

ART AND SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY -

TWO PATHS TO COMMITMENT

by

Rhonda Jones

*The writer is either on the side of the oppressed or the oppressor.*

Chinua Achebe (March 1975)<sup>1</sup>

*There is a need for the African writer to come to terms with himself as either one of the underdog majority or as one of a privileged minority.*

Ezekiel Mphahlele (1969)<sup>2</sup>

Public statements announcing, advocating or urging commitment to a cause are often more emotional than those that are written. The tendency to play up to a live audience, to act out a role in keeping with what one thinks one's public image is, sometimes makes a writer say things that are more emotionally charged than his writings. A critic noticing the two apparent levels of commitment wonders which of them reflects the true stance of the writer, and may feel justified to level a charge of insincerity, an accusation that would turn most writers to the sword in preference to even the vitriol of the pen. Chinua Achebe and Ezekiel Mphahlele in various publications have addressed themselves to questions regarding the role of the African writer and his art. They view art as a craft that is responsible to African society, and as artists, regard themselves accountable to their societies. But there is often a contradiction between what they stated in articles, interviews, etc. as synthesized above, and what their early literatures actually express. It seems, that having realized this they are now working hard towards making their literatures committed to their society. Although they have not been totally successful, their attempts are commendable considering that they come from disparate backgrounds and are treading separate paths towards the same goal.

One of the predominant factors that has influenced Achebe and Mphahlele's attitudes is the past and present socio-political conditions in Africa. This is not to infer that an artist is merely a product of his environment but rather that in the case of these two writers it seems to have had a powerful and shaping effect. Their views about the role of African artists are attempts to alter

attitudes in their environment through art. Achebe and, to a lesser degree, Mphahlele see the African artist and his art as playing a vital role in depicting and criticizing African society, and as a result of their growing desire to make African literature meaningful to African people, insist that literature should direct itself to society.

Throughout his interviews and articles (1962-1975), Chinua Achebe views art as a craft and as a relevant and meaningful record of African society. Significantly, his early comments are general and few and do not differ from what has been said by western literary critics. In the lecture on, "The Role of the Artist in a New Nation" (1964), Achebe feels that the problems in what he calls "the new Nigeria" should be expressed in a dramatic and memorable form. For him, literature has functional as well as aesthetic aims, and he agrees with Western literary critics that content and form are equally important. In the mid 60's, Achebe places more emphasis on the functional aspect of art. His views are more specific and directed to an African context. Views on art as an educational tool in the society are expressed in "The Novelist as Teacher" (1965). Art can educate the African about the dignity of life in the past--a past that colonialism has distorted--and serve to instill a sense of pride and foster a positive identity.

*I would be quite satisfied if my novels (especially the ones I set in the past) did not more than teach my readers that their past--with all its imperfections--was not one long night of savagery from which the first European acting on God's behalf delivered them. Perhaps what I write is applied art as distinct from pure.<sup>3</sup>*

This attitude about art can be traced to the damages that an overzealous Christianity inflicted on himself and others.

*When I was a schoolboy it was unheard of to stage a Nigerian dance at any of our celebrations. We were told and we believed that our dances were heathen. The Christian and proper thing to do was for the boys to drill with wooden swords and the girls to perform, of all things, Maypole dances. Beautiful clay bowls and pots were only seen in the homes of the heathen.<sup>4</sup>*

The same attitude can also be said to have provided the impetus for his writing *Things Fall Apart* (1958). In this novel, he strives to correct the negative attitudes about African culture that resulted from contact with western culture. The novel conveys positive and yet realistic images of African society before the coming of the European. Part I shows a well-ordered

society that is able to provide the basic economic and psychological securities for its people. Yet, this society is limited in its ability to adapt to change and so as the title suggests, "things fall apart." The novel captures Achebe's views on aesthetics and his concern about the functional accountability that literature should be expressed in a dramatic and memorable form, first by creating the dramatic effect through the principle of conflict and the element of fate, and secondly, by making the language memorable. Okonkwo is the epitome of the positive aspects of his society; yet his negative aspects bring him into conflict with the community. His accidental killing of a kinsman provides an element of fate and he is so skillfully described in the beginning of the book that the reader is not likely to forget him as the story progresses.

*That was many years ago, twenty or more, and during this time Okonkwo's fame had grown like a bush-fire in the harmattan. He was tall and huge, and his bushy eyebrows and wide nose gave him a very serene look. He breathed heavily, and it was said, that, when he slept, his wives and children in their outhouses could hear him breathe. When he walked, his heels hardly touched the ground and he seemed to walk on springs, as if he was going to pounce on somebody. And he did pounce on people quite often. He had a slight stammer and whenever he was angry and could not get his words out quickly enough, he would use his fists. He had no patience with unsuccessful men. He had no patience with his father.<sup>5</sup>*

The sense of tragedy that the reader feels about the life and death of Okonkwo occurs because he has been introduced with remarkable vividness.

Unlike Achebe who adapts certain western aesthetics to an African context, Ezekiel Mphahlele uses it as a reference point in discussing his art. To him art is a craft and a vehicle for social criticism. Throughout his development as a critic and writer, he has demonstrated a reliance on western aesthetics. The chapter entitled, "White on Black", the subject of his B.A. thesis at the University of South Africa and which appears in *The African Image* (1974 revised edition), reflects his feelings about art as expressing the paradoxes and complexities of life--concepts that have their roots in western aesthetics. Since the chapter appears in the revised edition of the book the reader must assume that Mphahlele is at present in agreement with the ideas presented therein. In "White on Black" he selects Joseph Conrad, E.M. Forster and William Faulkner as the three major white novelists who achieve a competency in depicting cultural groups other than their own. Mphahlele selects these authors primarily because they are able to go beyond the race problem in depicting human character, and into the more subtle aspects of human existence. There is no doubt that he identifies with literature that attempts to depict the complexities of life.

Prior to the publication of his work entitled *Voices in the Whirlwind* (1967), Mphahlele asks, "Why should *la littérature engagée* be so spoiled as to want to be judged by different standards from those which have been tested by tradition?" This statement appearing in an article entitled "A Reply" in 1965 expresses the same feeling that is present in the chapter entitled "Voices in the Whirlwind: Poetry and Conflict in the Black World" and in an article "The Function of Literature at the Present Time: The Ethnic Imperative" (1974). In "Voices in the Whirlwind:" Mphahlele addresses two literary audiences: those individuals from the western literary tradition, and those Black Americans who are attempting to define a new aesthetic, stressing that there is a standard of literary ideas and concepts, whose roots are in western culture, but which could take on another dimension when used by other cultural groups. Agreeing with the architects of western literary tradition that poetry has moral overtones and that the language of poetry is memorable, he concludes that the poetry of conflict by Black American poets expresses a deep-felt emotion. It is memorable speech because "it's very diction is a way of feeling or searching for equilibrium of a people's yearnings."<sup>6</sup> Mphahlele infers that the uniquely black character that Black American literature is trying to assert may not be so unique and that Christopher Caudwell's statement in *Illusion and Reality: A Study of the Resources of Poetry* that poetry expresses a collective consciousness, is really no different than the Black Arts Movement's collective concept of art that speaks directly to the needs and aspirations of Black Americans. Mphahlele then warns against the danger of "finding ourselves having out of sheer crusading zeal, dismissed elements of Western aesthetics that are either built in our new modes of expression or have already been criticized by western critics."<sup>7</sup>

To Mphahlele, certain black artists such as Gwendolyn Brooks and Leroi Jones have made a synthesis of poetry, "a state of mind and poetry as powerful language--the synthesis of a language one feels compelled to use by force of political circumstances--and that which he wants to write because he is who he is."<sup>8</sup> He is in fact saying that Black Americans can express their unique concerns in a poem that has its aesthetic roots in a western tradition.

In "The Function of Literature at the Present Time: The Ethnic Imperative" Mphahlele expresses similar ideas that were stated in the preceding article. He speaks of tensions existing between art, whose rules are from the western literary tradition, and the social realities that the artist wishes to express. He also assumes that discussions on art should take place with western aesthetics as the reference point.

Mphahlele's reliance on western aesthetics can be attributed to three possible factors. Unlike Achebe, he attended a university where western aesthetics were rigidly proscribed, and any type of nationalistic spirit was totally absent. Finally he can identify with the complexities and paradoxes that western aesthetics addresses itself to, because "paradox has in fact defined his own life."<sup>9</sup>

The early conferences papers and articles of Mphahlele's stress a need for relevant literature that reflects the social realities of the times. In an interview with Dennis Duerden, in 1963 at the Conference on African Literature on University Curriculum, Mphahlele pointed out that much of the literature that is being taught in Africa is outdated and not in touch with present social realities. The purpose of the Conference was to integrate the teaching of African writing in the university syllabuses and provide meaningful literature, particularly for African students who could better relate to literature that addressed the problems of their society. In the article "A Reply" Mphahlele stated that art must have a social significance to the people it addresses.

*Surely meaningful art has social significance or relevance and this very fact implies social-criticism-protest in the broadest sense of the word.*<sup>10</sup>

His attitude that literature is a criticism of life has much to do with his experiences in South Africa where the economic, political and social conditions of Blacks demands a response from black South African writers. Consequently his autobiographical novel, *Down Second Avenue* (1959) "the autobiography of most Africans" criticizes and responds to the quality of life in South Africa. Employing a remarkably subtle yet alarming tone, Mphahlele is able to re-examine with seriousness and warmth past experiences from his life in South Africa. Chapters 1-2 present what life is like in the rural sector of the country. It is not only the poverty that arouses his memory, but the communal fellowship that he experienced with friends and family. Yet, in a scene around a fireplace, he is able to capture the disturbing realities that hover over this communal setting. Old Segone tells the story of Thema to young Mphahlele and his friends.

*And then Thema turned round and said men were not brothers in the city. The Black man must enter the white man's house through the backdoor. The Black man does most of the dirty work. When a white man who hasn't gone far in school is given such work he says I'm not a Kaffir! Black man cleans the streets but mustn't walk freely on the pavement; Black man must build houses for the white man but cannot live in them; Black man cooks the white man's food but eats what is left over. Don't listen to anyone bluff you and say Black and white are brothers.*<sup>12</sup>

The following chapters describe what it is like to live in urban cities of South Africa. The references to poverty of black people in the townships carry a message and yet are well integrated into the framework of the story, thus increasing the impact. To illustrate the psychological damages that life in South Africa does to the black man, he describes one of his characters, Dinku Dikae as a man who trembles at the presence of the law but whose repressed fear ultimately surfaces leading to the murder of a policeman. Thus the quality of life under apartheid affects both blacks and whites.

Whereas Chinua Achebe and Ezekiel Mphahlele are very conservative and western oriented in their writings about the role of African writers and their art, their public pronouncements and their poems have gone the opposite direction, pointing the way their literary works hopefully would follow. In the last two years Achebe has made more in-depth statements about the meaning of art in Africa before public audiences. His lectures and discussions at the University of Washington in April of 1973 and at the University of Texas at Austin in March 1975 demonstrate these strong opinions. In his opening statements at the Conference in Washington (which he is willing to modify) he states, "Art for art's sake is just another piece of deodorized dog shit."<sup>13</sup> It is interesting that Achebe feels it necessary to modify his statements before a public audience. The artist is conscious of his audience and how his statements will affect them. Achebe feels that "art for art's sake" has no purpose or responsibility to society. Such words as "use," "purpose" and "value" are beneath the divine concerns of this type of art. The type of art that Achebe favored should be an integrated and unifying function of society. Art is and was always in the service of man.<sup>14</sup>

His example of art playing the unifying role was the Mbari ceremony of Owerri Igbo in Nigeria. The ceremony which affirmed the Owerri Igbo's belief in the indivisibility of art in society, required a house of images for the earth goddess Alu to be built by the members of the community. Since the project was not the exclusive concern of a particular caste or secret society, "there was not a rigid barrier between the makers of culture and its consumers."<sup>15</sup> As Achebe put it "Art belongs to all and is a function of society."<sup>16</sup> At the conference at Austin, Achebe states that the concept of "art for art's sake" is a political statement. It is a commitment to the status quo. It implies that the writer should not upset things, and this Achebe did not agree with. As he had stated earlier at the University of Washington Conference, "art is a political thing." The fact that Achebe never made this kind of assertion before the Biafran War shows the effect his deep involvement in the war had on him. It must be pointed out, however,

that he still felt that although literature could discuss politics or liberation, it still had to adhere to the rules of art for it to be a meaningful work. Art is not misplaced sentiment. The content alone does not make a good poem or novel.

*What I know is that you can have a good idea, like saying  
I want my people to be free, but that's not a good poem,  
that's not a novel. So there is something else you have  
to bring to it if you want to write about it and make it  
a poem or novel. . . . This is where your craft or art  
comes in.*

*Christmas in Biafra and other Poems* (1973) is an example of Achebe's views on art as a "political thing." In the poem "Refugee Mother and Child," he records the destructive nature of war on its most innocent victims, women and children. Responding emotionally to what he saw during the war, he repeatedly mentions the horrifying aspects of life that war brings.

*The air was heavy with odours  
of diarrheas of unwashed children  
with washed-out ribs and dried-up  
bottoms struggling in laboured  
steps behind blown empty bellies.18*

Achebe as persona in the poem fails to re-organize his experiences and as a result the language of the poem becomes an embellishment of emotion. He has not applied his statement that art has rules of its own and the content alone does not make a good poem. The poem lacks any objectivity or subtlety, and is similar to those included in the section entitled "Poems About War."

This section of *Christmas in Biafra and other Poems* is an example of what can happen when the African artist forces poetry to make a political statement. Poetry can make a political statement and be a meaningful work of art, but Achebe is unsuccessful in doing this because he sentimentalizes his experiences. It is a dilemma the African artist might find himself in when he attempts to express his strong political feelings within the confines of a literary genre. Although an artist can be politically committed to a cause, and be able to express his experiences in an art form, writing "political poetry" not only involves personal feeling but also skill.

Achebe thus sees art as a flexible term that can express the needs and objectives of the African artist. He also views it as an educational tool and an avenue to express communal ideas and make political statements. These views have no doubt been influenced by his experiences as a young man under colonialism and a mature adult participating in the Biafran War. He has, through his art, sought to change attitudes towards the socio-political events that have affected Africa. The presence of a live audience has also in-

fluenced the tone of his statements.

For Mphahlele the language of poetry communicates on a personal as well as communal level. At the African-Scandinavian Writer's Conference at Stockholm in 1967, he expresses this attitude:

*There is the language that is very personal; it is personal, immediate experience and the poetry that tells you that, in terms of poetry, I mean. And there is the language that you feel, this is public poetry. It is not immediately felt by the individual who is writing. What he is trying to capture and demonstrate what he thinks is a communal feeling.<sup>19</sup>*

In "The Function of Literature at the Present Time: The Ethnic Imperative" he shows how art can be functional and serve a particular ethnic group in society. The ethnic imperatives in literature can record the cultural revolts of a group, determine what language it is going to restore and present the desired images that the group wishes to project. His poem, "Death II" (1974) demonstrates how art can serve a particular ethnic group within society. "Death II" asserts a positive image to the Black South African. It shows the growth of political consciousness of a young South African, beginning with him as a young boy looking at the statue of Paul Kruger. The statue, a symbol of the ruthless authority that came to South Africa and is now present in the country, instills fear in the youth.

*You're dead Paul Kruger dead  
dead as a treeless rock  
nothing you can do to me,  
And still fear licks at you and touches a nerve..<sup>20</sup>*

As the poem progresses the history of the confrontation between Whites and Africans unfolds. The youth Masilo sees the illusion and the lies behind the history of the "master race" and recognizes the effects of the pillage and plunder of Kruger and his men. Masilo now responds with anger:

*Monuments of hate!  
Masilo cries:  
heroes nurse their children  
on the milk of greed  
and savagery.<sup>21</sup>*

The final scenes of the poem show the present condition of the young man who is imprisoned for retaliating against the South African government. What has preceded has been a dream of the different levels of political consciousness that led to the open vengeance. At death Masilo's convictions are strong and his spirit appeased.

From the foregoing it can be seen that Chinua Achebe and Ezekiel Mphahlele share similar views on the meaning and role of art in Africa. These views are not only influenced by the socio-political conditions that have and do exist in their societies, but an attempt to respond and assert new attitudes and directions for African people. The relationship between these artists and their society appears self-reinforcing. Furthermore they appear to have a common meeting point of ideas because of their experiences with colonialism. Mphahlele feels that art should be a social criticism of life because of his peoples' confrontations with the South African government. Achebe believes that art should be functional and serve to educate Africans about their past, because of his experiences with colonial attitudes and practices. Mphahlele infers while Achebe states that literature can make political statements and yet be a meaningful work of art. They feel that certain social conditions call for a response and therefore African literature must address itself to these problems. Despite their different terminology they desire through art to increase the African's awareness of himself as an instrument of change, as well as the positive and negative aspects of African culture and society. Finally, they feel that African art must ultimately be accountable to African people if it is to have any meaning at all.

To some degree the context in which Achebe and Mphahlele choose to express their ideas about art and the role of the artist in the African society seem to have influenced what they actually said. It is therefore not surprising that articles written by Achebe on the subject reflect development and growth. In 1962, in an interview with Lewis Nkosi, Achebe did not see much chance of the Nigerian writer having any great impact on the society, because the writing was so new. In the mid 60's his attitude towards the importance of the artist changes, a period in which he can be called a cultural nationalist and teacher. It is then (at a lecture in 1964) that he makes his first direct statement on the social responsibility of the African writer—that the African writer does have a duty to make a statement. Just as nationalists in Nigeria showed in their early responses to colonialism that the African was a unique member of humanity, Achebe as one of the early Nigerian novelists also wished to settle the debate over black humanity.

*It is inconceivable to me that a serious writer could stand aside from this debate, or be indifferent to this argument which calls his full humanity in question. For me, at any rate, there is a clear duty to make a statement. This is my answer to those who say that a writer should be writing about contemporary issues--about politics in 1964, about city life, about the last coup d'etat. Of course, these are*

*legitimate themes for the writer but as far as I am concerned the fundamental theme must first be disposed of. This theme-put quite simply-is that African peoples did not hear of culture for the first time from Europeans; that their societies were not mindless but frequently had a philosophy of great depth and value and beauty, that they had poetry and, above all, they had dignity. It is this dignity that many African peoples all but lost in the colonial period, and it is this dignity that they must now regain. The worst things that can happen to any people is the loss of their dignity and self-respect. The writer's duty is to help them regain it by showing them in human terms what happened to them, what they lost.*<sup>22</sup>

In this same lecture, Achebe puts western literary concepts of the role of the artist in an African context. Achebe feels the African writer's duty lies in describing the human condition and he cannot do this without a proper sense of his history. The African writer should be concerned with the question of human values. In *A Man of the People* (1967), Achebe demonstrates it is the absence of values that allows Nanga to be elected by the people, and the corrupt campaign practices, Odili's own corruption and the declining morality in the city to exist. *Man of the People*, set in independent Nigeria, shows that Achebe is objectively willing to criticize his society even after the country has become independent.

Achebe discussed the theme of the writer as teacher in "The Novelist as Teacher" (1965). In this article he states, "I think I can safely deal with one aspect of these relationships which is rarely mentioned....What is not so well documented is what society expects of its artist."<sup>23</sup> Achebe feels his society sees him as a teacher. The African writer is responsible for the re-education of his people, especially in instances where the African child or adult is ashamed of his culture and prefers to identify with foreign values. The outbreak of the Biafran War gave Achebe's thoughts more political slant. His vocabulary changes from the artist as cultural nationalist and teacher to the "committed artist." In the article entitled, "Achebe on Biafra" he states that a writer like himself should be committed to causes and the Biafran War is a just cause. At this point Achebe sees that the African writer has a place in a revolution, "right in the thick of it, possibly at the front of it."<sup>24</sup> In the same article, "Commitment and African Writers" he says, "I believe it is impossible to write anything in Africa without some kind of commitment, some kind of message, some kind of protest."<sup>25</sup> He goes so far as to say, "All our writers whether they are aware of it or not are committed writers."<sup>26</sup> The African artist becomes irrelevant if he does not identify with the

problems and crises of his society, his role is in determining the directions society will take. In the 1973 Conference at Washington, Achebe states, "There is no separation between politics, public life, public themes, public concerns and the individual artist's concern."<sup>27</sup>

Thus Achebe's opinions about the role of the African writer in society has developed into very strong statements that have obviously been influenced by contemporary socio-political conditions in his society. In the past five years his comments appear to be very emotional, though sincere, yet he has not published a book of poetry or novel that expresses these feelings artistically. The socio-political conditions in South Africa have also influenced Ezekiel Mphahlele's concept of himself as an artist. At the beginning of his writing career in 1941, he was interested in writing about people as people and not as political victims. It was not until he became a teacher and felt the political pressures that his writing took a new direction. He wrote a number of things in *Drum Magazine* about the ghetto people and the political pressures over them. From this point on he consistently viewed his role as that of a social critic of society. In the chapter entitled, "Black on Black", of the *African Image* he feels that the South African writer has a dual responsibility. The South African writer must act as a political man as well as practice his craft.

*As in the Black American area of conflict, the African writer in this part of Africa has a dual responsibility, that is once we take it as a given that, like every other imaginative writer in the world, he has a duty to himself. At one level, he has to act as political man, and that means literally think and act. At another he has to practice the art and craft of interpreting his world through images and symbols.*<sup>28</sup>

Mphahlele's article, "African Writers and Commitment" (1969) which appears in *Voices in the Whirlwind* states his views on the committed artist. He feels that a writer can take a stand without using propaganda. He then follows this statement by, "Every writer is committed to something beyond his art, to a statement of values not purely aesthetic—to criticizing life."<sup>29</sup>

Mphahlele also sees the paradox of the committed artist who chooses to write rather than physically become involved in the struggle in South Africa. He asks himself, how can the African artist who deals with paradox, irony, symbols, images, reconcile a play of words with the urgent problems of poverty and racism in his society. Mphahlele has come to terms with this dilemma. He feels that working with images and symbols can help him understand the interconnectedness of life's experiences. The artist rather performs a cultural act. Literary technique is not useless because of its subject matter.

*The man in power is never going to be moved by a poem or a novel. The author of imaginative literature--the artist in general--is performing a cultural act. He is always having to revitalize language and experience. In this sense he is always revolutionary.*

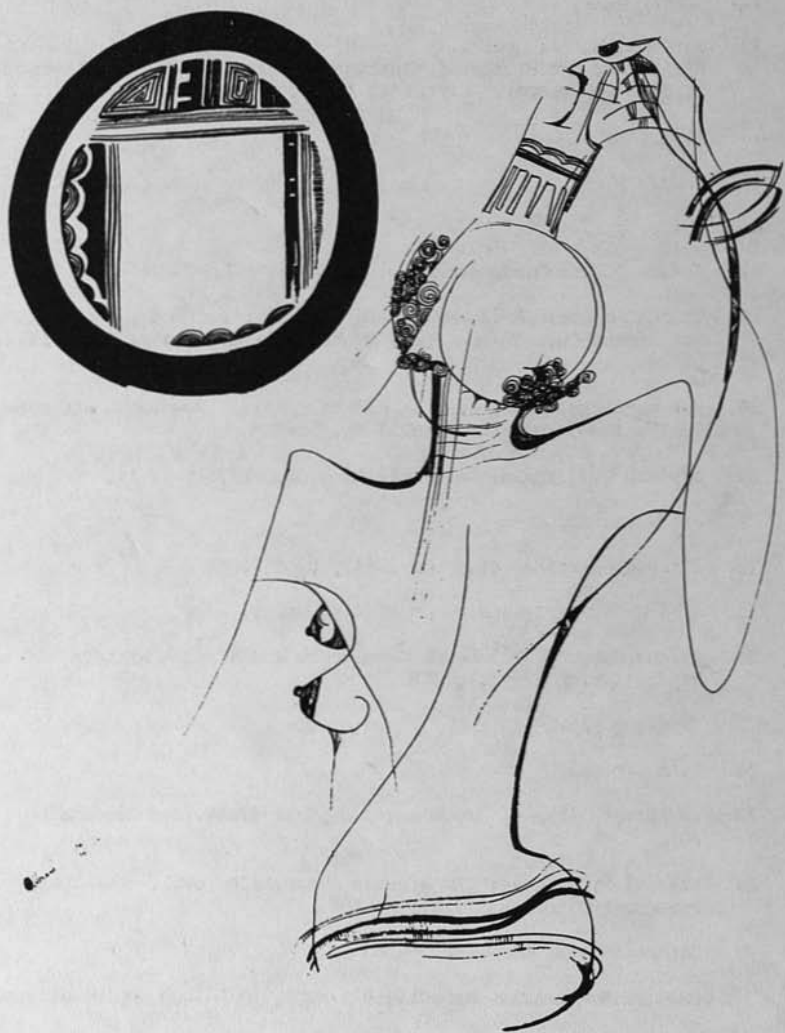
Mphahlele like Achebe on the role of the artist in Africa, has been influenced by events in his background that reflect the increasing political pressures on him since his views against the South African government, his definition of himself as an artist changed. Achebe's experiences with colonialism as well as his experiences with the Biafran war also helped form certain attitudes in his mind about the role of the African artist. Both Mphahlele and Achebe feel that the African artist must demonstrate responsibility as a teacher, cultural nationalist or social critic. They express the dilemma of the African artist who desires to be committed to his art and actively search for political solutions to the problems encompassing their society.

FOOTNOTES

1. "South African Voices", Conference on South African Literature, March 1975.
2. Ezekiel Mphahlele, *The African Image*, (2nd ed.), (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1974) p. 146.
3. G.D. Killam (ed.) *African Writers on African Writing*; "The Novelist as Teacher" (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1973) p. 1.
4. *Ibid.*, "The Role of the Writer in a New Nation", p. 9.
5. Chinua Achebe, *Things Fall Apart*, (London: Heinemann, 1958), p. 1.
6. Ezekiel Mphahlele, *Voices in the Whirlwind*, (New York: Hill & Wang, 1967) p. 17.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 77.
8. *Ibid.*, p. 85.
9. Ezekiel Mphahlele, "Ezekiel Mphahlele's Reply to Adison Gayle, Jr.", *Black World* (January 1974)
10. Gerald Moore (ed.), *African Literature and the University*, (Nigeria, University Ibadan Press, 1965), p. 24.
11. Ezekiel Mphahlele, *Down Second Avenue*, (New York: Doubleday and Co., Inc., 1971), p. xxvi.

12. *Ibid.*, p. 7.
13. Karen L. Morell (ed.), *In Person: Achebe, Awoonor and Soyinka: Africa and Her Writers*, (Austin: The African and Afro American Studies and Research Center in African Literature, 1975), p. 5.
14. *Ibid.*, p. 5.
15. *Ibid.*, p. 9.
16. *Ibid.*, p. 9.
17. *Ibid.*, "Class Discussion", p. 37.
18. Chinua Achebe, *Christmas in Biafra and other Poems*, "Refugee Mother and Child" (New York: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1973), p. 24.
19. Per Waskberg, *The Writer in Modern Africa*, (New York: Africana Publishing Corporation, 1969), p. 78-9.
20. *African Gav* (Texas: Gav Publishing Co., 1975), p. 14.
21. *Ibid.*, p. 15.
22. *Nigeria Magazine*, 81 (June 1964), p. 157.
23. *African Writers on African Writing*, p. 1.
24. Chinua Achebe, "Achebe on Commitment and African Writers, *African Report* (March 1970), p. 16.
25. *Ibid.*, p. 18.
26. *Ibid.*, p. 18.
27. *In Person, Achebe, Awoonor and Soyinka* (Televised Discussion), p. 30.
28. Ezekiel Mphahlele, *The African Image*, (2nd ed.), (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1974), p. 196.
29. *Voices in the Whirlwind*, p. 83.
30. Ezekiel Mphahlele, Mphahlele's Reply to Adison Gayle, Jr., p. 17.

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*Before the Mirror*, brush and ink, 1974/75