

ARMAH'S LINGUISTIC MYTHOPOEISIS

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ABSTRACT

*Ayi Kwei Armah is one of Africa's most ideologically committed writers. His writings, which consist of a bitter attack on all colonial institutions and activities, reveal a social vision for Africa. Through his diatribe, he shows how Africa could set herself on the path of renaissance and development. This paper, based on Armah's *Two Thousand Seasons* and *Osiris Rising* with occasional references to *The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born*, examines one of Armah's tools for the construction of this social vision: mythopoeisis. *Two Thousand Seasons* is based on the myth of Anoa through which Armah tells the story of Africa's continued resistance to colonial oppression, exploitation and the slave trade. *Osiris Rising* is a complete transposition of the events of the myth of Osiris from its Ancient Egyptian setting to modern Africa. It is a story of Africa's dismemberment and its eventual re-memberment and resurrection. An aspect of Armah's myth-making is the conscious effort to give new semantic denotations and connotations to the word pairs black/white and way/road. Armah gives positive attributes to the colour black and pejorative significations to white. He also opposes 'way' to 'road'. Armah points Africa back to 'the way', a set of principles, which according to Armah, made Ancient Egypt, a great African civilization. The paper concludes that the solution to Africa's problems lies not in demonizing everything white and accepting everything black but in carefully selecting what is good in both cultures.*

Keywords: *Linguistic mythopoeisis, black, white, road, way.*

INTRODUCTION

Myth criticism refers to that part of literary criticism which deals with what writers do with myth. Writers select a myth – traditional, religious or imaginatively created – and exploit the metaphorical resources of the whole or part of the myth to create a story which is relevant to the modern age. This is known as mythopoeisis

or mythmaking. The objective of mythopoeisis is to use the old myth to address a particular concern of society and thus make the old myth relevant to the contemporary age. In this paper, we examine how Armah uses the myths of Anoa and Osiris in *Two Thousand Seasons* and *Osiris Rising* respectively to tell the story of Africa's persistent resistance to colonial ex-

plottation and oppression and how he envisages a new form of leadership that can empower the people with knowledge to improve their lives. This paper discusses one of the methods of mythopoeisis which we call linguistic mythopoeisis or the use of the resources of language to demonize the white colonialists and to encourage black people to free themselves both physically and mentally from Western subjugation.

Three famous examples of mythmaking in Western literature which have a timeless relevance are: *Moby Dick* (Melville, 1988), *Ulysses* (Joyce, 1968) and *Absalom, Absalom!* (Faulkner, 1987). Melville uses the Biblical story of Jonah and many documented tales of the whale to tell a new story of the individual pitted against nature and the perpetual struggle between good and evil. It is a timeless classic which continues to appeal to the modern generation. Someone has commented:

In a real sense, Melville's book is not about its time, but about ours. A possible reading would have the *Pequod* as modern corporate America, intent on control and subjection, and Ahab as a power-crazed executive, quick to seek vengeance for any perceived aggression. (Microsoft Encarta, 2007)

The allusion to America under former President Bush, whose hunt for terrorists led him to embroil America in two unnecessary wars, is unmistakable. *Moby Dick* (1988) has always had a message for all generations since it was written. James Joyce's *Ulysses* (1968), a landmark in English fiction, marked by the liberties he takes with ordinary syntax and diction, his use of symbolisms and the sheer poetry uses the Classical myth of heroic Odysseus to tell a new story of an unheroic fictional everyman whose heroism lies in his confrontation with the drab ordinariness of everyday life. Faulkner's *Absalom, Absalom!* (1987) is based on two stories: the story of David and his son Absalom in the Bible and the Classical myth of Cadmus, the founder of Thebes. Faulkner uses the two

myths and his characteristic novelistic techniques – his circumlocution, the convoluted time structure, a circular rather than a linear plot structure, the multiple viewpoints and his lengthy sentences – to tell the story of the unmaking of fathers who could not manage their sons. This then becomes the metaphor for the American South which could not manage its two sons – blacks and whites. It is a timeless warning to all communities which through injustice and hypocrisy discriminate against sections of their societies.

TWO THOUSAND SEASONS

The mythmakers are wordsmiths exploiting the resources of language to tell their new stories as anyone who has read any of the Western classics mentioned above will testify. In African Literature, one mythmaker and wordsmith is Ayi Kwei Armah. In his *Two Thousand Seasons* (1973), he uses the myth of Anoa to chronicle the history of Africa and her search for new directions and development. Anoa is a divinized heroine and an embodiment of the struggles of the African people. Armah(1973) narrates the myth of Anoa simply as follows:

Among the most secret remembrances imprisoned in the memory of communicators one – so short it maddens the ear stretching to hear more – tells of a priestess Anoa, she who brought the wrath of patriarchs on her head long before the beginning of the fertile time by uttering a curse against any man, any woman who would press another human being into her service. This Anoa also cursed the takers of service proffered out of inculcated respect. It was said she was possessed by a spirit hating all servitude, so fierce in its hatred it was known to cause those it possessed to strangle those – so many now – whose joy it was to force the weaker into tools of their pleasure and their laziness. It has come down that the same spirit possessed the women of the desert white men's harem, possessed Sekela, possessed Azania, possessed all the women who

slew our predatory tormentors. (p.21)

The only other writer who has used the myth of Anoa is Ama Ata Aidoo in her play *Anowa* (Aidoo, 1970). She dedicates that play to 'my mother Aunt Abasema who told a story and sang a song'. In an interview she granted to the BBC, Aidoo explains that the story of *Anowa* is a legend her mother told her. According to Etherton (1982), *Anowa* is a traditional tale. Etherton (1982) further explains in a note on the play: 'Anowa is a legend of the Akan derived from Fanti folklore. Anowa was the proud one who insisted on choosing her own husband' (p.239). Megan Belurent, who wrote a thesis on Aidoo's play for Brown University, observes that *Anowa* is 'a beautiful young strong-willed woman who refuses to marry any of her suitors and marries for love to the disapproval of her parents'. She adds that *Anowa* cannot bear the idea of possessing slaves as she deems it morally wrong.

The story as told by Armah and Aidoo seems to agree in three main respects. Firstly, *Anowa* is an unconventional girl and woman who defies patriarchs. According to Armah (1973) her knowledge about the way 'filled the elders with chagrin'. She also 'discomforted her teachers by reminding them that aggressive hunting was against our way and the proper use of hunting'. Aidoo's *Anowa* defies her parents in her choice of a marriage partner in an age when it was almost an abomination to do so. Physically, they are similarly described. Armah's *Anoa* 'was slender as a fawn stalk' while Aidoo (1970) in her characteristically transliterative language describes her as 'Someone's-Thin-Thread'. Armah (1973) says her body 'was of a deep, even blackness' and Aidoo (1970) agrees describing her figuratively as 'a dainty little pot/ Well-baked/ And polished smooth'. She is uncommonly beautiful for Armah (1973) observes that 'men not commonly known for their lechery grew itchy-eyed looking at her'. Aidoo (1970) describes her as 'beautiful as Korado Ahima' (a comparison readers may not appreciate much since we know nothing about that

beauty) and remarks that she has 'allowed her unusual beauty to cloud her vision of the world.'

Secondly, both writers indicate that *Anoa* smothered oppressors. Armah (1973) informs us that she hates all servitude so fiercely as to kill all those who enslave others. In Aidoo's play (1970), *Anowa* advises her husband: 'Kofi, no man made a slave of his friend and came to much himself. It is wrong. It is evil.' (p.23) She slowly and relentlessly drives her incorrigible husband to commit suicide. Thirdly, both writers mention the fact that the spirit of *Anoa* possesses others after her death. Aidoo (1970) ends her play by tentatively mentioning that *Anowa*'s spirit ranges abroad. Aidoo (1970) writes: 'Ow, if there is life after death, *Anowa*'s spirit will certainly have something to say about that!' (p.64) The traditional Akan belief is that there is life after death. Armah (1973) also informs us that *Anoa*'s spirit possessed 'the women of the desert white men's harem ... who slew our predatory tormentors' (p.21). *Anoa*'s spirit possessed different people at different stages of Armah's story.

Two Thousand Seasons is an ideological statement, for through mythmaking Armah reconstructs the history of Africa. He describes the intense confrontation between patriotic Africans on one side and the white oppressors, the slave dealers and black imitators and collaborators on the other. Wright (1992) expresses his deep antipathy as a Western critic to Armah's book because of the partisan invective, diatribe and racist comments giving certain people, nations and races a monopoly of human vice. Soyinka (1976) praises the book for 'the visionary reconstruction of the past for the purpose of a social direction.' He admits to a 'feeling of discomfort' over aspects of Armah's language and scenes in which 'the humane sensibility tends to recoil a bit.' However, he goes on to remark that the book's 'historic inevitability' rescues it 'from its less defensible excesses.' Okpewho (1980) also comments: 'The tone of the novel is nasty and for the most part intem-

perate ... but nobody who has encountered the flagellating prose of the classic Faulkner will pretend that the language of such intense self-reassessment can be anything like good music.'

Soyinka (1976) has stated that Armah's *Two Thousand Seasons* is not a racist tract but is meant for Africans to clear their minds for its ideological message. One of the ways Armah does this is to assign new and positive semantic significations and connotations to the colour black and pejorative ones to the white colour throughout his works. This is consistent with the overall purpose of Armah's mythmaking: to denigrate whites and all institutions they set up in Africa and to upgrade blacks and their culture. This is against traditional usage of the English Language which defines black as absence of light, dark-skinned, resentful, gloomy, funereal, malignant, diabolical, abominable, unconscionable and unspeakable. The word 'white' traditionally has many positive meanings and associations. It is the colour of fresh snow, connoting innocence, chastity, virtue and freshness. 'White' is also silvery and hoary and as such has the associations of beauty and wisdom. The word can be used negatively in connection with an unhealthy state of the body: pale, wan, ashen and cadaverous are examples. Armah in *Two Thousand Seasons* negates the positive connotations and exploits the negative implications to the full.

Armah describes beautiful and wise black characters, and ugly and stupid white people in *Two Thousand Seasons*. In the myth of Anoa, the priestess has a 'deep even blackness' (p.23). Azania one of the women of the harem is a 'black woman, ... beautiful as a walking dream' and Faisal, the Arab 'screamed his incredulous delight at her being real' (p.35). She is one of the women who plotted and executed the mass murder of the lecherous Arabs. Idawa, who has 'a beauty with no ... disappointment in it' and who fills Koranche the king with so much jealous rage that he causes Ngubane, her husband to be murdered has a colour 'that must have come uninterferred with from night's own

blackness' (p.109). She defies the king not only in the question of marriage but also in supplying the exiled Isanusi with provisions against the king's edict. Abena, another black beauty, 'had a mind that had filled every fundi teacher's mind with joy.'

Consistent with giving the word 'black' positive connotations, Armah (1973) uses the black night to stand for victory and at least the narrator describes three such victories won at night. The women of the harem go into action on 'a dark night', (p.31) 'the mature night', (p.31) 'a night of nights' (p.33) and 'that beautiful night of blackness', (p.34) murdering many Arabs and forcing others to flee back into the desert. One night, 'that good night' (p.67) the askari army pursuing the fleeing people is destroyed completely in an ambush and since then the black vulture becomes the totem of those directly involved in that fight because they used the call of the black vulture as their cry of recognition. This victory was possible mainly because of 'the darkness of the night'. (p.70) The experts of the spear, the arrow and the bow attack the ship of the white men 'in the darkest' of a 'dark, propitious' night. (p.123) One night, five askaris sent to kill Isanusi are executed and 'in the best darkness of that night, a voice crossed Anoa ... calling memory to a remembrance of our way.' (p.297) One other night the liberators attack and kill the white hunter, storm the palace and kill the king Koranche after forcing him to confess his crimes. (p.302)

'White' and words associated with it have been used pejoratively throughout Armah's works especially in *Two Thousand Seasons*. Only two women have been characterized pejoratively in *Two Thousand Seasons* and they are understandably white. The first is Bentum's wife, 'a dry white woman more than half deaf, blind in one eye, with a body so dead...' (p.142), 'an apparition exactly like a ghost: a pale white woman in white clothes ... and a white hat. ... This singular apparition had blighted all surrounding life into rigidity.' (p. 187) The second is the white governor's wife, 'something white

like leprosy triumphant, her body bloated in a watery way, much as if she had been made out of a single giant yaw.' (p.265) The white characters in the story invariably have something wrong with the way they walk. The white soldier walks 'as if his bones had nothing soft between them.' (p.125) One of the white men who visits Anoa is a short man dressed in a white robe 'covering him almost completely so that in his movement he was just a red head carrying itself forward above folds of white cloth.' (p.125) One of the white men at the castle has one wooden leg and is therefore impaired in movement. Bentum's wife, a white woman, moves 'with a disjointed, severe, jerky walk ... like that of a beginning stilt-walker...' (p.186).

The most recurrent of the pejorative associations of whiteness in *Two Thousand Seasons* is death. Armah links death and whiteness because death generally, and for Africans in particular, is closely associated with the white colour. The 'white deathly people' are 'harbingers of death' and they bring 'glittering death'. 'White' and associated words like 'pale' and 'ashen' are used as negative intensifying epithets. Examples include 'whitest death', 'ashen death' and 'pale extinction'. These suggest death of the worst kind. An example of 'whitest death' is dead slaves being thrown into the sea. One of the slaves remark: 'Ancestors, this death is so new. We cannot join you. We cannot even be wandering ghosts.' And another adds: 'No. This is complete destruction, death with no returning.' (p.199) The link between white men and fire is made many times in *Two Thousand Seasons*. The destroyers bombard Anoa and other villages on the least pretext. 'In the night they saw flames bursting on the river, then they heard sounds like smaller thunderclaps. ... The sounds were of people dying, of houses burning, of earth breaking up under burning iron.' There are many images of death and decay in the novel and they are all metaphors describing the whites in the novel who are killers, predators, destroyers, beggars, snakes and are associated with devastation, extermination, annihila-

tion, fragmentation, theft, murder and trickery. One powerful image in the Prologue of *Two Thousand Seasons* is the white sand of the desert and it is used to symbolize the white man. Just as the desert is sandy and porous and shows its insatiable nature by drinking up every drop of water fed to it, so Armah says, is the white man. The desert also blasts 'with destruction whatever touches it' (p.ix) and the white man in the novel corrupts the people and the environment he comes in contact with. Everyone who comes in contact with the white men like the askaris, the trained bodyguards of the white men, the religious fundamentalists and the black slave dealers invariably acquires the physical and behavioral characteristics of the whites. There is not one king who is presented positively in the novel. They are all like the white men, whom the institution of kingship imitates, violent, greedy, lecherous and power-hungry.

OSIRIS RISING

Armah's *Osiris Rising* is based mainly on the myth of Osiris. The myth as given by Frazer (1947) and Bulfinch (2004) agree in many respects. According to the myth, Osiris, Isis, Set and Nephthys – are all children of Geb, (or Seb or Keb as the name is variously transcribed) the god of the earth, and Nut, (or Nwt) the goddess of the sky. Osiris marries his sister Isis while Set marries Nephthys. Osiris, the founder of the Egyptian civilization, is reputed to be a great king loved by his people. He reclaims Egypt from savagery by the introduction of the cultivation of wheat and barley, thus helping the Egyptians to abandon cannibalism and taking to a grain diet. He discovers and teaches men simple agricultural technologies like training the vine to poles, treading the grapes and harnessing the ox to a plough. He then gives his people an elaborate code of laws to regulate life in society, institutes marriage and a civil organization and teaches the Egyptians how to worship the gods.

Eager to communicate these beneficent discoveries to all mankind, he commits the govern-

ment of Egypt to his wife, Isis and travels over the world, diffusing the blessings of civilization and agriculture wherever he goes. He returns to Egypt loaded with gifts. His brother, the god Set, who is jealous of his power and popularity plots against him with some associates. He fashions a highly decorated sarcophagus and once when they are drinking and making merry, he brings the coffer and jestingly promises to give it to the one whom it should exactly fit. It fits none present but when Osiris lies in the box, the conspirators quickly run and slam the lid down on him, nail it fast, solder it with molten lead, and fling the coffer into the Nile. When Isis hears of it, she puts on mourning attire and wanders disconsolately up and down seeking the body. She finds the box with the body and hides it in the forest. Set stumbles on the coffer while hunting and tears the corpse into fourteen pieces and flings them all over Egypt. The goddess Isis, consort of Osiris, diligently searches for and finds the pieces, reassembles them and with the help of some gods, gives new life to Osiris, who becomes the ruler of the underworld. The pregnant Isis gives birth to a son posthumously to Osiris called Horus. He grows up to avenge the death of his father on Set.

Armah carefully associates the awesome security headquarters which dominates *Osiris Rising* with the sarcophagus in which Osiris is entombed alive. Both of them are carefully and expensively constructed. One is a complex, 'complete with hunting lodge, polo grounds, stables, a private casino and a yacht basin' while the other is a 'highly decorated' box according to Frazer (1947) and a 'chest of precious wood' in the words of Bulfinch (2004). Armah states that the Kaiserlever Corporation, a multinational, afraid that it might be nationalized because of the socialist rhetoric of the government specially brings in 'a psychological warfare specialist' who studies the situation and the president carefully and recommends that a holiday resort should be built and presented as a gift to the president. It is presented at the right time for the president nearly

had a breakdown, ostensibly due to overwork but really because he did not delegate responsibility. Set in the myth, we are informed, takes his brother's measurements by stealth and makes a coffer that exactly fits him. In both cases then the resort and the sarcophagus are built exactly to fit the owners.

Both are such deadly gifts like the proverbial white elephant which the kings of Siam presented to courtiers they disliked so that the gift would ruin them. The sarcophagus ended the life of Osiris. The complex was slowly smothering the economic life of the nation. It was equipped with a yacht which was acquired with appropriation from the national budget. To construct a yacht basin there was dredging and the construction of locks at great cost again paid for by the people. For the president's peace of mind, modern gadgets of surveillance were procured every now and then. Military hardware, some a gift from the American government and others bought out of the scant resources of the nation, fit for a battalion of the army was kept at the security headquarters. A vicious cycle had been created. Due to the profligate security spending, the immediate needs of the people were not satisfied and they responded by agitations and demonstrations which the security people gave as pretext for more security spending. The state was being suffocated because of the gift just as Osiris was.

It is no wonder then that Armah (1994) describes this massive high-tech security headquarters as a structure of unrelieved whiteness. The ground on which it stands is 'paved with white concrete' (p.37), the structure itself is a 'monumental upthrust of pale concrete and gleaming metal' (p.21) and the interior is described as 'an unrelieved sheet of silvery metal' (p.22). Ast, the heroine of the novel, observes and describes two gates: one 'a metallic gray gate' (p.21) and the other 'a steel gate' (p.23). On both sides of the first gate and at fixed intervals are 'a series of silvery metal guard towers' (p.22). The walls at one point are

'tiled a uniform white' (p.23) and where the white tiling ends, there is 'a granite wall with a high narrow white door'(p.23). This riot of whiteness – concrete, gray metal, glass, aluminium and white tiles – gives us the impression of a white elephant which the security organization actually is.

The monstrous security headquarters is also associated with white light. At the airport security office, whenever the officer gets connected to the director's office, 'a white light went on' (p.16). At the headquarters itself, Ast describes the quality of light as 'a surfeit of fluorescent brilliance' and as 'garishly lit with fluorescent tubes in a continuous line at a height of two metres.' (p.23) The plain suggestion here is a wasteful display of light and this wanton extravagance is seen in everything about the security headquarters and the service itself. Just before Asar is shot by security agents on the orders of Seth, Ast describes a battery of arc lamps lit to show Asar's boat clearly as being 'whiter than day' in the night (p.303). The scream of bullets as they shoot Asar is 'a metallic stutter', and light from their fire turns the world 'ashen'.

The colour white is also associated with Seth, the villain of the novel and the director of security. The BMW saloon car with which Seth pays Ast a very unwelcome visit is 'metallic gray' (p.58). Seth's penis has 'a reddish square' mark which Ast wrongly takes to be a birthmark but which, in truth is a mark of syphilis or some other sexually transmitted disease. His discharge is 'a thick yellow pus' (p.64). The writer carefully demonstrates both the external and internal decay of the security organization and its director. Armah (1969) describes the Atlantic-Caprice hotel in *The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born* in a similar fashion as 'a useless structure' and 'an insulting white in the concentrated gleam of the hotel's spotlight' (p.10). It is a place of the swinging life and corruption, where 'women, so horribly young, are fucked and changed like pants ...' (p.89).

In *The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born*, Armah's first novel, the colour white, light and other words associated with them are linked with corruption. The symbol or image of what Armah calls 'the gleam' or the swinging life in that novel is a sudden flash of bright light. Those who give out this shining light are referred to as heroes of the gleam. Koomson, the Minister, is a powerful symbol of this swinging world of bright lights. Of Koomson's sitting room, the author writes: 'It was amazing how much light there was in a place like this. It glinted off every object in the room.' (Armah, 1969) Light glinted off many shiny and useless objects: ashtrays, a silver box, a small toy-like pistol, marble tops of the little side tables, a row of glass-covered shelves, a multitude of polished dishes and glasses. When the Minister appeared, 'he was in a dressing gown, a shiny thing in its own right'. Later, Mrs Koomson also made her entrance and she was wearing 'a dress that seemed to catch each individual ray and aim it straight into the beholding eye.' (p.148) In *Two Thousand Seasons* kings associated with the white men like Koranche and Atobra are given mirrors and other things which shone 'fiercely in the sun'. The author describes such people as having the eyes of children set in adult heads.

'THE WAY' AND 'THE ROAD'

Another example where Armah invests words with new associations is his use of 'way' and 'road'. The way is described as 'the way of creation', 'the way of reciprocity', 'the living way', 'the fecundity of our way', and 'the way of life' to show that it is live-giving. The first and most important historical period in Armah's story is the period of the way. During this period the people adhere to a way of life, a set of principles which they use to govern the society and which makes the community great. The best explanation of 'the way' is what Lindfors (1980) describes as Armah's most compact formulation of 'the way' and what Wright (1989) calls 'the ten commandments of the way'.

Our way is reciprocity. The way is wholeness. Our way knows no oppression. Our way destroys oppression. Our way is hospitable to guests. The way repels destroyers. Our way produces before it consumes. The way produces far more than it consumes. Our way creates. The way destroys only destruction. (p.62)

The triad of terms used to characterize 'the way' is 'connectedness' which is linking the past with the present and the future; 'reciprocity' which has two meanings: the cooperation of men and women and 'giving, but only to those from whom we receive in equal measure'; and finally, 'creation' which stands for productivity. The narrator is sure that the greatness of the society lies in the moral and religious revival of these principles of the past. The narrator is so obsessed with 'the way' that he saturates us with it, on some pages mentioning it more than eight times. The writer thus demonstrates the hope that 'the way' would become the principle by which the people would live once more. The narrator shows the importance of the way when he makes the following comment: 'If necessity is for the land or the way to be lost, better then the land.' (p.63)

Armah believes that the resurgence of Africa depends on going back to these principles which once governed the society. The problem is that he does not clearly give us an account of how these principles actually worked in practice. The way then looks like a standard the people aspired to and like all principles, never attaining in any era. In this connection, Frye (1971) observes:

Before time began, many mythologies tell us, the right way of life, in a body of laws, doctrines or ritual duties, was given by gods or ancestors to their willful and disobedient children, who forgot or corrupted it. All disaster and bad luck follows from departing from that way, all prosperity from returning to it. (p.38)

'The way' as Armah talks about it could be only a 'body of laws' for 'willful and disobedient children' who 'corrupted it'. In Anoa's prophecy, she saturates us with repetitions of a return to 'the way' as the solution of the community's problems. *Osiris Rising* takes us far back to the beginnings of the Ancient Egyptian Empire which, even though Armah does not say it, may exemplify the principles of 'the way'.

'The way' is contrasted with 'road' or 'highway' in *Two Thousand Seasons*. A road is traditionally an agent of development for it facilitates the movement of people and goods from one place to another. Armah, however, links the road with death and destruction. There is 'the desert road', 'white road', 'alien road', 'the road of death', 'the predators' road', 'the white destroyers' road', 'the road of destruction, the road of a stupid, childish god'. There is no physical road in *Two Thousand Seasons* and so its use is metaphorical. Wright (1989) writes: 'Roads are always destructive in Armah's novels.' 'The road' thus symbolizes the totality of the white man's way of doing things. In *KMT: in the house of life* (2002), Armah lumps the school, the church and the prison together and he describes them as the 'abattoir of minds.' They are all sited on hills and they are all housed in white structures. These exemplify aspects of the white road and Armah is saddened that there is a 'rushing multitude' along the white road because it is the fashion of the time.

CONCLUSION

Armah, in his writings, consistently rails against the colonialist as one of the causes of Africa's problems. His dual objective is to demonize white people and the institutions they have set up in Africa and to glorify black people and African institutions. This is to conscientize his people for his ideological message. Armah attempts, through this to balance centuries of black degradation. This attempt, however, goes to the opposite extreme. The solution to Africa's developmental problems does not

lie in rejecting everything white and accepting anything black but in judiciously selecting the best in both cultural settings. Armah himself demonstrates in *Osiris Rising* that education can be reformed through the restructuring of courses and syllabuses to play a crucial role in liberating Africans from poverty and disease.

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