CHAPTER-II

REPRESENTATION OF REALITY: AFRICAN CONTEXT

Through time Africa has been looted in every possible way. Even the history itself was stolen and denied the Africans. It is only in recent years historians have started to put together the true history of the old continent where humans first walked. This is our common history.

White people have to some extend succeeded in convincing everybody that the Africans had not been able to build any civilizations before the arrival of the people from outside. Today we know some of the oldest civilizations at all existed in Africa, but even the Africans have started to believe the lies told in the last two centuries. Not knowing their great past, many young people lack pride and faith in Africa. It is hard to see a future without knowing the past. Today the whole world is drowned in cultural imperialism from the West. A big part of the youngest generation in Africa sadly thinks that everything worth having origins from USA. African cultural heritage are still being denied the Africans. Historic and valuable artifacts are illegally exported mainly to private collections and museums outside Africa.

Contrary to the belief of many people Africa has a history going back to a long time before the arrival of white people. But this early history is difficult to tell because
few traces are left. First of all, the African societies maintained their culture and traditions verbally. Almost nothing was written down as most African cultures simply didn't have a written language. The African cultures were based on storytelling from old to young. The stories gradually faded and changed through time. Names of great kings were forgotten. Only a few tribes started to write down their history (One of them, the Foumban dynasty of Cameroon, developed a unique written alphabet to do so.) Most sources to the early Africa are written down by Europeans obviously with a risk of an unbalanced view of the events.

The arrival of European helped to wipe away traces of highly developed ancient cultures. The white people did simply not believe that any African tribe could have build something like the Great Zimbabwe. Their explorers, missionaries and "scientists" decided that this was surely a trace of an old White civilization in the middle of Africa. In more modern time archaeological findings in South Africa has been kept secret because they could nourish (black) African nationalism. The white people really believed that they arrived in southern Africa at the same time as the black people arrived. By claiming this, the white people could justify their rights to the country -at least to themselves

There is a common feel that Africa means the most backward continent ,the land of uncivilized people, the dark land . The darkness of the ‘dark continent’ has been turned into an almost metaphysical idea in more than one aspect.
Anthropology, culture, race, religion, and even literature of the Europe have condemned Africa to a position of inferiority in the absolute sense.

Regarding the debate about the human status of Africans, a similar image prevailed for a long time. Africans are called ‘noble savages’ ‘depraved cannibals’, ‘children of nature’ and so on. According to the Linnaean classification of humanity into the white, yellow, red and black races in the eighteenth century, the blacks were considered inferior to other races. Even in the nineteenth century, there was no change in the image projection of the Africans by the Europeans. Africans are placed below the white race in the ladder of Great Chain of Being. Darwin’s ‘Theory of Origin’ stated that it was the fittest that survived and developed. According to this theory, Africans were backward because they were inferior. Even if any traces of past civilizations were found, it was argued that they could not be African. Various kinds of race and evolutionary theories joined forces to prove too strong the myth of ‘the noble savage’.

“The ‘will of power’ and the ‘impulse to dominate’ have been dominant trends in much of the Europeans thought, behaviour and culture over the past 2500 years.”

-David Comissiong, Politician. (www.hiperhistory.net)

One of Africa’s most famous twentieth-century scholars, Cheikh Anta Diop of Senegal, has long maintained that, just as Greece was the birthplace of Western civilization, so too ancient Egypt was the cradle of African civilization.
W.E.B. Du Bois, the great African American scholar in referring to the importance of African people in world history, tells us that:

Always Africa is giving us something new. On its black bosom arose one of the earliest, if not the earliest, of self-protecting civilizations, and grew so mightily that it still furnishes superlatives to thinking and speaking men. Out of its dark and more remote forest vastnesses came, if we may credit many recent scientists, the first welding of iron, and we know that agriculture and trade flourished there when Europe was a wilderness.

He notes further that:

Nearly every human empire that has arisen in the world, material and spiritual, has found some of its greatest crises on the continent of Africa. It was through Africa that Christianity became the religion of the world. In Africa, the last flood of Germanic invasions spent itself within hearing distance of the last gasp of Byzantium, and it was again through Africa that Islam came to play its great role of conqueror and civilizer. Egypt and the nations of the Nile Valley were, figuratively, the beating heart of Africa and the incubator for its greatness for more than a thousand years. The human traffic from the South renewed the creative energy of Egypt and helped it meet one of the greatest challenges in history. She gave birth to what later became known as Western Civilization, long before the greatness of Greece and Rome. (RE.: *Education for a New Reality in the African World*, by John Henrik Clarke. www.africawithin.com)

Of all the earth’s continents, Africa provides the longest, deepest record of human past. Several million years ago, a group of primates diverged from the rest of apes and set forth on a distinctive evolutionary pathway involving upright walking. Humans represent the only living descendants of this primate line. The first several
million years of development of this line also appears to have been in Africa, before they gradually migrated out of Africa, spreading throughout the rest of the world. It may well have been in Africa where modern forms of humans first emerged. Africa is referred to as the "cradle for all humankind." Archaeological records document the development of different regional groups of people--with their own technologies and local cultural styles. The long and complex prehistoric record extends far beyond the reach of written historical records or oral traditions shaping the ethnic identity of modern African people.

After more than 60 million years of primate evolution, there is evidence in East Africa, dating more than 4 million years ago, of upright-walking ancestors who split away from the rest of the apes. By approximately 2.5 million years ago, ancestors show interesting new behavior patterns--making and using stone tools, ushering the Stone Age.

Changes in the Stone Age are slow during the Early Stone Age. In the Middle and Later Stone Age, more rapid changes in diversification of tools, behavior patterns and cultural styles occurred--beginning approximately 100,000 to 150,000 thousand years ago. Proto-human and then human populations during the Stone Age subsisted on wild foods by gathering, hunting, and probably scavenging. By the later Stone Age, all regions of Africa were occupied by a large number of societies of people who looked like modern humans. Their behavior also appears to be modern in terms
of complexity and ingenuity as well as development of aesthetic and symbolic behavior.

Beginning approximately 5000 to 6000 B.C., food production in the form of agriculture and herding was introduced in Africa. This involved the introduction of domesticated species from the Near East as well as domestication of indigenous species -- particularly various plants. There was a step by step spread from one part of Africa to another. Some societies developed large populations in sedentary villages.

Iron technology was introduced into Africa within the first millennium B.C. from the Mediterranean of Indian Ocean region near where it was first discovered. The Africans soon developed their own techniques. It gradually spread from northern Africa to the northern part of sub-Saharan Africa. Iron working was wide spread in West Africa by the first century A.D. Ironworking centers developed large populations organized as chiefdoms or kingdoms with hierarchical social stratification, complex division of labor, craft specialization, well-developed artistic traditions, long-distance trade, and campaigns of conquest. Food production and iron working spread to central and southern Africa within the last 2000 years, during the expansion of the Bantu-speaking people. Iron-using food producers replaced stone using hunter-gatherers, except in regions not suited for agriculture.
Between 10,000 and 20,000 years ago, diverse Later Stone Age populations in Africa exploited specific plants and animals available to them in their specific regions. Hunting focused on a few species and wild plant gathering on a particular plant type. Sickle blades used to cut grasses and grinding stones used to process grains have been found in northeast Africa dating back at least 10,000 years. There is no evidence of this domestication of wild plant species in the Nile Valley during this time. Domestication involves the breeding of a species until its characteristics become altered from the wild state-- bringing them more in line with human needs. A number of populations during the Later Stone Age appear to have adopted domesticates while also domesticating locally available plants. Indigenous plants include African yams, African rice, bulrush millet, finger millet, sorghum and oil palm. Wheat and barley were imported from western Asia. Bananas and coconuts were introduced from South Asia within the past several hundred years. African domesticates spread to Asia as early as 1000 B.C. The domesticated animals in Africa have been imported from Asia including sheep, goats, cattle and important in arid areas -- the camel. Wild ancestors of these animals have not been found in Africa (ancestral cattle not in sub-Saharan Africa). There is some evidence of experiments in domesticating wild cattle in parts of northern Africa. The donkey and cat were domesticated in Egypt.

An important region of food production in pre-historic Africa appears to have been the Sahara Desert Region. After the last glaciation there was a period of higher
rainfall and lower evaporation in the region that lasted from about 10,000 to 6,000 years ago. The Sahara supported good-sized populations around lakes, ponds, and rivers throughout plains. With a Mediterranean climate and better water supply, it was better suited for production than it is today. Peoples around 6500 and 8500 B.C. developed pottery.

In the Egyptian Western Desert, by 7000 B.C., people with microlithic tools and living in settlements around ponds were using domesticated barley and domesticated local cattle long before food production in the Nile Valley. Domesticated Asian imports -- sheep -- or goats appear in the region about the same time. By 4000 B.C. to 5000 B.C. these practices appear further west in the Sahara. This time is referred to as the "Sahara Neolithic." Many of the rock paintings in the Sahara are believed to date to this period showing domesticated animals as well as tethered giraffes. By 2000 B.C. newly imported horses and camels and milking of cows appear in paintings.

In the Nile Valley, use of tubers and wild grasses continued for thousands of years along with fishing, hunting and management of wild herds. Large-scale village farming does not appear until about 5000 B.C. Pre-Dynastic Valley Cultures starting about 4000 B.C. developed into the Egyptian Dynastic Cultures starting about 3100 B.C.
To the south of Sudan along the Nile, hunters and fishers with microlithic tools began to use quantities of local plants such as sorghum and finger millet beginning around 5000 B.C. These people developed large settlements, used pottery, built substantial house structures, and kept domesticated cattle, sheep and goats. Egyptian influence was greater in northern Sudan, introducing wheat, barley and Egyptian trade goods. Domestic sheep and goats and pottery also seem to have rapidly spread across coastal North Africa -- herding replacing hunting by 6000 to 5000 B.C. The human type found in these regions might be ancestors to modern Berbers. Domesticated cattle spread south of the Sahara to the Sahel by 3000 to 4000 B.C. Since wheat and barley were not suited to the Sahel zone, the people domesticated plants such as sorghum and bulrush millet. Other West African plants included the African yam and African rice. Pottery and ground stone axes were found in West Africa starting between 5000 and 4000 B.C. -- indicating forest clearance, woodworking and digging. In Congo and Zaire, pottery and ground stone tools and palm oil nuts appear thousands of years later -- within a few hundred years B.C. Finger millet was domesticated in Ethiopia or in Uganda.

Ethiopia imported species of wheat, barley, cattle, goats, and sheet within the last few millennia B.C. Microlithic cultures spread into Kenya between 3000 and 2500 B.C. Herding was established in southern Kenya between 2000 and 1000 B.C. Linguistic studies indicate that the early herders may have spoken Southern Cushitic languages rather than the Bantu and Nilotic languages present in the region today.
Further herding spread south beyond Tanzania much later due to the successful hunter-gatherer adaptation of the Khoisan-speaking people occupying much of southern Africa. Once people with iron tools and weapons spread into southern Africa and brought herding and farming with them, those practices dominated the region. The food producers supported complex centralized societies that rose during the Iron Age.

During the last few millennia B.C. many societies based on agriculture in Africa and Eurasia rapidly developed. Specialized arts and crafts flourished, thriving trade emerged, power was consolidated and populations grew. Great complex societies included the ancient kingdoms of the Egyptian Nile in northeast Africa, Meroe in Nubia, and Axum in the Ethiopian horn; in West Africa there were the kingdoms and states of Ghana, Mali, Songhai, Asante, Ife, and Benin; and in southern Africa the large commercial center responsible for the Great Zimbabwe and other stone-built trading centers. Developments in one region are often affected by other societies and elsewhere in technologies, foods, religions and trade. Many local developments became incorporated into written documents of the literate world.

The technology of making tools out of copper and bronze developed in western Asia before 3000 B.C. but never took hold in Africa except in some northern regions. After the fall of the Hittites about 1200 B.C., the complex iron smelting technology spread rapidly throughout the Near East, around the Mediterranean, through Europe and on into Africa. The superior strength and widespread distribution of iron ore
favored to the spread. Iron technology appears to have entered North Africa with Phoenician colonists and traders by the eighth century B.C. and spread to the Nok people of Nigeria by the fourth century B.C. In the following centuries, there is more evidence of using and working with iron throughout West Africa. Large trade networks developed during this period. Before iron technology reached Egypt, the unification of Upper and Lower Egypt around 3100 B.C. began a long series of dynasties. By 2000 B.C. control by Egypt extended southward into Nubia (northern Sudan) -- a land they called Kush. Control changed hands several times until in the ninth century B.C. when Kush reestablished itself as an independent kingdom. In the next century, Kush conquered Upper Egypt then went on to conquer Lower Egypt. The Kushites lost to iron welding Assyrians by 671 B.C. The following century the Egyptians destroyed the Kushite capital city, forcing the Kushites to establish a new capital upstream in a more wooded area of the Nile at Meroe. Meroe developed a large ironworking industry and traded with other people of the Sudan and Red Sea ports. Most iron produced was traded away.

Semitic-speaking people emigrated from southern Arabia into the Ethiopian highlands during the first millennium B.C. slowly incorporating local Cushitic-speaking agriculturists. They introduced iron technology and urban living into Tigre and Eritrea and by the first century A.D. had established an extensive state reaching across much of Ethiopia and Sudan. This Axumite kingdom controlled trade through the Red Sea from its port capital at Aidulis. They produced monumental
architecture. Around the fourth century A.D. they conquered Meroe. The Axumite kingdom declined when Arabs took over the Red Sea trade in the seventh century.

Egypt came under influence of the Greeks in the centuries following the Assyrian invasion and then the control of the Macedonian empire and then by Roman conquest by 30 B.C. Christianity moved into northern African during the Roman Empire, spreading by the fourth century into Ethiopia and Nubia. Christian villages flourished even after the expansion of Muslim Arabs into northern Africa cut them off from more northern centers of Christianity. The Arab invasion in the seventh century A.D. brought in Islam that rapidly took hold in much of North Africa -- especially to the west of Egypt. Through the Arabs, looking to control trade with their camel caravans to the south, Islam spread to much of sub-Saharan Africa, particularly in West Africa. Once the Arab caravans reached West Africa, developing networks began to involve many local Iron Age societies, creating large urban centers with centralized political power that regulated and controlled this trade. The networks' first involved the people of the savanna regions to the south of the Sahara. By mid eighth century there was a powerful state of Ghana. Ghana regulated trade between the gold-producing area of Guinea and the camel caravans. The state of Mali took over the control in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries extending control over a substantial area of West Africa. By the sixteenth century, the Muslim state of the Songhai Empire, was in control.
Coastal people also asserted power and gained control in the West African trade. In Nigeria, the kingdom of Benin started to emerge in the twelfth century. It had developed into a powerful city by the time it was first visited by the Portuguese in the fifteenth century. The kingdom of Benin flourished and developed the well-known tradition of lost-wax casting in bronze and brass -- as well as fine ivory sculpture. Ife, the center of the powerful Yoruba in southwestern Nigeria, also showed the development of fine artistic traditions in terra cotta and lost wax castings in a bronze-like copper alloy.

During the first millennium A.D. there was a rapid migration of Bantu-speakers of the Niger-Congo language into Central and Eastern Africa and throughout much of southern Africa. In Zimbabwe an important trading center emerged by at least the tenth century A.D. -- at the site known as the Great Zimbabwe. The Great Zimbabwe was active in the gold trade to the coast and the import of goods such as glass and pottery from China and Asia. It was a central site among a number of stone-built centers in southern Africa. It flourished until 1450, when the opening of mines further north shifted trade routes. Over time hunter-gatherer populations diminished until by the time of European contact, they were restricted to more arid regions of southern (and part of eastern) Africa. The relationship between iron-using food producers and stone-tool-using hunter-gatherers is of interest to archaeologists today.
Africa, the second largest continent in the world, is comprised of more than fifty different countries. In the past 150 years, Africa’s political system and economy has undergone some noticeable changes, which may be categorized into three noteworthy eras: Pre-colonial Africa, Colonial Africa, and Post-colonial Africa. In pre-colonial times, African governments could be generally grouped into three categories, which include centralized kingdoms and empires, centralized small kingdoms and city states, or decentralized or stateless political societies. Similar to Europe, Africa was composed of numerous large kingdoms and empires, in which “political control was concentrated” and the rulers held close to absolute power. In addition to his monarchial duties, the king also acted as “chief executive, chief law-maker, and chief judge” and thus designated officials for areas of criminal justice. Successful and powerful kingdoms were in part characterized by expansion of trade. Aside from the larger centralized kingdoms, Africa also contained smaller political systems, often also referred to as city-states. Although smaller in size, these political systems were similar to their larger counterparts in that their rulers enjoyed centralized power and also required military power and stability in trade. Economic growth and stability that was fostered by the king, his military, and the ruling elite, resulted in greater revenues, which in turn benefited and supported the ruling class again. Africa’s political glory is found in the view of the Arab historian al-Bakri. He wrote this description 900 years ago:

“The king of Ghana can put 2,00000 warriors in the field, more than 40,000 thousand being armed with bow and arrow…. When he gives audience to his people …,
he sits in a pavilion around which stand his horses caparisoned in cloth of gold..., behind him stand ten pages holding shields and gold mounted swords; and on his right hand are sons of the princes of his empire, splendidly clad with gold plaited into their hair.”


When, in 1483, the first Portuguese explorers arrived at the mouth of the Congo River, they found a large and thriving kingdom. There was a capital city and a royal court, an aristocracy of governors, chiefs and functionaries, and an efficient system of tax collection. (*Tropical Africa*, p. 65)

In recent decades, historians have questioned the "tribal" model by investigating inter-regional connections, political institutions, and the multiplicity of social identities which existed in the African past. Historical research has been particularly effective in demonstrating that, far from living in isolated "tribes," Africans developed institutions which maintained political, social and economic relationships across wide regions. Consequently, African identities were shaped by both village life and the world of road and market, and by highly localized concerns as well as inter-regional relationships. This historical research poses a formidable challenge for students of African art history. It not only challenges them to seek manifestations of these aspects of social life in African art, but also forces them to ask whether we should be satisfied with the conventional ethnic or "tribal" classification of African art.
We might expect the "tribal" model of isolated ethnic groups to be nowhere more appropriate than in the great equatorial forest of modern-day Zaire. This vast and densely-vegetated region would appear to be the African environment most likely to impose isolation by impeding travel. Yet, forest peoples were never isolated. Using the great river systems of the Zaire basin as their highways, they maintained vibrant commercial and cultural relationships over wide areas. Drawing upon their common Bantu culture, the peoples of Zaire developed ingenious political institutions. This is well illustrated by the Kuba kingdom, which developed a political system capable not only of bringing about cultural change (its political institutions altered patterns of marriage and increased agricultural productivity), but also of supporting a magnificent artistic tradition. Elsewhere, political authority and commerce were regulated by a remarkable institution called the "drum of affliction," an association devoted to the treatment of certain illnesses which maintained contacts across great distances.

If we read or study the history of African societies, you begin to understand so many African societies practised some kind of democratic values and they were part of so many pre-colonial African societies. The values of democracy were practiced long years ago among Africans. The idea of living in a community in West Africa was exercised in the 15th century. They participated in open political discussions, raised political issues based on the democratic way of the community where all the people
were invited for discussion on matters that concern them. So, democratic practices existed in Africa long before the colonial times.

Economy in pre-colonial times was mainly focused on the cotton and textile industry. On the other hand, up to one third of Africans lived within political systems that were described as “stateless or decentralized”. In contrast to the centralized systems, the decentralized societies were not governed by a king, a ruling elite, or a system of chiefs, but instead by a council of community elders, and were “made up of a group of neighboring towns or villages that had no political connection with a larger kingdom or nation.

Africans did possess that paradise of life with self-respect once in the history when the shadow of a white man had not yet captured that land. No doubt it was. It would be improper to say that Africa had no life with self-respect at all a traditional, to some extent superstitious and primitive life, but it had its own culture and values. In terms of modern development they were far behind, backward and illiterate but they did possess self-respect for which they were ready to die.

Africa was the birthplace of the human species between 8 million and 5 million years ago. The chances are that humanity- the homo sapiens that all we are, black, brown, yellow or pink- began in Africa, rather than in Asia as had been thought. Such is the inference from anthropological discoveries made by the Leakeys- Dr. Louis S.B. Leakey, the Kenyan-born British anthropologist, and his wife and co-worker, Mary. (Tropical Africa, p-46 ).Today, the vast majority of its inhabitants are
of indigenous origin. People across the continent are remarkably diverse by just about any measure: They speak a vast number of different languages, practice hundreds of distinct religions, live in a variety of types of dwellings, and engage in a wide range of economy.

It would be improper to say that Africa had no life with self-respect at all. Africans did possess that paradise of life with self-respect once in the history when the shadow of a white man had not yet captured that land. No doubt it was a traditional, to some extent superstitious and primitive life, but it had its own culture and values. In terms of modern development they were far behind, backward and illiterate but they did possess self-respect for which they were ready to die. The characters of Sidi or Elesin Oba in Soyinka’s plays reflect that self-respect which once Africa had.

The pre-colonial state of this Dark Continent was not as dark as it became after the entry of the White man. The sense of self-respect and spirit, which Africa possessed in the pre-colonial state, has been well captured in David Diop’s Africa. Africa used to be the land of true warriors, genuine tribal and self-sufficient people who never depended upon others for their needs, as their needs were highly limited. This self sufficiency never made them feel the need for contact with the external world and external world considered them backward simply because they were not advanced materially. They had their personal God and Goddesses, family patterns and many of the social systems that are considered taboo today were a part of routine life for them. For example, Chi was their personal God and it used to be a part of ritual to
commit suicide for the people of certain categories. The pre-colonial Africa never aspired to have the development in the western pattern with the help of material progress. They lived their life which was the life of struggle for survival in the forest and they were happy with it.

Actually, African society was a society in which the individual identified his welfare with the welfare of the group, in which personal rights were subordinated to the rights of the group. In sociological terms, the African was not “inner directed” but “other directed”. His outlook, in politico-economic terms, was “communalized” or “socialized”. The sentiments associated with ‘we’ had been the cement of the traditional African society.\(Tropical Africa\, p\text{-}35\)

In important Swahili towns such as Lamu in Kenya and Kilwa in southern Tanzania, a wealthy and cosmopolitan culture took shape. Its crowning achievement was stately public and residential architecture which utilized coral stone and mangrove poles. This was a culture which combined local and international elements -- for while Swahili people gloried in their urbane sophistication and embraced the Islamic faith of their Arab trading partners, they also honored eloquence in their own language, created a copious body of Swahili oral epics, and zealously guarded the independence of their small city-states. Their healing practices, political organization and structures of kinship drew much more heavily from their Bantu heritage than from their Arabian and Asian

The pre-colonial Africa had no regular and refined political or economical structure as it is found in the Western culture today. Even a social structure was in its
primitive form of groups. Polygamy was not a taboo and the number of wives used to be the yardstick for man’s reputation. By and large they depended on the barter system for their needs as the idea of currency was remote for them. It was a life with limited needs and highest contentment. They always considered it a sign of self-respect to live that way and it was treated as an offence if any attempt was made by any external agency to refine them. The Pre-colonial Africa did witness conflict but it was only among the tribes.

Before the coming of Western civilization and colonialism, the African child was raised by the community and educated in the culture and traditions of his people. The child was seen as an asset of the community in whom the community maintains a stake. Therefore, every member of the community contributed to the upbringing of the child whether the child was an offspring, family relative, extended family member, or simply another member of the clan. Generally, the child’s intelligence was measured by several factors including the child’s ability to reason among his peers, the child’s ability to meet the challenges of his age group, the child’s ability to obtain or go through the initiations of emancipation to adulthood faced by his age group. The tests were natural but obvious ones built into the community’s social structure. His peers would usually tease a loafer or lazy child. Little respect if any is given to him or his words in the community.

In the typical pre-colonial African Society, a child who could not pass the test or initiation ceremony to the next level of adolescence or adulthood is naturally expected to continue retaking the test until he or she passes it. There was no
consideration of a blanket promotion since that would defeat the idea of the test, and also give less value to the test or the next stage of life. Imbedded in the process of taking such test and passing (or failing and retaking) it, are most of the essentials needed by the child to mature as an individual and as a valuable member of his/her society. To bypass an initiation or age group test was seen as being unfair to such child since the child was indirectly being encouraged to be lazy and less resourceful or creative. The society had no room for such individuals. Without proper understanding of the workings of this process, it may seem a harsh way of life. However, a closer consideration of the general and long term effects suggest otherwise.

Practically, members of the pre-colonial African societies thrived well with the practice of tests for emancipation or advancement to the next stage of life. In pre-colonial African societies, education took forms other than the ones operational today. There were several constant avenues synonymous to modern classes. For instance, whenever the moon was out, children gather according to age groups to play, sing, joke, play games, tell and share stories. That was a form of education. In fact, most of the prominent African cultures subsisting today have been handed down through oral transmission, physical interaction, and visual education. Other forms of education in early African societies included sharing of expressions through festivals, ceremonies, games and artistic performances such as dancing, singing etc.
Prior to the 19th century, the rest of the world knew very little about Africa -- the Dark Continent. What trade was transacted between Europeans and African traders occurred on the coast. However, beginning in the early 1800s, explorers began to explore the African interior. Many of the first European explorers in Africa were missionaries who felt called to minister to the pagan African tribes.

Many of these missionaries also wanted to eradicate the poisonous trade that wreaked havoc on so many poor Africans, the slave trade. After seven centuries of being brutalized by the Arab slave traders, Europeans took great advantage of the existing system of blacks capturing blacks to feed the huge demand of large plantations in the Americas. So Swahili or black traders trekked throughout Africa, capturing blacks or buying prisoners from other native tribes to sell as slaves on the coast.

Led by Christian officials such as Willberforce, Great Britain outlawed the slave trade in 1807 and slavery itself in 1834. British ships started to patrol the African coast to try to prevent other nations from engaging in the slave trade. Meanwhile, more and more explorers, whether Christian or secular, British or not, began to explore Africa.

At first African diseases and hostile natives repulsed most expeditions into Africa. However, as European society made progress with new inventions and discoveries
such as the Maxim gun and quinine. Armed with these innovations, explorers began to cut their way through the African jungle — and natives. Great Britain led the way in African colonization with colonies in South Africa. Then France invaded Tunisia in 1881, and Great Britain took over Egypt which Great Britain and France had previously ruled jointly. Henry Stanley and Pierre de Brazza, exploring for Belgium and France respectively, rushed around in West Africa in an attempt to gain the Niger River for the countries supporting them.

To avoid a European war that might arise from the conflicting claims, German chancellor Otto von Bismark held the West African Conference in Berlin from November 1884 through February 1885 which became known as "the Scramble". Ambassadors attended to talk about African policies, particularly the notification of any new conquest by one signing country to all the other signing countries. Although this conference had everything to do with Africa, not a single of the fourteen countries represented at the West African Conference was African.

Of the seven European countries that would eventually control most of Africa, Great Britain, France, and Belgium together controlled most of Africa's territory. But what were the motives, policies, and abilities of these nations, and how easily would their colonization of the territory turn into independence?

Numerous motives instigated Great Britain, France, and Belgium's colonization of Africa. For one thing, since Europe felt depleted of natural resources needed for
industrialization, all the nations had an interest in the raw materials found in Africa. But besides this, the countries' major reasons for interest in Africa differed. After Napoléon Bonaparte was finally defeated at Waterloo in 1815, the humbled Frenchmen saw colonization in Africa as a chance to gain back some of their dignity and prestige in their traditional competition against the English.

As for Belgium, King Leopold II actually supported the idea of a colony in Africa, not the country. All of the king's advisors and counsel members thought that Leopold, who spent much of his own private fortune into the colony later called the Belgian Congo, must have lost his marbles. Leopold II expected great returns from his overseas colony.

Unlike the purely lucrative interest in African colonization sought by France and Belgium, Great Britain had a Biblical motive to colonize the continent. Of course many Englishmen looked at Africa as an economic opportunity, but some Englishmen also wanted to open up the continent to Livingstone's "3 Cs - Commerce, Christianity and Civilization." They wanted to end slavery, convert the blacks, and civilize the continent.

**COLONIAL REALITIES**

Portuguese colonization of some parts of Africa would have a very negative impact in some of the existing civilizations. By 1583, they had destroyed the Afro-Muslim Zendj civilization of East Africa that competed with them for the African trade,
Two other important African kingdoms, the Kongo and the Monomotapa, would also be destroyed by the Portuguese conquerors.

Relations with the Kongo were initially good: Congolese kings embraced Catholicism and welcomed Portuguese missionaries and merchants. But the slave trade eventually became a major issue of dispute in the region. The Portuguese (and later also the Dutch) supported the enslaving warrior state of the Jaggas, who sacked the Kongo repeatedly. They also used the Kongo to weaken the neighbour realm of Ndongo, where Queen Nzinga put a fierce but eventually doomed resistance to Portuguese and Jagga ambitions. Portugal intervened militarily in these conflicts, creating the basis for their colony of Angola. In 1663, after another conflict, the royal crown of Kongo was sent to Lisbon. Nevertheless, a diminished Kongo Kingdom would still exist until 1885, when the last Manicongo, Pedro V, ceded his almost non-existent domain to Portugal.

The Portuguese dealt with the other major state of Southern Africa, the Monomotapa (in modern Zimbabwe), in a similar manner: Portugal intervened in a local war hoping to get abundant mineral riches, imposing a protectorate. But with the authority of the Monomotapa diminished by the foreign presence, anarchy took over. The local miners migrated and even buried the mines to prevent them from falling into Portuguese hands. When in 1693 the neighbouring Cangamires invaded the country, the Portuguese accepted their failure and retreated to the coast.
Beginning in the 17th century, the Netherlands began exploring and colonizing Africa. While the Dutch were waging a long war of independence against Spain, Portugal had temporarily united with Spain, starting in 1580 and ending in 1640. As a result, the growing colonial ambitions of the Netherlands were mostly directed against Portugal. For this purpose, two Dutch companies were founded: the West Indies Company, with power over all the Atlantic Ocean, and the East Indies Company, with power over the Indian Ocean.

The West India Company conquered Elmina in 1637 and Luanda in 1640. In 1648, they were expelled from Luanda by the Portuguese. Overall the Dutch built 16 forts in different places, including Goree in Senegal, partly overtaking Portugal as the main slave-trading power. The Dutch left a lasting impact in South Africa, a region ignored by Portugal that the Dutch eventually decided to use as station in their route to East Asia. Jan van Riebeeck founded Cape Town in 1652, starting the European exploration and colonization of South Africa.

Almost at the same time as the Dutch, other European powers attempted to create their own outposts for the African slave trade. As early as 1530, English merchant adventurers started trading in West Africa, coming into conflict with Portuguese troops. In 1581, Francis Drake reached the Cape of Good Hope. In 1663, the British built Fort James in Gambia. One year later, another British colonial expedition attempted to settle southern Madagascar, resulting in the death of most of the
colonists. The British forts on the West African coast were eventually taken by the Dutch.

In 1626, the French Compagnie de l'Occident was created. This company expelled the Dutch from Senegal, making it the first French domain in Africa. France also put her eyes in Madagascar, the island that had been used since 1527 as a stop in travels to India. In 1642, the French East India Company founded a settlement in southern Madagascar called Fort Dauphin. The commercial results of this settlement were scarce and, again, most of the settlers died. One of the survivors, Etienne de Flacourt, published a History of the Great Island of Madagascar and Relations, which was for a long time the main European source of information about the island. Further settlement attempts had no more success but, in 1667, François Martin led the first expedition to the Malgasy heartland, reaching Lake Alaotra. In 1665, France officially claimed Madagascar, under the name of Île Dauphine. However, little colonial activity would take place in Madagascar until the 19th century.

In 1657, Swedish merchants founded Cape Coast in modern Ghana, but were soon displaced by the Danish, who founded Fort Christiansborg near modern day Accra.

In 1677, King Friedrich the Great of Prussia sent an expedition to the western coast of Africa. The commander of the expedition, Captain Blonk, signed agreements with the chieftains of the Gold Coast. There, the Prussians built a fort named Gross
Friedrichsburg and restored the abandoned Portuguese fort of Arguin. But in 1720, the king decided to sell these bases to the Netherlands for 7,000 ducats and 12 slaves, six of them chained with pure gold chains.

Overall, European exploration of Africa in the 17th and 18th centuries was very limited. Instead they were focused on the slave trade, which only required coastal bases and items to trade. The real exploration of the African interior would start well into the 19th century.

**AFRICAN SLAVE TRADE AND ITS IMPACT**

Africa, in a sense, is the oldest and the newest part of the world. Yet it was not until the 19th Century explorers and colonizers penetrated the interior of the continent that this huge area began to emerge from its mysterious obscurity. Measured against Africa’s long history, the colonial era was a mere episode lasting less than 100 years. But it was the most decisive episode, one that quite literally shaped the political and the economic character of contemporary Africa in irreversible ways. In fact, it has given Africa a destiny which is no longer specially African but which inevitably must reflect the influential presence (in Tropical Africa alone) of some 750,000 Europeans and 400,000 Asians, with their skin colors and cultures and aspirations. Colonialism brought something entirely new into Africa— and what comes out will again be something new.
Who were the “colonialists”? Why did they come? What did they want from Africa and the Africans? What were their methods?

These are large questions, and the answers to them not only involve many complex variables but obviously are also subject to different interpretations. The most concise explanation for the 19th Century “opening up of Africa” is that Europeans had previously limited their attentions to the coast because their commercial interest lay there, particularly in the slave trade. When slaving was outlawed, and the Industrial Revolution put the Europeans in need of raw materials and of markets for their manufactured goods, they went inland for the goods of their pocketbooks.

In the latter part of the 19th Century, the great European powers were engaged in a fierce political and economic rivalry. Industrialization had created a demand for raw materials. At the same time, progress in engineering and medical science had reduced the hazards of colonizing the African interior. European businessmen and political leaders began to realize, as Sir Philip Mitchel has said, that the new lands offered possibilities for “valuable trade and substantial profits, provided, however, that stable and humane governments were established, a task which had defeated the people of the region almost completely….“(Mitchel,”Africa and the West in the Historical Perspective” www.africanhistory.about.com ) Investment groups had begun to form; the great powers eyed one another suspiciously and jockeyed for position. Suddenly, the “Scramble for Africa” began.
CHRISTIAN MISSIONARIES IN AFRICA

“Jesus has been hijacked by Western culture so as to make him "white", he was not.”-Father Wolf Schmidt, SJ, St. Ignatius College, Zimbabwe (1991).

Christianity was introduced in North Africa as early as the first century AD., but it was only in the late nineteenth century, when colonialism was advancing, that Christianity seriously increased its presence on the continent (Ray, B. African Religions: Symbol, Ritual and Community. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1976: 193). In what later became Southern Rhodesia, now Zimbabwe, the first mission station was opened in Inyati close to Bulawayo in 1859 by the London Missionary Society through Reverend Robert Moffat. It is pertinent to keep the following critical questions in mind:


There may have been many reasons for missionaries to travel to Africa, but not only as remarked by Father Wermter: "The community culture of Africa fascinated
the European missionaries who came from individualistic cultures." Moyo remarks that the introduction of Christianity made the mistake of believing that to become a Christian, people had to be "removed from their indigenous cultures" (Moyo, 1983, in Haar, 1990: p-139). African religions were treated as an evil which had to be encountered. This can be seen in the following quotation: "Once their children have gone to school, they begin to show interest in the strange religion of the white missionaries, religion which denies the truth of Tonga religious beliefs." It was frequently believed by Western missionaries that traditional religious beliefs and practices were inferior, and traditional customs had to be done away with before the acceptance of Christianity. This did not happen without resistance or problems, and gave for instance rise to the process which can be seen as religious syncretism in religious beliefs today. What Bishop Desmond Tutu described as a "form of schizophrenia" was thus the result of having to disclaim the indigenous culture before converting to Christianity (quoted in Moyo, p-103). There is no reason to dismiss such attitudes as a thing of the past, however. Many of the same sentiments can be found in contemporary religious expressions and among the leaders of various religious groups.

The role of the missionaries in the colonisation of the region was also considerable in terms of cultural and political domination of the people. Although the missionaries' task was to make people accept the Bible and its teachings, Christianity was turned into an ideology which could be used to convince people not
to resist white domination. Religion was used to legitimate, sustain and even promote political tyranny and oppression, as well as in other instances for reasons of political liberation of the people. In the words of Charles Villa-Vicencio, religion has functioned both as the "opiate of the people" and a "source of the social renewal" (Villa-Vicencio, Charles. "Have the Chickens Come Home to Roost?" in Religion and Oppression: The Misuses of Religion for Social, Polical, and Economic Subjugation in Eastern and Southern Africa. ed. Edicessa. Symposium Proceedings, 1989: p-25). Bourdillon, on the other hand, maintains that "missionary Christianity cannot simply be identified with colonialism" (Bourdillon Bourdillon, M. Religion and Society: A Text for Africa, Gweru: Mambo Press, 1990: p-269).

Regardless of claims that the missionaries regarded themselves as opposed to the colonial ideology, they were part of the colonial structure and brought with them religions, beliefs and practices which were alien to the area.

**Impact of Colonialism on Agriculture**

Under colonial rule, the plantation system of farming was widely introduced in order to grow large quantities of cash crops, employing cheap (often slave) African labor for export to European countries with little or no compensation. Mining for gems and precious metals such as gold was developed in a similar way by wealthy European entrepreneurs such as Cecil Rhodes. The implementation and effects of these colonial policies were, arguably, genocidal in a number of cases. Belgian
government commissions in the 1920s, for example, found that the population of Belgian Congo had fallen by as much as 50%, or from roughly 20 million to 10 million people, under Belgian rule as a result of forced labor (largely for the purposes of rubber cultivation), massacre by colonial troops, famine and disease. In white settler colonies like Algeria, Kenya, Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe), South Africa and Southwest Africa (now Namibia), the most fertile lands were forcibly expropriated from the indigenous populations for use by white settlers. African farmers were pushed onto "native reserves," usually located on arid, marginal lands. In German Southwest Africa, somewhere between 25,000 and 100,000 Hereros were killed either resisting land expropriation by white settlers, or by starvation in the desert where they were exiled. The legacy of these land expropriations remains in Africa today, as over 80% of the arable land in both South Africa and Namibia remains white-owned.

Today, many African economies suffer from the legacy of colonialism. The utilitarian attitude of European countries toward their colonial possessions stopped them from building adequate infrastructure in Africa. In agriculture, the plantation systems that they introduced are highly unsustainable and cause severe environmental degradation. For example, cotton severely lowers soil fertility wherever it is grown, and areas of West Africa that are dominated by cotton plantations are now unable to switch to more profitable crops or even to produce food because of the depleted soil. Recently, more countries have initiated programs
to revert to traditional, sustainable forms of agriculture such as shifting cultivation and bush fallow in order to grow enough food to support the population while maintaining soil fertility to allow agriculture to continue in future generations.

**EXPLOITATION OF AFRICA ON LARGE SCALE**

Walter Rodney's *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa* (1981) analyzes the colonial relations of production -- and the economic and political contradictions -- that produced Africa's underdevelopment and continue to plague Africa today. Rodney, who describes colonialism as a "one-armed bandit," claims that colonialism, more than anything else, underdeveloped Africa. According to him, colonialism laid the roots of neocolonialism in Africa by creating Africa's economic dependency on the international capitalist system. The introduction of capitalist relations of production and distribution, -- for instance, the International Trade Commodity (ITC) exchange systems and values -- created such dependency. Rodney (1981: p-244) asserts that "previous African development was blunted, halved and turned back" by colonialism without offering anything of compensatory value.

Many works of African literature record the kind of exploitation Rodney describes. In *Mayombe*, for example, the Narrator notes:

> My land is rich in coffee, but my father was always a poor peasant . . . In Dembos, men lived wretchedly in
the midst of wealth. Coffee was everywhere, hugging the trees. But they stole from us in the prices, sweat was paid for with a few worthless coins. (Pepetela: *Mayombe*. 1983: p-18)

Meka, the protagonist in Ferdinand Oyono's *The Old Man and the Medal*, and the other peasants grow cocoa for export to France; In Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*, the opening of a trading post and selling of yams, marks the beginning and entrenchment of the capitalist money economy. Similarly, in Mongo Beti's *Mission to Kala*, *The Poor Christ Of Bomba* and *King Lazarus*, the production of cocoa for export marks the beginning of an international capitalist economic order, so detrimental to Africa. "Mono-culture," introduced by colonialism, made the African producer helpless in the face of capitalist maneuvers. There was little development of local industry (a trend that persists in contemporary Africa).

In *I Will Marry When I Want*, Gicaamba says:

I wouldn’t mind, son of Gathoni, If after selling away our labor, Our village benefited. But look now at this village! There is no property, there is no wealth.


Rodney writes that "roads were built to make business possible" and argues that "any catering to African interests was purely accidental." For instance, in Mongo Beti's *Remember Reuben*, the colonial road in Ekoudom is a symbolic means of the oppressive exploitation of the African. The narrator says that "the road was a world apart from ours, and it was chance alone which had made it brush against our city; it
was certainly not by any wish of ours . . . "(Beti,M..*Remember Ruben*. (Trans) Moore, Gerald. London:Heinemann,1980p-16). In Ferdinand Oyono's *The Old Man and the Medal*, the road, constructed by forced black labor, symbolizes the visible exploitative means linking Africa to Europe. Rodney notes also that the social services in colonial Africa reflected the pattern of domination and exploitation geared toward the well-being of the settlers.

In *Mayombe* the narrator says:

> You earn twenty escudos a day, for chopping down trees with an axe . . . And how much does the boss earn for each tree? A pile. What does the boss do to earn this money? Nothing, nothing . . . So, how can he earn many thousands a day and give you twenty escudos? What right has he? This is colonialist exploitation. (Pepetela: *Mayombe*. 1983: p-19)

What the narrator notes above, claims Rodney, is what resulted in the underdevelopment of Africa.

Rodney observes that the African dependency upon the European also ultimately produced neocolonial class stratification and Africans who manipulated the colonial economic structures for their own benefit. In *Mission to Kala*, the colonial authorities nominate the chief of Vimili who goes on to live an opulent life at the expense of the people:

> The colonial Administration (who had nominated him in the first place) buttered him up. In return, he obeyed their commands like a robot and knew they would not
throw him out. In the days of the forced labor gangs he had been feared by everyone because he betrayed fugitives to the authorities and acted as an informer. He used our traditional tribal hierarchy as a vehicle for his underhand intrigues, and flouted our laws and customs when he no longer needed them. (Betí: *Mission to Kala*. 1964:p-18)

Like the chief of Kala, he works in league with the colonial administrators to exploit the local society. Medza's father also becomes rich from collecting money and livestock from his insolvent debtors. He is, to Medza, an epitome of the successful grafting of western hypocrisy and commercial materialism onto a first rate African intelligence. This class of petty accumulators and the educated black people form the basis of neocolonialism. They are the progenitors of characters like Gitutu Wa Gataanguru and Kihauuha Wa Gatheera in Ngugi's *Devil on the Cross*, the corrupt civil servant, Obi Okonkwo, in Achebe's *No Longer at Ease*, the honorable M. A. Nanga "the bush politician" and the young intellectual, Odili, in Achebe's *A Man of the People*, the railway freight clerk in Armah's *The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born*, and Ahab Kioi Wa Kanoru and Ikuua Wa Ndikita in Ngugi's *I Will Marry When I Want*.

**Colonial Education**

Rodney discusses at length the role of education in producing Africans to serve the colonial system and subscribe to its values. He notes that class stratification, which leads to neocolonialism, begins with the linking of colonial education to material gain. Rodney points out that
education is crucial in any type of society for the preservation of the lives of its members and the maintenance of the social structure . . . The most crucial aspect of pre-colonial African education was its relevance to Africans in sharp contrast with that which was later introduced (that is, under colonialism) . . . .

(T)he main purpose of colonial school system was to train Africans to participate in the domination and exploitation of the continent as a whole . . . Colonial education was education for subordination, exploitation, the creation of mental confusion and the development of underdevelopment.

(Rodney, *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa*, p-263)

In *Mission to Kala*, Medza's colonial education makes him a privileged political and economic functionary in a colonial system that militates against the interests of his own people. Colonial education, therefore, creates a black elite to succeed it and perpetuate its political and economic interests in the post-independence period.

In discussing the role of colonial education, Rodney shows that the roots of neocolonialism lie in colonialism. This links African literature of the two periods because neocolonialism is the result of a historical process of class formation by colonialism. According to Colin Leys (1975),

". . . Absolutely central to neocolonialism, is the formation of classes or strata within a colony which are closely allied to and dependent on foreign capital, and which form the real basis of support for the regime which succeed the colonial administration." (Leys, Colin.. *Underdevelopment in Kenya – The Political Economy of Neo-colonialism 1964-1971*. Berkley and Los Angeles: University of California Press. 1975.p-21)
The neocolonial situation in Ngugi’s *Devil on the Cross* is a legacy and a logical consequence of the situation depicted in Beti’s *Mission to Kala*. Rodney also observes that the colonial machinery created a military elite that later became military dictators in the post-independence era. A good example is Sam, the military despot in Achebe’s *Anthills of the Savannah*.

Rodney also observes that

> the educated Africans were the most alienated Africans on the continent. At each further stage of education, they were battered and succumbed to the white capitalist system, and after being given salaries, they could then afford to sustain a style of life imported from outside . . . That further transformed their mentality."

(Rodney, *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa*, p-275)

Colonial education did more than corrupt the thinking and sensibilities of the African, it filled him/her with abnormal complexes which de-Africanized and alienated him/her from the needs of his/her environment. Colonial education has thus dispossessed and put out of the control of the African intellectual the necessary forces for directing the life and development of his/her society. The narrator in Dambudzo Marechera’s *House of Hunger*, for instance, is culturally alienated because of his Western education. In *Mission to Kala*, Medza’s role model is America. Medza cannot make decisions in relation to the needs of his society nor have a new vision relevant to African society:
Then, to make my ideas more intelligible, I decided to illustrate them with an example. I found myself (somewhat to my surprise) telling these simple people about New York . . . It was child's play to describe New York, probably because my only knowledge of it derived from the cinema.

(Beti: Mission to Kala 1964:p-65)

Colonial education taught Medza everything that is irrelevant to his African life. In Charles Mungoshi's Waiting for the Rain, Lucifer similarly feels alienated from his homeland because of his colonial education. In Song of Lawino and Song of Ocol, Okot P'Bitek laments a situation in which colonial education emasculates the emerging African elite: "my husband's house is a dark forest of books .Their manhood was finished in the classrooms, their testicles were smashed with big books." (P'Bitek, O. Song of Lawino. Song of Ocol. Harare: The College Press. 1985: 117). In Decolonizing the Mind, Ngugi observes that the lack of congruency between colonial education and Africa's reality created people abstracted from their reality. Little wonder, therefore that the negritude poets try to achieve disalienation through identification with Africa, African values and African origins. They yearn for their lost identity and the lost African heritage. Leon Dumas writes that the whites "have stolen the space that was mine." Tchicaya U'Tamsi laments that the whites have left the blacks in "a dark corner somewhere . . . gone are the forests where sung and danced the inspired priestess . . . the great Western world holds me
in fee . . . Something in me is lost forever." (Tchicaya U'Tamsi, Congolese poet, dramatist, novelist, and short story writer-www.afriucanglory.com)

**Christianity, Education, and Colonial Administrative Systems**

Rodney also analyzes the interrelationship between Christianity, colonial education, and administrative systems. In *Homecoming*, Ngugi says that to gain "acceptability and perpetuation, the colonialists enlist the services of Christianity and Christian oriented education . . . To capture the soul and the mind . . ." (*Homecoming* 1982, p-38). In Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*, the newly converted Christians renounce their traditional lifestyle, thus advancing the cause of colonialism. In Oyono's *The Old Man and the Medal*, Meka gives up his land to the priests:

> And now lived in a small wretched hut in the village which has given its name to the mission and lay at the foot of the Christian cemetery. (Oyono *The Old Man and the Medal*: 1967: p-9)

In *Houseboy*, Toundi renounces his natural father in favor of Father Gilbert, the head of the colonial church. In Beti's *The Poor Christ Of Bomba* and *King Lazarus*, father Drumont and father Le Guen respectively use Christianity to consolidate their control over the indigenous people and thus maintain the security of the oppressor.

In *I Will Marry When I Want*, Ngugi notes that:

> Religion is not the same thing as God. When the British imperialists came here in 1895,
All the missionaries of all the churches held the Bible in the left hand, and the gun in the right hand. The white man wanted us to be drunk with religion while he, in the mean time, was mapping and grabbing our land. And starting factories and businesses on our sweat.


The European exploiters, oppressors and grabbers use Christianity as a tool to explain the manifest contradictions portrayed in African literature because of the working out of broader historical forces.

Amilcar Cabral's *National Liberation and Culture,* (1980) which defines the relationship between culture and colonialism, explores the relationship between culture and social class. Cabral's analysis aids the reader's understanding of African literature by putting into its proper historical perspective the crisis of identity and its implications portrayed artistically by many African writers. Cabral defines culture as the result of economic and political activities as they appear on the ideological and idealist levels. Culture has its basis in a society's level of productive forces and in the character of the dominant mode of production. Thus, culture is the result, with more or less awakened consciousness, of economic and political activities, the more or less dynamic expression of the type of relations prevailing within that society, on the one hand between man (considered individually and collectively) and nature, on
the other hand, among individuals, groups of individuals, social strata or social classes." (Cabral, 1980: p-141)

Culture may be dynamic, but only in the sense of being a continuing record of a society's achievements and an important element in sustaining resistance to foreign domination.

**Colonialism's Destruction of Indigenous Culture**

Colonialism, however, denied Africa the right to cultural development and self expression and set up a state of siege that it justified with theories about cultural assimilation. In Oyono's *Houseboy*, colonial culture plays the role that Cabral observes above. The implications behind Toundi's question, "what are we black men who are called French?", pervade the whole novel. He asks this when he becomes aware that his "French identity", imposed on him by colonialism, identifies him with the colonial culture and values of his oppressors. In Charles Mungoshi's *Waiting for the Rain*, old Mandengu and Garabha's drums with Uncle Kuruku's ndungu become symbolic vestiges of an African culture besieged by colonialism. In Oyono's *The Old Man and the Medal*, colonialism perpetuates cultural imperialism by setting up "whiteness" and its values as a superior quality that deserves emulation. Cabral's conclusion that National Liberation is an act of culture parallels Ousmane's views in *Man and His Culture* that, in tempestuous periods like that of the anti-colonial struggle, the only artistic expression is the armed struggle. Liberation struggle to
Cabral rejects cultural domination by the foreign power by denying the culture of the oppressor. Thus, Cabral argues that the tie between a people's identity and the reproduction and maintenance of the social system of a specific set of institutions affects both culture and the people's intimate sense of selfhood.

Colonialism by "denying to the dominated people their own historical process, necessarily denies their cultural process." (Cabral: p-142) In Mongo Beti's *The Poor Christ Of Bomba* and *King Lazarus*, the structures that the colonialists introduce affect both the people's culture and their sense of selfhood. In the two novels, *Tala and Essazam* societies respectively are culturally transformed by the introduction of the capitalist cash nexus, bourgeoisie religions, and European educational systems. Oyono, in *Houseboy* and *The Old Man and the Medal*, portrays colonialism as undermining and suppressing indigenous culture and its institutions. The alternatives colonialism provides for these are schools, stores, roads and hospitals -- structures that the colonialists use to impose and consolidate their own culture on the colonized thereby altering the African culture. Cabral argues that imperialist domination "for its own security requires cultural oppression and the attempt at direct or indirect destruction of the essential elements of the culture of the dominated people" (Cabral,1980,p-142).

For most Africans (and this was particularly true for women), the colonial period was deeply frustrating, because they had little opportunity to obtain the new forms of knowledge and economic opportunity which were being introduced by
colonialism, and instead were confined to menial, poorly-paid occupations. African
frustration was compounded by the inconsistency between, on the one hand,
universalistic Christian ideals (for Christianity spread widely during the colonial
period, as did Islam) and liberal political ideas which colonialism introduced into
Africa, and, on the other hand, the discrimination and racism which marked
colonialism everywhere. This discrepancy deepened during the Second World War,
when the British and French exhorted their African subjects to provide military
service and labor for a war effort which was intended, in part, to uphold the
principle of national self-determination. Post-war Africans were well aware that
they were being denied the very rights for which they and their colonial masters had
fought.

This deepening sense of frustration and injustice set in motion the events which
would lead to national independence for most of Africa by the mid-1960s. As the
Cold War came to dominate world affairs from the late 1940s, Western Europe
worried that its restive African subjects would adopt Communism. This fear was
intensified by a series of armed revolts (most notably the Mau Mau revolt in Kenya,
but also rebellions against French rule in Algeria, Madagascar, Cameroon), and by
the rise of powerful, though non-violent nationalist movements. Persuaded that
colonialism could be preserved only through unacceptably costly military and
economic investment, more interested in the post-war reconstruction of their own
economies, and increasingly confident that a Western-educated African elite would
have little sympathy with Communism, the Europeans began to concede independence to Africans in the late 1950s, beginning with the independence of Ghana in 1957 under its charismatic president Kwame Nkrumah.

Although much of the continent was free of colonial rule by the mid-1960s, European domination of southern Africa seemed unshaken until the mid-1970s, when liberation movements in Angola and Mozambique expelled the Portuguese, paving the way for the Zimbabwe liberation struggle which triumphed finally in 1980. Nevertheless, the most brutal and implacable form of white domination in Africa -- South Africa's apartheid regime -- would survive into the 1990s. The historic election of Nelson Mandela as President of South Africa in 1994 marked not only African victory in a long and terror-filled struggle against apartheid, but also the conclusion of the struggle against white rule which dominated African history through the second half of the twentieth century. Thus the dawn of the twenty-first century would bring a new era when Africans would confront persistent economic and political stability, rapid population growth, increasing environmental degradation, and forms of external domination which continued to be exerted by Western governments and financial institutions. Their long history of achievement suggests, however, that they would find ways of overcoming these dilemmas. (Reference- Issues in African History, Professor James Giblin, Department of History, The University of Iowa)
NEOCOLONIALISM IN AFRICA

Many African nationalists and critics of colonialism see the independence gained from the withdrawing colonial powers as only partial liberation. Some call it ‘false independence’. Full or real freedom, they believe, will come with economic independence. African nations are said to be currently in a phase of neo-colonialism - a new form of imperial rule stage managed by the colonial powers to give the colonized the illusion of freedom. At the 1961 All-African People’s Conference held in Cairo neo-colonialism was defined as "the survival of the colonial system in spite of the formal recognition of political independence in emerging countries which become the victims of an indirect and subtle form of domination by political, economic, social, military or technical means."

The implication is that western powers still control African nations whose rulers are either willing puppets or involuntary subordinate of these powers. The main economic theories supporting the neo-colonialism concept come from the dependency school developed in the late 1950s by Marxist economists who initially focused on Latin America. According to them poor countries are satellites of developed nations because their economies were structured to serve international capitalism. The natural resources of the satellites are exploited for use in the centre. The means of production are owned by foreign corporations who employ various means to transfer profits out of the country rather than invest them in the local economy. So what these countries experience is the ‘development of
underdevelopment’. The unequal relations between developed and underdeveloped countries make economic progress impossible for the latter until they break economic links with international capitalism. Only by becoming socialist can they hope to develop their economies. Some theorists went further to postulate that revolution in dependent countries would not be enough because of the structure of world capitalism made any national development impossible. Only the ending of capitalism at the centre would permit underdeveloped nations to achieve development. As desirable as it would be for African nations and indeed the world to become socialist, the experiences of former Third World nations that have transformed into advanced economies, made the generalizations of the dependency school less credible in the 1990s.

A general overview of the whole situation of things on the African continent exposes a continent plagued by anguish and travails. The bad story about Africa no doubt presents to any observer a continent that is bedeviled by anomalies. This is true when one considers the instances of inter ethnic killings in various African countries, the rates of premature deaths all over, the ineluctable rate of poverty, and above all, the resignation to bad fate of the contemporary African who seems to have totally lost the will to fight against the difficulties and unpleasant situations that the reality of his existence poses to him. In the words of Uzukwu Eugene in the editorial of Bulletin of Ecumenical Theology, Vol. 12: 2000, "It is so bad that a descendant of African slaves in America thanked God for the singular favour God
bestowed on his parents and on himself by having counted his parents worthy to be slaves in America.".”

**NEO – COLONIALISM: MEANING**

*The Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English* (2000 edition) defines “neo-colonialism” as “the economic and political influence which a powerful country uses to control another country.” In the case of Africa, neo-colonialism is a system that guarantees the continuous dominance of the West over Africa even after independence. Thus, Kwame Nkrumah’s use of “fake independence” to qualify the independence granted African countries depicts the situations. In attempts to describe neo-colonialism, both Julius Nyerere of Tanzania and Sekou Toure of Guinea expressed bitter statements that reject the concept neo-colonialism. According to Julius Nyerere, neo-colonialism not only implies economic and political “domination”, but also the creation and maintenance of spheres of influence by Western capitalist powers. Hence, Nyerere warned against a “second scramble” for Africa which could be worse than that produced by the Berlin conference of 1884 - 1885. In the same vein, Sekou Toure of Guinea while denouncing France for her continuous exploitation of her former territories wrote that neo-colonialism is “the most dangerous” of “the old philosophies” now camouflaged in new forms “to justify the exploitation and oppression of underdeveloped societies such as African countries.” It is in the light of the
arguments of both Nyerere and Sekou Toure that we consider neo-colonialism as the worst form of imperialism.

**DIMENSIONS OF NEO-COLONIALISM IN AFRICA**

The tentacles of neo-colonialism present in Africa have over the years spread across all spheres of life on the African continent such that Africa is caught in the hooks from which it has continuously sought emancipation. To make the picture clearer, we shall examine the various dimensions of neo-colonial grips on African.

**POLITICAL DIMENSION OF NEO-COLONIALISM IN AFRICA**

On the attainment of independence, many African nations had thought they were free to determine independently who their leaders were to be. However, the contrary was the case as the erstwhile colonial powers did not conceive of political power in independent Africa in that way. Rather, their understanding of it was to form a stronger capturing wall, which will enable them to rule from afar. Hence, Nkrumah’s definition of neo-colonialism captures the scene in these words: Neo-colonialism is based on the principle of breaking up former large united colonial territories into a number of small, non-viable states which are incapable of independent development and must rely on the former imperial power for defense and even internal security. Nkrumah’s assertion was later re-echoed by Olusegun
Obasanjo in the following words: The withdrawing colonial power ensured that it retained the capacity to orchestrate and manipulate the decolonization process sufficiently to exclude where possible the most uncompromising, the most intransigent and the most stubborn aspiring leaders in the colonies. Nevertheless, in order to sustain their economic hold on various African countries, the Western imperialists before leaving various African countries deliberately handed over the affairs of governments to the hands of people whose loyalty could only be trusted. They in their turn had to be friendly to the same powers and run patterns of administration that would protect the interests of the powers in question. If the leadership failed to yield to such, the end was usually a removal through Western sponsored coups and political upheavals. Secondly, the imperial West exerted its neo-colonial influence on many African countries through constitutional control. The colonial leaders then in making provisions for the future decided to include clauses that sought the promotion of their interests and at the same time the division of the various ethnic groups living in the countries. Thirdly, there was the projection of conservative leaders into political offices so as to prevent any attempt of revolutionizing their various countries. Actions such as these are deliberate efforts through which holes are created in the security network of African countries and as such, they remain at the mercy of the Western neo-imperialists. Another way by which political neo-colonialism is achieved is through what is known as regional groupings of Africa. It is for this reason that African countries are members of different bodies under the leadership of their erstwhile colonial masters. For
example, Nigeria as a leading member of the Commonwealth is indirectly made to swallow the policies of Britain that she is made to see as her political mother. On a final note here is the recognition of the fact that the neo-imperialists deliberately destabilize progressive governments and replace with puppets who are “no-goods” to their people except to steal and to oppress. (Obasanjo, O. *Africa Embattled*, Ibadan, Fountain Publications, 1988.p-43) Thus, Gregory Amuluche Nnamani has this to say about these agents of Western imperialist as he expresses disgust at their attitudes. How else can one explain the mercenary attitude of most present day African rulers who impoverish their countries, siphoning money from their natural treasures to patronize foreign banks? (Nnamani, G. “*The Dialectics of Poverty and Oppression - From an African And Theology Perspective*” in Bulletin of Ecumenical Theology, Vol. 12: 2000.p-26)

**ECONOMIC DIMENSION OF NEO - COLONIALISM IN AFRICA**

The West in recognizing the need for its economy to be vital decided to apply the Machiavellian principle of “The end justifies the means.” In other words, the West is building its own economy through the deliberate and calculative destruction of economics in Africa. In so doing, their political powers are enhanced over African countries and the other third world countries. Firstly, African countries have been deliberately conditioned to the position of raw material producers only such that they do not see themselves as being economically relevant again in the world
outside the production of raw materials. When this is done, the West still determines what price they are bought from Africans. Subsequently, when the raw materials are processed, the West tells Africans the price they want to sell. Thus, African nations are not in any way determiners of prices even when issues and events relate to them particularly. Secondly, the West in subjecting the economies of African nations to its control applies the system of loans and grants. When loans are given, the usual things that accompany them are policies that have always been crippling the African systems. This was what somebody called “Loans with strings.” Due to these conditions, African countries have always met brick walls as they attempt to eliminate poverty. Again, Nnamani writes. The third world nations (that Africans are) struggle to eliminate poverty; but they are condemned to do that from a disadvantage positive of dependency and indebtedness to the West. In the same vein, P. Ujomu, wrote on the same issue in the following words: Our argument is that the IMF and some other international economic agencies and structures have contributed immensely to the failure of the state, economy and society in many African countries due to their harsh, misdirected economic interventions. Extremely painful is the fact that African countries are not able to pay their debts to the international agencies but continue to service debts and at the same time paying the salaries of those experts sent by the West to monitor the implementation of the aids given. All in foreign currencies that are far higher than those of African countries in monetary value. Olusegun Obasanjo’s reaction to such an exploitative scheme came in when he expressed that The set of experts from the IMF and the IBRI… dictated
to us that we needed to embark on import - substitution industrialization ……… and the result today has been a number of assembly plants that cannot survive of their own and have constituted a drain on our economies. A very recent invention in the neo-colonialization project is the sapping of economic builders by the West through attraction. In this situation, dynamic and prospective African economy builders are wooed over to the West and given conditions that can only benefit the West. It is for this reason that the most sought after “U.S. Green Card Lottery” must be viewed with utmost suspicion bearing in mind the fact that America is a master player in the game of “interest.” Also, in achieving its aims and objectives, the West has over the years indirectly given consent to immoral trading activities that have destroyed economies in many African countries. This experience is very glaring in warring parts of Africa where some Western business personnel buy mineral resources from rebels and warlords at prices that are far below market prices. A European dealer was quoted sometime, as having affirmed the possibility of buying diamond stone from Sierra Leonean rebels for almost next nothing. (Obasanjo, O. Africa Embattled, Ibadan, Fountain Publications, 1988.pp-56)

SOCIO–CULTURAL AND INTELLECTUAL DIMENSION

As a result of the institutionalized colonial mentality in Africa by the former colonial masters, Africans in general have been captured in thinking, such that today, majority of Africans are “artificial white men and women.” They are the ones
who cannot see any value in the traditional African system and have always sought to justify their claims and actions through the use of their neo-colonial intellects. In fact, these are the very people whose ways of life Ferdinand Okorie describes as “being packed between two cultures and thereby managing lives of contradiction.” He continues: … And this tension lies between living a life that is totally African and a life that is of Western orientation; hence the crisis of identity. (Okorie, F. “Africa: The Crisis of Authenticity” in NAPSSEC Journal of African Philosophy Vol.1, 2001) In support of the above situation, Joseph Didu Iddio wrote (NAPSSEC JOURNAL OF AFRICAN PHILOSOPHY VOL. 1, 2001p-15) that the black man had the notion of development in its real sense interlaced with the Europeans. Till date, the phenomenon has created an obstacle to the expansion of the African philosophy whereby African scholars today are either not able to write in their native languages or able to translate fully their thoughts into the foreign languages they have decided to write in. Thus, the problem of language lingers on. To worsen the whole situation, the West has succeeded in giving out the particular yardstick for measuring the authenticity of anything from Africa. In other words, a thing is only good in so far as it tallies with the standard set by the West. The implication of this is that Africa is not able to see anything good coming from its within and thus, the application of the Biblical assertion of “Nothing good can come out of Nazareth.” It is in this light that some Western philosophers have till date rejected any proposition of an African philosophy existing. In their words “Philosophy must be scientific” and in any case, African philosophy is not scientific. The problem simply is that to
these scholars, the scientificity of any philosophy must meet the standard of the West. In my own opinion, if there is no philosophy in Africa, Africans then must have been fooling themselves down through the ages and in which cases, those claims of Africa’s ancient glories are better thrown off. Also, the educational systems run by most African countries are the designs of the Western erstwhile colonial powers whose aim is to make possible the training of individuals who will end up defending the values and ideologies of the West even at the expense of African values and interests. While the Western powers on getting to Africa in the pre-colonial days considered it fine and fitting to describe Africans as barbarians and uncivilized people simply because they met some of our forefathers covering their private parts alone, the tide has however changed with the culture of nudity which is prevalent in the West and which is largely being imitated by many a contemporary African. Hence, nudity becomes to us the way of showing “we are in town.” Like the above not being enough, the West continues to send into the African entertainment industries those pictures and movies that advertise the prevailing culture of violence thereby making Africans consume raw violence as lived in the West. The effects of this are always of the African scene, violence!

**EFFECTS OF NEO-COLONIALISM ON AFRICA**

Our effort here shall be geared towards analyzing the adverse effects of neo-colonialism on the African continent. First, the political dimension of neo-
colonialism has succeeded in giving Africa many a merciless and corrupt leader. A relevant example is the role of Belgium in the crisis of the Republic of Congo and which produced the late despot and dictator Mobutu Sese Seko. Since these leaders got hold of power through the support of the West, necessary also has it always been that they dance to the tune (of the music) of the neo-colonialists. In so doing, corruption and state protected violence have always become the orders of the day in their respective countries. Hence, Francis Ogunmodede’s recognition of good leadership in the task of development spells out the implication of bad leadership. He says:

… The realization of human development and, consequently, of welfare is not possible if it lacks good leadership. The problem of underdevelopment in Africa is due to the absence of good leadership, or the right type of leadership. As long political leaders do not consider political power as a means to render service to the people, then African societies will continue to be to their own people a hell on earth. On the other hand, those leaders who were not positioned into political offices by the West have increasingly been dictatorial in trying to be security conscious especially as they see the hands of the West on the wall. In the end, focus is lost and political opponents suffer unjustly. (Ogunmodede, F. “Awolowo’s Contributions to African Literature” West African Journal of Philosophical Studies Vol. 4, December, 2001.p-48)

Ready examples are Muammar Gadafi of Libya and Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe. To leaders such as these, power must be secured by all means irrespective of whose ox is gored. Undeniable too is the fact that the various clauses included in the independence constitution of many African nations have been largely responsible
for the intra-ethnic disunity in many African countries. For example, it has become quite difficult to have a peaceful Nigeria since independence, as there has been a constitutional supportive provision for the “Northern Nigeria” which the British favoured extensively in the independence constitution. Thus, the need to protest by the other sections of the country. In the economic sphere, poverty has been on the increase in Africa. With African’s share of world trade being less than 1%, a greater percentage of Africans have got to live on less than one U.S. dollar per day. Africans are no longer able to meet the basic necessities of life, which prior to the coming of the whites had never been lacking. As a result of this, there is crime on the increase coupled with a high rate in mortality. While Africans continue to work under the harshest conditions, they are not able to show anything for their labours in producing raw materials. Under the same condition, an average African having lost the will to fight on almost concludes, “life is not worth living.” Since it has extremely become difficult for the African to feed himself as a result of neo-colonial impositions, it has in the same vein been very difficult to think along the same line with the rest of the world that considers scientific advancement as the most important priority of the age. Accordingly, Africans now wallow in intellectual ignorance, which to an enlightened mind is about the worst condition a man can be placed in, especially in our time. It was in towing this line that Aylward Shorter gave a vivid description of the vicious circle of poverty in Africa. According to him, Poverty, ignorance and diseases form a vicious circle in Africa. Not only is poverty a cause of disease, but disease is a cause of poverty, because it reduces the size and
effectiveness of the labour force. Not only is ignorance a cause of disease, but
disease is a cause of ignorance, because inadequate school performance is related to
the ill health of school children. Not only is poverty a cause of ignorance, but
ignorance is a cause of poverty, because it deprives people of the knowledge and
skills they require for making a living. To the above, Shorter called the attention of
everyone to the emergence of an underclass in Africa and this he called “the
alternative Africa” which is made up of street children and street people, hawkers,
street vendors, beggars, criminals, drug-pushers, prostitutes, and all those who
make a living on the streets. To buttress our point on the role of the West, Gregory
Nnamani’s affirmation that anthropological poverty is known to have been caused
by imperialism, colonialism and slavery becomes a reference point. As to the other
dimensions of neo-colonialism in Africa, Africans have today become “deluded
hybrids” who cannot recognize themselves again and thus are engulfed in the
“problem of identity.” A good example of this is the case of many Nigerians who
following the attacks of the twin-tower in America on September 11, 2002 by
terrorists, ignorantly went about with the American flag made into headscarf and
handkerchiefs. I am sure if the Nigeria’s “green - white- green” had been suggested
for such, it would have met a total rejection. It is to people such as the above that
Olusegun Obasanjo addressed in the following words:

We strongly imitate the West and thus become holier
than the Pope. African things are regarded and described
as native, primitive and unworthy. We develop tastes for
what we do not produce and become enslaved by our
tastes and desires. To secure the seal of approval we try
to outdo the Europeans to become cultured, civilized and
accepted. We even take pride in speaking their
languages better than they do while we cannot
communicate enough in our mother tongues…. As a
result of the “problem of identity”, it is important that
we note here that the African has lost the focus of
existence and finds it quite difficult to apply his
potentialities in developing the very world around
him.(Obasanjo, O. *Africa Embattled*.Ibadan, Fountain
Publications, 1988.p-76)

In the words of Pantaleon Iroegbu, “The three ‘Cs’ that have rendered Africa non-
African; Colonization, Civilization and Christianization are in full force against the
authenticity and autonomy of Africa and its people.” If these be true, one then may
not be wrong in proclaiming the death of Africa since almost all Africans have
encountered them.

**GLOBALISATION AND ITS NEGATIVE IMPACT ON AFRICA**

Globalisation refers to the process of the intensification of economic, political,
social and cultural relations across international boundaries. It is principally
aimed at the transcendental homogenization of political and socio-economic
theory across the globe. It is equally aimed at “making global being present
worldwide at the world stage or global arena”. It deals with the “increasing
breakdown of trade barriers and the increasing integration of World market
(Fafowora, O.O. “*Management Imperatives of Globalisation*”, Management in
Globalisation can be seen as an evolution which is systematically restructuring interactive phases among nations by breaking down barriers in the areas of culture, commerce, communication and several other fields of endeavor. (Ohuabunwa, Mazi S.I. “The Challenges of Globalisation to the Nigerian Industrial Sector” Nigerian Tribune, December 14, 1999: p-20)

Problems of Globalisation and Consequences for the States in Africa

Even though, globalisation is a positive or powerful force for the improved material well-being of humankind, that would aid developing countries to “create better economic environments”, to “leapfrog” into the information age; improve their access to technology; speed development and enhance global harmony”, its effects on the political, economic, social and cultural nerves of the weaker member states cannot be ignored without severe consequences. In other words, the seeming near-consensus on the agenda of globalisation notwithstanding, the unrelenting encouragement of its “uneven thesis” does not give room for comfort as, it is exorbitantly costly to the developing nations. This is particularly so in that, globalisation affects developmental thinking and actions of the developing polities; relegates ethical equity and social concerns behind market consideration and reduces the autonomy of the independence states. According to Ohiorhenuan, it
challenges the mediative role of the state vis-à-vis external pressures. It threatens the discretion of the state everywhere (Ohiorhenuan, J.F.E. 1998. “The South in an era of globalisation” in: Cooperation South, No. 2, pp. 6-15.) Not only this, according to Tandon, globalisation encourages “decreasing National control and increasing control over the (Internal) economy (of the state) by outside players. In fact, the gospel of globalisation through its economic liberalism “has been elevated to the position of absolute truth, a sort of pen see unique (or single theory) against which there is no credible alternative” (Tandon, Y. (1998a). “Globalisation and Africa Options” (Part One) in AAPS NEWSLETTER, Harare” African Association of Political Science, Vol. 3, No. 1 January- April.p-22) Indeed, globalisation is an awesome and terrifying phenomenon for African countries.

Concretely put, the planetary phenomenon of globalisation is nothing but a new order of marginalisation of the African continent. Its universalization of communication, mass production, market exchanges and redistribution, rather than engendering new ideas and developmental orientation in Africa, subverts its autonomy and powers of self-determination. It is rather by design than by accident that poverty has become a major institution in Africa despite this continent’s stupendous resources. Indeed, the developing countries/world burden of external debt has reached two trillion dollars (World Bank, 1994). In the process, it has enlivened the venomous potency of mass poverty and, its accompanying multidimensional depravity of the citizenry of all the requisite essence of
meaningful living. It has disintegrated or disarticulated the industrial sector of most, if not all polities in Africa. This has been particularly evident in the areas of cost of production which has become uncomfortably high in most of the developing countries (e.g. Nigeria); also in the lack of government’s incentives to encourage local production; subversion of local products through high importation, currency devaluation; and depletion of foreign reserves. This clearly raises the problems of marginalization which, according to Ake is, in reality, the dynamics of under development - the development of under development by the agents of development. (Ake, C. *Democracy and Development in Africa*, New York: Brookings Institution 1996: p-114),

Nation-states in Africa today, rarely define the rules and regulations of their economy, production, credits and exchanges of goods and services due to the rampaging menace of globalisation. They are hardly now capable of volitionally managing their political, economic and socio-cultural development. Globalisation It has imposed heavy constraints on the internal management dynamics of most if not all the polities in Africa (e.g., Nigeria) where the government now finds it difficulty in most cases to meet the genuine demands of the governed on many issues of national urgency (e.g., the June 1st, 2000, 50% hike in the prices of petroleum and related products and its attendant crippling national strike by the Nigerian workers). The reality in Nigeria today, as it is for most African nations, is that globalisation has made it immensely difficult for governments to provide social insurance - one of
their central functions and one that has helped many developed nations to maintain social cohesion and domestic political support. Trends like this have been largely dictated by the asymmetry of powers that accompany globalisation (i.e., inequality in the status of the members of the “villagized world” and, their inability to resist imposed policy options). In fact, this asymmetry which is undergirded by a system of production where capital rules has been clearly amplified by Madunagu when he claimed that:

the result of globalisation in Africa, is basically a competition between the palatial centres (Developed World) and the slums (Africa) of the village where a preponderant majority of the people daily sink deeper into poverty and misery.( Madunagu, E (1999) “Globalisation and its victims” Guardian (July 26) P-53.)

Consequently, its (globalisation) ideology of “free-market liberalism and property-based democracy remains a continuous licence for cultural imperialism and, the institutionalisation of both political and economic domination and exploitation of the weaker partners (i.e. the developing economies) through their internal agents (Tandon ,1998A: p-12).

This imperialistic cultural dimension of globalisation, particularly in the area of “internet connectivity” which has often been used as a bait for luring Africa and other developing polities into the villagized world, has recently been put into perspective thus:
The world is gradually moving in a unidirectional manner and, the tendency towards uniformity has never been so appealing as it is now.... Consequently, there is a serious concern that nations like Nigeria whose contributions to the internet pool is low may lose their identity (Otokhine, Otokhine, E. (2000): Internet Strengthens Cultural Imperialism” The Comet, August 23, P. 21).

According to this perspective, if this trend continues:

A sort of cultural imperialism which will seek to enslave the African mind, leaving in its wake a cultureless or culturally disoriented people (may become a permanent feature of Africa and or people. (Ibid).

This fear has been greatly highlighted by the effects which Internet use already has on the language of most polities of the world according to the survey of the global reach diagrammatically.

Looking at the foregoing, it is apparent that, the globalisation process is more symmetrical to the “origin and development of the neo-colonial states (in Africa)” which were “determined by the nature and structures of the colonising countries” (Akindele, 1990, Adebo and Akindele, 1990) rather than according to a concretely established philosophy or determination to get Africa out of lingering crises. Thus, globalisation is a form of entrapment for Africa. Apart from its evocation of powerlessness already analysed, it creates a process through which the “poor countries (in Africa) are dominated and exploited by the rich countries and, a vicious circle of vulnerability of African governments” to outside parasitic economic maneuvering as does the lack of capacity for independence of socio-

Unless, as earlier stated, its one-arm banditry is understood, concretely discerned and checkmated, globalisation will lead Africa to “increased penury”. This can be better understood in the context of the fact that, the “heavy burden of foreign debt has greatly eroded their capacity to run their own affairs and respond to the demands of the people” (South African Political and Economic Monthly, Volume 9, No 91996: p-2). This unwholesome development has created a legitimacy crisis for most African governments and turned the African continent into an Empire of Chaos.

Generally, globalisation has become a “threat to the poor rather than an opportunity for global action to eradicate poverty” (Obadina, T. “Globalisation, Human Rights and Development”, Africa Today (October) 1998:p-32). Arguing further, Obadina contends that the “concept of absolute freedom that underlies the rationale for globalisation is the same notion” used to justify slavery and colonisation. It is equally anchored on the “belief that the strong, however defined, should be free to exercise their strength without moral or legal limitations that protect the weak”. (Obadina 1999:p-33) Thus, it is distinct from positive freedom which states that:

People should be free as long as they do not deny the rights and freedom of others. People should not be at liberty to deny others freedom and basic rights. There
must be limits on freedom otherwise the liberty of the powerful becomes the oppression of the weak (Obadina 1999: p-32).

Given the foregoing, Obadina (Ibid), argued that the free-market undertone of globalisation is anchored in “greed and ethos of winner takes all” and a “beggar their neighbour” philosophy irrespective of its seeming moral terms of freedom and, this, in itself, has increased the debt burden of most countries in Africa. He summed his position thus:

Western relations with (the) undeveloped countries are not predicated on a desire to eradicate mass poverty but on the penchant to impose the free-market system founded on the notion of absolute freedom (Ibid).

The foregoing is even more absurd given the fact that, these same western nations that are clamouring for respect for human rights and fundamental freedom are at the same time pushing for globalisation and economic policies that encourage the abuse of these rights including the denial of the right to economic equality. The predicaments of the people of the Niger Delta (particularly Ogoni people) in Nigeria offer a case in point.

These predicaments are explicable within the context of the (deliberate) inability of the Nigerian government to equitably protect the interests and environment of the people of the Niger Delta particularly the oppressed Ogoni people from the rapaciousness of the forces of globalisation (ably represented by the multinational oil companies).
This is evident from the fact that oil exploration has negatively affected the environment of the Niger Delta and, the Ogoni people in particular, leading to a worsening socio-economic situation for the people. In fact, more than 2 million barrels of oil are explored from the Niger Delta daily (Human Rights Watch, 1999).

Concretely put, despite the immense contributions of the Niger Delta (particularly the Ogoni people) to the fiscal basis of the Nigerian State as well as to global capital, the area remains basically underdeveloped due to deliberate neglect and eclipsing from the rational policy agenda of the Nigerian State. The area continuously lacks basic infrastructural facilities such as good roads, schools, electricity, communications, hospitals and so on. In addition, oil spills have drastically affected the supply of potable water, leading to the high prevalence of water-borne diseases. Also, the impact of the exploratory and extractive activities of these global forces – Shell whose operation in Nigeria alone accounts for 14% of its total global operations, Mobil Agrip, Cheveron, Texaco, Total, etc. – have basically affected the social organization of the Ogoni people and the Niger Delta in general.

A manifestation of these negative impacts is the replacement of the traditional economy that was founded on fishing, farming and hunting for economic sustenance with a petrol-dollar economy. Thus, as the World Bank (1995) noted, the impact of oil exploration in the Niger Delta Area (particularly in the Ogoni Communities) by the forces of globalisation has decreased agricultural productivity and fishing in the
areas, leading to the prevalence of poverty which was put above the national average.

The attempts by the people of the Niger Delta and, the Ogoni people to challenge the inhuman and mindless capitalistic wastage of their marine life and environment through series of mass protests and attacks on the forces of globalisation have been smothered by the Nigerian State using the instruments of coercion, repression, intimidation and unjustifiable killing of the leaders of the oppressed. The unnecessary and avoidable supreme price through hanging which Kenule saro-wiwa and eight other Ogoni Environmentalists were made to pay in 1995 offers a useful explanation of the predicaments under reference here. These inhuman measures were embarked upon ostensibly to continuously generate capital for developing needs, debts (re)negotiation and, to ensure that the process of capital accumulation is not altered against neo-colonial compradors. These developments have created renewed determination by the people to prevent further degradation of their eco-system hence, the constant conflicts between them and the Nigerian State on the one hand and, the multinational oil companies on the other hand. These conflicts and the predicaments of the Ogoni people continue to persist because the Niger Delta and its resources (oil) are significant to the existence of the Nigerian Nation and its economy. Oil has become and, largely remains the mainstay of the Nigerian economy, accounting for 25% of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP), 90% of foreign exchange earnings and more than 70% of budgetary expenditure. It (oil) is
the most strategic commodity on which Nigeria’s attempts at industrial capitalist development is dependent hence, the Nigerian State found it difficult to lose the resources to such agitations regardless of their rationality.

The determination of the Nigerian State to maintain the status quo in this regard, despite its accompanying problems of legitimation occasioned by domestic crises, depicts its renter status and, relegation to the sphere of dependence on collection of - (externally realized) – oil rents for reproduction rather engaging in productive service(s) (Obi, 1997). It equally depicts the continuous rapaciousness of the forces of globalisation in their quest for the critical needs - (e.g. oil) - of the G8 Countries in the Ogoni area of the Nigerian polity. Indeed, the dominance of the forces of globalisation in the Niger Delta areas of Nigeria accounts for the incidence of mass pauperisation in the midst of affluence.

There is no doubt that globalisation has “created a vast chasm between the North and the South” (Tandon 1998 op cit. 3). This is particularly identifiable from the UNDP’s Human Development Report of 1996 contains the fact that:

the gap in per capital income between the industrial and developing worlds tripled from $5,700 in 1960 to $15,400 in 1993 (UNDP, 1996:p-2).

This shows that Africa has a plethora of problems particularly in the areas of industrial and economic growth which her continuous “unequal-partnership status” in a villagized world would further worsen. As Mule once stated:
the most obvious (of these problems) are the low incomes on the continent with the GDP per capita of only US315 and with declining service sector contribution rates from around 20% GDP to 15% of GDP. These are accompanied by declining government revenues. The low average per capital income levels are further exacerbated by very high income inequalities comparable to, or even worse than those of Latin America. There are high incidence of social exclusion.... Africa is also marginalized globally, with it contribution to world trade amounting to less than two percent ... Africa is also highly aid - dependent with aid accounting for nine percent of GNP on average for all countries.... These are also problems of governance ... on the political and Economic management fronts. (Mule, 2000: p-8)

Without any gainsaying, Africa is the hardest hit continent by the rapaciousness of globalisation. Ironically, the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) put before the American Senate by President Bill Clinton in 1998 which was passed into law in May, 2000, and, the Multilateral Agreement on Investment (MAI) of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Developments (OECDS) are part of the instruments put in place by the West to further deplete whatever is left of Africa’s resources. These are devices to “roll-back whatever gains the third world counties were able to make at the economic level during the cold war years” (Tandon, 1998A: 5). In fact, both the AGOA and MAI are traps aimed at foisting-without much conscious resistance by the victims of the so-called “global constitution” - a “global economy” on Africa and other developing economies. This constitution, argued Obadina (1998 op. cit.: p-32), allows the powerful international corporations unfettered freedom to operate anywhere around the globe without any
limitation by the policies of host nations irrespective of the consequences of their operation to the interests of the host nations.

It should be particularly noted however, that, the advocates (western nations) of globalisation are hypocritical in their approach giving the fact that:

the Western Nations pressing the poor nations to open their doors to the free-market are advocating policies they did not follow. (The) governments of virtually all developed nations gave their agricultural and industrial producers some level of protection at crucial stages of their economic development. But today’s Western leaders conveniently forget economic history (Ibid: p-33).

The foregoing is further corroborated by the fact that:

the same globalisation process that champions the eradication of the great divide between the East and West is negating the dissolution of the North-South divide (CASS in Guardian: 1999.p-14).

It could be reasonably argued that, this explains why the officials of the instruments - (the World Bank and IMF; and also the WTO and the G8) - of globalisation cannot see or have chosen not to see any “connection between globalisation and Africa’s poverty” (Tandon, 1998A: 5). This ideological blind spot aided by the “uneven thesis of globalisation” is very consequential to Africans and Africa’s development because:

the consequence of the ideological blindspot and the refusal (by the instruments of globalisation) to accept the evidence of history is that whilst capital-led
globalisation is at the root of Africa’s crisis, it is also miraculously suggested as its solution (Ibid).

This has promoted the argument that, globalisation has damaged Africa’s natural environment and, on balance of costs and benefits, it has been a disaster for Africa both in human and material resources (Ibid) The reasons for this are not far-fetched looking at the UNDP’s Human Development Report of 1996 (Ibid), which contains among other revelations the fact that:

- twenty countries in Africa (today) have per capital income lower than 20 years ago. Two-thirds of the least Developed Countries (LDCs) are in Africa. A food-surplus continent twenty years ago, Africa is now food-deficit (UNDP-HDR 1996:p-2).

The striking points that emerge from the foregoing are that globalisation through its “heavy constraints” is changing the way in which major institutional actors think and operate across nations and within nations. Globalisation is changing the determinism of the state: its actions and inactions; what firms and people do; where they do it, how they see themselves (their identity) and what they want (their preferences). Moreover, its accompanying financial transactions’ increasing volume and their decreasing costs as well as reduction in public sector expenditure have put strong competitive pressures on the governments worldwide to reduce their role in the determination of who gets what, when, where, how, and why - particularly as it affects the delivery of public goods within the political system. This is especially disturbing in Africa which, according to Thorbecke, “is the only developing region

Africa governments (now) seem to have lost control of the policy making process, and are under pressure to accept dictation from creditor nations and financial institutions. (African) governments now tend to discuss development issues less with their own nationals, and more with donors and creditors, about debt repayment, debt relief and rescheduling, and paradoxically about more development assistance (which rather than develop them further their underdevelopment and dependent.