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Christendom's Narratives and the Stained Glass Designs of Yusuf Cameron Adebayo Grillo

Graves, P. Nelson

Department of Fine and Applied Arts
Ignatius Ajuru University of Education
Rumuolumeni, Port Harcourt
E-mail: pelgraves@gmail.com

Abstract

Stained glass paintings, the most distinctive accessory in the interior repertoire of Christian ecclesiastic spaces, is the subject matter of this study. This paper attempts a recast of Christendom's narratives in the stained glass designs of Yusuf Cameron Adebayo Grillo as the distinctive overarching mechanism of the evangelisation paradigm of the post Vatican II Church. It, therefore, draws attention to the delimitation of time frames in the history of the art form. Using the Grillo genre as the cipher that under girds the new evangelisation, the study narrates a new sense of time in the story of the development and growth of stained glass in the constellation of Church art. Yusuf Grillo's images of the post Vatican II Church, albeit Nigerian independence era, with its unique modern representation imageries is the kernel of this study. For in spite of their peculiar imageries, they recite the same Bible and Christos story that the earlier European ones served. Utilising the adage "God lies in the details", the iconographical details in the new images crafted by Grillo are employed as a distinctive typology that defines the style of the new evangelisation. This study presents a story of the emergence of a new art form. It, however, points to a set of new imageries that reflect the place of Christ as a central magnet that holds the entire Bible and Christos story together. That story-line emphasises the liturgical transmission of a new experience of time. It is a theological history in which the past, present and future make contact in the presence of the living Christ.

Key Words: ecclesiastic, evangelization, cipher; representation, iconographic, central magnet

Introduction

Figurative imageries have played a critical role, usually largely taken for granted and unexamined, in Christendom' art: mediating relationships between the Church and its faithful; the individual, the global and the local church. This paper looks at the power and meaning of imageries drawn from Nigeria, albeit all Africa. Utilising the story-telling traditions and picture making tooling mechanisms commonplace in Nigerian art world, Nigerian artists engaged in the creation of glass for the post Vatican II Church opened up new vistas of making the Word and Christos story readily visible. These artists also opened up cross cultural fields of discourse in which the African is the new progenitor not a curiosity and an artifact. In fact, these new images created for the most distinctive art of Christendom, the stained glass, crafted from Nigerian studios and workshops; expressively celebrate the adage "*nku di na mba ne eghelu mba nni!*" "a people's wood is their source of cooking fire", Igbo proverb (Patricia Oyelola, 2003).

The stained glass paintings of the prime Nigerian glass artists: Yusuf Cameron Adebayo Grillo expressively celebrates Nigerian glass of the post Vatican II Church. The stories that these diverse images recite remain the same as those of the European glass imported onto colonial shores in the days of Christianisation of the continent. However, the content of the Nigerian glass pictures are distinguished by their unique imagery. These diverse images equally are representative of the new evangelisation in the Christian Church. In fact, these images also reflect the new religious and political ethos of Nigerian Independence (1960).

In spite of the attention and publicity that this most spectacular of ecclesiastic art deserves in Nigeria, there remains an absence of a comprehensive and encompassing narrative that strives towards analysing (i) the Nigerian glass of the Christian church as the distinct overarching mechanism of the evangelisation paradigms of the post Vatican II church, and (ii) its impact at enthroning modernism in contemporary Christian art. Before the details of this essay it is important to situate a biography of Grillo. As Kubler (1962, p. 6) notes:

In the Ong view, biographies and catalogues are only way stations where it is easy to overlook the continuous nature of artistic traditions. These traditions cannot be treated properly in biographical; segments. Biography is a provisional way of scanning artistic substance, but it does not alone treat the historical question in artists' lives, which is always the question of their relation with what has preceded and what will follow.

In view of the foregoing, it is my intention in this paper to approach the glass art historically; taking into consideration specifically styles in the art works of the post Vatican II Church. The focus of this paper is, therefore, concerned with how the new art work from Nigeria, as a composite art form in the constellation of church art, draws attention to (I) the historicity of the new in the disentanglement from Hegelian empiricism. That new glass, thusly, reflects the religious, political and social consciousness of the post Vatican II Church; and (II) since the Christian message is the same, propose a hermeneutic reading of the Nigerian images as the historic elongation of the series of Church glass, in spite of its peculiar vernacular content.

Nigerian glass art works, expressive of the cultural paradigm of the post Vatican II years, coming from a former colonial imperial country deserve a critical look. For these works are no mere objects of aesthetic contemplation, deemed as precious treasures, perhaps, relegated to the margins of human experience merely. Nigerian glass reflects and speaks volumes for genuine human experience, not just about feeling.

Biography of Y.C.A. Grillo

Yusuf C. A. Grillo was born in Lagos in 1934 as the last of eleven children (the Yoruba would describe such a child as *Omo Arugbo*, child of old age) of his parents. His parents were Yinus Ventura Grillo and Kalia Grillo, both returnee Brazilians, who settled in Lagos. Grillo's great grandfather was among many native Nigerians who were taken away to the plantations and sites of the new World in Brazil as slaves. Many of these forced immigrants returned home, others preferred to settle in Lagos colony. It was from this batch of returnees that the Brazilian Quarters was created. In that settlement names reminiscent of the of the Bahia Brazil place of surjourn have reechoed as prominent settler names even here in Lagos: *Salvador, Darego, Da rocha, Da Silva, Pinheiro, Marinho, Da rocha* are commonplace. Grillo's grandfather was born in Brazil, but his direct father seems to have been born on Nigerian soil. The Brazilian Quarters is, in fact, a vast sprawl of land extending from the site of present day Central Bank of Nigeria, *Tinubu Square* to *Lewis Street*. That stretch includes the site of the Holy Cross Cathedral on Catholic Mission Street and Campbell, *Bamgbose, Igbosere, Simpson, Oil Mill* and *Kakawa* streets.

Grillo was raised in the middle-class Brazilian Quarters, *Igbosere*, Lagos. He came from a *creolised* intelligentsia family, steeped in cultural marginality as a result of a blend of sophisticated Abeokuta *Egba* and Brazilian returnee ancestry. He grew up in a homely environment where the Portuguese and the *Egba* languages were regularly chorused in the air. Portuguese Catholicism meshed side by side with emergent Islam. Grillo identifies with Yoruba culture in a peculiarly Lagos highbred fashion. In an interview with the late author Jane Kennedy, when confronted with the question of *Yorubanness* in his art works; Grillo simply confirmed his Lagos status, outrightly

debunking any association with traditional Yoruba society. In fact, he reiterated that for a Nigerian artist to express himself/herself in a style peculiarly Nigerian the “*right kind of atmosphere must exist because the artist creates out of his experience*” (Yusuf Grillo, 2012; Jean Kennedy, 1962).

Grillo’s father was a successful teacher, who retired as a headmaster of the Lagos Government School in 1947. Young Yusuf was only 13 years old and still in Secondary School. Grillo’s mother was a Salvador of the Brazilian Quarters. She was a successful trader, dealing on large consignments of Kola nuts, fruits, fabric distribution and other supplies. She was popular, an *Iya Egbe*. Mama died in 1963 and was buried according to Muslim rites, even before Grillo settled down after his Zaria days. Grillo lost both his parents before he settled down to real life, but he has maintained in conversations that his father and mother remained his most fervent memories. They taught him all he ever knew about life, the imperative for uprightness, humility and the imperative for the contribution of one’s quota to the good of all fellow men (Paul Dike & Patricia Oyelola, 2006).

Yusuf Grillo attended St. Andrews Primary School, *Oke popo*, Lagos and Saint Peter’s Primary School, *Faji*; and the Anglican Christ Church Cathedral School, where Aina Onabolu was a visiting Art teacher. He also attended the Secondary School of the Yaba Technical Institute (now renamed Yaba College of Technology), the first tertiary institution in Nigeria. In conversations, Grillo reminisced and reflected on old Lagos days: convivial neighbourly atmosphere, close family ties in the then small but bustling city, keen parenthood, and friendly neighbors. He cited neighborhoods like *Obalende*, the Brazilian Quarters, *Lafiaji*, *Olowogbowo* and *Isale Eko*. The Brazilian Quarters was an environment full of artisans, craftsmen of both domestic and public entrepreneurial engagements, master builders that transferred the Brazilian Portuguese colonial heritage in style to Lagos. There were, for example the *Shitta Bay Mosque*, *mossolashi*, as the locales call it, now on the Nnamdi Azikiwe Way; and the Tom Jones Building, both on the same Way leading to the Carter Bridge. Stylistic examples of Brazilian architectural styles were fashionable in all principal stuccoes residences of the wealthy folks’ homes. These vintage styles were also popular in the residencies of rich traders and businessmen. It is also important to mention the commonplace stylistic façades, usually cast in adobe in symbolic images and imageries by craftsmen and masons. South-western Nigerian towns such as Lagos, Abeokuta and a host of others, were in close contact with the Portuguese enclave of Bahia, in the Brazilian heartlands. Returnees made up of artisanal builders and craftsmen; and even merchants were regular to these towns. The preceding was the everyday environment from which the personality of, Yusuf Cameron Adebayo Grillo, and men of his time emerged.

Grillo was not taught Art in Secondary School, apart from the short and invaluable contacts with the visiting Art Tutor, Aina Onabolu. Grillo’s earliest recollection of his interest in art seems to be his early year’s engagement in simple

paper and bamboo construction of architectural models. He also painted simple portraits of friends and relations. The burgeoning artistic mind seems to have blossomed in his years at the Christ Church Cathedral School with Aina Onabolu, the visiting art teacher. Onabolu was still negotiating the entry of the subject Art in the colonial curricula at the time, though he was an itinerant art teacher in Kings College, Methodist Boy's High School and the Baptist Academy, all in Lagos. Grillo was fascinated by Onabolu's knowledge of art theories like perspectives drawing and three-dimensional formal analysis. The young Grillo was inspired by the old master Onabolu. In fact, as a keen European Art history reader, Grillo associated Onabolu's dexterity in drawing and keen rendering of artistic facts and details to that of the European greats like Leonardo da Vinci and the great Michelangelo. Grillo's interest in the print media of the Lagos day brought the future master in direct contact with the works of another Nigerian artist, the cartoonist and political satirist Akinola Lasekan of the *Zikist* tabloid. In *Lasekan*, Grillo discovered the ploys of exaggeration and the techniques of the redefinition of the peculiarities of picture characters using the caricature as indispensable for the art of the cartoon.

Grillo discovered that mimetic and naturalistic rendering of forms practiced by Onabolu was the distinguishing characteristic of form analysis. The art of the cartoon and its peculiarities of the caricature were invaluable at the use of the medium of the visual for social commentary and criticism. The curious budding artist, Grillo, made it a favourite pastime to keep an eye on the cartoonist trade by not only preening through every copy of the cartoonist entries, but by regular "peeping sessions" into the *Oke Ibokun* sitting room studio of Lasekan while the master worked. The young master's third inspiration came from the London trained artist, Jacob Kolawole Oye, editor of the government owned children's paper, the *Dawottery*. Oye had only come back from London Regent Street Polytechnic. He was in the employment of the old Western Region Ministry of Information as an illustrator of magazines. Yusuf Grillo, who lived in *Inabare* Street, in the Brazilian Quarters, established contact with Oye, who lived in the close neighborhood *Oshodi* Street.

Grillo's art activities and interests in art brought him to close association with the British Council Art Club. In fact, he became its secretary by dint of a connection with the British Head of the club, the artist and art enthusiast, Professor John Godwin, in the 1940s. Wednesday Art Club Drawing and Study sessions and his engagements with other Club activities convinced Grillo that a career in art was worthwhile. He had also brought in the older Londoner, the artist J. Kolawole Oye, to teach Drawing and even expand the scope to include out-door studies. The British Council Art Club Wednesday sessions attracted the emerging art literati, Paul Mount, who became Grillo's academic mentor. That club also attracted the Nigerian artists Agbo Folarin, Abayomi Berber and a host of others. All these future Nigerian art greats were British

Council Art Club students of J. Kolawole Oye. The young Grillo, still a secondary school student learned so much about visual arts from them.

After secondary school Grillo took on a Civil Service job in the Survey Department in Lagos. That job exposed the young school leaver to professional Draughtsmanship skills in cadastral mapping techniques, architectural drawing plans and graphic design. In spite of that exposure, Grillo kept regular contact with other artistically inclined persons. Yusuf passed his Cambridge School Certificate in flying colours, but kept up his training with J. Kolawole Oye. He also maintained regular contacts with Abayomi Berber and another artist Fred Akolo. He was poised to step into a career in the visual arts. Grillo could have prospered in a career in architecture and building. He proved himself competent in the practice of architectural draughtsmanship while in the Civil Service. He also showed competence in the practice of architectural modeling, a key element in the training of architects.

An admission into the Nigerian College of Arts, Science and Technology in 1956 put Grillo on a clear academic path. That institution was then sited in Ibadan, Western Nigeria, before it was subsequently moved to Zaria in the same year. Yusuf Grillo acquired an academic scholarship for this study. Grillo was among the second batch of students admitted to study Fine Art when the Nigerian College of Arts, Science and Technology (NACAST) moved to Zaria. While in Zaria, Grillo maintained his earlier contacts with the Yaba Technical College Lecturer Paul Mount. He was regularly engaged with the Briton in projects during the holidays. Mount had been a great inspiration to Grillo from the British Council Art class days. He also connected him to important visual arts and art in architecture projects.

After his Zaria years, Grillo attended other short courses overseas, including an education course at the Slade in London. He was sponsored by the West African Examinations Council (WAEC) to the University of Cambridge for a Chief Examiner in art course. This was to explore possibilities for what objective methods to be employed in the assessment of a subjective course like Fine Art as an examination subject. Other short courses overseas included a three-month course on the use of fiber glass and resin in Sculpture organized by the British Council in London, under the direct supervision of the sculptor Sir Anthony Grey. Fiber glass at the time was new in the sculpture world. It had been an industrial material product used in the manufacture of car bodies and for marine vessels construction.

With a Diploma in Fine Arts in 1961 and specializing in Painting, Yusuf Grillo was posted first to teach in the prestigious Kings College, Lagos. Paul Mount, the British sculptor, mounted pressure on the Ministry of Education to affect a transfer of Grillo to the Yaba Technical Institute. Grillo was eventually transferred to the College to assist in the teaching of Art. Mount and his foreign colleagues departed in 1962, leaving Grillo solely in-charge of the Art Department. Post graduate engagements

along with his commitment to practice, arguably have been responsible for Grillo's accomplishments as an artist. He was thus poised to achieve great reckoning with a long and impressive career and academic leadership at the Yaba College of Technology, Yaba, Lagos. Yusuf Grillo expanded the academic programme to include Textile Design and Ceramics. For many years Grillo was the Director of the School of Art, Design and Painting, Yaba College of Science and Technology until his retirement in 1987. He was also President of the Society of Nigerian Artists (SNA) for over two decades.

This master's knack for forthrightness in the articulation of his views on art and practice endears him to all persons who encounter him. Grillo bridges the gap between the artist Aina Onabolu, Akinola Lasekan; and Ben Enwonwu, whose sculptures were entirely shaped by western standards. Both Grillo and Enwonwu were academically trained artists. Grillo, however, maintained only one style that was entirely African in spirit with a recognisable expressionistic style. His forms were characterized by an angular geometric flair, reminiscent of African traditional sculpture unlike Enwonwu, who maintained two. This Nigerian elite artist, steeped in the tenets of Western art history had also found his alter-ego among the great European masters of the Dutch Bauhaus. In spite of all this, Grillo remained the most conservative of the Zaria modernists. Grillo is a polymath, considering the diverse studio competences he brings to bare on his work in stained glass.

Grillo was associated with the architectural boom of the post-independence construction era in Lagos. Through association with the European expatriate architects like Robin Atkins and his principal partner, Ronald Ward and another architect Peter Whitehouse, Grillo was engaged in Mural painting and decoration in mosaics for the giant University of Ibadan Student Halls and Residences. He further expanded his engagements to mosaic projects for other government agencies, even faraway in the old Northern region. Grillo also enjoyed commissions from the Northern Nigerian Newspaper Corporation, Zaria and Kaduna (NNNC) publishers of the *New Nigerian* and *Gaskiya Ta Fikwobo* newspapers.

Yusuf Grillo did not study mosaic in NACAST, Zaria, but by dint of association and keen attention, he was able to acquire skill enough to attract the attention of expatriate architects and builders. While abroad on material selection for projects, Grillo often ran into stained glass artists. In fact, he confessed that he learnt the bulk of his skills in the trade by watching specialists engaged in the picture making processes. He compared those processes with mosaic making. Grillo found that the processes were similar. He, however, established that orthodox stained glass production was an industrial process outside his reach. Yusuf Grillo instead developed a creative improvised approach to stained glass production. In spite of looking and learning directly from professionals abroad; Grillo remained an avid searcher in books and papers. Despite initial technical setbacks, Yusuf Grillo prospered as the only local

stained glass maker of note in Nigeria for many years. He revealed that the first stained glass paintings created in his improvised studio method, for the All Saints Anglican Church, Yaba, Lagos (Fig. 1) collapsed as a result of inadequate material compaction.

Post graduate engagements and exposure overseas positioned the master as the identity figure of the Yaba College of Technology. Yusuf Grillo served that institution as art educator, teacher of art as an academic subject and as an administrator. Grillo is a polymath. Over a career that has spanned more than fifty years, and in fact not thinking of retirement from studio practice, this master has established diverse studio competencies in a variety of studio undertakings. During the interview, he jokingly chided “*what do you want me to go unto, take a new wife?*”. Little wonder that a man like Grillo with such a formidable artistic background remained conservative. When the time came for the break with the canons, in the new evangelization of the 1960s and Grillo was called to take the task, he chose a rather deceptive detour. He did not go bending back to the traditional tendencies of his native *Egba* Abeokuta antecedence. He, instead, reached out to the European art for inspiration; and dared to create that *Egba* cum Brazilian and Lagos creolized hybridized version of images and imageries for a radical redirection in the pictures in the stained glass for the new evangelisation regime.

Y. C. A. Grillo and his Works

Yusuf Grillo is one artist who has nurtured a deliberate passion to re-engage an African renaissance in the stained glass in a manner that is unique and incisive. He brings the story of the Word and Good news, originally imported to African shores by the first generation of European images implanted on African shores in the first evangelization; transmuting the same stories in allegories that are quintessentially “other”. Bridging the gap with the first generation artists, Onabolu, Lasekan and Ben Enwonwu, Grillo deliberately breaks with the rooted canons of the academy but instead, simulates African story telling mechanisms, especially allegories. He, thusly, engages a transfiguration of commonplace iconographies *rite large* in the day to day lives of real people. Grillo’s sensitivity to form is in opposition to the trendy canons that dominate contemporary European church art. Such art works were implanted in Nigerian Christian churches in the first sojourn of Christendom. His work is strengthened by unique mathematical formal organization. These transcribe the visual canons of past art works, revalidating them in the present, while giving them the language of the new evangelisation. The foregoing is the guiding principle for the discourse of Grillo’s work. Grillo’s art works explore canons of art drawn directly from the *Egba* cum Brazilian cultural art world dominant in the Lagos metropolis. Colour schemes are lifted almost painter-like from the *Adire-eleko* colour ecology of fabric dying traditions popular in the *Egba* Abeokuta heartland. Even principal imageries, for example the drummer and kaftan clad figures are drawn from the allegories, folklore and storytelling traditions of the locales. This emphasises the local cultural

foregrounds. For the purposes of this discourse, a critical look at the principal works in the Lagos metropolis by this master now follows. The master's oeuvre in the stained glass medium is also reflected in his other paintings. These abound in several Church dioceses of the Lagos metropolitan see; the Ijebu-Ode and Ozurumba hinterland dioceses of the Church

All Saints Anglican Church, Yaba, Lagos

Most distinctive in the stained glass lancet units in this Church is the boldly outlined grids that define and simulate mathematical proportions as "fractals", which they project. The art work emphasises the artist's preoccupations with mathematical geometric principles in his alignment of shapes within the picture space. Thus, flatness is emphasised as the distinctive character of the art works. The emphasis is on flatness but the silhouette cartoon is employed to draw attention to the departure from canonic forms. Thus, skillfully avoiding any reminders of the popular themes and styles of European glass, Grillo imprints the new/ the modern in Christendom's stained glass. In that way the new art work inflects a critical insight along with reflecting on the particular needs of the post Vatican II Church. This new art work is its embodiment. In the stained glass windows created by Grillo, traditional glass was preferred but there is a dominance of the new substrate Plexiglas in subsequent works of the late 1960s. His painting medium is usually traditional stained glass colours. Tin-lead and steel bars are utilised as came. Tin-lead holds the glass pieces in place, while the steel bars aid the carriage that divide sectional weight.

The stained glass in the All Saints Anglican Church is peculiar among the other art works created by Grillo for the Christian Church. There are two giant lancet windows. Each window is made entirely of glass and scavenged glass from stockiest' waste heaps, especially the waste heaps of the German export glass agency, Dizengoff (now defunct). Copper foil as a casing material is absent in sections of the All Saints Anglican Church Paintings' *Celebration* (Fig. 2). All glass pieces are glued onto the substrate, uneven spaces between each section of glass is filled in utilising a mixture of silicone adhesive and black Universal stain all blended in white filler to create a permanent grout mix. The mosaics of grouted units in the compositions create the fantasies and abstractions in sections of the master's work. Grillo also employs a glass appliqué technique, similar to fabric appliqué in that work. Picture sections or patterns are created from small snaps of materials and sewn to a larger piece. He, thus, creates colourful mosaic-like fancy imageries in the left and right sections of both corner panels in each lancet. Such imageries toast to the possibilities of "unconscious flows" of, otherwise, psychoanalytic mechanisms that operate independently of the art makers' formal palette. The paintings of this Anglican Church, is a good example in which this creative turn by the artist is manifest. Grillo revealed, in conversations, that in spite of the dominant drummer motif and its attendant silhouettes in serial repeats in this composition, large sections of this picture were a result of the grouting and appliqué

techniques employed in their creation. The same technique is applied in the creation of the second window

In this lancet window (Fig. 1) the regular mimetic and photographic figuration commonplace in the first churches, for example, the Anglican Christ Church Cathedral, Marina, Lagos Island are absent. Instead, a prominent silhouette of a cartoon-like drummer figure dominates the rectangular picture space. Other silhouette imageries play out in endless repeats across the rectilinearly divided rhomboid shaped sections of the art work's picture ensemble. However, two bishop crosier silhouettes positioned as opposite shapes together project a middle rhomboid shape that "announces" the central theme of this image: Good News All Are God's Works in God's World. These together in concert, for example, seem to repeat aloud the chronicle of a slightly inclined figure, the silhouette drummer character. It is a metaphoric mainstay for the exposition of this picture. In both lancets giant silhouette cartoons are centralized diagonally in the centre-stage of the picture space. The left lancet is most fascinating. The giant drummer figure is surmounted on a screen almost water-mark like in the middle of a montage of Adire-eleko derived blues. Thus the drummer figure is the point to attract the attention of viewers. It is a direct invitation to the viewers (usually local folks and town people). It is equally a direct invitation to all beholders to engage dialogue rather than a mimetic recount of the actions in the pictorial space. Among the *Egba*- Brazilian community (this is true of Yoruba locales) the drummer is a ready and familiar chronicler of important events. In this case the important event of the Good News is the matter.

There is, however, another prominent silhouette figure, a Kaftan clad personality. This is obviously a distinctive kaftan, for its neckline is elaborately decorated. With the kaftan, it is fascinating to witness how this artist has smuggled in an internationalising imagery (the Kaftan is native to Arabian societies of the Middle-east; now made international by economic, trade and geo-political migrations to Africa and the rest of the world) to intuit the universality of the Christian message. That imagery brings the ecclesial truths of spreading the Word across the world to all mankind. Also included in the schema are a variety of crosses. However, the entire picture ensemble is skilfully tied together utilising the frame work of the peculiar *grilloesque* mathematically crafted triangles and rhomboid shapes as knitting mechanisms.

The entire picture space is swarmed in *Adire eleko* dye pit colours. In this art work Grillo engages the element of colour adroitly. He invests them with a richness that explores analogous harmony and linear intersections. With colour, line and his peculiar notions of harmony, Grillo enacts entire symphonies. Using the instrumentality of glass and metal, Grillo conjures the emotions, spiritual consciousness and physical energies into play. With rhythmic flair, he enhances the compositions. As he cajoles the persons doing commerce in the church space with the play of melodies and harmonies, Grillo re-enacts that "feeling that words alone cannot

describe”, the feel of transcendental presence (**Isaiah 1:**). With these, he develops a grid system of linear supports. The keynote of this artist’s work is harmony with the keynote of the archetype, God whose purpose the church space serves. With these, Grillo creates volumes and recessions, the music of the spheres!

St. Dominic’s Catholic Church, Yaba, Lagos

Another art work created by Y.C.A. Grillo in a rather different oeuvre, expresses Nigerian iconographical elements in a mimetic almost photographic representation *vivre* (Fig.2). The substrate is Plexiglas. In this Catholic Church’s lancet windows, the silhouette is further adapted to a water-colour like rendering but with sharp graphic definition of the images of principal personas of Church history. Grillo adapts colouration even in the stained glass technique adroitly. He invests each unit of the composite picture in analogous renditions. Within a formal grid system, each unit of the picture is located. The art work is made up of two giant shapes: a rhomboid dominated by twelve giant petals, these sunflower-like flutter around a central circle in which a white dove silhouette floats perpetually in eternal bliss. In each of these petals giant iconographical Christian motifs: varied cross shapes, the anchor, the sacred heart; and even an imperial cross in a crown of thorns; all sit on cut-out fabric print roulette patterns. These patterns are themselves silhouettes in petal simulacrum of the sunflower; the dove motif stays in eternal flight in the middle circle.

In spite of the print decorative impression that his colouration impacts in this picture, Grillo deliberately implants the colour green as background element to create the illusion of stability and balance. Green has a positive valence as an emblem of life. Green is a product of the collaboration between yellow and blue. These two colours together with red constitute the triad of primary colours. Green stands for vegetation and a symbol of calmness and cool disposition. With these qualities, Grillo aligns green with red as complimentary in the chords for this art work. Grillo’s approach remains quintessentially a painter’s!

Grillo exploits Yoruba textile and clothing, important cultural artifacts; to define concepts of beauty, humanity, culture and proper social relations. These enhance the biblical and Christos story. Cloth draws its strength as a metaphor from its use as a powerful expressive medium in Yoruba life. Grillo’s simulation of imagery from the *Egba* cum Brazilian world is subtle, reticent in its assemblage, but significant at achieving culturalisation of imagery for the Christian church’s purposes.

The other giant shape is a rectangular stained glass unit. It is made up of four smaller rectangular units. These units are horizontally aligned. Each unit contains mimetic images that choreograph the Dominican Orders vows: obedience, service, humility and continence. A crucifix is located in the centre panel. The St. Dominic’s art work is, therefore, made up of a giant rhomboid unit that fits snugly atop a horizontally aligned rectangular unit. Grillo’s works suggest grounding in the

Mathematical sciences. This is palpably conveyed in all his stained glass units. This, obviously, has shaped the planar relationships that characterise his work. This concurs with what John Simms (2004) referred to as “Math Art”. It is a dynamic system that undergirds both structure and beauty in Grillo’s work. That grid of structures usually supports his art work, constituting their foundation along with a colour scheme that appear as coordinates in complementary and analogous relationships. It equally conjoins the physical and spiritual essences inherent in African art and design. It is fascinating to how deeply rooted Grillo’s design metaphors are drawn from the immediate Egba Adire designs and interweaves them mathematically in stained glass. It is impressive to note the quantitative and the elegant way the artist has manipulated the “grid” in the format and of the entire composite picture space. As a result, Grillo’s approach to form is one where objective contexts emerge from personal dispositions. This is informed by the master’s interests in simple but incisive use of design metaphors, all drawn from the African cultural background.

This master’s preoccupation with culture and the numerical principle remains the pillar of strength in all his works. Hence the elegant and beautiful in art emerge concretely and usually through the voice of the physics of nature. It is the dynamics that tie together structure and beauty; the spiritual, the quantitative and the elegant. In the stained glass works executed by Yusuf Grillo, structure is the grounding upon which the beautiful and the spiritual are encountered. From Grillo’s preoccupation with the feminine theme in paintings like *Yoruba Bride, Mother and Child* and a host of sculptural works; and within the corpus of images, in Wood cuts and other print media, a characteristic primary focus on the human figure in dramatic projection from a deliberate investiture in open space is a distinctive master style. Grillo has sustained elegance in the glass paintings beyond the focus on the feminine figure.

The vertical format of the glass images in this Anglican Church reflects Grillo’s transposition of imageries and colour palette from regular painting canvass ground. Conversation with the master confirmed this disposition. The overall intensity of the now familiar Grillo signature Blue, lights up the background with impressionistic freshness. This fills up the, otherwise, somber clerestory void. The rest of the picture is a sketch pad geometric exercise in the alignment, balance and counter alignment of varied sizes of rectangular picture planes. In fact, the art historian and critic, C.O. Adepegba in the book *Nigerian Art, Its Traditions and Modern Tendencies* (1995) drew attention to this signature style characteristic of Grillo’s works. He stressed the artist’s simple figure compositions typified by elongated and geometrised forms with long necks and narrow heads.⁶ Grillo’s compositional imageries and contents reflect the logical tendency of the college trained painter, now turned stained glass artist, to transpose experience and ideas from one familiar ground to a new one. The artist’s peculiar simulation of *Adire eleko* blue flows freely water colour-like in an admixture of rich red and a splinter of various analogous colours. This is the master’s knitting

mechanism for the myriad of planes in the composition. In spite of the lead came that boldly define the geometric rhomboid planes, the palette colours simply flow like many streams flowing to make one river, the picture!

The master seems to have developed an aligned intellectual, almost religious concern for the female figure. This freshly immediacy in the exploration of form in the now distinctive *grilloesque* painting style remains a fascination. In fact, the feminine attired Nigerian figure is a theme the master has utilised in the interrogation of his unique pictorial geometrician analysis, and the explication of painting themes. That interrogation of his pictorial geometrician analysis is the dominant style that this master transferred to the glass pictures that he created.

The way he represents form in the various themes in the stained glass genre draws critical attention. A look at the All Saints Church, Yaba, lancet windows, the viewer is simply reminded of the treatment of the figure in some other picture, *Yoruba Bride* (Fig. 4). He engages the synergy of mathematics and art critically, hence empathises with the reality that mathematics and art are fundamental expressions of man's consciousness; and connected by the rhythmic in the voice of nature.

The master utilises the profile in a portrait stance. That figure engages space in a pyramidal relationship to the entire Picture Space. A deliberate lineal segmentation of the Picture Space creates the composition. This precise rendering in planes eventually defines the entire forms, with details created in defined rhomboid and curved shapes. The silhouette is exploited in the characteristic *grilloesque* contoured definition of each character and object in each geometric space. These are reminiscent of the treatment rendered to forms and shapes in the other media the master has engaged in. In the Wood cuts, for example, using the theme "Yoruba Bride", Grillo puts the figure usually either portrait like or as silhouetted shape engaged in a pyramidal relationship to its ground. The rest of the composition is put in lineally defined segments forced on, otherwise, negative ground. The figure is simply rendered in elaborately defined planes. The figure emerges with the principal distinctive feature of a head gear rendered in canopied formation to a drapery worked out in combined angled forms that endows it with vigor. This special treatment of the human figure in its structural foundation drawn from a mathematical resolution of forms remains an enduring characteristic of all his works. It has assumed the status signature of the master. That signature emphasises a perception of the resolution of forms in mathematical paradigms, as the first condition for the celebration of elegance and the beautiful in his works. Grillo's mathematical art preoccupation comfortably lodges him well in the grounds as the Senegalese modernist artist, Papa Ibra Tall, engaged in the ideological cultural renaissance discussed in Elizabeth Harney's book (2004). Though each individual artist's subject matter is different, both Grillo and Tall, adopted the cipher of Mathematics to project their modernist artistic modes of new expression.

Looking at any one work in the panoply of images in the Nigerian stained glass corpus executed by Grillo, he stands tall in a unique class of his own in the utilisation of colour to buttress the spiritual and abstraction in thought and imagery. Colours materialise in conscious coordinated relationships undergirded by the master's peculiar numerical thinking. There is an obvious preoccupation with an ordering process in the choice of colour allocation to the spaces within all Grillo's stained windows. The master conceded that in spite of all formal planning, the real thinking and execution come on the substrate (Yusuf Grillo, 2012). In all his works, the most distinct feature of his iconography is the peculiar *grilloesque silhouette* figures with elongated neck-carrying polar heads. These figures are always positioned on defined spaces to add to their importance as images in a story series. Grillo transferred his unique forms and peculiarity of colour in his paintings to bear on the immediacy of the needs of the new evangelisation art.

Nigerian Glass

In discussing the Nigerian stained glass of the 1960s, it is important to locate that art on the backdrop of the "new thinking" Vatican Council II paradigm and her subsequent ecclesiology. This discourse, therefore, concerns Church art commissioned and crafted to meet specific needs of the new evangelisation. Christendom's new art expressed novelty in imagery. That art met the Christian purpose for a spectacular representation of the central tenets of Faith: evangelisation to inflect the truths of the Word as Good News, the centrality of the Paschal mysteries and the Redemption of Calvary on which ethos the Christian Faith is hinged.⁹ It is with this background that one would rightly feel a fascination for the cultural values and the ideological underpinnings in the glass of the *new ecclesia* in Africa. In that art, as document, it is imperative, therefore, to acknowledge a product of the new thinking post Vatican II Church. That visual inflects the paradigm shift in imagery, emphasising the Church's empathic look at the emergent "new world order" and the places of future sojourn. Hence, it is significant to recognise the imprint of the new *ecclesia in Africa* liberalisms and new teachings of Church, from the Catholic Christian point of view. *Ecclesia in Africa* (John Paul II, 1995) is the Papal Document (Text) that the visuals in the new glass, as Christian artifacts, recite. It is with that grounding that one may reflect upon the cultural values with which the artists have invested their texts, in order to determine their social function for the purposes of the new evangelisation. That also proclaims the progressive acceptance of a uniquely Nigerian typology in the styles of the art form. That approach to the historiography of Christian artifacts serves to enrich its traditional status as part of the cultural history of ideas by associating it with the notions of ideological criticism or discuss analyses. I take the view, therefore, that the new glass draws attention to the notions of progress in the historiography of Christian art.

The glass art works of the pioneer Nigerian master, Y.C.A. Grillo, draw attention to subject matter, *vernacularisation* of meaning and a novel way of expressing

the Word and Message of the Christos in visual form. Most ambitiously, the works of art emphasise forms that show them to be symbolic expressions of (a) the Nigerian cultures from which their imageries were drawn, (b) the new art work was symbolic of a new style in Christendom's art, purposive and novel to signify the paradigm shift in Christianity (P.C. Chibuko, 2006) and (c) the art works iconographical and iconological analysis show how these works reflect the cultures and art world that inspired them. The novelty that these imageries spin is of importance to stained glass as an artifact that situates the new Christian ecclesiology. But the Nigerian window constituted an elongation of the extended series in the further development and growth of the, otherwise, European series. That series was imported to Nigerian shores at the behest of the European Christian interventions in colonial Nigeria. The painting themes deployed to express the subjects in the pictures present to the keen observer a visual history of the Bible and the doctrines of the Faith.

The foregoing was a resultant feature of "new thinking" in the Christian church ushered in by the Vatican II church. Vatican II's formally echoed policy of liberalism, assimilation and culturalization was directed at "catching the population" of believers in the new evangelisation. It is, however, important to remember that Vatican II emerged on the tapestry of the nationalist politics of nineteenth and twentieth century Europe. Vatican II signified the breaking of the Hegelian imperialist magnate that had hitherto fore, dominated the history of art.

Purposive narratives suited the teleological tendencies of Hegelian philosophy of history. It was also the overarching discursive practice of art history (Gombrich, 1969). The idea of a teleological development, emphatic on the notions that the sequence of styles that characterise different periods embodies an inherent principle of historical change is distinct in such a narrative. Such strategies are invoked so as to give the illusion that it is a *condition sine qua non* for art historical writing. This paper argues, instead, that the ecclesiastic glass of the 1960s debunks such an analogy. It is incisive to recognise that purposive/ teleological history writing, a tendency promoted by Hegel's philosophy of history, effectively coincided with the nationalist politics of nineteenth and twentieth century Europe. Needless to say, that the "Hegelian unconscious" pervades the discursive practice of art history. It is outside the purview of this paper to dwell on the question of the place of a textual understanding of the past and the rhetorical conception of the text. Suffice it, however, to mention that two influential historians, Michel Foucault and Hayden White, present seminal material for further reading on that subject (1973)

Telling the story of the glass artifacts of the 1960s, with their peculiarities of novel and diverse imagery, as part of the constellation of the images in the Christian church is problematic. For these images betray new ideas. These ideas reflect a new ideological stratagem. These reflect new attitudes towards religious art imagery, hence they defy rationale of stylistic evolution as in European art. The new ideology carries

within it the new non-racial, classless and liberal convictions of the new ecclesiology in the Christian church. Telling the story of the new glass as a rational elongation of the stained glass tradition, demands a new tooling mechanism. Such an authorial perspective would claim insight into the implicit 'history' of history that is imbedded in the new art itself. That interpretive gesture draws attention to a correspondence between the sequence of events, namely Vatican II, and the narratives that recite them. In an attempt, therefore, to seek historical meaning, it is imperative to acknowledge that the new art in itself has imbedded within it a new agenda that demands a new mechanism for its interpretation. Writing the story of the Christian artifact, stained glass, entails recognition of the European origins of the tradition of glass in the Church. Hence, Nigerian glass must be properly sited as part and parcel of the elongation in the new series of glass in Nigeria. The historiography notion inherent in such discuss insinuates that the sequence of styles that characterise the new evangelisation period inflected an inherent principle of historical change. That change was manifested by the pioneer glass master Y.C.A. Grillo, who transcended his historical circumstances in order to enable the great artistic transformations.

Nationalisation and Nigerianisation of an, otherwise, European Art Form

It is fascinating to note that the phenomena of Nigerianisation lodges well with a determinable consciousness of the irreversibility of a break with the traditions of western art and its European ideals. One of the eminent pundits of modern Nigerian art history, the Nigerian Ola Oloidi, a Professor of art history and art criticism, asserted that from the late 19th century, it was apparent that the age old art traditions of Europe would give way to Africa (Ola Oloidi, 2004). The colonial and post-colonial resolves in cultural studies have been on the rise in non-western cultures ever since the West appropriated to itself the locus of absolute transcendence as well as the quintessence for all mankind and all time. It is, therefore, plausible to situate the visual forms in the Nigerian stained glass as discourses that overwhelmingly signified the pursuits of the institution of the Church. These nudged in well with the indigenization regimen of the emergent political and social institutions in the former colony, Nigeria, towards identity politics. It is also omniscient to recognise the problematic of the colonial and post-colonial rhetoric, and their manifestation in the production of the visual culture of stained glass art. The historical time frame for this analogy grounds the decade 1955-1965 as specific to the discourse of the new art form.

Cultural nationalism prefigured in the philosophy of Negritude firstly defined by Diaspora Africans in literary texts, and the anti-colonialist rhetoric, engaged the consciousness of Africans in the colonies, especially in Nigeria. The search for novel interpretations of that ethos reflected an instrumentality of social change and progress.

The years 1955-1965 provide a benchmark for summarising the new directions for Church art, and for that matter, Nigerian art in general. In 1960 Nigeria attained her

political independence from Great Britain. Chinua Achebe crafted the much acclaimed novel *Things Fall Apart* (1958). That historical novel grounded an exemplar of the firmly set principles for a new ideology of cultural liberation and identity conferred on a people in order to starve off the effects of colonialism and the truncation of Nigerian collective consciousness. Elsewhere in another former colonial estate in West Africa, Ghana, the Ghanaian author and statesman Kwame Nkrumah crafted the politically incisive book *Neo-colonialism, The Last stages of Imperialism* (1965). Elizabeth Harney's book in *Senghor's Shadow: Art, Politics and the Avant-garde in Senegal 1960-1995* (Harney, 2004) captures the newly independent Senegal's approach towards the same goals of actualising national consciousness and identity. History had become so important that the onus was on the cosmopolitan visual artist to be conscious enough to know where the proverbial rain began to beat him. Nigerian visual artists at the time began to excavate their cultural past in search of creative resources in response to the challenges of a new national consciousness defined by the new nation state. The theme of individual and group identity under girded the grounds for creative sorties by the artists of the immediate post-colonial period in the emergent Nigerian art world. This was the landscape from which the prime stained glass artist, Y.C.A. Grillo emerged.

The foregoing draws attention to the intellectual groundings from which the strategies of acculturation deployed by artists, especially the Nigerian artist engaged in the new evangelisation glass art. Grillo and other artists elsewhere in West Africa, in pursuit of genuine and indigenous expressions in their work emphasised nationalism. The undergirding principle reflects "*natural synthesis*", a phenomenon at the heart of artistic practice as acts, which underlie cultural build up inspired by intercultural dialogue. The Nigerian artist engaged in the creation of the stained windows, created an art work that reflected that ethos. The Christian church, thus, made the new art form into an instrument of propaganda. This is the thrust of the utility of the stained glass painting as gadgetry in the "new thinking" Church. The art works of the new evangelisation regime make the experiences of the ecclesiology spatially perceptible. Art remains proof of what man has won for that culture.

Grillo's art captured the essence of the new evangelisation regime in a spectacle. Hence ineluctably utilised cultural symbols as capital to project the authority and symbolism of the new ecclesiology (Michel Foucault, 1972). The Christian churches employed the stained window as an artistic means to the desired ends of hoisting her strategic tomes of progressivism in her avowal of the new in her ecclesiology. Accordingly, the unique Nigerian iconographical imageries in the new stained glass art significantly canonised a new art form. The art form derives its peculiar idioms in the sourcing of its subject matter from indigenous themes, motifs and symbolisms that its creator deployed. These, otherwise, commonplace motifs are transfigured in their use for the explication and culturalisation of the Bible and the Christ-centred story. This gives the Nigerian stained glass art its provenance and

authenticity. Here lies the legacy and identity of glass as ecclesiastical art. Authentic church art remained, thus, a prototype inspired by the episteme in the Christian church's foundations of knowledge. These were scripted in church liturgical documents such as the Catholic Church's *Ecclesia in Africa: The Nigerian Response* (Ogujiafor & Enweh, 1996).

Grillo's stylistic inversion of church art, at the instance of the new evangelisation project, undergirded the momentous *pictorial turn* in Church art and its history. That inversion affected a change in the balance of church art and evangelisation culture. In this guise, it is significant to note the narration of a revivalist indigenous aesthetic in the practice. This should be regarded as a contemporary context of militant ethnicity. It was equally a sounding board for the more profound militant ethnicity reflected in post-independence at the Nigerian premiere indigenous art college, the Nsukka art school. Reflecting, therefore, on the facts of their fracture and intellectual factorships, this appropriation of indigenous culture is problematic since it filters their modernistic engagements, in Church art, through the lens of ethnic identity. Instead, it would make sense to perceive a review of the uses of revivalist aesthetics as deployed by Grillo, and, elsewhere, by the artists of the Nsukka School, as the specific regime for the identification and reflection on art's role in the production of an intellectual culture. Revivalist aesthetics as deployed here underscores new ways of explaining how the locale artist articulates and interprets subjects within the scope and possibilities of the lexicology of his indigenous culture's visual tooling mechanisms.

It is, therefore, pertinent to recognise the aesthetic regime of the locale Lagos *Egba* cum Diasporas cultural heritage in Grillo's work. Consequently, this master's approach to the creation of art is informed by his interests and cultural background. That is the grounding from which to appreciate the typographic response to the demands and dictates of the tomes of modernity reflected in his art work. Modernity for Grillo was channeled through a culture of radical politics hoisted on creative radicalism with appropriations from *creolizational* Yoruba cultural identity as its focus. Grillo was steeped in European art history, thus may have simply exhibited a formidable intertextuality in his art works. He also borrowed freely from kindred spirits elsewhere. All artists engaged in the new art for the evangelisation regime, therefore, were engaged in the transformation of indigenous *realia* to modern art. African art with its humanistic and serenely spiritualising aura was the ready resort for this transformation.

Conclusion

The art works of Nigeria's most prominent stained glass artist, Yusuf Cameron Adebayo Grillo, with its unique iconographic imageries met the needs of the overarching narratives of the new evangelisation in Christendom, post 1960. Nigerian stained glass art of the post Vatican II church is a distinct style in the series of glass in

the constellation of Church art. Its unique iconography all derived from Nigerian cultural spaces make it a distinct category all by itself. Nigerian glass presents a distinct art form worthy of study by itself. The artist, Yusuf Grillo, with deliberate passion has nurtured and re-engaged an African rebirth in the church. His style is unique and incisive. Grillo's sensitivity to form is in opposition to the Western canon of his education. The works are strengthened by their robust organization. These have obfuscated the visual canons of past stained glass art works, revalidating those canons with a freshness that is only African. Of essence in these art works is the predilection with the consciousness of the Time and Place of their engagement. That imprint puts these works in implicit confrontation with the glass that preceded them. In fact, the artist Grillo in his works skillfully avoided the aesthetic tastes associated with them. In this way post Vatican II glass alludes to a critical insight along with expressing the needs of the particular epistemology. The glass artist, Grillo, consciously locates his works to their Nigerian roots via affective and sentimental relationship with the commonplace in Nigerian cultural space. Grillo kept faith with African story telling tools, deploying authentic motifs from the ruff of every day in Nigerian locales; and even motifs drawn from both the traditions of ancient and extant Nigerian art. All these aptly place the art works in a definition of time and place they were made for. Identity lies at the very core of culture. The iconography specifically sourced from Nigerian cultural spaces effectively shaped the identities of the new imageries imbedded in the art works. They were the under pinning of evangelisation communication. They uniquely served the purpose of the new *ecclesia!*

The empirical analysis showed the solutions the artist gave to the artistic problem of new interpretations for the glass of the post Vatican II ecclesiology. However, the casual viewer enjoying the giant lancets does not see the problems. These can only be identified from knowledge of the *a priori* principles which provide the framework for the works. Yusuf Grillo abandoned the schema of perspective in his art works, a fundamental canonic principle of western European Art. Abandoning the principles of western systematic space resolution, perspective, he instead, emphasised flat plains and the use of illusionary Mathematical aggregate spaces. This is specifically African and unmodern. These art works (Figs. 1& 2) significantly underpin the historical epoch of the new evangelisation. They equally give a full vision of the Word and Christ-centred message. The new Nigerian specificity, articulates a different spatial system demonstrating their coherence and compatibility with the modes of knowledge, belief and exchange that characterise the cultures in which they arose. In spite of the perceptual schema of the European and Nigerian episteme, each is underpinned by a different but equally full vision of the Good News. The hallmark of Nigerian modernity is characterised by (a) its unique iconography and (b) its particularly mathematical expression of the concept of the infinite within a space that is necessarily both continuous and homogenous.

That new art prescribed identity: That identity emerged from experiencing its own uniqueness in the diversity of the world. Christendom's invocation of a new glass with unique vernacular features, all drawn from Nigerian cultural spaces, can arguably be regarded as a hyper-representation of Michel Foucault notions of the body as a "site of power".²⁰ For Foucault the symbology and symbolisms that have variedly deployed as instruments for the implementation of the ethos of authority and dogma are attributable to a mechanism of power. The stained glass accessory is a vivid example of this transmission of the new thinking church's dogmas of liberalism and openness using the *realia* of other cultures. The faithful followers and converts to the faith see familiar imageries drawn from their own locales as vehicles/aids for the transfer of the Good News stories centred on the Christ. In the traditions of the ecclesiology of the Church the visual has been constituted as a tableau of knowledge transfer. Glass art, therefore, reflects a *simulacrum* of (in fact, in the Nigerian specificity, an aphrodisiacal category) identities that adherents of the Faith conform to. It is these unified and fixed structures of thought and identity, hither to unified and eternally fixed that inform the *ecclesia Africa* project. That history is reflective of a changing world-mind relationship. This stratagem was subject to human interpretation. For the art historian it inflects a deepening of the new wave in art historical discourse. However, an art historian, who adopts a "determinist" position hence, takes the view of art as the resultant product of socio-economic forces, attributable not to historical agency alone, but implicitly to cultural and intellectual concerns, Nigerian glass art suggest an ideologically driven aggressive marketing ploy for the Church. These are all possibilities for a future study.

The story inflects a history of the continuous tradition of the use of visuals for evangelisation purposes in the Christian church. A narration of such a history imbedded in glass; and the subsequent implantation of Nigerian style imageries unto the constellation effected a stringing together of the narration of the Word and Christ-centred message. However, foremost in the story is the tying together of a story of the continuous imageries in evangelisation history (from the crude images on the ancient catacomb walls, in the days of the underground church; through the European classic series unto the Nigerian extension of the series). That story encrypts the utility of visuals in the epistemology of the Christian tradition. Thus, the post Vatican II epistemology draws attention to how icons imbedded in Nigerian glass eloquently point to the stringing together through visuals that enact the Christ-centred story. However, exploring the place of the iconographical elements in Nigerian stained glass paintings; this study exploited the adage "God lies in the details" (Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, 2000) to indicate the place of the iconographical method as a basis for research in Art history.

That exploration established the place of the visual elements in Nigerian images, as a generator of data for art historical research. The common denominator is

that the details reflect a process of signification. Utilizing the ancillary discipline of semiotics, a search for meaning and interpretation is achievable. The study presented a story of the Christian image's implantation, growth and development. It, however, told a story using Christ as the central magnet that holds the entire Bible and Paschal story together. That story, further, draws attention to the liturgical transmission of a new experience of time. It is a theological history in which the past, present and future make contact in the presence of the living Christ (Madeline Cavinass, 2003) History, thusly, makes visible the ecclesiology of the Christos story. It also draws attention to the possibilities of the utilisation of an iconographical approach as a genuine tool for Art historical research. Such an approach debunks the myth of biography, its accompaniment of the catalogue and the metaphysics of stylistic analysis as basis for the study of the history of art objects. Beyond a discourse of the narrative basis of Christian art and its iconographical elements, the embedded visual elements in Nigerian stained glass paintings, draw attention to the possibilities for an exploration of the expressive content of Christian artistic lexiconology as the expression of the devout. That discourse points to the need for further work in the Iconography of Nigerian stained glass art and the fecundity of its creators. The effects of trans-cultural encounters are to be found in the use of these artifacts as cultural *realia* for the new *ecclesia*. That *realia* self-consciously debunked the dyadic structures, the West and Other/ us and them dynamic that underpinned the old regime. That new language speaks, as it were, through symbolic codes. This is a result of cultural contact and interactions emphasising hybridity in the Faith. In fact, as a system of writing that language was spoken through pictures, called icons. A study of the art works "iconography" (E. Panofsky, 1984) as a reading mechanism for the Nigerian images is a worthy subject for study. Such a study underpins the imperative for an iconographic cum iconological interpretation of specific images in that ecclesiology. Peculiarities in the artists' interpretation of church story traditions; in fact, the transformation of strands of traditions of images is a pointer to an iconographical analysis. That would be the subject of a future paper.

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Fig. 1: *Celebration*, Yusuf Grillo, Plexiglas, 214x 334, 1962. © Nelson Graves.

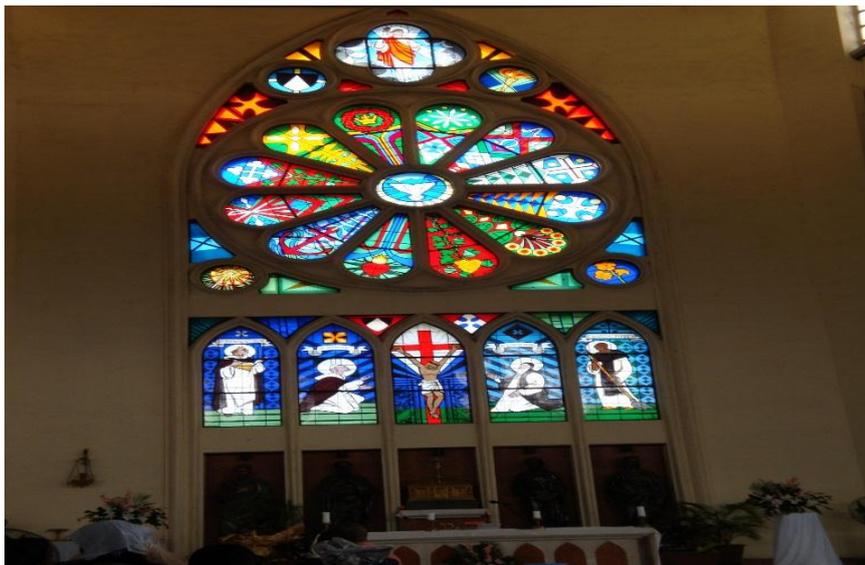


Fig.2: *Stained glass paintings*, St. Dominic's Catholic Church, Lagos. Yusuf Grillo, Plexiglass & Pigment, 1360x 680, 1963. © Nelson Graves



Fig. 3: *Stained glass painting* (detail of upper section), St Dominic's Catholic Church, Yaba, Lagos, Yusuf Grillo, Plexiglass & Pigment, 1963.
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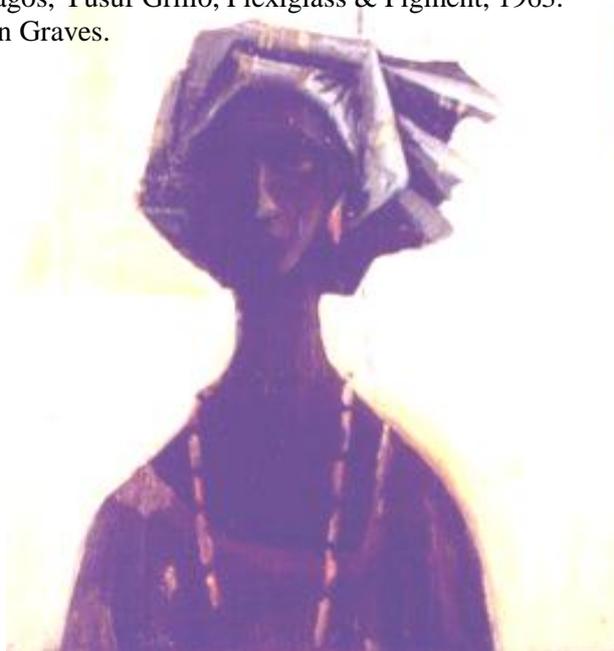


Fig. 4: *Yoruba Bride*, Yusuf Grillo,
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