



**Dissertation By**  
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**KENYATTA**  
**UNIVERSITY.**

**AN APPRAISAL OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF**  
**AFRICAN HISTORIOGRAPHY IN**  
**EAST AFRICA SINCE 1960 .**

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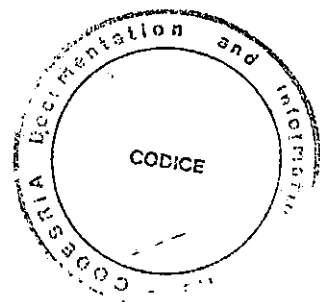
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EAST AFRICA SINCE 1960.

BY



HANNINGTON OCHWADA

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UNIVERSITY.

DECEMBER, 1993.

DECLARATION

This Thesis is my original work and has not been presented for a degree in any other University.



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HANNINGTON OCHWADA

This Thesis has been submitted for examination with my approval as the University Supervisor.



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DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my parents, Baba Henry Omwodo Gadd Odongo and Mama Truphosa Auma Rajwai, my wife Benedettah Jembwambok, son Dan Lukiri and daughter Valentine Nasubo.

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understanding has been an asset to me. I love you  
all!

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CCM	-	Chama cha Mapinduzi
CODESRIA	-	Council for the Development of Economic and Social Research in Africa.
CUP	-	Cambridge University Press
EAIR	-	East African Institute for Research
EALB	-	East African Literature Bureau
EAPH	-	East African Publishing House
HAK	-	Historical Association of Kenya
HAT	-	Historical Association of Tanzania
IDS	-	Institute for Development Studies
IFRA	-	French Institute for Research in Africa
KANU	-	Kenya African National Union
KLB	-	Kenya Literature Bureau
MISR	-	Makerere Institute of Social Research
nd	-	Not Dated.
NRM	-	National Resistance Movement
OSSREA	-	organization for Social Science Research in Eastern Africa.
OUP	-	Oxford University Press
p.c	-	Personal Conversation

PWPA	-	Professors World Peace Academy
ROAPE	-	Review of African Political Economy
SRB	-	State Research Bureau
TANU	-	Tanganyika African National Union.
TPH	-	Tanzania Publishing House
TYL	-	Tanu Youth League
UDASA	-	University of Dar es Salaam Academic Staff Assembly
UNESCO	-	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UoN	-	University of Nairobi
USARF	-	University Students African Revolu-tionary Forum.

## ABSTRACT

This study focuses on the development of African historiography within the East African region since 1960. It examines the different approaches and interpretations of scholars inquiring into the process, the nature of social and historical knowledge. It delineates the various approaches and interpretations in given social environments and epochs, identifies the causative-factors behind emerging traditions of scholarship namely; dominant political ideology, social background of the researchers and economic indicators. These factors are conceived as the basic determinants of the methodologies adopted in the human and social sciences and are therefore important illuminants of the body of knowledge under investigation.

The study postulates that Pre-classical, Classical and Colonial writings on Africa have had a considerable impact on African historiography. African scholars have reacted to this diverse literature variously, producing in the process, historical and social knowledge that either endorse or refute the assumptions advanced earlier.

Whatever the case, these contests have enlivened debate in Africa historiography.

Furthermore, the study indicates that contact with Africans in diaspora and Arab-Islamic culture had significant implications for the African conception of self. African scholars conceived their discourses in terms of Arab-Islamic ideology or as a reaction to its postulates. It shows how this in itself was a major factor in defining the trajectory of social and historical discourses.

Certainly the availability of sources of historical information was a significant motor driving the conceptual process in African societies. Relying on what was available at the given creative moment, some scholars arrived at conclusions, some of which - subsequently fell under attack with the discovery of new and credible evidence. On the other hand some scholars preferred some sources to others. This selectivity entrenched the element of bias in historical investigation.

The study also discusses the place of global and national ideology in conditioning individual and groups world view since 1960. The African

nationalist ideology, Marxism and currently the pluralist liberal ideology have significantly influenced discourses on Africa. These ideologies have established their resilience in contemporary discourse to such an extent that the question of ideology in contemporary scholarship warrants an appraisal in this study.

Finally, the study examines how political practice in East Africa has affected the production of social and historical knowledge. It contends that national priorities and aspirations of any nation are nationalist idea which find their reproduction in social and political discourses. Hence the generation of knowledge reflects the individual nation's culture and social political relations.

## CHAPTER ONE

### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Context of the Problem

Historical writing over the ages has demonstrated how the human past is interpreted differently according to the intellectual traditions and methodologies of various succeeding generations. The Classical, Liberal and even Marxist have all analysed historical processes using a variety of paradigms. No one generation, as a result, can see events in the same way others did, and so rewriting of world history has been necessitated by the ever changing social, economic, scientific developments and intellectual perceptions in the history of mankind. Viewed in this context, historical writing cannot be expected to reflect homogeneous normative and empirical approaches infinitely. Significant intellectual discourses must, therefore, be diagnosed and subjected to reasoned criticism; given that intellectual discourses of whatever nature, and the production of social or historical knowledge, cannot exist in a vacuum. To understand the writing of histories of societies, it is imperative that one takes a critical look at various theories and interpretations inherent in their historiographies.



This is necessitated by the fact that each interpretation seeks to give an intelligible explanation of prevailing circumstances of the society within which the historiographer is acting.

Social and historical interpretation is undertaken by use of the research methodologies in common use during that age. For example, while early research findings basically relied on oral tradition, successive researchers came to rely increasingly on the scientific methodologies such as; archaeology, anthropology, mathematics, linguistics, genetic studies, chemistry, carbon dating, econometrics etc. These developments arose out of the need for the scholars to explain and interpret human activities in the light of intellectual developments of those societies. Their epistemology was therefore a reflection of and perceptions of the requirements of that age.

An appraisal of the empirical and theoretical dimensions of historiography, the art of history writing is, therefore, a healthy exercise. To our dismay, it is rarely undertaken. It is a necessary exercise to enable students of historiography to cope with the widening intellectual quest for the formulation and refinement of both philosophy and its method which govern the production of social and historical knowledge.

Methodological and philosophical introspection is a no less important process in the production of historical knowledge. It is an exercise which is extremely useful in identifying and categorizing perspectives in the study of social phenomena. It is equally important in enabling scholars to undertake a critique of how these phenomena have been interpreted and explained. Competence embodied in these analyses of various historical phenomena can only be tested by way of a critique or an appraisal. Thus, these errors must be located and avoided if the art of historical explanation is to grow.

This study has, therefore, been necessitated by the fact that all knowledge is problematic. There is no known formula by which absolute knowledge can be established. That is why research as an exercise in the harnessing of empirical evidence is necessarily undertaken and, meaningful philosophical abstraction may be made on the basis of interpretations built on such evidence. An appraisal such as this critique is important in investigating the goals of historical inquiry in East Africa over the decades and assessing the relevance of historiographical traditions to the social realities whose evidence is still retrievable. There is need to measure the progress made in the generation of historical knowledge over the years. The

maturity of given epistemologies can only be tested through a process of confrontation at the level of concepts, explanations, value judgements and even language use.

### 1.2 Statement of the Problem and Objectives

The study undertakes a historical enquiry into the development of African historiography in East Africa since 1960. It seeks to explain theories of interpretation as applied to the study of African history by historiographers within the East African region.

It strives to attain the following objectives:

- (a) identifying different approaches and theories which have been applied to the study of African history. The approaches to be examined include both Marxist and non-Marxist perspectives;
- (b) investigating the contribution of social factors to the evolution of those theories and interpretative patterns;
- (c) contrasting the methodologies used by different study approaches with the aim of assessing their contribution to the growth of historiographical traditions East Africa;
- (d) explaining the dominant interpretation and diagnosing their inherent problems in the explanation of different aspects of African history;

- (e) evaluating the status of writing African history in East Africa.

### 1.3 Research Premises

The study hinges upon four fundamental propositions.

These are:

- (a) the attitude of Western historiographers towards precolonial and post-colonial African history was racially biased and was largely responsible for the conceptualisation of faulty analytical theoretical frameworks and approaches. These tools of analysis were also adopted by African historiographers in their various explanations;
- (b) the political, economic and social realities prevailing in the East African region and the world over time have influenced the scale of use of these theories or their being rendered redundant;
- (c) different theories and perspectives were conceived largely as derivatives of each group's philosophy of life and status of development;
- (d) theories, and interpretations are only tenable in so far as they explain adequately the character of African historical experience.

#### 1.4 Justification and Significance of the Study

It is imperative that history be reinterpreted and rewritten continuously according to the perception, interests and needs of every generation. In this sense, African history is not exceptional. The needs of groups and societies in question demand and calls for an assessment of different theories, interpretations and approaches as applied to the study of African history. It should be noted, however, that even within a group different interpretations may be discerned.

Critical evaluation of divergent interpretations within given schools of thought will definitely provide us with insights into the circumstances and conditions that led to the development of various views held by historiographers. By explaining these conditions and circumstances, it may be possible to keep abreast with the general trends characterising the development of African historiography, which if better understood, may lead to a good understanding of Africa's past as it informs the present. This study will, therefore, be a major contribution to intellectual history in Africa by operating beyond the rigidity of frameworks which have characterised most historical works. It is only by looking at different interpretations and approaches in historiographical traditions, discerning their inadequacies that scholars will be forced to chart new

paradigms of analysis while assessing and interpreting our historical realities. The need, therefore, for this study to carry out an appraisal of the development of African historiography in East Africa cannot be gainsaid. One hopes that this will not be the last exercise as knowledge has to be tested and developed through a process of confrontation (Aseka, 1989).

Nineteen sixty is taken as our point of departure because it was about this time that most African countries began realising their emancipation from colonial yokes. Hereafter, they provided a conducive intellectual climate which facilitated academic pursuits including the conduct of research and the reconstruction of African history. Political independence gave African scholars the licence to engage in intellectual inquiry without fear of victimisation by the former colonial masters. They were free to offer critiques and assess historical development with the use of analytical tools they deemed appropriate at that time. Previously, colonial historiography had reflected the interests of the colonizers, thus, bespeaking of the racial bigotry, prejudice and the idiosyncracies persistent in Western colonial hegemony over Africa (Curtin, 1968; Fyfe, 1976, Preiswerk and Perrot, 1978; Swai, 1981; Mudimbe, 1988; Shiroya and Aseka, 1990). However, some scholars argue that independence did not significantly

provide a conducive atmosphere for an unfettered production of knowledge.

### 1.5 Theoretical Framework

In analysing African history various theories, approaches and interpretations have been used. They have borrowed heavily from broad sociological concepts based on the psychogenesis and sociogenesis of knowledge, determinism and historical relativism, sociology of knowledge and the notion of cultural relativity of conceptual frameworks. In general, through the use of these theories, scholars have sought to provide an explanation of existing diversity in the interpretation of African history.

The concepts based on the psychogenesis and sociogenesis of knowledge assume that historical knowledge is accumulated through the process of interaction between the subject and object. This means that the individual subject is engaged in the process of social interaction. The knowledge of the subject too has a sociogenesis in the group with which it interacts. Social psychology conversely, concentrates increasingly on developing such concepts as social thought, social imagery and social construction of reality. The outcome of this, is that a researcher seeking knowledge of another culture projects his effective life, complexes, anxieties, impulses,

sympathies on the subject of study. The researcher is therefore, constantly influenced from the time of birth by his social interaction with his milieu (Preiswerk and Perrot, 1978). According to the concepts of the psychogenesis and sociogenesis of knowledge, it is apparent that the interpretation of African history has largely been conditioned by the Western cultural outlook of the world it came into contact with.

The theory of determinism and historical relativism posits that, human actions are entirely free acts dictated by the social and physical environment within which one operates. It states further that; everything we do and suffer is part of a fixed pattern, and that the world phenomena we see today is a result of antecedent acts. Cognisant of the fact that we have no control over the course that events take, this perspective exonerates us from blame of the outcome. It is asserted further, that the more deeply we investigate the course of our own conduct, the more blameworthy our behaviour may seem to be. Our situation may differ from others but not so widely as to make comparison unfair. It is by comparison that selection of what is considerable takes place; thereby, resulting in historical relativism in the process of production of social and historical knowledge.



The underlying assumption of the theory of historical relativism is that, we are creatures of nature or environment and history. This therefore, influences our temperament, judgements and principles. Every judgement in this sense, is relative, every explanation subjectively made, and, as it is by the interplay of its own time, space, individuals or the dictates of group(s) involved (Berlin, 1959).

The theory of sociology of knowledge postulates that the interpretation of social or historical processes depends largely on the perspective or point of view of the inquirer which is ultimately connected with the nature and validity of the result at which one arrives. The assessment of a historian or social scientist hinges strongly upon social conditions which largely influenced the writer and consequently incline his outlook towards making general or specific assumptions about the society and subject he is writing about.

Every idea, finding or conclusion, every knowledge or some particular matter of fact, is necessarily infected with preconceptions largely derived from the cultural environment of the researcher or historiographer. A more viable safeguard against the recurrence of this, lies in frank identification of these factors and by the need to generate a quest to formulate paradigms of

analysis by which a relatively objective exercise may be engendered. By way of a relational criterion of objectivity, divergences between the results obtained by historiographers whose perspectives are different may be allowed and explained (Gardiner, 1959).

The notion of cultural relativity of conceptual frameworks postulates that it is not possible for one to understand comprehensively aspects of an alien culture. The reason for this being that, whenever we are undertaking a study of any kind, each one of us brings along with him a certain cultural framework which ultimately influences his approach, interpretation and hence his conclusions. We are so imprisoned by our own frameworks of analyses that the outcome of our studies are culturally biased. It is important, therefore, that we perceive the social and intellectual origins of these biases in our attempt to study and understand different interpretations and approaches applied to African history.

Given that the process of production of social and historical knowledge is culturally and socially defined, and that we cannot be held entirely responsible for the outcome of our behaviour, we are compelled to undertake our study in the light of another idea; namely historical inevitability. This calls for consideration

of social conditions under which the researcher is operating in order to comprehend fully why there exists over the same subject divergent opinions (Mannheim, 1959).

In view of the numerous conceptual frameworks adopted in African historiography, we propose to undertake an investigation and appraisal of these with a consciousness as to the role objectivity in historical writing. Drawing heavily from questions raised by the debate of historical objectivity, we shall analyse the different approaches and interpretations as applied to African historiography. The study strongly holds the view that historical objectivity as an ideal of historical inquiry and production of historical knowledge, can be purely unattainable. Consequently, there is a need to carry out a comparative appraisal of different approaches and interpretations as a contribution to the understanding of crystal clear paradigms of analysis.

#### 1.6 Research Methodology

The study undertakes a bibliographical approach; relying largely on library and archival materials. Articles, journals, papers, theses and published books have been used as resource materials. The researcher harnessed information from public and institutional libraries such as the Universities of; Dar-es Salaam, Makerere,

Nairobi, Kenyatta as well as the Kenya National Archives.

In addition to the information collected from the libraries, there was need to interview academics involved in the formative years of the development of African historiography. Such an exercise has been undertaken proving to be valuable in assisting the researcher to come to terms with some aspects which would have been otherwise ignored.

The information obtained, which includes raw data as well as abstract discourses among scholars within the region, was carefully analysed and synthesized with the aim of validating certain theoretical intellectual positions. This also helped in the formulation of philosophical questions arising from the research process. A comparative analysis of the data collected enabled the researcher to delineate ideological currents in the production of social and historical knowledge in East Africa. This, enabled him to categorize the various works emanating from the region, thus the specific ideological positions governing the intellectual debates of different moments were discerned and appropriately explained.

There was constant consultation with the thesis supervisor. Debates often arose out of these

interactions which acted as an illuminant to the pertinent philosophical questions behind the development of the historiography of Africa. It further helped in synchronizing the divergent streams of thought to provide some consistency in the data gathered .

### 1.7 Limitation of the Study

The corpus of literature produced by various historiographers in the East African region is massive.

It embraces diverse views characterised by the writers' differing ideological persuasions; some of which are still held others having either been refined or abandoned, while others, are under attack.

The broad spectrum of literature on African historiography in East Africa, may not all be examined. Its size has been a major impediment in our effort of offering a critique of this historiography. Given the time span within which the research was conducted, it was not thus, possible to go through all the literature available thoroughly. It was, however, necessary for the researcher to gloss over some of the outstanding materials which he came across. To overcome this apparent handicap, the researcher was compelled to classify the discernible interpretations within their basic domains; of philosophy and ideology. Another

problem arising out of the classification was the difficulty to identify clear-cut ideologies within certain studies. In order to overcome this problem, the researcher attempted to identify the unmistakable ideological positions distinguishing one school of thought from the other.

Few studies examine the question of methodology. Not many people bother with ideological or philosophical questions in historiographical studies. The bulk of the literature to our dismay dwells heavily on mere chronicling of the development of African historiography (Kimambo, 1992). Thus the task of the researcher was to discern these trends and locate them within their appropriate analytical categories.

Lastly, the problem of adequate finances was a major handicap to the researcher from exhaustively undertaking the study. The problem arose largely because most of the materials are scattered throughout the East African region. Understandably, the finances available could not enable the researcher to traverse the whole region 'as had been his intention.

#### 1.8 Literature Review

Literature abounds on world history and historiography in general. The bulk of this literature emphasizes the need for continued reinterpretation and rewriting of

history of every generation. This need arises from the fact that the production and development of social and historical knowledge is relatively determined reflecting the needs, aspirations and interests of individuals, groups and societies to which one belongs (Carr, 1964; Marwick, 1989; Hegel, 1975; Mazrui 1979a,; Temu and Swai, 1981; Slater, 1986; Mudimbe, 1988; Breisach, 1983).

Studies conducted by Western scholars on trends in world history reveal that there has been and still is a strong bias in favour of the purported achievements of Western culture over non-Western societies. These studies announce that the Western way of life was, and is still superior to other world cultures. (Tempels, 1959; Levi - Strauss, 1966; Copans, 1977; Swai, 1990). However, other studies undertaken on the same subject assert that in the process of critiquing non-Western societies, the predominant role of geographical realities in determining the course of the human past of given societies should be fully grasped given that:

Geography has a lot to contribute to the understanding of past human-habitat changes .... Recognition of the complex nature of these changes calls for a geographical view point. The resurgence of behavioural geography has shown that the individual shapes, as much as he responds to his physical and social environment. The fact that there are two environments- physical and social - in which individuals operate forces scholars to recognise

that the actions of each and every individual have an impact on the environment, however slight and inadvertent that impact may be.... The awareness of the geographical dimensions of change and spatial patterns of interaction can contribute much to historical understanding (Sindiga, 1985:135-136).

Studies which have underscored the essence of geography in the process of human perception of self, have included (Ibn Khaldun, 1967; Preiswerk and Perrot, 1978; Baraclough, 1978). They have attempted, in their explanation, to provide an objective or perhaps a more balanced view of the character of world history. Yet in this noble task, they gloss over or simply ignore, and hence cannot not give the envisaged balanced and comprehensive picture of the general trends in African history. Within this context, African history has been treated in a cursory manner without the depth the of analysis it requires which if pursued further, might otherwise provide valuable insights into specific aspects of African societies. This is perhaps an outcome of the fact that a historian, given the environment in which he operates mainly responds to the demands of his society which seeks reproduction and an affirmation of the cherished conception of itself.

The outcome of the lukewarm treatment of the African past in early writings is what may have led to the crystallization of the extant prejudices exhibited by some Western scholars in their various attempts to



explain the African past. This crop of historiographers strongly clung to the view that in Africa, there was no remarkable change in terms of intellectual development of man over the centuries (Coupland, 1956; Hegel, 1975).

The emergence of ancient and precolonial and colonial historiographies of Africa, which for the purpose of this study, have been classified as constituting the Ancient and Aryan models of interpretation, may have been a product of the earlier prejudices discussed in the preceding paragraphs. By Ancient model we mean that school of thought subscribing to the view that ancient Africans had a rich culture and history requiring considerable academic attention. This school of thought includes classical writers such as Herodotus, Pliny, Strabo, and Diodorus. The Aryan model on the other hand, comprises scholars originating mainly from the West. These scholars tenaciously cling to the view that what supposedly passes as the history of Africa is not authentically African, but has its roots in the ancient Semitic - Aryan civilization. Africa, therefore, from the viewpoint of the proponents of the Aryan school of thought, can only take pride in a history resulting from the Afro-Semitic conjuncture of civilizations that were to find the Middle East as a perfection centre. In this view, Africa was depicted as having borrowed heavily from the Asia and Europe of antiquity. The bulk of the

literature appearing during the colonial period on Africa, seems to subscribe to this view however mistaken it was (Diop, 1974, 1981; Bernal, 1985, 1987a, b; Mudimbe, 1988).

Since colonialism was hegemonistic and exploitative in nature, in order to maintain the status quo that it had given birth to, it had to be paternalistic in its approach to the would-be subject societies. It aimed at patronizing the generation of both social and historical knowledge to serve exclusively, its imperialist objectives. This Eurocentric approach to the study of African history was not just meant to justify the conquest of Africa by the Europeans but also as a means through which the conquerors could demoralize resisters to colonial hegemony and hence have them acquiesced with the new order. It was, for this reason, that certain selected and doctored evidence was slanted to explain the African past by those jointly working with the colonizers of Africa. Some specific aspects of African cultures were emphasized. This is what hatched, in the minds of Western anthropologists, missionaries and chroniclers, demeaning and disparaging overtones to be used subsequently to describe the Africans. This was the source of the usage of terms such as; the "primitive", "savage", the "barbarian" etc. (Mudimbe, 1988; Gimode, 1993).

In the view of the colonial writers, African culture and history was considered non-responsive to the inertia of time hence its so-called static and unchanging character (Hegel, 1975). It should, however, be emphasized that the preoccupation of the colonial writers was to provide data that would enable the colonial state to govern their subjects and exercise utmost control both at the level of the mind and body (Falola, 1992). The twisted data and information turned out, in the process, to dehumanize the African person who became subservient and was acquiesced within the colonial working framework, and, later on was to become effectively controlled through indoctrination via the Western school system. The coercion process was supported by discriminatory laws which were promulgated by the colonial state.

African culture in the colonial setting was perceived as a unique cultural entity and was to be referred to thereafter in terms of "otherness". The colonial presence on the continent was thus equated with modernization. Modernization was perceived as a social prophylaxis to the real and imagined problems generating "backwardness" in Africa, hence the observation that in accordance with the colonial goals:

.. colonialism should have produced a body of knowledge on the means of exploiting dependencies. It should have produced a kind of empirical technique for implementing structural distortion by positing four main

political propositions: first, priority given to the industrial revolution over agricultural revolution; second, the simultaneous promotion of all branches of industry with a preferential approach to heavy industry; third, emphasis on tertiary and service activities; fourth, preference for exports to the detriment of the total economic system (Mudimbe, 1988:3).

It is not surprising, therefore, that colonialism was seen as a blessing in disguise through the lenses of the paternalistic methodology of anthropology which was often employed in the study of African societies. It also percolated historical studies. Although this approach prescribed some form of "cure" to the general malaise of Africa, it failed remarkably to account for patterns in the historical development of African societies in the precolonial and colonial periods, considering that it was mainly preoccupied with advocacy of the primacy of European activity on the continent (p' Bitek, 1970; Ki-Zerbo, 1981; Ochieng', 1985b; Sindiga and Zeleza, 1985; Zeleza 1986; Shiroya and Aseka, 1990).

A careful study of the general trends in African historiography, and the ensuing debate about the manner in which social and historical knowledge has been produced over the years, reveals the extent to which historical subjectivity in historical reconstruction can influence the writing and interpretation of history to mirror the interests of its beneficiaries at the expense of professionalism. This phenomenon is not only confined to the colonial historiographers and the

apologists of colonialism, but also embraces subtly some Western Africanist historiographers (some of whom have been referred to as "the friends" of Africa). It caused a devastating spill-over effect to the development of African historiography in general in years that followed (O' Toole, 1977; Temu and Swai, 1981; Ochieng', 1987; Jewsiewicki, 1989; Kimambo, 1992).

While it is true that the main concern of Western historiography was with the demonstration of Africa's ahistoricity, African historiographers opted to do the opposite. They intended to place Africa, which had been denied positive historical treatment on the plane of world history (Diop, 1974; Ogot, 1978; Wamba -dia-Wamba, 1989; Falola, 1992).

In the process of confronting and refuting the arguments and positions held by their imperialist inspired counterparts, the African historiographers accused their predecessors and contemporaries clinging to obsolete ideas. They accused them of negligence in their handling historical sources. They were taken to task for not adequately employing tools of inquiry and analysis with competence to arrive at results that were more credible and acceptable in scholarly terms (Diop, 1974, 1981; Ki-Zerbo, 1981; Temu and Swai, 1981; Prah, 1989).

It has been argued that this rather unorthodox approach to the study of African societies is what may have engendered the production of a tilted historiography because of the numerous perverted discourses which emerged, attempting to explain the various aspects of historical development in Africa. The overriding factor was the persistence of a profound subjective view of Africa designed to demean Africa's role in the world historical process (O'Toole, 1977).

Some critiques tend to propose the view that the bias against Africa could also be explained in terms of the scanty training which the producers of knowledge had acquired in the historical method during their formative years of professional apprenticeship. Others have yet argued that the producers of that knowledge simply ignored the facts that confronted them in the process of generating social and historical knowledge. In other words they were more preoccupied with the pursuance of agendas which they had set for themselves at the expense of what was seen as objective scholarship. It has also been argued that some of them could not come to grips with the application of the relevant theories in the various studies.

However, those versed in theory, clearly betrayed their veiled racial prejudices as they undertook studies on Africa (Seligman, 1966; Coupland, 1956). Despite the

fact that some studies recognized the need to consider the role of theory in the production of social and historical knowledge, few have, however, engrossingly appraised the historical development of theory and its application to the study of African history. As a consequence, this unfortunate omission rendered such studies methodologically inadequate.

It then appears that debate by various scholars on the general trends on the development of African historiography has had a tremendous impact on the illumination of emergence of ideologically flavoured research problematics. One can as such draw distinct dichotomies in the production of diverse histories by different generations of historians. This could be said to have been, a response to the different historical realities which have unfolded with time within specific settings. Therefore, with the coming of political independence to most African countries, an alternative pan-Africanist and nationalist world-view which African leaders embraced at the time, was an addition to the categorization of alternative paradigms of analysis of Africa's past. Viewed in this context, Africa assumed a new historical significance even among the most conservative Africanist historiographers of the West. Perhaps the most outstanding development in this direction was a need to re-examine the historical

sources available to the practising historian anew (Ogot, 1967; Kiwanuka, 1969; Kimambo, 1969; Vansina, 1984; Turyahikayo - Ruyema, 1988).

The early Africanist historiographers of the nationalist school of thought, assembled monumental evidence to counter the myths of the Western historiographers. They sought to demonstrate the perfidiousness of these myths which these historiographers had continued to popularize. Thus, the Aryan and semitic myth as means of explaining the historical process of creation of ancient African civilization was undermined (Aseka, 1992). The popularization of the Aryan- Semitic myth has had a lasting but adverse impact on the concept formation and production of social and historical knowledge in Africa to the extent that some African scholars attempting a search of the origin of civilization have tended to trace the inspiration behind intellectual development in Africa to the ancient Graeco - Roman cultural ambient (Mazrui, 1978; Temu and Swai, 1981; Ogot, 1987; Oruka, 1990). The question of this intellectual dependence on classical philosophy has not been treated adequately in the various discourses explaining the development of African historiography. Those, however, that have attempted to explain these developments include Bernal (1987a,b), Mwanzi(1987) and Aseka (1992) among others.



African-American scholars in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries have exerted a lot of influence on the development of African historiography. These scholars concentrated their energies on highlighting issues concerning their roots in Africa. As a result, they went to great lengths to offer explanation on the history and place of Africa in the global context. These have included Du Bois (1946), Rodney, (1969), ben-Jochannan (1970, 1971), Clarke (1971), Van Sertima, (1982, 1983, 1985, 1989), African scholars who have pursued this line of research include; Nangoli (1987), Mudimbe (1988) and Diop (1974). Many others came from the Carribean led by Rodney (1969). Acknowledging the force of this school of thinking, Clarke states:

The [Black] power and [Black] studies explosions, however, have stimulated a large number of [Black] Americans to search for their history and the roots of their struggle .... European writers have distorted African and world history .... Black Scholars are trying to restore some of the things that this distortion took away ... (Clarke, 1975:42).

The efforts and products of African-American scholars found their way into Africa through African students who undertook their university studies in America as well as African-American scholars who took up teaching careers on the continent (Rodney, 1969, 1972; Campbell, 1986). The historical experience of Africans in diaspora came to be given prominence in the history syllabi in all the universities teaching history in East

Africa because of this growing influence.

This study will attempt an explanation of the impact the Graeco-Roman philosophy on Black studies in the process of concept formation and formulation, as it has come to bear on historical interpretations within the East African region.

Also influencing the interpretation of African history within the East African region has been the Arab-Islamic presence on the continent. This phenomenon which started to be felt more profoundly around the <sup>+</sup>Seventh

Century with the rise of Islam, greatly influenced the interpretation of history within the region. The histories of various families in Africa came to be linked with the birthplace of Islam in the Middle East. Very few studies seem to pay attention to the role of this factor in the of interpretation and the rewriting of African history (Levtzion, 1967, 1968; Lewicki, 1968; Ismail, 1968; Kamian, 1968; Ogot, 1985; Mazrui, 1986a, b; Dramani - Issifou, 1988; Hrbek, 1988; Masao and Mutoro, 1988). Perhaps it is time the issue was illuminated as to generate new questions and insights to the study of the development of African historiography in East Africa.

The nationalist school of thought which was closely associated with the nationalist ideology aimed at consolidating the just won independence in African states. It emphasized the teaching and interpretation of history within the mould of nationalist values which:

... included the development of "pupils" spirit of tolerance and national pride. This introduces, for the first time a nationalist motive in history teaching (Lawi, 1989a: 192).

With time, however, the nationalist school of thought came under increasing attack from various disciplines in the academia for what appeared to be its lack of adequate explanation of the then prevailing conditions of African states. It was accused of mischievously overemphasizing "African initiative" in the making of history at the expense of explaining other aspects, which according to its critics, were considered to have held back African societies in the "development process" vis-a-vis the Western world. The dismissiveness of the attacks on the nationalist ideology, notwithstanding, it is urgent that a more engrossing critique be offered by way of undertaking a study which seeks to explain the conjunctural factors which brought about the rise and decline of the nationalist historiography (Ranger, 1968, 1969, 1971, 1976; Denoon and Kuper, 1970; Atieno-Odhiambo, 1974; Temu and Swai, 1981; Lawi, 1989a; Mlahagwa, 1989; Slater, 1986, 1989).

Given that historians do not study history for its own sake, and that the purposes of their studies condition their methodological approaches and perspectives, it is imperative that historical interpretations and writings be conceived in terms of explaining the operative forces behind the scenes. Conditions which seem to engross the "backwardness" of Africa in terms of the continuing and widening development gap between the countries of the North and the South must be examined. It appears that the dependency and underdevelopment perspectives seemed to offer some tools of analysis towards the end, however ineffectual they may have been. Adherent of these perspectives postulated that African developmental conditions resembled those of Latin America, from where these conceptual approaches were first brought into vogue. Inevitably, these theories would provide an historical explanation to the widening gap between Africa and the West. The theories endeavoured to shed light on:

... the worsening economic situation in the Third World in general and in Africa in particular ... the relationship between the industrialized West and the colonized Third World (was seen) as that of centre and periphery respectively. The very same mechanisms which started and maintained the process of underdevelopment in the periphery, were indispensable precondition for development in the centre (Kimambo, 1992: 19).

The general argument posited by critics about the dependency and underdevelopment perspectives, as applied

to the production of social and historical knowledge of the continent, has been that these concepts were imported into African social and historical studies with the intention to absolve the continent from the blame. African societies were increasingly indicted as responsible for the continent's underdevelopment by modernization theoretists. It had been popularly held by the modernization theorists that Africa created exclusively its "unique" conditions which militated against development:

... since its (Africa's) progress has always been thwarted by endogenous factors such as the insalubrity of the hot wet climate the poverty and fragility to tropical solid and the high rate of population growth which negates any benefits of economic growth. In addition, conventional development theory invokes a host of other social-cultural, psychological and economic factors to explain underdevelopment in Africa: too many tribes, a low "n-Achievement", too few industrial skills, a low productivity of agriculture, a limited propensity to save, scarce capital etc! (Darkoh, 1984:1).

The inherent deficiency in the modernization notion, that backwardness was synonymous with Africa, was finally exposed in the various analyses undertaken by dependency and underdevelopment theorists. It was dismissed as a pseudo-historical framework in which Africa's development has been falsely conceptualized. It was argued that the explanation of Africa's historical development in terms of its intrinsic "backwardness"

constituted the linchpin of the rationalization and elaboration of neo-colonial relationship between of Africa and the countries of the North and her dependence on the latter. This, for that matter, was not considered a plausible explanation of Africa's conditions (Rodney, 1972; Amin, 1981; Beckman, 1981; Temu and Swai, 1981; Zeleza, 1983; Aseka, 1989).

This study explains the place of the concepts of dependency and underdevelopment in the process of production of social and historical knowledge within the East African region.

The dependency and underdevelopment perspectives came under fierce attack in the mid 1970s and the early 1980s for what was considered to be their inadequate explanation of the pathetic conditions of underdevelopment and the increasing dependency of Africa on the so-called developed world (see ROAPE NO.19, 1981). The dependency and underdevelopment scholars were censured for ignoring other variables mainly, of political nature in the process of historical explanation:

...underdevelopment analysis was focused almost exclusively on the economic terrain. In short, underdevelopment writers miserably failed to delineate the specificity of the political in the reproduction of economic conditions of underdevelopment (Zeleza, 1983:17).

Noteworthy is the fact that some of the leading theorists of the dependency position (Colin Leys, 1975) slowly but surely abandoned the dependency and underdevelopment notions and "unleashed a barrel of criticism towards it" (Aseka, 1989: 12). Granted the integration of Africa and other Third World's pre-capitalist social formations into the world capitalist system as to create peripheral capitalism within which there has been perpetual reproduction of poverty in these regions, historical analyses attempted to explain the mechanics of change in given societies in terms of encounter of different systems of production. The capitalist development notions were variously addressed by Crummey and Stewart (1981), Bonat (1982), Zeleza (1982, 1983) Klein, (1985), Freund (1985), Harris (1985), Newbury (1985), MacGaffey (1985), Cordell (1985) and Jewsiewicki (1989).

However, there were drawbacks in their efforts to identify the dominant pre-capitalist modes of production in Africa which variously encountered the capitalist mode of production. Given the controversies over sheer identification of pre-capitalist modes of production, many problems have bedeviled the analysis of the historical development of African societies. The difficulties can be located in the diverse and complex historical situations of encounter which characterized change in Africa (Crummey and

Stewart, 1981). Following those setbacks, it was argued by scholars, particularly of the Marxist tradition, that the concept of class struggle and class relations in the process of social transformation be given considerable attention in historical analyses. This was imperative granted that the myth of a classless Africa appears to have been misplaced and is therefore being discarded. The myth did not explain adequately consequences resulting from the conjuncture of African societies and colonial capitalist penetration (Shivji, 1975; Woddis, 1977; Wallerstein, 1977; Ake, 1978, 1981; Nabudere, 1979; Kitching, 1980; Mudenda, 1981; Tandon, 1982; Khamisi, 1983; Zeleza, 1982, 1983; Aseka, 1989). The gist of the argument in relation to the process of accumulation which took place in both pre-capitalist and capitalist situations in Africa was aptly articulated thus:

The concept of class struggle is therefore at the centre of the doctrinal philosophy of dialectical materialism and it concentrates on the process of accumulation, class formation and class relations. Thus, in highlighting on these inherent processes of capitalist production, the approach of class analysis will underscore a series of salient elements (Aseka, 1989:18).

Some scholars have as such insisted on the need to emphasize central tenets of the classical Marxist model to realize this. This has amounted to calling the "revival of Marxism" (Chachage, 1987). The materialist



conception and approach to the study of African history was aimed at analysing the apparent situational manifestations of Western capitalist technology: This Marxist epistemology was termed in some circles as "the proletarian history" (Slater, 1980, 1989). But the charge that there was a proletarian history in Africa was highly contested. This was because, as some people asserted, the proletarian culture is not well established in Africa. Furthermore, hardly any practising historians are originally linked with visible proletarian movements in Africa (Wamba -dia-Wamba, 1981; Slater, 1986; Kimambo, 1992). It is therefore, the task of this study to extend the debate on the place of ideology in historical discourse. The methodological and epistemological imperatives of discourse among historians of East Africa has for long been ignored.

Another issue which has found expression in most social sciences as well as the discipline of history, has been the gender question. Gender studies in East Africa, is a relatively new field of social inquiry. It found its way into human and the social science disciplines after the mid 1970s as a result of the feminist movements in America. The accommodation of women studies and perhaps the growing number of institutes of women studies at our universities, can be seen as stemming from the fact that:

The movement for the liberation of women in Western societies has succeeded in raising issues regarding the position of women in these societies to the top of the list of public issues. As a result, discussion of women issues and publications about women have increased. The burgeoning literature on women reflects the increased attention paid to these issues by social scientists in Western Societies ... The issues regarding the place of women have since found their way into our societies and we are at the stage of popularizing them among the governing elite....(Kotorobo, 1985:10).

Recognizing the importance attached to women studies in the history syllabi in our institutions of learning and the growing literature on gender issues, the vehemence with which women are articulating issues pertaining to their well-being and place in moulding societies, this study gives a brief appraisal of the development of women studies in East Africa. Few studies have made such an attempt (Kotorobo, 1985; Mbilinyi, 1985).

Meanwhile, in watching the flow of events in the 1980s and the 1990s, and considering that history (which is the total sum of events and social processes in past) is a social product of labour, we are tempted to posit that in order to understand its characteristics and functions we must first understand the conditions of its production. Of significance is that historians, in essence, live in societies or groups whose members stimulate, condition and determine the process of the production of social and historical knowledge (Slater,

1984; Kimambo, 1992).

Within those groups and societies in which a historian lives, specific ideologies are conceived and political systems are erected. These in due course may demand the recourse to history to justify and reproduce the positions of those dominating specific societies.

In various pluralistic societies embracing the ideals of liberal democracy, for example, there have existed a host of historiographical traditions. Suffice it to state that there will be many more in future with the rise and disintegration of diverse socio-political systems. The demise of communism, for example, seems to be a pointer to such scenario. We are perhaps witnessing the temporary or long term victory of economic and political liberalism which will definitely impinge on our world-view. Francis Fukuyama asserts thus:

The triumph of the West, and the Western idea, is evident first of all in the total exhaustion of valuable systematic alternatives to Western liberalism. In the past decade (1980s), there have been unmistakable changes in the intellectual climate of the world's two largest communist countries (Soviet Union and China), and the beginnings of significant movements in both. But this phenomenon extends beyond high politics and can be seen also in the ineluctable spread of consumerist Western culture in such diverse contexts as the peasants' markets and colour television sets now omnipresent throughout China, the

co-operative restaurants and stores in...  
Moscow.... (Fukuyama, 1989:3).

Given the realities of political and economic pluralism, and which the entire East African region is embracing, one would expect a metamorphosis of a kind in its historiography. There will be need to redefine theories and analytical parameters by people of different generations to reflect diverse political interests. However, it would be interesting to see, how in the midst of this diversity the national question in each of these states would be resolved given that every effort of historical reconstruction is a process of nationalization.

The central thrust of this study is to define the developmental pathway of African historiography in East Africa. Its main objective is to offer a critique to sensitize to historiographers of today and tomorrow the importance of theory in historical explanation. There is need for them to open up new avenues for research purposes of historiographical concern. The practising historian who may wish to offer fresh inquiry would easily do so by gauging from past and present trends before charting out an alternative course.

## CHAPTER TWO

2.0 EARLY AND COLONIAL HISTORIOGRAPHIES ON AFRICA:  
THE BATTLE FOR CONTROL OF KNOWLEDGE.2.1 Introduction

The historiography of Africa can conveniently be divided into two broad categories. These categories are; historiographers who subscribe to the view that Africa was ahistoric prior to the coming of the Europeans to the continent, and those on the other hand, who identify historical development in Africa independent of European patronage. These two diametrically opposed views aimed at satisfying individual subjective interests in the constitution of social and historical knowledge.

The views which the historiographers expressed were in essence of immense political, social, and intellectual significance. The generation of such knowledge touched on the material and spiritual aspects of those involved in its production, whether on their own behalf as individuals, or as an expression of the desires of those wishing to change or preserve a particular political order. Viewed in such terms, the knowledge produced facilitated the sustenance of the material and spiritual being of a given group by defining the roles of its members. Hence the dictum that in the process of social

inquiry, a researcher cannot claim to be completely detached from the subject under study. Given that he is part of that society which he investigates. Even if he is not he still develops interests, prejudices or idiosyncrasies which connect him with the subject of study, he cannot claim to be impartial. The knowledge he produces in this sense is a product of this condition, and therefore, cannot make false claim to neutrality (Perrot and Preiswerk, 1978; Chinweizu, 1974; Swai, 1980; Mamdani, 1983; Mudimbe, 1988; Ochwada, 1991 b).

Working within colonial pre-conceived notions and stereo-types of the African, the early and Colonial historiographers exhibited their preferences and tastes as products of compulsions demands and dominant philosophies of their time. Ethiopian, Egyptian, Classical and Colonial historical sources all represented divergent interests depending largely on the nature of questions the scholars were addressing in order to achieve specific goals. The diverse agenda in these histories bear testimony to the direction of growth in African historiography. The development which attracted historiographers to chronicle Africa's past, were in the fields of politics, economics, scientific and academic life. The profundity of their global impact on the developments in human intellectual history cannot be gainsaid (Diop, 1974; Mwanzi, 1987).

Given the important position which African occupied in the evolution of human history, it became imperative that the explanation of Africa's historical heritage be undertaken in terms of a global problematic. There is no way Africans can be separated completely from experiences of people from different regions of the world. There are numerous interlinkages in world cultures. But this does not validate the diffusionist attempt to link ancient African civilizations with the non-African genius from either the Oriental or Occidental worlds by Seligman (1966) and Coupland (1956) among others. The craft of the Hamitic theory has been ably countered by ben -Jochannan (1971), Diop (1974), Maina - wa -Kinyatti (1976), Mazrui (1978), Bernal (1987b), Mwanzi (1987), Davidson (1987), Mudimbe (1988), James (1989), Caetanya (1990), Kamenju (1990a, b,c,d), Ochwada (1991a) and Aseka (1992). In essence, these studies demonstrate attempts by historiographers (mainly from the West) to link the historical developments in Africa with those of the two worlds; the Orient and the Occident. The controversy surrounding the origin of civilization has characterised the struggle for the control of knowledge in African historiography.

The significance of the studies highlighted in the foregoing paragraph, is in their recognition of the fact

that a full account of world history cannot be undertaken without significantly paying tribute to Africa as the cradle of humankind. No amount of hostile historiography can divorce the genesis of world civilization from ancient Africa's intellectual history, considering that humanity's civilization has a beginning in Africa. From here human ingenuity was exported to other parts of the world through outward movements and cross-cultural interactions.

This view, however, is repudiated by those scholars who think that by acknowledging the fact that Africa is man's original home, they would be undermining legitimacy of their claim on the origin of social and economic ideas in the West. It would challenge the very basis of Western dominance which they cherish. This explains perhaps, why there has been a frantic "search" for man's original home elsewhere other than Africa; it has characterised the production of knowledge as it relates to Western scholars. The result of which has witnessed the attempt to locate "different" original homes of humanity elsewhere by various historiographers attempting to explain social processes in world history. Following this development and shifts in intellectual concerns which occurred, our attention is quickly drawn to the place of Africa in the entire history of the world and how the debate has influenced the production of knowledge over time.



This chapter attempts to demonstrate the extent to which early and colonial writings have influenced the interpretation of African history. To what extent the ancient and colonial epistemologies may have implicitly conditioned the character of the post-colonial historiography in East Africa?

### 2.1.1 Pre-classical and Classical Historiography

Pre-classical and classical sources on the history of Africa reveal pertinent changes in Africa's historiographical trends. Some of these sources demonstrate at considerable lengths the nature and extent of Europe and Asia's indebtedness to African civilization in ancient times.

Some of the pre-classical sources, were Egyptian, variously accounting for the prosperous pharaonic civilization of -3200 to -322. They indicate that there was indeed close connection between the history of Egypt, Nubia, Kush and Ethiopia (Axum) to the south. In this connection, the Egyptians referred to the Ethiopian nation as the land of Puanit; (sic) the land from which they learnt their religion. In the Egyptian conception of history, the Ethiopian nation was so revered as to be referred to as "Gods land - the land where Gods love to dwell" (ben-Jochannan, 1971: 237).

About the other Mediterranean nations notably; the Classical-Hellenic, Phoenician and Oriental world, the Egyptian sources in the same breath speak of the long standing relations in knowledge dissemination and other cultural activities. This bears testimony to the fact that Africa occupied an important place in world history. The sources being referred to include oral tradition as well as written materials in the form of extant Egyptian papyri.

These sources provide us with information on the achievements of ancient Africa in various fields of science, technology, philosophy and arts in general. The Ahmes papyrus (renamed Rhind) talks about the perfection of mathematical calculations in Egypt thirteen centuries before Euclid. Other sources with similar information are clay tablets of the pharaonic era. The Ebers papyrus (-1500) and the Edwin Smith (-2600) which is attributed to Imhotep, constitute the surviving medical texts that throw light on the history of medicine. The extant hieroglyphic writing in Egyptian pyramids speak in good taste about Egyptian history and culture.

No wonder that in his attempt to reconstruct the history of ancient Africa, for instance, Herodotus relied

extensively on Egyptian sources among others. On giving an account of the reign of Sesostri, one of the pharaoh's in the Egyptian dynasty, Herodotus drew heavily on Egyptian oral tradition. To demonstrate this is a quotation from Cheikh Anta Diop:

To show that the inhabitants of Colchis were of Egyptian origin and had to be considered as part of Sesostri's army who had settled in that region. Herodotus says: "The Egyptians said that they believed the Colchians to be descended from the army of Sesotris. My own conjectures were founded, first, on the fact that they are blackskinned and have woolly hair"(Diop, 1974:1).

In his Histories II, Herodotus provides us with an account of one of the Egyptian pharaohs being honoured with a stele erected by the Ethiopians at the city of Deire; itself testimony to the fact that he consulted Ethiopian oral traditions. To prove that Herodotus' assertions were not unfounded, other writers of the classical period, bore him out on the possible accusation of falsifying history. Coming to the witness box on his defence was Erastosthenes a geographer from Cynene who lived during the reign of pharaoh Pep II (-, 2401).

The Ethiopian chronicles absolve Africa from the blame that it created conditions which locked the continent out of the circuit of world historical development. For instance, tales are recounted about the eleventh dynasty

voyages presumed to have been organised under the direction of the reign of pharaoh Mentaohetep IV (-2015-2005). From these accounts, we learn of how the Ethiopians established themselves in Egypt during which time they erected the most magnificent civilizations thousands of years before the arrival of the first foreigners; the Hyksos in -1675 from Asia and the Greeks around -600. Diodorus of sicily in one of his treatises in -50 affirms this thus:

Now the Ethiopians as historians were the first of all men... and the proofs of this statement, they (the Same Greek historians) say, are manifest ... As for the people of Egypt, they are colonists sent out by the Ethiopians after the steady annual accumulation of the Nile Silt had raised the land of Egypt above the level of the waters. And the larger part of the customs of the Egyptians, are Ethiopian, the colonists still preserving (sic) their ancient manners... (cited in Davidson, 1987:7).

The disciplines of archaeology, anthropology and the natural sciences now affirm that the cultures ennobled in the lower Nile and Egypt proper were derived from the Neolithic cultures of Green Sahara - the Makalian phase of the earlier period (-6000). This claim has, however, been rejected by the Eurocentric historians who view the intra and inter-relational influence of the Egyptian culture as emanating from the presence of population living in the south instead.

These Eurocentric scholars contend that colossal

pyramidal architectural edifices found in Egypt, were imitated by Ethiopians and Nubians of antiquity, this, notwithstanding the long ancestry of their prototypes existing then in Ethiopia and Nubia. Archaeological evidence, however, vehemently refutes this apparent racist claim over knowledge and instead affirms that the burial tombs (the prototype of the Pharaonic Pyramids), had their beginnings in Nubia and Ta-Seti which had similar burial cultural practices (Adam, 1990:141-147).

In terms of aesthetics and scientific precision in architecture, the Pharaonic pyramids were not comparable with the inferior ones found in Nubia and Ta-Seti. It was perhaps because of the inadequacies of the former that led to the strengthening of the Eurocentric view about the two cultures, whereby, the achievements of Nubia and Ta-Seti civilizations have been demeaned and dismissed altogether. Following this biased state of mind, it was found appropriate only to compare the "Egyptian obelisks" and the pyramids in Aksum, Ethiopia and Nubia. It was consequently argued that Egypt bequeathed the lands to the south her civilization (ben-Jochannan, 1971; Diop, 1974).

However, Egyptian sources maintain that the land to her south, and quite specifically, the Great Lakes (Turkana, Edward, Victoria, Albert and Tanganyika), was the origin

of mankind and hence its civilization. The Egyptians did not pretend about the source of their cultural inspiration as they were quick to refer to the area to their south as the land; "of the Ape-like Gods and the original home of man". It was their paradise from where the names of all Gods were derived (Diop, 1974; Mwanzi, 1987).

Indeed, by consensus most of the pre-classical and classical texts assert the historicity of Africa, perhaps with exception of Plutarch's essay entitled: "On the Malice of Herodotus" appearing in the 2nd century. In this treatise, Plutarch also vilified Herodotus for attributing all Greek civilizations to foreigners, namely; the Egyptians and Phoenicians. His accusations, however, were not seriously taken as noted by his contemporaries:

While this essay has offended lovers of Herodotos, it has also disturbed admirers of Plutarch, who have found it hard to believe that so kindly and good-natured an author could himself write such fierce malice and thus lay himself open to charges against Herodotos (Bernal, 1987b:113-114).

There is no doubt that in the Classical world, Africa emerged as a power-house in the field of generation of ideas conditioned by its enabling environment; ideas which were perfected on in ancient Egypt and found their way into Hellenised Europe. Looking at ancient Africa's achievements in the field of knowledge Cheikh

Anta Diop observed:

Egypt was really the classical land to which two thirds of the Greek intellectuals and philosophers went to be schooled. In truth, it can be said that Alexandria, at the time of the Hellenistic period, was the intellectual centre of the world where all Greek scholars now remembered were assembled. The fact cannot be sufficiently emphasized that these scholars were educated outside of Greece in Egypt itself. Even Greek architecture had roots in Egypt (Diop, 1971:132).

On Classical historiography, there abounds literature including the Periplus of the Erythrean Sea believed to have been written by an Alexandrian Greek traveller Basiles which described activities on the East African Coast. This document provides us with insights into the social and economic life of hinterland communities of the Indian Ocean. It was written in the 1st century and speaks of the flourishing urban cultures and trade activities. Some scholars have argued that as a commercial handbook for the imperial Roman government together with Claudius Ptolemy's Geography, it might have influenced the influx of Persian and Arabian traders among others to come to the East African Coast (Ochieng', 1985a).

Despite enormous evidence adduced on the place of Africa and the central role it played in shaping humanity's civilization, it has continued to be vilified and the intellectual products of its people corruptly

appropriated by the Western World. To do this more effectively a change of paradigm was necessary. Consequently, the:

... Ancient Model was discredited in the last quarter of the 18th century, through a process that cannot be linked to any new evidence or source of information. It must therefore be associated with other intellectual shifts ... these were the new predominance of romanticism racism and the concept of progress ... it emphasized peculiarity and the importance of place and kinship in the information of cultures.... Thus such a virtuous race as the Greeks could not have derived their culture from the south and east (Bernal, 1987a:67).

The Ancient Model was, in this construction replaced by the Aryan Model which credited the Graeco-Roman world and Europe with the generation of all novel ideas and knowledge. This, perhaps was the genesis of the myth about the Greek "Miracle" - a myth that has, for a long time, dogged African studies and historical interpretations. Suffice it to state that the proponents of the Aryan Model have not hitherto come up with superior and alternative quantity evidence to dismiss the Ancient model which they discredited. Martin Bernal was so incensed by their dishonesty as to state:

For them what matters is not the amount of information but the use made of it. In their eyes they and they alone have treated it "Scientifically" hence the term Altertumswissenschaft "Science of



Antiquity". For them, just as the railways, steamships and telegraphs transcended all previous means of transport and communication, their scientific and skeptical historical approach or "method" has put them on a categorically higher place than all their predecessors, especially the "credulous" Greeks (Ibid: 71).

Mired in this mentality, the Eurocentric scholars on Africa injected this racist ideology into their works to justify the act of slavery and the crimes against the colonized people. Subsequently, the discourses on colonialism were conceived in these terms of "otherness".

The feeling of superiority came to dominate their discourses on races other than the white race - in practically all treatises on human civilization, the Greek "miracle" reared its head on the scene as the yardstick by which to measure the intellectual achievements of all humanity. We shall be considering the impact of the idea of the Greek "Miracle" on trends in historiographical studies in East Africa. Meanwhile, a clear manifestation of the Greek "Miracle" can only be appreciated by considering colonial historiography and how it propped it up in the entire period of its life.

#### 2.1.2 Colonial Historiography

It is safe to assert that colonialism had, perhaps, the most profound impact on the development of African

historiography per se. This, given that colonial manifestations were felt at two levels in the colonized world; mental colonialism and the physical occupation of the lands that were acquired by the European colonial powers. Physical occupation preceded the former.

However, this study notes that certain stereotypes had been developed in Western historiography about African history and culture which gave the false impression of the continent to the masses in Europe prior to the actual occupation. It has been observed that:

The deformed image of the continent and her people is particularly shrouded in myths which have been created about this continent. They are rooted in the politicization of interpretation of social phenomena following the emergence of racism as an overriding influence on scholarship. It also came to justify the Western imperialist agenda and to characterize the relationship between the Western world and the rest of the world (Gimode, 1993:32).

With the discrediting of the Ancient Model in the 18th century and its replacement with the Aryan Model, the racist Eurocentric view of Africa gained currency in discourses on Africa. Information was sought and knowledge produced mainly by travellers, imperial officials and "scholars", at first, it was skewed towards amusing, entertaining and informing the outside world, especially the "civilized" people in the metropolitan countries (Falola, 1992: 193).

In due course, the deliberate and systematic misrepresentation of Africa in their writings, was perceived as an attempt to stress those aspects that were most likely to shock their audience and, as a result consolidate support from the Western masses who were far removed from the situations being described to them. Edwin Gimode summarises this pitiful situation in the following words:

The masses, to elicit generous response, were made to visualise a continent in decadence, yet which could be saved if they donated money. They deliberately omitted aspects in African culture common to all human cultures. This is the light in which Livingstone's fervent speech at Cambridge University in 1857 should be understood (Gimode, op.cit:45).

To justify colonialism, a lot of literature was hurriedly produced in racial terms largely reflecting the needs and interests of the European colonizing powers. Considered in this sense, colonial historiography aimed at establishing and sustaining Western patrimony over the continent of Africa. To accomplish this, a specific image had to be created ; it involved the fabrication of history to portray Africa that accorded well within the prejudiced Western conception of African history. As a result, disciplines such as ethnography, anthropology were resorted to in order to facilitate the creation of the desired image , an image that would duly accommodate the political and economic interests of imperialism. In Western imperial

scholarship, Africa and other colonized areas were, in event, characterized by the Western racial desire to impart knowledge to Africans that depicted the Europeans as naturally superior to them.

The West thus curved out an image for itself of a "civilizing" and "etiquette cultivating" agent whose ultimate "philanthropic" volition was to introduce the "native" to order which hitherto, was lacking. Imperial historiography, in essence, emphasised the idea of "otherness" and cultural relativity of knowledge. Theoretical frameworks were, consequently, conceived in terms of exclusively attributing unique cultural tendencies to Africa as compared to the Western "civilized" world. The cultures were not merely seen as "backward", "primitive" and static but, technologically, it was postulated further, that Africa remained several miles behind its Western counterparts in terms of progress.

Following this, was the assertion by imperial historiography that African cultures and institutions could only be comprehended by undertaking their study within western invented paradigms of analysis by way of anthropology, ethnography etc and not history. This was because the concern of history was not as Hugh Trevor - Roper would say; a mere amusement "with the

unrewarding gyrations of barbarous tribes in picturesque but irrelevant corners of the globe" (cited in Mazrui, 1979a:11). Knowledge about Africa was, therefore, disseminated through anthropology and related disciplines invented specifically to study "backward" societies of the world.

The crystallization of the ideology of the "primitive" and "savage" Africa, was the work of the discipline of anthropology which ensured its realization to the extent that by the nineteenth century right into the beginning of the twentieth, century, everyone was exceedingly fascinated by the idea of primitivity, by its ambiguity, and by its existence at the edge of experience (Masolo, 1991:68). The discipline was instrumental in connecting the pathetic conditions associated with primitivity to the experience of domination of colonists; it legitimated colonial authority over the subjugated people and the employment of coercion as a process of socializing the "natives" into Western values.

While pretending to play a philanthropic role, anthropology was used in the study of the so-called less developed and primitive cultures: it recorded how the African "savage" became an active participant in "modern civilization". Through anthropological studies the African was incorporated and co-opted into the Western

cultural process. It was perceived that only in this way the western people could understand the "savage mind". Anthropology, therefore, facilitated the process of colonization with an epistemology which designated the white man as would-be master while the African was relegated to a mere slave in the historical drama. The entire body of knowledge was perceived thus:

Theories of colonial expansion and discourses on African primitiveness emphasize ahistoricity and the promotion of a particular model of history...(they focus) on the discrepancy between civilization and "christianity" on the other and means of "evolution" or "conversion" from the first stage to the second (Mudimbe, 1988:20).

In conceptualizing Africa, the Western scholars in numerous treatises judged Africa as of no historical consequence on the globe before the advent of European colonialism. Central in their theses was the primacy of the civilizing mission (Tempels, 1959). In short, the history of Africa was synonymous with European activities on the continent. Anything outside this realm of knowledge constituted darkness, which Hugh Trevor - Roper condemned as "not a subject of history". This was in itself a clear apology for the use of anthropological method to the study of Africa societies and their past.

In their misconception of the historical process, African societies could only be considered in so far as

they passed the test under the rigours of the Western yardstick. History in this view was interpreted as the evolution of societies towards the ideal perfection (corresponding with the progress as perceived in the Western world). Under Western patronage, it was assumed that Africans would be admitted into the fold of universal history following its acquiescence and acculturation as to begin to replicate the Western image.

Reinforcing the Western stereotypes and the misconception of history, were the achievements of the mercantilist period. During this epoch colonies were viewed as assets to benefit the awakening Europe of the time. The mercantilist ideology and the concomitant mood of "enlightenment" demanded that Europe's economies and social structures spread their tentacles in capital to unexploited lands outside Europe, and make "better use of". This situation obviously required a supportive epistemology.

Following the conception of African societies in terms such as; "backwardness", "primitivity", "savagery" and so on, the Western scholars reverted to the use of achievements of European Middle Ages, the transformation and advanced technology as a yardstick against which "progress" of other societies could be measured vis-a-vis their own. It is undeniable that with industrial

technology gaining a foothold in the Europe of  
 + eighteenth century, economic growth at unprecedented  
 rates, was realized. In particular, this development  
 drastically altered the Western self-image and made the  
 Europeans place a high value on their  
 accomplishments. European chauvinism of the  
 + eighteenth century in ascendance was rooted in the perceived  
 relativity of technological development on the globe so  
 that:

When they thought of progress, they  
 thought of their own rapid progress  
 over recent decades. By contrast,  
 the pace of historical change in  
 other societies seemed slow, and  
 Europeans began to talk about the  
 "changeless East" (which included  
 Africa) ... the new rate of European  
 change altered the western concept of  
 history (Curtin, 1968:16).

On the drawing board, the Western theorists strategized  
 and selected from the abundant facts resulting from the  
 mood of the Industrial Age those facts which accorded  
 well within their own conception (world-view). By the  
 + turn of the eighteenth century, they had at their  
 disposal a variety of theories from which they could  
 draw on in the process of production of social and  
 historical knowledge on Africa. Most significantly,  
 these theories were located within two racial conceptual  
 frameworks deliberately designed to prop up the status  
quo, and which, in due course came to dominate  
 intellectual pursuits of the moment; the polygenetic and



monogenetic theories of the origins of the human family. These theories constituted a pseudo-scientific approach to the study of societies, conceived in extremist racial terms with the view of distorting the history of other world races. They were closely linked with the ascent of the Aryan Model and vehemently presided over the funeral ceremony of the Ancient Model.

The polygenesisists postulated that humankind had different origins. To justify this claim, they fell back on the Bible to authenticate this. According to the proponents of this view, the whites were supposed to have descended from Shem; the "Mongolians" being the children of Japheth and the Black the children of the disgraced Ham (see Genesis chapter 9). The monogenesisists on the other hand stressed the idea of common ancestry of the human family basing their argument chiefly on the mythical Genesis story of creation and the fall out of man with God. The monogenesisists posited that the differentiation in skin pigmentation among human beings could be explained as resulting from environmental conditions of the earth which affected all races. The black colour of the Africans was, therefore, caused by the intense rays of the sun. The Whites had their lighter colour because they happened to live far way from the intensity of the rays of the tropical sun. The intensity of the rays of the sun determined the level of melanin content in the

skin and in effect gave the concerned race its skin pigmentation.

Supported by the Genesis story of the cursed son-Ham, the polygenesisists and monogenesisists invented the Hamitic hypothesis (theory). The theory which had first appeared<sup>+</sup> in the Hebrew myths about sixth century was reworked and elaborated on in a manner that would afford it accommodation within the stereotypes of this new theory. It stipulated that the "Negro" race was doomed as a result of Noah's curse to his youngest son, Ham. The curse was manifest in the form of skin pigmentation of his descendants; those of Canaan's lineage. They were cursed to "blackness" and condemned to a state of perpetual sinfulness with his progeny relegated to degenerates. From then it was assumed, that the so-called Negro race was endowed with a distasteful physiognomical attribute and a concomitant uncouth character. In their view, this was an outcome of Ham's unbecoming behaviour as enumerated thus:

Now I cannot beget the fourth son whose children I would have ordered to serve you and your brother! Therefore it must be Canaan, your firstborn, whom they enslave. And since you have disabled me... doing ugly things in blackness of night, Canaan's children shall be born ugly and black! Moreover, because you twisted your head around to see my nakedness your grandchildren's hair shall be twisted in kinks, their eyes red; again because your lips jested

at my misfortune, theirs shall swell; and because you neglected my nakedness, they shall go naked, and their male members shall be shamefully elongated! Men of this race are called Negroes, their forefather Canaan commanded them to love theft and fornication, to be banded together in hatred of their masters (the whites) and never to tell the truth (Sander, cited in Ogot and Mwanzi, n.d:2 )

Typical of imperial historiography, was the use of disparaging and demeaning language in the description of African societies and cultures, as was demonstrated by a group of pioneering works by scholar-administrators who saluted the "civilising" impact of imperialism. The crowd of such praise-singers was largely seeking in ancient mythologies parallels that would be quickly drawn to support white supremacy on the continent (Falola, 1992:193). In ancient Hebrew mythology, they sought parallels which could be conveniently drawn on, and ancient stereotypes re-enacted and modified to fit in their epistemological framework. One such intellectual dishonesty is exemplified in a 16th century Hebrew stereotype about the African, which in the later periods of nurturing imperial historiography, was incorporated in the Hamitic theory. It states thus:

There is a people... like animals, eat of the herbs that grow on the banks of the Nile and their fields. They go about naked and have no intelligence of ordinary men.... They cohabit with their sisters and anyone they can find... they are taken as slaves and even sold in Egypt and neighbouring countries. These sons

of Ham are black slaves (Ibid).

With positivism asserting itself, coming as it did about the end of the 17th century with its clout on Europe, the study of social sciences and the humanities acquired its scientific characteristics. According to Auguste Comte (1798-1857), society was to be studied in the same way that the natural world was studied by the so-called positive sciences. The positivists argued that the scientific method should be applied to the study of society as well. In essence they argued, that science offered explanation as to the nature and behaviour of all things - hence the call for "ideal of unified science." Granted these developments and imbued with the spirit of "enlightenment", Western scholars appealed more to scientific theories to explain and expound on the nature of race relations - as well as the perceived existence of apparent physiological, technological and intellectual lacunae between the "superior" white race and "other" races. In this mud, emerged eminent Western scholars such as Voltaire and Rousseau to outrageously suggest that the "Negroes" were naturally intellectually inferior to the Europeans, citing the so-called inability of the Africans to conceive and invent ideas. Indeed, David Hume's expression is representative of the general Western prejudice over the Africans. He asserted thus:

There never was a civilized nation of any other complexion than white, nor even any individual eminent either in

action or speculation. No ingenious manufacturer amongst them (other races), no arts, no sciences (cited in Curtin op.cit 42:).

Other Western scientists notably, Buffon in the <sup>+</sup> 18th century with his study entitled Histoire naturelle, intended to demonstrate "the amazing similarities" between the ape and the human species. The results of the study were skewed to support the popularly held view of the time of the so-called Great Chain of Being and the close gradation between species. This view postulated that all species had a common ancestry. Buffon's study, among other naturalist studies attempted to fill in the hitherto, perceived, missing link between men and apes. To them the link was filled up by the "Negroe" - the African! To make their results more palatable to the audience to which the knowledge was directed, the proponents of the theory embarked on a search for archetypes in "autochonomous" or "aboriginal" Africans on whom to fix this label. In Africa, they readily found the Khoikhoi, "pigmyes", San and the so-called Negro. The archetypes, according to the notorious Western view, provided records about how to pattern early man's historical development. Harry Johnston was to assert of their conception in the following manner:

Africa in fact, is like a wonderful museum to illustrate the past conditions of life which existed in our own country and in Southern and Western Europe - and with mankind in

Africa it is the same thing (cited in Ogot, 1976:3).

While still working within the era of positivist amusement, the physical anthropologists asserted that the African was biologically inferior thus, incapable of realising change and progress- let alone instituting it. In fact, to them, it was futile to engage moral philosophers or other social theorists in the study of the African social phenomena simply because, the "natives" lacked morals. The best way to deal with the African, in their conception, was to seek to understand his "animal state ." In support of this claim, the physical anthropologists cunningly put forth the following argument concerning, for instance, the African woman:

... (she) could give birth without pain... (because) the Negro nervous system was generally less sensitive in matters of touch and taste, though not in eyesight. The Negro brain, bile and blood... (was also) of a different colour (sic) from those of other races... Negro sexual organs were larger (and) Negro women menstruated in greater quantity and with less disturbance than Europeans... (and) had long and pendulous breasts as inherited physical trait (Curtin, 1965:229).

+ +  
Racist overtones dominated the 18th and 19th century discourses on Africa. Within this milieu, grew theories propounded by philosophers such as Immanuel Kant who perceived four world races as constituting the human family-namely the; "white" (at the top), "Yellow",

"Negro" and the "Red Indian" at the bottom. He stated that in the beginning only existed one race - the White race! To prove his point, he devised a theory which he said explained the process that caused differences in skin pigmentation among world races. As for the Black race the theory asserted:

As a baby he (the African) is white. A few weeks after the baby is born, the colour, spreading out from the navel and the penis or vagina in concentric circles, begins turning black (cited in Neugebauer, 1991:252).

The intellectual labour that was employed to demonstrate how the African acquired his blackness was a deliberate effort aimed at fixing his (African) character within the framework of the Hamitic theory. By planting him firmly within the precincts of the Hamitic theory, it was possible to distort the facts of history in the interest of the colonizing Europe and hence give credence to the use of terms such as the; "primitive", "savage", "barbarian", "uncivilized" among others.

With the remarks of Kant and G.W.F. Hegel's Lectures of the Philosophy of World History, great damage had been done to the African's image. In his treatises, Hegel perceived of Africa as a continent enclosed within itself with no history of its own. According to him, Africans lived on the fringes of the unfolding "universal spirit" which walked the globe dictating and presiding over the course of history. This was because

the: "Africans knew no God or law; they had no state and consequently, they lived in appalling conditions characterized by disorder." Given this "disorder", there was no historical process in Africa. Indeed, this was qualified thus:

... in his undifferentiated and concentrated unity, (he) has not yet succeeded in making distinction between himself as an individual and his essential universality, so that he knows nothing of an absolute being which is other and higher than his own self. Thus man in Africa has not progressed beyond his immediate existence (Hegel, 1975:177).

It has been argued by Neugebauer (1991) that Hegel's treatises were not innocently conceived; that they aimed at the promotion of colonialism and more specifically, the German colonial ambition. This is no negation of most discourses hatched during the colonial period.

The racial pseudo-scientific theories continued to dominate the 19th century European scholarship. Among the most celebrated, and which seemed to substantiate claims by earlier studies was Social Darwinism. In his treatises, The Origin of Species and The Descent of Man in 1859 and 1871 respectively, Charles Darwin founded a theory which laid emphasis on the idea of struggle for existence among species. Given its appeal to European scholars of the moment, it asserted itself in their analyses of social phenomena. Human development was



thus assessed with the use of this measurement. With its postulation that the fittest species survived the challenges of environment, and that those which could not withstand those challenges perished in the process, it was quickly applied to the study of human races and race relations. In this calculus, the Africans were relegated to the bottom of the ladder allegedly because they were the most vulnerable of the human races and, therefore, could not withstand environmental hazards. With the emergence of this theory, the whites arrogated themselves an innate superiority over all other races.

Appearing as it did just before the infamous Berlin Conference, the theory turned out to be a great blessing and of service to European colonial ambitions.

It justified Europe's plunder of the rest of the world's resources in the name of the so-called White man's burden. This, consequently, found fulfilment in the overt act of partition of Africa. With the continent parcelled out to the different powers that came to hold sway over it, the theories were ennobled through researches undertaken within such disciplines as archaeology, anthropology, ethnography, etc as manifestations of the imperial grip on the African continent.

Formal colonialism brought with it the feeling of

patronage on the part of the imperialists. As a result, they quickly commissioned Western anthropologists to study African cultures with the view of totally manipulating the colonized people. These studies did not in any way renege on the theoretical foundations on which the colonial philosophy rested. Instead, the various studies undertaken seemed to confirm views and the position held by the imperial powers. Some of the anthropologists doubled up their roles as scholars and administrators in the service of the metropolitan governments. From these scholars and administrators who cherished the so-called civilizing mission of imperialism, emerged a corpus of anthropological knowledge on Africa; a literature that has had far reaching implications for the production of knowledge in East Africa (Tempels, 1959; Mbiti, 1969; p' Bitek, 1970; Hountondji, 1983).

Drawing heavily on the data provided by European missionaries, travellers and the so-called adventurers of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the anthropologists blended their findings with those of outstanding Western theorists like Frazer, Malinowski; Radcliffe - Brown among others. The information obtained in Africa was closely scrutinized at institutions established in Britain in 1926 and in France in 1943. These centres which serviced

colonialism included; The International African Institute (IAI) founded by Lord Lugard in Britain and, The Office for Scientific and Technical Research Overseas in France. In these institutes research was conducted with emphasis laid on the explanation and understanding of "other" cultures. Studies in these areas chiefly aimed at providing the colonial administrators with insights into the workings of contemporary structures and functions of different components (of African societies) as part of the integrated whole.

The Structural-functional school, in its approach, sought to demonstrate that it comprehended the problems pertaining to social change in the so-called primitive and backward societies. It was imperative to study the process of "cultural contact" between tribal and Western societies and the application of anthropological knowledge to the government of subject races (Ogot, 1976:4). This lends credence to the assertion that anthropology played an urgent role as lubricant to the imperial engine. It is no wonder then that Copans summarized its role thus:

The functioning of the colonial systems implied a minimum of knowledge of local societies and its effects upon them. The different theoretical tendencies (Malinowski, Radcliffe-Brown, Evans Pritchard) had this in common: an approach to societies as collections of institutions, of functional relations, or productions ... The need to

find political continuity in African society in order to ensure a beginning of indirect rule was the reason for political anthropology. "Find the chief", as Malinowski would have said, and in 1940 appeared African Political Systems (Copan, 1977:22).

Knowledge conceived in anthropological terms, and the related literature churned out during the colonial period should be viewed as largely supporting colonialism. It was in this light that important colonial works such as: Hopley's, Bantu Belief and Magic (1922); Placide Tempels, Bantu Philosophy, (1959); Gunter Wagner's, The Bantu of North Kavirondo, (1949); Sir Philip Mitchell's African Afterthoughts, (1954), among others emerged. This struggle to control the generation of knowledge couched in the colonial ideology, aimed mainly at maintenance of the status quo; the master-slave relationship between the colonizer and the colonized. The myth of the Greek "miracle" was constantly invoked during the colonial period in a variety of literature to pacify and to acquiesce Africans into accepting the status quo without question.

## 2.2 Implications of Pre-Classical, Classical and Colonial Discourses for the Development of African Historiography

The interpretative endeavour in African historiography has been defined variously at different levels in debates on the place of Africa in world history over the years. At one level some scholars have, in the attempt to produce knowledge, demonstrated the primacy of the

African initiative in the process of erecting the pillars of its own civilization. At another level, however, there has been a growing tendency to blindly adore the achievements of Western civilization and all that it professes. While the former enhanced a positive African self-image, the latter eroded his self-confidence, thus, systematically drafting African intellectuals into the culture of intellectual dependency. This was the obvious implications of the battle to control the production of knowledge which Africa has witnessed over the centuries.

In the process of interpreting and rewriting of the world's intellectual history, there has raged on the debate over the impact of ancient Egypt on the Graeco-Roman civilization and the creation of the myth, so-called the Greek miracle. Questions have been asked and attempts made to locate the possible African contribution to the building of classical civilization, and hence the indebtedness that Europe has to Africa of this legacy. The manifestations of these debates cannot be ignored given that they have come to bear a lot of influence on interpretative pursuits in African history significantly. Granted this development there is a demand for the exploration of the implications of pre-classical, classical and Colonial intellectual history for modern African thinking. Modern African thinkers

have underscored the importance of explaining this phenomenon in the following words:

It is a respectable academic tradition to be able to discover the Greek root of almost every important phenomenon of the modern world. It is always safe to say, "It all goes back to ancient Greece". This is often a myth-but it is a myth with a capacity to fulfil itself. A thinker starts suspecting that his thoughts have their roots in ancient Greece. He turns to the Greeks to find antecedents of his own thoughts. And before long his thinking is indeed affected and stimulated by what he reads of Greek ideas.... It is all bound up with the place of Greece in the total mythology of "European civilization", and the influence of this mythology on the course of African history (Mazrui, 1978: 81-82).

The Classical impact on the conception of ideas among African intellectuals has been tremendous. The influence has been to the extent that historical expositions and accounts both in Western and African Africanist historiographies show the heavy influence upon them by classical thinking. This apparent grip, together with the ethnocentricisms of all kinds, have characterised the intellectual products of some scholars interpreting and rewriting African history. This, being as observed in the preceding paragraphs, the result of the reliance on substantive data provided by the Graeco-Roman literature available, and of which they have been quick to fall back onto for supportive evidence. This explains why certain Western Africanist scholars have, in many instances, sought to support Western stereotypes about Africa by invoking the eminence of the Greek

"miracle" in world intellectual history. Conversely, it explains the crystallization of African nationalist sentiments in the realm of scholarship to dislodge the grotesque and persistent appearance of ancient Greek thought in Western historiography on Africa (Diop, 1977; Amayo, 1977, 1982; Mazrui, 1977, 1986a; Odele, 1981; Mwanzi, 1987; Aseka, 1990a, 1992; Ochwada 1991a, c; Kakai, 1992; Gimode, 1993).

Each group of historiographers has reacted differently to this so-called Greek miracle. In the process, they have selected and sifted the evidence best suited to their interests and ideologies. In the end, however, none of the groups has managed to untie this knot. This clearly shows the monumental task a historian faces in his attempt to reconstruct ancient African history without even a cursory reference to classical literature.

Western Africanist historiographers opining that Africa was ahistoric drew heavily on aspects in classical literature which demeaned Africa's heritage. According to them evidence that Egyptians were black testifies to the fact that Africans were "primitive" and "backward".

Some scholars, for example, Mauny (1968), maintain that the allusion to the Egyptians' complexion as being black by the Classical writers, was in later African

historiography, manipulated by some Africanist scholars to blend it with the predominant ideology within given period of time to reflect their interests. To him, the general consensus among Egyptians was that their country comprised a population with diverse racial backgrounds - the semitic, Aryan and the "Negroe". Given this state of mind and the demands of the Western audience for which the cherished knowledge was produced, Mauny dismissed the idea that Africa bequeathed to ancient Europe its civilization. Indeed, it has been argued that this school of thought writes exclusively for:

...an audience which has negative images about Africa and whose conviction is that Western civilization dawned with apocalyptic bloom of the so-called Greek miracle (Aseka, 1992:2).

However, another strand within the broad category of Western historiographical tradition, comprising faithful disciples of classical revelation, assert that the denial of Africa a place in world history, was an outcome of conspiracy by some Western scholars to justify the enslavement and brutalization of Africans. This epistemology carried no tangible and supportive evidence from pre-classical or even classical sources to validate the claim. It was concluded, therefore, that this view could only be associated with the intellectual shifts that were a predominance of the age of romanticism and the concept of progress (Bernal, 1987a:67). This school of thought which positively



portrays Africa's history, has been referred to as comprising "the friends of Africa." These Western Africanists include Thomas Hodgkins, Basil Davidson, Martin Bernal among others. Their writings have attracted wide readership being cited extensively in African historical studies - both in the West and Africa. They have no doubt significantly impinged upon the development of African historiography per se.

African scholars have reacted to the Greek mystique variously. Some, like Leopold Senghor seem to have been mesmerised by it to the extent of exclaiming that: "Emotion is African as Reason is Hellenic " (Mazrui, 1978). Senghor, it is obvious, fell prey to Western machinations since he viewed Westerners as more intellectually endowed than Africans to whom, he concedes, reason is alien. In the Senghorian view, the African is incapable of comprehending abstract philosophical and scientific concepts and hence, he is not able to invent anything comparable to the Europeans.

The African mind in this context, is corked and has to be uncorked through the brainwashing process of Western colonial educational system. This is how the Greek mystique was negatively smuggled into African thinking and came to manifest itself at different levels of varying degrees even within our university education

system, constituting in the process, a crisis of identity among our intellectuals. It was thus reproduced at different levels of our educational system to a pathological extent that a common citizen, consequently associated all aspects of excellence in his every day life to have originated from the West. This notion of cultural relativism of knowledge has, over time had complex implications for the development of African historiography in Africa.

Some African historiographers have come to accept, albeit naively, the diminutive reference to African history and culture as "ethno-history". This "ethno" phenomenon perpetuates the notion of "otherness" - the racial uniquenesses of cultures and the specificity of concept formation. The idea of "otherness" has engendered the production of texts on the so-called African philosophy such as: Placide Tempels', Bantu Philosophy; Marcel Griaule's, Conversations with Ogotemeli; John Mbiti's, African Religions and Philosophy among others. These texts constitute a potential source for the reconstruction of intellectual history in Africa. These sources, if used without purging them of the negative attributes to pre-colonial Africa, may reinforce the decadent notion of a "backward" and "primitive" Africa. Indeed, this has been the case with the production of social and historically related knowledge, as exemplified in some

writings (Odera-Oruka 1990, 1991). These are the wider implications of the classical phenomenon for the generation of knowledge in Africa. However, not all African scholars reacted to the Greek "Miracle" in the same way. Others like Cheik Anta Diop, the Senegalese physicist-cum-historian opted, without compromise, to battle it out with Western historiographers over the issue of Africa's ahistoricity, and in his own words he avered:

I have devoted my life to redynamise culture in the most diverse domains such as history, languages equally for the past, the present and future (cited in Wamba - dia - Wamba, 1989:18).

Mesmerised with the achievements of Western Europe and the entire Western world, while at the same time manipulating the myth of Greek eminence one of his detractors unleashed the following scathing remark on Diop's doctoral thesis on the African origin of civilization:

... one would have thought after reading his doctoral thesis that Diop would have put water in his wine and that the advice of his professors... would have taken root. This is not the case, as I realised when listening to a lecture given by Diop on April 19, 1960 at Dakar.... Now, what may be permissible to a student or a young secondary school teacher is not permissible to the Doctor es lettres, who can, by virtue of his title begin teaching in a university.... I feel it is my duty, whatever pain it may cause both of us, to say openly what others do not, out of politeness or for other reasons (Mauny, 1968:16).

Mauny (Ibid) did not stop at this scathing attack, instead, he went ahead to disprove Diop's thesis drawing evidence from the same classical sources that Diop used. However, this did not deter Diop from his endeavour. He went ahead to assemble massive scientific evidence to support his contention that ancient African civilization watered the intellectual fields of the primitive cultures of Europe and the Near East. Diop's thesis has been supported ably by treatises of among others, Gabriel K. Osei (1964).

The production of social and historical knowledge in East Africa no doubt reflects the influence of Diop's brand of reaction to the fallacy of the Greek mystique.

Among the notable scholars to have conceived their discourses in the same vein as Diop's are: Amayo (1977, 1982), Mazrui (1978, 1986a, b) Olela (1981, 1989), Osotsi (1985), Thairu (1985), Mwanzi (1987), Wamba-dia-Wamba (1989) Mailu (1989), Aseka (1990a, 1992), Caetanya (1990), Nangoli (1990), Kamenju (1990a, b,c,d), Ochwada (1991a,b,c,e), Kakai (1992) and Gimode (1993). All these studies underscore the importance of the pre-classical and classical documents to the generation of historical knowledge on ancient Africa as complimentary sources. It should be noted that this conception of world history is an attempt to emancipate Africa from

the absurd imperialist grip it has on the dissemination of ideas.

That philosophy of colonial discourses, as such, aimed at the maintenance of the status quo of; the master-slave relationship between the Europeans and Africans. The relations they entered into were reworked constantly to reflect the new realities in the development characterizing the lopsided global race relations. Consequently, Western scholarship continued to reproduce the already created image of Western eminence via the Western educational systems established on the continent. It has been observed, for instance, that to this day:

...modern education in Africa suffers from two acute failings. It is both too foreign and too rationalist. It is both too foreign partly because a high proportion of educational innovators are still foreign. As for the African university itself, it is too rationalist for reasons connected with precisely its Western ancestry. The ethos of Western University system puts a special premium on a form of rationality which aspires to neutral universalism. (Mazrui, 1978:202).

Mazrui's observation demonstrates the extent to which the colonial legacy in terms of colonial institutions with its peculiar body of knowledge contributed towards shaping subsequent African colonial historiography and other historiographies. This explains why the African past is bound to continue being viewed through Western lens. We seem to be so imprisoned by Western ethos

that we are unable to moot paradigms of analyses outside the Western conceptual frameworks.

Moreover, in areas where Africans had been deeply acculturated into Western norms and values, and where, in some peculiar way, they shared the "fruits of colonialism" to the extent of sufficiently being socialized as a class, the African educated elite sought to carve out a historical path of their own with the view of endearing themselves to the colonists. This amply explains why:

...local histories and traditions were collected, sometimes with great assiduousness, and published locally. They reflected the outlook of their authors, often championing the interest of a particular pre-colonial state, ethnic entity or important family or chiefs and were generally under heavy influence of a christian mission education (Freund, 1984:3).

In such histories, myths would be created to demonstrate the link between the conscientized people and the colonialist. Furthermore, the authors of the texts would illustrate their superiority above other colonized people to legitimize their hegemony over others. Such was the case with the histories of the so-called centralized states (Swai, 1990). This is in part, what the Western educational system has reinforced and bequeathed us.

No wonder that our tools of academic inquiry in the human and social sciences have their origins in Western scholarly traditions. Most of our intelligentsia either studied in the West or was trained by imperialist scholars. In essence, this is the source of our intellectual dependence. The period following the end of Second World War was particularly important in the creation of this dependency. This period witnessed the growth of interest in African studies in the Western World as a means of circumventing the nationalist forces that were threatening to upset the colonial status quo; due to the growing momentum of the deconolonization process.

For instance, in North America, Melville Herskovitts established a centre of African studies at Northwestern University in 1948 - others followed suit. In Europe, about the same time, the chair of African history was set up at the School of Oriental and African Studies of London University. Other universities in imperial metropolises such as France and Germany followed closely behind.

By the 1960s, quite a sizeable number of European and Americans were engaged in field research in Africa. The projects were mainly funded by their home governments and institutions of higher learning. Out of such

endeavours emerged journals like the; Journal of African History, and The Canadian Journal of African Studies. Furthermore reputable foundations in the Western World such as Ford and Rockefeller set aside funds to recruit young African scholars to study in European and American institutions, while at the same time strengthening social science departments on the African continent. Achola summarises this situation thus:

... (there) was the increasing admission of African Students to pursue their university education in European or American universities. American universities became particularly accessible to many African students after the United States emerged as the world's dominant political power of the Second World War. Anticipated political independence for African dependencies and the need by European colonial powers to retain some influence, and the United States' desire for extending its international influence as a hegemonic power, all combined to promote Western University education among Africans (Achola, 1990:17-18).

Given this development, the discourses in the academia emerging within the decolonization drama seemed to be "friendly" towards the Africans. In the main, however, studies such as Robinson and Gallagher (1961), Gann and Duignan (1969, 1970) and the Cambridge series on African history laboured to demonstrate the primacy of "modernization" in moulding African societies. They apologised for imperial presence on the continent - they stressed the balance sheet approach to the study of African history; that Africans benefited from colonialism. They asserted that because pre-colonial



Africa was "backward":

Thus Europe was beckoned, lured, forced into Africa. An Africa where life was nasty, brutish and short; a steamy desolate continent immobilised by primitive agriculture and technology and frail static subsistence economics. Colonialism promised to hurl Africa from centuries of backwardness that catalyst of progress, the market system (Zezeza, 1986:187).

African universities were therefore, established largely to manipulate the elites already socialized in the Western values. The universities were custodians of modernization on the continent. Although the university system was more suited to the European, it could still serve Africans without negating its canonical philosophy of "civilizing" the Africans. With this consideration, African Universities were created as extensions or overseas colleges of universities in Europe. Indeed, Bonaventure Swai reflecting on the impact of colonial institutions on the generation of knowledge in East Africa, laments:

... like what for decades had been taught in schools ... albeit under the rubric of the ideology of development, was nothing short of a continuation of the mission to civilize which had been the hallmark of the colonial era (Swai, 1980b: 32).

For many years after the establishment of African universities, African institutions of learning continued to be staffed with European scholars brought up in Western academic culture. Some of the staff came as a form of aid to developing nations! It has been argued

further that:

... these scholars propagated a cosmic view that was strongly Eurocentric (Western tailored). As (social science) disciplines that deal with human values and belief systems... as taught in institutions of higher learning were tainted with European modes of thought (Achola, op.cit: 17).

This intellectual dependency engendered the perpetuation of a somewhat deformed image of Africa even among African intellectuals. At independence, a new academic garb was acquired; it was manifested in theoretical and methodological approaches to the study of African societies of the past. It sought to demonstrate how observable trends in this period contributed to the present conditions. Most paradigms in use in African studies, have their origins in Western metropolises including the Soviet Union. African problems were, therefore, formulated within the ideology of Western specificity. Consequently, conceptual frameworks were conceived at that level. This is the legacy of colonial historiography which has culminated in the production of a neo-colonial history. It was a history which pretended to embrace neutrality in the process of generating social and historical knowledge. Yet no knowledge is objectively conceived given that the advancement of knowledge is undertaken within a specific world-view. This has been underscored as follows:

Facts are considered natural and are therefore given an ontological status. The fact that events arise and develop as part of a social whole is disregarded. The observation that "no reading is innocent" and that "plainly put, every interpretation involves its own theoretical and political presuppositions" is forgotten. Facts are "themselves theoretical constructs". They are neither the beginning nor the end of investigation (Temu and Swai, 1981: 113).

Colonial historiography produced a body of knowledge which, it regarded as "authentic" account of the African past. These facts according to them, were indisputable. All was done under the rubric of empiricist methodologies which aimed at promoting and sustaining colonial capitalism. This provoked Temu and Swai to lament of colonialism thus:

... the constituent elements of the capitalist system will only be understood if the mechanisms of the system itself are clear in our minds. This is because the system presents itself in a way that is and is not. So too, do its articulated parts.... Such considerations have not been taken seriously in professional Africanist history. The discipline was brought into existence as an ideological intervention against colonial historiography which in most cases was treated in reductionist terms (Ibid: 114).

Since colonial historiography treated the African past contemptuously, the analyses after independence were preoccupied with refutations, largely using the same yardstick as the colonial scholars. A good example, is the debate on modes of production which some African historians used to measure progress or "development," The Marxist schema of historical explanation is not

absolved from this charge either; as the dependency and underdevelopment theory, articulation of modes of production or otherwise. The point we are emphasizing is that out of the colonial experience and the literature produced within that period, emerged diverse approaches in the attempt to control knowledge by both the ruled and the rulers. Notwithstanding all these efforts, neo-colonial historiography has demonstrated its recalcitrant nature in influencing discourse on the African past. Indeed, the application of Western science in analysing African societies has been seen, as seeking:

... to remake Africa in the Western image; (analysing and evaluating) Africa through the prism of idealized Western conditions and experience. Africa (becoming) an exotic laboratory for testing and confirming the universality of Western social science. Africa did not exist in and of herself. It became a simplified and crude outgrowth of the Western imagination (Sindiga and Zeleza, 1985:2).

We have continued to pursue knowledge on Africa within Western conceptual frameworks. This fact is supported by the persistence of colonial thinking in our discourses as we generate social and historical knowledge. The reason for this, it has been asserted, is partly because, history teachers and researchers in Africa have divorced themselves from the responsibility of deciding on the relevant research topics and methodology that would provide them with the relevant answers to the questions they pose, and which are

pertinent to African problems. The essence of this argument is that African history has been problematized in the Westerner's world-view, conceptions, and prescriptions.

As a result, the interpretation of African history has been largely surrendered to the expatriates who, seated comfortably in American or European universities and other institutions, have continued to churn out paradigms of analyses which have been imported into Africa with broad implications for African historical studies. Africa has been caught up in the intellectual dependency which has resulted in the erection of false problematics.

This neo-colonial tendency has reproduced a scholarly relations in which the African scholars involved in the process of production of knowledge, have done so under the patronage of the European experts. In this arrangement themes and even research agendas have been dictated to them. A cursory look at project advertisements from the West sent to tertiary institutions of learning in Africa, will reveal the imperialist tactics and designs of pursuing knowledge to its exclusive advantage. Sometimes even after research has been conducted by the African scholars in this unjust division of intellectual labour, the findings

have to go through the harsh Western editorial requirements, which purge it of epistemological arguments considered, in the Western view, inimical to the preservation of the status quo; and also that which threatens to flex the neo-colonial grip on Africa at the intellectual, political and economic levels. Lately perhaps to have betrayed vulnerability to such Western machination is a paper that was jointly presented to the Professors World Peace Academy (PWPA) by two historians, Prof. O.J.E. Shiroya and Dr. E. M. Aseka decrying the grotesque neo-colonial grip on African intellectuals through the school system. The ideas contained in the paper have apparently been suppressed by the high handedness of editorial paternalism of Western Scholars (Shiroya and Aseka, 1990).

However, Western scholars contend that their role in this arrangement is to moderate a body of knowledge that is highly susceptible to "ethnocentrism and other biases that would render knowledge produced by Africans highly subjective." This neo-colonial paternalism over African intellectual has not spared even the UNESCO project on the General History of Africa series. In this connection, the presence of Westerners on the project has been apologised for, by one of its leading editors in the following manner:

On balance the UNESCO project does not assume that there should be a preponderance of

Africans studying Africa, but it also seems to accept the necessity of the moderating influence of non-African scholars. After all, the supervising international committee has of necessity to be one-third non-African. Those non-African members of the committee include historians from countries such as the German Federal Republic, Italy, Czechoslovakia, the Soviet Union, the United States, Singapore, and the United Kingdom. All the non-Africans are of course Africanists - that is to say, they are scholars who are devoting a large part of their academic work to the study of Africa.... The actual historians chosen to write the chapters are also only preponderantly Africans rather than exclusively African... the meetings of the Executive sub-committee, the Bureau, need not take place within the African continent and are quite often scheduled at UNESCO headquarters in Paris (Mazrui, 1979a: 12).

This way, the West continues to dominate the interpretation and dissemination of social and historical knowledge, given the paternalist tendencies over African scholars by their Western counterparts. Radically opposed ideas to European world-view, are not allowed to emerge in the process.

While it is true to assert that colonial historiography largely endeavoured to whimsically satiate the West's appetite, it is conversely true to state that some African intellectuals who had received training in Western institutions challenged and also tried to modify Western paradigms on the existing body of knowledge in their own interests. Examples of such efforts are illustrated in works like Walter Rodney's, How Europe Underdeveloped Africa among others. Borrowing from

Marxist teachings, together with others Rodney ennobled the dependency and underdevelopment perspectives to explain Africa's state of underdevelopment. This characterised the battle for control of knowledge which continues to date. An appraisal of this nature, therefore, cannot ignore these aspects which explain the general development of African historiography.

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## CHAPTER THREE

## 3.0 THE BLACK DIASPORA AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF AFRICAN HISTORIOGRAPHY.

## 3.1 Introduction

In discussing the development of African historiography, one is likely to encounter great difficulties in explaining its course, without making cursory references or recouring, altogether, to the philosophical contribution of Africans in diaspora to the general body of knowledge on the African past. In the early nineteenth century there was a growing interest among Black intellectuals to review their heritage in a positive light. The broad significance of these developments has been underscored thus:

The nineteenth century was a crucial period for [B]lack men, because of the disquieting forces of slavery and imperialism at work in America and Africa. During the century, [B]lack leaders emerged in both Africa and America to challenge white power to prevent the complete subjugation of their race (Griffith, 1975:1).

Moreover, it was maintained by the crop of the early writers that the reconstruction of a positive view of the African past was long overdue. As a necessary prerequisite for people of African ancestry, to cultivate a positive self-conception, they required a functional conception on which they could rely for self-determination. This conception is what has been observed as:

... an African search for African emancipation in a world where the

African humanity was, in the main, denied or curtailed. These struggles included those against the slave trade and its attendant anti [B]lack people ideologies and practices, later, white racism: white supremacists ideologies and practice; those against the imperialist partition of Africa for pan-African unity; those against the imperialist destruction and denigration of African cultures and civilization.... The African point-of-view grew out of the global treatment (or mistreatment) of Africa at a time when the whole world history depended on this mistreatment for further transformation (Wamba-dia-Wamba, 1986:59).

The need for reconstruction of the glories of the African past is apparent. A sense of achievement is important as a stimulus for the general demand towards achieving equality of racial treatment. This would result in the elevation of their lot as a racial group in the human family. However, this was not possible in the absence of a unifying ideology of all people of African descent. Consequently, Black intellectuals, especially those in America came up with a pan-African perspective. With time, this became an ideology behind which African peoples in the diaspora and those in Africa would eventually rally behind to fight institutionalised white racism. Racism had facilitated the nurturing of a false consciousness that they belonged to a race condemned to serve the lighter-skinned races of the world in perpetuity. Other forms of consciousness in the mould of pan-Africanism, included the idea of Negritude which embraced the ideal

of African exceptionalism in cultural aspects as compared to the European culture. Negritude, was a cultural re-assertion aimed at bolstering the African self-image basing its inspiration on the African past and culture.

Our primary concern in this chapter is not to trace the history of the pan-Africanist idea. It aims at demonstrating how it has, over the years, manifested itself in and characterized the African mode of thought. It offers an alternative world-view from that of the European. The European view emphasized slavery and colonialism. This idea was conceived within the currency of mercantilist thought and was to reach its climax in the nineteenth century. It emerged out of the Africans' experiences both in the diaspora and the continent.

Pan-Africanism was, essentially, an antithesis to the ugly picture that was painted of the Africans in the existing racist literature. That is why Raymond Betts states:

The History of Africa in the modern world is charged with drama and wracked with suffering. Undergoing a diaspora more tragic than that endured by the Jewish people, the Africans were forced, with the advent of slave trade, into the most widespread involuntary migration the world has known. They were forced to assume habits and social patterns of the alien cultures into which they were intruded. Those who remained in Africa underwent a much less severe but still disorienting

experience when European imperialism spread over the continent at the end of the nineteenth century.... Everywhere he found himself, the [B]lack was thus placed in a psychologically disturbing and socially oppressive system. He was told that he had no past, at least no past worth recording; he was told that his future depended upon his ability to imitate the very peoples who had enslaved him (Betts, 1971:v).

It was natural, therefore, that radical Black intellectuals in the diaspora responded ideologically to these apparently condescending assertions. An attempt was made to define a culture and social order that would respond to the needs of African people in the diaspora and on the continent. It was a duty that African intellectuals in the diaspora assigned themselves, to assess the entire domain of their African heritage and to restore dignity to people of African descent globally.

This explains why, in most discourses conceived by Africans of the diaspora on world history, the primacy of African cultural contribution to world civilization is given due attention. Hence, the historical search of their roots, extending back to the ancient Nile civilizations among others began.

Different approaches were adopted by the Africans in the diaspora to reconstruct their past. Their interest grew and may have varied in their diverse approaches. Yet they all aimed at dignifying the African person anew

wherever he was. Most of their discourses were, in essence, couched in the ideology of blackness.

### 3.1.1 The Crystallization of the Black Ideology

African political consciousness and solidarity as a weapon to combat white racism globally is a collective effort stemming from the common link among Black people on the continent. African communality was rudely interrupted as those in the diaspora were enslaved. The remaining lot on the continent, underwent the dehumanising experiences of colonialism. These minimized the Africans' participation in political, social and economic activities of their communities.

Slavery and colonialism provides us with the background against which one may explain the formulation and development of the Black ideology.

Given the dehumanising experiences through which the Black man lived in the white-dominated world, it became logical for him to react to this form of discrimination by a racial counterpoise. "Black is beautiful". Black intellectuals quickly recognised the need to appeal to Black ethnocentrism as, perhaps the most viable means of social and cultural escape from the centuries-long deliberate white-subordination of Blacks. Hence the ideology of Blackness, in constitution, was the ideology of revolt and redress. It quickly manifested itself:

... in terms of romantic literature dedicated to an idealized [B]lack type and [B]lack past, defining itself in terms of philosophical assessment of [B]lack experience, and searching for that metaphysical quality which W.E.B Du Bois has called "the soul beauty of a race" (Ibid :3).

The crystallization of Black ideology has a long history extending back over several centuries. While tracing this history, some scholars have asserted that the development of pro-Black ideas began in the nineteenth century. This had its roots in the Trans-Atlantic, middle passage experiences with African people and those while in diaspora. Back on the continent, they shared colonial experiences characterized by oppression at the hands of the white man (Shepperson, 1968; Shiroya, 1992.) Indeed the ideas were not manifestly a one-way affair as both Blacks on the continent and those in the diaspora were starkly involved in collectively heightening the consciousness of all Black peoples amidst their experiences in the two worlds.

Two strands in the ideological development of Black-awareness are discernible; firstly, the intellectuals involved in the formulation of the ideology were generally scattered globally without a clearly defined school of thought. Yet their philosophy had positive consequences in refining later day Black thought. Secondly, Black people attempted to co-ordinate activities of the scattered scholars by organizing Pan-

Africanist conferences in early twentieth century. Perhaps the most important move to profoundly influence the development of the ideology of Blackness on the African continent in the later years was this Pan-Africanist movement.

These two periods may be identified as constituting the era of racial awakening and consolidation of solidarity among the people of African ancestry wherever they were. One, therefore, can comfortably state that it was a period that witnessed the search of the Black man's identity in his past and the need to "go back to Africa". All of these culminated in the emergence of a sizeable Black press and literature highlighting the general Black plight both in America and the West Coast of Africa. Suffice it to say, the contributions of leading Black intellectuals to the generation of knowledge and the catalysing of Black awareness is immense. These were: Edward Wilmot Blyden, Martin Robinson Delany, J.E. Casely Hayford, Marcus Aurelius Garvey, W.E.B. Du Bois, Booker T. Washington, Bishop H.M. Turner, Bishop Samuel Crowther and Bishop James Johnson and John Edward Bruce among others.

Meanwhile, of significance to note, is the fact that during the nineteenth and the early part of the twentieth centuries a bevy of Black intellectuals in America used the wealth of resources at their disposal

to enrich their African counterparts' perception of their past by founding historical associations. For example, in 1911, John Edward Bruce, a journalist in New York, founded the "Negro Society for Historical Research." In addition Carter G. Woodson, a Harvard trained historian, founded the "Association of the Study of Negro Life and History" and was founder-editor of its organ, The Journal of Negro History.

Woodson, no doubt, among other intellectuals in the diaspora aroused Black awareness. His contribution has been summarized in the following words:

He was in constant contact with a large number of African intelligentsia from various African countries in West, Central and Southern African. These links between Old and New World Africans, in the chain of ideas eventually led to political pan-Africanism which emphasized political action in order to solve economic and social problems confronting African peoples in the European-controlled modern world (Shiroya 1992:18).

In the latter years, not only were the intellectual efforts of such illustrious sons of Africa confined to America but were also-exported to the African continent where institutions of higher learning sought to entrench these nationalist perspectives. These culminated in the establishment of nationalist academic programmes in the immediate post-colonial states of Africa. This study will be considering this shortly.



Nevertheless, perhaps the most crucial among the intellectuals in the diaspora who sought to articulate forcefully the need to forge a lasting solidarity with continental Africans in attempt to challenge the epistemological status quo, was Martin Robinson Delany. A one time journalist, Harvard medical student, Union Army Major and explorer of the Niger. As early as 1843, Delany was already editing Mystery, highlighting the plight of Blacks in America. It has been observed, for instance, that:

As editor of the Mystery, whether writing about slavery or politics, Delany uncompromisingly attacked individuals and institutions. But his assault on racial enemies was even more evident when he co-edited the North Star with Fredrick Douglass from 1847 to 1849. ...Delany was impressed by the opportunity to work with the greatest [B]lack antislavery advocate of his time that he relinquished his editorship of the Mystery to join Douglass in the publication of North Star (Griffith, 1975:7).

Delany was starkly involved in the whole process of political awakening of Black people world-wide. He argued and believed that with political awareness, and the expansion of frontiers of knowledge among Blacks world-wide it would be possible to change the White man's attitude towards them. He certainly envisaged a kind of political awakening among Black men in international terms. This made him, outstanding among the first Black intellectuals to contribute to the evolution of the Black ideology. He earned himself the affectionate title of "Father of Black Nationalism".

Writing in his seminal work, The Condition, Elevation, Emigration, and Destiny of the Colored People of the United States, published in 1853, Delany averred:

The time has now fully arrived, when the coloured race is called upon by all ties of common humanity, and all the claims of consummate justice, to go forward and take position, and do battle in the struggle now being made for the redemption of the world ....Our race is to be redeemed; it is a great glorious work, and we are the instrumentalities by which it is to be done (cited in Betts, op.cit : 4).

Delany's efforts did not waste away with successive years, but were carried over by another of Africa's illustrious sons, Edward Wilmot Blyden who had his education in the USA, and emigrated to Liberia in 1851. The cause of emigration was basically racially motivated, given the discrimination he underwent in the USA. He later, based his Africanist perspectives on his agonizing experiences. He played a leading role in the formative years of this Black ideology, a profound Black-awareness. Given his experiences both in the diaspora and on the colonized African continent, his earnesty to chart out a programme of action to right this condition is understandable.

His belief rested on the need to re-create the African world in which the Black man would regain his dignity. This dignity eroded over the years by persistent White prejudice. He then encouraged Black repatriation with a

hope to build a model African state that would lead the rest in forging a lasting unity for the Black man's advancement. This idea was seemingly a tall order. It significantly paved way for a fresh assessment of the question of Black solidarity. Thus, the terrain for pan-Africanism had been laid.

Blyden did not at any one time pretend about the rejuvenation of past African institutions. To him, the revitalization of these institutions and the need to re-assess their pertinence in modern setting provided the basic rationale for a Black Renaissance.

At the philosophical level, Blyden did not shy away from challenging the white racists. On one occasion in a series of addresses, delivered in the USA in May, 1880, entitled; "Ethiopia stretching out Her Hands unto God: Or, Africa's Service to the World", Blyden defiantly challenged the Hegelian disparaging treatise about Africa. He stated:

Africa is no vast island, separated by an immense ocean from other parts of the globe, and cut off through the ages from the men who have made and influenced the destinies of mankind. She has been closely connected, both as a source and nourisher, with some of the most potent influences which have affected for good the history of the world (cited in Shepperson, 1982:48).

In his, A Vindication of the African Race, published in 1857, Blyden dismissed the Hamitic myth which was

gaining currency among white racist scholars in the  
 + nineteenth century as a fabrication. In this view, he  
 asserted:

... it must be proved that the curse was pronounced upon Ham himself... that it was pronounced upon each of his sons individually...(and) if pronounced upon Canaan, that he was the only offspring of Ham... We know that no one of these was fact (cited in Mudimbe, 1988:108).

There is no doubt, therefore, that Blyden's choice of Liberia as his home had a profound impact upon the intellectuals with whom he socialized such as his contemporaries; the Gold Coast lawyer, Casely-Hayford and the Nigerian Minister Mojola Agbebi.

Together, they elevated the African perceptual horizons through their writings and contributed to the emergence of a new and positive self-image of the African self. African Scholars and statesmen in independent Africa like Leopold Sedar Senghor and Kwame Nkrumah, borrowed extensively from the products of these nourishing philosophical reflections of Blyden (Shepperson, 1982; Mudimbe, 1988). Leopold Sedar Senghor's, On African Socialism (1964) and Kwame Nkrumah's, Consciencism (1964) are highly indebted to Edward W. Blyden. In later years African historians were to be inspired by "heroes" of independence who heavily influenced their interpretation of history. Negritude manifested itself in many works of scholars seeking to demonstrate the

specificity of the African condition. Black intellectuals who have contributed to the evolution of the process of historical thought in East Africa and Africa in general are numerous. However, this study outlines only those outstanding ones. On the list is included W.E.B Du Bois, a historian by profession and a man of immense learning. He had a knack of prose and had a unique style. He was a prolific author of several works. These included; Suppression of the African Slave Trade (1896), The Negro (1915), Black Folk Then and Now (1940) and The World and Africa (1946). W.E. B. Du Bois was concerned with the conditions of the Black people both in the diaspora and Africa. He sought to restore their dignity by writing on African history both in diaspora and on the continent. Du Bois seemed to have realized the utility of historical knowledge in restoring dignity to the African. He writes:

The shadow of a mighty Negro past flits through the tale of Ethiopia the shadowy and of Egypt the Sphinx. Throughout history, the powers of single [B]lack men flash here and there like falling stars, and die sometimes before the world has rightly gauged their brightness (Du Bois, 1971:48).

Besides being a prolific writer, Du Bois demonstrated his organizational prowess when he influenced the transformation of the 1900 Pan-African Congress, called by Sylvester Williams, into a formidable movement for

the liberation of the entire Black world. Through his National Association for the Advancement of Coloured People (NAACP), he urged the Afro-Americans to approach the question of race in international terms. He was opposed to the parochial approach it had taken because it gave primacy only to domestic American problems of race.

Teaming up with leaders like George Padmore, Peter Abrahams, Kamuzu Banda, Kwame Nkrumah, Jomo Kenyatta among others, he played an instrumental role in the organization of the Fifth Pan-African Congress which was held in Manchester in 1945. One of the resolutions of the congress, urged the intellectuals in the colonies and the educated elites generally to play their part in organizing the masses. There was, perhaps, no other better way than writing educative articles in the press. Alternatively, those ideas would be disseminated through educational institutions as did Kenyatta at Githunguri Teachers College. A similar undertaking was by the renowned scholar Gabriel K. Osei the author of The Forgotten Great Africans (1965) and Fifty Unknown Facts About the African (1966).

Other Black intellectuals who played exemplary roles in solidifying the ideology of Blackness included Marcus Garvey a Jamaican-born African. He was deeply involved

in the Pan-African Movements' activities, during which he immersed himself in readings on Africa and its people. Following this, he founded the Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA); an association charged with the responsibility of alleviating the condition of the Black man globally. Prior to that, Garvey edited a number of papers such as, Watchman and La Nationale. When he went to London in 1912, he met an Egyptian journalist called Duse Muhammed Ali, a publisher of the Africa Times and Orient Review. The latter invited Garvey to serve as editor of his magazine.

While in London, Garvey broadened his perspective on the whole issue of race relations by involving himself in self-help projects to alleviate the Africans' condition. Noting the condition under which Black people lived and the hostility towards them:

... he decided to take time off from the magazine and travel around Europe. He found the same old story! He hurried back to London and invited Ali to his apartment one week-end. "Muhammed my brother, we have to do something if our race is to survive! If Europe is for Europeans, Asia for Asians, then WHY NOT AFRICA FOR AFRICANS?" Ali looked on in despair as if to say that is the way it is... (Nangoli, 1990: 89-90).

That signified the birth of Africa for Africans philosophy which Garvey espoused thence henceforth. He envisaged this as the best means to solve the problems

of race which subjected the African to discriminatory experiences in subordinated livelihood. He convinced himself that this objective could be realized through the UNIA which was formed in 1914. In part, the aims and objectives of UNIA read thus:

To establish a Universal Confraternity among the race; to promote the spirit of race pride and love; to reclaim the fallen; to administer and assist the needy; to assist in civilizing the backward tribes of Africa (sic); to assist in development of independent Negro nations and communities; to establish a central nation for the race; to establish commissaries or agencies in the principal countries and cities of the world for the representation of all Negroes; to promote a conscientious spiritual worship among the native tribes of Africa (sic); establish universities, colleges, academies and schools for the racial education and culture of the people; to work for better conditions among Negroes everywhere (cited in Geiss, 1974:265).

Garvey made tremendous efforts in an attempt to realize his stated objectives. He created subordinate organizations to prop up the activities of UNIA. He sought to make Blacks in America and Africa self-reliant by starting the Black Star Line in 1891, a shipping line operated exclusively by Blacks. Its shares were also sold in Africa.

Garvey's most important writings, speeches and epigrams were compiled by his wife, Amy Jacques Garvey and stored in, Philosophy and Opinions of Marcus Garvey. These discourses had a far reaching impact on Black thought particularly among on African-born intellectuals. Geiss



recognized this by stating:

His attempt to overcome the century-old inferiority complex which sprang from slavery and his emphatic commitment to Africa had a fascination of young intellectuals in Africa as well as for students at American [N]egro colleges and universities who came from Africa (Azikiwe and Nkrumah) or from the West Indies (Padmore). Finally he influenced the African masses to an extent which Du Bois could never have dreamt of (Ibid: 274).

George Padmore borrowed massively from Garvey. Evidence of this borrowing is noticeable in the deliberations of the Fifth Pan-African Congress which he helped to organise, and which largely drew on the UNIA objectives. These ideas found expression in the subsequent activities of the nationalist leaders present at the congress. They sought to actualize these ideals. Hereafter leaders embraced Pan-Africanism and fervently began to preach the need for nationalism and Pan-Africanism. These ideas quickly percolated vigorously through society via various institutions including those charged with provision of education as a social service. For example, in West Africa Nkrumah founded a journal, New Africa, for the same purpose, based on his experiences in America. The ideology of Blackness strongly deepened its roots among African masses and intellectuals during the period of nationalist agitation for self-rule in Africa. On the impact on African intellectuals of the ideology by some diaspora

Africans, it has been noted for instance, that:

The expression "African Personality" was first used not by the late Osagyefo Dr. Kwame Nkrumah, but by Edward Blyden in an address "study and Race" presented to the Young Men's Literary Association of Sierra Leone in 1893. A careful scrutiny of the writings of Blyden will show that he anticipated much that Marcus Garvey and Kwame Nkrumah were to advocate in the present century (Shiroya, op.cit: 17).

The conjuncture of Pan-Africanist forces from the diaspora and the African continent in the demand for the re-evaluation of the African position globally, certainly had great influence on the development of African nationalism. The production of historical knowledge as a political question must have been dependent owing upon this rising intellectual nationalism. Give the fundamental duality of knowledge itself, historical knowledge is not only a product of a given social reality of a specific moment. It is as well, a reflection of it. It may also contribute to the moulding of that reality towards a particular future (Slater, 1982:1). The influence of the Pan-Africanist perspective on the development of modern African nationalist thought was monumental. It led to the birth of nationalist historiography which many African intellectuals embraced in their newly independent states. The Pan-Africanist and nationalist ideologies preached with fervour by African leaders such as; Kwame Nkrumah, Sekou Toure, Jomo Kenyatta, and Patrice

Lumumba. Their treatises were conceived in Pan-Africanist terms. African intellectuals emulated them by producing nationalist history.

It is, however, noted that the implications of the historiography in the Black diaspora may be located at two levels: explicit and implicit levels. The first level considers the actual knowledge produced in terms of readable material or otherwise. The second level concerns the intellectual input at the philosophical level by those scholars involved. This is evidenced in efforts designed to identify typologies in thought processes under study which have given rise to trends of thought. Greater emphasis is laid on trends of thought since in our opinion, it is pertinent to understand the intentions and direction that the generation of knowledge ultimately takes.

### 3.2 The Black Ideology and its Implications for the Interpretation of African History in East Africa.

The implications of the Ideology of Blackness for the production of social and historical knowledge in Africa is particularly immense. It has manifested itself at different levels in the various works of African thinkers and social scientists - thanks to leading African Pan-Africanists who promoted this mode of thinking throughout this century, and, to those African political thinkers who led African people in their

struggles against colonialism. Their discourses on Africa, certainly provoked African nationalist leaders' sentiments and the zeal to re-examine their conditions vis-a-vis that of the colonizing Whites. Among the various African nationalists who responded to this challenge especially after the fifth Pan-African congress of 1945, included Kwame Nkrumah, Peter Abrahams, Jomo Kenyatta, Nnamdi Azikiwe, Hastings Kamuzu Banda, Leopold Senghor, Haile Selassie and Julius Kambarage Nyerere. The significance of the intellectuals in diaspora was particularly underscored when African nationalists launched attacks on colonialism. Melville J. Herskovits observed that with these developments:

... a new implication of these researches (Afro-American studies and the problem of African survivals in the New World) enters. This has to do with Africa itself, where Africans are increasingly faced with the need to make their adjustments to cultural innovations that belong to the same stream of tradition as that to which, in generations past, Africans in the New World had also to adjust. For those who hold that African cultures give way before pressures brought about by induced change, the lesson is clear. For it seems in Africa, for more than could have been possible anywhere in the New World, the principle of cultural tenacity must hold; especially since this is a principle which has been found to be operative in all societies experiencing cultural change. The conclusion that we reach is that in Africa, as in the New World, the cultural process that will be operative will be those of addition and synthesis to achieve congruence with older forms, rather than

of subtraction and substitution, with their resulting fragmentation (cited in Shepperson, 1968:163).

Herskovits' sentiments were not misguided. Indeed, they underlined the recognition by African continental Pan-Africanists of the need to knit their struggle with the experiences of the diaspora Africans. For them, it was ill-informed to attempt an attack on colonialism without reverting to the experiences of Africans in diaspora as recorded in their works left behind. Of significance to note, is the fact that some of these leading African nationalists were apprenticed during their formative years in Black institutions of the USA.

The emergence, therefore, of works like Nnamdi Azikiwe's Renascent Africa, for instance, in 1937, and Kwame Nkrumah's catalogue of the African's freedom and Pan-Africanist ideals which included, Towards Colonial Freedom - (a book he drafted in the USA between 1935-45 but published in 1962), Ghana: Autobiography of Kwame Nkrumah (1957), I Speak of Freedom: A statement of African Ideology (1961), Africa Must Unite (1963), Consciencism: Philosophy and Ideology for Decolonization and Development, With Particular Reference to the African Revolution (1964) should be considered in this light.

Together with others not cited in the foregoing paragraph, African nationalists sought, in their works

to project the African lost dignity in the years following the onslaught of colonial domination.

Their concerted efforts concentrated largely on charting a new course of African history. This is a course which reflected collective African aspirations of the moment, namely, the building of nascent states they had inherited from the colonialists. Reacting to such demands African social scientists (historians included), embraced the idea of nation building as a component of the body of knowledge which they produced.

In the process of producing knowledge various philosophical strands of historical relevance are discernible; those exclusively dealing with migrations of peoples and the formation of African states on one hand, and on the other the ones emphasizing the African contribution to the erection of world civilization. The former included scholars such as B.A. Ogot, S. Kiwanuka, I. Kimambo with their theses of the early 1960s while the latter grouped together C.A Diop and his disciples who include Amayo (1977) and Mwanzi (1987).

The task was, however, a big one; it entailed reneging on the existing authority of knowledge that had hithertofore dismissed Africans as lacking history.

This is where the ideal of Black consciousness and the cultural relativism of Negritude came in handy. They were tools of destroying destroy myths about the "primitivity" and "backwardness" of Africans.

This need was aptly summarised in Aime Cesaire's own words as follows:

And it seemed to me that if what we want is to establish this identity then we must have concrete consciousness of what we (are) ... that we are [B]lack and have a history ... that contains certain cultural elements of great value and that Negroes were not... born yesterday, because there have been beautiful and important [B]lack civilizations [before] (Cesaire, 1972:76).

It is in this light that the presence in East Africa of Black intellectuals from the diaspora such as Walter Rodney, Horace Campbell, Joseph Harris just to mention a few, and the emerging body of knowledge of African history, to which they contributed should be evaluated. Rodney, perhaps, of them all, had a lasting impact on the development of African historiography in East Africa given that he took up a teaching job at the University of Dar-es-Salaam in 1966 where he taught history until the mid 1970s during the period when African states were trying to consolidate their just won independence. Of Rodney's numerous works those which left an indelible mark on the development of African's historiography are; A History of the Upper Guinea Coast 1545-1800, (1966), Groundings With My Brothers (1969),

How Europe Underdeveloped Africa (1972) and his many articles in Maji Maji, the discussion journal of the TANU Youth League (TYL) at the University of Dar-es-Salaam. His association with some liberation movements in Africa and political leaders of popular organizations in independent African territories led him, together with others, into organizing the Sixth Pan-African Congress, in Tanzania in 1974. He wrote a paper entitled; "Towards the Sixth Pan-African Congress: Aspects of the International Class Struggle in Africa, the Caribbean and America" (Campbell, 1981:133). The paper was read at the Congress in his absence as he was too sick to attend the deliberations.

Rodney epitomised the Black diaspora intellectual contributions to the recovery of past knowledge on Africa in the 1960s and 1970s. He played an instrumental role in inspiring other African scholars into further research in various fields in the social sciences. Before him, Black diaspora intellectuals had participated in the "International Congress of African Historians" held in Dar es Salaam in October, 1965, where eminent scholars from the diaspora such as, Joseph E. Harris and George Shepperson presented papers highlighting the need of enhancing contributions by the diaspora intellectuals to the study of continental history. They emphasized, for instance on the need:



...for the pursuance of research on the question of African migrations, that stemmed primarily from unfavourable conditions at home, such as the slave trade and imperialism... (Granted that) Africans and persons of African descent over the centuries have continued to maintain a common bond of historical reality - the imputation of Negro inferiority - and manifested an interest in the land of their fathers (Harris, 1968:148).

The essence of Harris' and Shepperson's argument was in the recognition of the urgent need for Black scholars to cooperate globally in the reconstruction of African history given their common heritage. Indeed, these aspirations were realized when the First African Diaspora Studies Institute (FADSI) was founded in 1979. Its assembly at Howard University brought together over 130 scholars from Europe, the Caribbean, the USA and both French speaking and English-speaking African countries to discuss and assess the status of teaching African diaspora studies world-wide (Harris, 1982: ix).

The presence of Walter Rodney among other Black diaspora intellectuals in East Africa was particularly rewarding to the development of historical thinking among the indigenous African scholars. Rodney was a trained historian who lost no opportunity to place his immense historical acumen at the service of others. His commitment to scholarship and the plight of the African people led to the following observation of him;

... Dar as his base, Rodney not only contributed substantially to historical practice, but also helped build the Department into a world famous institution for the study of African history. He influenced the shaping of the syllabus, helped establish postgraduate studies, and contributed to the forging of theoretical issues and concepts which still form the basis of serious but lively discussions in this Department.... The three Historical Association of Tanzania Conferences which were convened in the town of Morogoro in the years 1974, 1975, and 1976 and the fourth ... Dar es Salaam in 1977, followed closely the recommendations which he had set out regarding the shape which the study of history should take (Swai; 1982:38).

Rodney's response to the history of Africa and Black people in general, was not simply an academic question. It was an expression of his experiences in the Caribbean as well as the countries that he visited and became acquainted with. As a consequence, envisaged the production of a history which would illuminate the plight of the concerned societies and help them alleviate their sorry condition. As a starting point, he felt it was necessary to uproot the extant myths abounding in Western historical texts with derogatory reference to Africans and which had over the centuries been successfully implanted in the minds of peoples of African ancestry.

The knowledge imparted to Africans by Whites was responsible for the psychological degeneration of the Africans to such a worrisome extent. That is why most

of them did not publicly want to associate themselves with their past. This created the urgent need to re-awaken them from their intellectual slumber by reminding them of the achievements of the Black man in time perspective. Indeed, it was a psychological effort which was not only confined to the Blacks in the diaspora but required to percolate down into the African people of East Africa. He wrote for the people of this region and Africa as a whole, socialized with the region's social groups, particularly as a participant in the liberation struggle. Speaking on the need to revitalize the African past, He said:

... culture is not a dead thing, nor does it always remain the same. It belongs to living people and is therefore always developing. If we, the [B]lacks in the West, accept ourselves as African, we can make a contribution to the development of African culture, helping to free it from European imperialism. What we need is confidence in ourselves, so that as [B]lacks and Africans we can be conscious, united, independent and creative. A knowledge of African achievements in art, education, religion, politics agriculture and the mining of metals can help us gain the necessary confidence which has been removed by slavery and colonialism (Rodney, 1969:37).

In his book, Groundings With My Brothers, Rodney hardly pretends about his general service in concert with other Black intellectuals, to people of African ancestry. Central in his thesis, is the primacy of the question of race which he conceives as a unifying factor to Africans.

Race consciousness is resorted to as a means of reconciling African people in a positive way with their denigrating experiences as Blacks at the hands of oppressive Whites. It is in this light that his contribution to the development of African historiography in East Africa should be considered.

In East Africa (at the University of Dar es Salaam), Rodney encouraged participation of students and members of staff in debates over the place of Africa in World history in the same fashion as he did in Jamaica. His efforts culminated in birth of the University Students African Revolutionary Forum (USARF) which produced a journal, Cheche, that was:

... devoted to a theoretical appraisal of the African reality and its stultification by imperialist domination. In the following four years after 1967, "radicals" on the Hill (as the University of Dar es Salaam is locally known)" evidenced an increasingly sophisticated awareness of the realities of economic imperialism and colour blind class formation - without losing sight of the attendant realities of worldwide racial and cultural oppression." Questions of national liberation were discussed, the plight of Southern Africa was reviewed, and suspect politics' of visiting professors sponsored by metropolitan foundations, like Ford and Rockefeller exposed (Swai, 1981: 40).

With the introduction of the "Sunday Ideology Classes", an idea of Rodney's, he sought consciously to break the monotony of the ivory tower mentality which African Universities' education systems embraced. He raptured

the liberal mythology the African universities inherited at independence. Rodney endeavoured to knit history to the social sciences and in particular, with the social conditions of the masses. As a demonstration of his commitment to this course, he wrote his world-famous book, How Europe Underdeveloped Africa in 1972. The book, as he confessed, was not a single-handed effort but a product of a collective intellectual labour of those he shared ideas with on the prevailing circumstances of Africa at the "Hill."

Indeed, this important book marked a methodological breakaway from the apologetic strand of "uninterested" history to an "interested" one which indicts the West for the developmental problems of the continent. The text bequeathed scholars in the region and African general the dependency and underdevelopment theories as tools of historical analysis. The impact of this seminal work is evidenced in the research projects undertaken by sizeable number of graduate students in the East African universities.

Rodney was, to say the least, an inspiration both to his academic colleagues and students. In fact most students who went through his hands recall vividly his contribution to revolutionizing the study of history. Examining the legacy of his historical method, a colleague of his, Wamba-dia-Wamba remembers him:

In Rodney's historical work, one has the feeling that the ultimate criterion of validity of historical knowledge is not just its conformity to the theoretical and technical requirements of the community of historians, their scientific ideology - so to speak - but more than that its liberating impact. A historian who does not grasp the social conditions of production and reproduction of his/her profession resting on the basis of a separation of intellectual labour from manual labour for example - fails even to know himself/herself honestly and correctly (Wamba-dia-Wamba, 1980:51).

That Rodney contributed immensely to the emergence and growth of revolutionary scholarship in East Africa cannot be over-emphasized, as shown by the various eulogies accorded him by his colleagues and students after his demise. There emerged a wide corpus of literature globally in his praise. At least two symposia were specifically organized to pay tribute to him. The first of which was held on 22nd July, 1980 at the University of Dar es Salaam on the theme "Walter Rodney's Contribution to the Revolution" and, published in a special issue of the university's students journal he helped found, (Maji Maji, No. 43, August 1980). The second one was held at the University of California, Los Angeles under the subject; of "Walter Rodney Revolutionary and Scholar: A Tribute" (UCLA 1982).

In the mid.1970s and early 1980s, radical scholarship in East Africa borrowed heavily from the works of Rodney in terms of methodology. During this period it was becoming increasingly fashionable to diagnose and

analyse various problematics in a Marxist approach to African history. These problematics were conceived in dependency and underdevelopment perspectives.

However, G.T. Mishambi (1976) has argued that the rise and development of underdevelopment theory to explain the growth of African history has to be considered in reality as a continuation of cultural nationalism the use of radical rhetoric, notwithstanding (Temu and Swai, 1981:76). This, indeed speaks boldly of the influence of the Black ideology's influence on reformulation of the processes of historical thought among East African scholars.

T.O Ranger noticed the failure of radical scholars to substantively depart from the nationalist approach. He stated:

... radical historians (were) interested in the African past pessimists largely because they did not agree with the straight-forward glorification of the African past dominant in Africanist history of the 1960s. These were people who were interested in the past not for its own sake but with intent to illuminate the neo-colonial plight within which Africa was engulfed. African history, they argued, was necessary as a liberation force against colonial oppression. They wanted to uphold the revolutionary character of this type of history (Swai, 1981:43-44).

Thus, Rodney's conception of history was essentially partisan. He had an agenda of liberation of Africa from

the vagaries of Western capitalism which had underdeveloped the continent for centuries.

Discourses on Africa's plight, conceived in dependency and underdevelopment perspectives by East African Scholars, were basically Pan-Africanist. They were therefore conceived in terms of the ideology of Blackness. This provoked vitriolic attacks on Rodney's thesis. He was accused of being an arrogant cultural nationalist and a racist. However, scholars of marxist persuasion vindicate Rodney of these accusations in the following tone:

But, as is now becoming clearer, Rodney did not simply stop at trying to develop racial consciousness among his people. He recognized that there were forces at work in the world which owed allegiance to no racial group, which exploited and oppressed people of all races and against which all races would have to unite in order to ensure its defeat. (Ibid: 44).

Rodney's influence on trends of historical interpretation and writing in East Africa is evident in Leys (1975) Mamdani (1977) Leo (1976), Brett (1973) Langdon (1980), Kaplinsky (1981), and Tandon (1982b). Entire volumes of the Review of African Political Economy (RAOPE No. 17, 1980, and RAOPE Nos.19, 20, 1981) show this influence. He equally inspired Black thinkers based mainly in the USA. In the main, this school of thought which employs the liberal approach to the study of African past, has helped tremendously in solidifying



Black consciousness in the community of African intellectuals world-wide. This group has been instrumental in according special features to the production of knowledge within the East African region.

This school of thought inspired by the ideology of Black consciousness, has worked from the premise that the Black historian has a formidable task. He has to aggressively confront and expose the fallacies in the propositions of White scholars as recorded in their textbooks. They have observed that:

Unlike those (historians) of the "master race" who have leisurely pursued "the study of history" and "dispassionately" recorded massive propaganda that is now plamed off as science, [B]lack scholars must plunge deep beneath the accumulated strata of man's ancient heritage, canvass its foundation and emerge with a strategy for Black survival. But none of this can be achieved or even attempted until we as students of history thoroughly comprehend that, not only are [B]lack masses narcotized by deliberate misinformation, but [W]hite "scientists" have so completely preempted the study of man's past that even [B]lack scholars, overawed by prevailing opinion, have not ascended to a state of consciousness that affords them the confidence to liberate their people or themselves (Clegg II, 1975:33).

Laying emphasis on the agency of ancient Ethiopia and Egypt in the rise of Classical civilization, scholars such as Huggins (1937), ben-Jochannan (1971, 1972), Clarke (1975), Ivan Sertima (1982, 1985, 1987), Williams (1978), James (1989) have significantly reiterated

Black creativity and achievement in their approaches to African historical studies. They have attempted to demonstrate that human civilization has its origin in Africa. They have done so by conducting research on various aspects of African history and culture. In some instances, African intellectuals in diaspora have travelled to extensively and undertaken research projects on ancient civilizations of Africa. They have been very encouraging. Volumes of books have been written about Africa's past examining subjects like science, technology, ancient religions, medical practice, economics and astronomy. The historiography emerging from this is a product of co-operative effort, hopefully, in the service of the masses and the African intellectual who find it of use.

A project such as the Journal of African Civilizations series, edited by Ivan Sertima, is particularly significant as concerns the transformation of attitudes and perceptions of both historians and general readers. It was founded as a means of shaping the consciousness of the people of African ancestry in the present century following a prolonged period of falsehoods in the + nineteenth century. This effort constitutes a bold attempt to reconstruct a usable past in our attempt to understand the present predicament of Africa and the development process of African peoples throughout the world. Thus, the acceptance of this approach by some

African intellectuals in East Africa was a step in the right direction.

The Ideology of Blackness initially manifested itself among East African scholars through their experiences as students in America. Among those influenced in this way during their formative years were: Maina-wa-Kinyatti (1976); Kamuyu-wa-Kang'ethe (1977) Amayo (1977,1982); Olela (1981); Osotsi (1985); - Wamba- dia-Wamba (1986, 1989); Shiroya (1992).

Although they do not state so in their works, those who know them personally are aware of their schooling abroad at one time or another. An easily detectable feature of their writing is the imposing nature of Black Nationalism on their conceptualization. Perhaps the following quotation best illustrate this. In it, Amayo refutes the Greek origin of Western civilization in the following manner:

To what extent can a historian go back in the reconstruction of a cultural history of Africa?. When and where should the Africans begin tracing their cultural history?. The historians of the Western civilization do not seem to have problems in answering the above questions with particular reference to their cultural history. They claim, with certainty, ancient Greece and Rome for the foundations of their Western Civilization. Under the title, Ancient Foundations of Black Cultural Development, the writer (Amayo) wishes to address himself to the statement and challenge offered recently

to the African historians by Dr. Chancellor Williams, a distinguished emeritus professor of African history, Howard University (Amayo, 1977:91).

Some of these scholars have taught at East African universities. One is able to detect their influence on their students in the nature and choice of the postgraduate research projects. Their perceptual standpoints have generally borne decisive influence on their students students such as Kisiang'ani (1993).

In a bid to reconstruct the cultural history of Africa, some historians in East Africa have relied greatly on texts produced by diaspora scholars such as ben-Jochannan (1971, 1972), Williams (1987), and Ivan van Sertima's series on the Journal of African Civilizations. These texts, in essence, constitute an attempt to remedy the misrepresentation history by European and White American historiographers. The effort is indeed, laudable since it marks a renaissance in the African quest for self-discovery. Historiography is increasingly being redeemed from shackles of colonial and misconceptions neo-colonial pre-conception of African history. These misconceptions deny the African his role as an agent in the making of his own past.

Recent research projects in East Africa reveal the growing influence of Black ideology and diaspora in the development of East Africa's historiography. While

emphasizing the importance of the African initiative in Africa's past, these intellectuals often cite authorities drawn from diaspora historians as an effective way of challenging the prejudices of neo-colonial historians. The growing interest in diaspora studies in East Africa's Universities as shown in their syllabi and course outlines is a clear testimony as to the forcefulness of the Black ideology.

It is most likely that as we advance into the 1990s, most studies undertaken of Africa's past will be grounded in the ideology of Blackness. This is because there is an inadequacy of pertinent paradigms of analysis to explain underdevelopment and the continent's growing dependency. Nevertheless, this approach will also have to stand the test of time, given that no theory is foolproof and no body of knowledge is absolute and truth is relative. Therefore as debates rage over methodologies theories or prejudices which hinge upon the subject of objectivity and subjectivity, paradigms of analysis will have to stand the test of both rigour and time or else they appear obsolete. East African historians can be no exception in this regard.

## CHAPTER FOUR

4.0 ARAB- ISLAMIC PRESENCE IN EAST AFRICA AND  
HISTORICAL INTERPRETATION IN EAST AFRICA.4.1 Introduction

The way of life of a given people to a large extent, determines their self-perception and interpretation of phenomena as around them. The practice of writing history is, thus, an expression of the ideals nourished and cherished in the process of understanding the human environment against which social phenomena occur.

The social or historical knowledge produced, therefore, aims at explaining social phenomena in terms of human experiences. The ideologies within which histories are written are by themselves products of historical situations. They are perceptual problems.

Commenting on the place of ideology in the process of self-projection of societies Samir Amin asserts:

They constitute the moment of crystallization of a bloc of social forces capable of offering a way out of the social crisis. That is why new, rising social forces, who have assumed the goal of changing the social order, often though not always - prove capable of formulating their view of the future in a social project defined in terms whose coherence is guaranteed by the ideology which binds them together (Amin, 1983:13-14).

The presence of the Arab-Islamic culture on the African

continent beginning as from the <sup>+</sup> seventh century should, therefore, be accorded due attention. This event changed, to a significant extent, the self-perception of many societies. Indeed, the religious interests of Islam were closely linked to Arabic cultural concerns bringing about an intertwinement between social and religious.

Consequently, in interpreting historical processes of the societies which were confronted by the Arab-Islamic phenomenon, an experience of cross cultural enrichment of peoples history has to be considered. Islam brought to bear on many communities an ideology derived specifically from the doctrines of prophet Mohammed. This in essence, justified the establishment of political authority subscribing to an ideology legitimating the interests of Muslim community.

To believers, Islam is not only a belief and a religious faith, but a social order. In this view, the two are inseparable since the concept of separation between religion and civil society is inconceivable of Islam (Ibid: 17). Perhaps this explains why Muslim adherents at times resorted to jihads in their proselytization of non-Muslim societies.

It is being argued in this chapter that Arab-Islamic

presence on the continent of Africa had far reaching implications for subsequent historical interpretation and writing. This stems from the fact that, perhaps, more than any other religion on the continent, Islam has had wider social implications for its adherents. M.H.Y Kaniki observes of its capacity to exert influence upon its believers in this way:

It carries with it a number of obligations and prohibitions, and it explicitly regulates most of the social and civil relationships between the adherent and his environment. Islam imposes on a people its own value system and general outlook towards life. Thus the penetration of Islam into a society is generally speaking equivalent to cultural conquest (Kaniki, 1976:87).

It has been argued however, that in the process of Islamic expansion across Africa, it accommodated aspects of traditional ways of life of the people it held sway over.

The "stubbornness" and durability of traditional cultures made Islam acquire an outlook of immense adaptability. In this chapter we do not set out to investigate this relationship, but to re-assess its implication for the production of knowledge in East Africa.



#### 4.2 Arabic and Islamic Culture and Production of Social and Historical Knowledge.

Historically, the Arab-Islamic cultural ascent on the continent beginning in the seventh century, had small impact on the way of life of Africans several centuries after its introduction. African people were Islamized and Arabized variously by Muslim adherents who traversed the continent as traders or conquerors. Muslims spread their faith through persuasion and coercion and sought to fit certain African traditional ways within the Islamic mode of thought. In places where persuasion failed to instal the supremacy of Islam, coercion was resorted to. African people were thus profoundly influenced by the presence of this culture.

Living in proximity to Arabs and other Muslim communities, Africans, adapted to Arab-Islamic social and economic life; in trade and scholarship as exemplified by the establishment of predominantly Islamic institutions of higher learning like the pre-colonial University of Timbuctu in West Africa as well as other educational institutions. At the University of Timbuctu, a seat of Islamic learning, some African scholars produced several publications inspired by Islamic ideology. Intermarriages and other social-related activities tended to reinforce the identification of Africans with Islam and its birth

place Mecca.

Arab-Islamic influence is noticeable in linguistic terms whereby some African communities have acquired some words and even sentence structures from Arabic, for example Swahili and Somali languages. It has been argued that this development should be seen as one of strengthening of fellow Afro-Asiatic languages in Africa which include; the Semitic, ancient Egyptian, Berber, Cushitic and Chadic. The Arabic influence on Somali language, for instance, has been particularly striking (Mazrui, 1986a:89).

This is testified by linguistic comprehensiveness of those languages as relates to the impact of Arabic imagery on Somali language among others.

In other regions of the continent, Arabic influence has been less pronounced comparatively, given their geographical distance from Arabic heartland. However, a considerable impact has been made on languages such as Kiswahili of the East African Coast, Hausa and Fulani in West Africa. Kiswahili, for example, has adopted words like "darasa" and "mwalimu" from Arabic. These words "classroom" and "teacher" respectively. It is important to note, in this context that communities with a deep interaction with the Arab-Islamic culture have further bequeathed to other societies not in their immediate

proximity, linguistic legacies (Rowe, 1988).

Arabization and Islamization of African societies occurred and led to the emergence of a culture which was double-edged; first preserving the African identity and then accommodating the theological outlook of the new religion. With these changes, historical interpretation of African societies was destined to take a new course. This explains perhaps why historical writing of the time now tilted towards satisfying the ideological aspirations of Islam.

Consequently, Arab-Islamic writers appear unapologetically partisan in the interpretation and writing of African history. They sought to explain the history of Islamized regions such as; the East African Coast, Sahel, and the Sudan more pompously than non-Islamized areas. Moreover, Arabic writers concentrated their discourses on leading personalities of Islamized communities rather than the African traditional states which were ruled by non-Islamized rulers.

Where Arabic writers afforded the non-Islamized African societies space in their treatises, they depicted them negatively. In their conception, such societies badly needed Islamic cleansing.

Scholars analyzing the source of these biases which characterize the bulk of Arabic written documents on African history and culture, associate them with the social background of their authors. These writers aimed at the cultural conquest of societies they met. Indeed, Lewicki (1968) and Hrbek (1988) assert that these documents were largely:

... written by educated Muslims who were often fanatics, their judgements are coloured with faith: the good rulers were the good Muslims and the bad rules those who like Soumi Ali (sic) in the 15th Century persecuted the educated Muslims (Cornevin, 1968:84).

While the Arab-Islamic writers obtained the bulk of their data from personal archival documents, most of the information, however, stemmed from rumours or hearsay. Such information consisted pre-dominantly of bits of data collected from travellers, seamen and merchants who incidentally have remained for most part anonymous (Lewicki, 1968: 15). For this reason, contemporary historians have cast doubt over the authenticity of the said documents, claiming that only a portion of these texts has original character, and, therefore require verification before the data is accepted. They have further asserted that African culture and history is depicted as mere recasts of older accounts, or confused compilations of diverse Arabic sources derived largely from different, and hence unrelated experiences. This body of knowledge tended to reinforce the normative

homogeneous picture of all regions which those writers envisaged.

The idiosyncracies and bias for islamized areas is further revealed in the writers' penchant for exploring and reporting on only regions under the influence of Islam. Arabic scholars such as Al- Ya'qubi of the  
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ninth century wrote extensively about Nubia and the adjoining Beja as well as the Kanem Bornu Kingdom. The  
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tenth century writer, Al-Faqith chronicles how caravans from Ghana to Egypt were managed by Muslims. Al-Masudi made several journeys from Oman to Kanbalu in the so-called Zanj country (supposedly East Africa Coast). Al-Masudi does not hide his love for islamized regions, he says of the island thus:

...Kanbalu (Pemba) is inhabited by a Muslim people although their language is Zandj (sic) ...(which) the Muslims conquered... making the local people prisoners (Masao and Mutoro, 1988:599).

Al Bakri, another writer who spent a considerable period  
+  
of his time in the eleventh century Spain, wrote a treatise entitled, The Book of Roads and Kingdom, in which he describes elaborately the life of the inhabitants of Western Sudan. From this account, we learn of the conversion of the Mande principality by a Muslim purported to have "saved the country from drought after all the efforts of local priests had failed"  
+  
(Levtzion, 1967:15). Al-Idrisi writing in 1154 dealt

extensively with issues pertaining to administration of Tekrur, Ghana, Kuku and the East African Coast.

In the <sup>+</sup> thirteenth century some important works like Yaqut's, Geographical Dictionary, emerged providing us with insights into some unknown facts about East Africa.

In the <sup>+</sup> fourteenth century Al-Omari wrote an encyclopaedic work describing Ethiopia, Kanem, Nubia and Mali. Between <sup>+</sup> 1353 and <sup>+</sup> 1355 the Moroccan traveller cum writer, Ibn Battuta visited Mali and Kilwa. Ibn Battuta fondly describes Mali as a great centre of learning for both native and foreign scholars.

Ibn Khaldun in the <sup>+</sup> fourteenth century, wrote numerous works on both history and the historical method. One of the chapters in his, History of the Berbers, was a historical account of Mali. His masterpiece, An Introduction to History: The Muqaddima, is a discourse on the historical method guiding the historian on his craft. In the latter work, Ibn Khaldun's contribution is significant, it has been a source of reference for social scientists whose interest lies in the philosophy of history (Babu, 1988). Ibn Khaldun's works were largely conceived in terms of the Islamic world-view. He begins his writing by invoking the name of Allah (God). Since the <sup>+</sup> seventh century, the spread of Arab-Islamic culture on the continent has been remarkable. It has embraced the regions of Niger, East Africa and North

Africa. The tempo and zeal with which its adherents were imposing it on societies they met, elicited the following remarks:

If an extraterrestrial visitor had looked at the Old World at the beginning of the seventh century of the christian era and had then revisited it after five centuries - by 1100 - he might well have come to the conclusion that the World was on the way to becoming Muslim.... In the meantime Islam had ceased to be an exclusively Arab religion; the new faith showed the capacity to win over and assimilate ethnic elements of most diverse origins, fusing them into a single culture and religious community (Hrbek, 1988:1).

The foregoing observation provides us with germane insights into the religion as an oecumen; capable of integrating traditional African practices with certain aspects from the Near Eastern cultures as they confronted each other. The wider implications of this relationship is the nurturing of a new identity and its reproduction in the body of social knowledge.

Suffice it to mention that the process of Arabization and Islamization went hand in glove with commercial activities of the time. Trade was the domain of Arabs and islamized traders. Those African communities, hitherto not islamized took on the "new" religion in order to forge closer trade links with merchants who were predominantly muslim. And with increasing participation of the Arab-Islamic merchants in trade activities on the continent, more people were persuaded

into the religion of Islam and its way of life.

North and West Africa acted as corridors of the Trans-Saharan trade while the East African Coast played the role of middleman between Oriental traders and the inhabitants of its hinterland. Along the trade routes and the adjoining areas, Arabization and Islamization manifested itself in various degrees, depending on the level of contact between Muslim teachers "maalim" and the Africans in the region. Islamic scribes, technicians, educators and judges erected their educational systems on the continent based on teaching of the Koran. Islamic institutions such as the mosques, "madrasa" and the Islamic law - "Sharia"- were a common feature along trade routes.

At Timbuctu, for instance, there was a university which accommodated a large number of Muslim scholars who were recruited as government advisors to Askia Mohammed in the fifteenth century. One would perhaps attribute the emergence of strong tradition of family chronicles in West Africa to this educational system. Similarly, this could be said of the, Tarikh al Sudan, and Tarikh al Fattash, of West Africa.

Wherever Muslims went, they were accompanied by some of their scholars. At Nabongo Mumia's of Wanga and Kabaka



of Buganda's palace, Muslim "maalim" established themselves, teaching and producing texts about their experiences. On the eve of colonialism, Kabaka Mutesa of Buganda had a tutor at his court who instructed him on prophet Mohammed's teachings as stipulated in the Koran. As a result of Islamic influence in East Africa, some African scholars, in the pre-colonial era started writing family chronicles such as the, Kilwa, Pate and Lamu Chronicles, detailing their genealogies. These texts have been used extensively by contemporary historians to reconstruct East African history in general (Salim, 1973; Schaffer, 1979). Consequently, they form part of the East African historiography in a significant way.

Arabization and Islamization in some regions of Africa was so profound to the extent of exciting some nobilities into attempting to knit their origins with the Middle East traditions and cultures. This provoked scholars reconstructing African history to observe as follows:

Any prince of any standing had to come from the East; the only noble origins were those of the east and no past was spoken of except if it were(sic) related to the prophet, his family or his companions. A start was made (not, by any means, for the last time) on the rewriting of African history and the new history was to strike a blow at the absolescence and the absurdity of the cosmic or animal origins with which African societies

sometimes endowed themselves (Dramani-Issiofou, 1988:112-113).

The frantic search for the noble origins in the Near Eastern cultures accorded well within the notion that the world was created in and around the Near East. And for this reason the creation myths and the migration stories of the concerned communities had to change to tally with the Koranic teachings. Hence Islamic doctrines licensed the spread of the Near Eastern civilization to other parts of the world hitherto, not islamized. The emergence of family chronicles in East and West Africa should be viewed and evaluated within this context.

The family which laid strongest claims on the Middle East ancestry, assumed political power and control over the rest. A case in point is the chronicle on Mandingo genealogy written in the nineteenth century. These texts supported the Mandingo family claim over kingship vis-a-vis contending groups for the same political position. There is yet another example of the Maba people of West Africa who tried to rewrite their history by fabricating genealogies to correspond to the supposed Arabian myth of origin.

That majority of Arab-Islamic literature produced was inclined towards people who had embraced the culture in which they were apparently fashioned. Such people were

often described lavishly. A segment of this literature was however dedicated to those Africans who were not necessarily Arabized or islamized, perhaps as a pastime activity. This kind of literature included Hamdani's, who was more pre-occupied with geographical description of where he sojourned, perhaps to encourage more Muslims and Arabs to adventure and capture those areas.

Geographers such as Hamdani divided the East African Coast into three parts: what they referred to as "the land of Barabar (Bilad al - Barbar) in the North; the land of the Zandj (Bilad al-Zandj), between the Webi Shebele river; and some point on the coast opposite Zanzibar and the Sofala country (ard or bilad Sufala) to the South" (Masao and Mutoro, 1988:600).

Notwithstanding the discrepancies exhibited by Arab-Islamic texts, they contributed enormously to the development of African historiography in East Africa. The impact is traceable in various works on African history and culture (Mazrui, 1986a, 1988, 1990, 1991, 1992, 1993a, b; Hrbek, 1988). This is why an appraisal such as this one, is appropriate to explain the extend to which the ideology of Islam continues to manifest itself in African historical interpretations.

The legacy of Arab-Islamic historiography is further revealed in the compartmentalization of the African

continent into regionally study-based areas along Islamic influence. For academic purposes, some scholars divide present day Africa into two main parts; North Africa which includes what is conventionally referred to as Arab Africa and the so-called Sub-Saharan Africa. The artificial division of the continent into Arab and Sub-Saharan Africa is a racial facade designed to exclude North Africa from the rest of Africa and integrate it with the Middle East.

The falsity of racial categorization such as this one, lies in the fact that no human community or so-called race is an Island of itself. Human beings intermingle readily and this renders inadmissible the notion of racial purity or exclusiveness. The pigmentation of an individual does not constitute his nationality or perhaps his sense of nationhood. Furthermore, there is no colour homogeneity in Africa and the same cannot be used logically to describe the continents territorial divide.

Africa has further been sub-divided into smaller compartments such as the Western Sudan area which is treated as a separate entity of study. The reason given for the special treatment which it is accorded, is to enable:

The student of Islam in Africa (trace)... the historical development of Islam.... The northern part of the continent belonged to the classical world of Islam. It has been till the time of the decay of the caliphate and the rise of local dynasties parts of the domain of the Caliphs, Umayyads and Abbasids. The sub-saharan was never part of Islam and its rise to power came as a result of the movement initiated by Ibn Yasin (Ismail, 1968:9).

The compartmentalization process is not just confined to the attempt to facilitate the study of the historical development of Islam. It has also intruded into conceptual frameworks of social scientists. This is perhaps reinforced by the Islamic ideology expressed in educational and legal systems.

Given this state of affairs one can understand why some African historiographers have continued to search for successfully Islamized African societies on the continent in their treatises (Mazrui, 1986 a, b). In their view, Islam has been portrayed as the bandwagon on which prospective change of African societies could ride. This school of thought assumes that Islam had a liberating role. It liberated the lives of the majority of people from "heathen" practices of African societies. Working within this conception, some Islamic and Western scholars have generated social knowledge which demeans the African (Schaffer, 1979). African institutions are viewed as ahistorical.

In Africa, the conception of discourses in the terms of Islamic ideology, is evidenced by the so-called Arabization line. This line seemingly extended from the Northern part of Africa Southwards to include Mauretania, Sudan and even territories of Somalia.

Some scholars studying this trend have been quick to point out their fears about this development. They believe that if it is allowed to continue will pose some basic conception problem of defining the continent of Africa. Indeed, Ogot was to assert:

We have a basic conception problem in defining Africa, whose history we are supposed to write and whose heritage we are supposed to preserve and cherish. What is Africa to us?... Africa will contract progressively, irrespective of the socio-cultural heritage of the Arabized regions (Ogot, 1985:1).

Ogot's observation is an expression of typical reaction by African scholars to the extent to which African historiography has by and large been influenced by Arabic historiographies. It underlines the need to examine this development which is viewed by some scholars as a threat to a rather objective study of African past (Ibid). As part of the efforts to correct this error, scholars must ensure that the production of historical knowledge should lay more emphasis on African agency in the making of continental history.

Given that the production of historical knowledge is a political decision, the need to assess the development of African historiography has not been exclusively a question confined to the academia. Mobutu Sese Seko, President of Zaire in 1985, urged the so-called Black African countries to form a regional organization opposed to the ideals of the Arab League which, in his view, was a blatant attempt to dominate Africa at both the political and intellectual levels.

According to Mobutu, the problems facing Chad and Sahwari Democratic Republic, were basically emanating from the historical conception of what constitutes the Arab-Islamic (Ibid). Within the ideological ideals of Islam, Arab and Islamized writers conceive African and global history as moving towards an Islamic eschatological finality.

It is being argued in this chapter that given the strong Arab-Islamic element on the continent, a segment of social and historical knowledge generated has been conceived within this cultural reality. In East Africa, Islamic family chronicles, education and legal systems introduced, have been significant in determining the choice of subject or themes and the general approach to historical studies.

#### 4.3 Implications of Arab-Islamic Ideology the Production of Historical Knowledge in East Africa.

It is obvious from the foregoing section of this chapter that the many centuries of the presence of Arab-Islamic culture on the continent, has had clear results in influencing the African's self-perception. This development has to some extent compelled Africans to embrace the values of this culture, and in the process sought a new identity. Consequently, this self-image has been reproduced over the years by scholars in their numerous discourses on Africa.

There are social scientists, historians included, who have generated knowledge on Africa aimed at helping to inspire loyalty to, and enthusiasm for the religion and cultural heritage of Islam at a specific age in the life of an individual. Yet, on the other hand, are those who have considered production of knowledge in Islamic terms as threatening to institute a crisis in cultural identity and compromise the achievement of the ideal of objectivity in historical interpretation (Ogot 1985, 1993; Mazrui 1986a, b, 1988, 1992).

The implications of the Arab-Islamic ideology for the production of social and historical knowledge in East Africa is analysed within this framework.



The significance of Arab-Islamic phenomenon in the generation of knowledge by scholars engaged in this endeavour, is rarely explained. Neither is it also adequately critiqued. Given this discrepancy in the development of African historiography, a new look at the problem is required to illuminate the various factors involved in the process of historical explanation. The process of historical explanation of the period under study has, to a significant extent, been influenced by the Arab-Islamic ideology. That is why some African scholars have attempted to interpret African historical experiences in terms of Islam (Mazrui, Ibid). Scholars inspired by the achievements have written within the ideological parameters of Islam and given accounts of events in relation to the Middle East ancestry. Their scholarship has thus been biased towards Islam. Antithetical to this practice are scholars whose interest has been to preserve African primacy in history. The two contending views have given impetus to the growth of historical writing on the African past.

In Africa and perhaps East Africa, the claim has been that Islam has demonstrated the capacity to adapt itself to local African conditions more deeply and faster than other religions such as Christianity and Buddhism. The simple reason for this, it is argued, is that Islam shares with traditional African religion some values and

norms which coexist quite easily (Kaniki, op.cit). Its spread on the continent is thus explained as going through three stages namely: germination, crisis and gradual re-orientation:

At the germination stage change is first felt deep in the individual's consciousness, and then collective consciousness develops. As the seed "gradually forces the shock of crises", "a new attitude" develops "which in time profoundly modifies social and individual behaviour. Furthermore, at the first stage, Islam seems to show no incompatibility with the continued observance of tribal religion (Kaniki, op.cit : 88).

As Islam entrenches itself in society, deeper social implications are registered. The community among which it is accommodated applies more Islamic principles to day-to-day life. In this so-called crisis stage:

Traditional values and institutions come under fire as Islamic principles come to affect a wider range of human relations. Even at the second stage when adherents would like to be referred to as Muslims without qualification, their Islam is far from pure (Ibid).

The degree of islamization among its purported adherents aside, the religion and its attendant Arabic culture has had wider implications for societies' social reproduction. This has been facilitated, given that the requirements of Islam compel converts to live according to the dictates of the Islamic law - Sharia. The fact that some adherents among such societies as Swahili have

accepted to live and conduct their affairs within Arab-Islamic cosmic view, is enough testimony that the "new" culture may have altered their perception of self. In long run this development made them easily attune to islamic demands.

Islamic education on the continent has helped to strengthen this culture by emphasising on the need for converts to strictly live within the teachings of the Koran. There has been sizeable linguistic impact on some African languages through this educational system which underscores the need to have knowledge of Arabic (sometimes as a medium of instruction among the Islamized society). The way of life of converts has sometimes changed considerably and ethnic identity has, in certain instances, been severely compromised. Such groups have therefore attempted to link their past with the original home of Islam in the Middle East. This is evidenced in the change in the myths of origin among some East African Coastal people's reinforced by the broad Islamic curriculum which consists:

... of tafsir, The interpretation of the Koran and the study of literature, much of which is derived from Koranic commentary. The study of hadith is also of central importance; these traditions cover such subjects as marriage, divorce; inheritance and personal conduct. They are supposed to give the student a clear idea of the behaviour expected from an orthodox Muslim and an insight into how an Islamic society should be organised, administered and governed (Sifuna, 1990:24).

In East Africa, social scientists have responded to the presence of this influence variously. Their choice of research topics and themes have demonstrated this influence. Perhaps most profoundly to have been influenced has been Al A. Mazrui who in his, The Africans: A Triple Heritage, (1986b) has demonstrated how the Arabization and islamization of Africa has altered some societies self-image. Perhaps most instructive, is his assertion that to understand Christianity one has to become a Muslim first because Islam explains better Jesus Christ's role in the Christian religion (Mazrui, 1988). Indeed, Mazrui's defence of Islam in recent times should be assessed in the context of his socialization in Islamic culture. He does not conceal his bias for Islamic way of life and asserts of Kwame Nkrumah's treatment of Africa's triple heritage in, Conciencism, thus:

... [he] identified three elements in the African Personality - indigenous, Islamic and what he called "Euro-Christian" contributions.... Partly because of Nkrumah's recognition of a tripartite conscience in Africa, his own approach to Pan-Africanism was trans-Saharan. Ghana's founder President refused to recognise the Sahara Desert as a divide between "Arab Africa" and "Black Africa". He hosted meetings which were truly continental. Although not a Muslim himself, Nkrumah recognised the cultural continuities between North Africa and Africa South of the Sahara (Mazrui, 1986a:34).

The above quotation demonstrates the extent to which current issues, in which scholars are emotionally

involved exert perceptual pressure on the interpretation of phenomena. An inquirer of particular events is compelled to take a position in favour of one party with which he identifies himself, defending in the process, a specific ideology (Ogot, 1993; Mazrui, 1993c). In taking such partisan positions a scholar's capacity to objectively present facts is interfered with.

Mazrui's "controversial" utterances about Islam and the treatment of its adherents by political systems in East Africa since colonial occupation, have motivated fresh inquiry into the role of Islam and the Arabs in the history of the region. Mazrui contends that Muslims are discriminated against. Yet the dominant Christian population on the other hand, claims that Muslims have never been looked down upon. (cf Mazrui, 1993 a,b,c; Ogot, 1993).

The controversy over the place of Arabs and Muslims in East African history, is a healthy development in the historiography of Africa. Mazrui may not be the first one to address this issue, others have. In Uganda, for instance during the reign of Idi Amin between 1971 and 1979, attempts were made to influence the interpretation of history. He also sought to effect a re-design of the school curriculum in favour of Muslims and Arabs. In interviews with both Prof. S.M. Kiwanuka and Prof. P.

Godfrey Okoth of the Department of History, Makerere University, this author was given an account of how Amin decreed the theme of slave trade not to be taught in schools and even at the university because "Arabs are our brothers." Mazrui has also shown his sensitivity to the reference of Arabs and Muslims as slave traders. He has, therefore, treated this theme lightly in his writing (c.f Mazrui, 1993a,b,c). While critiquing Prof. William Ochieng's position on the need to record monumental history of the East African Coast, he averred:

Prof. Ochieng has reservations about my concept of monumental history. I agree that where there are royal palaces as in Gedi, there must have been exploitation of cheap labour. But that is also true of the building of the pyramids in Egypt, the ancient walls of Great Zimbabwe, the castles of Gondor in Ethiopia, the sunken churches of Lalibela... (Mazrui, 1993a: 11).

Commenting on the reasons that make the Organization of African Unity interested in the Trans-Atlantic slave trade as opposed to the East African Coast slave trade, conducted by the Arabs he asserts:

Why is the OAU focusing only on the Trans-Atlantic slave trade? Partly because of scale. People descended from slaves in the Americas are numerically almost the equivalent of the entire population of the Arab world or all races. The Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade was vaster by far in scale than the Arab Slave Trade (Ibid).

However, B. A. Ogot (1993) disagrees with this view. He

says, instead, that research which has been conducted by various scholars on Middle East history indict Muslims and Arabs for having, perhaps invented racial slavery. This slavery involved millions of African captives. These slaves were sold into Europe and Asia. In his own words he observes:

Arabs, Berbers and Persians invented the long distance Slave Trade that transported millions of African captives either by camel caravans across the deserts or by slave ships from East Africa to the Persian Gulf.... Within Africa itself there were Muslim groups that were reaping large capital gains by trading in human cargo through economic exploitation.... in 19th century Dar Fur, in modern Sudan, there were farms that specialised in breeding Black slaves for sale like cattle (Ogot, 1993:7).

Implicitly, Ogot is calling for the re-examination of Arab and Muslim historiography on Africa as it relates to slave trade, given the migration of Black slaves from Africa is frightening. In his view, the total numbers involved may well have surpassed over a period of 12 centuries those of the African diaspora. This explains why over the same issue historians are not likely to agree on any one interpretation.

Biases such as these are common in historical interpretations of many African scholars and are not only confined to Mazrui's discourses. This is why while reinterpreting African history, Muslim scholars show some degree of interest in issues that affect their

faith. They try to fulfil the collective interests of the group they represent by defending them. Hence, writing sympathetically about matters of Islamic concern, absolves them from personal ostracism from their own group (Mazrui, 1990,1988).

Moreover, the Arab-Islamic ideology is propped up by political leaders particularly those who adhere to the Muslim faith. Under their aegis Islamic institutions are nurtured. Indeed, such is the general consensus, for instance, in Tanzania since the ascent of Hassan Mwinyi to the presidency after Julius Nyerere retired in 1985. The christian population allege that more Islamic institutions began mushrooming during the former's tenure of office. The same could be said about Uganda under Amin when he solicited funds from the Arab world for similar projects which, however, are yet to be located. The establishment of an Islamic university in Uganda under Yoweri Museveni, who incidentally is not a Muslim will therefore create a conflict of interest in social and historical knowledge in that country.

In such institutions, studies of Islamic culture would be conducted studies under the rubric of Sharia law, strictly advocating Islamic way of life. The political economy and the philosophy of history of Islam is likely to be given prominence. Indeed, Ali Mazrui's summarises



what he foresees to dominate in the discourses thus:

Much more pressing is the need for a translation of values between civilizations - the need to make some of the emotions of the Muslim world more intelligible to the West, even if still fundamentally different from the dominant paradigms of Western thought (Mazrui, 1990:84)

The so-called threat of Islamic ideology (read Islamic fundamentalism) has elicited a great deal of reaction from those who perceive it as bent on dominating the socio-political life of African people (Ogot, 1985). At the first level they have reacted by increasingly advocating the production of social and historical knowledge which emphasises what is seen as authentic African past uncontaminated by Islamic influence. In this respect, "tribal" histories have been produced laying more emphasis on state formation in pre-colonial Africa (Salim, 1984). At another level African historians have demonstrated the importance of Arab-Islamic ideology in the creation of states and the general political economy of Africa (Mazrui, 1986b). Societies such as those of the East Coast Swahili and the Hausa of West Africa have been cited as good examples.

Perhaps the greatest challenge to the primacy of the Arab-Islamic ideology in the making of African history has been the Christian convictions of the Western world. Christian scholars in most of Africa, have

sought to confront the threat of the so-called Islamic fundamentalism. There has, therefore, emerged an interesting conjunction of interests between other various echelons of Western imperialism and Christianity.

The debate as to which ideology is more compatible with African culture is certainly important to the understanding of the controversies behind the generation of historical knowledge. Various histories have been produced. And are more likely to emerge thereby entrenching the divergences in paradigms of analysis in an apparent struggle over the control of social knowledge.

## CHAPTER FIVE

5.0 AFRICAN HISTORIOGRAPHERS: SOURCES AND THE  
PROCESS OF HISTORICAL INTERPRETATION.5.1 Introduction

The urgency to produce social and historical knowledge in Africa has for various reasons, over the years, attracted a great diversity of scholars. These have included Western and African Africanist social scientists. Each of these categories of scholars has approached the African past from different standpoints. This makes it necessary to examine the different histories emerging from the various interpretations of knowledge by various historians.

In the process of posing issues in African history, a wide array of historical sources has been used to validate certain theoretical positions. From these sources facts have been gathered which give a clarifying effect on certain theoretical assumptions. In undertaking the exercise of objectively accounting for the past, the data provided by sources has been sifted in order to blend theory with practice.

Consequently, certain historical sources have been mystified as being the most reliable for historical interpretation. This explains why some sources are

preferred more and not others. This, however, does not imply that any one given source is adequate in the reconstruction of a particular history.

A source, paradoxically, provides information according to the kind of questions posed by the researcher. Such questions are largely ideologically defined. Indeed, ideological frameworks have to a large extent, determined the boundaries of scholarly investigation as well as the concepts and methods subsequently employed. Hence the explanation that:

A problematic requires the formulation of a question which automatically invites an answer which will resort to certain definite analytical tools and concepts. In short, to define a problematic is to "problematize" i.e to set a particular question in the form of problem. The formulation of the problem as well as the solution takes place within a framework delimited by definite and precise analytical concepts which will be independent of the empirical data (Depelchin, 1977:5).

In the light of the above, it is imperative to state that African historiography has been conceived largely along ideological lines, in this respect, the liberal ideology. Liberal historiography conforms to the dictum that a historian's task is one of demonstrating "how the past really was" or merely "ascertaining the facts." Those who subscribe to this school of thought assert that facts or events of the past as revealed in past evidence, form the basis of the generalizations we

arrive at in producing social and historical knowledge.

However, such positivist or empiricist methodology, is itself ideologically infected. It is impossible to delineate the subject under investigation or a range of given concepts in epistemological constructs between express assumptions about the nature of society and about what is theoretically significant to it.

Thus, knowledge is produced within specific problematics reproducing in the process, underlying ideologies which the researcher subscribes to. The dominant ideology dictates the kind of knowledge generated.

The dilemma in which Africanist historians have found themselves is the extent to which historical sources could expedite the production of objective knowledge. This appears convincing given that the information contained in such sources also reflects the dominant ideology of the historical actors under investigation. Therefore, the generation of knowledge may largely be subjective.

Methodological reflection in the discipline is thus necessary given that:

It is not only information that they [scholars] need - in this Age of Fact, information often dominates their attention and overwhelms their capacities

to assimilate. It is not only the skills of reason that they need - although their struggles to acquire these often exhaust their limited moral energy. What they need, and what they feel they need, is a quality of mind that will help them to use information and to develop reason in order to achieve lucid summations of what is going on in the world and of what may be happening within themselves: It is this quality... (that scholars) are coming to expect of what may be called the sociological (historical) imagination (C. Wright cited in Temu and Swai, 1981:1).

That a historian should analyze his information in detail so as to determine its significance, cannot be gainsaid. Indeed, failure to come to terms with the problem of a philosophical analytical method can dilute one's inquiry to a mere chronicle of events. This is certainly not the domain of historical explanation given that it relegates a historian to a mere antiquary. Therefore, a practising historian should be involved in the process of explaining historical processes and to seek to penetrate the core of events he is describing. Judgement is passed upon him basing on how effectively he articulates ideas about the past. It is this that distinguishes him from others who might have sought to interpret the same information.

Debate on the development of African historiography since the demise of colonialism, shows that failure to locate the Africans' agency in their history, rested mainly in the inadequate decipherment of information provided by historical sources. Moreover, facts in

the empiricist or positivist reading of history, were considered a representation of stark actuality of the past. Facts were thus revered. A debate on the historical method was considered anathema. It was asserted that historians had certain obligations of; relating facts to facts (Swai, 1980a). This empiricist approach to the study of the past is synonymous with describing its appearance and does not fully explain the circumstances under which an event occurred. It also does not discuss the issue that facts themselves are theoretically derived and, that:

They are neither the beginning nor the end of investigation. The starting point of thought is never the bare noting of prime datum. One has to go out to meet the facts, as it were. This action involves the projection of schemata with which to perceive them. But since such facts constitute part of an articulated social whole - rather than, as is normally believed, being circular - one has to go beyond the facts to come to grips with reality. Short of this, scholarship becomes a matter of describing a part of the whole and confusing it with totality (Op.cit:113).

Perhaps what partly constitutes the crisis in African historiography is the so-called cult of facts and fetishism. That is why in African historiography the discovery of an alternative totality of the African past has rendered previously generated historical knowledge mythical, considering that truth is relatively defined by new findings and a consensus arrived at in the process of explanation. Data has been collected by

Africanist historians to demonstrate the equation of change in conception, largely enlarging the scale of knowledge of the African past.

The enormousness of historical data which a historian has to come to grips with, in the process of reconstructing the past, demands that he recourses to a selection procedure. A selection has to be made of what is relevant to his study as it concerns the needs of his generation. There are innumerable aspects of the past. A historian has to select what to focus on and then decide how to focus on them. In such an endeavour, a historian needs a criterion, normally dictated by his present political, social and economic conditions. This explains why a discussion on the methodology of history has largely to do with the use of sources.

Thus a historian has to contend with surviving traces and signs of the human past. In this sense historiography is a source - based discipline which illuminates the historical method.

Consequently, one is compelled to undertake source criticism to assess the reliability, accuracy and the general efficacy of the sources and the data which they store. Another major factor that leads to different interpretations of a history of a given society by historians, is the inadequacy of available data owing



to a particular source's unreliability. A good example of this is ethnography which has been flawed qualitatively because it is based on the observation of travellers who have not fully acquainted themselves with the local cultures they confronted (Mudimbe, 1988).

In this chapter, we attempt to demonstrate how Africanist historians manipulated the available historical evidence in the generation of social knowledge. We also discuss how different historical sources have facilitated the perpetuation of myths by certain scholars. We demonstrate how ideology has militated for the choice of certain sources. This chapter, therefore, endeavours to illuminate the contribution of historical sources to the corpus of knowledge on Africa by East African historians.

## 5.2 Ideology, African Historical Sources and Interpretation.

The discussions in the earlier parts of this study, have clearly demonstrated that a scholar's ideology largely influences his interpretative endeavour in the process of production of historical knowledge. This is chiefly because history studies events which are not readily accessible to our immediate scrutiny. A historian is required, therefore, to study the human past inferentially. That is, he relies mainly on observation of evidence for aspects which he is mostly interested

in. Moreover, in his assessment, certain factors which condition his character and influence his outlook and assumptions intrude considerably into his intellectual labour including the choice of the subject and methodology which he employs. This obviously puts the question of relativity into focus:

...concerning the degree of "objectivity" which can properly be attributed to any piece of investigation; every finding or conclusion, every claim to knowledge of some particular matter of fact, is to some extent necessarily infected with preconceptions deriving from the cultural environment of the "knower" (Gardiner, 1959: 241).

The choice of subject or field of investigation, and of given concepts and paradigms employed in the inquiry, are all but express assumptions about the priorities and goals of society which a historian belongs to (Temu and Swai, 1981:x). This has been reflected in the numerous writing of historical relevance produced on world history including Africa. There have been works, relying on the various sources of African history, which have included those reconstructed from anthropology, linguistics, oral tradition, archaeology, and written sources. These are what provide, in essence, some methodological alternatives or tools in the study of African history.

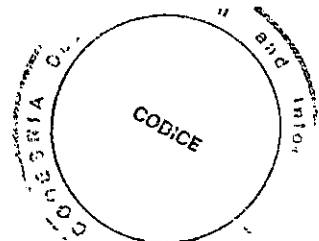
It has been noted in Chapter Two that the Greeks and Romans on their part, relied extensively on oral

tradition inscriptions and icons from Africa which they used to reconstruct ancient history. Their image of Africa was therefore, conditioned largely by the nature of information contained in these sources. And given their intellectual indebtedness to Africa in the fields of art, science and philosophy, their conception of Africa was one of awe and admiration. It followed that historical knowledge which they generated reflected this relations.

The sources cited above were revered, and to Greek, were stark expression of "truth" as it related to the historicity of "Africa". In apparent reverence for oral tradition Diodorus of sicily confesses:

The Ethiopians say that the Egyptians are one of their colonies which was brought into Egypt by Osiris. They even allege that this country was originally under water, but that the Nile, dragging much mud as it flowed from Ethiopia, had finally filled it in and made it part of the continent... They add that from them, as from their authors and ancestors, the Egyptians get most of their laws. It is from them that Egyptians have learned to honour kings as gods and bury them with such pomp; sculpture and writing were invented by the Ethiopians. The Ethiopians cite evidence that they are more ancient than the Egyptians, but it is useless to report here (cited in Diop, 1974: 1-2).

Like the classical writers, Arabs also relied extensively on oral tradition as a historical source relevant to the reconstruction of the continent's past.



However, the Arab writer's bias against certain aspects of African culture which were antithetical to the spread of Arab-Islamic way of life in Africa, made them disregard the wealth of information which oral tradition contained. In their view, only those traditions which helped promote their culture vis-a-vis that one of Africans seemed to be given prominence. Indeed, this explains why in those areas which came under the influence of the Arab - Islamic culture identified with the birth place of Islam. Myths were created to weave African history into that one of Mecca (El Fasi and I Hrbek, 1988).

Colonial writers on the other hand, completely disregarded the efficacy of oral tradition as source in their endeavour to produce knowledge on the African past. And for this reason, they condemned African history to the shadows and obscurities. Hence, by the time of Africa's political independence, the continent was still shrouded in this penumbra of knowledge.

The history of pre-colonial Africa was practically unknown because colonial writers sought to bury it. Thanks to the Hegelian historical orthodoxy of the nineteenth century which was internalized and reproduced by subsequent White racists and historians. Hegelianism thriving in the spirit of romanticism certainly impinged on the production of social knowledge. This was

summarised in <sup>+</sup> 1963 by an Oxford Professor of Modern history, Sir Hugh Trevor - Roper, in a lecture hall thus:

... nowadays undergraduate demand that they should be taught African history. Perhaps in the future, there will be some history to teach. But at present there is none: there is only the history of the Europeans in Africa. The rest is darkness... and darkness is not a subject of history. Please do not misunderstand me. I do not deny that men existed even in dark countries and dark centuries, nor that they had political life and culture, interesting to sociologists and anthropologists, but history, I believe, is essentially a form of movement, and purposive movement too. It is not a mere phantasmagoria of changing shapes and costumes, of battles and conquests, dynasties and usurpations, social forms and disintegration ...(Ogot, 1968:1-2).

The colonial ideology of subjugation could not withstand the fact that Africa had a history of her own. What was seen of Africa as historical progress, was the activities of Asiatics and Europeans. Oral tradition as a historical source, would renege on this element of European conception of self. Colonial administrators relied exclusively on anthropology, ethnography and White racist travellers accounts as sources of the reconstruction of history. Discourses couched in these exclusive White racist terms were no wonder outright biased against Africans, and, whose conclusions were implicitly political; advocating often linear evolution of humanity, with Europeans as "pioneer of civilization" and rest as late comers. No other source would have

done better in propping up European colonial ambitions and strengthened White racist prejudices against societies which were not white than anthropology and ethnography. To the Europeans ethnography and anthropology answered almost all the questions they needed to know about the Africans. It is in this light that the reliance on these two "sciences" should be considered. It has been observed (Mudimbe, 1988) that the "sciences" of study of the "other" developed as an outcome of the descriptions of other people by Western explorers, travellers and missionaries. It has also been postulated that:

The claims to thoroughness and accuracy of these descriptions of the "other" were nurtured because of the power that Europeans attributed to their own culture and to their own science. The power of Europeans in non-Western settings simply affirmed the power of European descriptions... The specific works of ethnography or anthropology were seen to develop within the structure of Western scientific discipline and not from the way they "observed" saw and represented themselves (Atieno - Odhiambo 1989:1).

The "other" was studied as an object which did not fully comprehend itself or what was going on around him.

Hence, what was written about the "other" did not take into account their needs neither did it appreciate his historicity. Following the employment of these "sciences" to the study of African cultures and societies, the African past was projected in static

terms. It was basically for this reason that the Western scholars ignored, excluded from their view, and suppressed the evidence that the "other cultures" were capable of also producing their own anthropologies and their own histories.

Paradoxically, Africans in this respect, had discourses on the own past including constitutions that governed their own societies. In essence, they produced their own versions of their past as preserved in oral tradition or written culture in some societies (Ajaegbo, 1990). However, in Western conception of pre-European Africa, there was no account of Time, Arts, Letters and society.

Colonialism and colonization in this sense, meant organization and arrangement of colonial Africa into fundamentally European constructs. The influence of ethnography and anthropology to the production of social and historical knowledge in Africa has thus been particularly immense.

African self-perception has been largely infected with the so-called ethno phenomenon which regards African civilization as comparably inferior to that of other lighter races. What has, however, often been misunderstood is the fact that the whole movement of the

so-called African self-reflection in anthropological terms, draws heavily on the European's mind dating back to the "Enlightenment" period. A mind preoccupied with the urgent need to understand itself through the mirror of other races and cultures. It was from this apparent warped perception of other human beings (not of Western peoples) as inferior, that justified their domination over them.

Anthropology and ethnography as disciplines of society studies seemed to have ingrained themselves into African scholarship during the colonial period through works such as: Tempels, Bantu Philosophy, (1959) and Mbiti's, African Religions and Philosophy, (1969). These discourses had deeply influenced the interpretation of African history and culture. Through such ubiquitous treaties, Africans seemed to succumb to European discourse of power and the yardsticks of assessment of "other cultures", hence the continuing distortion of the African past.

It is perhaps because of the need to correct these inherent distortions in pre-colonial history that African historians have emphasized historical progress in Africa. This may explain the emphasis by Africanist historians on the "recovery of African initiative or agency in African history." In this direction African Africanist scholars made reference first, to sources



like oral tradition and archaeology to challenge the position that had malignantly ingrained itself in the Africanist social sciences including historical studies (Ranger, 1976; Vansina, 1986).

They argued that to understand society or its institutions, it was necessary to scrutinize its historical tradition as revealed in oral tradition, written sources and archaeology among others. It was further noted that whereas Western scholars have relied extensively on oral tradition in the reconstruction of European history, they have denied that the African past could be reconstructed using a similar historical methodology. The argument goes thus:

While maintaining passionately that African societies have no history which pre-dates the colonial era, these same (Western) scholars have, on the other hand, written large volumes on such subjects as "African Religions", "African Political Systems", "African Customary Law", "African Art", etc. In these works they have amassed mountains of empirical data, constructed wonderful models, and invented tongue-twisting concepts such as "antagonistic acculturation", "pyramidal and consummatory" type of authority, "consociational systems of government", and so on (Ogot, 1967:11).

The present institutions of Africa are by and large products of the collective past of Africa, and to understand their functions they have to be scrutinized within their specific historical dimensions. This is partly why African historians became concerned with the

usefulness of oral tradition in the reconstruction of their past. It was convincingly argued that new functions are added to social institutions as perceived in contemporary times. Yet old functions which have become imbedded in the tradition of a particular society, continue to hold sway over the self-projection of a particular society. An anthropologist may not be the most competent social scientist to tackle facts pertaining to particular aspects of social and cultural change. Given that a historian's concern is about humanity and his culture treated in time perspective, it was considered anathema to attempt a reconstruction of the pre-colonial African past without recursing to oral tradition of various indigenous societies of Africa.

There was considerable opposition by Western scholars to the African counterparts who attempted to reconstruct pre-colonial African history using oral tradition. These scholars refused to recognise history produced by African scholars based on oral traditional. Instead, they referred to it as "ethno-history", simply because oral tradition was used in the reconstruction of the African past; and, in their conception represented a primitive method of historical inquiry. B.A. Ogot, in his attempt to reconstruct pre-colonial history of the Southern Luo, laments his predicament as he tried to apply the same methodology which Western historians used to write their ancient history thus:

When I decided in 1958 to study the pre-colonial history of East Africa, many of my friends and mentors ridiculed the decision on the ground that one cannot study what is non-existent. They reminded me that there are no documents on the period, and without documents there cannot be any history. Documents to them had become, in the word of an eminent historian, "the Ark of the Covenant in the temple of facts". But I persisted because I did not personally find the fact that we have to rely to a considerable degree on oral tradition for certain periods of East African history at all perturbing. The problem of oral tradition is not peculiar to Africa (Ibid: 13).

Resistance to the application of oral tradition to the study of pre-colonial African history was not a methodological problem but an ideological one. The belief by the positivists that history should also be made scientific in the nineteenth century Europe, had transformed the historical method as well. Any study which did not grope for positivism, was to the best of their knowledge, primitive. It was increasingly believed that to be systematic as the positivists asserted, was to be "objective".

Indeed, it was argued that:

To be objective was to study critically the historical sources, to describe impartially the facts of history with the same detachment and in the same manner in which, it was believed, other scientists regarded natural phenomena. The facts thus scientifically organized would speak for themselves. Historians were not supposed to interpret the facts (Turyahikayo - Ruyema, 1988:4).

European historians who were themselves immersed in positivist amusement, which also coincided with the strengthening of modern racism in the West, did not consider the fact that a historian of any age arranges facts well in accordance with his conception. As a historian selects and arranges his facts, he imposes on them, his own views and biases by giving them interpretation so as to make them meaningful and functional.

This is why historical knowledge is largely inferential knowledge. Thus, production of historical knowledge mainly hinges upon the interpretative endeavour employed to recover "traces" of the past. This is then used as evidence in relationship with the question being investigated. Above all, historical inquiry is conditioned by one's general world outlook.

Considering that the majority of pioneer social scientists who undertook historical studies on Africa were predominantly foreigners and not Africans, who did not belong to the societies whose histories they described, it was obvious that their methodology would be culturally defined. In their interpretative endeavour, they applied models which did not explain adequately the development of African institutions and societies. As a result, European social thought

permeated African historical studies thereby generating historical critiques which were redundant even in Europe itself. Sadly, some African historians who were trained in the European social science academies imbibed the Western conception of social and historical investigation. They sought to make it a universally accepted methodology, even when they doubted some specific Western conceptions of Africa (Mkandawire, 1989; Achola, 1990).

The comparative approach employed in historical explanation of the African past has seriously misrepresented African institutions. This has been partly responsible for the awkward self-image which Africans have cultivated since their induction into Western culture. In reference to this approach and its negativating effects on historical studies in Africa,

Tiyambe Zeleza asserts that:

When it comes to comparative history Africa's contributions in world history tend to be understated or ignored. This arises in part from a tendency to use idealised developments in European history as the point of reference. In particular, incorrect comparisons are made of societies at different levels of development, for example, comparing pre-industrial Africa with industrial Europe and not pre-industrial Europe. Indeed students are usually taught the history of modern Europe, of Europe at the pinnacle of its historical development and global hegemony, while they encounter other civilizations in their moments of decline

and subjugation to Europe (Zezeza, 1990:11).

The legacy of anthropology to African historical studies is tremendous. It has helped reinforce the view of Western supremacy as expressed in the notions of "Dynamic Europe" and "Static Africa". Therefore, for comparative history to be meaningful to Africa, it has to be freed from this strangling Eurocentric anthropology. However, this is not to say that the anthropological methodology is of no use.

Whereas the methodology of anthropologists may have enriched certain aspects of African historical studies, particularly culture, it remained an exclusively Western "science" whose agenda was perpetrating White mythologies about Africa. It is perhaps because of this realization that as a suspect discipline, in the eyes of many African scholars, that it has been the subject of immense criticism. As a result, Western institutions started to re-examine it with the view of endearing it to their African counterparts where it was largely being questioned. Okot p' Bitek (1970) suggested that it be done away with all together. There are yet those who do not subscribe to this view. The latter school of thought strongly argues that the discipline needs to be re-examined. In this respect, a Kenyan historian E.S. Atieno - Odhiambo observes:

On the other hand, as anthropology has

come to be marked by intense self-scrutiny and self-doubt, the study of "other cultures" has clearly ceased to be the monopoly of anthropology and of the earlier traveller literature parent to it. Historians in North America and Europe have developed powerful expertise in the study of societies and cultures in Asia, Latin America and Africa... Just as anthropologists and ethnographers are questioning the possibility of knowing the "other", ordinary people across the globe are gaining images and knowledge about other cultures. The exchange of knowledge about "other cultures" proceeds at an incredible pace, and substantially outside academic disciplines that once monopolized such inquiry (Atieno - Odhiambo op. cit : 2).

The above quotation is perhaps, a justification of an African historian's need to look at anthropology afresh with the view of harnessing the wealth of its methodology in historical studies. In this sense, Western stereotypes that permeate colonial anthropology have to be erased from current and future discourses on Africa. Atieno-Odhiambo's (Ibid) effort in advocating for and using anthropology to re-examine the history of the Luo of Siaya, is a landmark in such an interpretative endeavour. It is a step forward in reformulating our paradigms of analysis.

It would, however, be erroneous to conclude that anthropology single-handedly facilitated reproduction of Western values in Africa. Whereas anthropology as a discipline, with its methodology, may have generally characterised the production of social and historical

knowledge in Africa, other historical sources augmented it. These sources included historical linguistics, archaeology and written sources.

Another historical source that was particularly vulnerable to Western ideological manipulations was historical linguistics. This source of history assumed considerable importance during the period when Western social scientists craved for knowledge on the peopling of Africa with the view of racially classifying its inhabitants. This endeavour, which smacks of positivist approach to the constitution of knowledge, was popularized in the nineteenth century. There is no doubt that linguistics as a historical source has not been used without excessively forcing it to bow to the Western racial prejudices. That is why it has not illuminated significantly, the historical processes in Africa. As a scientific classification of languages and the history of the African peoples, it reproduced and confirmed Western stereotypes about the Africans. In this sense, ideological distortions seemed to take an upper hand as to elicit the following observation:

The first large-scale linguistic and historical studies conducted on the African continent coincided with the slave trade and then colonization, and this accounts for their Eurocentric and racist bias. The Hamitic theory was devised to explain any perceptible historical progress on the continent as being the result of the civilizing action of white or "brown" conquerors, the latter being



the colonizers dispatched by capitalist imperialism. Men like C. G. Seligman, in his Races of Africa, saw historical movements and language relationships on the continent through the distorting spectacles of racism and racialism and, when ascribing some measure of progress in Central and East Africa to the Bantu, felt compelled to turn them into "Hamiticized Negroes" (Diagne, 1990: 93).

The application of the so-called scientific methods invented in the positivist era to the study of man by and large, compromised the "Negro" or the African status. The pseudo-science of the positivist era shunned any debate that tended to classify humanity as belonging to the same family. Instead, it encouraged the separation of creation of races or polygenism; a theory which considered the "Negro" or Africans as sub-humans. Whereas claim was laid on the primacy of the methods of science, religious superstitions, in so far as they supported the notion of White racial supremacy, were widely applauded and perpetrated by Western social scientists such as C.G. Seligman. It was in this vein that African "otherness" had to be demonstrated by among others, Western linguists.

According to Western linguistic classification of Africa, various linguistic categories of African peoples were identified basing this identification on the so-called similarities of languages. The conception of African peoples as the "Negro", "Bantu", "Hamites" and "Nilo-Hamites" emerged. These groups of people, in the

Western view, were expression of the level of civilization attained in the history of humanity. The so-called Negroes and Bantu represented the primitive segment whereas the "Hamites" and "Nilo-Hamites" were models of man's development. Everything of value in Africa was thought to have been introduced on the continent by the "Hamites". The ideological implications of this racial classification of African people for historical studies was the strengthening of the Hamitic theory. Western social scientists did not waste time in manipulating it. Indeed, it was asserted of humanity's civilization thus:

Apart from relatively late Semitic influences... the civilizations of Africa are the civilizations of the Hamites, its history the record of these peoples and of their interaction with the two other African stocks, the negro (sic) and the Bushman, whether this influence was exerted by highly civilized Egyptians or by such wider pastoralists as are represented at the present day by the Beja and Somali.... The incoming Hamites were pastoral "Europeans" - arriving wave after wave - better armed as well as quicker witted than dark agricultural Negroes (Seligman, 1966:96).

Africanist historians reacted differently to the myths created and reinforced by Western social sciences particularly the one dealing with the peopling of the continent. Perhaps the rise of migrational discourses in African historical studies have a direct link with the prejudicial linguistic and anthropological studies of the + nineteenth and + twentieth century.

These disciplines in Europe sought to explain the histories of the so-called pre-scientific societies of the world.

Whereas African social scientists may have embraced the methodology of these disciplines, as an effort to demonstrate the historicity of their societies, they did not fully comprehend implications of this so-called scientific method for the study of African societies. It is precisely for this reason, that some African historians have succumbed to the view that the Bantu homeland, for instance, is to be located around the Niger- Congo region. The Niger - Congo hypothesis was preponderant in African historical interpretation of the late 1950s and 1960s. This was the time when nationalist interpretation of history was gaining currency.

The nationalist school of thought of the early 1960s aimed at consolidating the just won independence of African nations. It also aimed at confirming that Africans were organised in some form of institutions which could be compared with modern European system of government. The school of thought was pre-occupied with the restoration of Africa's lost dignity and therefore took particular exception of European stereotypes about global race relations.

Indeed, from the:

... European point of view, the classification of races and specification of their attributes served, directly or indirectly, to sanction the colonial enterprise (there are, of course, many other aspects both of race theory and of colonialism). The superiority of the Caucasoids centred on their political capacity. Knowledge of government was contrasted with another ideal construct, absence of knowledge of government, which was attributed to the opposite pole of the system. If these attributes were innate and immutable, government by those who knew how of those who did not was a reasonable and natural consequence (Macgaffey, 1970:105)

The Niger - Congo hypothesis and the Hamitic theory as paradigms seeking to explain precolonial African history have, to a significant extent, influenced the production of historical accounts, particularly migrational histories of Africa. Most Western Africanist and African historians have reacted variously to these theories. They have either endorsed or rejected them outright. Those who have incorporated them into their studies have sought to pattern their findings along the main thesis propounded by these standpoints. In the main, however, those applauding them comprise Western scholars and a few African scholars deeply socialized in Western social science methods of inquiry through the Western school system.

Despite the sizeable amount of knowledge generated under the rubric of these two theoretical constructs, the Niger- Congo hypothesis and the Hamitic theory have been

systematically discredited in African historical studies. First, to experience this test has been the Niger-Congo hypothesis which was brought under academic scrutiny by some Western scholars themselves (Olderogge, 1990).

Indeed, commenting on the use of historical linguistics in the reconstruction of precolonial Bantu history, Malcolm Guthrie asserted:

The main characteristic of this type of study is that it introduces speculative hypothesis into the handling of the data, so that few of its conclusions can really be substantiated. The persistent use of this approach to Bantu prehistory has led to a crop of unverifiable theories which have gained general acceptance, the latest of these being the Niger-Congo group introduced into Greenberg's classification of African languages.. (Guthrie, 1970:131)

Notwithstanding the discrepancies inherent in this kind of approach to the study of pre-colonial African past, Western social scientists have advocated a detailed study of other sources of information to ascertain their stand.

Phillipson (1975), for instance, suggests a more detailed study of the precolonial Bantu history using both archaeology and linguistics. What is most revealing is that archaeological findings do not seem to corroborate linguistic evidence in this aspect. It is perhaps for this reason that in his effort to

reconstruct Meru history basing on the Niger - Congo hypothesis Alfred M. M'Imanyara noted of the methodological difficulties:

In my view the Niger-Congo hypothesis lost touch with the reality of African history from the moment it was conceptualised.... The Niger- Congo hypothesis could neither identify a civilization nor special attributes of nature that could not be found elsewhere in the Bantu region, to justify proto-Bantu origin from Cameroon highlands. What the hypothesis did in effect, is to misdirect Bantu origin quest into 'barren lands' in the endeavour to reconstruct Bantu history, hence contradicting logic (M'Imanyara, 1992:2).

Following the foregoing quotation, one immediately notes the significance of the Niger-Congo hypothesis in the debate over the creation of historical knowledge of Africa. This is particularly so, given its capacity to arouse the curiosity of African historians to seek an explanation leading to the identification of an alternative centre of the origin of African civilization per se.

Furthermore, it exposes the ideological flavour which stained Western racist scholarship in its attempt to explain historical processes in Africa, and its manifestations in the subsequent African historiography. There is no doubt that certain modes of thought intruded into historical interpretation of race relations, chiefly governing the method of investigation and the outcome. It is precisely for this reason, that the

shift in employment of paradigmatic of analyses in historical studies of Africa should be considered.

With both the Niger-Congo hypothesis and the Hamitic theory discredited in the historiography of Africa, African Africanist historians yearned for an alternative explanation to illuminate precolonial African history including the peopling of the continent. Whereas this alternative effort was lauded as an endeavour to correct the warped image of Africa resulting from Western and colonial misconception, it still succumbed to paradigmatic problems of analysis prevalent in Western social sciences.

Noteworthy, was the persistent harping on the idea of migration of peoples and racial classification. Thanks to oral tradition which conveniently testified in their favour, sometimes reinforced by Islam and Christianity which perhaps, some African societies sought to identify with (Kiwauka, 1969; Were, 1967, 1974; Ochieng', 1974, 1975; Stevens Jr., 1987; Hrbek, 1988).

Reactions by East African historians to the body of historical knowledge produced by Western scholars brings into direct focus the "Misri" myth as an alternative explanation of the origin of most East African societies. The "Misri" myth has featured prominently in

the various peopling theses of African historians (Kipkorir, 1973; Ochieng', 1974, 1975; Makila, 1978)).

Indeed, the importance of this myth in historical analyses persists to date in discourses concerning themselves with the interpretation of social and cultural history of East Africa (Shilaro, 1991; Kakai, 1992). Yet even in their diverse discourses the "Misri" myth has been intensely debated as to warrant a brief appraisal of the historical efficacy of this legend.

Some scholars (Were, 1967, 1974) imply that the "Misri" myth could be a modern-day invention, and for that matter was constructed as an attempt by biblically influenced informants to trace their ancestry to the cradleland of Christianity. However, paradoxically, in her thesis entitled, "Kabras Culture Under Colonial Rule: A study of the Impact of Christianity and Western Education", P.M. Shilaro, while refuting this assertion seems to confirm it on the contrary. She states of the Kabras (of Kenya) migration, settlement and early history thus:

Kabras migration into and settlement within their present homeland must be understood within the wider context of Luyia history. According to oral evidence, the ancestors of the Abakabras originally came from Judea in Bethlehem and settled in "Misri". Their departure from "Misri" was attributed to bad ecological conditions which made the area susceptible to famines... From "Misri"



they went to Karamoja (probably the northern part of Uganda), and then to Eyembe near Mbale where they found the Bagishu and the Sebei (Shilaro, 1991:34).

From the foregoing quotation, it is evident how the present view of self can influence perception in historical explanation. Indeed, these modern-day christian idiosyncracies should be thoroughly scrutinized as they could easily distort precolonial African history. While it is true that the etymological meaning of "Misri", in the East African context cannot be clearly explained, abounding evidence absolves its users from lifting it from the Bible.

However, historians who have sought its assistance in interpreting the history of some societies such as Haya, Markwet, Gusii and Ganda identify "Misri" with Egypt. Yet they vehemently dismiss that it is biblically derived. Perhaps the strongest refutation in recent historical studies comes from Pius Wanyonyi Kakai who asserts:

Were dismisses the Misri origin as a myth emanating from the biblical influence. Instead of Misri, he suggests the present day territories of Karamoja and Turkana districts. But this dismissal does not seem valid. For as the oral accounts of Abatachoni trace their route from Misri through Turkana, it is difficult for one to allege that Abatachoni mistook Turkana or Karamoja for Misri. Furthermore, the custodians of these accounts were mainly traditional believers who not only dissociated themselves from biblical influence, but were also illiterate. Therefore to allege

that they were mainly under biblical influence does not hold water (Kakai, 1992:33).

From the above assertion, it is evident that the "Misri" myth has been particularly significant in the reconstruction of precolonial African past as it related to the peopling of the East African region. In many a historical account of the peoples of East Africa, the myth seems to reappear persistently.

For instance, in his attempt to reconstruct the history of the Chuka and Meru of eastern Kenya, H.S.K Mwaniki (1986a,b,c,d) asserts the possible origin of these communities should be located in Ethiopia or lands thereabout. Mwaniki like most Africanist African historians questions the authenticity of the Niger-Congo hypothesis as an explanation of the possible Bantu migration. The theories propounded by J. Greenberg, M. Guthrie and R. Oliver to explain the peopling of the African continent are highly contested; historical linguistics as the single and most appropriate source of historical explanation is disputed.

Whereas historical linguistics as a source for the reconstruction has its merit, and helped illuminate historical processes of the distant past of certain communities, it has its inherent flaws which were systematically concealed by early Western Africanist historians who attempted to produce social and

historical knowledge of Africa in the colonial period. As these scholars grappled with the reconstruction of the African past, the fact that languages change and are sometimes even lost in the process of interaction among communities was largely ignored. A good illustration of this is the El Molo of Kenya who have lost their language, yet a thorough study of their oral tradition reveals a totally different picture from what historical linguistics testify.

Historical linguistics have influenced the interpretation of El Molo history as they have done on the general historical explanation of most East Africa. In the El Molo oral tradition, they originated from Ethiopia or lands there about. This strengthens the need to further investigate the "Misri" myth.

The "Misri" legend has assumed great importance in historical discourses relating to precolonial Africa, because of the inadequacies of other sources to provide indisputable evidence on the migration patterns of peoples, and the emergency of civilizations on the continent. This is particularly so, as it relates to historical linguistics. However, this is not to say historical linguistics is not a reliable source of historical inquiry. On the contrary, this study contends that it should be thoroughly evaluated before

one accepts wholly the evidence it contains to avoid repeating the mistakes of Western scholars.

The identification of "Misri" as the original home of certain communities in East Africa raises some fundamental questions about the general body of knowledge produced by Western scholars on pre-colonial Africa. Particularly pertinent is the view that Egypt "civilized" the rest of pre-colonial Sub-Saharan Africa. The Western scholars, and specifically those who subscribe to the so-called Aryan model of historical interpretation, assert that Greece and Rome "civilized" Egypt. Egypt in turn extended the Graeco-Roman civilization to Africa south of the Sahara. In this view, therefore, the implication of the "Misri" myth would be to confirm the agency of the White race in the making of pre-colonial African history and deny the existence of an African initiative.

The impact of the Hamitic myth in African historiography has been felt variously in discourses of Africanist historians. Perhaps most instructive in recent times has been M'Imanyara's effort to reconstruct pre-colonial history of the Meru of Kenya. In his work, M'Imanyara laments his difficulties in producing knowledge on the Meru past and hence betrays the spectre that seems to haunt many African historians:

... it is easy to see that the

earliest of civilization to which the Bantu could have been attracted was Egypt, followed by Meroe and so on ... In my attempt to locate the origin of the Meru ancestors, I have taken into account the fact that I am dealing with a complex issue. Being Bantu speakers and, therefore, their origin having been contradicted by the Niger-Congo hypothesis, a different approach of my predecessors had to be adopted. Firstly, I have given attention to the historical events of North Africa from where the majority of Kenya Bantu speakers claim to have originated. Secondly, I have turned my attention to the Meru as they relate to other peoples. Thirdly, I have presented the history of Meru people from the perspectives: a Meroitic peoples and as emigrants from North Africa into East Africa. Fourthly, ancient Meroe is known to have been well organised, and for this reason, the Meru system of government and organisation has been presented as a source of cultural evidence (M'Imanyara, 1992:4).

In the light of the above, it is evident that the author of the foregoing text makes a veiled attempt to link Meru history with the pre-colonial African magnificent civilization of the Nile Valley, ancient Egypt and Meroe.

However, such attempts among others, are contradicted by adduced evidence from the school of thought which posits the view that East Africa and, specifically the area around the Great Lakes was the homeland of humanity. The latter school of thought draws heavily on archaeological evidence unearthed around the Nile Valley. The main argument here is that the closer one moves to the source of the river Nile, the more ancient African civilizations become (Diop, 1974, 1981; Mwanzi,

1987; Kamenju, 1990a, b,c,d,e).

Indeed, in his thesis on the "Origin of the ancient Egyptians", Cheikh Anta Diop affirmed the truth of this assertion thus:

The general acceptance, as a sequel to the work of Professor Leakey, of the hypothesis of mankind's monogenetic and African origin, makes it possible to pose the question of peopling of Egypt and even of the world in complete new terms. More than 150000 years ago, beings morphologically identical with the man of today were living in the region of the great lakes at the source of the Nile and nowhere else... It means that the whole human race had its origin, just as the ancients had guessed, at the foot of the Mountains of the Moon (Diop, 1981:27).

It was through archaeology perhaps, as a source of historical reconstruction that African dignity was restored in Western social sciences. Through it, the precolonial African past which had been retrieved via oral tradition found respectability among Western scholars. The + eighteenth and + nineteenth century European Romanticists and racists, found it intolerable to accept the view that Greece, which symbolized the epitome of Western civilization, was in essence a product of colonizing ancient Africa. As a result, the model which perpetrated this view had to be overthrown and replaced by something more acceptable to them.

The overwhelming evidence about the origin of civilization however, caused the following reaction from

one Western scholar:

If I am right in urging the overthrow of the Aryan Model and its replacement by the Revised Ancient one, it will be necessary not only to rethink the fundamental bases of 'Western Civilization' but also to recognize the penetration of racism and 'continental chauvinism' into all our historiography, or philosophy of writing history. The Ancient Model had no major 'internal' deficiencies, or weaknesses in explanatory power. It was overthrown for external reasons (Bernal, 1987a: 2).

The overthrow of the Ancient Model was basically extrinsic rather than intrinsic. Western scholars of Romanticism used a priori arguments and unproved assumptions to discredit the old model and establish the new one (Wilmot, 1989:6). A similar confusion in methodology seems to reign among some African historians, particularly those handling the "Misri" myth in explaining the peopling of the continent. Some of them have not come to terms with the myth - hence flawing (methodologically) as they attempt a reconstruction of pre-colonial African past. (cf M'Imanyara, op.cit).

Indeed, Shilaro seems to acknowledge this difficulty when she states:

.... the theory of the north as the original home of various African peoples is an enigma that calls for resolution. As such, the view that the "Misri" myth is a product of christian influence is not proven (Shilaro, 1991:35).

Whereas archaeology illustrates that East Africa may have been the home of humanity, some scholars postulate that East Africa was peopled by emigrants from the north.

The northern invaders are supposed to have carried with them a "superior civilization" as Ogot observed:

... (there) was the invasion of Western Uganda by the Bahima or Bachwezi pastoralists (the so-called Hamitestock), perhaps from the Southern part of Ethiopia. They brought with them new crafts and techniques, new ideas of social and political organisation and a cattle culture which greatly influenced much of present - day Uganda as well as parts of Kenya and Tanganyika. The Bachwezi are credited with the creation of the Bigo earthworks in Mawogola Country of Buganda (Ogot, 1964:39).

Ogot's pronouncement in the early 1960s, clearly demonstrates the extent to which racial prejudice had entrenched itself among African scholars who had received Western education.

However, the line of thought like the one Ogot subscribed to, was attacked and had to be abandoned. Those who spearheaded the attack were historians of the Pan-Africanist nationalist school of thought. They chose to emphasise African agency in the making of continental history. Archaeology was particularly important in this respect, given that it provided basic



information on ancient civilizations of Africa. Thanks to pioneer archaeologists on the continent who included J.G.D. Clark and L.S.B. Leakey with their findings which confirmed that Africa, besides being the home of humanity was the progenitor of world civilization.

Archaeological findings reinforced the Africanist approach to historical inquiry. The primacy of archaeology in historical studies is underscored in the following statement:

That human civilization originated with the human race in Africa is an established fact. The task for us now is to trace some of the attributes of that civilization. These have to do with the developments of cognitive forces; which include artistic expression, that is appreciation of shapes; appreciation of the moon and its crescent shape; appreciation of the permanence of the sun and its dominance of the sky, a permanence which leads to wonder and to the spirit of enquiry which is the path of intellectual growth. The first expression of this intellectual awareness was in the making of tools, perfection and paying attention to their shapes and colour... In short one can trace man's mental and social development through his interaction with his environment and how he expresses that interaction. Africa provides evidence for all this (Mwanzi, 1987:3-4).

It would have been an onerous task for African Africanist scholars to demonstrate that Africa contributed enormously to world civilization without the help of archaeology. This explains why the study of African Archaeology has developed tremendously on the African continent.

In East Africa, universities boast of having departments of archaeology which include; Dar es Salaam and Nairobi. Those universities which do not have archaeology departments teach courses on African archaeology under the auspices of the Department of History. Through these courses, historical processes in Africa of great antiquity have been illuminated.

Archaeological studies augmented by oral tradition and other historical sources, have systematically discredited the dominant view of colonial Europe that Africa was primitive and unprogressive. Consequently,

African history is being interpreted anew in Western institutions of learning, regardless of the ideological biases against Africa. In fact, the debate rages on about what constitutes African prehistory. Thanks to written documents existing in Africa many centuries before the birth of Jesus Christ. It is now popularly held in Western Africanist studies that:

... the earliest written records relating to Africa, those of the ancient Egyptians, began about 5,000 years ago; for other parts of the continent, notably the interior regions south of the equator, such relevant records exist which are more than one or two centuries old... The term (prehistory) is not entirely appropriate for African... (Phillipson, 1985:1).

Yet Western Africanist scholars and their audience are not ready to acknowledge that written records which archaeology unearthed are indigenous to Africa. Attempts by some Western Africanists to attribute these documents to the natives of Africa has been frowned upon.

Indeed, the compartmentalization of the continent into "White" and "Black" Africa betrays the racist agenda aimed at appropriating the wealth of civilization exhibited by the ancient Nile Valley peoples. Moreover, studies conducted by Western Africanists which stress African "initiative" in the making of their own history have been met with hostility from the Western audience; an audience that has a fixed opinion and which apparently knows very little about African's history.

In some quarters, within Western Africanist scholarship, it has been suggested that "friends of Africa" have no business talking positively about the African past. To racist Western Africanists, only Africans can write their history, if her magnificent culture and civilization has to retain its intellectual value. In the Western view, for Western Africanists to state that Africans have their own history offends nearly all established historiographical orthodoxy. Those European writers including, Martin Bernal (1987a, b) and Basil Davidson (1987), who appear to contradict

this general wisdom basing their theses on new evidence, are regarded by their peers in European and American institutions as renegades. An endeavour of a similar magnitude, it is argued (Davidson, Ibid ), should be left to the likes of Cheikh Anta Diop.

It is fashionable among Western Africanists historians, to portray Africa as a disintegrated continent with different ethnic groupings, since this was one of the major legacies which historical studies were bequeathed by anthropology and historical linguistics. The balkanization of the African continent was the result.

This balkanization facilitates and sustains the growth of African studies in European and American institutions. Indeed, it has been observed that quite often in Western institutions of higher learning, African students were "persuaded" to study their "tribes" while:

The Western Scholar would then conveniently collect all those "micro" studies and process them into "macro" syntheses wrapped in theoretical packages. This international division of labour meant that the agenda and the terms of debate were set by Western Africanists. African scholars were reduced to followers, or at best critics, of each new intellectual fashion that emerged from the Africanist capitals of the West (Sindiga and Zeleza, 1985:4).

Without this kind of international division of labour in the sphere of intellectual pursuits, the future of

African studies in Western institutions was bleak. It is in this light that declaring certain topics, regions "tribes" or even approaches outlawed for certain scholars may be understood. The West has encouraged the emergence of intellectual "kingdoms" over Africa, an event that has entrenched the dependency syndrome at the scholarly level. African scholars have been relegated to mere research assistants in the so-called collaborative research endeavours with their Western counterparts.

In reaction to this saddening scenario, African Africanist scholars in the early 1980s sought to establish an epistemological breakaway from Western orthodoxy.

These efforts culminated in the publishing of the eight-volume UNESCO General History of Africa, whose production met with a hostile reception from Western Africanist scholars.

Feeling threatened, they embarked on their own eight-volume study which was christened the Cambridge History of Africa. And given the always-ready funds to champion a racist cause, these volumes were quickly churned out to pre-empt the General History of Africa. Moreover, the architects of the Cambridge series confidently

predicted that the UNESCO project would crumble in the wake of their effort (Zezeza, 1990).

Yet despite this chest thumping of Western scholars which characterized the battle for control of knowledge, African scholars have through numerous treatises raised historical consciousness in Africans about their past. It is in this light that alternative approaches in the study of the African past should be considered.

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## CHAPTER SIX

## 6.0 APPROACHES IN AFRICAN HISTORIOGRAPHY SINCE 1960.

6.1 Introduction

Historical writing and debate on the method of history in East Africa has, like the trends elsewhere in scholarship, been conceived in ideological terms. The politics of the concerned societies play a major role in determining the terrain and main approaches to production of knowledge. In East Africa, Africanist social and historical knowledge was first conceived in the anti-colonial ideology advocating for political independence.

After independence, the post-colonial state embarked on political, social and economic development programmes with the different countries opting for ideological approaches to the problem of development. The diversity in development alternatives in East Africa has strongly influenced the development of African historiography since 1960.

The different analytical paradigms adopted in the humanities and social sciences by academics in their respective countries are, therefore, expression of the dominant political ideology of the moment.

Moreover, they largely reflect the national aspirations

of peoples despite the elitist and exclusive nature of decision-making.

These decisions have their importance in historical reconstruction, given that any epistemological stand taken is based on a more preferable methodology of study which is largely politically defined.

#### 6.2 Factors influencing approaches adopted in Historical Interpretation.

The use of historical evidence in Africa is crucial in explaining the epistemological and methodological shifts in African historical studies over the years. It has already been demonstrated in this study, how Europe in particular, invented an Africa it desired through the "power of discourse" by popularizing falsehoods and creating a warped image of it. Considered in this context, the past emerging out of the colonial and imperialist discourses was useful in carrying overboard the Western quest for domination and exploitation of Africa. Hence, the historical knowledge produced during the colonial period was defined by the nature of political and economic relationships forged between the colonizers and the colonized.

Given that the production and dissemination of knowledge is at no time neutral, it is important to understand the battle for control of knowledge that has



characterized the growth of the social sciences and historical studies in Africa. The issue of control and dissemination of knowledge by both Western and African Africanist scholars is central in any discourse that attempts to explain methodological development in the discipline of history.

Whereas Eurocentric Africanists have struggled to retain the niche they secured in the colonial period of being the producers of social knowledge par excellence, Afrocentric Africanists have over the years incessantly sought to decolonize and control its production and dissemination. This is perhaps what constitutes the "scramble for Africa at the intellectual level" (Shiroya, and Aseka, 1990).

The post-World War II period saw a growth of interest in African studies by Western Africanists and African Africanists. The former's interest coincided with the decolonization process in Africa while the latter's interest, although hatched within the last years of formal colonialism, confirmed itself in independent Africa. The two discourses had different agenda. The West wished to uphold its supremacy over the continent through neo-colonial tendencies at the intellectual level, whereas African scholars, intended to achieve intellectual emancipation through revision of African

history.

Discourses by Western Africanists on Africa were aimed at understanding African peoples and their social, economic and political institutions. However, while the political decolonization process dismantled the age-old colonial structures, intellectual emancipation demanded that the production of social knowledge in Africa must be conceived in African terms. This is because in the face of a nationalist onslaught, imperial historiography went into hibernation shedding off its aged and hideous scales. It did this in readiness to begin a new life and spit the same old poison (Zeleza, 1986: 182).

Although the social and historical knowledge produced by Western scholars appeared "sympathetic" or "friendly," to the African, it remained to a large extent, a powerful apology of imperialism. In essence, it was neither sympathetic nor friendly to Africa. It was an account of events taking place on the globe at that time, redefining in the process, the relations between the West and Africa.

In most Western discourses of the late 1950s a rosy picture began to be painted of the continent. Previously it had been described by racist scholars in the most dehumanizing terms. The Africa that was emerging in Western treatises of the period was entirely

a new one; an Africa which determined her own destiny without interference from Europe; the so-called local initiatives in the making of African history. However, it has been argued that the real reason for the change of heart among Western Africanists was to secure a place in African universities immediately after independence as agents of imperialist academics and perpetuate the selfish interests of the Western audience (Sindiga and Zeleza, 1985). The audience desired an image of Africa which emphasized European supremacy and neo-colonialism.

The notion of local initiatives fitted in well the changing Western Africanist conception of decolonization as a process. It has been alleged that Africa called for colonization as a way legitimating the "correctness" of the "civilizing mission" of the West. This view has been contested in recent times by African Africanist scholars (Mwanzi p.c, 1993). They assert that it is a facade whose aim is to obscure the pertinent issues which African historians should address as they reinterpret their own history.

Moreover, it absolves the Europeans and Westerners in general from the blame that colonialism was unjust and that the system was biased against Africa. Instead, the employment of this analysis in African historical studies advocates for a "balance sheet approach" to the

understanding of African history. It contends that Africa also benefited from colonial presence on the continent. At the end of the day, following the foregoing argument, European supremacy is confirmed.

Indeed, this has had far reaching implications for the historiographical tradition adopted in Africa since independence. The euphoria for African studies in the America and Europe of the 1960s should be understood in the light of Western desire to dominate other societies. During this period, young European and North American scholars travelled widely in Africa to gain first hand field experience. Metropolitan governments, private foundations and other agencies provided funds to undertake researches on African institutions in Africa. It has been observed, for instance, that: .1s1

In the United States, the National Defence Education Act of the late 1950s required American colleges and universities to teach foreign languages and foreign area studies. This made it possible for scholars to get research money. African studies became an academic growth industry. M.As and Ph.Ds were churned out, journals appeared, publishers scrambled for the latest research findings, careers were made, reputations rose and fell. It was all exhilarating, infectious and rewarding (Sindiga and Zeleza, 1985:1).

Out of the 1960s euphoria in African studies, journals such as the Journal of African History, emerged and flourished.

The source of contemporary intellectual paternalism in scholarly relations between Eurocentric and Afrocentric Africanists has been this phenomenon of empire - building by schools of thought. Although co-operation between African and Western scholars existed, the former were relegated to mere research assistants to foreign "experts" even in areas where the African scholars were more qualified. In Western controlled academic journals, Africans are disadvantaged in terms of competing for space so that: .1s1

Even when one gains publication space, the author must conform not only to editorial requirements but ideological and social ones as well. There are cases in which Western editors rewrite papers to remove "unacceptable" portions of a report. In fact, both research funding and the dissemination of results in the West are social as well as political matters... And except for a token African or two, their editorial committees rarely include African scholars. Sometimes even their overseas consulting editors in Africa are expatriate scholars! (Ibid: 5-6).

It can be argued that the exclusion of the African voice or perhaps perspective, from important journals of history in the West, has no doubt had significant implications for the generation of knowledge on Africa. The credibility of such journals remains questionable.

These journals are primarily controlled by Western Africanist scholars and published for a specific European and American audience. Looked at from this angle, this explains the persistence of intellectual

poverty among Africans in the social sciences. It also explains the manifestation of the dependency syndrome at that level.

Intellectual dependency went hand in glove with the kind of economic relations into which Africa was forced by imperialist Europe and America. This was a relationship based on the imperialist programme of capitalist super-exploitation of the colonies to maintain and sustain Western economic and social systems. Exploitation of African labour has taken place at both the physical and intellectual levels.

However, with the rising tide of anti-colonialism brought in by African elites within the ideology of Pan-Africanism or Negritude, the imperialists were compelled to reformulate and refine their doctrine of the mission to "civilize" Africans. Imperialist powers then adopted a different approach of domination and exploitation all in the name of maintaining the status quo.

Nevertheless, "traditional elites" played an important role as functionaries in executing exigent conditions of colonial oppression and exploitation. Similarly, the modern African elite was to be relied upon to play a similar role in neo-colonial conditions. African elites, by this token had to be incorporated into the

imperialist camp as a central force in the mediation of the new exploitative relations.

Indeed, in this context, colonial education created intellectual dependency by preparing the ground for the production of an elite that would be subtly controlled by imperialists. Thus a new era in educational relations dawned. There was a need to create the so-called modernizing elite:

All this was done in the name of neutral and value free social science. Academic exchanges were organized, training undertaken, and books on 'value-free' social science donated. The result was the creation of an educated elite 'which accepted Western socio-economic models unreservedly as representing modernity and scientific ethos. The question whether these models and assumptions on which they rested were at all relevant' to Africa and the Third World, "was not raised" (Swai, 1980b :45).

Within this neo-colonial prospect, rules for comprador relations in politics, economics and education were spelt out. The African tertiary educational institutions including universities turned out to be the chief breeding ground for members of the elite who played a leading role in nurturing these relations. In some instances, African universities were infiltrated by imperialist intelligence agents who posed as scholars. Yet their mission was clearly suspect. Their chief function was to inform the West on the radicalism of a contrary position to the imperialist agenda of intellectual manipulation. Their activities contributed

to the strengthening of intellectual dependence (Ray et al., 1982).

Essentially, African institutions of higher learning remained mired in a wider network of external linkages which monopolised the determinancy of debates in education at that ultimate level. Some elites were willing agents of covert external manipulations and control. They fell victim to this by virtue of their early education, training and acquired patterns of social behaviour in Western institutions. The reason for this, it has been asserted, was that they knew of no better or worthwhile roles to perform in their societies than serving metropolitan predatory intellectual interests (Mohiddin, 1977). Indeed, this was the consequence of the inextricable link between humanities and social sciences and the circumstances under which they emerged in Africa.

Intellectual dependence has helped breed epistemological poverty in the human and social sciences in various ways. Among the manifestations of this dependency, is the continued existence of replicas in almost all spheres of our national life. There are many institutional forms which have been borrowed from the metropolitan countries. This has been done without considering the fact that some of these institutional



forms are despised even in countries where they originate (Mkandawire, 1989).

This way, neo-colonialism has impeded alternative approaches by independent African states for social and economic transformation. In this context, intellectual development was crucial in facilitating the attainment of its goals. That is why:

...the trajectory of growth in African scholarship had as it were to be nipped in the bud. Obsolete theories of development such as modernization theories, marxist notions of proletarian struggles and other metatheoretical constructs have as a consequence found their way in African historiography without Africans themselves braving the challenge to question their validity (Shiroya and Aseka, 1990:7).

The precise role assigned to Western institutions of manipulation, was to derail African scholarship from pursuing germane issues affecting the continent. Africa became the testing ground for theories invented by Western scholars (Collins, 1990; Lonsdale and Berman, 1992). Yet when these theories of analysis did not work, Western experts in these institutions turned against Africa and condemned the continent of mismanagement of her affairs. These institutions were concerned with the creation of paradigms of analysis and suggested the problematics.

More still they oversaw their implementation. In some instances, Western Africanists travelled in African

countries where they conducted research and engaged African scholars in the exercise, not as genuine collaborators, but research assistants. This kind of intellectual collaboration has elicited the following observation:

Usually the "collaborators" are included not because of the researchers' perceived scientific needs for such collaboration but because of the insistence by funding organisations or local governments that the researchers indicate in their applications that they will have a local collaborator. In the worst cases, the expatriate community may be large enough to live its own intellectual life and conduct debates in which native scholars are totally marginal (Mkandawire, 1989:2).

It is this division of labour which not only reproduces the dominant intellectual relations between Africa and the West but also enhances epistemological poverty in the social sciences. With African intellectuals ignored, no meaningful contribution is made to the generation of historical knowledge. Western perspectives are made to prevail in social sciences and have become the basis of reproducing stereotypes even among African scholars. The stereotypes ultimately percolates to the masses for whom knowledge is produced. In the Kenyan case, an example of a research project with devastating results on the general scholarship on Kenya, was the so-called Kenya Debate. This debate was ostensibly conducted among a coterie of expatriate scholars on the nature of state the country:

By a process of self-reinforcing cross-referencing among themselves, these

scholars were able to create a veritable enclave of intellectual discourse from which local scholars were virtually excluded. With the end of their contracts and their return to their respective homes, the "Kenya Debate" ended (Ibid.).

There is no doubt that this approach to the recovery and generation of knowledge smacks of racism. It is also discriminatory and exclusionist. In the end, it goes beyond just impairing the self-image of African scholars to inflict more fundamental damage on the conception of African historiography. Indeed, it reinforces certain forms of intellectual mimetism, while condemning local scholarship to crude empirical verification of hypotheses conceived in Western institutions of learning.

In essence, it reduces African scholars to appendages of alien theories. By implication, this is the source of the paradigmatic predilection that has thrown African studies off balance. It is the basis of the kind of academic tour that has contributed considerably to what may be termed as the poverty of theory in African historiography.

Because of this academic tourism Africa has experimented with a host of paradigms of analysis ranging from Liberal to Marxist epistemologies which are not African in origin. Hardly are African scholars given the time to evaluate the efficacy and relevance of such paradigms

of analysis to our historical conditions. Instead, they are made to cultivate a misdirected appetite for these "fashionable" epistemologies.

Consequently, this exclusionist intellectual relationship breeds the culture of intellectual opportunism. This is a culture that is antithetical to the sound development of the disciplines of social sciences in our institutions of higher learning.

Intellectual opportunism demands subservience of the local scholar to neo-colonial manipulations of the West and their academics. The choice of research themes and approaches by local scholars, for instance, are not based on one's frank reflection or understanding of the issue, slated for investigation. It is influenced by a strict compliance to the criteria of the funding organization.

Worse still, African scholars are shy to discuss the place of foreign scholars as it relates to their participation in writing and interpreting the African past, despite some of the discrepancies which have been highlighted in the foregoing. It has been argued that the reason for this apparent silence is the fear on the part of African academics perhaps, to antagonize European Africanist friends and mentors, and thus sever

the funding conduit that has been sustaining some African social science projects (Ochieng', 1985b). That is how Western scholars are trying to recapture the minds of African intellectuals. This offers an explanation why, in recent times, a considerable number of African scholars have been groping for research packages from the West. Moreover, history textbooks are being revised by Western Africanists whose motive is suspect. Ochieng' brings out this point thus:

As some frank American scholar recently told me in Nairobi, the propaganda is aimed at winning for colonialism the vast population of Africa's post-independence generation who had no colonial experience. They are being told that European tutelage was much better than independent African rule. The idea is to smuggle back into Africa European control through the back door(Ochieng', 1987:44).

Western exclusionist scholarship and intellectual intimidation facilitates recolonization of Africa by the West. Intellectual intimidation is done by forcing certain research projects down the throats of African scholars who are otherwise incapacitated, by a lack of financial resources from domestic sources. Consequently, they find it difficult to reject this kind of academic blackmail. Lack of funds militates against the need to conceive and conduct autonomous research and analysis. Thanks to research advertisements appearing on notice boards in our universities announcing the generosity fo the West in dollar terms. Together these factors entrench

intellectual opportunism and dependency.

It is clear that Western scholars did not whole - heartedly accept the realities of the decolonization process. Caught up by the wind of change they had to acquiesce to these new conditions of decolonization. It has been observed, for instance, that the departure of

European colonialists hurt Western psyche. They had to readjust and:

European scholars who were interested in Africa - like Basil Davidson, T.O. Ranger, Roland Oliver, John Lonsdale, J.D. Fage, and others - joined African historians to chronicle the various stages of African nationalism. There was no doubt in their minds at all that African independence was brought about by African initiative (Ibid:45).

Indeed, the West had to befriend African nationalists in the period immediately after independence.

In about the second decade after independence the honeymoon was over between Africa and the West. The West had seemingly recovered from the ravages of the Second World War and the shock inflicted upon it by the decolonization drama; it was picking up economically by rehabilitating its ravaged industries. It was in the light of this new strength that the West turned its guns on Africa. A new discourse of slander and plunder was set in motion. Africa was once more depicted as a dark continent which through "local initiatives" had presided

over the mismanagement of her own affairs. They argued that this was perhaps because "independence had come too soon." The message from Europe and America was clear; "Africa was not ready for independence!" Despite the alleged European tutoring "the natives in the ways of good government," Africa never learnt. It was claimed that after all this show of good will by Europe, the latter:

... withdrew hoping her energies had not been wasted, that Africa would steadily continue progressing along the path that Europe had carefully charted out for her, until she too became civilized. But these hopes were soon dashed. The "natives" soon went back to their old "primitive" ways (Zeleza, 1986: 187-188).

In their bid to recapture the lost territory immediately after independence, the West continued to play the politics of imperialism and neo-colonialism. It was not enough to control Africa's wealth and natural resources. It was necessary to control also the production and dissemination of social and historical knowledge. The Western agencies commissioned to capture Africa and the Third World included; various aid-agencies including the International Monetary Fund, The World Bank, and research organizations.

All these agencies spoke in unison about the inability of Africa to govern herself and prescribed patented programmes to "liberate" Africa from the shackles of "self-imposed backwardness." This certainly explains

why European and American scholars whose discourses on Africa were positive in the nascent years of independence, demonstrated a resurgence of Western conservatism and imperialism of the earlier period prior to decolonization in the 1970s, 1980s into the 1990s.

All of a sudden the mood in the citadels of higher learning in Western institutions became hostile:

Many European and American scholars who were Africa's "friends" only a decade ago (in the 1960s) are today saying terrible things about African history, African leaders and African humanity. Books on history, economics and political science are being revised to justify neo-colonialism and to preach the falsehood that the African condition today is worse than it was in the era of European colonialism (Ochieng', op.cit).

It is important to recall here that the West supported the launching of the UNESCO General History of Africa project in 1965. This eight-volume project seeks to present a fairly objective history of Africa long obscured by Eurocentric misconceptions, interpretative methods and references. It differed from the latter in the sense that it treats Africa as one historical unit, ignoring the division of Africa, in European texts, based on geography and colour (Zezeza, 1990). Its approach to African history was interdisciplinary. While it is true that all the editors were chiefly Africans, the contributors included Western Africanist "friends" of Africa - some of whom have since turned their backs on Africa. (Zezeza, 1986; Ochieng', 1987).



The UNESCO General History of Africa series owed a lot to the Senegalese - born Director - General of UNESCO between 1974 and 1987, Amadou-Mahtar M'Bow. This is because his efforts at the agency saw the fruition of the project with its first volumes emerging in 1981. For a keen student of African historiography it is understandable why Western hostility, especially from Britain and the United States of America mounted against his presence at UNESCO.

In fact, Britain and the United States of America left the organization in 1984 and 1985 respectively, and threatened to withdraw membership and funding completely from the agency as a protest against his administration. Other Western countries threatened to follow suit while African and other Third World countries remained solidly behind him. The M'Bow saga threatened the existence of UNESCO. He was, however, persuaded by the Third World countries which would have been the biggest losers in the event of its collapse, to abandon the fight and retire from the agency.

M'Bow's perceived crime at the agency is still unexplained. However, the answer is obvious. He devoted a lot of his time and energies toward alleviating problems of Third World countries through the organization. It is on record that he had started

programmes of scientific and cultural nature to address the problems of the Third World. ( Standard 19 October, 1987). Perhaps the unforgivable sin was the dream-come-true, the execution of the UNESCO General History of Africa project. To get him out of the way accusations were levelled against him. For instance, it was alleged that the organization under his directorship had taken an anti-Western stand; he was also accused of corruption and authoritarianism while deliberating on the organization's matters.

However, these may not appear to be the main issues driving a wedge between him and the West. His biggest crime was driving the organization towards calling for a new world information order! Perhaps this was inconceivable in the West. A lot of this had to do with the production and dissemination of knowledge on more equitable terms among the diverse cultures of humanity which M'Bow advocated. It appears that the West which had been closely watching his activities at the agency could not stand him any more. He had to go and was replaced by someone more acceptable in their judgement.

Amadou Mahtar M'Bow saga is a typical example of how the West attempts to cow African scholars under the pretext of generating "objective knowledge". Yet all paradigms conceived in the Western ambient are

culturally defined, reflecting in the main, the aspirations and interests of the Europeans. That is why, for instance, Western scholars confidently predicted that the UNESCO General History of Africa project would never see the light of day at its launch. When the project weathered the storm and threatened the little empires of career Western Africanists, new strategies had to be devised. Thus, a study of trends in African historiography is instructive. It enables one to understand the manifestations of intellectual dependency and poverty in African historiography, and how this impinges upon historical interpretation. Furthermore, it explains the Western zeal to control the production and dissemination of knowledge. A good number of African scholars are resisting, this attempt.

Resistance to neo-colonial history in East Africa is closely associated with universities in the region. These institutions are charged with the responsibility of apprenticing the youth into positive ways of building independent and autonomous nations. In this sense, decolonization of the history syllabi in our institutions has become a matter of urgency to erase obsolete notions that keep recurring in the problematics of African history as it relates to the generation of knowledge on the world scale. The problematics, whether grounded in Liberal or Marxist paradigms, all portend

Africa as lagging behind Europe in intellectual development. This is why a historiographical reflection and analysis assumes importance in affirming Africa's position as a historical entity. It is useful in the face of raging intellectual and ideological struggles over Africa. Moreover, it demonstrates and exposes the various strategies Eurocentric approaches are using to sneak racist irrelevancies back into African historical studies.

The recognition of the fact that imperial historiography is trying to assert itself for the second time, appearing as it is, in repackaged themes and generalizations, is a major step in attempts to combat it. It can only be combated by reconstituting debates on African historiography in purely African terms. This has been aptly put by two scholars thus:

For too long Africa has been understood on other peoples terms, some well-meaning others less so. Through vigorous debate we should aim at constructing a self-sustaining intellectual tradition to which, for once, others should respond. This can only be done by creating and maintaining the necessary academic media, such as local journals. As intellectual workers our role is to produce and disseminate ideas, not mere pedlars of ideas and models produced elsewhere (Sindiga and Zeleza, 1985:9).

That is why in an epoch where African scholarship has reached great heights, such as witnessed by the re-interpretation of African history in the UNESCO General History of Africa project, historical narrative couched

in obsolete imperial notions can no longer be left to hold sway. They must be subjected to thoroughgoing textual analysis and discarded.

For instance, the notion that North Africa is not Africa but Arab is highly contestible. In the same vein, there are problems with linguistic-cum-racial classification of African peoples. Its scientific basis and historical validity are questionable (c.f chapter 5).

However, despite three decades of political independence in East Africa, most existing history textbooks persistently suffer from confusing approaches employed in historical analyses on Africa (c.f Were and Wilson, 1974). This problem arises mainly because of the designation of Africa based on colonial boundaries. Historically, these divisions do not represent the geopolitical realities of the continent stretching back into the pre-colonial era.

In this sense, therefore, some Western categories of historical analyses which are employed in the study of societies give misleading results. Suffice it to mention false attempts have been made to reconstruct ethnic histories, that have often ended up in presenting a disparate collection of stories of migration of the different ethnic groups into the "nation", and a

catalogue of their institutions, relations and conflicts (Zezeza, 1990). It has been argued that a historical discussion of pre-colonial Africa, should consider Africa as one continent as opposed to its regional compartmentalization.

Whereas it has become fashionable to periodize the continent's history into pre-colonial, colonial and post-Colonial eras, this in itself has its own shortcomings.

There is a tendency, besides giving primacy to colonialism in historical conceptualization to interfere with the genuine comparison of developments within the same society. Colonialism, in this context, rudely interrupts conceptualization of historical processes by posing European activities as the yardstick of all progress in Africa. It subtly reinforces the Eurocentric view that history in Africa, began with the coming of the Europeans. The use of terms such as "traditional", "modernization" and "primitive", should then be viewed as a product of this false conceptualization of history.

Be it as it may, to avoid misrepresentation of the African past in historiography, will require considerable effort on the part of African scholars to

rid future textbooks of redundant notions. New approaches to research will have to be instituted mainly relying on primary sources as opposed to the texts already in existence. Most textbooks on African history available at our institutions of learning have too many concerns which emphasize colonial history. Perhaps this is the source of the prevalence of European misconceptions in the philosophy of African history. To come to grips with our own past, it is important:

... to develop our own conception of history and resist imperialist stranglehold over historical knowledge... The history teacher as a historian requires to give historical facts and their interpretation the respect and justice they require. The reconstitution of our historiography should not be left to pedestrian chroniclers who renew discarded notions of Africans and world history when our very professionals are people trained in the methodology of the subject (Shiroya and Aseka, 1990:3).

In the past few years, growing disenchantment with some interpretation of facts in the discipline of history has been noticed. The reason behind this is the penchant for some African scholars to reproduce the same historical propaganda, of imperialist scholars, only that it is now repackaged in new theories hatched in Western academic sanctuaries. This so-called history has then been passed over to students of history causing serious damage at various conceptual levels. They suffocate their students with a conglomeration of facts which are vacuous intellectually (Ibid.) The importance of historiographical critiques cannot be

gainsaid.

African historians seem to have responded favourably to this challenge over the past few years in various ways. For example, they have organized conferences for African experts on the history of Africa under the auspices of UNESCO. Such meetings were held in 1984, 1985 and 1989 in Nairobi to discuss the status of teaching history in our learning institutions. In essence, these meetings concerned themselves with the historical method as it relates to generation and dissemination of knowledge. Given that these deliberations were conducted in an East African capital, it is obvious that the deliberations of the meetings injected a new lease of life in East African institutions of higher learning especially the universities which require a perceptual renaissance (Ochieng', 1985b).

But perhaps the most important methodological seminar on history held in the decade of the 1980s, was one organized under the auspices of UNESCO and CODESRIA in collaboration with the Chadian National Commission for UNESCO. This seminar whose theme was, African History: Perspectives for Tomorrow, brought together twenty-two African historians in Nd'jamena, Republic of Chad, from 17 to 21 July 1989. The conference attempted a synoptic examination of the situation of African historiography



at a time when history, like all humanities and social sciences, faces a multi-dimensional crisis (CODESRIA Bulletin No. 2,3,1989). It highlighted the need:

- (i) to begin work on a thorough going critical overview of African historiography;
- (ii) to examine the functional role, social status and operational impact of historians in the crisis-ridden context of Africa today;
- (iii) to study the necessary conditions for the establishment of a structure designed to facilitate contacts and interaction between the continent's historians and historians abroad;
- (iv) to explore prospects for the publication of a three-volume set of sub-regional histories to serve as companion texts to the UNESCO General History of Africa. The overall aim of the project would be the production of a new series of continental and sub-regional histories for Africa.

At this conference well over thirteen papers, each addressing a specific aspect on the foregoing objectives were presented. This was perhaps the most important methodological reflection ever carried out touching on various aspects of African historiography. It suggested co-operation among African historians in the process of

production of historical knowledge. The importance of such conferences in re-organizing means to tap the wealth of expertise of African historians goes without saying. This is because:

Historical research today is not simply a quest for cultural or national identity, it is a quest for reconstruction and renewal, and a fundamental requirement for the qualitative transformation of African societies. In Africa, the human and social sciences - especially history and social studies - often suffer from the general discredit applied to disciplines characterized as useless and encumbering, or even subversive. Nonetheless, it is well known that in Western societies the social sciences have often been mobilized for reconstruction and development .... Consequently, any reflection on the future of African societies is useless if not firmly based on an objective analysis and evaluation of the past (Wondji, 1986: 269).

Given the importance of history in re-awakening a people's consciousness and mobilizing them for developmental tasks of specific societies, it is sensible that historians should undertake regular methodological appraisals of their discipline. As part of the need for continuous appraisal of our historiography, in this chapter we attempt an investigation of the circumstances under which approaches and paradigms of historical analyses have emerged. Due consideration is given to the nature of politics evolving in Africa and the world in general, and its influence on historical interpretation. Thus, subsequent sections of the chapter delineate the

approaches adapted in the development of African historiography.

### 6.3.0 The Nationalist Interpretation of African History

Elsewhere in this study (c.f chapter 1), it has been postulated that the production of historical knowledge is inseparable from political decision, and interests. Scholarship in itself is a social activity defined by human relations over time. Thus, historical awareness is a function of social consciousness of given generations. It illuminates the world in which human beings are participants in the social drama of society thereby contributing to the process, of creating awareness. That way they partake in the moulding of future social realities. Contradictions which are embodied in these realities are expression of conflicts of interests of categories of people involved. On the one hand are those who struggle to impose their dominance over others, while on the other, are those who attempt to upset the status quo.

The nationalist conception of the African past was born in circumstances characterized by the struggle for Africa's independence and the maintenance of the colonial order. Recognizing the imminent demise of colonialism after the Second World War, the imperial powers started to re-examine their relationship with the

colonized people at the political, social, economic and intellectual levels.

At the intellectual level, the teaching of history was introduced at Makerere University College in 1949. Most of the knowledge produced relied on research at East African Institute for Social Research (EAISR). The history syllabus of the time was heavily Eurocentric. It could not have been by accident but rather by design. The European teachers appointed to teach history knew very little about African history. Indeed, the history taught at Makerere was nothing more than an attempt to turn "the Expansion of Europe" inside out for the benefit of African students at the institution (Swai, 1980a:32). Professor Kenneth Ingham one of the history dons of the 1950s and early 1960s reminisces:

When I think back to the early days of African History teaching at Makerere I marvel at the tolerance displayed by our own students towards our jumbling attempts to tell them something about their own continent. I marvel even more at the apparently satisfactory results achieved in examinations. Yet I have no doubt whatsoever about the importance of teaching Africa, and more particularly East Africa History at Makerere (cited in Ogot, 1978:23).

The African component of the history syllabus at Makerere was too weak, dealing mainly with aspects which explained the expansion of Europe into Africa. Part of the weakness could be attributed to anthropologically biased EAISR. The European staff at Makerere was not

keen on revising the syllabus to reflect the nationalist aspirations of the moment. Professor Bethwell Alan Ogot asserted it was for this reason that he was forced to migrate to Nairobi only to find an academic climate worse than Makerere's (Ibid). Under these circumstances, the battle-line had been drawn and the rebellious scholars like Ogot had to prepare to defend their careers and convictions.

Therefore, the nationalist ideological triumph over colonialism in the late 1950s and 1960s, gave impetus to the development of a forceful nationalist historiography in the period. It was within this nationalist rebelliousness that Ogot, with the support of the administration of University College, Nairobi, was appointed to head the Department of History in 1965. It has been noted that his appointment:

...opened the way for rigorous teaching of Africanist History together with its research. This was too much for Hanna who tendered his resignation immediately. Hanna, a University Professor in an African University, had all along maintained that "Africans were impulsive children of nature" who lacked "prudence and forethought". "Only by a wilful disregard of abundant evidence" Hanna maintained, "is it possible to evade the conclusion that, on the whole, the picture (of the African past) was one of the brutality, callousness, suffering and futility, and that the situation did not include any factors which offered hope of improvement in the future... (Swai, op.cit: 33-34).

To Hanna, the coming of Europeans to Africa was a

blessing in disguise that improved the African hitherto "pathetic" conditions. He strongly believed in the so-called European philanthropic civilizing mission to Africa. This was the information which Hanna had vigorously pumped into the heads of African students under his tutelage. It was, therefore, inconceivable to him and other like-minded European scholars for an alternative Africanist perspective to be taught to the same students in their presence. It is in this light that his resignation from Nairobi should be understood.

Thus, historical knowledge produced within East Africa in the decade of the 1960s, was conceived basically as a liberating social force as well as a means of strengthening self-government. Indeed, this explains why Africanist nationalist historians sought in the African past "African activity", "African adaptation", "African choice" and "African initiative". There was a need to re-discover the African cultural heroes. Political independence of African countries for that matter, created propitious conditions for the production of nationalist history. History teaching and research acquired a particularly prominent place in East African universities in the humanities and social sciences.

A similar nationalist attachment saw the establishment of the Department of History at the University College of Dar es Salaam in 1964 by Professor Terence O. Ranger.

Ranger had migrated from the University College of Rhodesia and Nyasaland where the settler government had declared him persona non grata because of his interest in "African initiatives" and nationalist politics. The Department of History at Dar es Salaam was founded on a clean slate unlike Makerere and Nairobi where there were many resident defenders of colonial historiography to fight against.

At Dar es Salaam, there emerged what has been referred to as the "Dar-es Salaam School of New Historiography" (Denoon and Kuper, 1970). The school brought together, J.E.G Sutton, I.N. Kimambo, A.J. Temu, J. Illife, W.Rodney, J. Lonsdale among others. Their main concern was with the recovery of African genius in history, and to demonstrate that colonialism and its historiography aimed at victimizing the African by portraying his culture and history negatively.

Indeed, the "Dar es Salaam School" was perhaps the most aggressive school of nationalist historiography to emerge in East Africa within the nationalist parameters of the 1960s. This period characterized the production of nation-based histories in which Africanist historians celebrated the rise of the new status. It was urgent to provide a history of the new nation as a means of filling the gap left by the fast retreating colonial

historiography. Thus Africanist historians eulogized the activities of African nationalists, giving the new states their legitimating linkage to the remote pre-colonial African past (Zezeza, 1990). Historians at Dar es Salaam may not have been uniquely placed in this respect. Yet in the process of producing historical knowledge they demonstrated a rare diligence and determination. Their efforts were acknowledged in the words:

... European interventions in West and Central Africa, and to a lesser extent in East Africa, have been shown to be in part prompted and modified by the pressure of much more local developments within the continent. But scholars at Dar have gone further still: in giving primacy of attention to local initiatives within a particular territory they have made the diminution in scale more pronounced, more arbitrary and more decisive ... The fact that they were working in Tanganyika (and then Tanzania) is significant, in that they were surrounded by the activity of a highly articulate national political party, building a nation out of an ex-dependency. They were exposed to stronger ideological currents than scholars in many other independent countries, where national movements are less pervasive and dominant (Denoon and Kuper, 1970:330).

Whereas Ranger (1971) refutes the notion that the ideological atmosphere of Tanzania was not precisely nationalist in any simple or exclusive sense, Lawi (1989a) and Kimambo (1992) have views to the contrary. Both agree that the prevailing ideology was predominantly nationalist. The Dar es Salaam school demonstrates how history was conceptualized in the light of social and political demands of the time,



becoming value-laden in the process. The inevitable consequence of this was the teaching of history for nationalist purposes in Tanzanian secondary schools. This started in 1964 with the "Africanization" and then "Tanzanization" of the syllabi content. The period between the late 1960s and mid 1970s was characterized by the implementation of the goals of the Arusha Declaration. This declaration in itself was:

...often considered to have been an expression of renewed nationalism in history teaching. This partly implies that the nationalist tendency had clearly expressed itself in the period prior to 1967 (Lawi, 1989a: 204).

That is why it is important to recall the political environment in which historians at Dar es Salaam were operating. Tanzania nationalism was radical in the sense that its advocates had a vision to liberate Africa. This desire certainly influenced historical interpretation at the university, a quest that was reproduced at various levels of the educational system.

Noteworthy is the fact that even before the Arusha Declaration, Dar es Salaam had become a centre of political refugees fighting to liberate their colonized countries (Kimambo, 1992). Furthermore, the influx of radical scholars such as Walter Rodney influenced the ideological and methodological dimensions in the generation of knowledge at the institution.

The above factors distinguished the "Dar" School as a

unique entity for its special commitment to the "political philosophy of current African nationalism." It consolidated its influence on national thinking by producing historical material for all levels of the country's school system. In this important period in the growth of Tanzania's historiography, the Historical Association of Tanzania was founded in 1966. Its findings were published in the form of pamphlets such as Maji Maji. Thereafter works like A History of Tanzania edited by I.N. Kimambo and A. J. Temu, Tanganyika Under German Rule 1905-12 by John Illife and Tanzania Before 1900 by Andrew Roberts were released within the perspectives of nationalist interpretation.

The Department of History at the University of Dar es Salaam launched the first issue of Tanzania Zamani: A Bulletin of Historical Research and Writing in 1967. The bulletin has since been turned into a journal. As a result of these efforts, the "Dar es Salaam School of Historiography" acquired a distinct character.

Earlier on in 1965 the University of Dar es Salaam, referred to as the "Hill", was privileged to host an international congress of African historians under the auspices of the Government of Tanzania and UNESCO. The keynote address was delivered by the then President of the Republic, Julius Nyerere. Nyerere underscored the

need to understand the past as means explaining the present. Commenting on the role of history in restoring an African dignity which had been eroded by colonialism, Nyerere stated:

The new consciousness that we have a history, and the amount of study which it needs and deserves, is not confined to Africa. The emergence of independent African states over the last two decades has meant that the rest of the world feels a need to understand this continent in a way which was unnecessary when we were simply colonial subjects ... we in Africa are now equals whom the world cannot disregard (Nyerere, 1968:2-3).

The prevailing nationalist mood and the enthusiasm to re-write African history were playing an important national function. Studies in African history in the 1960s meant to repair the damage caused by years of colonial subjugation. African leaders in power, were portrayed as heroes and architects of a grand plan for Africa. Thus efforts were made to demonstrate continuity in national history, knitting it with the pre-colonial African past. In essence, the nationalist interpretation of African history, provided African nationalists and the newly independent states with a legitimizing ideology. The ideology sought to consolidate the just won independence and inspire the collective response to the need to build the nascent African nations. Looking back at the three decades of production of historical knowledge in East Africa with nostalgia, B.A. Ogot narrates his experiences thus:

We demonstrated that African societies had well-organized states and engaged in long distance trade with properly organized markets. We proved to our satisfaction that Africans had religions, philosophies, military organizations, legal systems, medicines and technologies. In short we tried to demonstrate that Africa had a rich and significant history (Ogot, op.cit: 25).

African history was interpreted in aggressive nationalist terms characterized by refutations of racist prejudices which had hitherto highlighted African "passivity". The post-independence discourses gave prominence to the African initiative. Various nationalist leaders including Kwame Nkrumah and Ndabaningi Sithole called for a serious study of the African past, and used it to rally together their followers. Symbols of the African past were systematically enshrined in state paraphernalia (Crummey and Stewart, 1981).

By mid 1960s the nationalist perspective of history had started being felt, albeit mildly, at Makerere which until then, had been submerged under the liberal tradition of historical explanation. The latter tradition was mainly pre-occupied with production of a history which assisted in maintenance of the status quo. Because the liberal tradition articulates the hegemonic interests of the ruling bourgeois class, it is also referred to as the bourgeois tradition.

Bourgeoisie history emphasizes that the history which it

produces in character, is neutral, value-free and entirely "scientific" since it is based on facts. In this context, it poses as the only authentic historical knowledge. Moreover, it inculcates in its recipient a form of acquiescence and acceptance of the given prevailing domains of knowledge. Thus, it ingrains in its consumer a feeling of confusion and powerlessness to overturn it (Slater, 1980).

At Makerere defenders of liberal history against the nationalist onslaught included Donald Denoon who wrote on Kigezi. But perhaps the most formidable defence of the liberal tradition came in the form of a critique to the rising Nationalist School of thought at Dar es Salaam in the 1960s. It was advanced as follows:

...our argument is that the new historiography has adopted the political philosophy of current African nationalism, and has used it to inform the study of African history. That commitment inclines the school towards rhetoric in defence of narrowly selected themes and interpretations, and the stereotyping and total rejection of alternative views...[T]his is ideological history... African history is too important to be left to politicians. The African historian should be committed to writing the truth, rather than the politic half-truth (Denoon and Kuper, op.cit: 343).

Yet Denoon and Kuper (Ibid) did not realize that bourgeoisie liberal scholarship was itself conceived largely in conservative terms. It examined evidence within specific ideological constructs.

Production of historical knowledge at Makerere was characterized by the struggle between liberal leaning scholars such as Donald Denoon and Michael Twaddle on one hand, and S.M. Kiwanuka representing the nationalists on the other. In the meantime, nationalist historiography seemed to have given way to the balance-sheet approach to the study of African history and social sciences at Makerere.

The dominance of the liberal paradigm at Makerere in the 1960s could be explained, perhaps, as resulting from the imposing nature of Makerere Institute for Social Research (MISR) which was established under the aegis of colonial administration in 1948. This institute was set up to undertake research in social sciences drawing heavily from the methodology of anthropology which emphasized the study of tribal entities. The basic assumption of the methodology was that African societies were "backward" and to overcome this condition, it was imperative that "traditional" barriers to modernity be removed. This explains why despite the enormous knowledge produced at Makerere, there:

...was an inability to transcend the ideological parameter of colonial scholarship, that is that Africans needed to be modernized out of tribalism (Campbell, 1985:6).

However, both Professor P. Godfrey Okoth and Professor M.S. Kiwanuka of the Department of History, Makerere

University attest to the fact that the revision of the history syllabus in the 1960s facilitated the teaching of Africanist history (p.c. Okoth, 1992; Kiwanuka 1992). The history syllabus at the university was conceived with the view of broadening students' awareness of African history and the factors which have contributed to its making. This, indeed, explains why at the beginning of the 1960s, research on pre-colonial history of Uganda was instituted as an attempt to retrieve Uganda's history. Like most of African Africanist historians on the continent of the time, Ugandan historians relied heavily on oral tradition in the exercise. Hence the production of the ubiquitous historical texts, which are perceived as important means of preserving materials which may sooner or later get lost. This way, sufficient literature on Africanist history was generated at Makerere by the end of the 1960s.

Following the need to rewrite Uganda's history, "The Uganda Project" was launched in 1969 drawing the participation of 30 undergraduate students. The students concentrated mainly on colonial history emphasizing the question of African "initiative" in the essays which they wrote. These essays were produced in what constitutes undergraduate research papers. The research papers were aimed at correcting the image which

had been painted of Uganda by colonial anthropologists, administrators and sociologists. It was observed that these historiographers hardly possessed any grasp of the political, and to a large extent, the historical elements of the societies they described (Kiwanuka, 1973).

The nationalist enthusiasm of the 1960s, and the need to produce historical knowledge within the Africanist perspectives, inevitably led to the birth of Makerere Historical Journal. Under the auspices of the Department of History, the journal was launched. It took considerable interest in what was being taught in Uganda schools with the aim of making historical studies responsive to the political mood of the time. It was history emphasizing politics (Slater, 1980). The co-optation of Professor Matia Semakula Kiwanuka and Professor Gideon S. Were of the University of Nairobi into the East African Examinations Council was meant to facilitate desirable change in the schools' history syllabus.

Yet the historical knowledge generated at Makerere when compared with the one emanating from Dar es Salaam, demonstrated a great disparity. This tempts one to conclude that Makerere retained a largely liberal outlook, drawing heavily on the liberal methodology of inquiry in historical studies which emphasized the



detachment of the inquirer from the object of study. Dar es Salaam, however, adopted a radical problematic. The liberal approach by historians at Makerere could be attributed to the nature of politics in Uganda that was not particularly stringent in resolve and aspiration compared to the one that characterized the emergent Tanzanian political culture.

Indeed, discourses such as M.S. Kiwanuka's, A History of Buganda, S. R. Karugire's, A History of the Kingdom of Nkole in Western Uganda to 1896 and Donald Denoon's edited work of, A History of Kigezi in South-West Uganda, were certainly grounded on the liberal tradition. This could also be traced in B. A. Ogot's, A History of the Southern Luo, Vol. 1. Migration and Settlement, a thesis written while he was a member of staff at Makerere University.

Nevertheless, the nationalist mood did not spare the University College of Nairobi. Here, the need to transform the Department of History into serving the aspirations of the nascent Kenyan nation, was increasingly being recognized. With the arrival of B.A. Ogot at Nairobi in 1964 and the nationalist politics within the department found itself immersed and influenced the production of knowledge according to the dominant political ideology of the moment,

nationalism. However, the brand of nationalist historiography at Nairobi did not assume the aggressiveness that characterized the "Dar es Salaam School of New Historiography". It was for this reason that A. J. Temu who had been recruited as a special lecturer at Nairobi left only after two weeks for Dar es Salaam on the advice from Professor Oliver that:

... "History at Dar es Salaam was more aggressive", and this seems to have appealed to his thrusting Chagga temperament (Swai, 1980a: 37-38).

It is being emphasized here that history at Nairobi was poised to shape up within the scholarly tradition carried from Makerere by B.A. Ogot, considering that he was appointed to the Chair of History in 1967. Ogot's approach to historical studies was largely liberal, emphasizing the need for facts to speak for themselves, the need to produce objective history based on authentic African historical sources. Thus, the empiricist approach seemed to dominate at Nairobi.

This explains perhaps why while perhaps in the process of producing knowledge, Africanist historians laid more emphasis on examining how various sources of African history have been utilized (Ogot, 1974; Phillipson, 1975; Ochieng', 1975; Mwanzi, 1976). This, however, is not to say that they did not attempt to remake the culture heroes of Kenya. Evidence was marshalled to

confirm the African "initiative" in Kenyan history. The activities of historians in Kenya were co-ordinated by the Historical Association of Kenya which was formed in 1967. It aimed at encouraging professionalism and the production of historical material for history teaching at various levels of Kenya's educational system. In this connection it has been stated:

On the history of Kenya's nationalist movement for example, the Association encouraged and assisted people like Makhan Singh, Bildad Kagia and Waruhiu Itote to write and publish their experiences for posterity (Liyai, 1988:15).

In a nutshell, nationalist historiography, regardless of the degree of aggressiveness characterizing knowledge produced at Makerere, Dar es Salaam or Nairobi, celebrated the triumph of African nationalism. The bottomline was the primacy of African "activity", "initiative", and "adaptation" in the continent's history.

This historiography recalled past glories to consolidate the young nations' independence. That is why the historical knowledge produced in the 1960s was, in the main, conceived in African nationalist terms, an approach which found adoption in various school history curricula.

### 6.3.1 The Decline of Nationalist Historiography

The late 1950s and 1960s was a period when the

nationalist ideology played a fundamental role in shaping the self-image of most of post-colonial Africa stated in the earlier parts of this study. Nationalism was an ideology for the colonized people of Africa, who were struggling to rid themselves of oppression by alien powers. They also sought to liberate their history as well.

Consequently, nationalist historiography played a significant role in mobilizing African masses towards a common cause. However, as the decade of the 1960s drew to its close, this analytical perspective came under severe attack from various schools of thought ranging from Western Africanist historiographers to fellow African Africanist scholars. These scholars accused the

Africanist nationalist historiography of conjuring up an image of a paradise lost which needed to be regained. It was charged that a nationalist historian:

...not only venerates the past glories of his nation before it was spoiled and corrupted by foreign domination; the nationalist also passionately believes that his fatherland has a mission to fulfil once independence is won and the nation state restored. In the quest for these ideals, the nationalist is prepared to surrender. Thus understood it becomes clear that such an ideology subsumes, among other things, class loyalties and interests under the banner of nationalism (Mudenda, 1981:70).

The charge, in essence, is that nationalist interpretation abounded in populist imagery. The

euphoric moments provided by the prospect of independence elicited several justificatory myths about the uniqueness of Africa. This brought about the common claim that African societies were classless. Africa's assumed classlessness gave rise to a new myth, the myth of African socialism. This conception of self may have been mistaken. Lawi laments:

... African history was to be highly romanticized stripping it of its dynamics: contradictions, antagonisms, struggles and socio-political and economic transformations. The past had been studied not for the purpose of facilitating a critical understanding of the present but in order to prepare for a return of its assumed glories (Lawi, 1989a:207).

Nationalist historiography was preoccupied with the demonstration of a socially undifferentiated African state deeply rooted in the African past. Critics of this school of thought have charged that the nationalist perspective of history emphasized politics, treating Africans as equals of the European counterparts (Neale, 1986).

The celebration of African chieftainship, kingship and participation in commercial activities such as the long distance trade, should be considered as an effort to create African self-respect. It underscored the fact that Africans, too, had participated in and contributed to the transformation of their societies. The notion of

African passivity was condemned and pro-imperialist historiography taken to task. Whereas colonial historiography demeaned the African, nationalist interpretation, the Africans highlighted their own achievements.

Consequently, the nationalist perspective virtually ignored pertinent economic and social questions relating to African historical realities. The interpretation did not offer comprehensive and penetrating analyses of imperialism and neo-colonialism. The changing forms of imperialism and its impact on the social formations including the general political economy, was largely ignored (Zezeza, 1983).

The emerging glorious picture of the African past against which the crimes of colonialism were highlighted militated against its own problematic. Neale shows how it wrongly emphasized the triumph of African nationalism but did so in a Western mould. She says: ... "Achievements" were still defined in Western terms, in the context of an evolution from more primitive political forms towards the modern nation-state, which was seen as the culmination of mankind's progress to date (Neale, 1986:112).

The general framework of the nationalist interpretation came under attack for its reliance on Western

achievements as a measure of human progress. It was asserted, for instance, that since Europe had the "wheel", "plough" and "stone buildings" among others, Africa had to find its equivalent. The argument was that African historians had to cite the civilizations of ancient Zimbabwe, the coastal Swahili civilization, the Congo state forming traditions and the Nok culture to mention just but a few as equivalents of the said European achievements. The evidence of these civilizations made African historians to conceive their discourses as a refutation of colonial writing (Ibid). In essence, critics of this kind of interpretation maintained the view that such a reaction was time wasting as it makes Africans vulnerable to Western stereotypes. Unable to formulate their own problematic they have been reduced to reacting to the agenda set by the West.

However, in a critique of Western critics of the nationalist history, William Ochieng' wonders whether African historians should sit back and recount their "savage" past, or catalogue Africa's "failure" because some European scholars think Africans had a dark past. He argues that the so-called African failure and passivity is not only confined to historical studies but even other of social sciences (Ochieng', 1985b).

In the Western view, Africa continues to be negatively

portrayed, an event that has bred antagonism between Western and African scholars. Ochieng' explains as follows:

...it is very clear that Western scholars still insist on using history to embarrass, oppress and exploit Africa, and this they do by either marginalizing African achievement, or by insisting that only the unsavoury features of the African past and present should be highlighted in world press and textbooks (Ibid: 5).

By harping on the perceived failure of Africa, the West then is able to capture the minds of the African youth and leaders in the bid to firmly install neo-colonialism.

Indeed, this explains why some African scholars have refused to accept the picture which the West wants to assign Africa (Ochieng' b, 1985,1987; Zeleza, 1985, 1986,1990; Shiroya and Aseka, 1990). A picture that dramatizes failure and the unsavory aspect of the African past. It is a past that will certainly not edify African youth.

Moreover, despite the vociferous attacks of some African scholars, it was asserted that a prime fallacy of the nationalist epistemology, was rooted in its emphasis on the "unfavorable terms of trade" between pre-colonial African societies and Western capitalist powers. It stated that greater economic and social achievements would have been recorded had the terms of trade not been



tilted in favour of Europeans (Lawi, op.cit: 210).

Hitherto, the phenomenon of long distance trade had been viewed positively as a means of transforming pre-colonial African societies. It became apparent that it should be re-evaluated (Kimambo and Temu, 1969; Iliffe, 1979).

The importance of this re-evaluation lies in the fact that the nationalist historiography was vulnerable to manipulation by Western interpretations which reduced African history to a catalogue of primitivity. This means that the African historian was merely relegated to responding to questions posed by imperialist postulations. Thus it explains the ensuing search for the African "genius" in the past (Mudenda, op.cit).

It should be borne in mind, however, that the euphoria of independence, the nationalist and the concomitant historiography of the 1960s it elicited, had epistemological weaknesses in normative terms. Despite its radicalism its theoretical underpinnings were infantile and fragile. It was an epistemology which basically concerned itself with institutions, values and issues without relating them to the composite whole. Historians using this perspective preoccupied themselves with answering questions of a political nature and not economic. In this context, Kwame Nkrumah's clarion call of "seeking ye first the political kingdom" and the rest

would follow, which had been adopted by nationalist scholars was now a subject of attack. Its efficacy had to be re-examined. At the same time decolonization was re-assessed and found to be falsely premised. Africa's independence was deemed a sham. The once worshipped "Uhuru" began to lose some of its glitter in the late 1960s.

6.4.0 Dependency and Underdevelopment Perspectives: Implications for Historical Studies in East Africa.

By the early 1970s, the period of honeymoon in East African nationalist school of thought was drawing to an end. The approach was losing its appeal. It was receding fast and giving way, in the process, to fresh perspectives of historical inquiry grounded in neo-Marxist perspectives of dependency and underdevelopment. The major failing of the nationalist school of interpretation, is that it interpreted African history using European colonial categories. It tried to prove that "civilization" also existed in Africa. Mishambi summarized the situation this way:

Certainly one should show developments in Africa, but the trouble with these historians, is that they operate within the same theoretical frameworks as the colonialist historians, and in so doing use subjective problematic which of necessity engenders the use of idealist categories of analyses. African history gets reduced to a set of morals and humanism. This approach was used to mobilise the masses of the people during the struggle for national independence (Mishambi, 1977:203).

Whereas young radical scholars like Walter Rodney (1972) welcomed the dawn of a new era in the historiography of East Africa with the advent of neo-Marxist, dependency and underdevelopment theories, the older generation were pessimistic about its problematic. Yet the older generation of scholars comprising T. O. Ranger, J. Iliffe and J.E. G. Sutton acknowledged the fact that the overall debate within African historiography towards the close of the 1960s had been sharpened and redefined by broad political developments within the East African region. As Terence Ranger, one of the custodians of the African "initiative" observed:

In these years the disillusionment with the apparent impotence of independent Africa to develop itself, to attain unity, or to liberate the south, has made many men firm adherents of the Fanonesque analysis of African nationalism (Ranger, 1968:xxi).

The changing politics of the moment certainly had significant implications for the reformulation of analytical categories to be employed in historical studies. There is no doubt that a historian, as an instrument of conscientization was product of those politics. He responded to the cross-currents of debate to generate knowledge to illuminate that age. In this regard Terence Ranger says:

The historian who persists in treating national movements as something of genuine importance and formidable energy; who sees the African peoples winning their independence in the face of colonial reluctance and suppression; who believes

that mass participation was at various points crucial; has to argue his case against a wide belief that national independence was an episode in a comedy in which the colonial powers handed over their selected and groomed bourgeois successors and in which nothing fundamental was changed (Ibid).

The period of transition from nationalist interpretation to dependency and underdevelopment perspectives was viewed with suspicion by admirers of the former. To them the advent of neo-Marxism introduced confusion in historical studies within the East African region simply because the thesis advanced was derived from the teaching of Marx, an advocate of revolutionary means to effect change in society. Otherwise it is a valid one and would not have caused confusion (Ogot, 1978).

Nevertheless, critics of the nationalist school of historiography indicate that despite all the aid the Third World had been receiving from the developed countries, there was scant evidence to demonstrate the ameliorating capacity for economic development. Consequently, it became increasingly necessary that African historians turn to economic history to explain this lack of development. It was for this reason that the notions of dependency and underdevelopment were imported into African historical studies.

The dependency and underdevelopment theorists in the attempt to explain Third World economic conditions,

rejected the conventional economic theory which saw underdevelopment as an "original" or "traditional" state. It was attributable to the so-called primitive societies. These theorists were reacting to the postulate that the so-called underdeveloped countries could only:

...wrest themselves out of this state by passing through a number of Rostovian stages, acquiring Parsonian value system and keeping their doors open to "free" trade, and the diffusion of Western investment and technology (Zeleva, 1983:14).

Indeed, the appeal of dependency and underdevelopment perspectives to some East African scholars is based on the fact that dependency and underdevelopment theorists questioned and challenged conventional theories of international trade in Latin America. Thanks to Raul Prebisch and the Economic Commission for Latin America (ECLA) formed in 1948 for prescribing a framework for economic development of the region. As head of ECLA beginning in 1950, Prebisch had written a document which later on became ECLA's Manifesto", The Economic Development of Latin America and its Principal Problems.

The document began its attack thus:

In Latin America, reality is undermining the out-dated scheme of the international division of labour, which achieved great importance in the nineteenth century and, as a theoretical concept, continued to exert considerable influence until very recently. Under the scheme, the specific task that fell to Latin America, as part of the periphery of the world economic

system, was that of providing food and raw materials for the great industrial centres. There was no place within it for the industrialization of the new countries. It is nevertheless being forced upon them by events. Two world wars in a single generation and a great economic crisis between them have shown the Latin-American countries their opportunities, clearly pointing the way to industrial activity (cited in Blomstrom and Hettne, 1984:40).

Obviously, Prebisch sought to explain the causes of Latin American underdevelopment outside the continent, locating them in the system of international free trade. His attack, therefore, was aimed at the neo-classical theory of trade which supported the existing international division of labour.

In this arrangement, the periphery had specialized in the production of primary products and the centre in the production of industrial goods, as well as the idea that this division of labour would result in the greatest possible advantage to all the parties involved (Ibid). Hence in its study, ECLA attacked and discredited the notion that international trade was a natural outcome of world trade. It was concluded that, instead, it brought greater benefits to the centre than it did to the periphery. As a corrective measure in redressing these imbalances:

The Commission advocated the use of a structuralist and historical perspective in order to understand underdevelopment and devise solutions for its eradication.

But the failure of the import-substitution industrialisation model of the ECLA encouraged writers on Latin American underdevelopment like Gunder Frank, to seek for more radical analyses and solutions (Zezeza, op.cit: 14).

ECLA's analyses and strategies were reformulated over time. Latin American scholars, particularly those of the left attempted to reconceptualize obstacles which faced capitalist development in the periphery.

Perhaps the first systematic analysis of underdevelopment within the Marxist perspective, was undertaken by Paul Baran. He advanced the view that Western development had taken place at the expense of underdeveloped countries, arguing in the process that the dominant interests in the advanced countries were to a large extent, inimical to economic development in the periphery (Ibid: 14-15). Essentially, the Latin American critiques agreed on a common ground; one regarding the possibility and efficacy of capitalist development in the periphery. To them, therefore, socialism was the only solution to the problem of dependency and underdevelopment facing Third World countries in general.

Following this firm redefinition of socialism, the dependency and underdevelopment school of thought found ready and eager disciples in Africa. Africa had for centuries been impoverished by centuries of imperialist

exploitation; a condition which had to be historically explained.

Indeed, this position was clarified by Andre Gunder Frank (1967) who stated that this was expedited by the expropriation of surplus capital from the periphery to generate economic development in the centre. Frank's reconstruction and periodization of Latin American history was thus repeated for Africa by Samir Amin, Immanuel Wallerstein and Walter Rodney. The dependency and underdevelopment scholars:

...demonstrated that from the era of the Atlantic Slave Trade up to the time of formal colonization and the post-colonial period, Africa like Latin America had its history characterised by constant expropriation of its surplus value to the West. This was identifiably through numerous mechanisms, especially that of unequal exchange. Thus, crucial in the analysis of dependency is the concept of unequal exchange which is seen as the linchpin in self-perpetuating exploitative relations of centre and periphery (Aseka, 1989:6).

In short, it was argued that the underdevelopment of the periphery and development of the centre was constantly being reproduced through an endless satellite - metropolis chain.

In this chain, the economic surplus generated at each stage was successively drawn to the centre. In this sense, African and Third World underdevelopment was simply one side of the same coin of Western development



(Zezeza, op.cit: 15). World history considered within this framework, buried the dualist models of modernization theory which the nationalist approach was accused of popularizing. The world was conceived as a single entity where capitalism became pervasive as did the "development of underdevelopment" in the Third World. At this juncture, the relevance of dependency and underdevelopment approach to the study of African history was underscored. It has been pointed out (Rodney, 1972; Amin, 1981) that a study of world history vis-a-vis the continent of Africa upto the <sup>+</sup> fifteenth century, the development in economic and also in social spheres between Africa and Europe was at par. A disparity in development of the two continents, started to manifest itself with the interruption by slave trade on the African continent.

Africa began to lose natural and human resources and these pressures were exacerbated by systematic destruction and of African technology. The disintegration and suffocation of the African economy led to the creation of economic dependence which culminated in the crystallization of various forms of asymmetrical structures of production (Darkoh, 1984).

All this was facilitated through the agency of international capitalist trade which benefited Europe

more than it did the Africans. While all these were being done, Europe introduced political and social institutions to enable it capture the African masses by way of indoctrinating them to accept as to the superiority of Western norms and values. These assumptions found their way into various forms of historical inquiry.

Beginning in the late 1960s until the mid 1970s, it became fashionable to employ the notions of dependency and underdevelopment in many social studies. Instead of focusing on ethical, political or social issues, emphasis was shifted to economic aspects. The approach highlighted the powerlessness of the local elites in the face of the penetration of local formations by metropolitan capital. The colonial era was vigorously studied because, it was argued, those very colonial structures which were glossed over by the nationalist school of interpretation, were now identified as instrumental in mediating continued exploitation of Africa by metropolitan capital after independence (Slater, 1981).

The dependency and underdevelopment perspectives were more aggressively articulated at the University of Dar - es - Salaam than any of the other institutions of higher learning in East Africa. During the 1970s Tanzania assumed importance as a centre of the theoretical debate

adopted by social scientists at other centres of higher learning within East Africa, and in general, the entire continent (Ibid.).

Nevertheless at Dar es Salaam, in particular, debates raged on the subjects of colonialism, imperialism, underdevelopment, class struggle and self-reliance. Indeed, most of the treatises emanating from the discussions have since been published in the abounding literature available at the University of Dar es Salaam libraries and others scattered all over the East African region. Among the publications resulting from the debates include; How Europe Underdeveloped Africa, by Walter Rodney, Tanzania Under Colonial Rule, edited by Martin Kaniki, Socialism in Tanzania Maji Maji, and Cheche, by students of University of Dar es Salaam Tanzania Zamani by the Historical Association of Tanzania, and Class Struggle in Tanzania by Issa Shivji. All this time the Department of History at the University of Dar es Salaam played a prominent role in structuring the trajectory of the problematics of dependency and underdevelopment.

Given that historical studies are concerned with human activities of the past which include the relations in which they enter with each other, the Department of History at the "Hill" was in a particularly favourable position to respond to the social contradictions bearing

on the Department at the time. It played a significant role in the ensuing debate about the contradictions besetting the production of historical knowledge produced (Slater, 1982). There is evidence that the production of a new epistemology at the "Hill" was preceded by two developments; a critique of the existing dominant tradition, and an attempt to delineate schematically a new methodology:

Thereafter, the development and articulation of the new historical knowledge has followed a fairly regular pattern, beginning with lectures and pioneering seminar papers within the University, some of which have become published articles, reaching a wider, but still largely academic audience. The second stage has involved the testing of the new position before conferences of history teachers and its subsequent filtering through into teaching examination syllabuses. The final stage has involved the introduction of the overall interpretation to a full national and international audience, through both individual and collective publications of members of the Department of History, in some cases under the auspices of the Tanzanian Historical Association (Slater, 1982:4).

It has been argued (Slater, 1986) that despite the aggressiveness of the Dar es Salaam school of historiography, the impact of the debates on the total field of African historiography is extremely difficult to assess.

Whereas this assertion may hold some truth, a glance at a number of foreign scholars in the Faculty of Arts and

Social Sciences, and the contribution to the debate by both academics centred at the "Hill" and outside Tanzania reveals the contrary (Utafiti: Journal of The Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences 1976-1987; ROAPE 1985). Academic activities at Dar es Salaam, prompted an influx into the institution of foreign scholars to the extent that it began to be referred to as "The Academic Mecca" of Africa. These scholars contributed to knowledge, and, with inspiration from the Dar, they produced knowledge using a similar paradigm as the one dominant there.

For instance, inspired by this intellectual atmosphere, discourses such as Mahmood Mamdani's Politics and Class Formation in Uganda (1976) Dan Wadada Nabudere's Political Economy of Imperialism (1979) were conceived. Other young scholars from Uganda such as Gerishom T. Mishambi and Mwambutsya Ndebesa, who did their postgraduate degree work at Dar reflect this influence in their works (Mishambi, 1976, 1992; Ndebesa, 1988). The latter two are today lecturers at the Department of History, Makerere University.

#### 6.4.1 Uganda

Dar es Salaam's inspiration to the generation of knowledge in human and social sciences in Uganda notwithstanding, some discourses in the Department of History at Makerere came to be based on the dependency

and underdevelopment analytical paradigms. The theses which employ this Marxist problematic include N. Bazaara's, "The Food Question in Colonial Bunyoro Kitara: Capital Penetration and Peasants Response" (1988) and Godfrey Asiimwe's, "Capital State and Peasantries in Uganda: The case of Bunyaruguru and Igara Counties in Bushenyi District, 1962- 1985" (1992).

Notably the period between 1971 when Idi Amin Dada overthrew the President of Uganda, Apolo Milton Obote, and 1979 when the former was removed from power, was characterized by a degeneration of political relations between Uganda and Tanzania. It was extremely difficult to have academic exchange programmes at University level between the two countries let alone conceive knowledge within Marxist or neo-Marxist perspectives in these circumstances. In fact most social and historical problematics conceived in Marxist terms was done by scholars situated outside Uganda (Mamdani, 1976; Nabudere, 1978, 1979).

#### 6.4.2 Kenya

In Kenya's historiography of the 1960s, the dependency and underdevelopment approaches started to emerge in various studies (van Zwanenberg, 1974; Leys, 1975). According to these scholars, Kenya was considered as

part of the periphery whereby the underdevelopment syndrome has been entrenched by the exploitative mechanisms set in motion by international capitalism. The employment of dependency and underdevelopment theories in Kenya was mainly confined to discourses of expatriate scholars culminating in the so-called Kenya Debate (ROAPE, No. 17.1980).

Nevertheless, the application of these notions had significant implications for historical studies as well as the social sciences in Kenya. Kenyan scholars began to conceive knowledge in neo-Marxist terms; either embracing or critiquing dependency and underdevelopment and perspectives (Mukaru-Ng'ang'a, 1979; ROAPE No.20, 1981).

However, the "Kenya Debate" did not assume a national dimension similar to the debates in Tanzania which culminated in conferences bringing together various scholars from different levels of Tanzania's education system (Kimambo, 1992). This notwithstanding, scattered historical studies in Kenya have attempted to use the dependency and underdevelopment approach (Nasimiyu, 1984; Zeleza, 1987; Omwoyo, 1990). To get better insights into the full import of the approach to historical studies in Kenya will require a separate study.

### 6.5 Debate on the Efficacy of the Marxist Methodology to the Study of African History

While dependency and underdevelopment theorists were busy experimenting with the problematic of these perspectives to explain the process of development of African societies and those of the Third World, capitalism was expanding globally. In the so-called underdeveloped or Third World Countries, import-substitution industrialization was increasingly being adopted. In fact it was observed that:

... the polarisation of the capitalist system into metropolitan centres and peripheral satellites, and the continuity of the fundamental structure of the capitalist system throughout the history of expansion and transformation of capitalism, are due to the persistence or recreation of these contradictions everywhere and at all time (Nabudere, 1979:41).

Consequently, a need arose to explain this character of international capitalism which could not be grasped by merely propounding theories on the nature of centreperiphery relations. The dependency and underdevelopment notions were attacked for propagating petty-bourgeois ideology which blames the working class in the neocolony for "exploiting" the working class in the neocolony (Ibid).

Moreover, it was stressed, these theories undermine the international working class against imperialism, when it is commonly assumed that both workers in the metropolés



and peripheries are exploited by the same forces of monopoly capitalism. In essence, the working class share a common enemy (Zezeza, 1987:1). Nevertheless, dependency and underdevelopment perspectives had proved a point, development and underdevelopment are interconnected and have to be analysed as one reality.

Following the exposure of some of the deficiencies of the dependency and underdevelopment approach to the study of African history, there ensued a debate on the most appropriate alternative paradigm of historical analysis of the unfolding African reality. Africa and the Third World in general, had been systematically integrated into the capitalist world system. Methodologically, scholars in the human and social sciences had to conceive discourses on Africa in terms of those relations being nurtured. The perceived poverty of Africa lost some of its exoticism (Bonat, 1982; Zezeza, 1982, 1983).

In their bid to explain the problems associated with capitalist development in Africa and Third World countries, Marxist scholars started to popularize the notion of dependent capitalism. This theory was also conceived within the general Marxist framework. It was an attempt to marry some of the dependency and underdevelopment perspectives on unequal exchange. The changing international division of labour, uneven

development and Marxist concerns with accumulation of wealth were integrated within the conceptualization of the process of class formation and class struggle (Zezeza, 1983:18). Furthermore, it hoped to illuminate the dependent character of African economies as they relate with the West. Studies conducted within this mould include Tiyambe Zezeza's "Dependent Capitalism and the Making of the working class during the colonial period" (1982).

The dependency and underdevelopment notions gave the impression that factors responsible for poverty should be looked for in the centre-periphery capitalist development relations. This approach to the study of African societies did not take cognizance of the existence of diverse levels of underdevelopment in different countries. Thus, the diversities are reduced to basic commonalities. This realization gave further impetus to critics of the perspectives to step up their attack. Concerning its problematic they asserted:

Although these theories speak of a dependent class structure, the treatment of this subject is not sufficiently vigorous to show the nature of this social structure and to provide explanation for the reproduction of underdevelopment. The subordination of class relations to regional relations does not seem useful for explaining the explanation of labour power by the metropolis, but unequal exchange between internal metropolises (sic) and their satellites. The theory of unequal exchange reduces the world system to the level of a market while political

and economic structures that make it a system are glossed over (Bonat, 1983:26).

The importance of highlighting the general trends in the historiography of Africa lies in the fact that it helps us to grasp the full import obtaining from it. This is helpful in the sense that it illuminates the process of producing historical knowledge.

Within East Africa a debate on the method of social and human sciences was inaugurated and undertaken at the University of Dar es Salaam in the early 1970s. This debate made a break with the old Marxist orthodoxy of the dependency and underdevelopment problematic, emphasising instead, class analysis. The assumption was that the dependency theorists were not "Marxist" enough to adequately explain the African condition. That is why the emergence of Issa Shivji's, work was perhaps the most dramatic event in the historiography at Dar. It provided for fresh methodological re-assessment among historians and social scientists. Shivji attacked the existing epistemological categories for their inadequacies thus:

The present situation in Tanzania appears to be both confusing and confounding. This is made doubly so because hitherto no attempt has been made to do a scientific analysis of the socio-economic formation in Tanzania. The vacuum resulting from lack of a theoretical analysis of the total situation has given rise to the dangerous phenomena of finding a substitute in platitudes, phrase-mongering or chanting of hollow slogans. Important decisions and judgements, even among

progressive circles, are beginning to be founded on day-to-day happenings of incidences and events (Shivji, 1973:304).

After launching the attack on dependency and underdevelopment perspectives, Shivji prescribed what was perceived as an alternative problematic within the Marxist thinking. This approach, sought to apply the key concepts of Marxism such as mode of production, articulation of modes of production, social classes, relations of production, class struggle and productive forces (Bernstein and Depelchin, 1978, 1979). The adoption of this problematic led to the emergence of a new form of "radicalism on the Hill" in the 1970s. The centrality of the use of this paradigm was its call for an engrossing analysis of the Tanzanian socio-economic formation as expressed in the words of Shivji thus:

...Without a clear analysis, it is impossible to chart out a correct strategy and formulate appropriate tactics. More important still: it is impossible to make correct alliances. How can we talk about a "Tanzania Revolution" without even knowing the friends and enemies of such a revolution? An analysis of the socio-economic formation of Tanzania is, therefore, urgently needed (Ibid).

Shivji's programme was carried forward in the form of discussions at Dar among intellectuals of Marxist persuasion who were perhaps, inspired by the "Cultural Revolution" in China. Moreover, the "radical" intellectuals on the campus were inspired by the writings of other Marxist scholars elsewhere (Tandon, 1982, 1984).

At one moment (See Utafiti Vol.2 No. 2. 1977), it appeared as if Kenyan intellectuals would join in the debate. This was occasioned by anonymous university students from Nairobi and Kenyatta who, reacting to the so-called imperialist history being taught at Kenyan institutions, launched a scathing attack on their teachers. They accused among others, Kenyan historians, Prof. William R. Ochieng' and Prof. E. S. Atieno-Odhiambo of being imperialist lackeys. One would have expected that after such a ferocious attack against existing paradigms of analysis, they would have charted out an alternative theoretical and methodological framework. This unfortunately was never done.

Those who attempted to pursue the debate further (Mukaru- Ng'ang'a 1979; ROAPE No. 20, 1981) did not get far. They merely revolved around the questions of peasantization and industrialization. However, most Kenyan intellectuals seemed reluctant to join the debate. Even though the terms of debate were not clearly stipulated. This explains why the debate was exclusively conducted among foreign scholars (Mkandawire, 1989).

Thus, in Kenya there did not emerge a formidable African Marxist school of thought embracing either the dependency and underdevelopment approach. There were,

however, scattered attempts by Kenyan scholars to conceive discourses in Marxist problematics. These include studies conducted by Njonjo (1977), Kinyanjui (1979), Wanjohi (1981), Anyang' - Nyong'o (1983, 1986), Aseka (1989) and Eseşe (1990). They did so within analytical frameworks established by foreign Marxist scholars, although some of them modified or adopted the problematics established by Leys (1975), Swainson (1980), Kitching (1980), Berman (1990), Zeleza (1992), Berman and Lonsdale (1992).

On the other hand, debate on the applicability of the Marxist problematic in historical studies of Uganda did not quite crystalize. There are two main reasons militating against the attempt to nurture such a school. Firstly, was the liberal tradition that Makerere inherited and which was constantly reproduced via MISR. This tradition upheld the virtues of modernization theory which hoped to remake Africa in the Western image (Campbell, 1986). The second, and perhaps most profound intervening variable in the process of generating social and historical knowledge, was the political turbulence which arose after the overthrow of Apollo Milton Obote, as President of Uganda, in 1971 by Idi Amin.

Following this coup detat, there was an exodus of scholars from Makerere. This ushered in an era referred to as the "Dark Ages" of scholarship at Makerere.

However, some Marxist scholars notably Mahmood Mamdani (1976, 1982, 1983), and Dan Wadada Nabudere (1979, 1982) conceived their discourses within the historical materialist perspective. Their base was not however Makerere.

Meanwhile, the developments taking place in academic circles in Tanzania were largely conditioned by Julius Nyerere's socialist strategy of "Ujamaa". It was an ideology which allowed Marxist discourses to flourish. They assumed greater importance in the country in the 1970s and 1980s. Social and historical knowledge produced adopted a Marxist outlook so that:

By late 1970s bourgeois political economy did not have leg to stand on; indeed, bourgeois scholars on the campus began to masquerade as "Marxists" in various guises, seeking nooks and crannies in the broad spread of "Marxist" theories to protect themselves against attack. As among the serious Marxist scholars too, a lot of impurities and eclecticism had entered into their thinking... and some kind of "purification", including a critique of the dependency school became objectively necessary (Tandon, 1984:34).

While this "purification" exercise was purportedly taking place, some historians at Dar were proposing an alternative framework based on the Marxist problematic of historical materialism. To them a materialist problematic was perceived as the only way for a possible "objectivist" history. They thought that historical explanation based on this mode is scientific and,

therefore, more acceptable (Depelchin, 1977a, b; Bernstein and Depelichin, op.cit).

The "Science of history" presupposes that Marxism provides a systematic and accurate interpretation of all hitherto existing societies, their development and their struggles. Moreover, the materialist conception stressed the theme of class rather than of ethnicity. This way, it made an attempt to generate scientific study of the forces perceived to have exploited man for centuries both within and outside Africa (Lawi, op.cit: 223).

The materialist problematic was therefore concerned with the level of development of productive forces. It defined the ownership of means of production and how the products of labour are ultimately distributed. Essentially the materialist conception of history was a critique of the so-called ideological history produced within the various bourgeois analytical categories. The proponents of materialist history argue that:

The problematic of historical materialism does not reproduce the theory/facts distinction characteristic of bourgeois (human and social sciences) which suggest theory as responsible, hence subject to error, and facts as innocent in their passive, and pre-existing "givenness." Materialist epistemology is premised on the objective nature of the material and real world, prior to and independent of its appropriation in thought. The real cannot be appropriated in thought without mediation of categories (Bernstein and



Depelchin, 1978:10).

It was within the above framework that a materialist history was proposed with the aim of developing a general understanding of world history.

However, debate still rages on whether it is possible to produce a pure "scientific" history devoid of any "ideological" stains (For a detailed discussion see: Bernstein, 1977; Depelchin, 1977a,b; Bernstein and Depelchin, 1978, 1979; Slater, 1980, 1984, 1989; Wamba - dia-Wamba, 1981; Swai, 1982). It is only by studying the above works that one may gain proper insights into the proposed Marxist epistemology.

Theoretical debate over the most appropriate paradigm of analysis notwithstanding, various historical studies, among them, Zeleza (1982) and Aseka (1989) have combined certain aspects from both dependency and underdevelopment perspectives with classical Marxist concepts of class struggle.

It has been argued (Aseka, op.cit.), in defence of marriage between various tenets of Marxism in African historical studies, that dialectical materialism as a philosophy permeates the entire Marxist concept of history and all reality in general. It is precisely for this reason that historical studies are compelled to rely on materialism at some stage of historical inquiry

and in the production of social and historical knowledge. Indeed, most of the 1970s and early 1980s in African social and historical studies, debates raged on the spread of capitalism and the continued underdevelopment of the continent and the entire Third World.

Given the need to explain and find a solution to problems associated with this reality, African scholars continued to search for paradigms of analyses that could explain best the problems of the Third World. There are times when the type of education and paradigms of analyses imported into Africa through colonialism were attacked for their perceived inadequacies. One African social scientist, in this respect, lamented:

Current theories of development and underdevelopment in Africa - which have reached an impasse - are an expression of the period of generalized crisis in which we live. Revealed by this situation is the fact that, the more than forty years of institutional development of social sciences has not yielded much in terms of their capability to furnish the necessary social capacity for the transformation of social process: social sciences being part and parcel of the ideological, philosophical, theoretical and political struggles for and against the transformation of the capitalist societies in Africa (Chachage, 1987:6).

It is clear from the above that the Western world intends to recolonize Africa through social and historical studies. Perhaps this is why the Marxist critique of Western expansionism has tended to be

attractive. The Marxist methodology seems to offer radical prescriptions for Africa's malady. Thus, the need to revert the orthodoxy Marxism is underscored as follows:

Of paramount importance and a very powerful methodological "tool" in analyses of processes and social dynamics is the concept "mode of production." In other words, history is transformed into the processes of emergence of production and their displacement. This mode of theorization has had its impact on the conceptualization of African social formations and the whole process of "development." Current theorization, taking into consideration the aspects of the socio-economic crisis, also questions Dependency and neo-Marxism as a divergence from classical Marxist theory (Ibid: 7).

Debate on application of the concept of mode of production to social and historical studies in Africa has not abated since it was proposed (Hindess and Hirst, 1975; Bernstein and Depelchin, op.cit.). This concept has been articulated as a self-conscious effort and an alternative model for reconceptualizing and reinterpreting the Marxist analysis of capitalist development, particularly the notion relating to the progressive nature of capitalism.

Indeed, many Marxist scholars consider the relations of production as a significant aspect in historical explanation of evolution of societies. It is argued that specific modes of production within a given social formation constitute the units of analysis. This

conclusion is a product of the fact that:

A mode of production is an articulated combination of relations and forces of production structured by the dominance of the relations of production. The relations of production define a specific mode of appropriation of surplus-labour and the specific form of social distribution of means of production corresponding to that mode of appropriation of surplus-labour (Hindess and Hirst, op.cit.: 9-10).

Given the fact that various modes of production co-exist within a given social formation, the approach was considered as an appropriate to means of explaining the level of capitalist development globally.

Moreover, its deviation from the holistic approach of the dependency and underdevelopment perspectives, and the fact that its proponents recognized the resilience of pre-capitalist forms of production within the capitalist system in different social formations, endeared it to the disciplines in the social sciences. There was optimism that this theoretical perspective would reflect the realities of the Third World.

However, when the analytical approaches of modes of production did not respond favourably to specific issues concerning the blocked development, it was subjected to growing criticism and this led attempts to re-conceptualize it further by adopting a paradigm which came to be called "articulation of modes of production." Since mid 1980s there have been vigorous debates about

its efficacy (See: Zeleza, 1983; Canadian Journal of African Studies Vol.19 No.1.1985).

Debate on the use of Marxist paradigms in the analysis of African history now focused on several issues. This included the need for constant methodological introspection, and the fact that no one method of historical inquiry can provide answers to all questions posited. Whereas one problematic elicits certain responses that may help the researcher and social analyst to suggest solutions with regard to a given society, if applied elsewhere it gives false responses. That is why constant reformulation of Marxist paradigms has been necessary.

Any method of study applied to the study of society should thus take into consideration the conditions under which specific paradigms evolved. This may partly explain why, in the development of social studies on the continent, various approaches have been adopted.

The decline in the orthodox Marxist conception of global politics, following the collapse of Communists of Eastern Europe will definitely undermine its intellectual appeal. In recognition of the fact that no one paradigm is all embracing, new problematics will perhaps emerge. Liberal ideologies are already in vogue emphasizing themes such as "democracy", "demography" and

"Women liberation".

#### 6.5.1 Other Approaches in African Historiography

In the preceding sections of this chapter, we found it necessary to delineate major approaches in African historiography in order to discern the dominant frameworks within which knowledge has been generated. But this is not to say other frameworks of historical inquiry were non-existent. As Katorobo states, the reliance on certain paradigms of analyses is dictated by exigencies of the moment and the availability of resources (Katorobo, 1985).

Nevertheless, there are other approaches such as women studies which entered African social studies in the mid 1970s. Prior to this period research on the role of women in African societies had virtually been sidelined. Perhaps this was because gender issues were not of immediate concern to the nascent African nations. Today, numerous studies exist on the role of women as food producers, household managers and nurturers of children (Jalang'o - Ndeda, 1991). For this reason among others, feminist scholars have advocated research in this field.

Within the discipline of history, the question of history of women is increasingly asserting itself in

itself at the university. It has been argued further that:

Prior to the mid-seventies in Eastern Africa, very little attention was specifically given to "women" as an object of inquiry....women did emerge in colonial literature, usually as keepers of the homestead in anthropological literature, as urban prostitutes or costly dependent wives of wage labourers in sociological work... A false picture of the timid, shy, acquiescent African male chiefs and elders was happily reproduced by European (human and) social scientists (Mbilinyi, 1985: 130).

It has been noted as shown in the above quotation that colonial historiography, besides demeaning the African generally, reproduced stereotypes about the African woman. While the stereotypes regulated the desired male-female social relations which worked in the interest of the colonial state, they had a significant impact on the place of women in subsequent literature.

Writers on gender issues cling to the view that the need to institute studies on women is a corrective endeavour to this warped portrait (Tadria, 1989; Ayot, 1990).

However, with the development of social studies in

Africa throughout most of <sup>+</sup> 1970s, women studies found a place at universities and other tertiary institutions. This was possible with assistance from the international donor agencies which increasingly funded women studies in Africa.

Be it as it may, the motive of Western scholars is suspect and it is worth noting that Western feminists did not concern themselves with the plight of Black women in the West. Instead, they shifted their attention to tackle the so-called oppression of women in the Third World countries (Ayot, op.cit: 10). Studies on Third World women were undertaken because women in the West wanted to understand their own position (Ayot and Jalang'o-Ndeda, p.c., 1993).

Indeed research prospects are generally determined by funding from outside, sometimes with the assistance of small groups of internationally based African women experts. Consequently, scholars in this field are likely to be relegated to mere cogs in the wheel of international (Western) interests on the continent. That is why some of their critics see them as no more than mercenaries. In spite of this, in recent times women - oriented studies seem to be getting increased attention. Acknowledging this fact one social scientist asserts:

The cooptation of national researchers in agency research programmes, and opportunism which accompanies it, is in no way unique to women researchers or to women related studies. Rather, we could say that studies on women are simply "catching up" with trends and with reliance on external funding characteristic of (human and) social sciences in general in neo-colonised Africa (Mbilinyi; op.cit: 113).



The above quotation is not an exaggeration. Intellectual dependency has rendered the African scholar helpless in the face of his Western counterparts. This has resulted in the faulty formulation of problematics. Nevertheless, there have been conflicts and disagreements between Western feminists and Third World women at many forums on the relevant paradigms to be applied in gender debate (Zezeza, 1993:114). For instance, Third World women have insisted on instituting research on the pervasiveness of international capitalism, arguing that capitalism helps to marginalize women in African societies. This resistance notwithstanding, social science research agendas continue to be hatched in the West and are merely advertised on noticeboards local of universities and other tertiary institutions in Africa. Young African scholars are encouraged to undertake studies on topics such as; pastoral communities, demography, gender issues and pluralism.

In this chapter, we have attempted to examine approaches adopted in African historiography since 1960. It has been demonstrated that political, social and economic factors have been central in the definition of method of historical inquiry. Future research and historical writing is bound to build on the epistemological foundations already laid in earlier studies, refuting or accepting some propositions and evolving more

appropriate frameworks in the light of changing conditions in the conceptualization of problematics and the material realities of life.

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## CHAPTER SEVEN

## 7.0 POLITICAL APPROACHES IN EAST AFRICA AND THE PRODUCTION OF HISTORICAL KNOWLEDGE.

7.1 Introduction

A discussion of how the type of politics impinges upon production of social and historical knowledge within a given territory is important. It entails the need to examine the role of intellectuals in society, and particularly in Africa. The role of an African intellectual in his society is closely related to the history of university education in Africa.

The political socialization which the African intellectual went through, was closely tied with politicization of university education immediately African countries attained political independence. The socializing role of education therefore defined the terrain for future production of knowledge.

That African universities were initially a European cultural relic in tradition and purpose. It was to be later modified into an amalgam of European and American intellectual traditions. They were a conduit for the dissemination and reproduction of Western wisdom and

ethos. They belonged to the "international academic community" from the time of their inception. Thus African universities were a mere extension of Western institutions, a link that was:

.... reinforced first because the metropolitan universities, concerned to maintain their own and so international standards abroad, "mothered" the development of their offspring overseas under a system of sympathetic tutelage. For example, the university of London through its "special relationship" with the new institutions in East and West Africa first awarded them under its supervision its own degrees until, having progressed from university colleges to full universities, they became experienced and confident enough to award their own (Cameron, 1987:32).

Given that most African intellectuals received their education in Western countries, and assumed political leadership of their various nations, it followed that they either endorsed or modified the system to suit their needs. Indeed, a good measure of African nationalism was born in university seminar rooms outside Africa. The majority of the educated elite who had been brought up in these forums perceived their role differently. Their task was seen as that of assisting independent nations to create a new national identity and foster development. Yet as they pursued those ideals, they intended to maintain standards comparable with those which they themselves had had to satisfy in their diaspora years of educational training in Western educational institutions.

Thus, the dilemma of maintaining and overhauling the university model bequeathed to Africans via colonial relations characterized the production of social and historical knowledge in East Africa. It has, for instance, been observed that:

Most African universities had to fight a big battle to put African studies in their curricula, in part because the older politicians and academics feared that such an allegedly "soft option" would prejudice the high standards they themselves had met abroad (Ibid: 33).

The above quotation in part explains why in various immediate post-independent African universities, senior staff remained predominantly expatriate. Indeed, expatriate presence greatly influenced the kind of curricula that was followed in the given institutions. Their presence largely helped to reproduce and reinforce the ivory tower image of the university with its commitment to the "neutrality" and "universality" of knowledge.

In this way, no doubt, liberal Western professional practice as relates to scholarship took root. The university teachers increasingly regarded themselves and their role, as "ethical neutralists" upholding the "holy cow" of impartiality. In the event there ensued a debate over what the role of the university in society should be, given the contribution of African elites in the struggle against colonialism (Nyerere, 1980; Mushi,

1980; Swai, 1980, 1981a; Sokoine, 1983; WAJIBU Vol. 2 No.4 1987).

University education in post-independent Africa was and still is closely linked with specific goals of the state. Most universities and institutions of higher learning were and still are financed and controlled by the state. This is largely the result of the relationship between the state and the university that was nurtured in the immediate post-independent period.

At independence, African nations recognized the importance to create institutions of higher learning as a key element in the process of nation-building. The creation of national universities and expansion of the existing ones became a top priority in Africa. "national universities" were perceived as a source of high level manpower development on one hand, and a symbol of independent nationhood on the other (Mushi, 1980).

The extent to which these institutions were successfully integrated into societies which they served depended on the value orientations of the universities and the ideological definitions of the given nation. Indeed, this explains why in some instances there has been an attempt to install the so-called relevant education through regular reviews of university

curriculum including staff training and localization of programmes (See Africa Development Vol. III No. 4 1978 and Vol. V No. 4 1980). The different universities' charter define their role.

The relationship between the state and national universities as centres of production and dissemination of social and historical knowledge since 1960s, is termed the era of collaboration:

... particularly pronounced in the years immediately after independence when the post-colonial state enjoyed immense popular legitimacy, bestowed upon it by the nationalist struggles. Also, during this period the ideologies of nation-building and development held sway. The state was able, with the intellectuals' acquiescence, to push an instrumentalist and developmentalist agenda for universities. Universities were essentially seen as factories for churning out the necessary trained manpower for indigenization and development, and intellectuals were pressed to orient "their scientific enquiry to solely solving current problems, as defined by the developmentalist state (Zezeza, 1992:12).

Given the State's involvement in the affairs of East African public universities, it followed that knowledge generated would largely reflect the ideological orientation of specific nations and their leaders.

Moreover, with the chancellors of East African universities being heads of state and the major funding agency being the state, it was imperative that the developmentalist agenda would dictate the curriculum.

However, this is not to say that academic freedom was compromised. On the contrary, it was encouraged, as the chancellor of the University of Dar es Salaam once observed on the occasion of the institution's tenth anniversary testifies:

A university which just turns out "yes men" is worse than useless. So staff members write books; I read them! There are those which dig out and analyse the meaning of facts, which show appreciation of effort, and which make constructive suggestions even when they are very critical of what has been happening. These books please me (Nyerere, 1980:6).

Nevertheless, with problems of disease, ignorance and poverty becoming worrisome among other issues, their impact on African economies, meant that intellectuals in the humanities and social sciences had to re-examine their approaches. They had to devise solutions to national problems. The approaches they adopted varied according to a given political, social and economic needs of the country concerned.

Thus, African intellectuals defined overall paradigms of analysis in social production of knowledge. These efforts and those of political leaders show that there were political forces at work within the East African region which influenced the generation and dissemination of knowledge.



## 7.2 Ideology and the Generation of Knowledge in East Africa.

In chapter six of this study, it was underscored that nationalist euphoria on the continent in the 1960s demanded that discourses in social studies reflect, correspondingly, the dominant political mood and ideology. Given the need to consolidate nationhood, "National Universities" were created. Where these institutions existed they were transformed into touchstones in the development of what was perceived as "relevant education."

In the case of Tanzania, the University of Dar es Salaam was inaugurated on 25 October 1961 constituting a single Faculty of Law, of the University College of London University. Makerere and Nairobi also became Colleges of London University.

However, with the establishment of the University of East Africa in 1966, these institutions ceased to be affiliated to London University. The former institution became autonomous and assumed a role of serving African needs. It aimed at generating knowledge in the interest of the Africans within the region.

While it is true the 1960s were characterized by relatively close political and economic ties among

the nations of East Africa, the ideologies of the three countries were not compatible. Each one of them by 1970, was in the process of evolving a distinct national culture based on its specific goals and priorities. While Kenya outlined its brand of socialism in a policy document entitled; African Socialism and Its Application to Planning in Kenya (1965), Tanzania spelt out hers in The Arusha Declaration (1967) and Uganda had The Common Man's Charter (1969).

These developments together with the political relations that were being nurtured within the region, defined the political ideology of each territory. This ideology was also influenced by the intensity of political socialization in the colonial period.

For instance, Kenya which was more intensely socialized in the British liberal ideology during colonialism betrayed those influences more than Uganda or Tanzania. It had a bigger European component and therefore more social and political institutions which sought to sustain colonial interests through a systematic co-optation of Africans in colonial service.

#### 7.2.1 Ujamaa and Self-reliance in Tanzania

The Arusha Declaration of Tanzania had charted a course to be followed in the process of instituting change in

the political economy. In fact in the wake of this all-important document, the issue of "relevant education" was taken more seriously with the publication of President Julius Nyerere's policy statement on "Education for Self-Reliance" in 1967. This policy statement called for educational reform from primary to university level. There was no doubt as to what Nyerere had in mind about the programme to be followed by the University of Dar es Salaam. He was to admonish:

In its teaching activities, and in its research for new knowledge,... the aim of the University of Dar es Salaam must be service to the needs (of) a developing socialist Tanzania. This purpose must determine the subjects taught, the content of courses, the method of teaching, the manner in which the University is organized, as well as its relations with the community at large (Nyerere cited in Mushi, op.cit: 15).

Nyerere had defined the terrain for academic discourses and the type of education for the Tanzania that he expected to build up. Having stated the need to build a socialist country, political leaders and scholars engaged in debates on the best way to build socialism (Ujamaa).

Academics were attracted to the "Hill" from afar. They came looking for a revolutionary Mecca of their dream to change Africa (Africa Events, May, 1987). Defending the socialist concept of the University of Dar es Salaam Grant Kamenju asserts:

Clearly the university college should not be allowed to play a negative reactionary role or to stand in the way of the development of a socialist society in Tanzania. It can and must be expected to play a positive and progressive role of producing socialists; for, as has been widely acknowledged it has become a truism that "there can be no socialism without socialists." For this reason, the attainment of socialism in Tanzania requires a socialist transformation of the university which occupies a key position in the training and the professions and in the formation of intellectuals. ....Above all the university must be able to combat on the intellectual level various forms of anti-socialist thought and practice and the whole galaxy of liberal, elitist, technocratic and pluralist ideas ... (Kamenju, 1973:287).

Consequently, the development of a socialist discourse in Tanzania was largely a response to the political call for a socialist construction of society. Given the political direction outlined in the Arusha Declaration, many academics endeavoured to have knowledge produced within the socialist framework. In the process of producing social and historical knowledge, they overstepped their epistemological boundaries by advocating for political education. This is what was known as indoctrination because of its emphasis on the "right political theories" that would transform Tanzania into a socialist state (Hyden, 1988). The political euphoria of the time generated intense debates on capitalism, imperialism and questions such as the nature of the bourgeoisie in Africa. This led scholars at Dar to struggle to belong to the right camp, the socialist school of thought. It is clear that liberal-mindedness

of Julius Nyerere, the first chancellor of the university facilitated this. The presence of liberation movements centred in Dar es Salaam catalysed the whole debate. A commentator on "Radicalism at the Hill" stated:

But one must not under-estimate the impact that the presence of the liberation movements had on Tanzania's intellectual development. These movements were not only engaged in struggles in their respective countries but their leading cadres, as a result of struggles, were forced to constantly define and refine their theories and assumptions; and they found the university campus an excellent testing ground.... Radical politicians in the country who felt their ideas were not getting a good reception in the party or government also used the university to air their views. Prominent among these was former Tanzanian Minister, Abdulrahman Babu (Africa Events, May 1987:40-41).

Indeed, Babu's contribution to radicalization of the "Hill" cannot be under-estimated given that he wrote a postscript to Walter Rodney's important book, How Europe Underdeveloped Africa. This book was important in influencing academic discourse at the "Hill" as well as reinforcing the socialist ideology. The postscript can be regarded as, perhaps, the political manifesto of Tanzanian's leadership of the moment. Babu also wrote a penetrating introduction to, University of Dar es Salaam: Debate on Class, State and Imperialism edited by Professor Yash Tandon. All these testify the extent to which politics in Tanzania influenced social and historical studies.

By mid 1970s, a national panel for curriculum development had been established with the view of reviewing the schools as well as university curricula to attune to the socialist goals of Tanzania. Under the chairmanship of G.C.K Gwassa, books and other materials were developed with the aim of delinking Tanzania from neo-colonialism and orient it with Ujamaa policy. However, in the process of instituting these changes, not much thought was given to the difficulties associated with the implementation of the curriculum. Various groups emerged including the one that advocated abolition of history teaching at secondary school level and advocating its replacement with political education.

However, in contravention to this was a group composed of professional historians. Obviously, politics in Tanzania influenced heavily the society's social reproduction in the form of social and historical knowledge. This had far reaching implications for the development of African historiography at Dar. The current chairman of the Department of History at the University of Dar es Salaam, Dr. J. R. Mlahagwa observes:

History went through a rough period. There was increasing pressure for political education to take the place of history in secondary schools. The \*defenders of this position argued that history borrowed from political education \*hence the need for its abolition.

It took President Julius Nyerere's intervention for the continued teaching of history at our secondary schools. Nevertheless, periods allocated to teaching of history were reduced from five to three periods (Mlahagwa, p.c., 1992).

There is no doubt that the Arusha Declaration had far reaching implications for production of knowledge at the "Hill". It stimulated debate which enabled people to discuss prospects of socialist construction. Within the Department of History itself, debate among members raged on what was regarded as relevant epistemology.

This caused Bonaventure Swai to lament:

Indeed, right now the attempt to bring some kind of revision has been met with much hostility from the establishment. The discipline of history is not only professional but political. The need to arrest the march of history and therefore its writing has made the life of historians and students extremely insecure, and the discipline rather unpopular (Swai cited in Kimambo, 1992:29).

The political establishment was apparently concerned with knowledge being imparted at the time to the country's youth at the University of Dar es Salaam. This explains why Chama Cha Mapinduzi (CCM) youth league VIJANA was set-up at the University since 1978. Prior to this there existed Tanzania Youth Leagues (TYL). VIJANA aimed at popularizing party ideology on the campus. This kind of involvement of the political establishment in campus affairs culminated in the so-called University crisis of 1978. During this crisis, there followed the removal of a number of staff from the University of Dar

es Salaam because of their ideological stand which was deemed incompatible with socialism (Kimambo, p.c.; 1992).

Yet Kimambo argues that:

... there was no evidence that the removal was in connection with specific production of knowledge on the side of the members. Yet, it is quite possible that it gripped the production of knowledge in many departments for a long time (Kimambo, op. cit.: 29).

He continues to explain:

From the historians point of view, the two decades of debating theory did mean lost opportunity to produce historical knowledge for almost a whole generation. It must have been gratifying when the first major publication appeared in 1987 - Professor Abdul Sheriff's Slaves, Spices and Ivory in Zanzibar... One of the losses incurred during which involved two sides of the same coin: One the "collapse" of the Historical Association of Tanzania, and two the loss of the regular position of history as a subject in secondary schools (Ibid: 30).

Indeed, this was the extent to which developmentalism influenced the production of social and historical knowledge at Dar. Students at secondary school level had to contend with less time allocated to history teaching according to the curriculum introduced in 1974. The so-called "Biases" were introduced which included the "Engineering Bias". According to this arrangement history became optional. It was only to be taught in Forms one and two. Thereafter, one would have the liberty to drop it. More emphasis was laid on physical sciences and economics.



The above changes adversely affected production of knowledge at the "Hill". To curriculum developers, history was not of particular significance in the process of socialist transformation of Tanzania (Mlahagwa, op.cit). It was considered a prior that political education was a suitable replacement of history. This crisis notwithstanding, historians at Dar responded to the pressure by reviewing history curriculum at the ultimate level. The aim was to have the educational system to reflect the needs of socialist Tanzania. Consequently, in the history syllabus, the theme of political economy of industrialized states and Tanzania found a place (University of Dar es Salaam Calender, 1979/80, 1985/88).

Despite the socialist rhetoric which characterized academic discourses of the 1970s and most of the 1980s, Tanzania's political economy did not witness qualitative transformation towards this end. It was perhaps, for this reason that Julius Nyerere opted for retirement from office as President of Tanzania in 1985. He was replaced by Ali Hassan Mwinyi.

Mwinyi, unlike his predecessor, appeared to favour capitalist development. This is revealed in his effort to liberalize the economy in line with capitalist

tenets. Following this development the strident socialist rhetoric of the earlier era subsided and gave way to discourses that were not rigidly socialist. This can also be attributed to the end of the Cold War and the global clamour for political pluralism of the closing years of 1980s.

The politics of pluralism have considerably influenced the thinking of scholars worldwide. At Dar es Salaam in particular, Marxist analytical categories are increasingly being subjected to attack. They are being abandoned in favour of the pluralist approach to the pursuit of knowledge. This has culminated in the crystallization of diverse views among university lecturers and professors (Kimambo, p.c.; 1992).

In the light of this, the Department of History at Dar es Salaam has started to review its position vis-a-vis the unfolding politics and the new demands that are being made by advocates pluralism (Mlahagwa, p.c., 1992).

It should be noted, however, that the political establishment is not very comfortable with the newly-found "academic freedom" bellied calls for democracy. There have been attempts to remove from the University of Dar es Salaam members of academic staff considered untamable. Indeed, this has provoked a sharp reaction

from members of University of Dar es Salaam Academic Staff Assembly (UDASA). They said: We are convinced that their removal is directly connected with their contribution to the struggle to maintain the integrity and autonomy of institutions of higher learning.... We therefore, find this exercise of State powers which impinge on the integrity of the University as arbitrary and reprehensible (Bugengo, 1992:6).

It is, therefore, evident that most members of the academic community at Dar es Salaam are demanding less State involvement in affairs of the University. Yet the Central Government continues to finance the institution and therefore, maintains that national purpose should feature prominently in the knowledge being imparted to the country's youth. The idea of greater autonomy of the University is not frowned upon.

However, social responsibility should underline discourses within the University community so that the institution does not degenerate into an ivory tower whose interests are alien to Tanzanians (UDASA Newsletter No. 12 1991). A university whose curriculum does not reflect national purpose serves alien interests.

### 7.2.2 Uganda

The location of MISR in Uganda has had significant implication for production of social knowledge at Makerere University. The institute had a strong bias for anthropology since its inception. But has generally intruded into historical discourses as well (Kiwauka, p.c., 1992). The anthropological method characterized early African historiography in Uganda, a historiography launched in pure ethnic terms. This was a reflection of the receding imperial historiography of Africa with a penchant of conceiving research prospects in narrow ethnic perspectives.

Given the interest which Western countries had in Uganda and Africa in general, they continued to fund MISR even after Uganda had attained her independence in 1962. It was prudent, in their conception, to "modernize" African societies by inculcating Western value systems.

The tribal approach in the study of social phenomena was undertaken in order to pave way for "modernity" in African societies. Modernity was synonymous with westernization. Thus, it should be understood why Makerere strove to uphold the ideals of modernization theory which emphasized the balance-sheet approach to the generation of social and historical knowledge.

Moreover, these developments heightened the process of politicization of ethnicity. This process found expression in the kingship system, a political option that Uganda was poised to embrace thereafter.

The launching of politics of independence in ethnic terms, strengthened the production of "tribal" histories. These became pet subject of nationalist historians (cf chapter 5 and 6). With politicians scheming and counter-scheming to uphold the kingship political option or abrogate it altogether in favour of the idea of a unitary state, academics shifted their research priorities according to their ethnic sympathies.

While this was happening, there were those who were determined to ensure that Makerere University maintained the ivory tower image it had inherited from the British academic tradition and which it had carved out for itself in the 1950s. Makerere had a tradition of training tribal leaders (Mazrui, 1978).

The University trained leaders considering that it was born during the period of nationalist euphoria. Consequently, it developed a close relationship with the state. It was, therefore, imperative that the political leadership take keen interest in the knowledge that was being imparted at the institution. Like the University of Dar es Salaam, the Head of State became the Chancellor of the university with the Government taking

on the role of the major funding agency. By mid 1960s Makerere was slowly but surely shedding its age-old skin of "objective" pursuit of knowledge. The Chancellor of the institution showed interest in what was going on in the lecture theatres as Mazrui illustrates with his own experience:

One day in the course of 1968 Mr. Y.K.Lule, then Principal or head of Makerere University College, sent for me... He asked me whether I had ever written an article comparing President Obote of Uganda with Thomas Hobbes' sovereign... If I was comparing Obote with Thomas Hobbes' concept of the sovereign, I could be interpreted as implying that Obote was an absolute dictator (Mazrui, 1978:ix).

Mazrui continues:

Mr Lule then explained why he needed to know. He was acting in response to a complaint from "very high quarters" in Uganda... Some months later I was in the Presidential Lounge of Parliament Building in Kampala engaged in a discussion with President Obote and some of his Ministers. In the course of the conversation President Obote referred to a diagram I had drawn on the blackboard in my first-year class at Makerere. In that lecture I had been discussing the relationship between class formation and the ethnic structure of African societies (Ibid:x).

Mazrui may have been imparting "objective" knowledge to his students. Yet he failed to recognize the role of African states in the creation of "national universities" on the continent. The newly created African universities had the task of enhancing economic development in nascent African nations. This created a conflict in the tradition of liberal scholarship

according to in the tradition of liberal scholarship according to which what was uttered in a lecture theatre was supposed to remain in the privacy of one's class. But now, in the African context, knowledge disseminated was supposed to have a long term impact on the political, social and economic developments of the concerned nation. Mazrui's experience, is an illustration of the character of State/University relations emerging in Uganda over the years after independence. The same applied to other African countries.

Clearly, the production of social knowledge at Makerere was largely conditioned by the political climate in Uganda. The situation got worse when General Idi Amin Dada toppled President Apolo Milton Obote in 1971. Amin had a special interest in university affairs. He envisaged a university at his service. Looking back at his years at Makerere, Professor Ali Mazrui writes:

... Idi Amin Dada - had apparently served as the decisive initial "germ" for the moral and social decay of a whole society. Among those who watched helplessly were the "exceptional individuals" at the country's sole University - Makerere. Far from being able to save even their own institution, they saw themselves being inexorably drawn into the political disorder that Idi Amin had helped to unleash. One day the soldiers came to fetch the Vice-Chancellor Frank Kalimuzo from his home... There was little doubt that Kalimuzo was killed on the direct orders of the Head of State, Idi Amin (Mazrui, 1987:62).

General Idi Amin Dada did not stop at simply creating conditions that put Makerere into disarray but also attempted to win intellectuals on his side.

For instance, given Mazrui's public reputation as a major critic of Obote's regime, Amin tried to patronize him. For a short while they seemed to get along.

Needless to say Amin's tenure as Chancellor of Makerere University saw degeneration of the institution into an extended period of academic lull. This period has been referred to by Ugandan academics as the "Dark Ages of Scholarship in Uganda" where:

Academic freedom was curtailed and certain statements considered anti-regime were not uttered. It was difficult to produce knowledge. Amin charged that academics were collaborating with his enemies and the imperialists. Consequently, lively open academic discussions stopped. During his time the Makerere Historical Journal stopped (in 1977). The regime was generally anti-scholarship (Okoth, p.c., 1992).

It is apparent that Amin began to project his hostility towards scholars and intellectuals in Uganda when they refused to support his wicked and tyrannic regime. Many of them refused to be drawn into peddling outright falsehoods to prop up his government when Amin systematically eroded the institutions of the country.

Indeed, the Amin regime did not support research in the



social and human sciences. Furthermore, he stopped exchange of staff and students with Kenya and Tanzania (Ibid.). Foreign staff based at Makerere were not keen to renew their contracts because of fear of State terrorism. By 1980 out of an establishment of 600 posts, only 291 were filled. Most lecturers had left the campus for fear of their security (Mwiria, 1990). The majority who were expatriates and senior members of Ugandan staff. There is no doubt that these developments negatively affected the generation and dissemination of knowledge at Makerere. This is understandable given that the pursuit of scholarship requires tranquil conditions to flourish.

Amin's years at State House were certainly antithetical to the realization of stability in Uganda as well as the development of African historiography. Uncertainty among scholars at Makerere was worsened in 1976 when Amin sought assistance from two university professors to establish his claim over the Kenyan territory. It should be noted that in mid 1970s there had ensued a war of words between Amin and President Jomo Kenyatta of Kenya over the issue of national boundaries.

Amin attempted to enlist Professor Brian Langlands, head of Geography Department and Professor, Semakula Kiwanuka of History Department, to justify his claim over part

of Kenya's territory. The former was assigned the task of drawing up new maps of Uganda, East Africa and Africa while the latter was asked to rewrite the history of the region justifying Amin's case. Concerning this event Professor Kiwanuka writes:

In Amin's view the drawing of the maps was not enough. It was necessary to establish the historical side of boundary changes. That was where I came in as Professor of History at Makerere and I was summoned by telephone to report to the President's office (Kiwanuka, 1979:148).

Professor Langlands declined to do the assignment and since he was a foreigner, he was deported. As for Professor Kiwanuka being a Ugandan and knowing his fate he had to consider the implication of his action. Nevertheless, after taking some considerable time to reflect over the issue, he realized the damage the weight of his learned opinion would do to scholarship in the Department of History. His failure to write the document within the time given to him occasioned the following reaction from a member of the State Research Bureau (SRB):

If I were you I should have written that document... If only you knew what was on your file... at least writing the document would have shown that you were not an enemy of the present regime... (Ibid: 151).

The above threat was enough to send Professor Kiwanuka then head of History Department to pack secretly and escape the wrath of Amin's regime. In fact the following year on August 3, 1977 University students

were killed in the so-called Makerere Massacre. The students had demonstrated against Amin's national policies an event which enraged the President (Mamdani, 1982).

Thereafter the culture of silence at Makerere reverberated in the academic corridors for the rest of the 1970s with postgraduate studies in the Department of History virtually coming to a standstill. This also explains why Ph.D works such as P.M. Mutibwa's and P. Kakwenzire's of the early 1970s were not on topics dealing with Uganda. These scholars chose non-controversial topics to avoid pitting themselves against the regime (Okoth, p.c., 1992).

Indeed, it was not until in the early 1980s after Apolo Milton Obote's "second coming" that open learned discussions in scholarship were revived. This was because Obote's regime seemed to support scholarship on various facets of Uganda's life. During this period academic conferences started with research and publications resumed. These have continued to this moment. Perhaps the most important act was the inaugural Mawazo workshop of 1983 organized by the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, of Makerere University.

In the Department of History, M.A. programmes resumed on a regular basis in 1988 while Ph.Ds have been conducted on ad hoc basis. At the same time, Makerere Historical Journal was revived, notwithstanding the financial problems it has had to face. It provided a forum for discourse for scholars from different departments at Makerere, the general academic fraternity within the East African region and beyond.

The events accounted for above clearly indicate that politics has had significant consequences for the production of historical knowledge in Uganda. One requires only a cursory glance at topics of research being undertaken by members of the Department of History to determine the extent to which politics reproduces itself in academic discourses. Scholars in the department have embarked on a wide range of research themes. These themes include topics on the "Place of Peasants", "Human Rights" and the "Role of the Press" in the creation of positive political and economic relations in the country. Indeed, these appear to be responses to issues which were overlooked by the previous regimes in Uganda during the so-called "Dark Ages" in the country's political and economic history.

Furthermore, the National Resistance Movement (NRM) "Ten Point Programme" which constitutes President Yoweri Museveni's manifesto has had a great impact on the

direction in which social knowledge is ultimately produced and disseminated. The priorities given by this programme derive from the need to establish popular democracy, restore security, consolidate national unity, and defend national independence. Other important questions are about building a national economy, restoration and rehabilitation of social services, elimination of corruption and misuse of power, resettlement of displaced people, settling the long suffering Karamojong and relieving the plight of salary earners, regional cooperation and human rights. Moreover, the NRM regime of Yoweri Museveni has striven to follow a strategy of a mixed economy (Manyire, 1992). Political socialization of the country into Museveni's brand of politics has contributed to the need for national rebirth and development to which this government appears committed.

The Makerere University syllabus, for instance, reflects the political influence of NRM policies and the developments in world politics in the recent times. The 1989/90 Academic Year Undergraduate Handbook of the Department of History stresses teaching of Revolutionary Theories and Practices, Liberal Revolutions, Socialist Revolutions and Anti-Colonial Revolutions.

When asked whether the inclusion of these topics in the syllabus did not smack of political influence on the

generation and dissemination of knowledge at Makerere, the Chairman of Department, Professor Okoth, in an interview with the researcher, denied it was. Yet evidence available suggests the contrary. At the moment that seems to be the trajectory of development in African historiography at Makerere.

### 7.2.3 Kenya

National goals and aspirations of any given country exercise a great deal of influence on its self-conception and the direction of frontiers of knowledge in its educational institutions. Indeed, this was emphasized in chapter six of this study. In this part of our work, we underscored the fact that independence of African countries in the late 1960s ushered in a nationalist mood and feeling which was reproduced in academic discourses of the time. Independence provided African countries with the opportunity to re-examine the relationship between the State and School. This realization led African governments to embark on programmes intended to steer their nations into greater heights of development drawing largely on their own heritage. By this token terms such as "African Socialism", "equality" and "egalitarianism" became common political catch-words. Development blueprints based on this thinking flourished all over Africa, it was "Africa for the Africans."

In Kenya, there was promulgated Sessional Paper No. 10 of 1965. This is what is known as African Socialism and its Application to Planning in Kenya. It was a policy document outlining Kenya's projections for political, social and economic development. On the basis of this document, policies concerning departments of Government including the Ministry of Education (under which university activities fall) formulated their action plans.

Thus, developmentalism had its bearing on the kind of knowledge that was subsequently generated at the country's institutions of higher learning as well as the university. There was an urgent need to re-examine the role of university education to serve the needs of their given societies rather than encourage recipients of that education to become social burdens who pursue knowledge for its own sake regardless of its usefulness to the concerned nations. It was argued that:

The role of the university in Africa should be to inspire men and women with a high sense of social responsibility to tackle the complicated problems of development intelligently and with self - confidence and initiative... [It] is from experience that theories are formulated, and theories are not valid until they can work in practice (Machyo, 1969:15).

In essence, universities were being asked to examine their societies and make some hard and realistic decisions inspired by some practical African social

philosophy. This was to ensure that the kind of manpower they produced would be conscious and committed to the African collective social vision, and the relevance of knowledge produced (Wasawo, 1965). In this sense, State involvement in matters of university was justified. State participation in affairs of universities is therefore, not a new phenomenon given that:

In every country universities assume the predominant social ideology as a basis of their teaching. In the capitalist world the basic assumption is capitalism. In the socialist countries it is socialism. In fact it is difficult to imagine any human being who is without any form of ideology (Machyo, op.cit: 16).

Since the ideology of developing countries is closely connected with the need for eradication of poverty, disease and ignorance, it was imperative that national universities produce manpower to build a strong economic base. This explains why African governments spend enormous financial resources on university education with a hope to create knowledge and high level manpower for nation building. As Wasawo further states:

We realize that our political independence means the reorganization of our society in a way as to mobilise all activities going on within our borders towards the goal of economic, social and cultural independence.... We in the University of East Africa are charged, among other things, with producing the high level manpower need for our countries. We accept this charge and are continually conscious of it in the planning of our courses and in the organization of the



life of students (Wasawo, op.cit: 4-5).

Developmentalism did not overshadow the traditional role of universities of pursuing truth in the process of producing social and historical knowledge. In fact developmentalism and pursuit of knowledge for its own sake were inseparable and both were accommodated within the African university system.

Therefore, the establishment of the Institute for Development Studies (IDS) at the University of Nairobi in 1965 may appear to have enhanced the ideology of developmentalism. It punctured the Oxbridge myth of academic "objectivity" and "excellence" by which people had assumed that knowledge could be sought for its own sake.

The establishment of university education in Kenya had to contend with this twin role that characterized the production of social knowledge in the country. Within the academic circles emerged a school of thought which advocated neutrality in the process of inquiring and advancing knowledge (Mazrui, 1978). On the other hand, there were those scholars who believed that there should be academic "nationalism" in order to serve the nation adequately in achieving her goals of development (Songa, 1971; Amayo, 1980). There is no doubt the two views were expressed variously at different levels.

In the 1960s and 1970s, there was a formidable wave of "academic" nationalism. Nevertheless the British tradition of scholarship continued to hold sway. This explains why the nationalist school of thought in Kenya could not compare with the Tanzanian one in terms of aggressiveness (cf chapter 5 and 6). Nationalist sentiments were rather guarded and emphasis was laid on tools of historical analysis to arrive at what was deemed as objective history (Atieno-Odhiambo, 1974). Nationalist scholars in Kenya were committed to what they called "academic freedom". This was a tendency which they wanted to retain for academic discourses.

However, this elicited the following observation:

There is.... sometimes a tendency to use the words "academic freedom" in another sense, and to assert the claim that a university is more or less an institution of learning having no respect or allegiance to the community or loyalty to the country in which it exists and supposed to serve. This cannot be accepted because the university does not exist in a vacuum; it has a clear duty to the community which maintains it and has the right to express concern over its activities (Njoroge, 1979:12).

Despite these strong feelings the objectives of the University of Nairobi did not fully appreciate ideals of the Kenyan society. Whereas in the University of Nairobi Act, 1970 Section 5 (b), it was stated as one of the objectives "to assist in the preservation, transmission and increase of knowledge and stimulation of the intellectual life and cultural development of

Kenya", there was apparent silence over means of achieving this objective. Consequently, the Oxbridge tradition reproduced itself at this ultimate level of learning. Amayo observed, for instance:

There is hardly any reference to the fundamentals of the Republic or Society of Kenya in the (University of Nairobi) constitution.... It is false to claim that Kenya during the late first President (Kenyatta) had no political ideology which could serve as basis for the formulation of education philosophy and objectives... The most tragic news is that the school system from primary to university for the last seventeen years of independence has done hardly anything substantial in the inculcation of the fundamentals of the Republic of Kenya (Amayo, 1980:12).

The University of Nairobi Act of 1970 was evidently silent on means of conscientization. This was, perhaps, due to the reluctance of the political leadership to stress on the place of national ideology in the university curricula. Consequently, some academics took advantage of this to propagate their own political ideologies in the course of their teaching at the University (Mukaru - Ng'ang'a 1979, ROAPE No. 20 1981; Maina - wa - Kinyatti, 1987; Ngugi - wa- Thiong'o, 1987, 1993). These political ideologies, mainly Marxist, found expression in their writings between mid 1970s to early 1980s. This is the period when Marxism was gaining currency in African historiography within the East African region (cf chapter 6). This era witnessed an attempt to relate Marxist theory to actual

problems.

Whereas it was possible to combine scholarship with activism as in the case of Tanzania, where Marxism - Leninism and political activism was encouraged on campus in Kenya it was rather problematic. (Sokoine, 1983; Mishambi, 1983). Radical Marxism - Leninism in the Kenyan context, was not compatible with the capitalist goals defined in Sessional Paper No. 10 of 1965 on African Socialism and its Application to Planning in Kenya because the former emphasized on scientific socialism while the latter did not.

Since Marxism - Leninism was not African, it was rejected by the political leadership in Kenya. President Daniel T. arap Moi, for instance, argued that Kenya's ideology should be "based on African tradition, but not confusing and far-fetched theories which are not compatible with Kenyan peoples' aspirations" (Standard 4th July 1981:1). He was further quoted urging university lecturers to teach what is relevant to Kenya since:

This implies a clear understanding of Government policies including the concept of African Socialism and African brotherhood (Standard, Ibid).

Indeed, the attempt to marry Marxist theory with political practice in Kenya strained the State/University relationship. More-so, when it was

evident that the so-called radical Marxist Scholars were associated with an underground movement - MwaKenya.

MwaKenya is believed to have authored anti-government pamphlets entitled Pambana and Mzalendo in the early 1980s (see Gutto, 1982). It is also possible that the same group authored a book entitled Independent Kenya: Cheche Kenya released by an anonymous people calling themselves "Kenyan patriotic nationals" (Ibid). This text was sponsored for publication by Journal of African Marxist and published by Zed Press of London in 1982. While reviewing the book, (Independent Kenya: Cheche Kenya), Shadrack B. O. Gutto who himself a "radical" Marxist scholar teaching at the University of Nairobi, who fled in the early 1980s had the following to say:

"Cheche" is a Kiswahili word for "spark" - in this case, the spark of and for revolutionary social change. I first read Cheche in a cyclostyled manuscript from Kenya in 1981 when my gallant compatriots who wrote it caused it to be selectively but widely distributed in Kenya. Its uncompromising tone and incisive class analysis has been faithfully preserved in its present published form (Gutto, 1984:112).

He continues:

Historically, Cheche opened and will continue to widen the revolutionary path through political consciousness - building and other forms of class struggles appropriate to the Kenyan condition. It must be noted that organized political action, in the form of popular consciousness - building and resistance that Cheche advocates and represents has already seen concrete response in the form of Pambana (struggle) which was widely

circulated in Kenya in 1982 in its combined English and Kiswahili version (Ibid).

A number of Marxist activist scholars who included Peter Anyang' Nyong'o, Shadrack B. O. Gutto and Micere Mugo went into exile while others suspected to belong to Mwakenya movement were arrested by Government authorities. This was in so far as they were connected with Marxist scholarship political and activism. In fact there was an outcry from a section of the Kenyan population that the university had abandoned its noble duty to serve "parochial" interests of individual lecturers. A section of the Kenyan press in its editorial observed:

The university as an institution should be saved and indeed strengthened, though those within the university who have used it as a convenient place to propagate their personal ideologies and to whip up opposition among students against Kenya's whole way of life should be asked in no uncertain terms to look for a living elsewhere. Academic freedom notwithstanding, the university is a public institution paid from out of tax payers money and the public, through the elected representatives and the duly elected government of the land, have a right to determine the parameters within which the process of learning will take place at the university (The Nairobi Times, November 12, 1982:6).

After the attempted coup in Kenya of 1st August 1982, fear reigned among some academics. The main reason is not difficult to find given that most Marxist" an activist scholars on university campuses were suspected of supporting it. This included Makuru Ng'ang'a, Peter

Anyang' Nyongo, Edward Oyugi and Kimani Gecau. However, there is no evidence to bolster the charge. The coup did not succeed and this had a negative effect on the burgeoning Marxist school of thought in Kenyan universities. The Marxist school of thought was nipped in the bud. From thence henceforth, few university teachers dared to openly identify themselves with the teachings of Marx.

Indeed, following the August 1 1982 coup attempt in Kenya and its psychological impact on academics, discourses conceived within the general Marxist epistemology subsided. Activism in scholarship which was used to attack the State certainly subsided amid strident public voices against Marxism as a method of social and historical inquiry. These led to re-examination and self-censorship among scholars. It is possible that utterances such as one by John Keen, then an Assistant Minister in the Office of the President, intimidated scholars of Marxist persuasion.

He remarked on one occasion that:

Marxism is outdated and irrelevant to the Kenyan situation and as such it should be removed from the university schedule.... Marxist theory arose from the industrial unrest in Europe several hundred years ago and has no relevance to Africa today (Standard, 26 October, 1982:5).

Consequently, the Historical Association of Kenya (HAK) became less interested in Marxist rhetoric but more

concerned with production of historical knowledge that was "relevant" to the needs of Kenya.

Marxist discourses persisted in Kenya. For example, in 1982 Tiyambe Zeleza produced a Ph.D dissertation entitled: "Dependent Capitalism and the making of the Working Class in Kenya during the Colonial Period" drawing heavily on the various Marxist perspectives. This was a remarkable effort at theoretical integration.

Apart from Zeleza, there are others who have used Marxist conceptual frameworks in the production of historical knowledge. They have included Nasimiyu (1984), Aseka (1989), Omwoyo (1990), Esese (1990) and Jalang'o-Ndeda (1991).

By mid 1980s Marxist rhetoric at university had given way to a new form of developmentalism. Debate began to rage on "shedding the ivory tower image" and utilization of expertise in Kenyan universities in the same manner in which it was used in Western countries. University teachers began to be used in developmental tasks. The second half of the decade of 1980s witnessed improvement in government and university relations. These had hitherto deteriorated in the early 1980s. The warming relations were so conspicuous that G. Ikiara could write:



The relationship between the government and Kenyan academics has recently undergone a change for the better. For a long time, many senior government officials saw and treated the university as a hotbed of radical lecturers and students, more concerned with rhetoric and theoretical issues than with current national concerns. This attitude prevented the government from utilizing effectively the expertise of the various departments in the university; therefore, the involvement of academics in national development was very limited (Ikiara, 1987:11).

He continues to explain:

With President Moi's deliberate efforts to involve the academics in development programmes and his challenge to the universities to become more relevant to the country, the situation has changed dramatically in the last five years (Ibid).

In fact in the late 1980s the Kenya African National Union -KANU (the sole political party in Kenya then ), began to open branches on university campuses with the view of making the university community to "understand party and government policies." Party activity at university was accepted as a means of developing "national" consciousness and "patriotism." Critics, however, were quick to point out that this effort among others encouraged and reproduced "conformism" in scholarship as opposed to the inculcation of "critical" inquisitiveness and analysis at the university. It was asserted that this tendency manifests itself variously in history text books for secondary schools:

In Form Four students are taught the topic Public Systems and Government. In this topic students are required to compare

different constitutions, but again here, one notices avoidance to discuss issues relevant to Kenya. In the book by Assa Okoth and L. Ochieng' Moya (1989) the authors take USSR as an example of one party-state. They however, deliberately avoid discussing the features of one party state or factors leading to its introduction in Kenya. They merely mention that Kenya and Tanzania are other examples of one party-states (Karugu, 1993: 10-11).

Pluralism, as a movement for democracy has influenced the thinking of Kenyan scholars. Diverse views on the history of Kenya, Africa and the world in general are conceived within this wide dimension of political pluralism. The Western liberal ideology of democracy seems to be poised to constrain the conception of knowledge on the continent. In Kenya, for instance, a debate ensued on the efficacy of pluralism on the eve of introduction of multipartyism. The debate, among other things, questioned the place of tenets of Western liberalism in Kenya's politics of transition to multipartyism. The discourses which started in 1991 and are still going on, clearly demonstrate that ethnicity and neo-colonization were major factors shaping political relations in the country. In this regard, a contributor to the pluralist debate had this to say:

For quite sometime now Kenyans have been treated to the clap-trap of political talk about the need for democratization. The sound and fury of this talk seems to have woken up from slumber even criminals to assume messianic roles for the very Kenyans who have been transgressed by their misdemeanour in pursuit of personal interests.... Perhaps a historian's insight into the historical basis of

change may help Kenyans during this period of intense reflection.... It is therefore extremely improper to conceive the pertinence of political change in terms of our local political contests, rivalries and jealousies as it seems to be the case currently. Pax Americana has more sinister ideological motivations than can be explained in terms of the mere local cajolery for power or tribal persuasions of our individual actors (Aseka, 1991:1).

In reference to the clamour for multi-party politics in Kenya, Aseka warned that the rise of pluralism will reinforce ethnic particularism Ibid).

Generally, the liberal trappings of multi-party politics have curtailed the objective production and historical knowledge in East Africa. Many scholars are abandoning more pertinent frameworks of analysis, including the shedding of their Marxist skins by some as to adopt liberal standpoints (Aseka, 1992; Kimambo, 1992). Thus the bourgeois philosophy together with its analytical methodology is being revitalised. This trend seems to be engulfing the entire African continent but may not be the last paradigm ever conceived.

## CHAPTER EIGHT

## 8.0 CONCLUSION

The main task of this study has been to provide an analysis of the trends in the development of African historiography in East Africa since 1960. It begins with a general exploration of heritages in historical writing, and the factors influencing production of historical or social knowledge from early times when communities, the world over started to reflect on their self. The basic contention of the study is that one's outlook, interest, the social and physical environment influence his conception of the world. Consequently, the epistemology he adopts reflects this.

The study, therefore, investigates various frameworks of analyses that have been employed in the disciplines of social sciences with the view to ascertain their efficacy in historical explanation. It evaluates diverse conceptual frameworks and demonstrates how every generation specifies its problematic. The study then explains the theory of historical relativism and relates it to the development of African historiography by demonstrating how every problematic reflects the main phases of a given society's historical development.

Thus, given the pertinence of the question of historical relativism the idea of historical relativity permeates the entire study. The study also applies the concept of historical subjectivism to the diverse analyses and explanations of African historiography as is evident in the chapter layout. It adopts thematic approach in the explanation of the development of historiography. It delineates the specific approaches, interpretations and factors contributing to the crystallization of analytical paradigms in the interpretation of the African past. Each chapter, therefore, attempts to explain how particular conditions influenced the conception of stated epistemologies and the growth of knowledge with their defined analytical or narrative frameworks.

The study emphasises the fact that early historical writing and colonial interpretations had significant implications for the development of African historiography. This was the case considering that types of literature provided important data and ideological parameters which were of importance to future discourses. By drawing a distinct dichotomy between the historical and ahistorical, early and imperialist writers were obviously defining the two schools of thought that came to dominate historical studies at particular moments in the historiography

of Africa.

The paradigmatic struggle in African historiography is what has been termed in this study as the "battle for control of knowledge". It has been characterized by the contest of epistemologies with each school of thought trying to outshine the other. Early historiographers who included Egyptians and Greeks of ancient time strongly held the view that Africa had its own history while on the other hand, the imperialists denied this fact.

The battle for the control of knowledge led various scholars, depending on which school they represented, to search for the origin of humanity in their own surrounding. As shown in this study, this event has been responsible for many conflicting accounts of the "original" homes of humanity in historical texts. This study therefore, has attempted to explain the import of this struggle over control of knowledge for historical studies within the East African region, highlighting in the process, the growth of a more serious problem; intellectual dependency. The roots of this dependency were laid earlier by the mystification of the so-called

Greek miracle to which each school of thought reacted differently. Studies conducted on African historiography

hitherto had not adequately accounted for the source of our intellectual dependency and the analytical problems it has raised over the years.

The study also investigates the impact of the Black Diaspora on historical development within East Africa. In this case, we argue that contacts with Africans in the Western world transformed the thinking of colonized peoples of Africa. More significantly, was the idea of Pan-Africanism which came to influence the thought process of many African intellectuals who went to study in North America and Europe. Pan-Africanism, was later on, to find way into discourses on the African past and culture thereby enriching the nationalist school of thought. The latter school of thinking, therefore, considerably gained from the Black diaspora intellectual input. The projection of Africanness in discourses and the general ideology of Blackness acquired by African scholars perhaps best illustrate this influence from Pan-Africanism.

It was also noted in the study that the Pan-Africanist ideology received further impetus from the presence of African American scholars in East African universities. They were not only instrumental in crystallizing the ideology of Blackness, but also in launching a methodology that attempted to explain Africa's underdevelopment (Rodney, 1972). The underdevelopment

paradigm sought to explain how Africa was depleted of her human and natural resources which helped to develop North America and Europe. There is no doubt this presence, notably the one at the University of Dar es Salaam, helped to popularize among African scholars, the Marxist perspectives of dependency and underdevelopment. This method of inquiry was extensively applied in the study of social and human sciences in the post Arusha Declaration period and also in the study of capitalist Kenya and Uganda. The explanation of the development of historiography in East Africa would, therefore, be far from complete without highlighting the impact of the Black diaspora as this study has shown.

Again, the Arab and Islamic culture in East Africa has also considerably exercised immense influence on the development of the epistemology of some African scholars. Those who are Islamized and Arab-biased have conceived their ideas under the rubric of the Arab Islamic ideology. However, on the other hand, scholars who are opposed to Islam and Arab presence continue to produce knowledge which dismisses Islam as a useful factor in history of Africa (Ogot, 1993). Their views on the contrary notwithstanding, this has demonstrated how the Arab-Islamic ideology has helped to shape African historiography within East Africa, largely because of the ensuing competition between scholars



seeking to popularize their respective ideologies.

In any case, discussion of ideological imperatives by itself is insufficient if the nature of historical sources is not extrapolated. We have therefore underscored the importance of sources of historical information as significant inputs in the development of African historiography. We have argued in the study that sources for information largely determine one's world outlook; they help to validate his theoretical assumptions. In some cases, this may strengthen stereotypes or even demystify them like those that were thrown up by imperialist writers (Mudimbe, 1988).

It is our contention in this study that the kind of sources which a scholar consults, and the type of question he asks, derive from a particular framework of knowledge based on certain general assumptions and biases. Thus, a researcher consults specific sources because of his social background which has influenced his world-view. Given that the social scientist attempts to answer pertinent questions posed by his society within a specific epistemology, this validates the concept of psychogenesis and sociogenesis of knowledge as discussed in chapter one of the study. It proves the thesis that all knowledge is relatively and ideologically conceived.

The fact that all social knowledge, and not just historical knowledge, is relatively and ideologically conceived cannot, be gainsaid. This fact has been vindicated by our survey of the different approaches adopted in African historiography since 1960. In the light of the understanding that all knowledge is relatively and ideologically conceived, we have advanced the view that political ideology of the three East African countries played a significant role in shaping the knowledge generated within the region. The dominant political ideology dictated the terms of defining specific problematics. For instance, Pan-Africanism and nationalism were largely responsible for the growth of nationalist school of thought while the socialist ideology thrived within the neo-Marxist epistemology.

We have shown how political ideology manifested itself in African historiography. However, we have equally argued that Western Africanist scholars on the other hand were engaged in struggle to protect the niche they had secured in the development of African historiography under colonialism as masters of knowledge on Africa. There were various attempts to impose on African scholars Western paradigms of social and historical analysis via the educational and funding systems of Western institutions. We have illustrated how funds to African scholars are administered for tailor-made research projects suited to Western interests.

Africans have no choice over priorities of research.

Furthermore, we have given an account of how expatriate scholars flood African institutions of higher learning to prevail upon burgeoning African scholars on the correctness and usefulness of Western paradigms of analysis. We have also underscored the fact that in event of the so-called joint research endeavours between African scholars and their Western counterparts, African scholars play the junior role of research assistants in the whole arrangement. Thus, we have submitted that among other factors, this unequal partnership to the process of generation of knowledge in favour of Western expatriate scholars and institutions is another source of our intellectual dependency. It is the source of our intellectual deformities which are reproduced in various types of African historiography.

The character of politics in each territory has played no mean a role in the production of social and historical knowledge. In this respect, we have underscored that national priorities and goals have been instrumental in outlining issues of great controversy or consensus in discourses by African scholars. Scholars have reacted different to attempts by East African states to regulate conditions of scholarship. There are among those who argue that national goals

should not limit one's quest for knowledge. Others have posited that a scholar is a product of his society and has, therefore, to generate knowledge in the interest of his society. That is why we argued that the Arusha Declaration of 1967 (Tanzania) the Common Man's Charter of 1969 (Uganda) and Sessional Paper No. 10 of 1965 on African Socialism and its Application to Planning in Kenya, had significant implications for the production of knowledge within the East African region.

The study further emphasized that State control of public universities in East Africa and Africa as a whole, knowledge generated in these institutions reflect national priorities of states in which they were located. With these states subsidizing their national universities, they demand that the universities be accountable to them. That they should generate knowledge considered useful to the State. This function has reduced them to instruments of the State in creation of manpower and control of concept formation.

At the end of the study, we observed that the end of the Cold War and the introduction of pluralism in Africa altered the character of discourse in the region. Social and historical discourses began to change to reflect the unfolding realities. Whereas it is difficult to state with certainty what course knowledge will take in the future, given that history does not

deal with predictions, however, it is safe to assert that already, divergent views (histories) are emerging more forcefully in the interest of groups which scholars represent than was the case in monoparty political environments.

These are important diagnostic observations we have made in the study despite the vastness of information on the subject which has militated against adequate appraisal of all its aspects. Nevertheless, what emerges from this study is the need to conduct further research on some of the observations and perspectives posed in this study in order to appreciate their significance in the growth of African historiography. Our understanding of the nature of East Africa's historiography and our interpretation of the significance of this to the production of historical knowledge in the yester-years, today and in future is our humble contribution to this vast subject.

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#### 6. Unpublished Materials

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#### 7. Personal Conversations

Ayot, T.O.O. and Jalang'o-Ndeda, M. A. p.c., April, 6, 1993.

Mlahagwa, J. R., p.c., November, 10, 1992.

Mutibwa, P., p.c., October, 7, 1992.

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Kiwanuka, S. M., p.c., October, 6, 1992.

TERMS AND CONCEPTS USED IN THE STUDY

Africanist - A Specialist in or enthusiast in African Affairs.

Arab-Islamic Era - Period of birth of Islam and the era when Arabic culture spread; between  
+                    +  
700 and 1300.

Articulation of Modes of Production - A continuous process of interaction through which pre-capitalist modes of production are incorporated into the capitalist mode of production, dissolving undesired elements and conserving useful ones.

Black Ideology - African political consciousness and solidarity developed by Africans in diaspora as a weapon to combat white racism.

Classical Era - Ancient Graeco-Roman period, between  
-                    +  
500 and 600.

Classical/Orthodox Marxist Approach - Emphasises the idea of class struggle and the theory of dialectical materialism in development of societies.

Dependency and Underdevelopment - neo-Marxist school of thought which emphasises the external factors such as unequal relations in trade in explaining development of Third World societies.

Epistemology - Body or theory of knowledge

Feminism - A conscious effort to view things differently from the male perspective.

Historiography - The study of the art of writing. Historiographical analysis entails a diagnostic survey of historical works for the purpose of assessing their value.

Historical Materialism - The theory of historical development of societies based on the Marxian emphasis on material forces of existence as determinants of social phenomena.

Intellectual History - Record of what men have thought and done at different times in human history.

Liberalism/Bourgeois tradition - Western social thought which emphasises that the history which it produces in character is neutral, value free and entirely scientific since it is based on facts.

Materialist Problematic - A theoretical framework which poses historical problems in a marxist theoretical way. It contains within it formulation of concepts and methodology to be used in the elaboration of the answer in a non-partisan manner.

Mode of Production - An articulated combination of relations and forces of production in a given economic setting. The relations of production are dominant in this combination.

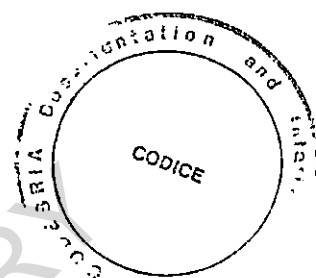
Nationalist Approach - School of thought which gives primary to nation building in interpreting historical processes.

- Neo- Marxists - Consists of marxists who do not confine themselves to Euro-centred classical marxism as defined by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels. This school of thought sought to revamp marxism to make it relevant to the Third World.
- Paradigm - Theoretical formulation which highlights a discipline's major concerns and the procedures which specify how evidence is to be gathered when investigating a problem. It also highlights which evidence constitutes proof of resolution of such problems.
- Problematic - The manner in which problems concerning a particular history are posed.
- Production of knowledge - The process of generating ideas.
- Ujamaa - Julius Nyerere's brand of socialism based on African brotherhood which Tanzania adopted in the mid 1960s.
- 100 - One hundred years before the birth of Jesus Christ.



+ 100 - One hundred years after the death of Jesus Christ.

\* - Emphasis in the quotation added.



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