

Africa: a voyage of discovery with basil davidson

[History](#)



Africa: A Voyage of Discovery with Basil Davidson Episode Different But Equal In the first episode of the documentary series titled ' Africa: A Voyage of Discovery with Basil Davidson', a historical-colonial perspective of Africa and its people is given. The title ' Different But Equal' hints at how African people were treated to the contrary by Westerner colonialists. Although early travelers to ancient African kingdoms thought highly of the region's culture and natural riches, more recent accounts see them as inferior. The exoticism of Africa and its culture is used as rationale to justify its inferiority and hence its rule. In this context, it is fair to claim that the history of Africa of recent centuries is representative of the history of European colonialism.

Dr. Basil Davidson informs the viewer how the African continent is one of the most geographically diverse in the world. Ranging from tundra to tropical rainforests, from savannahs to arid deserts, from fertile plains to steppes, every climatic and geographical condition is to be found in the continent. Moreover, due to geological cycles, solar cycles and phenomenon such as global warming, these climes are always on the flux. It is hard to believe that the now climatically hostile and uninhabitable Sahara desert was one a lush vegetated forest that supported a huge human population. But the deterioration of the Saharan landscape to its present condition also reveals another facet of African peoples, namely, their adaptability and innovation. Genetic footprint analysis shows that the great Egyptian civilization composed of people not merely indigenous to the Northern corner of the continent but also those who migrated away from the declining Sahara. Another important fact mentioned by presenter Basil Davidson is how African is a melting pot of many religions. The Egyptian civilization had its own primitive religion that is rich in artistic and symbolic expression. The great <https://assignbuster.com/africa-a-voyage-of-discovery-with-basil-davidson/>

pyramids and the elaborate ritual associated with their construction bear out this fact. But after the decline of the rule by the Pharaohs, Northern Africa came under the influence of the Roman Empire and Catholic Christianity. The intellectual traditions of Romans as well as their religious beliefs were easily assimilated into the native African culture. Later during 7th century A. D. Islam came into its own in the Middle East, which quickly spread to Africa. All these historical religious influences are evident in contemporary African religious practices and culture, lending credibility to Basil Davidson's view that Africa is on par with any advanced civilization witnessed in history. Africa played a pivotal role in the evolution of several species of primates, including the most recent Neanderthals and Homo-sapiens. Going further back in geological time, many of the Old World Monkeys, Apes and early Hominids also evolved here. In this respect it is fair to claim, as Dr. Basil Davidson does, that Africa is the cradle of evolution of the human species. Genetic tests prove that every other continent in the world is populated by people who ventured out of Africa.

Finally, while acknowledging the uniqueness and historical significance of Africa, the presenter Dr. Davidson also acknowledges one of its unsavory aspects. The label of barbarity that Westerners easily attach to Africans is not without some merit. This is most evident in the culture of the Nubia and the Misovalat, as well as the history of the kingdoms governing Nuba Hills.