Ayi Kwei Armah, a decade younger than either Achebe or Soyinka, is a novelist who has moved from the realm of the conventional novel toward the more austere region of the functional artist. His work is a response to the cultural evolution of the African continent. It also outlines the purpose of the novel in the English language in the setting of a post-colonial African nation-state. The question of the novel's purpose and the social role of the artist have been illustrated in a classic statement in "The Novelist as a Teacher" by Chinua Achebe. He says that a revolution which the novelist should espouse is to help his society regain its belief in itself and "put away the complexes of the years of denigration and self-denigration." The African writer works against a background of social and material deprivations, and a writer like Armah focuses on the ingrained need for an awakening of the communal imagination. He offers us vistas which take us back to the distant African past in order that we might have a fearless glimpse of the present which opens on to the prospect of a future. His first two novels examine the malaise affecting the post-colonial society. These novels depict the morass in which his people find themselves. The genesis of the problem is traced to the departure from inherited ancestral norms. This investigation leads Armah to a form of the historical novel wherein he would trace how each work of art arises out of the particular alternatives of its time. As George
Lukacs states, the genuine categories of literary forms are not simply literary in a sense. They are forms of life especially adapted to the articulation of great alternatives "to the exposition of the maximal inner realities of forces and counter forces." African novelists like Armah have proceeded from this principle to create literary works which give significant insights into the potentialities of the fictional treatment of historical material. These potentialities, evidenced in Armah's thematic concerns and narrative techniques, are sought to be analysed in this study. The examination of the fictional panorama of Armah offers a rewarding study of the social and historical terrain of African fiction, and we notice a fresh sensibility at work and a bold attempt at the creation of a native novelistic form.

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