CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION
Since the term ‘colonialism’ is related to the word ‘colony’, it is generally seen in connection with the political developments of the colonized regions. But its effect and influence are much broader and more widespread than its mere political implications. Colonialism has not only influenced history, politics and literature, but also the culture and identity of the countries that were colonized. However, it has also impacted the colonizers to a certain extent. According to the *Oxford English Dictionary* (OED), colonialism is “the policy or practice of acquiring full or partial political control over another country, occupying it with settlers, and exploiting it economically” (qtd. in Loomba 7). The word ‘colonialism’ comes from the “Roman ‘colonia’ which meant ‘farm’ or ‘settlement’, and referred to Romans who settled in other lands but still retained their citizenship” (Loomba 7). It is described as:

- a settlement in a new country… a body of people who settled in a new locality, forming a community subject to or connected with their parent state;
- the community so formed, consisting of the original settlers and their descendants and successors, as long as the connection with the parent state is kept up. (qtd. in Loomba 7)

The invasion of colonial powers changed the fabric of cultural ethics and influenced the religious beliefs of the native people, as these colonial powers portrayed themselves as god-like figures and thus superior to the people of these colonies. The domination over other people’s culture, land and wealth turned out to be one of the major characteristics of colonialism.

The powerful countries first entered the less powerful countries, controlled their societies, used their resources and transported their wealth to their motherlands to enrich their wealth and power, and show their dominance to the socio-cultural settings of the natives. Osterhammel gives the following definition of colonialism:

- Colonialism is a relationship between an indigenous (or forcibly imported) majority and a minority of foreign invaders. The fundamental decisions affecting the lives of the colonized people are made and implemented by the colonial rulers in pursuit of interests that are often defined in a distant metropolis. Rejecting cultural compromises with the colonized population, the colonizers are convinced of their own superiority and their ordained mandate to rule. (16)

Ronald Horvath states, “…it seems generally, if not universally, agreed that
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Introduction

Colonialism is a form of domination – the control by individuals or groups over the territory and/or behavior of other individuals or groups” (47). Colonizers not only imposed their cultures, customs and religions on the natives, but also exploited them at various levels including biased trade relations, exploitation of their natural resources and properties and extensive practice of slave trade. Albert Memmi in his book *The Colonizer and the Colonized*, defines the colonizer as a person who enforces his culture, socio-economic and educational systems on another in total ignorance of the latter’s culture. In the process of colonization the colonizer becomes “an illegitimately privileged usurper” (Memmi 9).

This study shall mainly focus on Africa and the Indian sub-continent as they share a history of colonial dominance and cultural struggle against that dominance in one form or the other. The all-pervasive colonial rules practiced different forms of repressions and sought to modify the socio-cultural fabric of the colonized societies to suit the perceptions, needs and requirements of the colonizers. Efforts were made at establishing cultural hegemony to prove the superiority of the cultures and the way of life of these masters with a view to carve resistance and achieve willing subjugation of the colonies. But it gradually generated resentment and defiance at various levels, social as well as cultural. One of the main reasons for such cultural resistance was to maintain the cultural ethics and cultural purity of the native soils. In his book *The Wretched of the Earth* Frantz Fanon primarily talks about the need of reclaiming one’s own past that was exploited by the colonizers when they invaded native lands. The resentment was at times expressed as overt political action against the colonial dominance; but even when it was not so apparent, it worked as an undercurrent that helped in the growth of the social consciousness among the colonized communities.

The process of colonization also helped in the emergence of a separate class of natives who were employed and utilized as pawns of colonial masters and helped them administer the colonies according to their desires and interests. This section of people developed the feeling in them that they were somehow superior to the people of their native lands and belonged to a higher class, as they could speak the languages of the colonizers. Fanon in his book *Black Skin White Masks* points out that this section of the colonized people felt being “elevated above his jungle status in proportion to his adoption of the mother country’s cultural standards” (9). He further illustrates the colonized mindset of this class in the following example:
He becomes whiter as he renounces his blackness, his jungle. In the French colonial army, and particularly in the Senegalese regiments, the black officers serve first of all as interpreters. They are used to convey the master’s orders to their fellows, and they too enjoy a certain position of honor. (9)

This certain position and honor worked as an undercurrent that helped in the burial of the local cultural originality to make the languages and cultures of the colonizers essential parts of the way of life of this newly emerged class of the natives. In Indian sub-continent, especially in Bengal, a ‘babu’ class was created that replaced its own cultural ethnicity and language with that of the colonizers and considered themselves as the cultural elites in their societies. They believed in their superiority to the other members of their societies as they could speak the colonizer’s language and communicate better with them. They accepted alien cultures and practices of the colonial rulers as fundamental parts of their lives out of these beliefs.

Colonizers have always used language and literature in terms of religion, culture and politics, as very effective devices to expedite the process of ‘colonization’. Edward Said’s *Orientalism* expands the scope of the postcolonial studies by questioning the Eurocentric universalism that attempts to establish the Western superiority over the East. Said observes and illustrates that the East is treated as the ‘Other’ in the hegemonic discourse of Orientalism. The Orient, according to Edward Said, features in Western mind as a “sort of surrogate and underground self” (3). He further observes that the Orient is characterized by qualities such as, decadence, laziness, stupidity, sensuality and effeminacy by the Orientalist, which they think, are contrary to the qualities the Occident possesses. The people in the East are seen as homogeneous and monolithic. The individual differences and the unique traits of different peoples in the East are not recognized. Said also points out that orientalists have tried to exoticize the Orient. Many postcolonial and modern critics also reiterate Said’s observation. For example, Krishnaswamy, Varghese and Mishra continue to reaffirm Said’s legacy and point out how the West has recurrently pictured the Orient as “exotic and mystical with magic, maharajas and snake charmers” (91).

The colonized people were projected as subordinate others in all forms of writing and records, produced by the Europeans. Be it knowledge, wisdom, science, technology, literary criticism or modernization, they are all projected as universal. But actually, such projections are largely Eurocentric, because all of these are based on
White Eurocentric norms and their practices. “The critical questioning and rejection of this norm of universalism mark the beginning of ’post-colonial’ criticism” (Krishnaswamy, Varghese and Mishra 91).

Postcolonial studies interpret the relationship between the occidental countries and their colonies from a different point of view that is not influenced by the Eurocentric perspective of the colonies. Young is of the view that, … postcolonialism offers you a way of seeing things differently, a language and a politics in which your interests come first, not last.

Postcolonialism claims the right of all people on this earth to the same material and cultural well-being. The reality, though, is that the world today is a world of inequality, and much of the difference falls across the broad division between people of the west and those of the non-west. This division between the rest and the west was made fairly absolute in the 19th century by the expansion of the European empires, as a result of which nine-tenths of the entire land surface of the globe was controlled by European, or European-derived, powers. Colonial and imperial rule was legitimized by anthropological theories which increasingly portrayed the peoples of the colonized world as inferior, childlike, or feminine, incapable of looking after themselves (despite having done so perfectly well for millennia) and requiring the paternal rule of the west for their own best interests. The basis of such anthropological theories was the concept of race. In simple terms, the west/non-west relation was thought of in terms of whites versus the non-white races. White culture was (and remains) the basis for ideas of legitimate government, law, economics, science, language, music, art, literature – in a word, civilization. (2)

M. H. Abrams defined colonial and postcolonial studies as “The critical analysis of the history, culture, literature, and modes of discourse that are specific to the former colonies of England, Spain, France, and other European imperial powers” (236). The geopolitical regions where such studies focus and emphasize at length are mainly the African and Asian territories. But the study of South America and the Caribbean islands cannot be neglected when it comes to colonial and postcolonial analysis. Abrams further mentions some researchers who:
extend the scope of such analysis also to the discourse and cultural productions of such countries as Australia, Canada, and New Zealand, which achieved independence much earlier than the Third World countries. Postcolonial studies sometimes encompass also aspects of British literature in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, viewed through a perspective that reveals the extent to which the social and economic life represented in the literature was tacitly underwritten by colonial exploitation. (236)

Postcolonialism as a critique was developed during the late 1980s. Postcolonial studies analyze the impact of colonial rules after the colonial countries got independence from the colonial powers. The clash of cultures and identity crisis were some of the major problems the ex-colonies had to grapple with as residues of the colonial periods. As mentioned earlier, when colonizers came to these countries, they not only captured their lands but also influenced and changed major parts of native traditional practices and cultural identities. They considered native cultures and identities as inferior ones and constantly substituted them with that of their own. The effect of such changes became a huge challenge when these countries got independence, as many native people felt the immediate urge to regain their lost cultures and traditions. But they could not get rid of the Western way of life all of a sudden. They were neither able to go back to the cultural ethics and purity of the time before the advent of colonial powers, nor could they manage to create and develop a completely new political and cultural ethos to replace the legacy of the colonizers.

Although both Africa and the Indian-subcontinent experienced these imbalanced and hegemonic relationships between colonial rulers and indigenous people of these colonies, the colonial relationships were more complex than they appeared. McLeod in his introduction to *The Routledge Companion to Postcolonial Studies* points out that both ‘colonizers’ and the ‘colonized’ were products of colonial establishment and they shared, “*new kinds of identities, inseparable from each other…*” (3). The aspects of colonialism were quite varied and diverse from one region to another, but certainly colonialism “locked the original inhabitants and the newcomers into the most complex and traumatic relationships in human history” (Loomba 7-8) everywhere.
A Brief History of Colonization in Africa:

Establishment of colonies in Africa was driven by European hunger for African resources. The slave trade was not new to Africa when European imperial powers entered this land. Africans sold other Africans as slaves to the Arabs for centuries. The slave trade between Africa and Europe started in the 16th century. In this century, African slaves were transported to Europe across the Atlantic. The Portuguese started exploring the African coast in the 15th century for natural resources. They reached the river Congo in 1445. In the 16th century, the Portuguese established their first colonies in Angola and Mozambique while the Dutch founded a colony in South Africa in 1652 (Lambert, “A Brief History of Africa”). While Europeans and Africans had established associations in a variety of settings for centuries, the eighteenth century scripts a major turning point in European approaches toward Africa. It marks the beginning of the real colonial period in African history. Many European nations wanted to stop slave trade by the 19th century. For instance, Britain banned slave trade in 1807 (Walvin). On the contrary, most of the African continent was colonized by the late 19th century. Following are some of the historical facts of colonization from this period. England took over the Dutch colony in South Africa in 1814. 1830 witnessed the French invasion in north Algeria. Germans captured Namibia, Togo and Cameroon in 1884 and Tanzania in 1885. The Democratic Republic of Congo was colonized by Belgium in 1885. In 1912, the French colonial power captured Morocco before invading Madagascar in 1896. Also, in 1912 Italy took control of Libya. The British Empire controlled Zimbabwe, Zambia, Malawi, Uganda, Egypt and Kenya in the early 20th century (Lambert, “A Brief History of Africa”).

The Western colonial powers colonized the majority of the African countries, except Liberia and Ethiopia by the early 20th century. Seven Western countries—France, Britain, Portugal, Germany, Belgium, Italy and Spain, had colonized much of African continent by 1900 (Iweriebor). Britain ruled the largest part of this continent—from Cairo to Cape Town. Britain implemented the “divide and rule” strategy to help maintain British rule in these colonies by manipulating the cultural, ethnic and linguistic differences between the peoples of different parts of Africa, especially the northern and the southern part of it. The French ruled the Western and Eastern part of
Africa, including Madagascar. The Belgian colonizers controlled the Congo region, Rwanda and Urundi. The history of the European colonization in the Congo region is considered by many critics as a bloody mark in the African history. The Congo was a region of rich natural resources and it attracted the attention of King Leopold II of Belgium. He spotted the Congo basin in the central Africa as “a slice of this magnificent African cake” in 1875 (qtd. in Ewans 168). However, the king gained international recognition of this colony in 1885, which was “some eighty times the size of Belgium” (Ewans 168). Much of the native culture was destroyed and millions of Congolese people were killed by Belgian colonial rulers. According to historian Adam Hochschild, the “killing in the Congo was of genocidal proportion” (2). Hands of those Congolese who refused to comply with the rubber harvesting demands, were cut off (Hochschild 215). All the other men were forced to work as slaves to maximize the rubber harvest. The women of this region were raped and otherwise brutalized. Approximately eight to ten million Africans died by 1920 as victims of King Leopold’s ‘rubber-terror’ (Lezer). Many of such atrocities in African territory found their direct or indirect references in the colonial and postcolonial writings from this region.

After the implementation of the British anti-slavery policy, the trading of palm oil (a treasured native product) was given priority to replace the dependency on revenue, earned from the slave trade in this region. However, The British government started undertaking a more direct participation in the administration and governance of its secured lands in Africa from 1849. The British imperial power started the process of colonization of Nigeria in approximately 1850 and it was accomplished by nearly 1905. Representatives of British trading companies used the means of negotiation to stop slave trade in this territory initially, but afterwards armed forces were slowly introduced to colonize this region.

A consul, based in Fernando Po, is appointed to take responsibility for the Bights of Biafra and Benin. He undertakes direct negotiations with the king of Lagos, the principal port from which slaves are shipped. When these break down, in 1851, Lagos is attacked and captured by a British force. (“History of Nigeria”)

This scripts the first direct involvement of the British government in the administration and governance of Nigeria from 1851. The British colonial power
replaced the king of Lagos with another member from the same royal family. The new king promised to discontinue slave trade and stop human sacrifice, which was in practice in this region before colonial invasion. But Lagos was occupied in 1861 by the British force under the pretext that the new Lagos king and his successor utterly failed to abolish the existing slave trade and human sacrifice from native social setup. It was eventually declared a British colony.

The second half of the 19th century witnessed the measured merging of British commercial affairs and direct British governmental control in this region in one unified body.

In 1879, George Goldie persuades the British trading enterprises on the Niger to merge their interests in a single United African Company, later granted a charter as the Royal Niger Company.

In 1893 the delta region is organized as the Niger Coast Protectorate. In 1897 the campaign against unacceptable local practices reaches a climax in Benin - notorious by this time both for slave trading and for human sacrifice. The members of a British delegation to the oba of Benin are massacred in this year. In the reprisals Benin City is partly burnt by British troops. (“History of Nigeria”)

Violence was thus one of leading means that the British colonial force implemented frequently to bring the entire region under its control by the end of this century.

The Niger region was a vast area and it became quite challenging for the new colonial force to manage and govern this huge territory. The administrative difficulty led the colonial government to bring the upriver regions, which were initially controlled by the Royal Niger Company, under the central control. The contract of the Royal Niger Company was canceled in 1900 by the government in Britain. England commenced direct governance of the region between the coast to Sokoto and Bornu in the north of Nigeria from this time. “Given the existing degree of British involvement, this entire area has been readily accepted at the Berlin conference in 1884 as falling to Britain in the scramble for Africa” (“History of Nigeria”). The British colonial force governed Nigeria for approximately sixty years and numerous reclassifications of different areas of Nigeria were carried out for administrative purposes during this colonial period. The colonial power found it very problematic to unify the country as a single state.
In the beginning of the colonial era, the Niger Coast Protectorate was stretched farther and officially named Southern Nigeria, with Lagos being its seat of government. The rulers in the north of Nigeria, namely the emir of Kano and the sultan of Sokoto, did not allow the British colonial rule to enter this part of Nigeria in the early years of colonial period. The British government appointed Mr. Frederick Lugard as the high commissioner and commander-in-chief of the Protectorate of northern Nigeria to successfully implement the colonial rule in this region. Lugard was not new to this colonial experience. He earlier played a very important role in the Royal Niger Company and commanded company’s army in 1894 to counter French claims on Borgu (a border area between Nigeria and Dahomey). As a high commissioner and commander-in-chief, he did not disappoint the British colonial power. Lugard efficaciously controlled the rulers of Kano and Sokoto between 1903 and 1906, and conclusively eliminated slave trade that was popular among the rulers of this region.

Lugard applied a few policies to pacify the ruling community of northern Nigeria after the advent of colonization in this area. For example, he ensured that the existing rulers were not replaced overnight from these states and each territory had a native chief if willing to implement the orders of the colonial rulers undisputedly. Lugard then gave these rulers considerable power to administer these native lands that ultimately fulfilled the colonial motive of controlling these colonies using the native resources and power at the later stage of colonial period. Finally, “in 1912 Lugard is appointed governor of both northern and southern Nigeria and is given the task of merging them. He does so by 1914, when the entire region becomes the Colony and Protectorate of Nigeria” (“History of Nigeria”).

Territorial conquests were further driven by economic motives to manage these colonies directly, replacing the older systems of informal controls through trade relations. This new form of direct imperialism increasingly made colonial rule in Africa a painful experience for the natives, as socio-cultural eradication, violence and exploitation became recurrently used colonial means of directly governing the colonies to maximize economic benefits. As discussed, the principle reason behind the European invasion in Africa was mainly economic, as the European countries felt the urge to find an assured source of raw materials for their industries. They also needed guaranteed marketplaces and lucrative investment outlets. The industries in
Europe produced more than what was consumed by Europeans. Unused goods remained in surplus as the working masses didn’t earn enough to buy them. Industrialists and bankers didn’t want to reduce the production or the price of their products. They rather tried to find new markets for their products. They found the answer in Africa.

The European imperialist push into Africa was motivated by three main factors, economic, political, and social. It developed in the nineteenth century following the collapse of the profitability of the slave trade, its abolition and suppression, as well as the expansion of the European capitalist Industrial Revolution. The imperatives of capitalist industrialization—including the demand for assured sources of raw materials, the search for guaranteed markets and profitable investment outlets—spurred the European scramble and the partition and eventual conquest of Africa. Thus the primary motivation for European intrusion was economic. (Iweriebor)

European colonial forces realized that Africa would not only provide them with new markets for their products, but different regions of Africa could also be huge sources for the required raw materials. The European industries influenced their respective governments to turn to Africa to find new colonies to find an answer to their small markets and limited resources.

As capitalist industries grew, gradual increase in socio-economic problems like poverty, homelessness, redundancy and social dislocation from rural areas became very evident in major European countries. The power struggle within Europe was an added pressure that the European countries experienced. Acquiring colonies and transferring ‘surplus population’ to these colonies was one way to find solution to such newly developed problems (Iweriebor). He fittingly sums up some major reasons behind acquiring colonies in a very comprehensive manner:

Thus it was the interplay of these economic, political, and social factors and forces that led to the scramble for Africa and the frenzied attempts by European commercial, military, and political agents to declare and establish a stake in different parts of the continent through inter-imperialist commercial competition, the declaration of exclusive claims to particular territories for trade, the imposition of tariffs against other European traders, and claims to
exclusive control of waterways and commercial routes in different parts of Africa. (Iweriebor)

This sense of competition in terms of dominance and power among these European colonial powers steered the European ‘Scramble’ for African land at the end of the 19th century (Parker and Rathbone 93). The last quarter of 19th century witnessed a steady European inroad into African territory that stepped up the impetuous rush for territorial conquest by the European colonial powers. These colonial powers included European states like Britain, France, Portugal (with the history of being a colonial power dated as early as in the 16th century), Italy, Germany, and, “as a private colonial entrepreneur, the King Leopold of Belgium” (Parker and Rathbone 93). Spain, the declining imperial power of Europe, also colonized a limited numbers of small African regions in the late 19th century. These European states shared common commercial interests and with their long coastlines they believed that securing African territories would consequently help them establish their imperial dominance over rest of the European powers. The struggle for power and dominance among these European rivals was largely determined by the number of colonial territories each colonial powers secured outside Europe. Parker and Rathbone document that the reason for colonial invasion was not merely the European rivalry for dominance of power or the urge to civilize the so-called backward people. The principal objective always remained unchanged and that was the possibility of discovering potentially lucrative sources of plenteous commercial benefits:

But at a time of economic downturn, rising tensions in established commercial relations on the coast, and growing knowledge of the interior, the allure of potential wealth to be secured by the forceful ‘opening up’ of the continent played a crucial role in convincing European statesmen to acquiesce to the increasingly shrill demands of small groups of imperial enthusiasts and opportunists.

The speculative nature of conquest is clear, with the desire to exclude rivals from potentially lucrative regions often being more important than the protection of established interests. But there was also a strong collaborative strain in the European carve-up of Africa. The opening up of the continent was regarded as an ennobling ‘mission’, not just to trade with, but through doing so to civilize a backward, benighted people. Imperialist rhetoric was a heady
mix of self-interest, racial arrogance, and missionary zeal – similar in many ways to that of the earlier anti-slave trade campaign. (96)

Subsequent exploitation and undermining of the moral, religious and cultural values of the African people by the Christian missionaries left a permanent European imprint on the continent.

The early twentieth century marks a change in the outlook to colonialism and imperialism in Europe. Christian missionaries established many schools in these colonies, which helped in educating an increasing number of Africans. Education made them more self-aware, and eventually developed in them the urge to make their native lands free from the European colonizers. The sense of resistance continued to be stronger and motivated them to get independence as soon as possible. The African struggle for independence became unstoppable and by the 1950s and 1960s most of the African nations got their independence from their respective colonial rulers. 1960 witnessed the independence of 17 countries from this continent. However, Mozambique and Angola did not get independence until 1975 (Tim Lambert). The Belgian colonial officials and army found it gradually difficult to control the Congolese resentment against them. Several violent and bloody clashes took place during the 1950s and 1960s. The Congo got independence on 30th June 1960 from Belgium. During the second half of the 20th century, a native African governmental structure was gradually established in Nigeria under the guidance of colonial force. A federal prime minister was appointed in Nigeria in 1957. The gradual process of shifting the political control of the Niger territory from the colonial government to the native administration also marked its beginning in the same year when the Western and Eastern regions were permitted to establish the internal self-government. The same policy was followed in the Northern region later in 1959, too. The modern-day Nigeria continued to be a part of the British colonial empire until 1960 when it gained its independence from the Great Britain.

Chinua Achebe is one of the most famous and widely read English writers of African origin who rejected Eurocentric perception of the colonized Africa and its culture as shown in writings of the European writers. Through his writings he has depicted the colonies from a native’s perspective. In addition to Achebe, there are also some other notable writers of Africa who contributed immensely to change the world’s understanding of Africa from the lands of only ivory, and masses who needed
to be civilized, to the lands of cultural diversity and individual people. Amos Tutuola (*The Palm-Wine Drinker*), Wole Soyinka (*Death and the King’s Horseman*), Camara Laye (*The Radiance of the King*), Dinaw Mengestu (*The Beautiful Things that Heaven Bears* and *How to Read the Air*), Abraham Verghese (*Cutting for Stone*), Mariama Bâ (*So Long a Letter*), Buchi Emecheta (*In the Ditch* and *Second-Class Citizen*), Ngugi Wa Thiong’o (*The River Between, A Grain of Wheat* and *Weep not, Child*) etc., are some of the major African writers who deserve a mention (Parekh and Jagne).

**A Brief History of Colonization in India:**

Colonial invasion in India is described as the domination of superior weaponry, army and political power in general. The principle objective was how to considerably increase economic wealth of the colonizers. Dirks is right in his observation that "Colonialism is made possible because it is sustained and strengthened by cultural technologies of rule that is established on foreign shores by the British ruler" (7). Colonialism in India was not only about establishing a profitable colony and governing the colonized Indians, it was also about controlling the minds of the colonized people. It would be sensible to have a brief look at some important historical facts of the colonial India.

The Macedonian army of Alexander the Great was the first European power which came to India in 327–326 BC. Later, sailors from Rome came to India through the Arabian Sea and the Red Sea, and established a trade relation between the Roman Empire and various Indian states. But they never pursued any trading settlements or tried to conquer any part of Indian Territory. India earned a good name in Europe for its production of spices and a successful spice trade relation was established between India and Europe. This spice trade gradually acquired a very significant importance in world economy of that time and played a pivotal role of being the main temptation that engendered the European exploration of Indian Territory.

Towards the late 15th century the Mughal Empire started losing its hold in India. The weakening of this Empire caused a void into which the colonial rulers moved. European countries started exploring Indian coast in the 16th century. They started conquering small bases along the coastline. The year 1502 marks the beginning of the colonial period in India when the Portuguese Empire established the
first European trading point at Kollam, Kerala. The first Europeans to reach India by
sea were the Portuguese who arrived in 1498 and began importing spices from India.
They formed a base at Goa in 1510. In addition to the trade aspect, another major
characteristic of Portuguese colonization was the effort to establish and spread
Christianity in the colonies. They promoted Evangelism and Catholicism in their
colonies before The English and Dutch took over the Portuguese in the 17th century
(Lambert, “A Brief History of India”). Vasco da Gama entered in Calicut seaport near
the end of the 15th century and acquired a license to trade in the city from
‘Saamoothiri Rajah’, the local Hindu ruler. The Netherlands, Portugal and France
colonized different areas in India before the “East India Company” was established by
the British in 1756.

India had precious natural and economic resources, such as textiles and
mineral ores that the Europe looked at with coveting eyes to exploit. Moreover, it was
both a significant source of cheap labour and a potential large market for British
goods. They first entered India as European traders. In the 17th century, the English
imperial force began to establish secure bases on the east coast of Indian subcontinent.
“Fort St George is begun at Madras in 1640 and is completed in 1644. Calcutta is
eventually selected, in 1690, as the best site for a trading station in the Ganges delta; it
is fortified, as Fort William, in 1696” (“History of India - The Subcontinent” 6). The
British securely established three English presidencies of Calcutta, Madras and
Bombay by the end of the 17th century.

England and France began to interfere in Indian politics and struggled for
supremacy in different parts of India in the late 18th century “partly through proxy
Indian rulers but also by direct military intervention” (The History of Colonial India).
The year 1746 witnessed the first battle between European countries on Indian soil
when a French force captured Madras from the British. In the south of India, where
Aurangzeb lived his last few years trying to implement royal control, British and
French militaries marched against each other in shifting associations with local rulers.
By the late 18th century, India was considered to be a place of importance by the
European powers in general and by Britain in particular. Both the French colonial
force and the English East India Companies extended military assistance in dynastic
power struggles within powerful Indian states to enhance their commercial benefits.
Assisting a native candidate to the throne unlocked a new region of influence - a new market for the colonial products.

The death in 1748 of the Moghul viceroy in Hyderabad is followed by French and English backing for rival sons of the dead ruler. Soon the two European nations are also fighting on opposite sides in a war of succession in the Carnatic (the coastal strip north and south of Madras).

The French candidate succeeds in Hyderabad, and the English favourite prevails in the Carnatic. But the most striking event in either campaign is a dramatic intervention by Robert Clive in 1751. With 200 British and 300 Indian soldiers he seizes Arcot (the capital of the Carnatic) and holds it through a seven-week siege. (“History of India - The Subcontinent” 7)

Clive’s strategies and his success in sequentially conquering a battle against a French and Indian force won the throne for his candidate. It further jeopardized the reputation of the French army in Indian eyes. Before the intervention of Robert Clive in 1751, the French colonial power enjoyed a superior position in India and the British imperialists always came second to them at that time.

However, the British and French colonial powers continued to be rivals in India, especially in the south for the rest of the 18th century. But this rivalry changed considerably in the north and the British colonizers gained dominance over the French in this part of India. The British colonizers initially faced a disaster in 1756, when the British settlement was overpowered by the then Nawab of Bengal, Siraj-ud-Daula. It is a popular belief that the Nawab of Bengal locked some of the British prisoners overnight on 20th of June, 1756 in a dark cell of Fort William in Calcutta (now Kolkata). All of the prisoners except one were allegedly died in that dark cell. However, there are no concrete historical proofs or details of what exactly happened that night, but since that time this infamous incident has been referred to by the British as the ‘Black Hole of Calcutta’ (“History of India - The Subcontinent” 7).

Nonetheless, Robert Clive did not wait long to revert. To regain power in Calcutta, he again cruised for Bengal from Madras in October 1756. He led the army of the British East India Company to the Battle of Plassey in 1757 against Siraj-Ud-Daula, the Nawab of Bengal and won it. Clive took control of the Bengal region indirectly by making his loyalist Mir Jafar the ruler of Bengal. He was broadly considered as a mere puppet in the hand of British colonizers (Lambert, “A Brief
The dominance of French colonizers started declining after the defeat of the king of Mysore, Tipu Sultan in 1799 at the hand of British colonial power. After the defeat of this king, the British power began to expand their territory in Indian subcontinent very speedily in the early 19th century. By the middle of the 19\textsuperscript{th} century British took control of almost all of India- directly or indirectly. The British colonizers gradually captured and managed to govern most parts of India including the major cities like Calcutta, Madras and Bombay before India got its independence in 1947.

The most treasured and populated parts of India were included in British India and were directly controlled by the British Empire by the end of 19\textsuperscript{th} century. It was termed as “the brightest jewel in the British crown” by Benjamin Disraeli, the British prime minister from 1874 to 1881 (“Why Did the British Call India the Jewel in the Crown?”). India was indeed the brightest jewel in the British colonial Empire because India was rich in cotton, silk, spices, indigo, gold and other produces when the colonial powers invaded this subcontinent. India was both prosperous and affluent before the colonial intrusion. Western merchants who came to India substantially amplified their personal assets and possessions. The pepper, an Indian spice, which was very famous and valued in India, was referred to as the ‘black gold’ in the colonial India. As its principal overseas territory, India was the most significant colony of the British Empire. After a numerous numbers of violent and non-violent incidents of resistance by the Indians, India finally got its independence from England on 15\textsuperscript{th} August, 1947. Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, eminently known as Mahatma Gandhi worldwide, was the pioneer of India’s non-violent resistance and struggle against the colonial rulers to gain independence from the British Empire. Raja Rao was deeply influenced by Mahatma Gandhi and his use of non-violence as means of resistance against the British colonization. The thematic structures of most of his novels and short stories imprint the influence of Gandhian ideology.

Similar to their policies in Africa, the British colonizers also applied the ‘divide and rule’ policy in India to better govern the Indian masses. Such divisions were put into practice and made quite clear between different Indian social and religious class systems, castes and major religions. The British were few in numbers and they needed these sorts of imperialistic policies to smoothly administer their authority and strategies so that they could fulfill the colonial ambitions of ruling
Indian masses and their resources. There are innumerable references of this British policy of ‘divide and rule’ in the colonial history of India. It would be worthwhile to cite here, what the Governor-General Lord Canning wrote to a British administrator during the rebellion of 1857, the first organized resistance against the British army by Indian soldiers who worked for the same British army:

As we must rule 150 millions of people by a handful (more or less small) of Englishmen, let us do it in the manner best calculated to leave them divided (as in religion and national feeling they already are) and to inspire them with the greatest possible awe of our power and with the least possible suspicion of our motives. (qtd. in Hardy 72)

In addition to the divide and rule strategy, the psychological brainwashing of those people from a privileged stratum within Indian society who were cleverly trained into becoming typical British subjects, was a very significant trait of British colonial power in India. This English-educated section of Indian society was shrewdly invigorated to engross the British values and notions in themselves in place of their local traditions and way of life; because such section of people would be favorable to the British occupation of India- furthering British ambitions of looting India's physical wealth and exploiting its labour resources (“British Education in India”). Thomas Macaulay, in 1835 expressed the purposes of British colonial domination most succinctly: "We must do our best to form a class who may be interpreters between us and the millions whom we govern, a class of persons Indian in blood and colour, but English in taste, in opinions, words and intellect" (qtd. in Hannerz 297). This newly created Indian social class, ‘English’ in all sense except ‘blood and colour’, were made to believe that they were much superior to the rest of Indian people, as they could speak the language of the colonizers and embrace their culture. The colonial force used these people very cleverly to smoothly run the colonial administration in the Indian subcontinent. The British colonizers required a class of intellectuals, submissive and obedient in their outlook towards the British, but full of abhorrence towards their fellow citizens.

It was important for the colonizers to stress the negative aspects of the Indian culture and tradition, and therefore expunge or put out of sight the positives. The colonial force consciously tried to ascertain a mindset among Indians that India did not have any praiseworthy pre-colonial civilization to be acknowledged. This section
Chapter-1

Introduction

of people were to be taught that they belonged to an intensely conservative and fatalist society - inherently inclined to illogical superstitions and numinous belief systems.

Colonizers created an elite Indian class who were conditioned not to acknowledge the fact that India had a rich history of civilization of its own and that its contribution in the field of philosophy and science might have influenced European scholars or the European renaissance. India and its people were pictured as if they did not have any concept of nation, national spirits, culture or history. If they had any cultural or social structure at all, it had been created by invaders - because Indians themselves lacked the productive vigor to accomplish anything worthy by themselves. But the British, on the contrary, were presented as the torchbearer of modernity - they were the forerunners of all that was rational, systematic, exact and scientific in the world. With their distinct administrative skills and vigorous enthusiasm, the British would elevate India from the trap of caste system and religious intolerance. These and other such notions were constantly filled in the thoughts of the young Indians who received education in the British schools during the colonial period.

The economic situation in India deteriorated after various European colonial powers invaded this country. Especially British colonialism left the greatest impact on Indian economy during colonial period. India’s share of world economy was much higher when the British colonizers first reached Indian shores in comparison to the time when British rulers left India in the middle of the 20th century. The reason is that India had been governed for the benefit of Britain and not to civilize or educate the native people of India, unlike the European perception to Indian colonization. The industrial revolution in Britain was largely premised upon the deindustrialization of India. The plight of handloom weavers of India who were famed across the world for the production and export of fine ‘muslin’ lightweight clothes would be an apt example in this regard. British rulers came and imposed tariffs and duties on their clothing products. They started taking the raw materials from India and shipping back the manufactured clothes from Britain that flooded the world market. As a result, the weavers in India became beggars and India found itself to be an importer of finished clothes from being a world famous exporter of the same. By the end of 19th century, British colonizers made India the world’s biggest purchasers of British goods that were manufactured in Britain from the raw materials of India. Between fifteen and twenty-nine millions Indians died during British colonial periods in several British
induced famines (Tharoor). Starvation, violence and discrimination were some of the harsh realities of the colonial experience in India. Unlike European perceptions, railways and roads were built in India to serve the British interest and not the native people of India. They were designed to bring the raw materials to various ports to be shipped to Britain and thus the access of Indian people to these facilities were just incidental. The incidents of racial violence, loots, massacres, bloodsheds, multifaceted oppressions, transportation of Indian wealth and resources became very prominent and frequent features of British colonialism in India. The undermining of social traditions, property rights and of authority structures of Indian societies was all done in the interest of British colonization. The fact cannot be denied that many of the problems in postcolonial India, including the persistent racial, ethnic and religious tensions are the direct consequences of Indian colonial experiences (Tharoor).

Like Chinua Achebe, the impact of colonization, cultural dominance and conflicts is also vividly reflected in the writings of Raja Rao. The theme of East-West conflicts in his major writings depicts the true sway of colonization and its legacy on Indian people and society. Mulk Raj Anand (Coolie, Untouchable, Two Leaves and a Bud, Across the Black Waters, The Village, The Sword and the Sickle, The Big Heart etc.), R.K. Narayan (The Bachelor of Arts, Swami and Friends, The English Teacher, The Dark Room, etc.), Salman Rushdie (Grimus, The Satanic Verses, Midnight’s Children, The Moor’s Last Sigh, Shame, etc.), Anita Desai (Cry, The Peacock, The Peacock Garden, Voices in the City, Bye-Bye, Blackbird, In Custody, Where Shall We Go This Summer? etc.), Nayantara Sahgal (Prison and Chocolate Cake, Rich Like Us, Plans for Departure, Lesser Breeds etc.), Amitav Gosh (The Shadow Lines, The Calcutta Chromosome, Sea of Poppies etc.), Vikram Seth (A Suitable Boy) are some of the many Indian writers in English of colonial and postcolonial period in India who deserve a mention.

Such a profound experience of cultural conflict and cultural hegemony could not but find an echo in the literature of the times. It will be worthwhile to undertake a study of selected literary texts from the two geo-political regions and see how the colonial experience is reflected therein. Chinua Achebe and Raja Rao as the two most representative of the writers lend themselves easily for such a comparative study.

Chinualomagu (Albert) Achebe was born on November 16, 1930, in Ogidi, in eastern Nigeria, a huge Igbo village near the banks of the Niger River. His father
worked as an instructor and catechist for the Church Missionary Society and was one of the first individuals of this territory to convert to the new European religion, that is, Christianity. As a boy he got educated at the Church Missionary Society's school where he was taught to admire everything that was Western and to discard things that essentially belonged to local native societies. But gradually the beauty in traditional African culture fascinated Achebe immensely. Achebe found himself in a strong association with his people’s traditional world. He rejected his Christian name ‘Albert’ while studying medicine at University College, Ibadan (later the University of Ibadan) and started using his Igbo name ‘Chinualomagu’ that was further shortened to Chinua and it suggests, “God will fight for me”. He changed his scheduled study of medicine to the study of liberal arts, including history, religion and English and received his B.A. degree in 1953.

During his University education, Achebe started writing short stories and essays, some of which focused on the struggle between the traditional African culture and the newly invaded Western cultural and religious norms. This subject of cultural conflict becomes the pivotal point in most of his later works. Still today, Chinua Achebe is the most widely read African writer around the world. He questions the misrepresentation of the native Africans and their lives in Western literature and media through his writings. He also explores numerous consequences of centuries of colonialism and cultural dominance on the African soils. His reputation as an exceptional African novelist rests securely on his five novels – *Things Fall Apart* (1958), *No Longer at Ease* (1960), *Arrow of God* (1964), *A Man of the People* (1966) and *Anthills of the Savannah* (1987), besides scores of books of short stories, essays and poetry. His debut novel *Things Fall Apart* became enormously successful and now it is studied as a literary classic in different parts of the world. On March 21, 2013 Chinua Achebe left this world at the age of 82, in Boston, Massachusetts, while serving as the professor of Africana Studies at Brown University in Providence, Rhode Island.

Raja Rao was born in a well-known Brahman family on November 8, 1908, at Hassan, Mysore in southern India and passed away on July 8, 2006, in Austin, Texas, the United States of America. Rao earned his B.A. degree in 1929 from the Nizam College in Hyderabad where his father also taught Kannada language. He then went to France on a scholarship to study literature and history at the University of
Montpellier and the Sorbonne. On his return to India in 1939, he worked as an editor of a journal. He joined the Indian freedom movement and got himself involved in Quit India Movement in 1942. His earlier novels and some of his short stories echo his involvement in the nationalist movement. The main plot of his first novel in English Kanthapura (1938) is the Indian independence movement. After spending few years in India and France after World War II, he finally settled down in Texas and joined the faculty at the University of Texas at Austin in 1966. He became professor emeritus there in 1980.

Rao’s experience of colonial India's struggle for independence is illustrated vividly in Kanthapura through its implication of Gandhi's passive resistance movement against the British colonial rule and the setting in this novel is a village in the southern part of pre-independent India. He celebrates Indian customs, history, philosophy and religion also through his other writings as a reflection of his nationalism. Sometimes his reference to the religious and mythic roots of India in his fiction is a deliberate attempt to offer a comparison to the Western thoughts of depicting India as a land of magic and enchantment. Kanthapura (1938), The Serpent and the Rope (1960), The Cat and Shakespeare: A Tale of India (1965), Comrade Kirillov (1976), The Chessmaster and His Moves (1988) and The Cow of the Barricades and Other Stories (1947), are some of his remarkable works which have enriched the English literature of postcolonial period. His style is fundamentally Indian and aims at carving out an Indian identity through a genre that is essentially Western (Aprajita 10). His novels also reflect his attempt to resurrect the values of ancient Indian civilization that suffered incalculable loss by the advent and the domination of Western culture during the colonial period in India.

Both Chinua Achebe and Raja Rao were deeply concerned with the effects of colonial rule as a form of cultural dominance upon the consciousness of the respective peoples. Their interest goes beyond the immediate context of colonial rule and they are equally concerned with the residues of the Raj. The first three novels of Chinua Achebe, Things Fall Apart, Arrow of God and No Longer at Ease are set in the colonial times, whereas A Man of the People has postcolonial Nigeria as its social background. Similarly in the case of Raja Rao, Kanthapura and the story The Cow of the Barricades are set in the colonial India whereas The Serpent and the Rope,
Comrade Kirillov and The Cat and Shakespeare: A Tale of India are set in the postcolonial India.

Chinua Achebe and Raja Rao study the effects of colonial dominance as well as the effects of the struggles against cultural dominance with great sensitivity. Their understanding of the subject goes beyond mere jingoism and political sloganeering. They are also not oblivious of the fact that cultural dominance is not just a matter of political rule, but has psychological and historical aspects, too. The proposed study, Colonialism, Cultural Dominance and Cultural Conflict: A Comparative Study of Chinua Achebe and Raja Rao shall focus upon the responses of the two writers to the cultural dominance of their societies, the conflict arising out of this dominance and the psychological and historical implications of it.

This proposed thesis is divided in the following chapters. This introduction chapter is followed by Chapter two. The second chapter is titled as ‘Chinua Achebe’s Novels: The Colonial Period’ and it shall deal with Achebe’s three novels namely, Things Fall Apart, Arrow of God and No Longer at Ease. Effort is made to analyze how Achebe perceives colonial rule in Africa and cultural hegemony in these novels. Chapter three, titled ‘Raja Rao’s Fiction: The Colonial Period’, shall attempt to examine Rao’s perception of colonial rule in India and socio-political resistance to cultural hegemony in Kanthapura and the story “The Cow of the Barricade”. The fourth chapter of this thesis entitled ‘Chinua Achebe’s Postcolonial Fiction’ shall mainly focus on Achebe’s perception of postcolonial African society in his novel A Man of the People. The fifth chapter ‘Raja Rao’s Postcolonial fiction’ shall read the novels The Serpent and the Rope, Comrade Kirillov and The Cat and Shakespeare: A Tale of India under the light of postcolonial effect in Indian societies. Efforts shall be made to analyze Rao’s vision of culture, cultural conflict and cultural hegemony. The concluding chapter shall highlight the range of cultural conflict, cultural dominance and the impact of colonialism as discussed and analyzed in the earlier chapters in the writings of Chinua Achebe and Raja Rao.
Works Cited


<http://www.answers.com/Q/Why_did_the_British_call_India_the_jewel_in_the_crown>.