

Pan-Africanism: Exploring the Contradictions.

by William B. Ackah.

The principal aims of the thesis are to search for a solution to the African crisis and to examine and explore the relevance of identity in the modern world. Chapter one poses the questions that provided the impetus for the study. The impetus arises from a need to understand and settle the question of one's own identity as a black person born in Britain. This personal dilemma is then placed into the wider world context via an analysis of Pan-Africanism. Chapter two explores the ideology of Pan-Africanism dividing it into themes ranging from expressions of black pride and achievement, to the political unification of Africa. It is argued that Pan-Africanism at present offers no meaningful solution to the African crisis due to a combination of factors including nationalism, poor leadership, an incoherent development strategy and the failure of the African diaspora to be relevant to the African reality. Chapter three examines the regional trend in the world and Africa. It is argued that technology and ideology the main impetuses behind regionalism exclude people and therefore as a consequence regionalism has a difficult task breaking down nationalism the major impediment to successful co-operation. It is argued that co-operation is difficult to achieve, but that it can work if individual nation-states can find a strong common purpose that will force them to put aside national rivalry and work together for the same end. In Africa it is argued that the current economic and political predicament of the continent constitutes a common purpose, but nationalism, petty leadership, squabbles, and damaging outside influences has prevented regional co-operation from working well in Africa. It is argued that regional institutions need to become more relevant to the African masses if they are going to be able to resolve the African crisis. Chapter four analyses the common Western perception of the African crisis, arguing that racism and short-sightedness characterise how the West views Africans and people of African descent. The thesis examines how the common Western perception has influenced the development of development theory, and strategy in Africa with negative consequences for the continent. It is argued that these perceptions need to be altered and that the African diasporan intellectual can still play a useful role in the development of Africa by attempting to alter these negative images of which he or she is also a victim. Chapter five assesses what one has learned from the exploration of the contradictions within Pan-Africanism. In the final analysis it is argued that the solution to the African crisis will not come from the African diaspora or Western orientated development and regional co-operation schemes that are not relevant to the ordinary African. The solution must come from the African reality itself, if it is to be of value.

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Dedication and Acknowledgements.

I dedicate this work to:

to my parents Ndidi Ackah and Mary Ackah.

To the sons and daughters of Africa and the Diaspora in particular the people of Haiti.

To Michelet, may you rest in peace.

To all those searching for a home for their hearts.

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Chapter 1. The Search for Identity.

Imagine that a map of the world is in front of you, could you put your finger on the spot that represented most closely the embodiment of who you are? How would you make your choice? Would it be determined by birth, ancestry, a sense of belonging? Would the physical aspect of living in a particular place be more important than an emotional or historical attachment to another place? What about the people around you, the lifestyle that you would like to live, and the government that you would prefer to live under? What would be the overriding factor in determining your final decision? What if after you have weighed up all the factors, thought carefully about what you liked and disliked, you could not put your finger down on any one spot. How would you feel? If the question of who you are was ambiguous in your own mind, how would that affect your personal development? Your life chances? How would it affect how you related to the people around you? Could you share in the joys and the sorrows of the place you lived in? Would you be able and willing to nurture the same ambitions as the people around you and labour with pride for the place that you live? Or would your heart be yearning for another place and another time, which made your

relationship to the present place and time all the more ambiguous?

As an African born and raised in London, I look at a map of the world and I hesitate to place my finger on any one particular spot. Logic, comfort and familiarity causes me to cast my eye towards London. However certain emotions, history and the ambiguity of life as I now live it causes my eye to roam towards Africa and Ghana the birthplace of my parents. Yet I have never been to Ghana or any place in Africa. Books and images are all I know of the place. Who knows whether I would even like the real Africa? This is my personal dilemma and from this questioning perspective the dilemma of the thesis will begin to emerge. The personal dilemma is essentially this. Is a sense of being, of knowing who one really is, essential to one's personal development? And from that dilemma stems a question of much greater significance. Is a sense of being, of understanding who one really is, essential to a whole race or continent and its quest for development?¹

If being black in Britain was a truly acceptable phenomenon then perhaps the desire to settle the dilemma of one's identity and being would have been less acute and my quest would have no meaning. However for many black people not

only in Britain but in the rest of Europe, and for that matter in the world, there exists the feeling that black people are never an acceptable phenomenon.

The curse of racism and the worldwide dissemination of negative and degrading stereotypes concerning black people is like a constant itch that no matter how much one tries to scratch, it continues to irritate. This constant flood of negativity whereby black people are depicted as violent, backward and incapable of independent thought and action often causes one to despair. As Mark Hollingsworth explains:

"For the past three decades black people in Britain have been treated and portrayed as a problem, rather than fellow citizens with problems. In the 1950s they were said to be living off immoral earnings. In the 1960s the vocation of most black Britons was supposed to be drug pushing. By the 1970s and early 1980s the spectre of the black mugger and rioter became the standard stereotype."²

It is as if one has been defined, manipulated and dismissed as unimportant like an animal and not a human being. As the main character in Ralph Ellison's novel describes:

"I am a man of substance, of flesh and bone, fibre

and liquids and I might even be said to possess a mind. I am invisible, understand, simply because people refuse to see me. Like the bodiless heads you sometimes see in circus side-shows it is as though I have been surrounded by mirrors of hard distorting glass. When they approach me they see only my surroundings, themselves, or figments of their imagination - indeed everything and anything except me."³

What Ellison manages to convey so clearly and what many black people feel, is that they are denied a sense of independent being. It is not only people of African origin who feel that their ability to be themselves is being denied. Jean-Paul Sartre the existentialist philosopher understood this situation very well, he writes:

"By virtue of consciousness the Other is for me simultaneously the one who has stolen my being from me and the one who causes "there to be" a being which is my being. Thus I have a comprehension of this ontological structure: I am responsible for my being-for-others, but I am not the foundation of it."⁴

For many black people the Other described by Sartre is white society. It was the white man who was responsible for slavery and colonialism. It was the white man who has sought to define and shape us. It is his language that we speak, his codes that we adhere to, and it is to him that we justify our

actions. This prognosis hurts. There was and is a sense that as black people we are more than just a mere reflection of the white man's image of ourselves. We are a people with our own image, purpose and destiny and one felt and feels the need even today to recover that. As Sartre explains again:

"Thus to the extent that I am revealed to myself as responsible for my being, I lay claim to this being which I am; that is, I wish to recover it, or, more exactly, I am the project of the recovery of my being."⁵

It is the project of the recovery of one's being that strikes a special chord in my heart and the hearts of many black people. But how does one recover one's being? How can the itch of racism be scratched away for ever?

Pan-Africanism as the thesis will show was and is a movement by Africans for Africans. And the black heroes that emerged from under that broad umbrella did give one that sense of being and purpose.. Reading how Toussaint L'ouverture overcame the might of French imperialism⁶ one felt that one could overcome the obstacles in one's own life. Listening to the music of black musical giants like Bob Marley and John Coltrane as the confidence of their ability and the belief in what they were doing shone through their art, one felt one

could express the blackness that had been trapped within and let it all flood out. Reading the works of great black figures like Aimé Césaire one felt that there was a native land that one could return to and be a part of.⁷ As one began to immerse oneself deeper and deeper into the rich and diverse black experience the world over one could sense a recovery of being going on in oneself. There was a pride and confidence in being black. Now one could be like Malcolm X⁸ and tell the white man who he was because at last you understood who you were. Ultimately one believed that the impossible dream was possible, like Marcus Mosiah Garvey.

"God and nature first made us what we are, and then out of our own creative genius we made ourselves what we want to be. Follow always that great law. Let the sky and god be our limit, and eternity our measurement."..... "We live work and pray for the establishing of a great and binding racial hierarchy, the founding of a racial empire whose only natural, spiritual and practical limits shall be god and Africa at home and abroad."⁹

Garvey more than any other African diasporan intellectual epitomised the project of the recovery of one's being. His ideas and practical work embody the spirit of Pan-Africanism, and his appeal for black people to find their sense of being in their racial identity is still strong today. Garvey and the

whole Pan-African movement has had a strong influence on my thinking but it is not a dilemma-free influence. In the first instance is ones being solely determined by one's race or colour? Is the project of the recovery of being the same for all black people all over the world? Is my experience the same as the peasant farmer trying to eke out his existence in rural Mali? Or the black congressman in Washington with long term presidential ambitions? Can one base one's life and the development of a society on the basis of common racial identity as Garvey ultimately believed?

"As the jew is held together by his religion, the white races by the assumption and unwritten law of superiority, and the Mongolian by the precious tie of blood, so likewise the Negro must be united in one grand racial hierarchy. Our union must know no clime, boundary or nationality. Like the great Church of Rome, Negroes the world over must practice one faith that of Confidence in themselves, with One God! One Aim! One Destiny!"¹⁰

In 1989 I had the opportunity to live in Haiti for a year. Haiti, the first independent black republic, has a sentimental attraction for many Pan-Africanists as a momentous victory over the colonial oppressors is remembered. But that landmark victory was over two hundred years ago; what of Haiti today? The Haiti of 1989 was a country of pain and suffering,

but the oppressors of the people in the main were not some distant other, the cold reality was that black soldiers killed black civilians, black elites stole from and victimised their own people. This was what had happened to one of the former stars in the Pan-African crown. Could appeals to unity on the basis of a common racial identity save Haiti? Unfortunately it is not only Haiti that is in trouble today. In Africa the drama of corrupt leadership, oppression and poverty is robbing too many black people of a viable, prosperous future. Could Pan-Africanism help create a better scenario? Is it a sense of being that is the missing component in the Haitian and African development models? Or is there more to development than simply rediscovering what one has lost? It is these questions and the issues of Pan-Africanism, identity and development that will provide the basis of the second chapter of the thesis and will resonate throughout the work. Another issue that the thesis will seek to explore in the second and subsequent chapters is that of leadership. All visions need visionaries but when the vision fails does one have the right to blame the visionary? The black visionary in particular has had to risk life and limb and suffer, abuse and scorn at the hands of the white man in order to give African peoples wherever they are a sense of purpose and destiny. So can one

fault them?

Growing up I can remember being starved of any kind of positive black image. As a consequence when I heard, saw or read about any remotely positive black individual I would embrace them wholeheartedly. Even if I had reservations about certain things they said or did I would shut them out of my mind. After all, here were people who had achieved something in the pernicious world of the white man so they deserved adoration. Malcolm X, Marcus Garvey, Kwame Nkrumah, one could not get enough of these people and their achievements. One put them on a pedestal and elevated them safe above the harsh words of the white critics, who seemingly wanted to see all successful black people brought down low. Now however, after going to Haiti and reflecting on the plight of black people in general around the world, nagging questions enter the mind. In the first instance have I as a black person, have we as black people elevated our leaders to the point where we can no longer criticise, or more importantly no longer constrain them? Malcolm X is a legend for many black radicals but he had strong anti-semitic leanings for a long while.¹¹ Marcus Garvey was a great visionary with mass appeal but some of his remarks and ideas border on being fascistic.

"We feel that we should now set out to create a race type and standard of our own which could not in the future be stigmatised by bastardy."¹²

All leaders weak and great have their faults but in the Pan-African context who has pointed out these faults loudly and on a consistent basis? Many black leaders have had opportunities and experiences that are far removed from that of ordinary people, how does this affect their vision? Is it compatible with that of their followers? Have black leaders been responsible leaders, sharing the same sense of mission as their followers but moving a step ahead? Or have many risen so high above their followers that it is only god and the sky that constrains them and not the welfare and aspirations of their black brothers and sisters?

As we are nearing the end of the twentieth century many of the official heads of state of predominantly black countries find themselves in a difficult situation. They are under pressure to come up with the ideas, strategies and performances to enable their respective nations to catch up with the West. But their populations in many instances have lifestyles and methods of survival that have more in common with the beginning of the last century than the end of this current one. How has the black head of state met this

challenge? It is a difficult dilemma, one that the novelist Richard Wright understood well. In a dedication to all non-white elites he writes:

*"the westernized and tragic elite
of Asia, Africa and the West Indies-*

the lonely outsiders who exist precariously on the clifflike margins of many cultures-men who are distrusted, misunderstood, maligned, criticised by Left and Right, Christian and pagan-men who carry on their frail but indefatigable shoulders the best of two worlds-and who, amidst confusion and stagnation, seek desperately for a home for their hearts: a home which if found, could be a home for the hearts of all men."¹³

The situation that many black elites find themselves in, is a difficult one and to a degree I empathise with their predicament. One often feels the pull of two different cultures on one's personality. On one side there is black culture and on the other there is white. One would like to fully be a part of both cultures and see the end of what is a very artificial division. One would like to find "the home for the hearts of all men."¹⁴In 1992, life as a black person in Britain is not wonderful, but one feels that progress is being made towards a more genuine multicultural society. However just when one was feeling comfortable with this ongoing

situation, one discovers that the goalposts have been moved. No longer is being black in Britain the main source of concern. Now it is the uncertainty of being black in Europe to which one has to adjust. The world is changing so fast, how does one cope with the question of one's identity in such a changing climate?

As an aspiring African diasporan intellectual these questions remain personal to me for the time being. For the fully fledged African elites, however, the answer to this dilemma is not only significant to them as individuals, what they do is important to me as I seek to learn from them; more importantly it is of significance to the many millions of black people that have to live with the consequences of the decisions that they will take and have already taken. This is one of the dilemmas that we will focus on in the third chapter. How have the black elites and the Pan-African philosophy responded to the changing world environment? Have they solved the problem of staying in touch with their populations whilst at the same time responding to the demands of modernism? The focus of many of the post-war African leaders has been the national agenda but as we approach the twenty-first century, one can sense that global issues such as the environment, free trade and human rights coupled with the

desire of the remaining super-power for a new world order, will force African leaders to more consciously adhere to the wishes of the international community. As African leaders have tried to consolidate their position as heads of newly independent states, one of the major political and economic trends that has been taking place around them, has been the concerted move towards more supranationality and regional co-operation. This has been a world-wide phenomenon based on the rationale of economic scale, the use of modern technology and an ideological progression towards a peaceful one world order.¹⁵ Is this development to be welcomed? Is it the precursor to the end of the diaspora dilemma? A world of one government and people with one identity, "the home for the hearts of all men?"¹⁶ The logic of the regional agenda with its basis in the science of economic rationale is a powerful one, however it brings us back to one of the central dilemmas of the thesis, namely, is a sense of being essential to development? Nationalism is perhaps the ultimate sense of being. For the past two centuries it has been the ideology to set the world alight. Is economic development a more powerful force than nationalism? Can economic development bring about a sense of being and common interest to the peoples of the world that will make nationalism a thing of the past? The

thesis will address this issue in chapter three.

Africa and Africans have a special interest in this debate given the historical significance of the appeal of African unity¹⁷ and the continent's current economic plight.¹⁸ However in the late twentieth century regional co-operation has increasingly been seen as a move that stable nation states take to better their economic interests.¹⁹ It is regarded as a highly technical, advanced, capitalist enterprise. So can Africa hope to emulate that? Should it even try? Many ordinary Africans are still trying to come to terms with the idea of a nation state in the modern sense, so are ordinary people going to be able to come to terms with regionalism, particularly a form of regionalism whose only identity can be found in the form of economic rationality? Or can the elites of Africa use the Pan-African ideology and the economic rationale of the West to create the ultimate regional co-operation scheme?

On the other hand perhaps one is assigning motivations to African elites that they do not have? Why are African leaders interested in regional co-operation? Is it to raise the living standards of ordinary people? Or is it an opportunity for them to pursue more grand dreams and to further ignore the demands and frustrations of the people? With democracy even now, barely alive in Africa, how does one

know what ordinary people think about co-operation? Could it be the case that it is not Africans who are determining the nature of regional co-operation in Africa, but that the primary pressure group influencing the African elites is the West? The thesis will seek to explore this theme in chapter three.

As an aspiring African diaspora intellectual, my primary concern is the plight of black people all over the world, as a consequence one tends to look for one's identity within the African diaspora sphere. However it would be foolish of me to deny that I am essentially a product of the West. I live in the West, I was educated here and most of my family and friends live here. In light of these very real and important attachments should not one just move with the times, accept multiculturalism? Do not the demands of the modern world require a knowledge of computers and not colour, of universal values rather than separatist ones? Is Sartre correct when he argues that the way to recover ones being is not to shy away from one's Other, but to embrace and alter it?

"In fact the problem for me is to make myself be by acquiring the possibility of taking the Other's point of view of myself." "Thus my project of recovering myself is fundamentally a project of absorbing the other."²⁰

Sartre's project is a bold one but can one alter the Western perception of Africa and black people in general? On one level it can be argued that I and many other black people have spent most of our lives absorbing the Other. The sponge of the black experience is soaking with the history, science, and literature of the Western world. From my personal experience I can say that the culture of the Other is my culture, the Other's language is my language, and even the Other's accent is my accent! Absorbing the Other is not really the dilemma, but accepting and altering the Other's ideas and values is? One has feelings of ambiguity towards a nation that was responsible for the dehumanisation of the African people and continent, yet proclaims these episodes as what epitomises the Great in Great Britain and ultimately the "big W" in Western civilisation. Perhaps I overstate the case, history is history and it cannot be altered. Can one judge the present generation on the actions of their ancestors? That might be unfair. One needs to focus on the West in which one lives and is a part. What is the attitude of the West towards Africa today? Given the presence of so many black people in the Western hemisphere, has the Western attitude towards Africa changed? Such is the far reaching nature of

telecommunications, and the media today, it is possible to form strong impressions of many places in the world without even leaving one's living room. The images that we receive through the media have been so well constructed and packaged that for most people these images are the definitive article. In other words, these images become the reality through which many people look at the world. So when one thinks about the former Soviet Union, images of long queues and empty shops are one's dominant impressions. Think of the Middle East and oil and Islam immediately come to mind. Think of Africa and famine and poverty immediately come to mind. The media through the use of certain powerful images has in a sense defined the world for us in simple stereotypical fashion. These stereotypical images are not neutral.²¹ It is through the media that the dominant attitudes and mindset of the West is revealed. The questions that the thesis needs to consider are how powerful are these images? What do they reveal about the West's attitude towards Africa? What is the impact of the Western mindset on Africa? If it needs altering can it be altered? The thesis will address these questions in chapter four.

As we approach the twenty-first century, it is evident that for all the efforts that have been made in this century,

Africa will still continue to languish at the bottom of the development league table into the foreseeable future.

In the introduction I have posed a wide-ranging series of questions, but they all pale in the light of the burning "Why?" concerning Africa's underdevelopment. The dichotomy between the rich West and underdeveloped Africa is as wide as ever and continues to widen. It needs to be narrowed. As an individual of the two worlds, I want to see the dichotomy disappear altogether. This is a big wish and in a sense an unreal undertaking. However, using the comparatively unique perspective I have at my disposal the thesis will begin a journey of discovery in regard to the question of Africa's underdevelopment. The question is so big and elusive that it seems to be an impossible one and I do not expect to find an answer. However for me it is not so much the big answer that is important, but the search. If in the search the thesis makes important and valid contributions to the narrowing of the gap between the part of me which is Africa and the part of me which is the West in myself and in the real world, then the thesis will prove to be a worthwhile undertaking. I hope it will be of profit to others as well.

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Chapter 2.

Pan-Africanism: The Relevance of the African Diaspora, to the African Reality.

"Where there is no vision the people perish."¹

Marcus Garvey, one of the giants of the Pan-African movement, expresses for many in the above quotation what can be considered to be at the heart of this very diverse movement. For Garvey was attempting to give articulation to a vision that was different from the European vision that dominated his world. The European vision that Garvey was opposed to, was racist in tone and imperialist in design. It was the driving force behind slavery and colonialism, and was responsible for the dehumanisation and subjugation of peoples of African descent.² This vision was potent in Garvey's day and still permeates the world we live in today.³

Hence not only for Garvey, but for many Africans in diverse times and places, there has been a need to counter what amounted to an affront to their human dignity. This counter-attack or alternative vision was to be a vision proposed by Africans for Africans. It would exalt African history and rediscover the African personality that had been subjugated under European domination. This African vision would be the basis for a concrete reality. The vision made perfect would be a united African continent strong, free and

vibrant.

In essence Pan-Africanism is a movement by Africans for Africans in response to European ideas of superiority and imperialism. This still remains however a rather crude definition of a movement or theory that spans three continents Africa, Europe and America, and has been in existence for over three centuries.⁴ Pan-Africanism by its very nature almost defies definition.⁵ Scholars have tended to ascribe to blacks of notoriety the term Pan-Africanist, when they would not have perceived themselves as such. The fact that they were black, irrespective of what they said, seemed reason enough to assume that they must in some way be "Pan-Africanist". Hence when one analyses the history of peoples of African descent one finds quite diverse bedfellows. For example, the self improvement morality of Booker T Washington⁶ and Marcus Garvey⁷ rest alongside the radical socialist ideas of Fanon⁸ and Nkrumah.⁹ There may have been similarities between the four but the differences are immense, yet they are all associated with Pan-Africanism in one form or another. Understanding that Pan-Africanism is a very unwieldy political concept is important but one still needs a basis from which to begin an analysis of the phenomenon.

There are four main themes that characterise Pan-Africanism over the centuries and we will examine each in turn.

Pan-Africanism: A Universal Expression of Black Pride and Achievement.

There has been a concerted attempt over the centuries by peoples of African descent to espouse black culture and propagate the notion of a distinct black race. The roots of this race are traced to Africa, but the aims of the various protagonists was for their culture and distinct contribution to mankind to be accepted universally.¹⁰ Such protagonists include such diverse movements as the Harlem Renaissance movement of the nineteen twenties,¹¹ with such distinguished writers as Langston Hughes¹² and Claude McKay;¹³ and the Negritude poets and activists, Senghor¹⁴ and Césaire¹⁵ being the most famous. Other people noted for their forthright views in this sphere are Marcus Garvey¹⁶ and the inheritor of his mantle in the United States Malcolm X.¹⁷ There are many other examples of this kind of expression such as the idea of the African Personality, first coined by E.W. Blyden¹⁸ and made famous by Kwame Nkrumah.¹⁹ Even the modern day rap, of groups like "Public Enemy" and "X clan" contain elements of the same fierce assertion of black power and race pride as their predecessors.

Pan-Africanism: A Physical Return to Africa by Peoples of African Descent Living in the Diaspora.

This aspect of Pan-Africanism was made famous by Marcus Garvey and the efforts of his Universal Negro Improvement Association.²⁰ However, ever since slaves in the Americas tried to escape from the tyranny of slavery,²¹ the notion of a return to Africa has been a feature of Pan-Africanism.²²

Pan-Africanism: A Harbinger of Liberation.

The people of Africa have been the victims of slavery, colonialism and other forms of oppression over the centuries. Each individual struggle for liberation whether it has taken place in the United States of America,²³ Africa²⁴ or any other place where people of African descent are found, has been unique. However the ideologies, strategies and successes of black liberation do have similarities and it has usually been protagonists with Pan-African leanings that have been at the forefront of these struggles. They have drawn inspiration from previous black struggles and the impetus that comes from one successful struggle to the next, turns unique episodes into universal inspirational victories.²⁵

Pan-Africanism: The Political Unification of the Continent.

Entwined with the struggle for the liberation of the African continent, this became the dominant theme of Pan-Africanism after the Second World War. This was mainly due to the vision of Kwame Nkrumah, the first President of independent Ghana and a revolutionary Pan-Africanist. He believed that the only way to resolve the problems of imperialism and neo-colonialism in Africa was in the form of unitary radical socialist government.²⁶ His ideas were supported by a tiny minority of African leaders, with Patrice Lumumba and Sekou Touré being the most notable. Nkrumah's ideas were pre-figured and echoed by a select band of radical black intellectuals who sought to combine ideas concerning African unity with Marxism. C.L.R. James,²⁷ George Padmore,²⁸ Frantz Fanon²⁹ and Walter Rodney³⁰ are just some of the notable figures who adhered to this approach. However the vast majority of the African leaders were not impressed by the rhetoric of Nkrumah. For them unity was meant to be a gradual process. After the territorial integrity of the nation-state had been guaranteed then other avenues of co-operation could be explored.³¹ These other avenues took the form of the Organisation of African Unity³² and regional integration

schemes. Regional integration or co-operation was to be achieved by groups of nation states coming together to find ways of bettering their economic prospects. This was viewed as a precursor to full scale unity. For the most part regional co-operation involved reducing tariffs, leading to the formation of a customs union and eventually a common market. This gradualist approach would hopefully lead to a United States of Africa, much in the same way as the different elements of the European Community hope to become a United States of Europe.³³

So these are the themes that generally speaking constitute the vision of Pan-Africanism. How then does it compare to the reality that is Africa today?

Out of the fifty-one nation-states that make up the African continent it is hard to find one success story. Famine, instability, war, economic stagnation and disaster, both natural and human are the keywords that describe a continent in turmoil. Some thirty years after the first wave of independence, one can ask the question, was it worth it? Tiny, artificial entities more commonly known as nation-states constitute a great deal of what is Africa today. These states have been ruled in the main by intolerant and inept regimes. These regimes have not prevented the mechanisms of international capitalism from looting the continent. They have repressed and exploited their already poor citizens and they have frittered away what little wealth their countries may

have had on weapons, patronage and personal aggrandizement.³⁴
Although these may seem broad generalizations and there have
been exceptions in terms of leadership and economic progress;
the general picture is an accurate one. Africa is in trouble.
The vision of Pan-Africanism and the reality of Africa are two
separate entities. So what is to be done? In these
circumstances it would seem that Nkrumah's plea for Africa to
unite should not go unheeded for too much longer. Surely the
larger economic market, the pooled resources and the best
brains all working together, could enable Africa to realise
its potential as a rich, vibrant and viable continent?
Continued balkanisation in the current world climate will mean
that Africa will be condemned to many more years of economic
stagnation and poverty, so surely unity must be the answer.
Pan-Africanism in its various guises has tried to embrace the
ideal of unity. Yet amazingly Pan-Africanism has not fared
well on the African continent. It was the vision by Africans
for Africans, yet its impact has been transient. The best
black minds the world over have contributed to its
development, so why has Pan-Africanism failed to emerge as the
ideology or movement to unite and transform a continent in
trouble?

In order to answer this question, a closer analysis of
the themes of Pan-Africanism is necessary.

Pan-Africanism: The Black Power Phenomenon. One Myth Fighting Another.

The first theme that was identified as belonging to the Pan-African tradition was that of the universal expression of black pride and achievement. Although the aims that are expressed in this theme are indeed laudable, it is here that one finds some of the crucial reasons why Pan-Africanism has not been a success on the African continent.

It has been well documented how Western civilisation has generally characterised African civilisation. African civilisation was regarded as backward.³⁵ The different cultures and religions of the various peoples were lumped together and defined as being primitive and savage.³⁶ The African himself was deemed to be sub-human. As previously stated it was these lies that provided the justification for slavery, colonialism and all the other evils that have been perpetrated against people of African origin. The black people that have been exposed to these ideas have responded to them in different ways. Some people accepted the lies as truth, others ignored them and yet still another group, the group that is of concern to us responded to these lies with their own conceptions of themselves and their ancestors. This group exalted the history of Africa and its rich culture. They

stressed the innate goodness of the black man, his humanity and sensitivity to his environment. In essence they replaced the big white myth with the big black one.³⁷

It is important to note that the people who propagated the black myth, were those people of African origin who had come into close contact with the Western world and its chaotic value system. The group included African Americans, West Indians and Africans from the continent who had studied in Europe or America. I would argue that this group, because of its interaction with Western culture lost the ability to look at their own societies shrewdly and analytically. What I shall term as the black power phenomenon, did not stem from the roots of what is after all a far from homogenous cultural experience. Instead this Pan-Africanism came about as a response to white racism.³⁸ Rather than use their brilliance to find ways of helping their own people, valuable energy was expended having a debate with the "white" world trying to prove to it what it actually means to be a black human being. Frantz Fanon, had observed this phenomenon. In his brilliant psycho-analytical work Black Skin, White Masks he states shrewdly.

"There is a fact: white men consider themselves superior to black men. There is another fact: black men want to prove to white men at all costs the richness of their thought, the equal value of their intellect."³⁹

It can be argued that the Pan-Africanism of the black power phenomenon was irrelevant to the continent of Africa, because it was ^{not} addressing ~~itself~~ to a false white vision and not the African reality. ^{For} The peasant farmer tending his land in the shadow of colonialism, did not need confirmation of the fact that he was a human being; that was not helping his crops grow better, neither was it ^{Pan-Africanism was not} solving his everyday problems. I'm sure the fact that he had never created anything was not a source of immense pride and joy for him and his family.⁴⁰ In fact it just was not an issue for him. Yet these were and are some of the concerns that dominate the first theme of Pan-Africanism. In trying to construct an image of the black man that could resist the psychological intimidation of white racism, the black power phenomenon has enabled people of African descent living in the west to redefine themselves positively. However, it is far removed from the reality of everyday peasant life in Africa and so within the continent its impact has been limited. Unfortunately even today Fanon's words are still relevant. The black world still struggles with the idea that the white man defined him according to his own image and found him wanting. Hence when one sees gargantuan buildings in the midst of poverty, when one sees the rusting vehicles and disused factories that litter the countryside, when one reads about the grand schemes for co-operation, like the 1980 Lagos plan of action, one is looking at an attitude that is seeking to prove to the white man at

all costs and disregarding the African reality.

Pan-Africanism : The Return to the Native Land by the not so Native People.

The second main theme of Pan-Africanism, is the notion of a return to the continent. In a sense this theme suffers from the same problem as the first theme. Close analysis of why people in the twentieth century wanted to return to Africa suggests that they were either running away from racism, or that they had a vision of Africa that was a far cry from the reality. In earlier times slaves that arrived in the Americas directly from Africa, still had strong tangible ties with the continent and this made their desire to return home strong.⁴¹ In the process, of ^{with} time, however, as more and more people of African descent were being born outside of the continent, tangible identification with Africa lessened. Other factors must have determined why these people of African descent wanted to return to Africa.⁴² This does not mean that the idea of a return to Africa was a bad one in itself, but it does reveal that it is another theme of Pan-Africanism that does not stem from the land itself and is therefore inaccessible to the vast mass of African people.

There are three main reasons that one can identify aside from tangible contact, why people wanted to return to Africa.

Firstly there are spiritual reasons, secondly there is the search for identity, and thirdly there is missionary zeal.

The return to Africa for spiritual reasons is best personified by the Rastafarian movement.⁴³ This movement whose origins are to be found in Jamaica, used certain Psalms in the bible to predict that the Messiah would come from Africa. Their messiah turned out to be Haile Selassie of Ethiopia, and so Ethiopia came to be regarded as a special place - the spiritual home of Africans everywhere. As Zion was to the Jews so Ethiopia was to the Rasta. The terrible condition of the modern state of Ethiopia is indeed a sharp contrast to the spiritual home that the Rastafarians envisaged.⁴⁴ The country has been plagued by the longest war in modern African history, famine is now a cyclical phenomenon there and successive regimes from Selassie himself to the recently deposed Marxist Menghistu have tended to compound rather than solve these problems. Hence here one can clearly see the vast difference that exists between the African image propagated by Africans of the diaspora and the African reality that is lived everyday.

The most famous proponent of the return to Africa idea was Marcus Mosiah Garvey, who is considered to be a Prophet by the Rastafarian movement. Garvey certainly was a man of vision and his return to Africa movement was only one aspect of his mass-based Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA).⁴⁵ It can be argued that a lot of Garvey's success in recruiting

blacks from America to join UNIA was due to the timing of his crusade. After the First World War the depression was just beginning to have an effect on the urban poor. With the arrival of more migrants from Europe to America racial tension was high and racism perpetrated against blacks was virulent. Garvey, with his majestic presence and glowing oratory had a waiting constituency.⁴⁶ However this constituency was more American than African. It was America that they were running away from, not Africa to which they were running. Hence it is not a surprise to understand that very few Garveyites actually made it to Africa. As the depression eased and Garvey was sent to jail so interest in his movement wained.⁴⁷ What happened to the Garvey movement was not an isolated phenomenon. It can be argued that there is a correlation between interest in Africa and economic downturn and racial tension in America. When racial tension is high and economic restraint is biting, then affinity with Africa and notions of black unity are high. On the other hand when racial tension is low and economic conditions are favourable the opposite is the case. So at best one can say that real affinity with the people of Africa is tenuous but affinity with the vision of Africa as a sanctuary from white racism is at times very strong.

The black missionaries that went to Africa did not have a positive vision of the continent. In general they viewed Africans as their backward cousins, and it was their duty to bring them out of primitive darkness and into the marvellous

light.⁴⁸ Thankfully such crude notions did die down with time, but the idea that Africans from the diaspora should return to the continent and help their brothers and sisters did not. Unfortunately for many that returned to Africa with this image they were to be disappointed. Rather than being brothers and sisters, they were strangers in a strange land. The first theme of the Pan-African myth, that black people were a wonderful homogenous race was rudely shattered.⁴⁹ Hundreds of years and many generations of living apart had created a chasm that could not be bridged overnight.⁵⁰ Thus the second theme of Pan-Africanism is largely irrelevant to the people that live on the continent because it addresses only those Africans who have a tenuous linkage with the continent. They had a vision of returning to Africa but the reality to which they were returning was in many respects an anathema to them. It is those Africans born in Africa, who have experienced the reality of living in Africa and who possess the skills that could help the continent that are leaving. They want peace and happiness and so they are leaving the reality behind and heading for the West in the hope of something better.

Pan-Africanism: The Liberation that was and the Liberation that was not.

The third theme of Pan-Africanism is liberation. Finally with this theme we have a movement that is headed by Africans for Africans. From the liberation of Ghana in 1957, to the declaration of Independence in Namibia in 1990, Pan-Africanism seems to have vindicated itself. However, behind the successes of the removal of colonialism, we have the tragedy of Africa today. Still tied to the chains of poverty, still not free from the bondage of international capitalism and still not liberated from the evils of political oppression. In order to understand why this is, we must go back and carefully analyse the so-called success of liberation. This is a difficult thing to do when one considers the lives lost and the sacrifices that were made in order to make independence possible, but nevertheless it is necessary. In the first instance we need to understand why nationalism was the dominant theme of the first wave of independence. Nationalism is a curious phenomenon at the best of times but in the African case it defies its own strange logic. Arbitrary and illegitimate boundaries become legitimate, and people who were as different as chalk and cheese were suddenly expected to assume a common national identity. It was all rather bizarre. In the second instance why did socialism become the dominant theme of the second wave

of independence? Pan-Africanism as an ideology had the scope to assume any identity it wanted, so why choose in both instances the dominant world ideologies of the time, nationalism and socialism, was this not inviting long term disaster?

It can be argued that the reason that African nationalism was the dominant theme of the first wave of independence was because it was the ideology that best suited the colonisers. The main protagonists of nationalism in Africa were those Africans that had been educated abroad, schooled in the ideas of the west and in a sense brainwashed by its achievements. These people thought that the way forward was via emulation of their colonial masters.⁵¹ African nationalism was a weak theory of liberation, it did not attempt to alter colonial boundaries, or change state structures, it had nothing to say about economic dependence, it was ahistorical as far as the African experience was concerned and it was the preserve of the elites. The African masses agitated and demonstrated for independence but their views were not sought concerning the nature of the society that they would be living in after independence had been achieved. African nationalism said nothing about the nature of post-colonial society, in fact African nationalism had little to say about anything. This created a dangerous precedent, whereby rhetoric and agitation were more important than content and substance in domestic African politics. The main colonial powers, Britain and

France, had to physically leave Africa due to the pressure for change, but they did not really want to leave behind the wealth that existed in raw materials and minerals, which had proved so useful to their own industrialization efforts. Non-violent, non-radical African nationalism provided the former colonisers with the perfect vehicle for achieving the goal of moving out of Africa but maintaining a significant interest in the affairs of the continent. It also provided the first generation of modern African leaders their with first taste of power. These factors combined, in essence, help us to understand why the first wave of independence occurred, in general, so smoothly.⁵²

In the second wave of independence, things were different, ideas of emulation and non-violence had been thrown away. The colonial power Portugal was not planning to leave, neither were the white minorities of Zimbabwe and South Africa. The struggle for liberation was therefore going to be protracted and violent.⁵³ The notion of violence was a radical departure from the non-violent, peaceful protests that had for the most part accompanied the first wave of independence, and so a new ideology was needed to justify this departure.⁵⁴ The leaders of the liberation movements also had the benefit of seeing what had happened to their recently liberated brothers, although free in name they were still tied to their colonial masters. Some of the leaders of the first wave of independence had also begun to adopt their own variants of socialism after

coming to the realisation that emulation of their former colonial masters was not working.⁵⁵ So now the message was clear, anything associated with colonialism was bad. The colonialists' main oppressive tool was capitalism, so in order for him to be defeated the opposite had to be employed, namely socialism. Socialism was not tainted with the brush of colonialism, and the fact that the various liberation movements received backing from Moscow, Cuba and other socialist-orientated countries aided them in thinking that they were on the correct ideological path.⁵⁶

Whereas African nationalism had little to say about the nature of post-colonial society, socialism did. However the leaders of the liberation movements have been unsuccessful in their attempts to implement what they perceived to be socialism in Africa. Socialism in Africa found itself too closely connected to the Cold War. Destabilisation and a lack of economic assistance was the price that many countries had to pay for adopting the socialist path of development and it has proved too much even for the sternest of them. With the Soviets on the losing end of the cold war socialism is on the retreat everywhere. In Africa socialism was a failure economically, in a harsh economic environment it was just not able to generate wealth, thereby restricting its redistributive aims. So even though socialist liberation was a much bolder ideology than African nationalism, it has not fared too well in the long term.

In a sense, both African nationalism and socialism were imports to Africa, although one can make the claim that African socialism was indigenous.⁵⁷ However the overriding fact is that neither ideologies have developed lasting roots on the continent. The two ideologies were successful in that they spearheaded the thrust to remove the enemy from the continent, but they were unsuccessful in that they have done nothing to alter the legacy that the enemy left behind. Hence the theme of this section of the chapter is the liberation that was and the liberation that was not. It is precisely the legacy of the liberation that was not that is haunting the continent today. It is this legacy that has exposed the ideas that spearheaded the liberation movements. One can go even further and argue that these ideas have been crushed by the legacy, to the point where a statement of Frantz Fanon's now reads like the fulfillment of a prophecy. He states:

"Colonialism and its derivatives do not as a matter of fact constitute the present enemies of Africa. In a short time this continent will be liberated. For my part the deeper I enter into the cultures and the political circles, the surer I am that the great danger that threatens Africa is the absence of ideology."⁵⁸

The fact that Pan-Africanism, as a ^{harbinger} harbinger of African nationalism and socialism failed in the long term, has had dire consequences for the ultimate theme of Pan-Africanism, namely political unification.

Pan-Africanism: The Politics of Unity Beyond Reach.

As stated previously, the struggle for liberation and the idea of unity were closely connected. The struggle against the common enemy of colonialism predisposed some people to think of unity as a natural extension of liberation. However we know that this was not the case. The liberation struggles were fought on a national and not a continental basis. After the struggles, the elites of these countries were intent on consolidating power and retaining their status as leaders of nation-states. Unity was something to talk about but few leaders were willing to give up the sovereignty that they had just won. Pan-Africanism was not dead but the smooth nature of the first wave of independence and the weak ideological development that accompanied it meant that leaders were generally reluctant to move forward quickly.

One man who wanted to move quickly was Kwame Nkrumah. He was a man with a vision. He knew what Africa's problems were, but his revolutionary socialist alternatives based on the Chinese and Soviet models were unrealistic.⁵⁹ In the 1990s the existing State socialist model of development has been seen to *as it has been proved in the* be unworkable. *people's* State structures that are imposed upon people create feelings of alienation and resentment. Coupled with economic inefficiency it spells disaster. Nkrumah had a vision, but from where did it come? I would argue that for the most part his agenda did not stem from the reality of Africa.

He wanted Africa to be rich, powerful and strong like the West, but he wanted to realise this vision using the methods of Moscow and the East. After his ambitions were realised he would turn around and say that the whole thing was uniquely African. With grandiose ambitions like these, who was Nkrumah trying to impress, peasant farmers? Another reason why Nkrumah's vision was never in danger of becoming a reality was because the majority of African leaders were opposed to him and his ideas. As stated already unity for them was meant to be a gradual process. Throughout this work it has been acknowledged that for the most part Pan-Africanism has been the preserve of the elites of the black world. It can be argued that in 1963, with the formation of the Organisation of African Unity, one sees the crystallization of this process. The question of the unification of the continent would be determined solely by the leaders of the individual nation-states. What has this meant for the fourth theme of Pan-Africanism? It can be maintained that it has rendered it almost redundant as a radical concept that could change the face of the continent.⁶⁰ The O.A.U. in its charter pledged to maintain the territorial integrity of all its member states. Non-interference in a state's internal affairs was another of its central tenets. Hence the foundations of the new Africa were based fairly and squarely on the old maps. In fact these old maps had now been enshrined and the continent was now ready to suffer the indignity of further balkanisation and

neo-colonialism.

Pan-Africanism has come full circle. It started life in the West with its protagonists having a vision of Africa and now it is an African reality albeit the preserve of African political leaders. In their hands Pan-Africanism still lives on but it has become conservative and directionless. It lives on in the form of regional co-operation schemes. Africa has had and still has a plethora of them. What is noticeable about them is that they lack direction. Apart from the Southern African Development Co-ordination Conference (SADCC) whose main reason for existence was to reduce dependence on South Africa. Even this however seems to be an idea that will soon be out of date with majority rule on the horizon in South Africa. As for the rest of them, nothing seems to be driving them forward except some nebulous concept of economic development. The post-war trend has been towards regional co-operation but with Africa being the least developed continent it should have a clear idea of where it wants to go rather than settling for following world trends.

Here is where the lack of ideology on the current African scene really shows up and the weaknesses of Pan-Africanism as it now is, becomes exposed. The fact that Africa is directionless after all the oppression it has suffered and the negation of its peoples' humanity, shows us that unity on the basis of a response to racism and unity on the basis of common oppression, are not enough to help Africa out of the

difficulties it now faces.

The central tenets of the old Pan-Africanism stem from
the common oppression that black people have suffered at the
hands of the "white" man. Take the white man out of the
equation for a while and what are you left with. You are left
with a very diverse group of people who apart from the land
which they all live on have no basis for unity as yet. The
suspicions and the negativity that were directed against the
colonialist still remain but they are redirected towards the
rival ethnic group, the rival nation, the different tribe and
so the list goes on. The fact that old style unity was based
on negative factors goes some way towards explaining why
political unification seems so hard to achieve and why
regional co-operation has failed to thrive. Leaders pre-
occupied with safeguarding political power are ultimately
suspicious of their neighbour and so they are reluctant to do
anything that is going to benefit their neighbour at their own
expense. In this atmosphere even a well organised regional co-
operation scheme is bound to fail or run into immense
difficulties. The East African Community (EAC) is a classic
example of this scenario. It was generally regarded as a
natural community, the people shared a common heritage and
their cultures were similar. Regional co-operation had also
been taking place in one form or another since the beginning
of the century. Hence the community at the time of
independence had a ready made infrastructure and resources at

its disposal. In spite of all these advantages, the EAC failed to thrive. Personal animosity between Nyerere and Amin, Kenyan suspicions of Tanzania because of its socialist stance, and accusations that Kenya was gaining economically at the expense of the other two nations are just some of the reasons why the community broke down in 1977.⁶¹ The year after the collapse of the community, war broke out between Tanzania and Kenya and even today border relations between the states are not friendly. The East African Community is only unique in the sense that it had at its disposal many of the prerequisites that are needed to make a venture of that nature work. The fact that it failed does not bode well for regional cooperation that is heavily reliant on state leaders to make it function. Pan-Africanism in the hands of the African nation-state machine has little hope of becoming a reality.

Pan-Africanism as it has developed so far was and is in a weak position as an ideological force to transform the African continent. Its focus thus far has been dominated by the white world. Perhaps this problem stems from the fact that for long periods of its development Pan-Africanism existed outside of the continent. Its protagonists, even those born on the continent, have been the elites, people who have been exposed to western values. Pan-Africanism then although seemingly irrelevant to the African continent in its present form, is an eclectic movement that still has the potential to evolve. Indeed it will evolve again and find a new reason to

be. One of the reasons that it has not done so already, is the nature of the present African leadership. It can be argued that after the Second World War, during the struggle for liberation and early independence, African leaders had the perfect opportunity to shape the direction and future of their continent, Pan-Africanism could have been whatever they wanted it to be. However apart from Nkrumah, Cabral and Nyerere, African leaders showed a startling lack of vision and still do. They could have given Pan-Africanism a new purpose and edge but they declined the challenge that history had thrust upon them. Why?

The Cult of Personality; an Age Old Tradition.

The fact that the cult of personality is such a major feature of African political culture means that it is no accident. After independence fledgling democracy in Africa was wiped out and in many instances replaced by the one party state. The embodiment of the nation and the state was the leader. His face was everywhere, his pronouncements would be given to the nation as though they were the word of God and he would usually display vast amounts of wealth whilst his citizens were grinding away in poverty.⁶²

In the lexicon of the twentieth century, the requirements of good government would appear to be to preside over the

economy and to be concerned about the welfare of one's citizens. Based on this criteria, the one-party state, cult of personality syndrome that has prevailed in most parts of Africa has been a woeful failure. However before one begins to eulogize over the western democratic tradition of good government, it should be remembered that this system did not just descend from heaven and work perfectly. Rather for the most part it emerged as a result of long wars and political struggles against kings and dictators, cults of personalities if you like. Real politics as opposed to the euphemism "good government" has and always will be about the pursuit of power. Democracy as it is in the world today is just a refined version of an age old practice, that of pursuing power. So in the light of this, it seems a useless exercise judging the current crop of African leaders by comparing their performance with that of the immoral moralists, the western democratic powers. Instead one would be better served by analysing how good African leaders have been at retaining power and what they have done with it.

Unfortunately, it would seem that quite a few have been very successful, and even in the cases where leaders have been unsuccessful it has not dissuaded others from taking up where the old leader left off. The successful leaders have been able to neutralise political opposition by either killing, imprisoning or co-opting them. At the same time they have been able to maintain a more than comfortable existence for

themselves and their families, and others have even proved to be popular with their people and have become respected internationally.⁶³ Looking at the domestic African political scene in this way, one can argue that leaders like Banda, Boigny and Kaunda have ultimately been successful, whereas Doe and Barre to name but two, ultimately have not. In the history of Europe the parallels are there. Why was Peter I hailed as great, whilst Nicholas II was seen to be a failure? Why was Louis XIV hailed as the sun king, whilst Louis XVI has been consigned to the dustbin of history? I do not think the answer lies in the fact that one leader was more democratic than the other. More plausible is the fact that the two successful leaders were able to preserve power and build on their prestige, whilst the two failures were unable to do this. In Africa at the present time, many leaders are fighting to retain power in a changing continental and global, political and economic climate. This is why they have not been able to take up the challenge that history had thrust upon them. They have been too busy following the trends that historical precedent had already laid down.

With the ideology seemingly lacking a basis and with the politicians fighting for power, is there any hope for continental unification? One is tempted to say that there is no hope of the continent coming together in the near future and jointly solving its problems. However, I think that recent attempts at regional co-operation hint that even at state

level this might not be the case. I would argue that there are three case scenarios that have been or are being played out at the moment that give a good indication as to whether continental unification will ultimately be possible.

The worst case scenario, is that all attempts at co-operation will fail due to the continued existence of the cult of personality and national rivalry. This scenario has already been played out in the case of the East African Community and it can be labelled as the "politics of personality."⁶⁴

The second scenario is that moves towards unity will continue. The world trend is toward more forms of economic unity and Africa likes to follow what is going on in the rest of the world. One can see this scenario being played out in the work of the Economic Community Of West African States. Their treaty is closely based on the European Community's Treaty of Rome. This scenario can be labelled as the "politics of emulation."⁶⁵

The third scenario is that Africa will be driven toward unity. With the Cold War over and marginalisation a distinct possibility, the increasing inefficiency and stagnation of the African economy will force nation-states to take drastic action, that action being unity. This scenario is being played out in the Southern African region with the formation of SADCC, whose formation came about because it was felt that it was necessary to reduce dependence on South Africa. This scenario can be labelled the "politics of necessity."⁶⁶

State-led Pan-Africanism then is not dead. The politics of emulation and the politics of necessity will move Africa along the slow and arduous road to unity. However if this unity is going to consist of more than the amalgamation of regional economic blocks then ultimately an alternative Pan-African ideology has to emerge to give the regional agenda in Africa a much needed impetus. A positive vibrant regional African agenda is crucial to Africa's future development prospects and the thesis will focus attention on the need for this agenda in the next chapter.

In concluding this chapter, it is evident that the old Pan-African agenda of Africa for the Africans based on racial unity was detrimental to the development prospects of the continent. The concerns of the African elites and the African diaspora are not the same as the African masses. For the ordinary African the agenda is survival, they require a Pan-Africanism that is committed to making that task easier. The old Pan-Africanism based on the diaspora dilemma does not do this, its primary concern was race and racism, fighting the West at the expense of the African reality. This state of affairs should not continue. Put simply the two agendas are not compatible and therefore should be separated.

If a new Pan-Africanism is to emerge, then its dynamic must stem from within Africa. It has to concern itself with the problems of the ordinary Africans and not those of the diaspora. Unity needs to be based on concrete factors that are

at the heart of the complex mosaic that we understand as Africa and it is African people themselves who are in the best position to determine that. If Africa is successful, then the diaspora will rejoice. If Africa fails the diaspora will be sad. However even though emotional ties will always be there, it is time to recognise that in the final analysis Africa is for the Africans who live; breath and have their whole being in the continent, and they for better or worse must be allowed to shape their own destiny.

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Chapter 3.

The Regional Trend in Africa and the World.

The devastating impact of the Second World War was the catalyst for the movement towards co-operation amongst nation states in the modern era. Although nationalism was and is still a strong force in the world, it has not prevented the steady drift towards regionalism and supranationality which has emerged as a prominent feature of the political map of the post Second World War era.

Although war provided the catalyst for a realignment of the relationship between nation-states, it was other more indirect forces that made the realignment possible. Domenico Mazzeo argues that there were three main factors that prompted the move towards regional co-operation and they were ideology, nationalism, and technology.¹

The Impact of Ideology on Regional Co-operation.

The Cold War and the desire of the Third World to redress its economic balance in relation to the industrialized world, have provided nation-states with strong ideological reasons why they should work together to defend and better their common interests.² As a result of the ideological confrontation between the super-powers, nationalism was partially submerged in Europe, as nations pooled aspects of their sovereignty in

the interest of defence. The North Atlantic Treaty Organisation³ and the Warsaw Pact⁴ were the regional formations that resulted from that ideological conflict. The formations functioned very well as long the perceived threat existed. This paved the way for co-operation in Europe to be extended beyond the realm of defence to other spheres. It was in the area of economics that co-operation became most prominent, and the formations that oversaw these developments were the European Economic Community (EEC)⁵ and the Council for Mutual Economic Aid (COMECON).⁶

The collapse of communism in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union provides interesting insights into the nature of regional co-operation. Firstly it can be seen that the fear of attack by an enemy actually forced the nation-states of Europe and North America to transcend national boundaries and co-operate on a highly efficient basis at the highest levels of government and the armed forces. Nationalism took a back seat to overwhelming common self-interest. Secondly, it is now evident that communism acted as an ideological fence that kept individual countries incarcerated within the Soviet garden. For more than forty years, the culturally diverse peoples of Eastern Europe were subjugated under the banner of communism. Although their cultural and ethnic identities remained intact they had to be seen as secondary to the ideology of the various communist parties. However as soon as communism began to look vulnerable nationalism reasserted itself. The false

sense of a common communist Eastern European identity collapsed, and has resulted in an explosion of ethnic tension and violence, as people try to reassert the identity which had been submerged for so long. It is evident that it was only the threat of war and the redundant ideology that was holding the communist bloc together and when both these notions collapsed, so did any concept of regional identity and co-operation. It remains to be seen whether economic necessity will force the countries of Eastern Europe to reconsider and form a new partnership.

In Western Europe, the initial impetus for co-operation stemmed from a desire to prevent the countries of Europe going to war for a third time.⁷ It was felt that if Germany could be held in check within the confines of a closer European union, then the need for further aggression would be avoided. The United States also desired a stable and prosperous Europe for economic as well as military reasons. Hence the US played an integral role in the economic reconstruction and defence strategy of the continent.⁸ Although the prime justification for regional co-operation has been removed, the formations that developed in the Cold War era in spheres other than defence, have continued to thrive and develop. The success of capitalist economic enterprise has resulted in economics becoming the prime motivation for co-operation.⁹ Given the turbulent history of Western Europe due to the national question this is a very interesting phenomenon, one to which

we shall be return.

The other ideological agenda that spawned a proliferation of regional and supranational institutions after the Second World War was the Third World agenda.¹⁰ Decolonization had resulted in the emergence of many new nation-states who seemingly had a common agenda. They all wanted to develop their economies. Contact with the West had to varying degrees across the Southern hemisphere undermined individual Third World countries' abilities to develop into self-sustaining industrialized nations.¹¹ This was the problem that they shared and it was hoped that by working together they could achieve two things. Firstly they could bring about changes in the existing economic order so that it was more equitable and better served their needs.¹² Secondly they could form trade and other economic links with each other, thereby reducing their dependence on the Northern hemisphere.

These and other ideological considerations resulted in an impressive array of South-South regional arrangements: the Pan-African movement; the Pan-Arab movement; the Afro-Asian Solidarity movement; the Non-Aligned movement; the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) to name but a few from a long list.

These groupings together represented the overwhelming majority of the World's populace. However in the international community this meant little. With the exception of OPEC the demands for justice that these groups made came to be regarded

as beggars' notes. The term Third World which initially signified a vibrant, different international perspective, became synonymous with poverty and weakness. It is important to note that regardless of how the Third World agenda was received by the richer nations of the North, it was an important agenda, important enough for nation states to come together to promote it.¹³ Unfortunately the beggar note agenda has come to be regarded as the popular Third World agenda, charities and Western media tend to reinforce this message that the Third World needs to beg the West for help, or it will not survive. When Third World countries try to promote alternative agendas there tends to be disagreement amongst them. They all seem to want different things from these international fora, but are not prepared to sacrifice national interest in favour of a regional or supranational interest. Hence Third World regional structures tend to be fragile and prone to dissolution.¹⁴ Only OPEC can hold up its head and say that it has been a Third World grouping that has put its own agenda on to the world stage and had it recognised in its own right, and that for a while it did wield real economic power. Today its significance is considerably more limited.¹⁵

South-South groupings are a useful forum for new nations entering an economic system not of their choosing. However as stated previously the limited ability of the groupings generally to achieve their aims means that many of these regional organisations have a tenuous existence, particularly

when the international plea for justice is not compatible with increasingly divergent national agendas.

Nationalism; Friend or Foe of Regional Co-operation?

Evidence would suggest that nationalism and regional co-operation are incompatible. The nation-state and the desire of peoples of the same nationality to live within a common border seems to have been enshrined, and regional co-operation in many instances is seen as an attempt to encroach upon national rights. Mazzeo argues that the two do not have to be mutually exclusive.¹⁶ Referring to the Third World in particular, he argues that regional co-operation should be subservient to the national agenda. Countries should come together with the aim of strengthening each others' national economies and then when the national economies are sufficiently strong there will be the basis for more conventional forms of co-operation based on trade. He writes:

"It becomes increasingly clear not only in theory, but also in practice, that regional co-operation among developing countries should principally aim at strengthening the partners' capacity for national self reliance."¹⁷

The argument that Mazzeo puts forward is a useful one, but I tend to think that if one attempts to reify the nation-

state and make the regional agenda subservient to it, then no regional agenda will emerge. Nationalism tends to be a divisive and destructive force. In Europe the political impetus for co-operation stemmed from the desire to dampen down the nationalist ardour that had resulted in two World Wars, and countless other conflicts.¹⁸ If one allows nationalism in the Third World to go unchecked, then it will lead to similar problems: to ethnic tension, to civil war, and the prospect of ever smaller enclaves of people, calling themselves nations, but unable to sustain themselves independently. Africa in particular needs unity not division. Inspiring nationalism in a poor and balkanised continent is condemning many people to a life of unsustainability and not enhancing their development prospects, hence one must disagree with the Mazzeo formulation.

For regional co-operation to have a chance of success the countries involved must have a purpose that transcends the national agenda, something that affects them all individually but is best confronted by them putting aside national rivalry and working together. The fear of attack by a common enemy is one phenomenon that brings nation-states together, it forces them to come together to defend their territory. In the case of NATO it worked very well.¹⁹ Other common purposes like a common ideology or religion can hold a formation together, but a lot depends on how successful they are in achieving the goals that they set. It has been argued that due to

communism's failure to provide adequate standards of living for the people living within the confines of its borders, the regional formations that it spawned are disappearing rapidly. Nation-states were not willing to co-operate just for the sake of protecting a redundant ideology. With many South-South formations, the phenomenon is the same. As individual states their resource bases are so narrow that they are unwilling to commit themselves fully to a regional scheme that is not going to bring them tangible benefits. Without the full commitment of participating states the formations tend to weaken and become ineffectual.²⁰

Thus it is evident that the national agenda can preclude the regional agenda from working efficiently. At the national level leaders know that they wield the power, whereas at the regional level they are not going to wield such power.

As Arthur Hazelwood puts it:

"There will be a natural reluctance for political leaders to surrender their autonomy when they are under no threat, external or internal from which they hope that federation might protect them, and when they do not feel confident they would have anything but a subordinate role in the proposed federal government."²¹

Positive regional co-operation does require sacrifice for it to work well, but when the regional and the national agenda are not compatible then it is usually the national agenda that wins the day. Although the national agenda is strong in many African countries, one can argue that Mazzeo's notion of using

the regional agenda to strengthen the nation-state is retrogressive. The national agenda in Africa has been epitomised by incompetent and corrupt state machines bleeding their countries and people dry. Using regionalism to strengthen these existing state machines puts more power into the hands of the few at the expense of the many and is in danger of exacerbating the misfortune of the centralised colonial entity in Africa. Promoting a regional agenda in and of itself on the other hand offers an opportunity to move beyond artificial colonial boundaries and to pool resources in order to help more African people. There is no guarantee that this will lead to prosperity, democracy and peace in Africa, but at least this idea attempts to break the mould of post-independence African politics, not strengthen it.²²

Having analyzed two of the forces that were meant to be the driving forces behind co-operation it is evident that meaningful co-operation between states is very hard to achieve. Now we turn our attention to the third of Mazzeo's forces²³ the one that he labels technology. And it is here that I return to the Western European phenomenon.

The Technological Need for Co-operation.

As more and more companies in the industrialized world, expand and develop new sophisticated production techniques,

there arises the need for bigger and more sophisticated markets in which to sell the products. For some this makes the idea of regionalism inevitable. As Mazzeo states:

"technological development created some of the most compelling conditions for the establishment of strong security and economic communities of states, particularly among industrialized countries. This gave the impression that the era of the nation-state had already elapsed, at least in the industrialized world."²⁴

The gradual approach to integration as adopted by the European Community seems to be progressing smoothly. Economic considerations have led the way, and in tune with the economic rationale the need for stronger supranational institutions has emerged, primarily to define, legislate and administer the parameters of the community. On a superficial level, at least, it would appear that given the right circumstances technological considerations offer a relatively trouble-free way of achieving meaningful co-operation between states.²⁵

However, the European example might not be as perfect as it would appear to be at first. It can be argued that, as a result of the Cold War and the need to prevent a third European conflict, nationalism in Western Europe was deliberately under-emphasized. National interest at the highest level was submerged in the interests of a common defence and foreign policy ²⁶

The good thing about the Cold War strategy as far as the

Europeans were concerned, was that it was easily defined, and in the national interest of all members to follow the strategy. Now, however, the Cold War is over, and economic and political issues are at the top of the European agenda. The national interest that had once been submerged has belatedly resurfaced in some parts of Europe, and with it there is the possibility of renewed nationalism. In Britain in particular, the move towards a single European currency, and hints of a federal Europe has caused great consternation in the domestic political arena. It has resulted in the fall of one Prime Minister and a number of cabinet ministers. Yet nothing of consequence has occurred at present. If just the fear of federalism can cause such rumblings within the British political establishment, then what will happen when Europe moves further and further along the federal road?

I would argue that after the introduction of the single market in 1992, the fallacy of technological development leading to inevitable, smooth co-operation will be exposed. I think that there are two main reasons why after 1992 co-operation in Europe will not be so smooth, and these reasons not only have salience for Europe, but for regional co-operation schemes world wide.

After 1992 competition amongst rival companies is going to be stiff. Although the community has tried to bolster up the underdeveloped regions of Europe, and has waited for the national economies of the member states to become more

comparable, it will not be enough. In any free trade zone there are going to be winners and losers. Weak countries and weak regions are going to suffer from unemployment and business losses as a result of the increased competition. This is going to lead to resentment and renewed nationalism on the part of the losers. In particular, small businesses are going to find it difficult to compete in an unprotected economic environment. They face the threat of being swallowed up by companies whose headquarters are in the wealthier nations like Germany and France. This will lead to renewed nationalism and people will make demands of their national parliaments, asking them to act to protect national jobs and living standards. If unemployment and business failures occur on a large scale in any one country, then undoubtedly nationalism, prejudice and bigotry are going to reveal themselves on an ever increasing scale. These problems will be compounded by the fact that amongst ordinary people, European identity is weak when compared to national identity. Because of Britain's geographical situation perhaps this perception is more keenly felt; but there is no hiding the fact that most of the decisions that have been taken concerning Europe have been taken with the citizens of the continent not having much of a say. The major European institutions are faceless, they were set up to carry out functional tasks, and they therefore lack persona, or an identity to which people can relate.²⁷

This failure by governments to bring their populace with

them along the European road means that they have stored up some future problems for themselves. In times of prosperity cultural and language barriers can be tolerated and overcome, but in times of recession these differences take on a significance all of their own. It can be argued that it is no accident that as the single European Market approaches racism and fascism are on the increase in Europe.²⁸ It will be tempting for politicians to play the "race card" and blame problems that emerge as a result of economic integration on the presence of too many visible ethnic-minorities. In France the National Front party of Jean-Marie Le Pen is attracting support using this method. In 1992 the British parliament will seek to pass a draconian asylum bill, also pandering to the idea that Europe would be open to a flood of migrants from the developing world, and that this would be a problem. Black people living in Europe are an easy target for disaffected white groups to attack. One hopes that black people do not become the unifying symbol for the disgruntled white peoples of Europe.

So it is evident that under the surface the process of European integration may not be as smooth as some would like to think. As a community it is hoped that class interests will transcend national boundaries and that the lure of profits will make economic and political union a success. In a sense this is rather like the United States, whereby capitalism brought its own sense of cultural identification, unifying a

very diverse society. However one should note that the United States had to experience a civil war before unity was achieved, and even now the melting pot seems to have a lot of lumps in it.²⁹ In Europe the national traditions of the individual states have been around for a rather long time, so I think that the EEC is going to have to perform exceptionally well economically if it is going to transcend the cultural identity gap and the problems that can cause.

So what can an analysis of world regional trends teach Africa? Firstly, it is evident that regional co-operation is difficult to achieve. Nations, ethnic groups, tribes, have historically tended to achieve what they desired by using the methods of conquest and confrontation, rather than co-operation. I would argue that co-operation is not a natural phenomenon. Even in the case of Europe where convergence would appear to be almost inevitable in theory, in practice it is still hard to achieve. Overall there is a proclivity towards failure and dissolution as opposed to successful outcomes.

All however is not gloom and doom. Regional formations amongst nation-states seem to have a better chance of survival if they have a strong common purpose that binds them together. There are always going to be disagreements amongst states, but if they have a strong common purpose they are more likely to overcome individual problems. Without a strong regional identity or common goal, disagreements tend to destroy regional organisations.

Finally the dynamics that have tended to be the reason for an increased interest in regional co-operation tend to leave people out of the equation. Supranational institutions driven by ideological and technological concerns tend to be functional in purpose and undemocratic and bureaucratic in nature. They work on a rational basis but in doing so, the irrational world that gives the institutions their legitimacy is forgotten. Not enough consideration is given to cultural and national identity, irrational though these might be, it is how the majority of people make sense of the world in which they live. This sense of identity that gives meaning to life makes people very reluctant to accept new ideas, particularly ideas that mean that they will have to rethink their identities. This is why nationalism is such a strong force. Most attempts at regional co-operation tend to ignore or try to trample over people's identity, but I do not know of a formation that has done this and been successful in the long term. It is usually the formation that dissolves not the identity of the people. So I would argue that the very important lesson to be learned here, is not to ignore people's feelings and need for an identity, but rather to find ways to harmonize the search for cultural identity within a wider regional grouping. In the long term political and cultural identity are just as vital in making a formation stick together as technological considerations.

Hence although Mazzeo's formulations³⁰ are useful

starting points, on their own they are not enough to bring about successful regional co-operation, particularly in the Third World. That this is indeed the case will become clear as the regional experience in Africa is examined.

The African Experience: Flying in the Face of Ancient Wisdom.

When one talks about co-operation in the African context, the words seem to have a special resonance. The ideals of the Pan-African movement make it seem as if Africa should be the home of co-operation and unity. However as has been argued in the previous chapter, the veneer of Pan-Africanism covered but did not heal the cracks that are apparent in the reality of Africa today.

Africa is the most fragmented continent on the globe in terms of the number of nation-states that occupy its continental surface area. Africa has also, probably, the distinction of being the continent that has had the most regional co-operation schemes. But has it benefited from these? The Third World agenda was important enough to make regional co-operation seem feasible. But outside of the appeal for justice could regional co-operation enable African nations to help themselves? Co-operation has seemingly worked in Europe so why should it not work in Africa?

The debate as to whether regional co-operation as seen in

Europe can be repeated in Africa is based mainly on the neo-classical trade theories of Lipsey and others.³¹ He argues that his customs union theory is only applicable to industrialized countries. Hazelwood on the other hand disagrees with this view, arguing:

"In underdeveloped countries the importance of customs unions rests partly on the larger market they can provide for existing enterprises, but primarily on the stimulus they may give to the creation of new productive capacity particularly in manufacturing industry."³²

Although Hazelwood seems to have a valid argument, the African experience to date seems to have vindicated Lipsey. The European free trade model of co-operation seems to fly in the face of the African reality. Individual African economies generally compete for the same market, they export raw materials and import manufactured goods. There is little that they can actually trade with each other. Tariff barriers and import duties are a main source of revenue for states, so why lower them when the intra-African trade flow is still going to be very weak. Other obstacles that preclude conventional co-operation in Africa, include poor infrastructure particularly in transport and communications, innumerable language and cultural barriers, too many currencies that are worthless outside the country of origin, obstructionist bureaucracies and an unstable political, social and economic environment.³³ All these factors make it very difficult for conventional

trade theory to work in Africa. In fact, given these circumstances conventional trade theory is not even desirable for Africa.

Africa needs co-operation schemes that will meet its own needs and requirements. The needs of the African continent are unique, so second-hand duplicates of other region's models are not going to come close to solving Africa's problems. But what does Africa have at the present time? Are its regional arrangements dynamic? Do they have a strong common purpose? Are they shaping the identity of the continent? Are they addressing the African reality? By analyzing the structures, the goals and the influences, on past and present regional co-operation schemes in Africa it is hoped that some of these questions will be answered.

With the plethora of regional co-operation schemes that Africa has had, it is certainly beyond the scope of this work to draw on the experience of all of them. Rather this work will concentrate on an overarching analysis of the regional phenomenon in Africa, focusing attention on the experience of state to state economic and political regional formations.

The Imposition of Institutions in Africa.

Africa has had a lot of regional co-operation formations, but their proliferation can hardly be due to their

record which has been disappointing to date. Many of them have come and gone without having an appreciable impact on the African continent. If a survey were carried out amongst ordinary Africans to ascertain what impact regional co-operation has had upon their lives, the number of affirmative answers would be few indeed. Regional institutions in Africa, as in many other parts of the world, are far removed from the lives of ordinary people. They tend to be organisations of the few, by the few, for the few. They were set up without the consent of the people. The issues discussed, the solutions proposed, and the very structure of the organisations were all arranged independently of the demands and wishes of the very people that they are supposed to be helping. This is ironic given that the regional constituency is considerably larger than that of national governments. Regional organisations have the potential to at least listen to the needs and requirements of a great number of people, however they have not sought to do this. Rather than being responsible to the people they continue to operate under the weakest of mandates, only their own. The failure to respond to the needs of ordinary people is one of the reasons why regional institutions are failing to deal with some of Africa's pressing problems. Another reason regional institutions have not lived up to expectations in Africa is because of their flawed institutional structure.

The Power Vacuum in African Regional Organisations.

A common characteristic of African regional formations is that they operate with weak secretariats. The national agendas overdetermine the regional agenda and such biases can have detrimental effects, especially when member states have different expectations from co-operation schemes. However a strong independent secretariat in theory can supersede national biases and determine what is best for the region as a whole. In formations like ECOWAS, and the West African Economic Community (CEAO), where free trade within the region is the ultimate goal, treaty provisions are an important part of the formation, but with a weak secretariat who is able to monitor how effective the provisions have been? And even whether all the states are observing the provisions? Treaty provision, particularly when it concerns revenue gains and losses and compensation claims for losses, is a very sensitive issue and formations have broken up because of it. Proper monitoring by the secretariat could certainly resolve this problem.³⁴ Also formations always seem to be plagued with the problem of rivalry between states and accusations of national bias within a region. A strong secretariat that is able to conduct independent research on behalf of its organisation can help solve the problem of bias and the feeling that weaker nations have, that they are not benefiting from belonging to the organisation.

A secretariat that has a positive remit can do a lot to help shape a regional identity. It can outline goals that stem from research findings, it can act as an arbiter between nations that have disputes and it can speak for the region as opposed to being the mouth-piece of one nation. Unfortunately, however, in most regional formations in Africa this just does not happen. Many countries seem unwilling or unable to find the resources to enable a secretariat to function properly. Fundamentally however, the essential problem is that individual nations are unwilling to cede political power to anyone. Power sharing even at the national level in Africa is rare, and this has serious implications at the regional level. A weak secretariat is symptomatic of the existing narrow national power base, to the detriment of regional formations.

The Dysfunctional Role of African Heads of State.

African regional organisations have weak secretariats because heads of state are the uncontested supreme decision-makers. This would not be a problem if there was an established regional agenda that was moving along agreed channels, then the heads of state could just iron out interim problems, and through their personas establish the tone of the formation. However, this is not the case. Leaders tend to be instrumental in the working of a regional formation. Without

their involvement, the formation does not go forward, and with their involvement every decision made becomes a political decision, making it controversial and prone to national bias.³⁵ When the heads of state become heavily involved in a regional formation, whenever problems emerge no matter how small, the organisation inevitably flounders. In the case of the EAC the personal animosity that existed between Nyerere and Amin meant that the supreme decision-making body did not meet for seven years, rendering it virtually defunct.³⁶ In the Customs and Economic Union of Central Africa (UDEAC) it was the heads of state that were making the decisions concerning contributions and compensation. Not surprisingly it was problems over the distribution of benefits that prompted Chad and the Central African Republic to leave the formation in 1968.³⁷

With the heads of state as the supreme decision makers of the African regional formations, it seems that the continent is trapped in a time warp. So many schemes in the Third World that have attempted trade liberalisation as the basis for regional co-operation have failed to work, and the benefits for the individual nation-state have proved to be negligible.³⁸ However rather than learning from past errors the same policies are pursued. One can argue that these policies are being pursued, either because African leaders do not understand what is required to help the African masses or that they have no wish to help them.³⁹ Most of the schemes

that have been in operation since independence mirror Western schemes. Perhaps that desire to emulate the West still drives the African elites toward achieving the impossible dream.⁴⁰ Meanwhile, however, their people languish for want of resources and direction. SADCC can be applauded for learning the lessons from past failures and attempting to devise a system that works and suits their interests.⁴¹ Rather than opting for a trade liberalisation scheme SADCC co-operation is based upon the need to develop the region's resources. Hence each SADCC member has an area that it is responsible for developing, be it transport, mining, agriculture or some other area. The sector for which a country is responsible plays to the strength of that country, giving it an incentive to develop those resources knowing that they will be used throughout the region. The SADCC secretariat is weak, but in this instance it is not to the formation's detriment as the administration and monitoring is carried out at the sector or national level. Due to this administrative decentralization, there is scope for bilateral and trilateral contacts, whereby countries that would not normally co-operate with each other can do so. The decentralized structure also opens up the possibility of greater contact between professionals of different regions as opposed to only the leaders meeting. Hopefully this will nurture a real regional identity. SADCC is not the perfect regional organisation but its importance to Africa should not be underestimated. SADCC is important

because the structure, organisation, and ethos of the organisation is geared to the possible. It is not trying to emulate some faraway scheme that has no relevance to its circumstances. Rather the organisation is a response to the specifics of the Southern African situation and in that sense it is different from most African regional organisations. However apart from SADCC most institutional arrangements in Africa seem to be variations of an EEC theme, but ending up with very un EEC-like results.

The Alien Nature of African Regional Organisations.

The most serious flaw in the institutional set up of regional organisations in Africa is the fact that there is no forum available so that ordinary Africans can put forward their grievances. The organisations are full of high-powered politicians, bureaucrats, and technocrats, but there is no room for inputs from African businessmen and women, or from peasants. Regional institutions were set up to help Africans but Africans somehow find themselves excluded from their own organisations. Regional organisations in Africa have positioned themselves so far above the African reality that they are no longer a part of it. A foreign multinational, or an NGO has better access to regional institutions than do the people. This is a travesty. Even SADCC which is a more

enlightened regional grouping, is not readily accessible to ordinary people. How can people be helped if you do not listen to them? This problem, seemingly inherent in all African regional organisations, makes a mockery of their claims to work on behalf of the African people, as S.K.B. Asante, here writing about ECOWAS, but making a statement whose truth echoes throughout Africa:

"Indeed, ECOWAS can rightly be criticised for not having any popular roots because the personalities and institutions controlling it have little contact or involvement with the man in the street. The whole institutional structure can be described as the "brain child" of the elite, and there is no organ through which interest groups can bridge, as neo-functionalists suggest, the elite-mass gap."⁴²

The scenario that Asante describes⁴³ is a sad one, but the danger is there, that in Africa we are witnessing the proliferation of more and more institutions that are less and less relevant to the people that they were set up to help. And if the institutional set up is far removed from the African reality what does that mean in terms of the objectives, and the concerns of these institutions?

The Motivation and Purpose of Co-operation in Africa.

The ghost of Kwame Nkrumah, seems to haunt the minds of African leaders as they continue to talk about unity in such

hopeful and revered tones.⁴⁴ When one analyses the charters of the various regional groupings in Africa, their motivations and goals are basically the same. All of them advocate the promotion of unity and good relations between states. They seek to reduce dependence on the outside world, and they all want to improve the living standards of their peoples. These aims are laudable, but the success in achieving them is not. In fact most formations are no nearer achieving these goals than when they were first formed. I would argue that the reason for this is because individual nations have stronger motivations of their own that in effect prevent these goals from being realised regionally. It can be argued that the vague goals of many regional formations and the semblance of unity that they portray, hides the real motivation of many states, which is the protection of the national agenda. The proof that this is the case lies in the reasons behind the collapse of many regional formations in Africa. Most formations flounder or collapse because of disagreements over contributions, arguments over benefits, or wrangles concerning proposed industrialization. At the root of all these disagreements, is the fact that one country feels that its national interest is not being served by the arrangement that it is in. Rather than make a sacrifice for the good of the region the country will more than likely leave the formation. In the African and Malagasy Common Organisation (OCAM) a fiscal dispute concerning sugar caused

the withdrawal of Zaire, Madagascar, Cameroon, Chad, Mauritania, and Congo from the sugar accord in 1973, putting a dampener on the whole organisation.⁴⁵ Before the formation of UDEAC, Chad and the Central African Republic wanted to prevent Cameroon from joining their regional groupings, because cheap manufactured products from their more illustrious neighbour would hinder their own industrialization plans. When Cameroon did eventually join UDEAC, continued squabbles over industrialization caused that formation to flounder.⁴⁶ The classic example of competing nationalism destroying a regional formation is that of the East African Community. It is widely recognised that the EAC in terms of its infrastructural development was the best regional scheme that Africa had so far possessed. As Mazzeo states:

"The EAC already incorporated those aspects of regional cooperation that are increasingly attracting the attention of concerned scholars and politicians, namely joint infrastructural development and cooperation in fields related to science and technology."⁴⁷

However even with such an impressive array of joint services, the different leaders of the respective East African countries were not on the same wavelength. Their individual national agendas were just not compatible with the regional framework that was in place. Kenya was pursuing a capitalist development strategy, Tanzania, a socialist strategy,⁴⁸ and Uganda under Amin was in a state of confusion.⁴⁹ Even in a

small formation such as the East African Community these divisions proved too great for it to cope. According to Mazzeo:

"In the case of the EAC, the widening ideological rift between Kenya and Tanzania considerably undermined the spirit of compromise and tolerance, perhaps the most essential political prerequisite for successful cooperation."⁵⁰

The failure of the East African Community, one of Africa's brightest hopes should have had a sobering effect on other prospective formations in Africa, but in many cases it seems that the lessons have not been learned. The ECOWAS formation of West Africa has the potential to be a colossal trading area, being bigger in size than Western Europe. However within that zone you have countries like Nigeria and the Ivory Coast at the richer end of the spectrum, and Mali and Guinea Bissau at the poorer end. In a free trade zone what is good for Nigeria and the Ivory Coast is not necessarily going to benefit Mali and Guinea Bissau. Inevitably divisions on national lines are going to emerge. The richer and more industrialized a country, the better placed it is to exploit the opportunities of a more open market. Conversely the poorer the country the harder it is. These differences are unavoidable consequently in a Third World regional organisation intent on pursuing a free trade policy, tensions are always going to be present. If the machinery for dealing

with these tensions is deficient then it is unlikely that the formation can survive. Despite these inherent problems, regional co-operation based on free trade aspirations is still the most popular form of co-operation in Africa. The countries of the SADCC region have shown a great deal of wisdom by not opting immediately for a free trade form of co-operation. By choosing a system that defers to the national agenda and the strengths of each nation within the region, they have avoided some of the rancour and divisive splits that have affected other formations. However for SADCC and other formations that are seemingly consumed by national priorities, there is the danger that regional co-operation becomes a nominal exercise with no real substance to it.

It is already evident that most regional co-operation charters are quite vague in terms of their agendas, generally demonstrating the absence of a strong desire for the promotion of a regional identity. There is no conscious effort for people to see themselves as part of a region with regional purpose and regional destiny. Without that kind of strong common purpose it is easy to understand why the institutional frameworks of these organisations flounder, when there are disagreements between individual states. Fruitful regional co-operation is very hard to achieve, and so there have to be important reasons for countries to come together and make the regional agenda work. At the rhetorical level, African leaders are beginning to acknowledge that as a continent they are

experiencing problems that could be tackled jointly,⁵¹ but a realistic forward thinking agenda that could solve some of these problems still seems a long way off. As A.T. Mugomba states:

"The very limited success of regional experiments on the continent has been largely due to the absence of a common ideology especially as regards development."⁵²

It can be argued that the success of SADCC can be attributed to its strong common purpose. In many ways the formation, has been an unlikely success. Given its recent history as a Cold War battle ground, the former ideological diversity of its member states, and the poverty and destruction of the region as a result of Apartheid, it is hard to believe that the formation has stayed together.⁵³ But stay together it has. Apartheid which affected them all was the common denominator that provided the impetus for successful co-operation.

OCAM was another regional formation that survived because it had a strong common purpose. This was a conservative formation, plagued by problems resulting in the main from its free trade agenda. However the members had two important things in common, a fear of communism and a fear of Kwame Nkrumah. As R.A. Fredland states:

"It has been observed that not every religion

requires a god, but all religions require a devil. If that be so, OCAM was endowed with the devil of President Kwame Nkrumah in Ghana, and so long as he pursued - or was perceived to pursue - subversion in West Africa there was a rallying point for OCAM. "⁵⁴

History has recorded the demise of Nkrumah and OCAM,

"But the devil manifested in Kwame Nkrumah was real, present, and destructible. So, perhaps the decline of OCAM came about as much as a result of the overthrow of Nkrumah as any other single factor."⁵⁵

From these two examples it is evident that regional formations can survive even under difficult circumstances if the agenda that unites them is strong enough. But if the plight of an underdeveloped continent on the brink of marginalisation in the global political agenda is not strong enough to inspire co-operation, then what is? Perhaps it is not the agenda that is the problem but the conservatism of the African elites. Their narrow agendas are allowing and even encouraging the continent to fall into ruin. With Africa in the predicament that it is in at the moment what can free trade areas seriously achieve? The African reality demands a bolder approach to Africa's problems than that of copying a European experiment that is inappropriate to Africa's circumstances. Yet perhaps the bold approach is beyond the ken of the present and past generations of African leaders. As one of those leaders Julius Nyerere reflects:

"Without question political unity would be the best way of achieving the co-ordinated economic and political action which Africa needs. But the political unity of Africa is not a realistic possibility in the near future. It was unacceptable to the majority of leaders in 1963, and since then African nationalism has grown more stronger and jealous. Even regional political unity has proved very difficult to achieve. The founding fathers of independent Africa - of whom I am one have failed our people in this important respect."⁵⁶

Perhaps the failure of leaders to address the African reality regionally stems from the fact that outside influences seem to have a pervasive and devastating impact on the African soil and mentality. We will go on to explore this hypothesis

The Impact of Outside Influence on Regional Co-operation in Africa.

In the inter-dependent world in which we live, it is foolhardy for countries to think that they can prosper by being cut off from the rest of the world. The world economy is inextricably linked and everyone is influenced by its upsurges and its downturns. However, it can be argued that in the case of regional co-operation in Africa, undue outside influence by different vested interests has had a negative impact on the African continent. Rather than aiding existing arrangements, vested interests have sought to push them in certain directions, in effect set their agendas for them. This has of course hindered the positive work that regional co-operation

schemes could realise for Africa if given the opportunity.

The Convenience of Regionalism.

Increasingly the international community seems to find it more convenient to tackle problems regionally than on a country by country basis. The United Nations is split up into regional sub-sections, the Bretton-Woods institutions operate on a one theory solves all problems basis, even though every country has their own specific arrangement. Aid agencies and NGOs are finding it increasingly more convenient to work with regional formations. And the EEC has conveniently lumped together a large proportion of the world under the Lomé convention.⁵⁷

Africa lacks a strong regional agenda even though it has many institutions. So who benefits from the regional perception? If the predominantly Western multi-lateral institutions were listening organisations responding to the needs of the African regional agenda, then the move towards regional contact can be seen as positive. However I would argue that because there is no clear regional agenda coming out of Africa at present, the move is governed by convenience as much as anything else. From a logistical and financial point of view it makes more sense to have a regional rather than a national standpoint. Particularly if you are dealing

with a region where there are many small countries who are deemed to be unimportant politically, strategically and economically. This idea of regional convenience suits the West but has detrimental consequences for the region involved. They find themselves coming to the table to meet together only to discover that their regional agenda has already been set for them. Nowhere is this relationship more apparent than the one that exists between the EEC and the African Caribbean and Pacific Countries (ACP).⁵⁸ For a regional formation like ECOWAS being tied to the Lomé convention puts a serious dampener on its own development plans. In the first instance the relationship hinders the ECOWAS goal of collective self-reliance, secondly it hinders intra-African attempts at industrialization, and thirdly it seemingly legitimates the neo-colonial relationship whereby Africans remain hewers of wood and carriers of water at the convenience of the West. As S.K.B. Asante has commented.

"the Lomé agreement is at one and the same time a means to preserve certain elements of the old division of labour and a device most in keeping with the changing global distribution of manufacturing production. To this end Lomé is not only neo-colonial in tone but it also perpetuates the client status of Africa."⁵⁹

In this instance undue outside influence perpetuates the uneven relationship that exists between the West and the developing world. The African regional organisations in the

midst of this relationship find themselves struggling to defend existing arrangements when they were set up to fundamentally alter them.

Individual Country Influence on Regional Co-operation.

It is not only supranational institutions that seem intent on unduly influencing the African regional agenda. Individual Western powers are adept at pursuing policies that either undermine the potential of a regional formation, or persuade that formation to make decisions that are beneficial to the individual Western power's interests. Ex-colonial powers, because of their ties with their ex-colonies, are often in a position to manipulate formations in this way. France in particular seems adept at it.⁶⁰ Through the operation of the franc zone it has tied its former colonies to itself. For these countries, their relationship with France is more important to them than their relationship with English speaking African countries. France is able to use its special relationship with its former colonies to prevent close co-operation between English speaking and French speaking states. In West and Central Africa there are exclusively French African regional groupings, that are in conflict with the predominant grouping of the region, the English and French speaking ECOWAS. In exclusively French formations like OCAM

and UDEAC, France actually had part ownership in infrastructural development like the joint OCAM airline. It also had stakes in regional banks. Such power enables it to obtain special deals for French companies operating inside Africa, making a mockery of complicated treaty provisions. It is not only France that indulges in these kinds of manoeuvre, but France illustrates just how difficult it is for Africa to set and follow its own regional agenda.

Western Vision and African Reality.

The final aspect of outside influence that I would like to deal with in this chapter is psychological influence. There is a common tendency amongst individuals and nations to seek to emulate the success of others, and regional co-operation is no exception.

Diaby Aboubakar Ouattara, the executive secretary of ECOWAS in 1981, stated:

"ECOWAS is intentionally emulating the European Economic Community, as the most successful regional economic community so far in operation."⁶¹

Such emulation is fine if the experiment is appropriate to one's needs and circumstances, but if it is not then such experimentation can prove disastrous. EEC-style integration is

not relevant to the African experience at this point in time. So why emulate it?

It can be argued that too many African elites are caught in the grip of Westernization to the detriment of their own people. Influenced by successful Western images and governments the desire for rapid emulation is strong. This leads to grand thinking and big project designs that require huge sums of capital investment for them to be realised. Once a capital intensive project is initiated, it requires capital intensive maintenance, capital intensive support systems, and capital expensive experts, to show how everything should be done. So Western thinking automatically leads to dependency on the West. A formation such as SADCC which was intent on reducing its dependence on South Africa has found itself susceptible to dependence on Western institutions because many of its projects require substantial capital investment to make them work.⁶² Once outside institutions bring their money into the SADCC region they try to influence the SADCC agenda in favour of its concerns. And the more money they put in the more leverage they are likely to have.⁶³

Another problem that emerges from too much unabashed western thinking in Africa, is that in the modern industrial era the thinking has tended to be technical, people are being removed from the work process by machines. Social security and a declining birth rate means that industrialized countries can just about manage this scenario. The same kind of thinking in

Africa however spells death and disaster for millions. Africans need to be brought into the work process, not excluded from it. Technical projects exclude, and ordinary Africans are not likely to benefit from the end result anyway. When an airline is improved or a road is built the poor peasant is not in any position to take advantage of the new infrastructure. The African entrepreneur, who has had no say in the developments, and who is suffering as a result of structural adjustment, is also not in a strong position to take advantage of the new infrastructure. So who benefits? Once again you have a situation whereby regional co-operation that was meant to help people ends up excluding and marginalising them from the development process. The Western agenda signifies no agenda for the ordinary African, because big infrastructural developments and monumental free trade zones are far removed from the individual's own experience.

If the same thinking and action that pervades regional co-operation in Africa at present continues unabated then the future is not hopeful. As Kwame Nkrumah warned:

"Regional groupings, specially when based purely on economic co-operation in areas which are already dominated by neo-colonial interests retard rather than promote the development process."⁶⁴

The West still seems to be a thorn in the flesh of Africa. No matter how one would like to move away from the idea of responding to Western actions and designs, it does not seem

possible. Why is this? This question and other issues concerning the West and its relationship with peoples of African origin will be explored more fully in the next chapter.

If Pan-Africanism can be described as the visionary architectural design for the future of Africa, then regional co-operation is where the builders with the cement, nuts and bolts turn that vision into reality. In that sense regional co-operation is vital to the future of Africa. However, co-operation EEC-style is no co-operation at all for Africa. It has not brought any more benefits, and the arguments that it causes between states harms the whole process of unity.

I would argue that regional co-operation in Africa needs to come down a little before it can go up. The plan of Pan-Africanism needs to be revised so that it fits the conditions, and regional institutions are in the position to know what those conditions are. Regional institutions need to incorporate and not exclude, listen rather than impose. They need to reflect the culture of the continent in order to be able to change it. This is the challenge that confronts regional co-operation in Africa and only time will tell if it is successful.

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Chapter 4.

The Diaspora Dilemma and the Western Perception of the African Crisis.

Thus far it has been argued that there is a need to separate the African diasporan's quest for identity from that of the continental African's quest for a sustainable lifestyle. In chapter two it was argued that the former quest undermines the latter with detrimental consequences for the vast majority of African people. This is an accurate statement, but for the diasporan intellectual one problematic still remains. Although his image of Africa might be irrelevant to the continent it is still relevant to him. Notions of self-esteem and combatting racism are linked inextricably to positive images of the African continent and conversely the opposite is true. Constant negative perceptions of Africa and African people attack the self-esteem of the African diasporan intellectual. Living in the West the images of Africa that confront the diaspora are of course Western images. When these images portray Africans in a negative light, depicting them as solely the victims of famine, civil strife and corruption, then the diasporan intellectual feels himself to be under attack. As a black individual living in the West he is merely a savage in a suit, only one step away from the Africa that he experiences

on the television screen. Hence there then emerges the need to become involved to restore his own self dignity by questioning the perceptions, assumptions, and prejudices of the Western media image of African people and by association all those of African descent.

The Western Perception of the African Crises.

In recent years there has been a marked increase in the number of works focusing on the crisis in Africa. Like the prophets of the Old Testament, writers have been warning the world that Africa faces environmental, political and economic catastrophe in the not too distant future.¹

If sheer volume of work were a reliable indicator of the seriousness of Africa's situation then the continent would be doomed already, such is the desire to proclaim the woes of Africa to the world.² It is evident that the fifty-one states of the African continent are grappling with serious problems at the present time,³ but are these problems tantamount to a crisis of existence for Africa? Is it possible for over five thousand years of history, culture, and stored wisdom to be wiped away by the more recent traumas that the continent has experienced? That is not to argue that Africa was the perfect place before it came into contact with Europeans. Certainly Africa has had more than its fair share of human,

environmental and economic disasters throughout history. However, it is one thing to acknowledge that Africa has problems but it is another thing to understand from the current situation that somehow Africans are deficient as people, that they have always been unable to feed themselves, and that their whole historical experience is one of lurching from crisis to crisis unable to do anything about their situation. I find this scenario to be outlandish to say the least, but it is rapidly gaining credence again. As more and more stories emerge from Africa that focus on famine, civil strife, and disease, it seems that the African individual is under attack. Constantly the victim of events, readily portrayed as somehow incapable, the Western media image of Africa and Africans undermines human dignity and distorts the pressing problems that the continent faces.⁴

It is tragic that Africa, the cradle of humanity, and perhaps the most abused continent in human history, is the only place written about and analyzed in such a theatrical manner. In the previous chapters it has been pointed out that Africa seems to lack direction. Garvey urged Africans to have vision, Fanon stated that lack of ideology in Africa presented a bigger problem to the continent than the legacy of colonialism.⁵ Our analysis of regional co-operation in Africa revealed a marked lack of vision on the part of the higher echelons of the African political strata. And now as we approach the twenty-first century it is becoming increasingly

apparent that this lack of a positive African agenda is costing the continent dear.

The Pan-Africanists of yesteryear deemed it important that Africans be a people with a vision. The double nightmare of slavery and colonialism had severely undermined African dignity and self-worth, and so the Pan-Africanists dedicated their lives to restoring African self-confidence. A great deal of what is considered to be African political thought stemmed from an attempt to alter the West's perception of Africa and Africans and to create an alternative African vision. Unfortunately in attempting this, the African's perception of his own reality altered.

One question that was not considered in an earlier chapter, was what impact did the Pan-African movement have on the Western perception? This is the issue to be addressed in this chapter. It is apparent that in spite of early Pan-African efforts, in spite of the presence of black people all over the world, the Western perception of Africa still needs altering. Africa is in a crisis, and Africans should recognise that they are partially responsible for it. However, the West is also responsible in part for the current situation, yet seemingly it seems that it has forgotten the role that it has played in bringing about the current situation. It is apparent that it is easier to recall an image of the African as a primitive being living in a hostile environment. Harder though to recall is the fact that since the beginning of the

independence process in Africa, thirty-five years of mainly Western knowledge, technology, ideas and assumptions have failed to make a positive impact on the African reality. The common Western perception of Africa plays down Western involvement in the African crisis, yet to the discerning mind certain aspects of the Western development debacle reveal as much about the West and the limitations of trying to export "development" regardless of circumstances, as it does about the real problems of Africa.

From the Conflictual to the Apathetic: The Rise of the "Inevitable African Crisis" Syndrome.

The prospects for Sub-Saharan Africa in the nineties are deemed to be very bleak. With an estimated twenty seven million people starving; a brain drain of at least one hundred thousand qualified people; a debt burden of two hundred and seventy billion dollars;⁶ and individual states torn apart by war and internal strife, the 1980s has been regarded as the lost decade. In the 1990s people are rapidly losing hope that Africa will ever turn around! This loss of hope is increasingly being reflected in the rhetoric that is used to describe the current situation. At the end of the United Nations review of the special Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development (UN-PAAERD) held in

September 1991, Javier Perez de Cuellar, the then Secretary General of the United Nations, stated that

"Africa faces an unrelenting crisis of tragic proportions."⁷

As stated the eighties have been proclaimed as the lost decade of African development, and now with the Cold War over and Africa's strategic position of minimal importance in the new world order, Africa's future is not looking any brighter than its recent uninspiring past. Such is the general belief that nothing can be done in Africa except manage the crisis that the United States and Great Britain have been vetoing new UN initiatives for Africa, claiming that they are a waste of money.⁸

Prominent Africans also seem in tune with the current mood of pessimism in the continent. At the forum on Security, Stability, Development and Cooperation in Africa held in Kampala in May 1991 (CSDDCA), General Olusegun Obasanjo the former Nigerian head of state commented:

"Africa and the majority of its people bear the sad status of being historically the most exploited, the most dependent, the most vulnerable, and now increasingly, the most internationally isolated, marginalised, and the least well governed."⁹

If one analyses the recent assessments of Africa that stem from the media, academia, financial institutions and aid

agencies, a language and an ethos is emerging that exudes pathos and tragedy in the extreme. Cyclical famine, environmental crisis, political instability, donor fatigue, are the words that are synonymous with the continent in the public mind. The rise in crisis rhetoric seems to indicate that the West is growing weary of the African problem. Rather than seeing Africa's dilemmas as problems that have solutions, slowly but surely they are being viewed as intractable, and endemic to the African continent. This is a remarkable turnaround. Thirty years ago Africa's prospects were deemed to be very bright,¹⁰ but now no-one has anything positive to say about Africa's future. Africa has gone from being a vast land with abundant potential to the dying continent. This change of tone has occurred in such a comparatively short space of time, that it gives the African situation an almost imaginary quality. How does one go from being a potential super-power, to a non-entity in thirty odd years? With hindsight it is evident that the early post-independence assessments of Africa's future prospects were naive and fanciful. If one seriously analyzed the reality of Africa before and after the independence process had started, then given the unique historical circumstances of Africa's development was not the African crisis of the nineties to be foreseen? Given those circumstances might not the situation for Africa today have been even worse?

The fact that Africa is going through a rough time at the

moment is not in question but the fact that this scenario comes as a surprise to many people is itself surprising. Shock, horror responses to Africa's current plight, or a belief in its endemic nature ignores the concrete historical circumstances that have made the current situation so unfortunately all too possible. Whether out of sinister motivation or just plain naivety, the historical processes that have led to the current situation in Africa are being edged out of the picture when the current African crisis is discussed. The West, rather than accept responsibility for its past actions or acknowledge present failings in tackling the African reality, has seemingly reverted back to the tried and trusted racist notion of the endemic African crisis to explain the present situation.

The African Reality and the Common Western Perception.

According to Wallerstein, the first phase of Africa's incorporation into the World Capitalist System can be traced to around 1750, when the slave trade was at its high point.¹¹ Wallerstein's deterministic and somewhat sterile approach to Africa's incorporation into the system, and its subsequent peripheralization determines dates, yet at the same time it seems to miss the point entirely. The point being that the slave trade was a real physical event, not an abstraction. It

was three hundred years of one of the most systematic brutalizations of man by man that has taken place in the history of the world.¹² Its impact on the social, political and economic structures of various African societies was immense, not to mention its impact on the then industrializing nations of the world.¹³ The devastation and suffering caused by the wanton indiscriminate trade in human beings cannot be measured, the legacy of the slave trade must in some way account for the current African crisis, such must have been the debilitating effects of having millions of people removed from the continent. The social fabric of those societies would have been undermined for generations, yet all this is strangely absent from the current African crisis debate. The West which continually basks in the glory of its past achievements, has curiously forgotten the effects of a cataclysmic event which was still very much in evidence less than two hundred years ago.

Slavery was a concrete historical reality that has a direct bearing on the African crisis of today. Another scar on the face of humanity that affects Africa today is colonialism. The Scramble for Africa, the occupation, balkanisation and dehumanization that followed in the name of progress was a negative event in the history of the continent.¹⁴ Colonialism affected every facet of African life. It affected how Africans related to their environment, how they understood the world around them, how they fed themselves, and how they perceived

their future as human beings. As Ajayi and Alagoa argue, the colonialists deliberately attempted to undermine the African reality:

"They tried to ignore, if not abolish, the African historical tradition, to cut the African away from his past, and to deny that the past was relevant to his present or future. In this way they struck at the core of the religion that gave him self-confidence and the philosophy that helped him maintain a balanced relationship with his internal and external impulses. This attempt to cut the African adrift from his historical experience and in effect to undermine his humanity was the most upsetting feature of European colonialism."¹⁵

Africa's current debt is a drop in the ocean when compared to what Europe put Africa through in the name of progress. A decent society would hopefully admit its culpability in such an affair and seek to redress its wrongdoing, but for Europe the opposite is the case. It has proceeded to underdevelop Africa and now wants to abandon it. As George Padmore states:

"The black man certainly has to pay dear for carrying the white man's burden."¹⁶

Colonialism was a concrete experience that has a significant bearing on the Africa that we seek to understand today. Yet if one were to read the newspaper, analyze the television coverage of Africa it would not be mentioned. One could be forgiven for believing that Africa had never been

invaded by Europeans, but that all of the continent's problems are due to fate or acts of god.

The third historical phenomenon that I would like to analyze in relation to the African crisis of today is independence and the process of state formation in Africa. State formation on the European model is a relatively new phenomenon in Africa. Ghana, the first country to become independent in Sub-Saharan Africa, has been attempting it for just over thirty years, whereas Namibia the newest independent country in Africa is still in nappies with merely two years experience. In Europe the process of state formation began in the seventeenth century with:

"the modern phase in European history, which roughly started with the peace of Westphalia (1648). This was the era of state formation and nation building, during which development became a national interest, even an imperative."¹⁷

The process of state formation is different in different epochs, and so comparing the process across eras can only be of limited value. However, one can say that in the modern era, Europe in its various guises has been attempting the process for over three hundred years, whereas the oldest post-colonial African state has been attempting it for just over thirty years, in very different circumstances.

Those circumstances were in general so difficult that it is amazing that those states still exist today. The boundaries

of the states were artificially created, there was a conspicuous lack of skilled personnel to run the state machinery, and a lack of historical precedent and experience as to how to operate a state. The boundaries were filled with burgeoning and diverse populations, the economies were not geared towards productive internal development and the list of problems goes on and on. The new governments were learning as they went along and for the most part they are still learning today. Plenty of mistakes have been made, but with hindsight one could easily predict that these states had little chance of being successful in the short term. The states were not prepackaged at the supermarket and neither were the leaders. State formation in Africa was the result of distinct historical processes that realistic observers would say had failure and dissolution written all over it.¹⁸ Harsh as it may be, the reality of Africa at independence was a continent of non-viable artificial entities, run by a few inadequately trained graduates, teachers and lawyers, dealing with a poor and socio-culturally diverse population.¹⁹ This was the colonial inheritance, and from this situation it is not a big leap to explain the African crisis of today.

Of course, not all of the historical phenomenon that can account for the current African crisis were the result of external forces. African people like any other people are a diverse group of actors. What they do in their own environment has an impact on that environment and as such Africans have to

take responsibility for the problems that exist within their continent.

It can be argued that one of the reasons why Africa is in trouble today is because many pre-colonial societies were too parochial in outlook and as such were slow to adapt to a fast changing world environment.²⁰ The social structures, religion and culture of the people suited the environment in which they lived, but the old ways were not going to be able to cope with the startling developments that were taking place in Western Europe. In Europe technological development began to rapidly alter the way in which man related to his environment, enabling the West to dominate the world that we live in today. African people seemingly preferring trading to innovation, and selling resources, as opposed to developing them, have languished in the technological stakes, and have coped less well with the movement from traditional societies to modern ones which has been one of the key features of development over the past two hundred years or more. Internal wars and political struggles that displaced many peoples and made the colonialist's task easier can also account for the African crisis,²¹ as can more recently the wanton irresponsibility of many of Africa's post-independence leaders who have sadly let their people down.²²

Africa is in trouble at the present time. Slavery, colonialism, artificial independence, not too mention other numerous shocks along the way, have seriously dented the

African resilience but thankfully not destroyed it. The contrast between the serious nature of the African reality and the Western perception is subtle but striking. Slowly but surely problems that were observable phenomena, rooted in historical circumstance, with external and internal factors logically explaining why they occurred, are almost imperceptibly becoming problems with no rational basis other than that they are endemic to Africa. This change in attitude toward Africa stems from the influence of the common Western perception.

The West and the notion of Endemic African Crisis.

The power of the image be it photographic or televised is such that when one thinks of famine, one immediately thinks of starving people in Africa. What is forgotten is that the other major continents of the world have suffered from famine at some stage in their histories, and that for the overwhelming period of their existence Africans have been able to sustain themselves more than adequately. However, such is the power of the Western image that it is now almost a question of what you see is what you get, in that one sees famine in Africa and so famine is labelled as an African problem. It is regarded as endemic due to the climate, poor soil, and bad farming practices of the African farmer. The concrete traumas of war, civil strife and state led repression which are features of

the famines in Mozambique, Ethiopia and Sudan,²³ are quietly being ignored in favour of the African problem approach, which crudely speaking sees these problems as naturally occurring phenomena.

War and internal strife are serious phenomenon that deserve serious analysis. Africa's artificial borders containing numerous ethnic groups are more than likely to suffer from internal strife. This is an African reality, yet in the West, the dominant perception emerging is that ethnic tension in Africa is an endemic phenomenon. The terminology that is creeping into normalised usage such as "black-on-black" violence suggest no political, economic, or social motive for the violence that takes place between rival groups who happen to be black, the impression one gets is that it is something that blacks do and it is not controllable. If one contrasts the framework within which the Liberian civil war was perceived to that of the Yugoslavian civil war, one easily gets the impression that the Yugoslav conflict is a rational event given the historical circumstances whereas the Liberian conflict was sheer black madness. One would not say that the Yugoslavian conflict was white-on-white violence, but the Western perception of the African situation is such that racist impressions can become acceptable analysis.

The clearest indication that the West and the notion of endemic African crisis is overtaking rational analysis is the AIDS phenomenon. One of the striking features of the AIDS

phenomenon is the difficulty one has in obtaining quantifiable data. This is not surprising given the nature of the disease, and secondly because of the different taboos that surround the whole idea of sex that seems to exist in all societies. One thing is clear and that is AIDS is a world-wide phenomenon, anyone can get it. After that, however, facts are few and perception begins to play a major role. Already two of the major perceptions concerning AIDS are to do with Africa. Firstly AIDS originated in Africa and secondly it has reached epidemic proportions there. Now it is not the task of this thesis to verify or deny these two statements but just to make a couple of observations. Firstly given the underdeveloped state of Africa, and the consequent lack of research materials, quantifiable data on any subject concerning the African continent has to be taken with a strong degree of caution. Population statistics on Africa are crude estimations so how accurate are AIDS estimates going to be? Secondly given that the HIV virus takes a long time to make its presence known in an individual, without universal testing no-one knows what the true extent of the disease is. So in such a confused climate why have even scientists and health workers singled out Africa? Is AIDS in Africa a unique phenomenon? Do Africans get different symptoms from the rest of the world? The simple answer is no. It is evident that the AIDS phenomenon and how it is perceived in Africa is symptomatic of a deeper affliction, one that negates over five thousand years of

stimulating, vibrant, real life experience and sees Africa and Africans as a monolithic mass of poverty-stricken victims who do not live as normal humans but merely exist from crisis to crisis. We do not deny that Africa has problems. Africa has a debt problem, a food self-sufficiency problem, a political instability problem, and a health and welfare problem amongst others. However these are observable phenomenon, with clear vision and some decisive decision making these problems could eventually be overcome. At present however, the common and dominant impression of Africa that exists in the West at present is that this is natural for Africa and these problems are terminal, endemic and threaten existence. Yet if one puts Africa's problems into perspective, does it really amount to an endemic, terminal, crisis scenario?

Africa's debt for instance. It's a small debt by world standards and four-fifths of it are owed to governments.²⁴ At the drop of a hat they could agree to cancel it and one African problem would no longer exist. One cannot say that governments do not indulge in that kind of debt forgiveness, because after the gulf war, Egypt, by far the biggest debtor nation in Africa, had large proportions of its debt forgiven and recently the United States government cancelled seventy percent of Poland's foreign debt.²⁵ These two states had their debts forgiven solely because it suited the United States' interests. In this light it is evident that Africa does not have a debt problem, Africa has a credibility problem. It is

just not important enough as a balkanised region to warrant special treatment. If two hundred and seventy billion dollars accumulated debt for a whole continent is a crisis, then the dictionary has no terminology that can accurately describe the more than three-trillion dollar deficit of one country, the United States of America.

Of course Africa has a food problem, the origins of which can be traced back to the colonial period.²⁶ At its most extreme Africa's food problem manifests itself in the form of famine, starvation and death. Putting the food problem into perspective is not easy because it is a complex issue that requires indepth analysis.²⁷ However, one can observe that in the world of international trade where everything is available at a price, it is not necessary to be self-sufficient in food production. Switzerland and Australia amongst others have successful economies and they are not self sufficient in food. There is so much over-production going on in the West that famine due to lack of food is not really an issue. There is enough food to feed all the people of the world comfortably. So what is the food crisis? Low commodity pricing is a problem for Africa; increasing food aid is a problem for Africa; cheap subsidized food imports are a problem; low prices paid to African farmers are a problem. If all these issues were being tackled seriously then one would not have to write about the food crisis in Africa.²⁸

As for Africa's other problems, political instability,

poverty, and lack of health and welfare, these problems exist all over the world in rich and poor countries alike. To lump them all together and regard it as an endemic intractable African crisis is somewhat perverse. If these problems exist in other parts of the world, and are solvable, then they can be solved in Africa. It is as simple as that. In a world where humans can readily fly into space and where movie budgets are more than the gross domestic products, of some countries, to say that there is little more one can do for Africa is nonsense. Yet this is the common perception of Africa that exists in the West at the present time. Through the image of the starving child, the haggard refugee, the young gunman who does not know why he is fighting, Africa and by association people of African descent are seen as the constant intractable problem. These images are enduring and they become reference points for the way everyone in the West sees Africa. As Barker in a chapter aptly titled "Beyond the images of crisis," states:

"Whatever our knowledge of the African reality, media images have become implicit reference points for the way in which all of us including many Africans, think about Africa's hard times. The images oversimplify and distort reality. By promoting misleading presuppositions they obstruct accurate perception and clear thinking." ²⁹

Defining the Common Western Perception.

At this stage it should be made clear that I use the term Western Perception to describe an attitude towards Africa that currently pervades Western culture. Individuals, or agencies, that carry out their work on Africa within the Western sphere of influence might virulently disagree with how I characterise the Western perception, particularly if they are deemed to be part and parcel of what is a negative conception of the West and its values. However, a common perception by its very nature is made up of an accumulation of generalized knowledge to which one is exposed. Hence this characterization of the West does not attempt to take into account all the divergent thinking that goes on within the Western sphere, rather it is the duty of the thesis to focus on the dominant attitudes that stem from the West because they have the most impact on Western society and how that society views Africa and those of African descent. With that stated, it is argued that the Western perception of Africa is characterized by three traits.

1. A short-sightedness in thought and action concerning the African continent, a belief that five years work, or one big idea should reap one hundred years worth of results.

2. Racism, a belief in the superiority of its own ideas and values, for no other reason than the fact that they are one's

own and are somehow therefore better than anyone else's ideas or values.

3. The inability to fully understand the specific nature of one's own past development and the future of that development, with the corollary being that one lacks the ability to fully understand the development process in other societies, and the good ideas of one's own development that can be transposed to the African environment.

Later it will be analyzed how the characteristics of the Western perception have affected development theory and development strategy in relation to Africa, but firstly it will be surmised what the common Western perception could mean for Africa.

The Stripping Away of Human Dignity.

It can be argued that the Western perception of the African crisis has the potential to do devastating harm to the future development prospects of Africa. Given Africa's weak position in the world economy, it is heavily dependent on the West for its future well being. Tied to the West economically means that Africa is also tied to Western ideas, and strategies for development and Western perceptions concerning

the future of the continent. This is a dangerous relationship for Africa given that if the West deems that Africa is in a crisis then Africa is in a crisis. If the West deems that Africans are somehow deficient, then it is hard to contradict these erroneous notions. Researchers paid by Western agencies will carry out crisis-orientated research. Planners working on plans, formulate crisis-orientated plans, academics influenced by the results write about the crisis and the process replicates itself. Long term thinking and planning is abandoned and Africa stays still, as everyone in the West adopts the crisis mentality. Eventually these perceptions leak into African society, into the minds of the leaders and the future generations. The people constantly being perceived to be victims in their own environment increasingly mirror the perception that people have of them, and become victims in their own environment. They have problems but a continued crisis scenario saps their energy and will-power to do anything about them. Hope turns to disillusionment, potential reverts to stagnation, and what was a short bad patch in the history of a great continent, develops into a revolving cycle of crisis. Young Africans grow up with no sense of history, no sense of value in themselves, all they know is crisis and once the cycle is set in motion, it is very hard to break. Memmi, in The Colonizer And The Colonized highlights the psychological effects of this scenario very well. He states:

"Is he not partially right?" he mutters. "Are we not all a little guilty after all? Lazy, because we have so many idlers? Timid, because we let ourselves be oppressed." Wilfully created and spread by the colonizer, this mythical and degrading portrait ends up by being accepted and lived with to a certain extent by the colonized. It thus acquires a certain amount of reality and contributes to the true portrait of the colonized."³⁰

This is the danger for Africa. The Western perception will become an African reality and no-one will be prepared to look beyond the crisis scenario. Already Africa's past is being surgically removed from its present. Egypt, one of Africa's great civilisations, is increasingly being seen as a triumph of the Middle East rather than of Africa. The Maghreb is increasingly seen as Middle Eastern as opposed to African. A society that has been cut off from its past will have a problem in carving out its future, because it has no reference point, no fountain of experience from which to draw. The notion of an endemic African crisis distinctly denies Africa a history, and so by its nature it denies Africa a future, hence it must not be allowed to dominate the African agenda. Perceptions of Africa are required that recognise the problems that the continent faces but which do not use the fact that there are problems to undermine the dignity of African people and under-emphasize their humanity.

The Influence of the Western Perception on Development Theory.

Paradigms or Parodies?

The common Western perception of Africa as characterized by its short-sightedness, racism and inability to fully understand development, has itself influenced the development of development theory. Thirty years is a very short space of time in the history of the African continent, yet already many different theories concerning the what, how and why of Africa's development have emerged. In this work we will focus on the three main approaches namely; Modernization theory, Dependency theory, and the more recent alternatives collectively referred to as Another or Sustainable Development.

Given that the conscious study of development is a relatively new subject, it is somewhat inevitable to expect that there would be a rush of ideas on what development is and how it should be carried out. And perhaps it was inevitable that many of these ideas would be incomplete and naive, given the freshness of the subject, and the fact that there were no clear lines of approach. So to a degree, the rise in the number of ideas concerning African and Third World development in general can be traced to the newness of the subject. What is disturbing about the development of development theory however, is the fact that the naivety and incompleteness of

the approaches was never acknowledged. Theorists proclaimed their ideas on development as if they were cast iron certainties that had to be adopted. If a Third World country wanted to develop, all it had to do was adopt the latest ideas of the development experts. It can be argued that such arrogance on the part of many academics and planners could hardly stem solely from the brilliance of their ideas. As many of these cast iron certainties have been shown to be suspect when put to the test of real life. As Robert Chambers states ironically but most accurately:

"It is alarming how wrong we were, and sure we that we were right."³¹

The fact that renowned scholars from all over the world have made glaring miscalculations concerning the nature of Third World development means that the problem one is dealing with is rather more than a problem over statistics or method of analysis. I would argue that the mistakes that have been made in the development of development theory do in part stem from influence of the common Western perception. For in the common perception of Africa, the basic human dignity of the black individual is constantly under-emphasised. One is never solely a human being but one is a poor human, a destitute human, a war-torn victim of a human. You do not live in your own right, your circumstances have marked out the nature of your humanity. This attitude toward mainly Third World peoples

leaks its way into the work of development theorists, whereby one has a situation where Western intellectuals instruct the people of the Third World how to live. It is irrelevant that they have been doing it for thousands of years, the Third World has not reached the status of being fully human as yet and therefore instruction is necessary.

The Impact of the Western Perception on the Modernization Paradigm.

With the benefit of hindsight, it can be maintained that the Modernization paradigm was a child of post Second World War confidence. Although it was rooted in the classical evolutionary tradition of social science as espoused by Durkheim and Spencer, it was the emergence of the United States as an economic and military superpower that gave the theory its character and early potency as a development strategy.

It is not within the scope of this work to deeply probe the ins and outs of Hozelitz's pattern variables³² or analyze the flight pattern of Rostow's take off.³³ Rather the task at hand is to show how the common Western perception influences the paradigm's ability to critically analyze and assess the complex variety of needs, wants, and wishes of the African people.

Hettne in his work Development Theory in Transition, neatly describes the essential characteristics of the Modernization paradigm.

"Development was seen in an evolutionary perspective, and the state of underdevelopment defined in terms of observable differences between rich and poor countries. Development implied the bridging of these gaps by means of an imitative process in which the less developed countries gradually assumed the qualities of the industrialized nation."³⁴

Modernization theory was shortsighted in its outlook on world development. The influence of the Western perception is clear, in that the protagonists of the theory looked no further than the United States for the perfect development model, justifying completely the existing world status quo. No real thought was given to the unique historical processes that led to a United States of America, and more importantly the histories of the newly independent states were ignored. Implicit in this is the racism of the Western perception that negates the input of other countries ideas, history and cultures. It was believed that imitation of the US would lead to successful development, so an analysis of other societies could only lead to the conclusion that they needed to follow the strategies that had made the US great. The problems lay in those other countries but the solutions could only be found in the US.³⁵ However, the prognosis of what made the United States the most powerful nation on earth was flawed because of

the arrogance that stems from the common Western perception. There was no mention of the abundance of raw materials and land that were at the new immigrants disposal. No mention was made of the near genocide of the North American Indian, of slavery and of forced labour upon which the foundations of the nation were built. All one can gather is that certain subjective pattern variables were responsible for the United State's rise to greatness. Yet as Gunder Frank demonstrated the pattern variables that the Modernization theorists valued so highly were to be found in the so called undeveloped nations as well as the developed.³⁶ It is evident that the early Modernization protagonists did not fully understand the development process in the country that they were eulogizing, yet they had the audacity to palm off these processes as universal truths³⁷. A closer analysis of the history and experience of the US as assessed by later scholars would have revealed that the United States of America was a unique rather than universal model of development.³⁸

That is not to say that there are not any good ideas contained in the Modernization paradigm, on the contrary it has been shown that peoples' attitudes towards life and society can act as either a driving force for, or a hinderance against development. Weber's classic study is a strong case for this argument.³⁹

Weber's study was historically and country specific, most of the Modernization paradigm is unfortunately not so well

grounded. So influenced by the common Western perception is the Modernization position, that its good ideas are negated. The Third World represents more than two-thirds of the world's population, yet through the Modernization paradigm one gets the impression, that two-thirds of the world's population are abnormal and the fortunate few who reside in the West represent normality or what the rest of the world should aspire to.⁴⁰ It can be maintained that a theory that was influenced more by the dignity and variety of the whole human experience rather than by the technological and material success of a small part of the world, could not leave one with such a negative impression of the vast majority of the peoples of the world. The Modernization paradigm however, does not appear to be concerned how the Third World lives, rather only how it should live. This notion accurately reflects the biases of the Western perception.

The Impact of the Common Western Perception on the Dependency Theory.

The beginnings of the Dependency approach, partly stem from a dissatisfaction with the Modernization paradigm, but also from the realization that Latin America was a great continent that was not utilizing its potential through no fault of its own.⁴¹ As a theory whose origins were in the

Third World, it attacked many of the Western assumptions of development and sought to redefine how development should be analyzed so that it reflected the reality of the Third World situation. Interestingly, however, it can be seen that rather like the Pan-Africanists discussed in an earlier chapter, the Dependency theorists attacked the Western perception but in so doing their grasp of the Third World reality was significantly weakened. Their framework for analysis and their terms of reference were influenced by the Western perception more than they would care to recognise. At the very time that they were trying to break free from the Western perception was the time when its influence affected their perception of the Third World reality and for the purposes of our study, the African reality.

Dependency theory was shortsighted in much the same way as the Modernization paradigm. The only difference being that the Dependency theorists came at the problem of development from another angle. Whereas the Modernization theorists viewed the problem of lack of development as being an internal problem of the countries involved, Dependency theory simply took the opposite view, and blamed the lack of development on external factors. This was a useful departure from the comfortable assumptions of the Modernization paradigm, but the one dimensional approach and the abstract theorizing, coupled with the simplistic solutions to the problems identified⁴² shows traces of the common Western perception influencing the

theory.

To argue that a predominantly Third World theory of development has racist overtones seems rather strange, but one can see the traits within the Dependency approach to development. Racism is primarily a power relationship, whereby one group in a society will use arbitrary differences that exist between people to justify oppression, subjugation, or simply deny access to power to another group. Dependency theory can rightly be accused of racism in that it strips people of power. The Western perception ignores the view of the Third World deeming it irrelevant, and unfortunately the Dependency approach does something similar albeit for different motives. In the Dependency theory one gets the strong impression that the destiny of the millions upon millions of people that live in the Third World is not in their own hands but in the hands of outsiders. The people of the Third World are victims in their own environment, they can have no self-worth or dignity because they are unable to alter their own surroundings. In fact they might as well not exist as free individuals, because it is the metropole that determines the nature of their existence.

This of course is only partially true. The Third World and Africa are constrained yes, but impotent certainly not. Nations and individuals have the capacity within the constraints to make choices that will affect their development. Dependency with its centres and peripheries

denies people the opportunity to be actors in their own environment. It is tantamount to labelling them as incapable, incompetents. As one Indian commentator talking

about the psychological impact of the dependency theory states:

"There can be no greater slur inflicted on our capabilities: we are nincompoops, we are unable to ensure a local supply of exploiters, the process of exploitation had to be initiated elsewhere This itself is neo-colonialism of a sort."⁴³

The Dependency theorists solution to the problem of underdevelopment was for poor countries to delink from the World economy, or for there to be world-wide socialist revolution. These solutions offered to complex problems is evidence of the fact that how people lived from day to day, and survived under difficult circumstances does not come over as the prime concern of this theory. It is apparent that the justification of an ideological position was more important than seeking a dignified existence for the majority of Third World peoples. For many African states delinking from the world economy would be suicidal, the circumstances that brought these states into being were such that they were not viable unless they maintained links with the West. As far as other states are concerned it is pure speculation as to whether delinking would make any difference to their development prospects. There may have been a whole host of

internal factors that would have hindered development anyway.

It is interesting to note that despite offering radically different prescriptions to the problems of development the Dependency perspective and the Modernization paradigm have some similar characteristics. Both theories are one dimensional, focusing only on internal or external factors. Both are rather abstract: concepts, paradigms, and diagrams abound, in order to explain very real concrete experiences. Finally both theories are heavily influenced by a desire to see a specific kind of development in operation. For the Modernization paradigm this meant North American-style capitalism, and for the Dependency theory it generally meant socialism. The fact that two such contrasting development theories share certain characteristics can in part be attributed to the influence of the common Western perception.⁴⁴ In general both theories regard themselves as universal in application. To be able to be so bold in determining the future of two-thirds of the world, with the added knowledge that the practical application of the theoretical findings could be the difference between life and death for many, signifies one of two things. Either that one is supremely confident in one's ideas. Or that one can push for one's own agenda irrespective of reality. Because the Third World individual has been under-emphasized so much in the eyes of the common Western perception, one can argue that theory and humanity have become almost equal components of the

development equation.

The Impact of the Common Western perception on Another Development.

The host of new approaches to development that have emerged in recent years, such as the Basic Needs, Sustainable Development, Green Revolution, have conveniently been put together and classified as Another Development. Hettne describes these approaches as normative in that they seek to show how development should be as opposed to how it is.⁴⁵

It can be argued that the growing popularity of Another Development reflects the breakdown of old certainties. Communism being one old certainty and that the rapacious exploitation of the world's resources can go on forever, being the other. Contained in these new approaches are a lot of useful ideas and ways of thinking that could benefit Africa immensely. These approaches are concerned about people and the preservation of indigenous cultures, they tend to focus on reality and not the abstract, and this makes them different from the earlier development approaches that have been analyzed. However even though they are different they are still not immune from the influence of the common Western perception. The common Western perception does affect Another

Development, influencing how African people are perceived and treated within the framework of its emerging ideology.

Two themes that resonate through Another Development approaches are democracy and the environment. Although both these issues need addressing within Africa, it is fair to say that both these issues are major Western concerns. Democracy is the pride and joy of Western civilisation, the gift it feels the need to bestow on the rest of the World. And the environment is one of the West's major problems. The side effects of undiminished capitalist production processes are such that the quality of life that many people living in Western nations took for granted is now under threat. I would argue therefore that whether these concerns were of benefit to Africa or not is irrelevant; because of the common Western perception that what is good for us is good for the rest of the world these concerns would be foisted upon Africa in any event. The fact that democratic concerns, and the environment are compatible with the African reality is co-incidental.

How the Western perception affects Another Development is to turn issues into panaceas for all development woes. It is short-sighted to think that democracy is a magic wand that is going to solve all Africa's problems. Democracy is a procedure for ensuring transfers of political power, nothing more or nothing less. However the influence of the Western perception blows the influence of democracy out of all sense of proportion, giving it god-like credentials. The same thing

applies to environmental concern, it is not feasible to assume that by tackling a single issue all Africa's problems are going to be resolved. All out effort in one area could well lead to negative effects in another area which had not been accounted for. This is something that the Western perception fails to see, in that it assumes that progress in one area will lead to monumental progress in all areas.

The various strands of Another Development seem at pains to incorporate people into the development process. This is in contrast to the two development theories analyzed earlier. They do not want development to disrupt indigenous cultures, rather they seek to preserve harmony between human beings and the environment. These are very laudable aims but when influenced by the Western perception these aims can easily turn into racist conditions. This is evident in the case of the World Bank who have taken some of the strands of Another Development strategy and have sought to impose their version of it on any country that wishes to secure loans from it. Regardless of history, circumstance, or culture, the issues of democracy and environment are being imposed on countries, and this again is a reflection of the Western perception. The West is not content to only suggest ideas, so arrogant are they that their ideas are correct, that they want to see them implemented at all costs. It can be maintained that when the Western perception permeates a pro-Third world strand of thinking like Another Development, what looked like a radical

alternative for Africa increasingly becomes a new white mans burden for the continent. With all the racist overtones of "we know what is best for you." "We have come to save you and your environment" and so on. It should be made clear that a development theory might be promoting sound ideas in and of itself but that is not the prime concern of this thesis, the thesis is concerned about the impact of the theory in the real world as it is. It is argued that when a theory enters the real world and becomes subject to common norms and perceptions, then the impact of these common norms means that one can end up with a theory or set of ideas that are very different from what the original authors envisaged. In this case whereby the World Bank has stolen the clothes of Another Development theory and used them to dress its own model, that more closely adheres to common Western perceptions and concerns.

Another way whereby one sees the influence of common Western perceptions on Another Development is in the concentration of single issues that spring up from within the overall agenda. Women, trees, soil, and animals, all seem to have a life of their own and are seen as do or die issues in their own right.

Many of these issues are fashionable at present, but will they still be in the limelight in twenty years time? Most probably they would have faded away to be replaced by a new trend. In the West it is apparent that the issues of women's

rights, minority rights, environmental concerns and so on, although loosely linked, are distinctive issues in their own right. They tend to be in competition with each other for the same meagre resources, hence they tend to exacerbate division in society rather than unifying it. In Africa resources are so meagre that to pursue Western style promotion of single issues is to create divisions and conflicts between groups that the continent can ill afford. That is not to say that women's rights are not essential in Africa, they are. So are minority rights and environmental concerns. However unless these aims are pursued within a holistic framework that seeks to understand the nature of change for a given section of African society, then single issues can only further undermine the social fabric of Africa, exacerbating the problems of the continent even further.

The Western perception clearly has the ability to undermine the African reality. It has influenced development theory from the conservative to the radical perspective and its impact on development strategy has been no less dramatic.

The Impact of the Western Perception on Development Strategy.

In the last thirty years or so, the Africa has been advised to industrialize, revolutionize, democratize, agriculturalize, and the list goes on and on. Africa has been

advised that military rule was best, because it was a stabilizing force. Then the military went out of fashion and so now democracy is considered to be Africa's best option. But what about in five years time, will democracy then be out of fashion? Perhaps it will be suggested that Africa give theocracy a try! I would argue that it is only a crisis in perception that can lead to such a divergence in thinking over a very short period of time. In Africa suggestions are being adopted, then abandoned, then adopted again as if there were no tomorrow. That is no way to run a sweet factory, let alone a continent, yet the Western perception is such that it only seems to be able to endure quick-fix solutions, and if plans do not bring about results quickly then they are discarded for new ones.

The temporary nature of the Western perception is reflected in the work of the international organisations that are meant to be aiding Africa. Projects carried out by agencies tend to last for two years and then they are finished. Foreign personnel frequently work on a project for two years and then leave. Continuity is sorely lacking in these areas so it is not a surprise to understand that project failure is a feature of the West's work in Africa. There are so many projects in Africa at the present time, yet they have not fundamentally altered Africa for the better. Long term, twenty or thirty year projects that have led to viable, sustainable, and independent means of survival for millions of

poor Africans have been sadly lacking. Instead, Africa has been one large experimentation ground. The experiments are never ending, whilst the results are never forthcoming. They rarely lead to anything. Africa has had about thirty years of this "mish mash" of experimentation, and now the perception is that it has largely been unproductive, due to the peculiar nature of the African and his or her surroundings.

Africa dearly needs a long term perspective, but the Western perception is becoming ever more short term. Strategies are devised to control problems rather than solve them. And these strategies, which are governed by a change and rearrange ethos, are in fact seriously undermining the social fabric of Africa. This is because the strategies and the thinking behind them, creates expectations in people but then fails to fulfil them. Traditional ways of living are being abandoned to take on new ideas but there is no long term viable alternative on offer. It would seem that Africa would do well to heed better the old proverbs.

"If you do away with your traditional way of living and throw away your good customs, you had better make certain that you have something of value to replace them."⁴⁶

Victims of Circumstance.

The fact that the Western perception has had such a marked impact on the African continent makes it more understandable why the early Pan-Africanists dedicated their lives to altering it. They tried hard to give Africa a positive image that would be forceful and enduring. Unfortunately their ideas do not appear to have altered the Western perception very much. I would assert that the Western perception is more readily swayed by economic circumstances than it is by force of argument. When there is a shift in the economic fortunes of a region, or a sharp fluctuation in the world economy, then the Western perception does tend to shift along with social science theory. The impact of critical analysis on a situation, does not appear to carry the same weight. In many instances it would be fair to say that attitudes and ideas within the realm of social science have been shaped more by circumstance than by analysis. In our own brief analysis of development theory, it was argued that the Modernization paradigm had more to do with the power of the United States in the global economy at the time the theory emerged than with the reality of the situation of the Third World. In the same vein Dependency theory emerged at a time when the Latin American economy was experiencing a resurgence. The cheap loans that the Third World were receiving as a result of the oil boom in the sixties gave many countries a

false sense of confidence, and from that window of confidence there emerged a theory that expressed the Third World point of view. Dependency was strongest in Latin America because it was the most developed Third World region at that time and because of its close proximity to the United States, with whom the economic and psychological struggle for liberation was being fought. The 1973 oil crisis altered the fortunes of the Latin American economy, and this change in economic fortunes altered in turn Dependency theory. Positive solutions to Third World problems turned to negative intractable positions that preached gloom and doom for the Third World, unless there was a world-wide socialist revolution.

It took another recession in the World economy in the late seventies and early eighties to signal the relative demise of the Dependency theory, and other indigenous Third World theories of development. As Gunder Frank, one of the leading theorists of the school admitted:

"the usefulness of the structuralist dependence and new dependence theories of underdevelopment as guides to policy seem to have been undermined by the world crisis of the 1970's. The Achilles heel of these conceptions of dependence has always been in the implicit and sometimes explicit, notion of some sort of independent alternative for the Third World. This theoretical alternative never existed, in fact certainly not on the non-capitalist path and now apparently not even through so called socialist revolutions. The new crisis of real world development now renders such partial development and parochial dependence theories and policy solutions invalid and inapplicable."⁴⁷

During that recession governments in the United States and Europe began to move further and further to the right politically, and social science reflected these trends. The collapse of communism in the 1990s is perhaps the culmination of these economic led trends. It was a such a major shift in world affairs that for many people it has resulted in a major realignment in their thinking. But what does this mean for Africa? It is evident that the common and dominant Western perception about Africa is wrong and is having a detrimental effect on the development potential of the continent. However, it is also evident that Africa is a poor continent, and that these circumstances are not going to fundamentally alter in the near future. As the thesis has tried to show, a change in circumstance can result in a change in perception, but with no change in circumstance on the horizon for Africa what is going to alter the Western perception?

I would argue that if there is going to be no monumental change in Africa's economic circumstances, then an intellectual leap of faith is required. Even though the West is dominant, its narrow minded and false perception of Africa must not go uncontested. In short Africa needs perspectives that are free of the racism and arrogance of the common Western perception. The continent is going through an important phase as it attempts to come to terms with the modern era. However totally negative perceptions of the continent's future prospects in the unstated belief that it is

a uniquely "black problem," with no solution is not going to help Africa resolve the problems it now faces.

Again it could seem that this chapter focuses on the concerns of the African diaspora at the expense of the continental African agenda. The peasant farmer living in a country with poor economic prospects, and an oppressive government has more to worry about than how the Western media portrays him. His struggle is with his environment, his government and the other elements of the African reality that he needs to deal with in order to live a meaningful life. The thesis concurs with this view yet argues that someone needs to defend the dignity of the African individual and by association all those of African descent. Perhaps this is the contradictory and unresolvable aspect of the diaspora dilemma. He finds that his own image and dignity is inexorably tied to that of the African, and the perception of the African in the modern world. Yet the desire to bring about the "true" perception of the African and ultimately himself, does not benefit the continental African as such because he or she is consumed by his or her own reality. In essence the African diaspora needs Africa for the purpose of self-esteem and identity, but Africa does not need the diaspora for development.

However, even though this is the case it can be argued that the role of the diaspora in spite of everything is still not over. This time it is not the diaspora's relationship with

Africa that is of consequence, but it is the diaspora's relationship with the West that could be of benefit to Africa. For such is the inter-dependent nature of the world in which we live it is evident that most African experts, African educators, planners, and future leaders, live, train, or are heavily influenced by the West and its perceptions. As has been shown, the common Western perception of Africa under-emphasizes the importance of the African individual and tends to exalt and heap praise upon the big idea. People connected with Africa but educated in the West pick up on these perceptions and they reveal themselves in the African agenda. Whereby the huge crop is all important for foreign exchange, whilst the producer of the crop finds him or herself under-emphasized: the regional co-operation scheme is the big idea for development but the ordinary African has no say in the agenda, deemed superfluous to requirements: and whereby solving the balance of payments, managing the state machinery, and complying with the IMF, equals successful development even though for one's populace, life has got worse. With the West dominating the world agenda the humanity of the perceived "lesser man" is under threat. The diasporan intellectual has seen this happen to him on the basis of race and now one sees the same kinds of images being used to convey certain negative notions about Africa. Hence the diasporan is still of use in spite of the contradictions. Not this time however to preach the unity of all Africans at home and abroad, but to try and

expunge racism from an inter-related world and preach human dignity for all people. The diasporan is in a position to do this, not only for Africa, but for a better humanity. As one of the great intellects of the African diaspora himself

remarked:

"When I search for man in the technique and the style of Europe, I see only a succession of negation of man and an avalanche of murders.... for Europe for ourselves and for humanity, comrades we must turn over a new leaf, we must work out new concepts, and try to set foot a new man."⁴⁸

In the final analysis, one does not wish to prevent the development of Africa, but to give a warning, not to develop theories, machines, and ideas at the expense of humanity.

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Chapter 5.

The Separation of the Diaspora Dilemma From the African Reality and the Search for a new Agenda.

We have almost reached the end of the journey. An intellectual and personal pursuit that has sought to explore the ambiguities and contradictions that I have felt in regard to my identity - that of an individual of African descent, born and raised in London. Although this journey has been firstly a personal quest, it is in a sense a microcosm of a much more significant set of contradictions and ambiguities - those that emerge from the African diaspora as it, in all its diversity, seeks to come to terms with the places of its birth, and reconcile that with its ancestry. This in essence is the motivation for Pan-Africanism, thus placed in a wider context, my personal quest takes on a universal dimension and emerges as an exploration of the ambiguities and contradictions within Pan-Africanism. That stated one now needs to pose again the questions that provided the impetus for the exploration. Is a sense of being essential to one's personal development and the development of a continent? Is that sense of being to be found in the concept of racial unity? Is Pan-Africanism the solution to the African crisis? Can regional co-operation work in Africa? And can the Western

perception of Africa and Africans be altered. These and the burning "why" concerning Africa's underdevelopment were the primary questions posed at the outset of the journey, now it is time to reveal what one has learnt from one's journey into Pan-Africanism: exploring the contradictions.

In the first instance one has learnt that a sense of being is important to individuals and to continents as they seek to develop. More importantly however is the fact that a sense of being or purpose and the vision of development that stems from it, must be relevant to one's needs and circumstances if it is to yield tangible and successful results. One of the reasons why Pan-Africanism has failed in Africa at the present time, is because it did not provide a sense of being or purpose that was relevant to the ordinary African. Rather than addressing the needs and circumstances of the African continent, the Pan-African sense of being stemmed from the concerns of Western-orientated black individuals. These people were concerned about a positive and unified image of the black race, but these concerns were incompatible with the African reality. Continental Africans were and are for the most part concerned about poverty, economic stagnation, political repression, and environmental degradation - nothing to do with race and racism as such. One has learnt that as a British born, black person, my sense of being and perspective on life is not the same as the peasant farmer in Mali, or the black congressman in Washington. I know little about their

everyday circumstances, hence I can be of little value to them. The fact that we share a common skin colour and continental ancestry does not alter that. One has learnt that common racial identity is not a sound basis for seeking the development of a continent. One of the reasons why Africans in the Diaspora have struggled in their attempts to significantly affect the African continental agenda, is because some of them have been guided by notions of racial unity at the expense of development strategies are actually geared to the needs of the continent.

It is evident that the problems that Africa faces are complex and multi-dimensional. One has further learnt that Pan-Africanism was just too disparate as both an ideology and movement to be able to tackle these problems. Under the Pan-African umbrella, one finds scientific socialism and the spiritual quest of the rastafarian. One can also find the raw energy of urban rap music, alongside the rural idealism of African socialism. Although this is a testimony to the diversity of the black experience the world over, it is too diffuse to be of any concrete value to the ordinary continental African. In the midst of all the Pan-African ideas, there is still lacking a coherent development strategy that African people can take hold of and utilise, for the betterment of the continent.

It is argued that Pan-Africanism could have fared better if African leaders had been more committed to pulling some of

the disparate Pan-African ideas together into a relevant development strategy. However for the most part African leaders have hindered rather than promote the development of Pan-Africanism on the continent. They have jealously sought to maintain their colonial boundaries, and such has been their desire to hold on to power at the national level that they have made regional co-operation very difficult to achieve and rendered the idea of a united African continent a near impossibility. One has learnt that although certain African leaders have done great things for the continent and for black self-esteem in general in the past. Those past achievements are not putting food into hungry mouths today, or meeting the many needs and requirements of ordinary people who need the leadership to help them with the problems they face now. African leaders in the main have failed their people and Pan-Africanism has suffered as a result, it is evident that if Africa is to do better in the future then its leaders have to be constrained. African leaders cannot be allowed to continue to dream their grand dreams, whilst the African reality continues to be a nightmare for so many. Clearly, at the present time Pan-Africanism as it is offers no viable solution to Africa's predicament. If it is to do so in the future, then it has to move away from black Western concerns and the concerns of the African elites, and become rooted in the concerns of the African people. They more than anyone know what the African reality requires and if given the opportunity

they have the best incentive to make change possible.

Regional co-operation could have been the means whereby a coherent development strategy, that was relevant to Africa and African peoples could emerge, but so far this has not been the case. One has learnt that although regionalism has the potential to be a good thing; particularly in a balkanised continent like Africa. In reality, it is very difficult to achieve. Individual nations are unwilling to give up the political and economic rights that they have fought so hard to establish, in order to co-operate in a regional grouping that might not bring them tangible benefits.

It is argued that regional co-operation schemes that are formed primarily on the basis of economic rationale and the desire for free trade are particularly vulnerable to dissolution because they exacerbate national tension and rivalry rather than diminish it. In Africa schemes based on free trade rationale have a very poor track record, mainly because individual nations think that their partners are benefiting at their expense. Even in Europe where theoretically co-operation should be smooth, competing national interests, and the desire to maintain national identity and sovereignty, are making the process towards a United Europe a difficult one. A simple lesson that one has learnt by examining the regional experience to date, is that unbridled competition, is not the best way to ensure smooth co-operation between states particularly those that have

traditionally been enemies and who have no experience of working together in genuine co-operative enterprises. Competition inevitably fosters rivalry and this tends to undermine co-operation.

It is argued that rather than compete with each other, nation-states work best together when they have a strong common purpose that forces them to put aside national rivalry and work together for the same end. Formations that have a strong common purpose are more likely to survive disagreements than those formations that exist solely to serve national economic interests. Defense against a common enemy is one such purpose that keeps a formation together, it has worked in the case of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation and it brought together the countries of the Southern African region into a formation that could work together against apartheid. One has learnt that these common purposes need to be very strong otherwise national interest will even undermine the work of these formations. One can look at Africa and argue that its current predicament makes it an ideal candidate for meaningful co-operation on the basis of a strong common purpose. Poverty, international exploitation, environmental degradation and marginalisation are all valid reasons why African countries should come together in a meaningful way, but for the most part this has not happened.

Another lesson that one has learnt is that regional formations tend to be people excluding organisations. They do

not seek to create a common identity to which people can relate and feel a part. Ordinary people need an identity, it provides them with their sense of being, this can account for the fact that nationalism, religion and ethnicity are such powerful binding forces in the world, these three forces provide people with a sense of identity and belonging. If regionalism is to replace nationalism, and be successful, then it must seek to meet this need for identity. Otherwise, it is argued that one risks seeing more and more people alienated and disaffected by government and that this is a recipe for disorder and extremism, rather than harmony and co-operation. An important lesson that one has learned is that people must be an active part of the development process. They must feel that they have a positive role to play in the welfare of their nation or supranational institution, otherwise one is in danger of creating alien institutions.

In the African context it is argued that the continent is already proliferated with alien institutions. Regional formations in Africa are undemocratic, bureaucratic and the vast majority of African people have no contact with them. This accounts for the fact that they have not had a major impact on the welfare of the continent as yet. Poor leadership also accounts for the general lack of success that the regional agenda has had in Africa. Too many leaders have used the rhetoric of unity, but in reality their primary concern has been to strengthen their national powerbase invariably to

the detriment of any regional formation.

In Africa there is again an overwhelming need for the kind of co-operation that is relevant to the continents needs and circumstances. A powerful lesson that one has learnt is that it is no good dreaming the grand dream if one has no workable agenda from which one can make that dream a reality. In Africa too many of the schemes examined are based on a free trade philosophy and a Western style agenda that is irrelevant to the ordinary African. The West economically and psychologically has too much influence on the African agenda and on those skilled Africans who should be viewing the problems of the continent through the eyes of their less fortunate brothers and sisters. This influence has the effect of moving development away from the people it should be for and exacerbates the problem of alien institutions and alien projects on the continent.

The disappointing nature of the regional agenda in Africa to date coupled with the fact that the West still exerts a great deal of influence in Africa, presents the diasporan intellectual with a problem. It has been acknowledged that the two agendas the continental and the diasporan are separate, yet Africa still fails to develop and continues to seemingly be lurching from crisis, to crisis. The diasporan living in the West sees these crisis images through the media and is disturbed. For the African diasporan self image relies heavily on positive images of Africa to sustain it against the

intimidation of white racism. Hence if the image of the African is under attack then the diasporan also is under attack and must fight back.

In chapter four it is argued that the same stereotypical images that classified the African diasporan as somewhat less than human are now being used to explain and implicitly justify the current African crisis. The complex historical, political, and economic circumstances that account for the current situation, slip into the background, whilst the image of the malnourished child, dying in the desert, becomes the simple, dominant enduring image of Africa and Africans. The human dignity of the African individual is under-emphasized by Western media and this reinforces the damaging notion that black people are somehow not the same as other people. It is argued that these images of Africa are part of a common perception that Western society has of black people and that it is characterised by its shortsightedness, racism, and inability to fully understand what development is all about.

It is argued that the common perception influences sophisticated development theory and strategy and can in part account for the fact that Western development models have only had a limited impact when it comes to dealing with the African crisis. This is because for the common or dominant Western perception, the African crisis is deemed to be endemic and intractable, hence the focus is on managing problems rather than solving them. The thesis argues that the influence of

this perception of Africa is damaging and needs to be altered. Africa needs perspectives that are long term, realistic, and free of the racism that seeks to undermine the African's human dignity and by association the dignity of all people of African descent.

The arguments of chapter four are valid, however they do reflect African concerns through the vision of the African diasporan intellectual. The diasporan still has a strong attachment to Africa that is hard to relinquish. The divorce might have been completed but the diasporan in his heart still thinks about reconciliation. The need still exists to identify with Africa in order to be reassured about one's image and identity, but the truth is that Africa does not need the diasporan concerns to develop. At the end of this journey, one has learnt a difficult lesson, the truth being that the differences between the various strands of the diverse diasporan experience and the diverse African continental experience, are at present irreconcilable. As the time has come for Africa to seek out a new direction compatible with the continents reality. So the time has come for the diasporan to stop using the continent as a psychological crutch, and stand up on his or her own merit, and seek a new direction. Whereby "the home for the hearts of all men" can become a diasporan reality. Ultimately it is hoped that this home will be of benefit to Africa and to all humankind.

