

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

The African e-Journals Project has digitized full text of articles of eleven social science and humanities journals. This item is from the digital archive maintained by Michigan State University Library. Find more at:

<http://digital.lib.msu.edu/projects/africanjournals/>

Available through a partnership with



Scroll down to read the article.

The Futility of Individual Aspiration In The African Novel

Virginia U. Ola

Department of English
University of Western Ontario,

Utafiti Vol VIII No. 2, 1986. Journal
of the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences,
University of Dar es Salaam

The novel of character is one of the most important divisions in prose fiction, mainly because the novel is about people, first, and about what they do, second. E.M. Forster's *Aspects of the Novel* and Percy Lubbock's *The Craft of Fiction* are two of the most interesting books on the novel to appear in recent years.¹ Both are writers of individual talent, and while they may agree on several aspects of this genre, they disagree totally on the issue of character or characterisation. While Lubbock insists on form, structure and limited point of view, thereby de-emphasizing the role of characterisation in the novel, Forster extols the "shifting point of view" and is content as long as the novelist 'bounces' us into a belief in his characters and gives us 'life'. Virginia Woolf also saw the novelist's main function and problem as the capturing of individual character:

Novelists differ from the rest of the world because they do not cease to be interested in character when they have learnt enough about it for practical purposes. They go a step further; they feel that there is something permanently interesting in character in itself. When all practical business of life has been discharged, there is something about people which continues to seem to them of overwhelming importance, in spite of the fact that it has no bearing whatever upon their happiness, comfort or income.²

I believe that all novels, that is to say, deal with character, and that it is to express character—not to preach doctrines, sing songs, or celebrate the glories of the British Empire, that the form of the novel, so clumsy, verbose, and undramatic, so rich, elastic and alive, has been evolved. To express character, I have said.³

Arnold Bennett is even more emphatic in his claims when he insists that the foundation of good fiction is character-creating and nothing else, and that although style, plot and originality of outlook count, "none of these counts anything like so much as the convincingness of the characters. If the characters are real the novel will have a chance; if they are not, oblivion will be it's portion..."⁴ Both critics, in addition, believe that men and women write novels because they are lured on to create some character which has thus imposed itself upon them. Mr. Bennett even carries this point to the debatable one of saying that there are no novelists of first-rate importance among the Georgian writers in England because they were unable to create characters that are "real, true and convincing"⁵. Forster, Lawrence, Joyce and Eliot fall into this group. As flexible as the words 'real' and 'true' are in meaning, I wish to take liberty and apply them to a strange phenomenon in African literature, that is, its interest in a particular type of character, the person of ideals who is inevitably crushed by society.

The African novel has for sometime paraded a most unimpressive gang of committed but naive, clumsy, confused and sometimes even stupid, heroes whose characterisation sometimes leaves the reader with a strange feeling of incompleteness and dissatisfaction, Obi Okonkwo of *No Longer at Ease*, Amamu of *This Earth My Brother*, and Okolo of *The Voice* are such heroes.⁶

The family society have constantly been projected in this literary tradition as the two greatest enemies of any hero who dares aspire to go against age-old traditions, or to fight for a better moral order in society. He is ultimately destroyed by the unbending attachment to tradition; that is, the ultra-conservatism of these two groups; sometimes by their fear of repercussions from the gods, their pride or jealousy, and most recently, as we witness in Armah's novels, by the 'insensitivity and lethargy of an unimaginative and spiritually dead society', coupled with the greed and impatience of a family which insists on having its erstwhile poverty turned to immediate wealth by a young member who psychologically and financially is in no way equipped to work such miracles. In some cases, such as those of Okolo of *The Voice* and Isanusi of *Two Thousand Seasons*, a corrupt leadership threatened by the commitment and questions of the hero strives to destroy him. In all cases, the family and society invariably win. The hero flounders, his will is broken; he is disgraced, brutalised, totally alienated and, in many cases, becomes mad. This *one-sided pattern* of struggle is gradually making the African Novel the arena of the made heroes. It is informed by a fatalistic philosophy which sees all aspiration towards a better future as doomed to failure except in Armah's cases where the heroes, though buffeted, never lose their principles. Most of these characters are so *stereotyped* that they come over as unrealistic, untrue and unconvincing.

This *fixed pattern* of characterisation has marred the quality of a few important African novels. The hero, unless he succumbs to the will of the family society and the gods, is portrayed as a fated dreamer, destined to be crushed whatever his inner strengths and hopes, by a deadly societal machinery of sinister rulers backed by greedy and cynical followers. The process and stages of such moral disintegration are so unconvincing that it becomes evident that the fault lies more in the author's failure at characterisation than in a weakness in the moral fibre of a well-developed character. Such failure at characterisation marks the yawning gap in success between Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* and *Arrow of God*, set in the traditional milieu, and *No Longer at Ease*, set in the more fluid environment of Lagos. Critics were quick to comment on the flaw in Obi's characterisation and character realisation. When Bernth Lindfors calls Obi an "unheroic figure" and his actions as "ignoble and unworthy", he is saying almost the same thing as Eustace Palmer in these lines:

Firstly, the hero is weak and insufficiently realized....for a central consciousness he is too uninteresting and vaguely portrayed rather than determining the course of events. Obi allows events to overtake him, and is merely borne along by the force of circumstance. Since Obi Okonkwo merely succumbs to the forces against him, he falls short of tragic stature; nor is he a martyr, since he is crushed for betraying his principles, not for championing them.

Oladele Taiwo, Arthur Ravenscroft and David Cook hold similar views on Obi's characterisation. Cook criticizes Obi for lack of firmness; nor can this criticism be disproved by Emilia Oko's lame argument that "...in Obi's cultural context it is beyond his scope to convince his parents out of consciousness of prejudices built through the ages, supported by a vital literature of folk lore, tales and taboos."⁸ It is also difficult to accept Mrs. Oko's claim that in Obi's transition from "tradition-oriented" to the Western world, the demands of relatives, especially of the immediate family, are more immediate and pressing than the abstractions of western technology, such as electricity, and insurance; and that "it is logical for Obi to assume responsibility for his brother's school fees before he can envisage how to budget for it."⁹ Ravenscroft was correct, therefore, when he claimed that "it is a very simple-minded young man indeed who does not expect a demand for some tax or an electricity bill",¹⁰ realities he

must have become used to during his year of study in England.

Such illogicalities seem even more incongruous when compared with the image of Obi initially projected by the author. He is exemplary in many ways and full of love and admiration for his country and a determination to help rid it of some of the ills retarding its progress. Unlike many of his colleagues, he is typified by humility and sincerity. His declaration against bribery, corruption, incompetence, nepotism, and especially the practice of discrimination against 'osus', are a direct contradiction of his sudden and systematic collapse. His later outbursts and total break with the Umuofia Progressive Union are untypical and seem almost imposed by the author. The financial burden of living in Lagos and participating in the upkeep of his extended family at the same time hardly seem heavy enough to precipitate the tragic fall of such an idealistic young man. When the old Okonkwo of *Things Fall Apart* chooses the path of suicide the reader does not share the shock of his townsmen, because his excessive pride and belief in success, together with his excessive fear of failure or disgrace, have been successfully situated as the cornerstones of his strong but vulnerable personality. When the mind of the proud Ezeulu snaps at the news of Obika's death, this fact is easily accepted as the result of cumulative effect of his dramatically portrayed fight against his townsmen, his family, the colonial administration, his fellow leaders and their gods, his own internal psychological warfare over the limitations of his own power as the chief priest of Ulu, and the baffling reaction of capricious Ulu himself.

The reader of *No Longer at Ease* searches without success for such a struggle, for a centre of conflict that could lead him into the consciousness of Obi Okonkwo, but the possible dramatic areas are monopolised quite often by the author himself. Obi suffers from constant confusion, not mental agony. Palmer lists the examples of psychological implausibilities which render the hero's character hazy:

Was it really necessary or plausible, for Obi to be roused to such uncontrollable anger at the meeting of the Umuofia Progressive Society? One is even more doubtful about the question of bribery. Is it possible that the idealistic Obi would have succumbed so easily to temptation? Although his financial position was desperate...one would expect, at least, an agonizing inner struggle. But there is no such torment. He merely sinks deeper into corruption, and continues to take bribes even after his financial position has improved.¹¹

He is not even allowed to face the prejudices of his once rebellious father, or to apprehend Christopher's comic joke at his mother's emotional blackmail over the issue of marrying Clara. In Palmer's opinion, his mother did not say he could not marry Clara after her death, only before, although one could claim that the former was also implied. As his problems multiply he gives in to paralysis of the will rather than take recourse in positive action, however ill-conceived. Obi fails not through insurmountable problems but by the author's manipulation. The book begins with his decline, a precipitous and hurried action towards a tragic climax whose stages the reader is hardly allowed to see, because the author has not traced them. The issue of Clara, his financial problems, his mother's death and his eventual descent into bribery are the supposed reasons for this complete turnabout in personality and destiny. The novel leaves one with a sense of the futility of ideals and aspiration. Unfortunately, Chinua Achebe does not succeed, as he set out to do, despite his perfect capturing of the social pressures involved, in demonstrating that society is responsible for Obi's fall. There is no feeling of inevitability in the events ranged against Obi. He is helplessly limp and in his portrait remains totally inadequate to carry the lesson

of family and social pressures on the aspiring educated individual in the Nigerian society. Obi's portrait is as unconvincing as his problems are, leaving an uncomfortable gap between the conception and execution of *No Longer at Ease*.

Amamu goes even further from Obi's state of paralysis of the will into the abyss of insanity. He is clearly one mad hero in the African novel, and again the nature of such a resolution remains unsatisfactory mainly because of Amamu's character and its realisation. *This Earth My Brother* is a poetic lament fitted into the framework of a novel. This fact has gained it the name of a prose poem, one which its author has never been too happy about. Awoonor's poetry has amply demonstrated his fascination with the Ewe dirge. He himself acknowledges this strong fascination in the following passage:

The Ewe dirge has fascinated me as a complete poetic form. Its use of the elegiac tone, statement, exhortation, and prayer combine into a totally effective poetic medium...the Ewe dirge established a relationship with the dead in order to emphasize the loneliness that death engenders for the living. It expresses the pathos of death, its desolation and the accompanying sense of loneliness.¹²

In *This Earth My Brother* he uses its lyrical structure along with its repetition of lines and segments; similar images and motifs also dominate the poetry and this novel. In the author's words:

You must see *This Earth My Brother* and my poetry as constituting the same continuous poetic statement about man and society. My concern is not...to provide a picture of a particular society at a particular time, but rather to provide through a series of selected images, the idea of the continuous process of corruptibility which the human society without strength and vision can be locked in.¹³

The landscape, established early in the novel, is one of decay and near despair, appropriately symbolised by the road overseer who is described as "a veritable picture of human lethargy translated into power at its most resigned and unconcerned pivot". The era is that of British Imperialism with its denigration of the culture of the conquered. Awoonor treats it with irony and sarcasm. The pervading decay and disorder in the society are concretised in Nima with its recurrent image of the dunghill, its choking filth, its congestion, squalor and its teeming population, jostling to find employment in the dream city of Accra:

Nima skirts the west central part of the city like a vulture...Who are the dwellers of this city within a city? From here, every morning, pour thousands of workers—labourers, carpenters, masons, carriers of night soil, builders, tradesmen, hawkers of petty goods, butchers, pickpockets, soldiers and prostitutes...From Nima come the washermen, the garden boys and the steward boys of the Ridge bungalows, and of the pretentious suburbia of Kaneshie—those who can afford. From here come the cooks, stewards and drivers of the respectable homes of the city.¹⁴

This description is backed by a string of scatological images which reminds one of Ayi Kwei Armah. In this physically and spiritually dead environment Amamu is the priest, the saviour, the visionary on whose sacrifice and death society hopes to witness a rebirth. He is what Achebe would call "the sensitive point" of this sick society. Since *This Earth My Brother* takes the form of a lament, it is, therefore, this pervasive tone of lament and the character of Amamu rather than any established narrative pattern, which gives it some coherence. Even if we were to agree with Richard Priebe that "it is not so important who Amamu is, as what he represents within this framework", what he represents is still very hazily sketched. Priebe continues:

His position as a specific person is no more important than the characters of Lycidas and Adonais in the elegies of Milton and Shelley, for it is the expression and transcendence of grief that becomes important for the reader. Here, even more so, it is ultimately neither the death of Amamu, nor the symbolic death of a country, Ghana, which holds our imagi-

nation. These specific events serve only as reference points to focus our attention on the man and his land as individual and collective carriers of a long history of suffering.¹⁵

As valid as this argument is, it must be added that in the cases above both Lycidas and Adonais, even within a totally poetic construction, are presented in character and achievement, however selective, as worthy representatives of what they symbolise. Within the framework of the novel, which gives the writer more spatial and explorative latitude, the emergence of a convincingly portrayed hero becomes more imperative. Amamu's character does not quite meet this demand.

As the potential saviour, Amamu's life history is given in this book, though not in a chronological order. In Chapter Ia, we are given the account of his birth, the pain of it and the hope it offers. This is soon followed by his picture as a full-grown man, a lawyer, but a sensitive one, anguished over the corruption, lethargy and the suffering he witnessed daily in Accra. His life with his young dead cousin, Dede, is interwoven at intervals. The fulfilment of this stage of his life is contrasted with the artificial life of boredom and lack of communication he lives with his London-trained wife, Alice, and daughter of a retired judge. His relationship with Adisa makes up for this emotional waste.

Amamu's personality remains an aspiration; an action-confused and intangible. His madness at the end of the book remains unconvincing because the mental agony which leads to it is not successfully transmitted to the reader. Amamu is portrayed from the start as an excessively brooding and introspective character, almost egocentric. The first page of the book dramatises his one-sided relationship with Adisa who must literally strain to elicit a response from him. It is likely that Alice was not ready for such a taxing relationship, hence the breakdown of their marriage. His conversation with Adisa is typically interspersed with periods of silence and occasional nos, unless the woman quickly thinks up another topic of conversation.

Amamu is odd, as members of his club claim, for who but an odd, perhaps outright madman would go to a club to discuss philosophy and theology, talk about Descartes and such outlandish topics during hours of relaxation? Sometimes his friends listen to his learned monologues with shy deference, but eventually conclude he is mad. Despite this, Amamu is talented, respected and admired and in addition enjoys all the trappings of his prestigious profession which mesmerised the traffic policeman and helps him at the airport to find his wife's misplaced luggage. In Ojo-Ade's words:

Amamu is aloof and proud. He is very assertive, and often brutally distant. A been-to and a been-to with genius. He is one of those 'brilliant children of our soil who has wrenched from the white-man the magic of his wisdom, and on his face is a grey look of satisfaction.' All indications point to the fact that he is an integral part of the social structure and he does nothing, at least nothing that one can pinpoint, to really change the system. Then he runs mad. Why?¹⁶

Whether this is the result of his sense of guilt at his own failure to help, or because the problems are too overpowering is difficult to ascertain. Awonor maintains he has a permanently sad face, "His face was arranged by his maker that way. Sad, silent, as if enduring an internal agony irrespective of any gaiety around him." It is this purposeless brooding agony which characterises Amamu's response throughout the book.

On two occasions Amamu defends the poor, the prostitutes at Lido and Yaro's brother. From the first attempt he gains Adisa who, in the course of the story, blends with Dede and the woman of the sea whom Amamu constantly seeks a re-union with. The second action is the bailing of Ibrahim, Yaro's brother, who is eventually beaten to death in the cell. In both instances, Amamu has a vested interest, therefore these actions cannot be regarded as undertaken

out of general care or love of the poor.

Amamu's eventual madness and death are perhaps the two most unconvincing phenomena in this work. Amamu now achieves his final sought-for union with his woman of the sea, and by joining her through suicide achieves his role as the sacrificial lamb on behalf of his land and its people. In a way, madness nullifies the validity of self-sacrifice since the mad man is psychologically incapable of appreciating the value of such a symbolic act. Amamu has been an escapist all his life, frightened of action and decision, nor can one accept without question that this desire for death is prompted by the fact that Amamu should be better able to help his people as an ancestor; as if weakness in this life is in African ontology automatically transformed into strength in the next. Even suicide itself, in most African traditions, is a crime against mother earth. After this metaphysical union with the woman of the sea,

It seemed suddenly that the centuries and the years of pain of which he was the inheritor, and the woes for which he was singled out to be carrier and the sacrifice, were being rolled away, were being faded in that emergence. Here at last, he realized with a certain boyish joy, was the hour of his salvation.¹⁷

His characterisation is far from that of a carrier and a sacrifice, responsibilities which his escapist nature is incapable of carrying. Perhaps this is partly the result of the poetic and often ritualistic approach of the author. Again Amamu is not destroyed by society but by his own introspective and selfish nature. He does not even aspire like Okonkwo; he simply lies down and dies, metaphorically and literally. Awoonor has also played to the dictum that the genius carries a streak of madness in him, but fails to realize it in action.

Okolo in *The Voice* is one more hero whose efforts are destined from the beginning to end in failure because his characterisation is tainted by insufficient realisation. Like the other heroes already treated, Okolo is educated but his personality is overshadowed by incredible naivete. *The Voice* has a clear plot and structure resolving itself into the story of a quest, a one-man series of adventures involving a departure, initiation into the ways of the world, the facts of exploitation, corruption and injustice, and final return. Okolo is a visionary in search of salvation and spiritual values for himself and his whole society. This distinguishes him from "less ambitious" heroes like Christian or Everyman who are mainly concerned with their own salvation. Okolo plunges into this search immediately after completing his education. In the African situation, by age and experience he seems ill-equipped for such a daring venture into a society where corruption has become entrenched through years of practice, and where those involved would resort to desperate means to safeguard their positions. As the book opens,

Some of the townsmen said Okolo's eyes were not right, his head was not correct. This they said was the result of his knowing too much book, walking too much in the bush, and others said it was due to his staying too long alone by the river. So the town of Amatu talked and whispered: so the world talked and whispered. Okolo had no chest, they said. His chest was not strong and he had no shadow. Everything in this world that spoiled a man's name they said of him, all because he dared to search for it. He was in search of it with all his inside and with all his shadow.¹⁸

It is, therefore, a very hostile society that Okolo has to face, a society that has replaced its traditional heritage of spiritual values, like honesty and sincerity, with the more materialistic values of money, cars, big houses, all of which have led to the type of spiritual sterility Okolo is not used to, but which he is determined to fight. He is totally unequally matched to Izone's totalitarian regime

which is fully consolidated under the influential chief. Izongo commands complete support from most of his subjects, either through fear of punishment or for sheer survival; especially as Abadi has reminded them they were mostly "mere fishermen, palm cutters and some of you were nothing in the days of the imperialists." They have been conditioned by years of experience to give their unflinching support and approval to Izongo's decrees and decisions, however obnoxious, unjust or unreasonable, by automatic nods or raising of hands. Words like conscience, personal convictions or principles have no part in such decisions.

It is into such an insecure and impersonal landscape that Okolo carries his mission of searching for 'it,' an unexplained reality which to the hero means faith, honesty, sincerity, but which also represents a spiritual, life-giving, humane principle which contradicts the spiritual sterility of Izongo's society. In Okolo's words:

All I want to do in my search...is to revitalize my flagging faith, faith in man, belief in something...Belief and faith in that, something we looked up to in times of sorrow and joy have all been taken away and in its stead what do we have? Nothing but a dried pool with only dead wood and skeleton leaves.¹⁹

As simple as these intentions are, they involve serious political considerations. It would amount to a complete reversal of the status quo and threaten the positions of those who have so far run and benefited from the mismanagement of the society. Okolo is calling for a revolution without knowing it and, like Baako, the society will seek to crush him. Izongo uses everything at his disposal to turn the society against Okolo. Not satisfied with this he finally drives Okolo out of Amatu, from where the hero proceeds to Sologa, another society badly in need of spiritual rejuvenation, and equally steeped in political corruption.

The population of Sologa is typified by indifference, lethargy and despair. Many people in the society know how bad things are but are unwilling to stake their peace, security or source of livelihood for a better society. Tebeowei articulates this general attitude. He tells Okolo:

But there is nothing I alone or you and I can do to change their insides. It is a bad spirit that is entering everybody and if you do not allow it to get you, they say it's you that has it. So I just sit down and look. If they say anything, I agree.

If they do anything, I agree, since they do not take yam out of my mouth.²⁰

The inscriptions on the white walls at the eating place in Sologa further testify to this resignation. Significantly, one of the inscriptions claims that even Jesus failed to make the world fine, showing that Okolo's role is the perennial one of a prophet misunderstood and destroyed by his own people. Okolo is thus abused and branded mad for being a non-conformist. He fails both in Amatu and Sologa, and is finally set afloat with Tuere in a canoe which sinks on the second day of the trip. The hero has once more lost to society, but it is possible to see how much the character of the hero contributes to this failure.

Because of the symbolic nature of the work, much is not said of Okolo's family or background, but the reader eventually learns that Okolo's parents are dead, although his father's advice to him on the value of moral courage remains his guiding principle in all his dealings. He is undeniably courageous, morally upright, and committed to the search for a better society. Why then does he fail?

Okolo's failure does not come as a surprise. It is even symbolically forecast early in the novel in the face of the moon which he sees through his window:

The moon was an about-to-break moon. A vague circle of light surrounded it,

telling a dance was going on up or down river. Across the moon's face and the dance circle, menacing dark clouds idled past, casting shadow after shadow on the river. Larger and darker clouds, some to frowning faces, grimacing faces changing, were skulking past without the moon's ring, suffocating the stars until they 'too lost themselves in the threatening conformity of the dark cloud beyond.²¹

The conflict dramatised in the foregoing image represents Okolo's struggle against his grimacing enemies from Izongo's camp, and yet an impression is created, perhaps unconsciously, that the hero unwittingly aided the forces that eventually destroy him. It is hard to comprehend how a young man, fresh from school, equipped with only secondary school education, without family or friends, and barely any means of livelihood, hopes to accomplish the type of dangerous quest he embarks upon. His first confrontation with Izongo's messengers show the hazards of such a venture, yet Okolo persists, not in using himself as the paradigm of the upright life but in going around asking people if they have got 'it', an act which borders on bigotry. To the population it is the sign of unusual boldness, arrogance, naivete or outright madness. Abadi insists that he is much better educated than Okolo, so, education is not a warrant for such clear disrespect for the elders of the land and the wisdom which traditionally they represent. Abadi in fact insists that, if actually Okolo is educated, he is not the only educated one in the land.

Okolo also approaches his quest with a total lack of discretion or diplomacy, and Tabewei warns him to take cognizance of the time, supporting his advice with the proverb that 'a chicken says when you are in a new town you should stand with only one foot, for where you stand may be a grave.'

Tuere, too, tells him he speaks like a child and that in reality, he is a child because he fails to see that his mission poses personal danger to Izongo. The owner of the eating house adds his own advice, "You in your inside see the world like a tree on you falling and with your hand you want to hold it, knowing you be crushed to death." Even the white man adds his voice, "All I am saying is, you have to be judicious. No one will thank you, especially one who is in authority, for telling him by implication that you are, morally, a better person. You've got to be discreet."

This advice too, Okolo rejects. He rejects the advice of friends and strangers alike and blindly plunges into a precarious quest in which he finally loses his life.

This stubbornness, together with his incredible naivete, contribute significantly to his destruction. It reduces his courage to foolhardiness and his innocence to arrogance. These qualities make it difficult for a reader to identify with his predicament which turns to be self-aggravated quite often. By inference, the same qualities make society less culpable for his predicament. The message of the author is thereby clouded by the faults of the same hero whose commitment he set out to uphold.

As much as African writers are interested in dramatising the predicament of the man of vision in a morally bankrupt society, they must at the same time anchor such a vital mission in a character whose profile is convincing, and whose merits and faults are credible, so that his failure does not become just the inevitable result of his own weakness, self-centredness or invented arrogance. *The Voice* is the most pessimistic of all the novels considered in this paper. Altogether, they create a questionable impression that individual aspiration in Africa is bound to end in an unnecessary dissipation of energy; in other words, in total futility.

FOOT NOTES

1. E.M. Forster, *Aspects of the Novel* (Harmondsworth Penguin, 1962), and Percy Lubbock *The Craft of Fiction*.
2. Robert Scholes (ed.), *Approaches to the Novel* (San Francisco: Chandler Publishing Company, 1961), p. 213
3. *Ibid.*, p. 217.
4. *Ibid.*, pp. 211-212
5. *Ibid.*, p. 212.
 6. See Chinua Achebe, *No Longer at Ease* (London: Heinemann, 1960). Kofi Awoonor, *This Earth My Brother* (London: Heinemann, 1971); Gabriel Okara, *The Voice* (Britain: a Panther Publication, 1969). Further references to these texts can be found within the essay.
7. Eustace Palmer, *An Introduction to the African Novel* (London, Ibadan, Nairobi: Heinemann, 1972), p. 68.
8. Emilia Oko, "The Nigerian Novel and Revolution," an unpublished Doctoral Dissertation. University of Benin, 1983, p. 158.
9. *Ibid.*
10. Arthur Ravenscroft, *Chinua Achebe* (London: Longman, Green, 1969), p. 21.
11. Palmer, op. cit., p. 69.
12. Kofi Awoonor, *The Breast of the Earth* (New York: Anchor Press, 1976), p. 202.
13. Richard Priebe, "Kofi Awoonor's *This Earth My Brother* as an African dirge in *The Benin Review*, Benin City: Ethiopia Publishing Company, 1974), p. 95.
14. Kofi Awoonor, *This Earth My Brother* pp. 153-4
15. *Ibid.*, p. 96.
16. Femi Ojo-Ade, "Madness in the African Novel: Awoonor's *This Earth My Brother*" in *African Literature Today*. No 10 (London: Heinemann, 1979), p. 141.
17. Kofi Awoonor *This Earth My Brother* pp. 179.
18. Gabriel Ikara, *The Voice* p. 7
19. *Ibid* p. 70.
20. *Ibid* p. 31
21. *Ibid* p. 10.