

COLONIALISM AND THE EDUCATED AFRICANS

THERE IS A DIRECT, IF COMPLEX, relationship between colonial politics and culture and African modernity and between colonial education and the foundation of modern African art. Thus my intention in this opening chapter of a book on the history of art is not to attempt a comprehensive history of education in colonial Nigeria and Anglophone Africa; rather, I want to sketch out salient ideas about and episodes in British colonialism, particularly how the encounter between the ideology and practice of indirect rule, on the one hand, and African nationalist visions of modernity, on the other, produced mutually antagonistic models for modern art in Nigeria in the first half of the twentieth century. This sets the ground for chapter 2, where I examine the specific theoretical and conceptual processes that catalyzed the emergence of modern Nigerian art from the ideological conflict between the colonizer and the colonized, as manifested in the work of Aina Onabolu (1882–1963) and Kenneth C. Murray (1903–1972). But this chapter also does something else. It sets the ground, sustained throughout the book, for keeping the evo-

lution of modern Nigerian art on a parallel track with developments in the national political sphere. The objective is to make the reader constantly aware of the ineluctable if fraught and asymmetric relationship of politics, culture, and art.

It is eminently clear from contemporary texts that early twentieth-century British colonial administration was particularly suspicious of what was then called literary education—social science and humanities courses (including fine art)—because such education was believed to breed, in the colonized subjects, critical thinkers and “troublemakers” who constituted a formidable, even mortal threat to the entire colonial system. One cannot help noting the striking similarity between this view of the educated native in the context of colonial Nigeria and in post-Reconstruction United States (the period of the 1895 Atlanta Compromise). Consider, for instance, that moment in W. E. B. Du Bois’s short story “The Coming of John” when the white southern judge confronts John, the black son of former slaves:

In their place, your people can be honest and respectful; and God knows, I’ll do what I can to help them. But when they want to reverse nature, and rule white men, and marry white women, and sit in my parlor, then by God! we’ll hold them under if we have to lynch every nigger in the land. Now, John, the question is, are you, with your education and Northern notions, going to accept the situation and teach the darkies to be faithful servants and laborers as your fathers were—I knew your father, John, he belonged to my brother, and he was a good Nigger. Well—well, are you going to be like him, or are you going to try to put fool ideas of rising and equality into these folks’ heads, and make them discontented and unhappy?¹

What is certain is that the fear of the revolutionary potential of the educated native in post-Reconstruction America, as in colonial Nigeria, was at the basis of the official antagonism toward him. With hindsight, the apologists of indirect rule were, in fact, right on the mark in their distrust of literary education. This is so because, to the early nationalists, education not only provided the intellectual weapons with which to confront the colonial system and its political institutions; it was in itself a battleground for the long-term struggle to define the terms of modern African subjectivity.

The focus in this chapter on the politics of colonial education helps us appreciate the fundamental argument of this book: that the development of independence movements and ideologies of decolonization premised on the invention of a modern African cultural identity provided the basis for

the crucial emergence of postcolonial modernism in Nigeria in the 1950s and 1960s.

This chapter prepares us to better appreciate my claim that colonialism resisted rather than chaperoned the emergence of modern art in Nigeria. I concede that this must surely sound heretical to many; after all, we know that Western-style art schools were established during the colonial period in many parts of Africa. I am heartened by recent compelling studies, especially the groundbreaking work by Olufemi Taiwo, who argues that colonialism resisted and ultimately derailed the emergence of modernity and its institutions—in fact, the very idea of modern subjectivity in Africa.² His proposition is that if modernity is marked by the triumph of an industrial economy, the rule of law, and a democratic system, then indirect rule colonialism, given its economic and political priorities, was antithetical to these benchmarks and did not demonstrate the will to midwife African modernity. When he proposes that British colonialism used what he has called sociocryonics—which he defines as “the ignoble science of cryopreserving social forms, arresting them and denying them and those whose social forms they are the opportunity of deciding what, how, and when to keep any of their social forms”³—to stanch the already substantial march toward modernity initiated by African and black missionaries in the late nineteenth century, I could not agree more with him. In fact, my task in this chapter complements this new way of thinking about the battle for African modernist subjectivity between the apologists and forces of indirect rule and their native antagonists, for whom the question of their autonomous agency was an inalienable right.

Indirect Rule and Colonial Education

In 1908, the maverick governor of the Southern Nigeria Protectorate, Sir Walter Egerton, listed his government's six administrative priorities, all of which were political (“to pacify the country” and “to establish settled government in the newly won districts”) or economic (to expand land, water, and railroad networks).⁴ The goal of the colonial government, he asserted, was developing the colonies for profit; it did not matter that apologists of colonialism claimed, ad nauseam, that its object was to open up “primitive” and “pagan” peoples to European Christian civilization and progress.⁵ African colonization, as a popular refrain had it, was the “white man's burden.” In any case, the government's economic motive and the moral imperatives of the Christian missionaries (already operating in the West African coastal regions before the onset of formal colonization of the continent in the years

after the Berlin-Congo Conference of 1884/85) more or less meshed. However, this alliance was often riddled with conflict arising from misaligned visions, attitudes, and convictions of the apostles of imperialism and Christian missionaries. The colonial government's primary goal, as outlined by Egerton, was political conquest, euphemistically called "pacification," and exploitation of the economic and natural resources of the colonies. The Christian missions, by contrast, convinced of their duty to bring the Gospel and salvation to pagan peoples, combined evangelization through the church with Western-style education through mission schools.

By the turn of the twentieth century, with colonialism firmly established, the stage was set in the colonies for a clash, ultimately for resolution of the rift, between the gospel and government, between the Bible and the gun. The trouble, as Martin Kisch, a colonial government official in northern Nigeria put it, was that mission education turned the African from the admired, lovable "native" to the despised, disreputable "nigger."⁶ The end of this crisis, however, raised the stakes of mutual antagonism between the educated elites from the colonies and the colonial regime—a high-intensity drama that, in turn, laid the grounds for the independence and decolonization movements of the post-World War II era.

A century earlier, it was already clear, given the prevalent imperial assumptions in Europe, that the protocolonial administration favored education but only insofar as it was aimed at giving Africans basic technical training. The 1846/47 report of the commission set up by Earl Grey, Secretary for the Colonies, recommended that colonial education should give the Africans enough training to liberate themselves from "habits of listless contentment" resulting from their inhabiting a bounteous tropical climate.⁷ It also envisaged that such education should prepare them for serving in "the humbler machinery of local affairs."⁸ Although the report was specifically in response to the question of native education in the West Indies, it was also circulated among governors in the British West African colonies. Little surprise then that, a few years later, B. C. C. Pine, the acting governor of Sierra Leone, possibly influenced by this report, attacked the mission schools for providing the natives literary education, given their lack of a culture suitable for intellectual pursuits.⁹

The Christian missionaries, for their part, saw literary education as a crucial tool of evangelization, for it speeded up the spread of the Gospel and European cultural enlightenment among the natives. Yet by 1865, at the very beginning of British imperialism in Africa, missionary education was already under enormous pressure. Answering questions from the Select Committee

on West Africa, Reverend Elias Shrenk of the Basel Mission argued that the natives needed to learn Latin and Greek to enable them to read newspapers; the gift of such education, he suggested, ought to be seen as a reparatory gesture on the part of Britain in atonement of its sordid slavery past. The colonial government, unconvinced of the merits of Shrenk's apologia for missionary education, set its eyes on a different model of education for colonized Africans. Helped in large measure by the work of American missionaries influenced by the work of the African American educator Booker T. Washington, West African mission schools increasingly opted for industrial education, which resulted in the simultaneous retrenchment from literary and humanistic studies and instead supported, willy-nilly, the colonial governments' emphasis on technical and low-grade education in the era of indirect rule.

Indirect rule has a complex history. The best-known and the most influential model of British colonial governance in Africa, it is usually associated with Lord Frederick Lugard—under whose regime Nigeria was formed in 1914¹⁰—and derived in part from the earlier ideas of the French ethnologist Gustav d'Eichthal, who advised the precolonial British Niger Mission against disrupting the Islamic society of the Fulani Empire in today's northern Nigeria. The mission, he reasoned, would do better to leave the Muslim Africans to develop in their own way, separate from the Europeans. D'Eichthal's ideas, well received in Britain, helped the colonial administration formulate the terms of its later political engagement with Islamic societies in the region. Apart from d'Eichthal, other important voices, such as the anthropologist and self-proclaimed imperialist Mary Kingsley, argued that African colonization must be based on the recognition of the role of African cultural institutions as well as the *difference* of the African.¹¹ In fact Kingsley's sympathetic racism, built as it was on her brand of social anthropology, exerted tremendous influence on the development of the theory of indirect rule operationalized in Nigeria by Lord Lugard.¹²

The problem with indirect rule's claim to preserving Islamic/African cultures and political structures lies in the colonialists' underestimation of the impact of their presence as political agents with ultimate coercive and judicial powers in the colonies. Moreover, Lugard's rule in northern Nigeria, legendary for its authoritarian excesses, did not reflect his supposed respect for Islamic culture. In its editorial in response to a famous 1920 speech by Lord Montagu, secretary of state for India at the British House of Parliament, in which he condemned the massacre of Indians at Amritsar, the *Lagos Weekly Record* drew parallels between official terrorism in India and in Lugard's Nigeria.¹³ The journal noted that Montagu's statement

could be made to apply to Nigeria particularly during the terrible administration of Sir Frederick Lugard, to wit: “when you pass an order that in the Northern Provinces all Nigerians must Zaki before any white man, when you pass an order to say that all Nigerians must compulsorily salute any officer of His Majesty the King, you are indulging in frightfulness and there is no adequate word to describe it.”¹⁴

Evidently, the argument for the preservation of Islamic cultures by indirect rule’s apologists conveniently justified the systematic alienation of all but a few northern princes from Western education, thereby limiting the scale of popular access to political power within the context of the modern state. From their experience in Lagos and southern Nigeria, the British knew that uncontrolled Western education for the colonized, especially at the secondary and tertiary level, inexorably led to disenchantment with the colonial status quo and to the struggle for independence.¹⁵ Given its success in stanching direct access to institutions of modernity by northern Nigerians, indirect rule seemed the most attractive bulwark against the upsurge of anti-colonialism, as articulated by the southern educated elite clustered around Lagos in the interwar period. In the hands of Lugard, this system of government avoided meaningful education of the natives, and his critics in the Lagos press—his eternal enemies—never forgave him for that. To his critics, indirect rule colonialism, as Achille Mbembe has persuasively argued, was not just about control of the bodies of the colonized through spectacular violence; its less obvious yet more pernicious objective was disciplining the intellect of the colonized.¹⁶ If colonialism depended on systematically stage-managing the colonized people’s access to the liberatory potential of education, the only effective bulwark against it would be sustained counter-offensive and contestation of the assumptions of colonial education policies.

The Educated African as Troublemaker

From the onset of British imperialism, the colonial government distrusted the educated native in unmistakable terms and was patently equivocal in its disposition toward the business of colonial education. More precisely, it preferred industrial education, which, apart from providing low-level manpower required to support the colonial bureaucracy, was less risky than literary education, which eventually led to the emergence of troublesome lawyers, historians, and social scientists who, soon enough, announced their disdain for the colonial system. While some outspoken members of the African elite in colonial Lagos condemned literary education because of its supposed ir-

relevance—because job prospects for those so trained were slim—others realized its importance in the establishment of a viable literate, progressive, modern society competent enough to assume political power from the colonialists. Lord Lugard, for instance, seemed to have confirmed his preference for agricultural and technical education over “book learning” in response to gratuitous anti-native education statements by two prominent beneficiaries of literary education: Lagosian lawyers Henry Carr and Sapara Williams.¹⁷ Moreover, as Benedict Anderson has shown regarding the connection between the rise of print capitalism and national consciousness, it is far from surprising that the emergence of a vibrant press in Lagos, signifying a considerable literate population, marked the beginnings of political and cultural nationalism in the colony by the late nineteenth century.¹⁸ It was an open secret, shared by colonizer and colonized, that support for and encouragement of literary and higher education invariably implanted the seeds of political opposition amongst the African population and was therefore inimical to the survival of the colonial system. Remarkably, this question of literary versus technical education and their relationship to the rise of the critical politics of the colonial subjects in Lagos was simultaneously played out in the United States in the legendary conflict between Booker T. Washington, who advocated technical education, and W. E. B. Du Bois, who famously called for the literary education of the black “Talented Tenth,” on whom depended any possibility of racial uplift during the post-Reconstruction era. My parallel point—detailed in the following chapter—is precisely that modern Nigerian art developed from within an ideological context marked on the one hand by the work of African artists seeking a literary education equivalent of art training emblemized by Aina Onabolu’s career and on the other by Kenneth Murray’s insistence on technical art education for production of craft.

Despite that the early Lagos elite, consisting of repatriated blacks from the New World, and a few native Yoruba tried to forge a common national community, their cultural identity, rather than fixed, was fluid and contested, especially measured in relation to European colonial culture. Indeed, we could reliably identify two distinct attitudes. One, that of the assimilationists, conceded the inexorable march of the dominant, all-powerful culture of Europe and advocated acceptance of and submission to it. The other, that of the protonationalists, argued for a relativistic view of culture and recognition of the value of the local, indigenous cultures upon which African political and cultural progress must depend. These debates were featured in two important contemporary newspapers, the *Lagos Observer*, which was sympathetic to assimilationist arguments, and the *Lagos Weekly Record*, the bastion of the emergent radical nationalists.

The assimilationists and radical nationalists, though thoroughly immersed in the pervading Victorian Lagos culture, were acutely conscious of and committed to the articulation and performance of their social and political identities within the stratified structure of the colonial society. This, it bears emphasizing, is crucial to an understanding and appreciation of responses to colonial culture by colonized peoples. In standard colonial culture texts, such as those of Margery Perham, it is usual to read that the local response to empire was unified and predictable, with little attention paid to the dramatic rejections and concessions, the conflicted and contentious attitudes and reactions to European culture within one class and across the general population. Take the matter of names. Several luminaries of Lagos's educated elite changed their original Western names to Yoruba ones. David Brown Vincent, for example, became Mojola Agbebi to reflect his identity politics; Otun Oba Adepeyin became John Augustus Otonba Payne, anglicizing his Yoruba names. Yet some, like Herbert Macaulay, arguably the most influential nationalist in the age of Lugard, retained Western names quite proudly.

Herbert Macaulay, an engineer and activist but also a scion of a distinguished Yoruba family—his maternal grandfather was the Reverend Samuel Ajayi Crowther, himself a repatriated son of a Yoruba slave and the first African bishop of the Church Missionary Society—was an African with a compound consciousness, one who laid claim to and defended the African's right to Yoruba, African, Arab, and Western cultural heritages. Indeed, G. O. Olusanya's interpretation of the appellation "black Englishman" given to Macaulay by Lagos market women is quite apt, in the sense that it described "a man who had mastered European education, techniques and culture so that he was capable of meeting the colonial masters and beating them at their own games."¹⁹ Macaulay defended traditional practices against which the Christians fulminated unceasingly, particularly polygamy and native religions.²⁰ Though a Christian himself, he often consulted Yoruba ritual experts and subscribed to the efficacy of native medicines. Like many elite Lagosians, Macaulay, in the true spirit of a compound consciousness, saw Western and African knowledge systems and cultural traditions in relative terms, as both contributing to the making of the complex life-world of the modern African. Macaulay indeed belonged to a section of Lagos's educated elite that formed an alliance with what one might call progressive traditional rulers against the colonial government; being part of the alliance often involved laying claim to and expressing sympathy for traditional practices deemed retrogressive and paganistic by the black or white Christian missionaries.

Macaulay thus represents the kind of colonial subject who, refusing to ac-

cept the bad news from racial theorists, scientists, and Christian missionaries, believed in cultural relativity and in the possibility of mining the best of three worlds. While conceding to Europe its ownership of the machinery of progress, he was equally convinced of his own abilities and indeed his right to self-determination, which necessarily included the application of the knowledge of Western culture to define the parameters of progress without European direction. Macaulay and other members of the educated elite, regarded as disgruntled agitators by the colonial government—A. W. L. Flemming, a British official in the Gold Coast, once described them as West Africa's curse—posed the toughest challenge to indirect rule and British imperialism and, in fulfillment of the very fears of colonialism's apologists and apostles, inevitably became the fountainheads of African political nationalism.

The major factor responsible for the making of the radicalized educated elite as represented by Macaulay was its marginalization and disempowerment by the colonial government at the turn of the century. This retrenchment of Africans from the colonial secular and clerical hierarchy, which had much to do with British anxieties about securing direct trade access due to increasing competition from other European colonial powers, led to what J. B. Webster described as a “new regime of white prestige politics.”²¹ Frederick Lugard consolidated this trend by the time he became the governor general; predictably, he soon became the target of anticolonial attacks in the print media and through petitions to the Colonial Office and even to Whitehall.²² More than any contemporary colonial officer, Lugard distrusted and held in contempt the educated Africans, often seen as culturally inauthentic, denationalized caricatures of the European rather than as serious individuals to be entrusted with official responsibility. Claiming that the members of the educated elite were estranged from native cultures and, in the case of the repatriated Africans, were not even part of them, Lugard argued that they could not be given political power because they did not represent or speak for the population at large.²³ This argument is persuasive, paradoxical, and downright disingenuous. It is persuasive because working for popular representation in the territories makes sense ideally; it is paradoxical and disingenuous because colonialism is a form of imposed dictatorship. The subject peoples have no say in the form of government under which they live, nor can its functionaries claim, by however great a stretch of the imagination, any popular mandate within the colonies.

There is a second reason for the radicalization of the educated elite. Because Lugard and the administration wanted to preserve indigenous political systems, it was expedient to support the so-called native authorities where

they existed, as in northern Nigeria and parts of western Nigeria, or to invent them where none existed, as in eastern Nigeria.²⁴ Predictably, colonial officials often contrasted the putative popular mandates of native rulers, their junior partners in the native administration system, with the unjustifiable power hunger of the supposedly alienated educated elite. It was even suggested by apologists of empire that, in providing the opportunity (as if they needed an external catalyst) to synthesize old and new cultures, indirect rule could help alienated Africans recover their cultural identity.²⁵ Yet for the educated elite themselves, the attempt to assert their irrelevance while propping traditional rulers, most of them not schooled in modern governance and politics, confirmed their claims about the racist ideology and antimodern framework upon which indirect rule was founded.

For his part, Lugard insisted that self-government for the “Oriental and African races” must come through the education and gradual extension of the powers of native rulers, rather than “by the introduction of an alien system of rule by British-educated and politically-minded progressives.”²⁶ This statement reveals Lugard’s theoretical and political dilemma, for it implies that the products of British-established and -controlled boarding schools (although he may have had in mind only those trained in England) were not expected to aspire to political leadership and that British-style education, if successfully managed, ought to alienate them from political activism.

Thus, when Lugard proposed the extension of indirect rule to southern Nigeria (it was already established in the north), the “progressives” feared that it amounted to a repealing of its hard-won modernization effort and was a veiled attempt to abort the political progress already attained, especially in Lagos. The result was a concerted attack against the colonial regime and its complicit native rulers. The press attacks did not leave Lugard’s administration unruffled, particularly during World War I, when Lugard requested powers from the Colonial Office in London to suppress the press before it poisoned or “inflame[d] native minds.”²⁷ Thus several Lagos editorialists, particularly at the *Lagos Weekly Record*, argued that the end of the war that also marked the end of Lugard’s rule must bring with it freedom from colonial oppression and terrorism and the beginning of self-government supported by major constitutional changes. Take, for instance, the editorial of February 1–22, 1919, in which the *Lagos Weekly Record* celebrated the end of the damnable Lugard rule, while anticipating—in vain as it turned out—the abrogation of his atavistic native administration government by his successor Sir Hugh Clifford. It was therefore evident to the administration that with the activities of these educated Africans, the period of what Margery Perham called “Colonial honeymoon” was practically over.²⁸

The radical nationalists' argument for self-determination in the print media usually foregrounded the idea that indirect rule, by its very nature, was designed to suppress anything beyond bare-bones literacy and keep Africans from attaining modernity on their own terms. As early as 1873, Edward Wilmot Blyden had written to the colonial secretary, John Woodhouse, proposing a West African University to provide the natives "superior education," as a solution to the scarcity of qualified natives in the colonial government. However, higher education was not so much a priority project as a luxury item in colonialism's to-do list.

To appreciate the grounds of this conflict on the question of education, let us look at what is arguably the greatest conundrum of indirect rule: the idea of allowing the natives to develop along their own lines, the same notion that—to keep attention on the reason for this excursion to this particular history—provided Kenneth Murray the ideological template for his own vision of modern Nigerian art.

Lugard articulated the objectives of colonial education in his magnum opus *Dual Mandate* (published in 1922). It is worth close attention if only because his ideas became the anchor of subsequent colonial-era education programs in Nigeria, including especially Kenneth Murray's art education. While condemning the overwhelming influence of mission schools concerned only with evangelization rather than training natives to do the work of the empire, he called for greater involvement of the government in colonial education. **Good education for him must turn the ignorant masses into a race of self-respecting gentlemen able to fit into clerical and artisanal positions but under the supervision of British superiors. For this reason the teaching of moral rectitude, respect for authority, and the industrial arts should precede the training of the intellect, the latter being unnecessary for the career opportunities open to the natives.**²⁹ Critics of Lugard's indirect rule often point to a suggestion such as this, in its antipathy to the educational and *intellectual* development of Africans, as a sign of the influence of racist social Darwinism on Lugard's political thought.³⁰ Even when he allowed for the possibility of postprimary education, his prescription was that it be carried out in a sanitized environment. The brightest students, he believed, must be trained in secondary boarding schools located several miles from native towns to keep them away "from the *subversive influences* of [their] normal environment."³¹ Here, they would be subjected to a tough disciplinary regime intended to inculcate the virtues of loyalty, respect for authority, and good citizenship, with the aid of stories from "school readers" and textbooks. Success in these instructions must be judged from the dress and demeanor of the students.³² Lugard was also particularly concerned about the teaching of

history in schools; above all, British history. It would be harmful to teach the evolution of democracy under Cromwell, as it could induce “the boy patriot to deplore the woes, and discuss the regeneration of his country, instead of attending to his lesson.”³³ Revolutionaries, he seemed utterly aware, begin their work with the mastery of particular histories, and colonial education ran the risk of razing the structure of empire by the simple gesture of offering history courses to African youths.

Even a most cursory analysis of Lugard’s education program under indirect rule reveals that his vaunted desire to allow the natives to develop along their own lines because of the natural difference between them and the Europeans is a merely rhetorical posturing, totally discordant with the realities of government-sponsored schools. His preference for boarding schools located far from native towns, for instance, had the objective of sequestering the students from the “harmful” influences of their *normal* environment, which no doubt included the evils of paganism and all the supposedly untoward primitive lifestyles to which natives were naturally disposed. Second, the virtues inculcated in the students at school aimed to create new, loyal subjects released from the stranglehold of their “tribal” cultures and primed for the work of the empire. Perhaps only Lugard and other apologists of indirect rule failed to appreciate to the fullest the implication of his educational program: that it was a machine for creating the very alienated natives that he detested. For in sequestering the young students in boarding schools where British masters indoctrinated them on the virtues of the empire and even cleansed them of lifestyles and moral codes associated with their native cultures, they could not remain a part of the admired majority, content with the supposedly simple primitive life in the villages. Lugard’s boarding school was therefore a laboratory for training a generation of Africans psychologically engineered to think, act, and reason differently from the unschooled pagans in their “normal environment” but also to be different from the “badly behaved” products of the mission and private schools. Yet Lugard did not seem to understand why the Lagos press accused him of “moral slavery.”³⁴ One thing is certain in all of this: Lugard’s indirect rule and educational program, rather than allow the natives to develop along their own path as he envisioned or claimed, achieved quite the opposite. For whereas indirect rule compelled the educated Africans to push against the empire and colonial system, the schools inevitably helped spread zeal among the youth for an African modernity premised on the people’s right to political and cultural self-determination.

New Models and Threats from America

The role played by ideas, individuals, and institutions from the United States of America in African colonial education and politics is nothing short of remarkable, given the intensity of national rivalries and conflict of interests among Western imperial powers. Even before the ascendance of the United States in world affairs, particularly after the two world wars, and the simultaneous decline of Britain's global political and cultural hegemony, Negro Americans provided crucial models of colonial subjectivity to both the British colonial administration and African radical nationalists. To the British, the United States was both a source for useful models in the pursuit of the ideals of indirect rule and a breeding ground for dangerous political pathogens capable of compromising the integrity and viability of the colonial system. The response to the two kinds of black American imports by colonial administrations, Whitehall officials, and the Africans themselves, predictable as it was, reflected established ideological fault lines transecting colonized Africa. Moreover, the three most significant Negro advocates of new black subjectivity within the context of racialized sociopolitics of post-Reconstruction America, the men whose ideas exerted tremendous influence on twentieth-century African nationalists, were unquestionably Booker T. Washington (1856–1915), W. E. B. Du Bois (1868–1963), and Marcus Garvey (1887–1940). In terms of the translation of their work in colonial Africa, it is not out of line to suggest that, respectively, they represented acceptance of the status quo, racial equality, and radical black ascendancy. While this might seem rather reductive, let us note that colonial response to the work of these three men clearly shows that while Washington became the darling of colonial regimes in Africa (as he was with whites in the US South), Du Bois was regarded with deep suspicion, and Garvey was all but considered a bona fide pan-African terrorist in colonial government quarters. But what were the stakes?

The colonizer's distrust of literary education found a powerful ally in Booker T. Washington, whose industrial/agricultural education program at the Tuskegee Institute in Alabama was based on his staunch belief that the advancement of black Americans lay in their acquisition of manual or low-level industrial skills rather than the classical and literary education offered in standard universities. Seen as less threatening to the racial status quo, Washington's program was popular with white southerners and liberal northerners in the United States, conservative educated Africans, and Negro American missionaries in Africa committed to gradualist racial self-uplift. On the other hand, W. E. B. Du Bois—one of the forces behind the estab-

lishment of the pan-Africanist movement—waged intellectual war against Washington’s apparent acceptance of the Negro’s status as hewer of wood and drawer of water.³⁵ Du Bois argued that Washington’s push for the Negro to give up his quest for political power, civil rights, and higher education inadvertently encouraged his political disenfranchisement and deferred government support of black universities. As if he shared notes with African nationalists who were already demanding a West African university by the end of the nineteenth century, Du Bois argued that black advancement depended on the education of the Talented Tenth in colleges and universities that furnished black men and women with “adequate standards of human culture and lofty ideals of life.”³⁶ While I am more interested in the tension between Du Bois and Washington, because it helps us grasp more firmly the intellectual fault line between acceptance and rejection of the colonial status quo as it played out in the turn-of-the-century United States, I must for the moment mention in passing the importance of Marcus Garvey, particularly in catalyzing the political—as opposed to the intellectual—imagination of African nationalists toward the fight for self-government.

Despite Du Bois’s criticism, the influential Phelps-Stokes Fund Commission—which had just one black African, Dr. J. E. K Aggrey of Ghana, a Washington sympathizer and archcritic of Garvey, and the white South African C. T. Loram, who supported industrial education for black South Africans—in its reports of 1922 and 1924 endorsed Washington’s industrial education program, more or less proposing it to mission and government schools in the British colonies.³⁷ To be sure, Jesse Jones, educational director of the Phelps-Stokes Fund and head of the commission, also played an active role in the government-mandated Advisory Committee on Native Education. In 1925 the committee published *Education Policy in British Tropical Africa*, the historic white paper that streamlined colonial education in accordance with the theory of indirect rule.³⁸ It bears emphasizing that the entrance of Phelps-Stokes in the politics of African colonial education inevitably catalyzed the mainstreaming of Washington’s pedagogical system no less because Jones, an ardent advocate of Washingtonian industrial education, became the shadow architect of the fund’s vision of education in Africa. The Phelps-Stokes Fund’s alliance with indirect rule’s visions of colonial education, their joint support for Washington’s industrial education, and the disinterest in Du Bois’s call for standard Negro universities found concrete expression in the Jeanes School, at Kabete, Kenya, which in the romantic atavism of its program went far beyond anything Washington had imagined for Negro education at Tuskegee.

In spite of these efforts to control the work of education in Africa by the imposition of low-skill schools, the colonial governments still had no effective antidote to the rise of the educated class influenced by Du Bois and Garvey and following in the intellectual tradition of Blyden. The systematic official antagonism against this type of African educated elite, which often meant denying a man a government position because of a supposed lack of moral character or proper qualification, clearly resulted from fear of being upstaged in the political power game by the native elite. As James Robertson, former governor of the Sudan and later of Nigeria, admitted in later years, this was a grave error on the part of the colonial administration.³⁹ Given that as late as the mid-twentieth century, British officials still imagined African independence but a faraway possibility achievable only through a very slow process of character modification and indoctrination of the African in specific forms of educational training, it was perhaps right in its war against the politically conscious educated African who demanded a much quicker self-determined path to political and cultural independence. Intoxicated by the ideological power and assumptions of indirect rule, British colonialism in Africa had naturally identified with the anodyne, acquiescent Washington rather than the troublesome Du Bois. It pitched its tent on the wrong side of history.

Renascent Africa

Nnamdi Azikiwe (1904–1996), a foremost Nigerian nationalist, was the interwar period-educated African par excellence, the type of native whose emergence Lugard and the colonial administration feared. At twenty-one he had traveled to the United States, where he studied under Alain Locke at Lincoln University and came under the influence of Ethiopianism, the late nineteenth-century affirmation of black heritage and civilization symbolized by the independent kingdom of Ethiopia.⁴⁰ Azikiwe, a follower of Marcus Garvey, W. E. B. Du Bois, and the pan-Africanist movement, earned degrees in journalism, political science, and anthropology and taught briefly at Lincoln before returning, in 1934, to the Gold Coast (Ghana). Failing to secure a job with the British West African colonial government, he became the founding editor of the *African Morning Post* newspaper, the precursor of his widely influential anticolonial, Lagos-based paper, *West African Pilot*.⁴¹ Azikiwe's rise in continental politics in a way exacerbated the colonizer's long-standing anxieties about the educated African, especially the type corrupted by the seditious politics of Garvey and the irritating racial equality

ideas of Du Bois. Azikiwe and others like him embodied the colonizer's worst nightmare. Whereas the colonial administration could arrogantly declare repatriated Africans, seen as outsiders to native cultural experiences, inauthentic representatives of colonized peoples, it was reduced to a stutter when confronted by a generation of educated Nigerians who, to signal their mastery of the game, claimed leadership of emergent cultural and township unions.⁴² Thus immunized against the colonizer's mantra of the culturally "alienated native" and schooled in the discourse of anti-imperialism and modern politics, these new Africans became more powerful adversaries of indirect rule.

Azikiwe first laid down his political ideas in *Renascent Africa* (1937), a text that, with youthful zest and flamboyant language, asserted its pan-Africanist heritage, waged an all-out war against indirect rule colonialism, and declared the emergence of a new Africa from the debris of the old.⁴³ He tactically played up tropes of renaissance and reawakening already established in the Gold Coast nationalist J. E. Casely-Hayford's biofictional book *Ethiopia Unbound* (1911), unquestionably the most influential contemporary literary argument for African nationalism. For Azikiwe (as for Casely-Hayford) Africa under colonialism was Ethiopia chained, and it was time she broke her fetters, reclaiming her freedom and retaking her rightful place on the world stage. But for this task she needed the politically conscious educated class, schooled in modern political discourse and practice, not the old African political cultures and the colonial regime. In shifting attention from the new African's relationship to the continent's traditional cultures and religions to the contemporary relevance or otherwise of old and new African political systems, Azikiwe announced in unmistakable terms the political stakes of pan-Africanism for modern Africa. Rather than remain obsessed with the question of the modern African's cultural authenticity measured against the extent of his connection to an imaginary root culture, Azikiwe focused on using the ideological rhetoric of pan-Africanism to attain not just racial accommodation but outright self-rule. It is here that he seems to have drawn most from the Africa-for-Africans movement exemplified by Garvey.

African mental emancipation, Azikiwe argued, recalling Blyden, depended on the realization of the West African university, but the attainment of political independence could not succeed without a concerted effort on the part of the educated elite to unify and "crystallize a sense of oneness for the ultimate destiny of the country."⁴⁴ His brand of pan-Africanism, as announced in *Renascent Africa*, must break the shackles of colonialism and restore Africa's battered image and lost glories not so much by invoking the vitality of the continent's imagined cultural heritage as by mastering the cul-

ture of modern politics. Here, I am convinced, is the critical point, the conjunction of the anticolonial politics of the turn-of-the-century Lagosian and West African educated elite, the black emancipation pan-Africanisms of Du Bois and Garvey, and the continental nationalism of the mid-century West African political elite—a radical fusion that produced a self-defined vision of African modernity completely at odds with colonialism’s own version of modern Africa. These two clearly defined positions in the colonial chess game, as I argue in chapter 2, equally played out in the field of colonial-era art and art education.