

exalted position revered as the highest mastery and display of artistic profundity. See Jean, S. (2000) *Portraiture in Renaissance and Baroque Europe*.

⁴³ Nationalism is used in this early state of Nigerian development in line with John Breuilly's theory of nationalism as an expression of sentiments (Breuilly 1993). In this sense with regards to Onobolu's art and the avant-gardism of the first phase of Nigerian Modernism, nationalism refers to anti-racism, anti-stereotypes, and anti-discrimination sentiments instigated by elite Lagosians in their battle against the racist policies and domination of colonial administrations and their battle for the recognition of Africans as equals with whites or any other continent in the World. It is used to describe the early resistance movement and political condition of Lagos from the 1890s and the nationalist sentiments it gave rise to. See Breuilly, J. (1993) *Nationalism and the State*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.

⁴⁴ Kenneth Murray promulgated the philosophy that "real creative impulse is stimulated by close association with visible experiences in one's immediate environment and not by imagined ones one has not personally experienced or felt. He proceeded to assert that it is more proper for pupils to be able to draw 'themselves' first before drawing 'others', and that Nigerian experiences are by far, richer than Western ones" (Kenneth Murray quoted in Oloidi 1989)

⁴⁵ During this period, two distinctive artists emerged namely: the college trained and self-trained. The self-trained artists were given the opportunities to teach themselves by the expatriates in Nigeria who established workshop centres such as Oye-Ekiti workshop placed under the guidance of Reverend Fathers Sean .O. Mahoney and Kevin Caroll, the Mbari Workshops which were manned by Ulli Beier and Georginia Beier in the 1960s and later co-ordinated by Susanne Wenger in Oshogbo, and the Ori-Olokun Workshop, which was set up by Micheal Crowder. In these workshops, the organizers/co-coordinators provided working materials and allowed people to freely participate in the visual aspects of their cultural arts (Ngumah 2014).

⁴⁶ Ulli Beier was one of the few expatriates involved in the pre- and post- independence ferment in art that crystallized into what we can today describe as the modern Nigeria Art...As a great teacher, mentor and role model, he helped develop artistic freedom, drew our attention to Nigerian values and aspirations by recourse to our past and traditions as well as to look beyond our immediate environment for inspiration...Ulli drew our attention to materials and themes around us...this became the foundation for the great art pieces by Twin Seven-Seven, Jimoh Buraimoh, Asiru Olatunde, Nike Okundaiye, Rufus Ogundele, Muraina Oyelami and my metal foil plastograph" (Onobrapkeya Bruce Onobrapkeya Foundation).

⁴⁷ Nationalism in this second modernist movement, refer to anti-colonial propaganda (anti-colonial nationalism). It is used to refer to the political movement instigated by Nigerian intelligentsia and political activists in their battle against colonialism and imperialism to foster decolonisation. It refers to the political movement, which emerged with the development of the Nigerian state that reached its crescendo in the late 1950s with the dismantling of colonial rule and the instalment of a government manned by indigenous Nigerians. This sense of nationalism alludes to Gellner and Breuilly's theory of nationalism as a political doctrine driven by the battle to attain power and change social order/the world. See Gellner, E., & Breuilly, J. (2008) *Nations and nationalism*. New York: Cornell University Press.

⁴⁸ *Onabulism* – refers to a very rigid and exultant subservience to and acceptance of naturalism/realism, that is the British Academy tradition of art as the creed of modern Nigerian art propagated by Aina Onobolu from the 1900s (Oloidi 2002: 244).

⁴⁹ By opposing the acquisition of the skills of observation and representation that Onobolu insisted on, Murray produced a new realism of appropriation and domestication of European principles, which subverted Western realism, and by extension cultural forms (Oguiibe 2002: 250).

⁵⁰ Young artists in a new nation that is what we are! We must grow with the new Nigeria and work to satisfy her traditional love for art or perish with our colonial past. Our new nation places huge responsibilities upon men and women...much heavier burden on the shoulders of contemporary artists. I have strong belief that with dedication of our very beings to the cause of art and with hard work, we shall finally triumph. But the time of triumph is not near, for it demands great change of mind and attitude toward cultural and social problems that beset our entire continent today...therefore the great work of building up new art culture for a new society in the second half of this century must be tackled by us. This is our age of enquiries and reassessment of our cultural values. This is our renaissance era! We must not allow others to think for us in our artistic life, because art is life itself and our physical and spiritual experiences of the world. It is our work as artists to select and render our reactions to events...Nigeria needs a virile school of art with new philosophy of the new age. Whether our African writers call the new realization Negritude, or our politicians talk about the African Personality, they both stand for the awareness and yearning for freedom of black people all over the world. Contemporary Nigerian artists should champion the cause of this movement. The key work is synthesis, and I am often tempted to describe it as *Natural Synthesis*, for it should be unconscious not forced...I do not agree with those who advocate international art philosophy; I disagree with those who live in Africa and ape European artists. Future generations of Africans will scorn their efforts. Our new society calls for a synthesis of old and new, of functional art and art for its own sake...Western art today is generally in confusion. Most of the artists have failed to realize the artists' mission to mankind. Their art has ceased to be human. The machine, symbol of science, material wealth and of the space age has since been enthroned. What form of feelings, human feelings, can void space inspire in a machine artist? It is equally futile copying our old art heritages, for they stand for our old order. Culture lives by change. Today's social problems are different from yesterdays, and we shall be doing disservice to Africa and mankind by living in our fathers' achievements. For this is like living in an entirely alien cultural background (Okeke (1958) *Natural Synthesis* Manifesto of the Zaria Art Society: 1-2)

⁵¹ Modern Nigerian art was deeply associated with local resistance to subjugation by colonial forces and joining artistic and political interests together was one way to assert a Nigerian identity that was anti-colonial, anti-domination and independent of British imperialism (Gbadegesin 2007: 9).

⁵² "A work of art is the unique result of a unique temperament. Its beauty comes from the fact that the author is what he is. It has nothing to do with the fact that other people want what they want. Indeed, the moment that an artist takes notice of what other people want, and tries to supply the demand, he ceases to be an artist, and becomes a dull or an amusing craftsman, an honest or dishonest tradesman. He has no further claim to be considered as an artist" (Wilde 1891).

⁵³ As early as the 1500, Ijebu Ode featured in the Portuguese map and Pacheco Pereira writings in 1507-1508

⁵⁴ Evidences of Ijebu military and economic might and organisation is recorded as early as the Fifteenth Century in various Portuguese explorers' records; Castello Branco in 1620 for example stated that the Ijebus were a warlike Kingdom and very powerful, while Edward Bold in 1822 provided details of the Ijebus' advancement in clothe making which were exported to different parts of Africa. See, e.g. Edward Bold, *The Merchants' and Mariners' African Guide* (London, 1822), 62, 68, 94; and John Adams, *Remarks on the Country Extending From Cape Palmas to the River Congo* (London, 1823), 89, 96, 108. Ijebu cloth was also sent into the interior to Nupe as remarked in Clapperton, H. (1829) *Journal of a Second Expedition into the Interior of Africa*. London: Ryder.

⁵⁵ Ijebu Ode art is a direct product of the people's religion and traditional philosophies; as a result, its forms are characterised by stylization symbolic of traditional perceptions of

metaphysical realism. Ijebu art ranged from abstract to stylised forms, which combine realism and abstraction. Modelled or carved forms had large heads, long torsos, conical wide eyes, small hands which in most occasions are stretched out, while the legs often taper and fade into the wood trunk not clearly defined. Some figures combine human and animal forms while others are compositions of human gestural forms with no heads. These figures often appear in groups carrying out some religious, customary or abstract spiritual function. One feature that stands out in Ijebu Oshogbo Art is the incorporation of tribal marks as surface scarification on sculptures and textile designs.

⁵⁶ Here, references are made to scholars who dismiss Onabolu's art as product of colonialism without modernist ideologies. Example, Araeen (2010) who argued that, "the perception of modernity ascribed to Onabolu's work, is actually the modernity of a surrogate class, which can only mimic but is unable to penetrate what it mimics" (Araeen 2010: 279). See also Okonkwo, I. E., Akhogba, A. E. (2013) 'Uche Okeke as A Precursor of Contemporary Nigerian Art Education' *AFRREV IJAH* Vol. 2 (3), S/No 7, Beier, U. (1968) *Contemporary Art in Africa*. FA Praeger and Mount, M. W. (1989). *African Art: The Years Since 1920*. Da Capo Press.

⁵⁷ Onabolu's painting of the colonizers was a projection of the poor judgement of the West, debunking their stereotype of Africans as incompetent - this is elaborated further in 4.3.

⁵⁸ Avant-gardism is used in this thesis to refer to the process and phenomenon of interlacing art with social and political concerns in order to instigate societal transformation, subvert authority and instigate Cultural Revolution. A good example is the Dadaist movement which through radical anti-authority, anti-institution aesthetics, subverted bourgeois social order and authority. It refers to the use of modern art as a form of antagonism to authority, as a form of resistance to institutions and for political activism through the invention of new counter-aesthetics. See Katz, L. G. (1974) 'Art and Avant-Gardism', *The Hudson Review*, 145-150.

⁵⁹ "I am happy that you yourself realize the danger of going your forefather's way by creating the type of art that our Church can quarrel with...I came back from Abeokuta a few days ago, and I must here bring to your knowledge what the Rev. in our Church said. This Rev. gentleman strongly rebuked the congregation for their stubborn devotion to their idols, which he regarded as heathen objects. They were considered ungrateful people who could not appreciate what God had done in their lives" (Holloway 1910).

⁶⁰ "What have we done to promote Art and Science? Our Geledes, Alapafajas, the Ibejis (sculptures) and our drawings are still crude destitute of Art and Science; our canoes remain as they were since the day, when first they came into use without the slightest improvement..." (Onabolu 1920)

⁶¹ Traditional apprenticeship is the system of training employed in pre-colonial Africa to educate indigenous peoples. It involved the pupil (apprentice) spending years learning and honing his or her skill by watching the master practice such trade. The apprentice then masters the skills by repeatedly practicing the observed skills and techniques.

⁶² Enwonwu contended with euro-modernism for its invention of *Art for Arts Sake*, which he believed, created a distance between modern artists and their societies...he viewed the euro-modernist ideology of *Art for Arts Sake* as a self-defeating ideal (Ogbechie 2008: 118).

⁶³ "Art (*nka*) does not imply good colors, lines and shapes, nor do these make up art...Art is not a quality of things, but an activity that objectify (ies) the artist's beliefs, his feelings, meanings or significance, and volition" see Enwonwu, B. (1949) 'The Evolution, History and Definition of Fine Art (3)', *West African Pilot*, Tuesday, May 11, p.2.

⁶⁴ “Enwonwu entered the program principally because he was disturbed by the racist rhetoric in England in the 1940's, and anthropology seemed to offer a space for the scientific study of the races, their physical and mental characteristics, customs, and social relationships. After enrolling in the program, he discovered the invidious dimension of the discipline and that the emphasis was on "primitive peoples and their cultures." The real objective of anthropology was the facilitation of the colonial agenda; "to create an intellectual barrier which makes it extremely difficult for most Africans to be considered qualified to play an important part in the development and preservation of their art". See Nzegwu, N. (1998) 'The Africanized Queen: Metonymic Site of Transformation', *African Studies Quarterly*, 1(4).

⁶⁵ During my time at Oxford, certain important events began to unfold; this was the merger of my political position with my art education. I became a member of the Oxford Union, a political organisation. I remember when Kwame Nkrumah and Nnamdi Azikiwe preached in London about African freedom and independence. That was the first stage of Africa's political struggle for freedom and we took part in it...I became inspired as an artist and some of the things I did at that time marked the yearning for freedom from colonial servitude...our art was all tied up with our political motivation. It was phrased in political terms" (Enwonwu 1989).

⁶⁶ Aesthetics of Radical Politics refers to the invention of a new aesthetics to foster political activism especially one inspired by anti-colonial ideologies as in the case of Enwonwu avant-gardism.

⁶⁷ Reactions to Enwonwu's portrait of the Queen in the West were expressed in *The Empire Telegraph London*, *Otago Daily Times*, and in New Zealand 1957 etc.

⁶⁸ “Art history disregard the complexity of modern African art by using notions of primitivism to affirm the unchanging nature of African cultures and her art...Enwonwu's most significant achievements is to have successfully countered this kind of inscription during his lifetime, and thereby secured international acknowledgement of his modernist practice” (Ogbechie 2008: 224)

⁶⁹ “The subversive form of art is used as weapons for political fights...such revolutionary language of art is not just invented but depends on the use of traditional material and the possibilities of this subversion are naturally sought where it is permitted...” see Marcuse, H (1972) 'Art and Revolution' in *Counterrevolution and Revolt*. Boston: Beacon Press.

⁷⁰ “...Nationalist movements were in fact efforts at cultural as well as purely political autonomy...cultural nationalism became a distinctive part of the liberation movements” (Irele 1965: 321).

⁷¹ Pan-Nigerianism is used to refer to the ideologies and movements that encouraged the solidarity of Nigerians as a unified nation. This included all activities tailored towards achieving unity, political progress, and independence from colonial domination and oppression.

⁷² “*Uli* was an important women's art form in South-eastern Nigerian...decorations were made with dyes from *Uli* pod, and painted murals incorporating *Uli* idioms with regular movements, arch shapes or concentric circles, repeated movements. *Uli* painting is ephemeral...”see Peri, E. A. (2002) 'Varieties and Qualities in *Uli* Painting Based on Drawings from the Igbo Ozo and Igbo Abamaba Areas, Collected in the 1930s' in Ottenberg, S. (Ed.). *The Nsukka Artists and Nigerian Contemporary Art*. Smithsonian National Museum of African Art. Washington DC: University of Washington Press.

⁷³ Expressionism as used here in relation to *Uli* art, refers to the cultural symbolic abstract representation of reality, and non-naturalistic technique of *Uli* unconventional rhythmic and lyrical movements deployed to externalize Igbo philosophies and cosmology.

⁷⁴ Characteristic motifs in the *Igbo Ozo* area are circles and spirals, triangles, four-sided shapes, moon shapes. Variations and interest are achieved by placing a filled-in shape against a fine line, straight lines against curved lines and short lines against long lines, and by rotating shapes (Op Cit.). The *isinwaqji* is a motif adapted from the space between the three or four lobes of the kola nut (*cola acuminata*). *Oloma* is orange fruit (citrus), and *onwa* is moon, while *agwɔlagwɔ* is an onomatopoeic term for *spiral*. The *agwɔlagwɔ* motif refers not only to the snake (*agwɔ*) but to a particular variety, *eke*, the sacred python revered in many parts of the north-central Igbo area. A variant of this motif, *oɖu eke* (python's tail), shows a short line ending in a spiral. See Jegede, D. (2002) 'Globalizing Ulism: Trick or Treat'

⁷⁵ Chike Aniakor opines that, "in its rhythmic temper, line dances, spirals into diverse shapes, elongates, attenuates, thickens, swells and slides, thins and fades out from a slick point, leaving an empty space that sustains it with mute echoes by which silence is part of sound. At once cursive, it creates taut boundaries, which it simultaneously relieves with dotted textures, curls up and resolves into a blocked shape hemmed with a contrasting color boundary" (Aniakor quoted in Ottenberg 1997: 59).

⁷⁶ Artistically and ideologically Okeke "fully engaged in the interpretation of folktale characters into *Uji*, and such characters come in form of supernatural beings, members of the animal kingdom, some magical objects, as well as inanimate objects" (Ikwemesi 2010).

⁷⁷ "Postcolonial Modernism refers to a set of formal and critical attitudes adopted by African and black artists at the dawn of political independence as a countermeasure against the threat of loss of self in the maelstrom unleashed by Western cultural imperialism and its enduring aftermath. That is to say, it is manifest as a variegated aesthetic in which formal elements, technical procedures, and conceptual modes derived from African, Arab, and Western art and cultures are complexly combined, depending on the individual artist's perspective on the meaning of postcolonial artistic identity". See Okeke-Agulu, C. (2010) 'The Art Society and the Making of Postcolonial Modernism in Nigeria', *South Atlantic Quarterly*, 109 (3), p.522-523.

⁷⁸ "The selective reception of Anatsui as a 'global' artist has a hegemonic agenda. It is grounded in the politics of inclusion, which uses multiculturalism as an excuse to uncritically include Anatsui in the genealogy of modern Western art. By equating the notion of 'global' with the older rhetoric of 'universal', the critics ignore the unevenness of global exchanges; and by treating 'local' as largely irrelevant, they trivialize the question of difference, which is crucial to gaining insight into the complexities of temporality and spatiality in the discourse of contemporary art" see Sanyal, S. K. (2014) 'Critiquing the Critique: El Anatsui and the Politics of Inclusion', *World Art*, 4 (1), 89-108. Pp 89.

⁷⁹ With the arrival of modernism there is the tendency to assume that the 'Other' is a subject of encounter; that Africa is a subject of the encounter not the other way round...even most contemporary African scholars have toed European view on Africa problematically absorbing African practices and products into European mainstream and thinking process in order to gain prominence and recognition from the West in doing so, they have become contained speaking the language of the West with a problematic view on their homeland (Aniakor 2013).

⁸⁰ Neo-colonialism is still a big problem for Africa. It is an extension of imperialism in former colonies by world powers that exercise economic and even political control over their former territories...the result of neo-colonialism is that foreign capital is used for the exploitation rather than for the development of the less developed parts of the world. Investment under neo-colonialism increases rather than decreases the gap between the rich and the poor countries of the world. They control the political, economic and social existence of former colonies from a distance by influencing their governments and exploiting their resources.

⁸¹ “The UK generates almost two million tons of electronic waste. Disposing of this in America and Europe costs money, so many companies sell it to middle merchants, who promise the computers can be reused in Africa, China and India. Each month about 500 container loads, containing about 400,000 unwanted computers, arrive in Nigeria to be processed. But 75 per cent of units shipped to Nigeria cannot be resold. So they sit on landfills, and children scabble barefoot, looking for scraps of copper wire or nails. And every so often, the plastics are burnt, sending fumes up into the air” (Selva 2006).

⁸² Contraposture in sculpture refers to the manipulation of the human form in sculpting to convey or express disposition and meaning through movements. See Honour, H., & Fleming, J. (2005) *A World History of Art*. London: Laurence King Publishing.

⁸³ This is the case for instance in Chika Okeke-Agulu’s ‘Art Society and the Making of Postcolonial Modernism 2010’, and *Postcolonial Modernism: Art and Decolonization in Twentieth Century Nigeria 2015*, Sylvester Ogbechie’s ‘Ben Enwonwu, Zarianist Aesthetics, and the Post-Colonial Criticism of Modern Nigerian Art 2003’, and Osa Egonwa’s ‘The Evolution of the Concept of Natural Synthesis 2001’, etc.