

Okot p'Bitek's Attitude Towards the African Past: A Study of *Song of Lawino*

Abdulqawi A. S. Altobai^{1,2*}

¹Department of English, College of Science and Humanities, Alquwaiyah, Shaqra University, KSA

²Department of English, Arts College, Taiz University, Yemen

Corresponding Author: Abdulqawi A. S. Altobai, E-mail: abdulqawiy@su.edu.sa

ARTICLE INFO

Article history

Received: April 11, 2020

Accepted: June 14, 2020

Published: July 31, 2020

Volume: 8 Issue: 3

Conflicts of interest: None

Funding: None

Keywords:

Song of Lawino,
Westernization,
Christianity,
Negritude,
African Culture,
Okot p'Bitek,
Colonialism

ABSTRACT

This paper attempts to textually examine Okot p'Bitek's *Song of Lawino* and find out how Okot deals with the theme of the past versus the present (tradition versus modernity) and what attitude he spells out through the song. Is he just advocating an idealization of the past and utterly rejecting the western culture and ways or is he one of those writers who are in favor of a realistic appraisal of the past and blending the modern with the traditional, the western with the African? While the song addresses many issues, this paper will focus on the two issues of Christianity and western education being the most important root causes of the cultural conflict depicted in the song.

INTRODUCTION

In the postcolonial African literature there have been two dominant attitudes towards the African past: romantic embrace and realistic appraisal. The Negritudists romanticize the African past and extol every aspect of it. They idealize the African traditions and praise the virtues of the black race in the most lavish terms. The Negritudists criticize the white people for their lack of these virtues and also for their inhuman treatment of black people. The poetry of Léopold Sédar Senghor and Léon Damas presents the best example of the Negritudist attitude. Other writers realize the need to reclaim and rehabilitate the African past but they do not lapse into romantic idealism. Famous among these are Achebe, Ngugi and Soyinka. Achebe says: "We cannot pretend that our past was one long, technicolour idyll. We have to admit like other peoples past, ours had its good as well as, its bad sides" (9).

The realistic appraisal of the past is also reflected in Achebe's novels. Achebe is more concerned with presenting the African culture and highlighting its presence than with attacking the European cultural structures. Achebe does not idealize the native culture; he shows both the positive as well as the negative aspects of this culture. He shows that the

native culture had its weaknesses which made the colonial intrusion more destructive. Ngugi's attitude is not different from that of Achebe. He believes that Africans had value systems and traditions which had their own logic which was not understandable to the Europeans. The African traditions, Ngugi argues, were "meaningful and wholesome" to the African community (Ngugi 35). Ngugi even condemns the Church as the "greatest cause of the misshaping of African souls and cultural alienation" (Ngugi 35). However, he does not advocate a total rejection of the European cultural structures or regression to the past. He wants the present to be grafted onto the trunks of the African traditions.

Okot p'Bitek (1931-1982) is a Ugandan poet and scholar who wrote in both his native language Acoli and English. He is "one of the major figures in East African literature and the founder of an influential school of poetry... one of the first poets of his generation to have made rhetorical strategies borrowed from traditional culture to be the basis of a new poetics" (Okumu 573). The important work which brought him to literary fame is *Song of Lawino* which Okot wrote originally in Luo, his mother tongue as *Wer Pa Lawino* and then translated personally into English. This paper attempts to textually examine Okot p'Bitek's *Song of Lawino* and find

out how Okot deals with the theme of the past versus the present (tradition versus modernity) and what attitude he spells out through this song. Is he just advocating an idealization of the past and utterly rejecting the western culture and ways or is he one of those writers in favor of a realistic appraisal of the past and blending the modern with the traditional, the western with the African? While the song addresses many issues, this paper focuses on the two issues of Christianity and western education being the most important root causes of the cultural conflict depicted in the song.

The writers mentioned above deal with the theme of confrontation between the European culture and the African culture directly. In their works we see the African cultural structures collapse under the powerful intrusion of the western colonial culture. What we see is destruction affecting the basic cultural, social and political structures of the African society. Okot deals with a late stage of the confrontation between the cultural systems of the west and the African ones. This is a stage when the western ways of life, western taste and western codes of social behavior had already found ardent admirers among Africans, especially the middle class educated people, a stage in which western lifestyle, standards and codes had already penetrated subtly among the generation exposed to western education.

DISCUSSION

It is clear that one of Okot p'Bitek's major concerns in his career as a writer was to effect a "cultural revolution". *Song of Lawino* is part of Okot's struggle for cultural restoration or "cultural redefinition" as Lindfors calls it ("Songs" 145). Okot p'Bitek says in one of his interviews: "I want to suggest that all my writings, whether they are anthropological monographs, studies of religion, essays, songs, poems, or even traditional stories and proverbs..., all of them are ammunition for one big battle: the battle to decide where we here in Africa are going and what kind of society we are building." (qtd. in Lindfors, *Comparative Approaches* 76). In his *Africa's Cultural Revolution*, Okot asserts that his essays are part of the struggle "dedicated to the total demolition of foreign cultural domination and the restoration and promotion of Africa's proud culture to its rightful place" (vii).

In *Song of Lawino*, Okot uses a domestic situation of a wife called Lawino whose husband, after his exposure to western education and conversion to Christianity, starts despising her. Lawino complains bitterly about her husband's abusive behavior and derision of everything African. The husband Ocol (whose name translates as "blackman") is married to another woman – Clementine – who is westernized in her ways. This situation is used to address the more serious debate of the European versus the African and the question of cultural identity and cultural restoration. The dramatic possibilities of Lawino's rivalry with Clementine over Ocol are cleverly exploited to reveal the ways the parties to the debate think of their native traditions and the western ones.

Some readers view *Song of Lawino* as a simple personal story. These readers miss altogether Okot's main purpose in the song. Okot's purpose is not to tell us of a simple domestic situation of a wife's quarrel with her husband

but to use the situation to address a more serious issue: the effects of colonization and westernization on African identity and African ways of life. Ngugi wa Thiong'o says that such readers "turn the fundamental opposition between two value-systems into a mere personal quarrel between Lawino and her husband.... The poem is an incisive critique of bourgeois mannerisms and colonial education and values" (75).

Though the issues addressed in the song are not quite different from issues that have been addressed in some African novels, *Song of Lawino* is the first African poem which is based on African oral traditions and addresses the issues in a clearly satirical and lighthearted manner. Because of the novelty of its style, the poem has been praised by many critics. Bernth Lindfors calls it "a thoroughly indigenous poem in form, content, style, message and aesthetic philosophy" ("Songs" 146) and "the first long poem in English to achieve a totally African identity" (144). Chinweizu, et al call it "possibly the best rounded single work of African poetry in English today [which uses] authentic African imagery, proverbs, laments, invocations and curses, thereby successfully rooting the modern in the traditional" (195). Peter Nazareth also describes it as

the first 'poem' in English to break free from the stranglehold of British writing ... It owed little to any English or western model: in one bold movement, it swept away the ghosts of T. S. Eliot, Wordsworth and others ... Prior to that, the best poets had walked in the shadows of the English 'Greats' (10).

Lawino, the heroine of the song, addresses her husband in an attempt to reason with him. As she does this, the reader learns about the beauty and strength of traditional ways of life and sees western practices and rites mocked. She comments on many aspects of life including religion and education. The reader is told that Ocol believes that the African ways and values in all the aspects discussed by Lawino are primitive and unworthy in comparison with western ways and values. Ocol is even too arrogant to make an attempt to reason with his wife. This is what he says in the opening lines of *Song of Ocol*:

Woman,
Shut up!
Pack your things
Go!
Take all the clothes
I bought you
The beads, necklaces
And the remains
Of the utensils,
I need no second-hand things. (Okot, *Song of Lawino* 121)

An important component of the western culture that is vehemently satirized in *Song of Lawino* is Christianity. The advent of Christianity created schism in the African society resulting in one part of society (Christian converts) deserting their traditional religion(s) and despising members of society who still cling to the traditional religion(s) and ways. Converts of the new religion are not ready to accept their fellow country men and women adhering to traditional religion(s)/

beliefs even if they were their own relatives. This is clearly reflected in the strained relationship between Lawino and her husband as presented in *Song of Lawino* and *Song of Ocol*. *Song of Lawino* makes it clear that the relationship between wife and husband is normal until Ocol has embraced the new religion and received the missionary education. Even the new converts to the new religion(s) are further divided into Catholics and Protestants. So the "dichotomy between Christianity and African tradition religion provides another level of social strife, as does the division between Catholicism and Protestantism" (Bowden xiv).

Not only are the church priests and teachers attacked, but the tenets of Christianity itself are attacked as well. The church priests and teachers are satirized for the purpose of exposing their exploitativeness, hypocrisy and immorality. The wives of church priests and teachers exploit girls by forcing them to do many laborious tasks such as drawing water, splitting firewood and grinding millet and sesame. They are forced to do all these things while the wives are sitting happily "with their legs stretched out." That is why Lawino chooses to stay away from the "Protestant catechist class". She "did not want/To become a slave" (Okot, *Song of Lawino* 74). It is clear that the wives of the church teachers and priests exploit the girls for their own benefits as when the meal comes, they send the girls hungry to play games.

Students are not only exploited in the church and missionary schools by the priests and teachers and their wives, but also suppressed when they pose questions. This is perhaps the only thing that unites both Catholic and Protestant priests.

But our teachers
Hated questions.
Protestant and Catholic priests
Are all the same---
They do not like questions. (Okot, *Song of Lawino* 84)

The nuns respond to questions by screaming fiercely "like a wounded buffalo" (Okot, *Song of Lawino* 85). Catholic teachers and priests incite school students against Protestants. They tell students that asking questions befits only Martin Luther King and "stupid stubborn Protestants."

The teachers
Of the Evening Speakers' Class
Hate questions.
If you go to the Padré
You provoke a fight.
You take the road
And go to the Nun,
The young woman
Is fierce like
A wounded buffalo girl,
She screams
As if someone has
Stabbed her at the death spot.
And the black teachers
Are angry
They say
Asking too many questions
Befits only Martin Luther

And the stupid stubborn Protestants. (Okot, *Song of Lawino* 85)

In their view, the good children are those who remain passive recipients accepting everything without questioning. This is a direct attack on the way Christianity was introduced to Africa or at least Okot's part of Africa. It was not embraced by Africans; it was imposed on them.

To them
The good children
Are those
Who ask no questions,
Who accept everything
Like the tomb

Which does not reject
Even a dead leper! (Okot, *Song of Lawino* 86)

Students who ask no questions are treated favorably and bribed by the nuns and priests to stay silent.

And those good children
Who ask no questions
Are liked,
They are given oranges
And guavas and bananas
They take a ride
In the Padré's car.

The Nun pats them on their backs
And says my son you are good! (Okot, *Song of Lawino* 86)

Lawino, who "once joined/The Catholic Evening Speakers'/Class" (Okot, *Song of Lawino* 75) comments on the sexual immorality of Catholic priests and nuns. She exposes their hypocrisy and dismisses their false priestly celibacy. The nuns are angry with her because they must be sexually frustrated:

They are angry with me
As if it was I
Who prevented them marrying ... (Okot, *Song of Lawino* 85)

Priests cannot discipline their sexual desires. Her teacher follows her to the "get-stuck" dance.

Shameless
The ugly man
Whispered something in my ear!
And touched my breast
With the rough palm
Of his bony hand
Cutting it as if with
An old rusty knife. (Okot, *Song of Lawino* 80)

It is clear that sexual harassment is widely practiced by priests even the senior ones in charge of receiving confessions:

And all the teachers
Are alike
They have sharp eyes
For girls' full breasts;
Even the padrés
Who are not allowed
To marry
Are troubled by health,
Even the fat-stomached
Who cannot see

His belly button
 Feels better
 When he touches
 A girl's breasts,
 And those who listen
 To the confessions
 Peep through the port-hole
 And stab the breasts
 With their glances. (Okot, *Song of Lawino* 81)

The major tenets of Christianity (such as the Holy Communion, concept of God, baptism, Christ's birth, Christian prayers and Christian story of creation) are not spared. They are ridiculed and shown to be alien and incomprehensible to ordinary Africans. They are presented as lacking relevance and immediacy and sometimes even disgusting. The Holy Communion is shown to be not only strange but also repulsive and sickening. This is how Lawino recounts her first communion:

He held a little shiny saucer:
 It had small pieces of something.
 The name of the man Was Eliya
 And he was calling people
 To come and eat
 Human flesh!
 He put little bits
 In their hands
 And they ate it up!
 Then he took a cup,
 He said
 There was human blood
 In the cup
 And he gave it
 To the people
 To drink!
 I ran out of the Church,
 I was very sick!
 O! Protestants eat people!
 They are all wizards,
 They exhume corpses
 For dinner! (Okot, *Song of Lawino* 75)

This is how Ramazani comments on the significance of the above lines in Okot's battle of cultural restoration:

Slyly inverting the Western stereotypes of African cannibalism, Okot irreverently literalizes a Christian ritual, stripping away its metaphysical meaning. The humor of the scene lies in defamiliarization, in the dissonance between the habitual Western rite and the impression it first makes on an Acoli village woman (167).

Baptism is another Christian rite that is satirized. The names given to children sound meaningless and even disturbing just like the noise of "tins thrown down from the rooftops".

Who understands
 The meaning of the Christian names?
 The names they read for
 The names of white men
 That they give to children
 When they put water on their heads,
 What do they mean?

To me
 They all sound
 Like empty tins,
 Old rusty tins
 Thrown down
 From the roof-top. (Okot, *Song of Lawino* 83-84)

Even the Christian myth of creation taught to school students is ridiculed. It sounds both nonsensical and incomprehensible to Acoli people. Lawino tries hard to understand it in the light of his mother's pottery, the way she molded different types of pots, jars, dishes and pipes.

Where did he dig the clay
 For moulding things?
 Where is the pot
 He dug the clay
 For moulding Skyland,
 And the clay for moulding Earth?
 For the mouth of which River? ...
 Where did the Hunchback
 Dig the clay for moulding things,
 The clay for moulding Skyland
 The clay for moulding Earth
 The clay for moulding Moon
 The clay for moulding the Stars?
 Where is the spot
 Where it was dug,
 On the mouth of which River?
 And when the Hunchback
 Was digging the clay
 Where did he stand?
 And when he brought home
 The clay for moulding things
 Where did he put the clay
 To season overnight?
 And when he was beating it
 With the wooden hammer
 On which rock
 Did the Hunchback put the clay? (Okot, *Song of Lawino* 86-87)

Another major concern of the song is to highlight the ill effects of missionary/western education. Due to the significance of this issue as one of the root causes of the cultural transformation Africa witnessed, Okot dedicates a great part of the song to it. In addition to section 12, which is exclusively dedicated to it, many other lines refer to education including the opening and closing lines of *Song of Lawino*. The real problem of western education is its negative impact on people's mannerisms, their social relationships and the way they view everything native. Ocol is arrogant and abusive. He looks disdainfully at his native culture- including African religious practices and traditional medicine- and his people who still cling to that culture.

In *Song of Lawino*, Lawino's attitude represents the attitude of the ordinary folks, all those Africans who still cling to the traditional ways of life vis-a-vis that of the African elite who is so dazzled by the European culture and brainwashed by the western education that they hate themselves and despise their own culture. Through the use of the temporal indicators (now, no longer) in the opening lines of the

song, the reader understands that Lawino's relationship with her husband is not strained from day one; Ocol begins despising his wife and all that she represents only after he receives his education.

Husband, now you despise me
 Now you treat me with spite
 And say I have inherited the stupidity of my aunt;
 Son of the Chief,
 Now you compare me
 With the rubbish in the rubbish pit,
 You say you no longer want me
 Because I am like the things left behind
 In the deserted homestead.
 You insult me
 You laugh at me
 You say I do not know the letter A
 Because I have not been to school
 And I have not been baptized (Okot, *Song of Lawino* 34)

Lawino cannot understand how this gap could have emerged so quickly because:

... Only recently
 We would sit close together touching each other!
 Only recently I would play
 On my bow – harp
 Singing praises to my beloved
 Only recently he promised
 That he trusted me completely. (Okot, *Song of Lawino* 36)

This gap is so great that even communication becomes difficult. Lawino asks Ocol some questions about Christianity but she finds it even hard to communicate with him:

Even if he tried
 To answer my questions
 I would not understand
 What he was saying
 Because the language he speaks
 Is different from mine
 So that even if he
 Spoke to me in Acoli
 I would still need an interpreter. (Okot, *Song of Lawino* 87)

The colonial education with the values it inculcates in Ocol alienates him from his community and its values and traditions. The alienating effect of the western education is reflected in the great gap it has created between Ocol and Lawino. This gap symbolizes the gap between Ocol and his community and its culture and traditions. Ngugi wa Thiongo writes:

What [Lawino] is describing is the whole alienating effect of western education: people are not educated so that they may be re-integrated into the masses, help the community to raise their productive and cultural resources, join them in their struggle for total liberation, but to form a screen between the community and objective reality... For it is Ocol's education, with the values it inculcates in him, that drives him away from the community (75).

Lawino tells the audience about the kind of husband she once had before he joined the missionary school. He "was a man then."

When my husband
 Was still wooing me
 His eyes were still alive,
 His ears were still unblocked,
 Ocol had not yet become a fool
 My friend was a man then! (Okot, *Song of Lawino* 113)
 Then she contrasts that man she once had with the 'woman' he became after receiving education in order to highlight the extensive brainwashing process he underwent.

My husband has read much,
 He has read extensively and deeply,
 He has read among white men
 And he is clever like white men
 And the reading
 Has killed my man,
 In the ways of his people
 He has become
 A stump.

He abuses all things Acoli,
 He says
 The ways of black people
 Are black ... (Okot, *Song of Lawino* 113)

Lawino thinks that Ocol is emasculated by the western education. In order to regain his manhood, she prescribes the remedy for him: re-embracing the traditions. He has to go to the shrines of his ancestors and beg them for forgiveness.

Go to the shrine of your fathers,
 Prepare a feast,
 Give blood to your ancestors,
 Give them beer, meat and millet bread,
 Let the elders
 Spit blessing on you
 Let them intercede for you
 And pray to the ancestors
 Who sleep in their tombs
 Face upwards. (Okot, *Song of Lawino* 119)

So the central harmful effect of education on Ocol is self-hatred; he now hates his own relatives, his traditions, all blacks and the whole continent.

What is Africa
 To me?
 Blackness,
 Deep, deep fathomless
 Darkness;
 Africa Idle giant
 Basking in the sun
 Sleeping, snoring.
 Twitching in dreams. (Okot, *Song of Lawino* 125)

Ocol represents that class which is so impressed by the western ways that they are ashamed of their own Africanness and condemn their past wholesale.

Mother, mother
 Why
 Why was I born
 Black ? (Okot, *Song of Lawino* 126)

Ocol has become a tool in the hands of the whites by which they have tried to "blow away" the African values and

ways but these values and ways are too well grounded to be shaken:

They are not thin, not easily breakable
They cannot be blown away
By the winds
Because their roots reach deep into the soil. (Okot, *Song of Lawino* 41)

Ocol, as depicted by Okot in *Song of Ocol*, is so thoroughly westernized that he rejects and wants to destroy everything African. He has embraced the colonial culture so slavishly that he wishes to erect monuments to architects of colonialism including the notorious Leopold II.

To the gallows
With all the Professors
Of Anthropology
And teachers of African History,
A bonfire
We'll make of their works,
We'll destroy all the anthologies
Of African literature
And close down
All the schools
Of African Studies.
Where is Aimé Césaire?
Where Leopold Senghor?
Arrest Janheinz Jahn
And Father Placide Temples,
Put in detention
All the preachers
Of Negritude. (Okot, *Song of Lawino* 129)

Throughout the poem, Okot relies on an elaborate series of contrasts. Lindfors says that "Okot's strategy throughout the poem is to contrast the natural grace and dignity of traditional African ways with the grotesque artificiality of modern habits and practices that educated African have copied from Europe" ("Songs" 147). An important example is the scene of the teacher trying to teach his followers by rote. He shouts "meaningless phrases". As Lawino is in the class, she hears the music of the traditional dance. The teacher is drunk and he spits and belches as he talks to his students. Even "the collar of the teacher's white shirt / Was black with dirt" (78). Eventually Lawino leaves the teacher to join her friends who are "dancing / And singing meaningful songs" (Okot, *Song of Lawino* 78-79). Lawino leaves the group with two other girls and joined the line of friends

And danced among our age-mates
And sang songs we understood,
Relevant and meaningful songs.
Songs about ourselves. (Okot, *Song of Lawino* 79)

Okot depicts the dance as more meaningful and relevant than parroting meaningless phrases to a drunk, dirty man with "Saliva squirting from his mouth" (Okot, *Song of Lawino* 78). The ugly, disgusting scene of meaninglessness in the class is contrasted with the scene of the traditional dance arena with its joy, vigor and meaningfulness.

We danced with vigour
And sweat poured
Down our backs,

Youthful sweat

From healthy bodies. (Okot, *Song of Lawino* 79)

Lawino is proud of her ways and from this position of confidence and pride she defends the African traditional ways of life and attacks the corresponding ways in the western culture embraced by the westernized African elites represented by Ocol. For instance, Lawino defends the African traditional dance which the colonialists condemn as immoral because Africans dance naked. To her the Acoli dance is a dance of "liveliness"(43):

When the drums are throbbing
And the black youths
Have raised dust
You dance with vigor and health
You dance naughtily with pride
You dance with spirit,
You compete, you insult, you provoke
You challenge all! (Okot, *Song of Lawino* 42)

Then she attacks the western dance which she considers immoral. She is shocked that white people dance in darkness holding each other.

Each man has a woman
Although she is not his wife
They dance inside a house
And there is no light
Shamelessly, they hold each other
Tightly, tightly,
They cannot breathe. (Okot, *Song of Lawino* 44)

Lawino defends herself and takes pride in her Africanness. She lampoons her husband and his westernized practices. This defense is subtly turned to defend African ways of life and to highlight their grace, beauty and strength:

All I ask
Is that my husband should stop the insults,
My husband should refrain
From heaping abuses on my head.
He should stop being half-crazy,
And saying terrible things about my mother
Listen Ocol, my old friend,
The ways of your ancestors
Are good,
Their customs are solid
And not hollow
They are not thin, not easily breakable
They cannot be blown away
By the winds
Because their roots reach deep into the soil. (Okot, *Song of Lawino* 41)

CONCLUSION

On the basis of the above textual analysis and discussion of the poem, it is clear that Okot rejects a blind and slavish embrace of the western culture that looks down upon the native African culture and leads to self-derision, alienation and self-hatred. This theme has been addressed by many scholars who seem to be in agreement on it. But Okot has done much more than that. Though some prominent African critics think that Okot "does not overtly claim that African

culture is superior to European culture” (Ngara 67) and that he “advocates neither an atavistic return to Acoli customs and traditions nor a total abandonment of Western ways” (Lindfors and Sander 231), this paper finds no textual evidence that supports the claim that Lawino respects the western ways and culture and has no problem with Ocol(s) blending them with the African culture and ways. In fact, this paper finds that *Song of Lawino* idealizes almost everything African and demonizes everything western.

Many scholars cite the lines (I do not understand/The ways of foreigners/But I do not despise their customs (41).) as evidence of Lawino's (and Okot's) respect for the western ways, but this is the only occasion in the whole poem where Lawino denies her derision of western ways and these lines are not enough to make the reader ignore the fact that she mocks and disdains everything western right from the beginning to the end of the poem.

In *Song of Lawino*, Okot is not in favor of syncretism as he depicts Lawino, the spokesperson of native culture, as a woman who is unwilling to accept anything western. She looks at everything western with utter disdain and derision. The exaggeration in the depiction of Lawino's derision of and ruthless attack against western ways and practices is perhaps required by the satirical nature of the song and designed to serve the poet in the defense of his own culture and traditions. But there is almost nothing in the poem that can lead the reader to believe that Lawino is tolerant of the western culture and ways and can accept a synthesis of both the western and African ways and cultures.

So Okot's vehement attack is directed at both the western cultural colonialism and the African elite that accepted to be its tool. Like the Negritude poets, Okot is proud of the African ways of life and he romanticizes them. To him they are graceful and beautiful. He asserts their value and emphasizes the need to preserve them. He attacks not only the European institutions and practices responsible for the cultural alienation of Africans but he also targets almost everything western. Thus it can be concluded that Okot (in *Song of Lawino*) subscribes to the idea that the African culture and ways are superior to the western culture and ways.

Okot through the song presents a successful depiction of the cultural transformation in Africa and exposes the western cultural colonialism and its agents. However, there are some shortcomings which do not encourage us to exaggerate the success of the song. Among these shortcomings are the inconsistencies in the character of Lawino. For example,

Lawino is an illiterate woman but she is highly aware of the necessity of her race to preserve its own culture and identity.

One expects Okot to present the debate of the African versus the western more objectively because he uses a dramatic situation in which the parties concerned are given a chance to spell out their minds and defend their practices. But Okot falls short of objectivity

WORKS CITED

- Bowden, A. Marie. *Mixing Cultures and Creative Techniques: Social Commentary in Okot p'Bitek's Song of Lawino*. 2003. Truman State University, MA dissertation.
- Chinua, Achebe. "The Role of the Writer in a New Nation." *African Writers on African Writing*, edited by G. D. Killam. London: Heinemann, 1973, pp. 7-13.
- Chinweizu, et al. *Toward the Decolonization of African Literature*. Enugu: Fourth Dimension Publishers, 1980.
- Lindfors, Bemth and Reinhard Sander, editors. *Twentieth-Century Caribbean and Black African Writers*. Series 2. Detroit: Gale Research Inc., 1993.
- Lindfors, Bernth. "The Songs of Okot p'Bitek." *The Writing of East and Central Africa*, edited by G.D. Killam. London: Heinemann, 1984, pp.144-158.
- *Comparative Approaches to African Literature*. Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1994.
- Nazareth, Peter. "Waiting for Amin: Two Decades of Ugandan Literature." *The Writing of East and Central Africa*, edited by G. D. Killam. Nairobi: Heinemann, 1984, pp. 7-35.
- Ngara, Emmanuel. *Ideology and Form in African Poetry*. London: James Currey, 1990.
- Ngugi, Wa Thiong'o. *Homecoming: Essays on African and Caribbean Literature Culture and Politics*. London: Heinemann Educational Books, 1972.
- Okot, p'Bitek. *Africa's Cultural Revolution*. Nairobi: Macmillan Books for Africa, 1973.
- *Song of Lawino and Song of Ocol*. London: Heinemann, 1984.
- Okumu, Charles. "Okot p'Bitek." *Encyclopedia of African Literature*, edited by Simon Gikandi. London: Routledge, 2003, pp. 569-573.
- Ramazani, Jahan. *The Hybrid Muse: Postcolonial Poetry in English*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2001.