

Zaria Journal of Liberal Arts (ZAJOLA)

Faculty of Arts, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria

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Faculty of Arts,
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seododo@gmail.com

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oa.oyeshile@ui.edu.ng

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mmmjimba@gmail.com

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dobieje@noun.edu.ng

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Olukoshi@gmail.com

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Nuremberg Institute of Technology,
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richard.woditsch@th-nuernberg.de

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University of Guelph, Canada.
kolapof@uoguelph.ca

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University of Malaya, Kuala Lumpur,
Malaysia.
sitiarni@um.edu.my

Dr Tapiwa Shumba
University of Fort Hare, South Africa
tshumba@ufh.ac.za

EDITORIAL POLICY

Zaria Journal of Liberal Arts (ZAJOLA) is a peer-reviewed journal, published bi-annually by the Faculty of Arts, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, Nigeria. The journal welcomes manuscript of original articles, from scholars around the globe, in the various areas of Liberal Arts. The articles may be product of descriptive or analytical research, field research notes, reviews of publications and printed materials, drawn from, but not limited to Languages and Linguistics; Law; Environmental Sciences, Education; Management Studies; Cultural and Literally Studies; Theatre Arts; Philosophy; Religion; History and Strategic Studies; Archaeology and Heritage Studies; Developmental Studies and Social Sciences.

All manuscripts submitted for publication should adopt APA 8th Edition Style of referencing. The manuscripts should be typed double-spaced with sufficient margins and should count between 4,000 and 6,000 words, including the abstract, references, and appendices. The Manuscripts should not be under consideration for publication in any other research outlet.

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For further enquiries, please contact:

Editor-in-Chief

ZAJOLA, Dean's Office,

Faculty of Arts

Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria

zajola@abu.edu.ng,

Cc: abuzajola@gmail.com.

EDITORIAL COMMENT

This Edition of *Zaria Journal of Liberal Arts* marks the end of the year 2023. In this Edition, there are twelve well written articles by distinguished scholars.

The Edition opens with Ibrahim Muhammad Abdullahi's article on the implications of the New Normal on 21st century African novel and the impact of ICT. In a related study, Saleh Ahmad Abdullahi explores a semiotic approach of Emoji characters as used in WhatsApp chat messages. Through Ahmed Yerima's *Pari* and Fosudo's *Another Episode of Trauma*, Oladolapo Ojediran and Olayinka Magbagbeola interrogate enraged voices and social realities in Nigeria.

In linguistics, Hassan Usman Gadaka carries out a morphological analysis of Polar tone in Gudi and Yaya dialects of Ngamo language while Abdulrahman Umar works on the semantic aspects of repudiation in Basa language.

Ezekwesiri Okebugwu Nwosu, Nwaoha Chimaroke Chizoba and Tobeckukwu Odunze are concerned about the attack on Igbo indigenous religion. To them, this act can be defined as imperialism while Azuka Felix God's presence and Emily Oghale God's presence are concerned with the issues and perspectives in teaching and learning in urban society with the integration of multimedia, developmental and career guidance.

In his article on archaeology, Ogunlade Simeon Oluwole assesses some potential heritage sites in Nigeria. Following this is the article of Eraye Chistopher Michael and Jimoh Buhari Edun. The two scholars examine the implications of forest crime on socio economic development in Boki local government area of Cross River State. Alawode Musa Ajibola, on his own, examines the ideological nexus between Zaria and Ife Art schools.

In French studies, Tajudeen Abodunrin Osunniran and Hannah Kojusola Kuponiyi bring out the linguistic characteristics and discursive functions of filler words in French and Yoruba films. In a related field, Aliyy Abolaji Abdulrazaq carries out a reflection of lexical gaps in some translation works by Yoruba translators.

It is important to note that the view and opinions presented in these articles are solely those of the authors. Happy reading.

Prof. Abubakar Sule Sani

Editor-in-chief

30th November, 2023

NOTE ON CONTRIBUTORS

Ibrahim Muhammad Abdullahi

Department of English and Literary Studies,
College of humanities,
Al-Qalam University, Kastina, Kastina State.
ibramabdul@gmail.com

Saleh Ahmad Abdullahi

Department of Languages,
Nigerian Army University Biu, Borno State.
salehmadbiri24@gmail.com
<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-2221-083X>

Oludolapo Ojediran, PhD

Department of the Performing Arts,
University of Ilorin, Ilorin, Kwara State.
Ojedirano@yahoo.co.uk

Olayinka Magbagbeola

Department of Theatre and Media Arts,
Ekiti State University, Ado-Ekiti, Ekiti State.
olayinka.magbagbeola@eksu.edu.ng

Hassan Usman Gadaka

Department of Hausa,
Umar Suleiman College of Education Gashua,
Yobe State Nigeria.
ughassan77@gmail.com

Abdulrahman Umar, PhD

A. A. Kure State University of Education, Minna,
Niger State.
aumar00034@gmail.com

Ezekwesiri Okebugwu Nwosu,

Department of History and International Studies,
Alvan Ikoku University of Education, Owerri,
Imo State.

Nwaoha Chimaroke Chizoba,
Department of History and International Studies
Alvan Ikoku University of Education, Owerri,
Imo State.

Tobechukwu Odunze Nwachukwu
Department of Political Science
Alvan Ikoku University of Education, Owerri,
Imo State.

Chigozie Constance Onyeukwu
National Museum,
Owerri, Imo State.

Azuka Felix N. God'spresence
Department of Educational Foundations
University of Nigeria, Nsukka
pheloskky.2blessed@gmail.com

Emily Oghale God'spresence
Department of Film and Multimedia Studies
Faculty of Communication and Media Studies
University of Port Harcourt
emily.godspresence@uniport.edu.ng

Ogunlade Simeon Oluwale PhD
Department of Surveying and Geoinformatics
The Federal University of Technology Akure, Ondo state Nigeria
soogunlade@futa.edu.ng

Eraye Christopher Michael
Department of Sociology
Federal University of Lafia, Nasarawa State, Nigeria
chriseraye@yahoo.com

Jimoh Buhari Edun
Department of Sociology
Faculty of Social Sciences
Federal University of Lafia, Nasarawa State, Nigeria
jimohbuhariedun@gmail.com

Alawode, Musa Ajibola (PhD)
Department of Fine Arts
Faculty of Environmental Sciences
Lagos State University
whereisdralawode@gmail.com

Tajudeen Abodunrin Osunniran, PhD
Department of Foreign Languages,
Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife,
Osun State, Nigeria.
osunniranta@oauife.edu.ng

Hannah Kojusola Kuponiyi
Department of Foreign Languages,
Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife,
Osun State, Nigeria.
hannahkuponiyi@gmail.com

Aliyy Abolaji Abdulrazaq, PhD
Islamic University of Niger Republic
abolaji1978@yahoo.com

Bintu Abdurrazaq Tahir, PhD
Department of Arabic,
Faculty of Arts,
Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria.
fattah075@gmail.com
08064298870

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A Study on the Attack on the Igbo Indigenous Religion as Imperialism

Ezekwesiri Okebugwu Nwosu, Nwaoha Chimaroke Chizoba, Tobeckukwu Odunze, & Chigozie Constance Onyeukwu

Abstract

Since the advent of Colonial rule in Igbo land and Africa in general, attacks on cultural monuments have been a commonplace. Many monuments that depict the way of life of the Igbo people of Nigeria have come under attacks leading to their destructions. This piece examines how the incessant attacks to root out cultural monuments have affected the history of Igboland in particular. Historical method which implies the use of both primary and secondary resource materials was employed in the course of carrying out this work. The findings showed that the source of the destructive attacks is religiously inclined. Most of the cultural monuments are products of Igbo indigenous religious system and since the advent of Christian religion in Igboland there have been a calculated attempt to extirpate the indigenous practices and signs. The conclusion drawn from the analysis of this situation is the negative influence on historical scholarship in Igboland.

Keywords: Cultural Monuments; Oral Tradition; Culture; Indigenous Religion; Pre-colonial; Colonial and Post-Colonial.

Introduction

The Igbo are occupants of the five states in what is known as South Eastern geopolitical zone in the present day Nigeria. According to Ngumah and Egonu; (2018) other areas where the Igbos are found include Akwa Ibom, Bayelsa, Cross River, Rivers and Delta States, all the South-South geopolitical zone of Nigeria. According to Ford and Jones; (1967) the Igbos are a single people in the sense that they speak a number of related dialects, occupy a continuous track of territory and have many features of social structure and culture in common.

As Mbiti (1982) aptly puts it, every people has culture and culture is changing all the time, whether slowly or rapidly. The word culture covers many things such as the way people live, behave and act, and their physical, as well as intellectual

achievements. Religion as a way of life of a people is among the richest part of the Igbo culture and indeed African heritage. It is on this basis that Mbiti (1982) accentuates that religion is formal in all areas of human life; it dominated the thinking of African people to such an extent that it has shaped their cultures, their social life, their political organizations and economic activities. It is on this basis that traditional religious practices affect every facet of Igbo activities. On this basis we look at the attacks on cultural monuments as means to an end in understanding the history of the Igbo and that of African at large.

The nature of African religion includes objects and places, value and morals. Objects and places cover things and places which people have preserved as holy and sacred. Some of these objects and places were either created by man or secured in their natural environment and can be employed into use for some particular purposes. These sacred objects and places may be owned collectively by the community or private individuals. They include sacred hills, caves, mountain, rivers amulets, charms, masks and sculptures Mbiti, (1982). There are other features of Igbo indigenous (traditional) religion that made it all embracing. For example, values and morals formed an integrated part of religion in Igboland and in most other parts of Africa. As Mbiti, (1982) has rightly advanced that value and morals are very important features of African traditional religion that concerns itself with the ideas that protect or strengthen the life of the people in their relationship with one another and the world around them. He went further to advice that value and morals cover topics like truth, justice, love, right and wrong, good and evil, beauty, respect for people, decency, prosperity, the keeping of promise and agreement, praise and blame, the right and responsibility of both the individuals and his community, character integrity and so on. They help people to live with one another, to settle disputes, to maintain peace and harmony, to make use of their belonging to have relationship with their total environment. This shows that there is no aspect of life that is left aside by religion. As pointed out above, these different features are represented by objects, places and symbols. Because of the important role objects, places and symbols play in the life of a people, they become monumental.

Monument on its own is derived from the Latin word “Monumentum”, “Monere” or “Moneo”, which implies to remind, warn or cause to think Njoku and Ndubuisi, (2019) what is explicit in this, is that, a monument means no other thing than a constant remind or that which causes a people to think about some events

of the past. Concurring with the shorter English Dictionary Cantacugmo and King; (1999) sees monument as a structure, edifice or erection intended to commemorate a notable person, action or event. This definition is narrow hence; monuments do not have to be erected.

Monument according to UNESCO, (1972) can be categorized into two, namely manmade and natural. It is, therefore, on this premise that refers to the objects, places and symbols which were created, secured and preserved by the Igbo in the cause of their interaction with their environment as cultural monument. Many of these objects, places and symbols that remind the people about their past have frequently come under attacks. This paper examined the sources of these attacks and their attendant consequences on the features of Igbo history in the 21st century. The paper uses secondary sources and few interviews as its methodology.

Igboland and Penetration of Christian Missionaries

The arrival of missionary enterprise in Igboland occurred in the latter half of nineteenth century in 1857. The venture was pioneered by the British Church Missionary Society Ekechi, (1971), Nwankiti, (1998). The Europeans believed that it was the pre-emptive right of the Whiteman to judge the character of the African without his participation (Ekechi, 1971:221).

The Church Missionary Society founded in 1799 claimed to have selected Africa as one of the spheres of its evangelistic operation and the negro race precisely, out of sympathy for the cruel wrongs which the slave trade had inflicted upon them Ekechi; (1971). As Ekechi further states it is noteworthy that Christian missionary enterprise in Igboland, as well as any other places in West Africa was not unrelated to the political and economic changes that had occurred in Europe. He concurred with Du Plassis, who aptly posits that missionary enterprise is so intimately related to the political movement on the one hand and to the commercial undertaking on the other, that its history cannot be accurately traced without continued reference to both.

The connection between missionary operation and colonial domination in Igbo land was a strong one. Both worked together to achieve their objectives. Christian

mission rode on the back of the British political, as well as economic/commercial interests into Igboland. When the Dens abolished importation of slaves into their Caribbean colonies in 1803, New African (October, 2007) Britain having developed their metropolitan industries reluctantly followed in 1807 when the emancipation act was passed in 1833 to free slaves belonging to the British investors in Canada, the Caribbean and Cape Colony (New African October, 2007) the British politicians and the commercial counterparts realized the changing trend in the economy and decided to look elsewhere. This brought the British merchants and their political counterparts into the interiors of Africa including the Igbo land. It was as a result of the commercial interests of the British officials and their merchants in Igbo land that Dike, (1956) posits that economic as well as diverse non-economic forces helped to canalize discordant elements in British society into one channel and provided a common ground for unity or alliance among such strange bed-fellows. Although Dike did not make these other factors explicit, but one would suggest here that, among these other factors as posited by Dike include the cause of civilization and Christianity through the Bible and plough which was pursued by Fowell Biston, a British humanitarian (Ekechi. 1971).

When Christianity came to Igboland, it met with a different civilization. The missionaries were confronted with the burden of extirpating the Igbo indigenous civilization so as to nurture their newly cultivated civilization (Western). Ekechi (1971) identified some considered reasons for the difficulties the missionaries encountered in the attempt to disseminate their propaganda across the length and breadth of Igboland. Among these reasons are poor communication, which according to him made travel from one town to another difficult, shortage of missionary manpower and financial strangulation which forced the missionaries to reduce the scope of their missionary operation to a manageable size, the last and most important to the present discuss is the stout resistance by the indigenous peoples against Christianity.

Although some indigenous people accepted the foreign religion as soon as it came, it was circumstantial because during the negotiation between King Obi Akozua, his cabinet and the British agents (traders and missionaries) discussion about trading was undertaken first before the missionary interest was announced. Ekechi (1971) postulates that it is possible that the trading post proposal was meant to soften the ground before the issue concerning missionary activities was

brought to fore. However, the early acceptance of the missionary propaganda by Onitsha is considered circumstantial because the arrival of the missionary in 1857 coincided with the war between the Onitsha and their neighbours (Ogidi, Aboh, Obosi and Idda). In his erudite postulation, Flinck, (1960) posit that the above mentioned rival city states were at war over wealth and power. Perhaps, the Onitsha saw the British merchants as well as the missionaries as sources of wealth and power to outwit their rivals. In spite of all their zeal and efforts, missionary enterprise was unable to be extended to the interiors of Igboland. They limited the spread of their propaganda with the areas having the European trading companies such as Onitsha, Asaba, Aboh, Obosi and Osamari.

The thirst to carry missionary activities across the length and breadth of Igboland was quenched by British colonial intervention into the affairs of the Igbo. The drive of the British imperialists is to move beyond the coastal margin so as to enhance the exploitation of both human and material resources in the interiors of Igboland. Between 1900 and 1910 the indigenous political system had collapsed before the bulldozing British imperial conquest Ekechi, (1971), Nwosu, (2018). During the campaigns to subordinate the Igbo political system, many institutions, monumental materials and objects were attacked and destroyed. By so doing, the British political authorities did some of the jobs the missionaries were expecting to do. Consequent upon the presence of the British colonial authorities in the Igbo interiors the missionaries as well as the merchants got the leverage to move freely in Igboland.

The Convert against Monuments in Igboland

As previously explained, this paper argues that the Igbo indigenous religious institutions are and the political, economic and other socio-cultural aspects of their life are intertwined. None of this can be neatly separated from the other. The European Colonialists, merchants and the Christians alike, enjoyed complementarily in a bid to destroy the ideological base of the Igbo society, through the destruction of Institutions like amala and umunna, Symbols such like ofor and uhie and Monuments like ikenga and umune. Most of the Igbo people who played key role in socio-economic and political-cultural war against their father land had already been clothed in their brain. They had already be anglicized

Christianized during their stay as slaves either in the English owned plantations in West Indies or in Sierra Leone.

The plan to put into extinction the Igbo way of life was hatched outside Igboland. The different interest parties that came together to carry out this mission were all represented in the expedition that laid the foundation of CMS Mission in Igboland in 1841. There are so many reasons to believe that the blow done to Igbo society was through the concerted effort of the three interest groups namely; The British Politicians (colonists), The Merchants and The Christian Missionaries. The execution of this agenda began in Onitsha in the present day Anambra State. In 1860s, when a missionary, John Christopher Taylor, a Sierra Leonean of Igbo origin advised the new converts at Onitsha to challenge the existing social order of their fatherland, one of them who was eager to carry out the instruction quickly put forward a question “will you protect us”. If we rebel again, according to the custom of the country, the response of Taylor to this question reveals the fact that the missionaries were part of the plan waiting to overthrow political authority in Igboland. Taylor responded to the young man saying that he could not offer them any protection because he had no political authority; however, he hoped that when the British will take over the territory, it would be possible to end this antique custom. Ekechi (1971) as Ekechi further stated. It is clear that the missionaries were eager to overthrow the social order and hoped to replace it with a foreign and Christian structure. Thus they endure them to break the laws and customs of the society.

One of the pioneer missionaries could not conceal his happiness and excitement when he saw some of their converts who violated their tradition in accordance with the instruction of the missionaries. The long awaited overthrow of the indigenous political authorities and monopolization of coercion in Igboland came to reality between 1900 and 1910. Between these periods, the British authority had planned and destroyed the famous Ibini Ukpabi (which the British called the long juju) in what was known as Aro expedition. Nwosu (2011) observes that the destruction of this monumental institution was political, economic and socio-cultural (religious). The political inclination of the Ibini Ukpabi earned it the description the judicial oracle, while it was seen as socio-economic institution because it was believed to give fertility and wealth (Anene, 1963). Given the influence of this oracle all over Igboland and beyond the Europeans believed that Aro dominated the rest of the Igbo politically, as well as in the socio-economic

spheres of life. This was the major reason for which they targeted and destroyed it in 1902. The destruction was welcomed by colonial authorities who carried it out for the merchants who saw the owners as an obstacle to their penetration into the interiors of Igbo land, the missionaries who had already sworn to root out the indigenous religious and cultural practices of the Igbo.

One important issue that should not be left aside in this discuss is the inclusion of the missionaries in the Aro expedition. On July 20, 1901 during the build up to the expedition, the Government Inspector General gave invitation to the Catholic missionaries to accompany the troops as military chaplains. There is no doubt whether or not the military operation counts among there long awaited event, and they quickly referred the expedition as civilizing expedition (Ekechi, 1971). In attempt to explain how colonial rule disintegrated blacksmiths in Nkwere, Osuala in Chukwu, Okoro, Uchendu and Nkem-Onyekpe (2016) recounted the experience of the Nkwere people, when the British colonial officers collected and destroyed guns belonging to the Nkwere. He further lamented that thus “arsenal of power and wealth which represented the pride of the Nkwere family as well as the symbol of Nkwere indigenous technology was systematically destroyed”, those guns retrieved from the Nkwere by the colonial officers should have been preserved in the museums as historical monuments, reminding the future generation of Nkwere and rest of the Igbo how far their ancestors had gone in technological advancement. Osuala further avers how complimentarily the colonial authorities and missionaries became very instrumental to the blacksmithing technology in Nkwere.

Arrogant behaviour of the Christians towards monumental objects transcended the colonial era into the post-colonial times. The Christians must have been dip-rooted in the post-colonial era, deriving the leverage to carry their propaganda and improve on their ideology. Some of the indigenous converts were already having clutch in their brain, mud as a result they no longer see anything good in the historical monuments representing the way our people lived. For instance in 2006, a group called United Congress of Mbaise Christians (UCMC) organized a restoration crusade during which no fewer than one hundred shrines were

destroyed. This crusade was said to have gathered about 1.5 million people together for three nights.

In reaction to this, Wole Soyinka (2006) revealed that his emphasis is not on the number of people who attended this program but on the number of shrines destroyed. Consequently, he asked what he referred to as rhetorical question.

Have you deployed trained archaeologists, ethnologists, indeed pharmacologists, or whatever to these shrines, those who have the training to discern whether the target of destruction may or may not contain objects of archival value? Have you taken the trouble to separate the wheat from the chaff? Do you consider it part of your collective responsibility to ensure that this is done? (Soyinka, 2006).

Because of the level of indoctrination which clutched their brain these Christians they could hardly realize the implications of their action. This scholarly observation is that Western civilization is still bulldozing its way into our important areas of culture and history making it difficult for us to solve our future problems. In a similar vein, in August 2009, a group called Akpodim Believers Union rampaged in guise of delivering the autonomous community from evil. During the exercise, they destroyed two oracles Alilieleghim Nworgu in Eziala Akpokwu and Odu Amadioha in Umuakam all in Akpodim, a monumental oil beam tree located at the Nkwo Epekele market square known as (Ugba Oso-mma) oil beam tree that forbids knife was cut down. Again, in February 2019, around 10pm, some so-called born-again Christians gathered around the community's slit drums kept in the community square of Amainyinta in Ihitte Uboma Local Government Area of Imo State with a mistaken believe that the drums are the source of evil spirits, therefore, they were casting and binding them. Udumaga (2019: personal communication) if not that the drums were properly secured, they would have perhaps replicated what happened at Uga in Aguata Local Government Area of Anambra State where a born-again Christian exhibiting some atom of fanaticism burnt the giant slit drum of Uga community (Ezeofe Igboekwu, 2019).

On the 5th of December, 2018, a popular Reverend Father known as Ebube Muonso visited Igboukwu for a crusade, during his program, he imbued the Catholic faithful to burn down the deities of their fathers that had endured for ages. The young men of the community responded in fierce manner. During this exercise, a giant clay pot which was perhaps used for ritual was broken. This pot was said to have endured for one thousand years (Eze Ononobi Igbo, 2019: personal communication). The catholic priest gave this instruction without any consideration to the circular nature of the Nigerian state, and the religious crisis that could become the consequences. In response, the youth of Igboukwu gathered and brought huge quantity of petrol in preparation to burn down all the catholic churches at Igboukwu but before this could happen, the Igboukwu elders were able to manage the crisis (Eze Ononobi, 2019). Another monumental landmark that received a devastating blow was Mbari. This is among those Igbo heritage that was almost forced into extinction by the adherents of Western civilization (particularly religion).

As have explained earlier in this work what monument implies. A monumental object can come from any aspect of human endeavor. Judging from the fact that historical sources encompass every viral of evidence that human beings have left of their past activities. For example written words and spoken words, the shape of the landscape and material artifact (Tosh, 2006). Important thoughts of people about their existence in any environment were most times represented by objects, natural or manmade. For example the thirteenth to fifteenth centuries impressive stone ruins of the Royal Palace of Great Zimbabwe remains a monument from the historical perspectives, it has thoroughly challenged some histories written from the western paradigm that create impression that indigenous African culture was intrinsically inferior to that of European (Tosh, 2006).

Those monumental objects that have suffered humiliation in Igboland are among the cultural heritages that require conservation. They are capable of promoting collective consciousness in terms of unity, oneness, nation building and promoting sustainable peaceful co-existence among the Igbo. Malinowski as cited in Onyima (2016) avers that all cultural traits are useful part of the society they occur in other words customary pattern of behaviour, belief, attitude and social

structures perform a function within the society they occur. There is no doubt that the past is necessarily the key to unlock the present and as well the part way into the future. Onyima (2016) argues that these objects and places that point to the Igbo immediate and remote past are our constant reminder and consequently historical. It is in this regards that Mullet cited in Uzoigwe (1977) states that the , first and last history is about people, what they do, what they think, what happened to them and how they influence the world in which they live. No matter the attention to deeds, institutions, and ideas, the historians come back to the men who performed the deeds, ran the institutions, and conceived the ideas. Without people history is inconceivable, the history of a country, an idea, a policy means the men who built it, or thought it, or carried it through.

Most of these ideas and deeds were expressed in various kinds of art representations. The materials for making history are man's creation in his environment. This is not peculiar to Igboland, as Maduka (1988) puts it, the Christians make efforts to cement their belief and conviction or to concretize them by creating visible religious artifacts which are in symbolic form.

Conclusion

As have examined the connotation of the term monument, the nature of monuments among the Igbo, its relevance to historical reconstruction and the nature of attacks directed to them by the European imperialists and their indigenous compatriots. In the cause of this exercise we realized that the Europeans who came to Igboland discovered how interwoven the Igbo indigenous system was and decided to create socio-economic and political discord. Some of the indigenous who provided themselves as willing tool to execute this project were already clutched in their brains. It was equally established here that man makes history as a result of his interaction with his environment. One way through which an individual survives in his environment is by relating to another individual or individuals, and this leads to the formation of the society. Therefore, the relation between an individual and another or individual and society is very crucial to historical understanding. An individual is important in himself only because the society exists and that the ancestors are.

History cannot be studied in a vacuum; it studies the society of people. For us to grapple with what happened before we were born, we must look at some documents. The numerous monuments which we have lost in various forms of

violent attacks from both European imperialists and their indigenous Igbo compatriots are capable of blurring the sight of an historian who wished to look into the past. Attacks on monuments and cultural heritages in Igboland are not only an attack on the facts of history but on that interaction that exists between an historian and his facts, and that dialogue which exists between the past and the present. If this trends are not controlled the future of Igbo history in the 21st century looks bleak.

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