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**UNIVERSITY OF BURUNDI  
FACULTY OF ARTS AND SOCIAL SCIENCES  
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND  
LITERATURE**

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**IMAGE OF ROT IN POST-COLONIAL DISCOURSE;  
A STUDY OF AYI KWEI ARMAH'S *THE  
BEAUTYFUL ONES ARE NOT YET BORN* AND  
NGUGI WA THIONG'O'S *DEVIL ON THE CROSS***

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Bujumbura, April 2006

*DEDICATION*

To you, my dear parents,

To you, my brothers and sisters,

To you, Abbot Onesphor Ntahimpera,

To you, my dear husband,

Egide Hakiziman, for your

Love, patience and support,

To you my lovely daughter,

Lauria Kamal Muzaninka,

To whoever cares,

I dedicate this work.

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**ABSTRACT**

This work examines the general rot in postcolonial Africa. It further explores the effects of colonization on Africans and denounces the changes which took place during and after colonization. Furthermore, this work intends to expose the greed of African leaders at the eve of independence. The work harbours on the premise that post-colonial discourse in Africa is mostly a discourse of decadence and filth. Written against the background of the postcolonial theoretical framework, this work settles on the note that the egocentric nature of post-independent African leader is main cause of the numerous problems that characterize contemporary Africa.

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## GENERAL INTRODUCTION

From all indications, colonization has been the main cause of the general disintegration in Africa at varied levels. The social, economic, political and cultural disintegration in Africa is embedded in the colonial encounter. The eve of independence gave hope, but this hope, later became a nightmare. The Africans, especially the peasants, expected too much from the new freedom. They saw independence as paradise and the end of suffering. Unfortunately, their hopes were dashed against a rock. The new leaders tended to operate for their individual benefit, and not for the interest of the masses, who brought them to power. They were selfish, and would use any means to satisfy their ambitions. The African new leaders were animated, mostly by hopes of self-aggrandizement, not that of true leadership. The nationalist's spirit was kept aside. The most alarming manifestation of the neo-colonialist was its apparent ability to disregard public opinion. With cynical disregard of what the people might think, the new administration displayed an uncouth ostentation, such as accumulation of wealth gotten through dishonest means.

From this perspective, one is tempted to raise the following questions: Do African leaders think of a future Africa? Is there any hope for Africa? Is there any means of getting rid of this hopeless situation? Where are the African messiahs?

Before one proceeds with the analysis, it is necessary to define the key word which this work harbours on. The term is "rot". Webster's Ninth New

Collegiate *Dictionary* views rot as a process of natural decomposition from the actions of bacteria or fungi, to become unsound or weak, to go to ruin, to become morally corrupt. In the Longman *Dictionary of contemporary English*, the word “rot” means to decay by gradual natural process, or to make something do this. It is also the natural process of decaying, or the part of something that has decayed. In the context of the topic, “rot” can be defined politically, socially, economically and culturally.

Politically speaking, rot refers to the deliberate language of deceit used by the new African leaders to deceive the masses. They have the trick of cheating the population and that of getting more money and more business to be prosperous. The leaders are incompetent, and spend their time delivering demagogic, useless speeches. They make promises which they cannot fulfil.

Social rot sums up all injustices and oppressions imposed by new leaders on the African people. The living conditions of African masses and workers are included in social rot because for this class, the situation remains unchanged because of the selfishness and avarice of the new leaders.

Economically, the image of “rot” in Africa is seen in corruption, bribery and appropriation of African land. To Africans, independence is no more an opportunity to get jobs or other good things, rather, it is the occasion to expropriate the African people’s lands, especially those of poor people. R.H Green, the Economic Adviser to the Treasury of the United Republic of Tanzania, and Honorary Professor of Economics at the University of

Dar-Es-Salaam in a conference on “Economic Independence and Economic Co-operation” once said :

Economic independence can be formulated as a situation in which national institutions have the rights, capacity and power to take and to implement decisions affecting the national economy and its component units without a de jure of the facto veto power being held by foreign individuals, enterprises, interest groups or governments, so defined, economic independence can never be total. The degree of independence can be assessed by evaluating the areas in which and the degree to which national right, capacity and power exist in contrast with areas and degrees of foreign rights, capacity and power. The realities that total economic independence is unattainable and that certain measures which do increase a country's degree of economic independence entail costs are not arguments against a definition.(Qtd in D.P Ghai's *Economic Independence in Africa*, 1).

Here, Green shows how African countries still dependent on western countries especially in economic domain even if they have got their independence.

Culturally speaking, the image of rot refers to the many factors which came together with the European colonizers. These factors include: prostitution, non respect of elders, ignorance of traditional African gods, and belief system.

This study aims at showing the effects of colonisation on Africans. It intends to denounce the negative changes which took place during and after colonisation, and to draw a common view of what really happened. The research also intends to denounce the new leaders, who turned themselves into African demi-gods, particularly in Ngugi's *Devil on the Cross* and Armah's *The Beautiful Ones are not yet Born*. The research will first of all examine the question of rot in African as a whole, before focussing on Kenya and Ghana.

The approach adopted for this study is the Postcolonial theory. Proponents to this theory are: Bart Moore-Gilbert, Gayatri Spivak, and Edward Said. The Postcolonial theory is concerned with what exists and happens after the end of colonial rule. The term postcolonial for some readers refers to texts produced after the colonized countries became independent, but others consider it as the text produced from the time of colonization to the present. To understand better the term postcolonial, it is important to differentiate the term post-colonialism with hyphen and the other one without a hyphen. Post-

colonialism (notice the presence of a ‘hyphen’ separating the two words) is a historical concept designating the period after colonization whereas “Postcolonial” (in one word) is a theoretical construct, reflecting literary themes and strategies used by African writers to resist colonial eurocentrism in literature, history and culture. As Bart Moore Gilbert mentions while quoting Russel Jacoby, “the Postcolonialist theorists make great use of interdisciplinary criticism: they move out from traditional literature into political economy, sociology, history and anthropology” (*Postcolonial Theory*, 14). He Proceeds by saying that “Colonial Discourse Analysis” now operates across on ever broader range of fields, including the history of law, anthropology, political economy, philosophy, historiography, history, art and psychoanalysis.” (Qtd Postcolonial, 9)

These ideas described in *Postcolonial Theory* are applicable to the present study in that it helps us to analyse the image of rot in post-colonial discourse. This theory will also help us to examine deeply, the selfishness of the African leaders and the disillusionment of the masses.

Many writers have been interested in postcolonial problems under different titles. Bernth Lindfors in “African Textualities” asserts that Armah’s novel and short stories are interesting as precursors of his long fiction, for they deal with the same matters that loom large in his novels: blinded hopes and dreams, greed and materialism, exploitation and persecution of the weak by strong, physical and psychological suffering and pervasive despair. He

proceeds by showing how Armah appears to be criticizing the sort of people whose yearnings for social position and personal comfort harden their hearts, turning them into monsters who mercilessly destroy their own kind. He asserts that the banister in *The Beautiful ones Are not yet Born* is socially and spiritually dead. He ends up saying that he hopes a lot to the moral and political reconstruction of modern Africa.

Eustace Palmer in *Introduction to the African Novel* examines how Ngugi sees the Kenyan society after colonization. He takes into account the weaknesses of Africans themselves, as well as those of the European. He asserts that according to Ngugi, their problem is made all the more intractable because of their lack of unity. Palmer points out that Ngugi's preoccupation is that of analysing the causes of the people's suffering. He adds that Kenya's problems are not caused by the intimidation committed by whites, but by the Kenyan's personal weaknesses. He concludes by showing that Ngugi's language deserves special attention, its biblical aura is most appropriate for the description of the suffering of people in bondage.

Gaudence Habonimana in *Corruption in Ayi Kwei Armah's Fragments* aims at showing that the introduction of money in Africa has its advantages as well as its disadvantages. For her, only rich people are important and are themselves the ones who are being listened to. She further exploits the different facets of corruption practiced in Africa.. She suggests that Africans

must struggle against corruption and other evils if they need stability and democracy in the future.

Charles R. Larson in *The Emergence of African Fiction* talks of the fiction of African writers, how it appears to be the evolutionary stage, mirroring anthropological and sociological situation created by the frustrations of western life. He argues that what makes Armah and Soyinka outstanding is their reluctance to fall back to the past as a solution for present-day social and political problems. He concludes by showing that some of the writers are fairly objective and sympathetic in their treatment of the African experience. Others used Africa as a kind of backdrop.

The present work differs from the aforementioned in that, it shows how African novelists especially Armah and Ngugi help in shaping the African mind against the injustices created by themselves by exposing the general rot in Africa. Also, it presents Armah and Ngugi as the spokesmen of the African masses.

This work harbours on the hypothetical contention that postcolonial discourse in Africa is mostly a discourse of decadence and filth.

Including the general introduction, the work is divided into three main chapters. The first chapter "Africa and the Question of Political Rot" examines the different historical trends in Africa and exposes the political rot in Africa. The second chapter entitled "Economic and Social Rot," examines the socio-economic vice plaguing postcolonial Africa. The third chapter entitled "Style"

analyses the style used by Armah and Ngugi in their works; *Devil on the Cross* and *The Beautiful ones are not yet Born* in the revelation of the general filth of their respective countries. Finally, the general conclusion summarises the major arguments raised in different chapters, brings out findings and recommendations, and suggests possible areas for future researchers.

## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **AFRICA AND THE QUESTION OF POLITICAL ROT**

This chapter is concerned with the political evolution in Africa. It tackles the situation of Africa under its pre-colonial period, during colonization and after independence. This chapter also shows how Africans were disappointed by their brothers after the whiteman's physical departure. It accentuates on the question of political rot, which is central in post-independent Africa.

Africa had its traditional institutions before the white man's conquest. People lived in clans that were ruled by chiefs and elders. The clans consisted of hunters, farmers, nomads. There was little or no divisions between them. They understood and helped each other in many aspects. They had their independent political institutions. This shows that before colonization, Africa was well organised. It also reveals Africa's reality to those who considered Africa as a continent without history and culture.

As far as the period of colonization is concerned, the changes were not very good for Africans. It corresponds with the coming and the settings of whites who considered African values as meaningless and evil. They considered Africans as uncivilized savages who needed to be civilized. Colonization had the conviction that Western civilization was the only sound and meaningful civilization. The purpose of colonization was to show Blacks that they were primitive, uncivilized and needed to be civilized. In this way,

they created an inferiority complex in Africans and presented themselves as a superior race.

After colonization, the next evil that befell Africans was neo-colonialism. This period corresponds with the post-independence period in which the African nouveau riche completed the assignment left by the colonial master. Most of the new leaders were people who were educated in Europe . Arriving in Africa, they allied themselves with the commercial bourgeoisie and exploited the masses. In Europe, they had been taught by white professors that their people and their ways were primitive.

In *Reading in African Political Thought*, Gideon- Cyprus M Mutiso and SW Rohio say that:

Neo-colonialism, like colonialism, is an attempt to export the social conflicts of the capitalist countries. The temporary success of this policy can be seen in the ever-widening gap between the richer and poorer nations of the world. But the internal contradictions and conflicts of neo-colonialism make it certain that it cannot endure as a permanent world policy. How it should be brought to an end is a problem that should be studied, above all, by the developed nations of the

world, because it is they who will feel the full impact of the ultimate failure. (416)

The end of neo-colonialism therefore depends upon those rich countries which colonize Africa, because they still continue to rule Africa indirectly, even if Africa pretends to be independent. Gideon Cyrus M Mutiso and SWA Rohio add:

Nigeria was broken into religious and anticipating further partitions. Rwanda–Urundi has been fragmented with independence. Because we in Ghana survived pre-independence attempts to split us, the British foisted on us as a constitution that aimed at disintegrating our national unity (419).

This subdivision of African countries is dangerous for political control, because by doing so, the imperialist's powers wanted to divide and rule Africa. Freedom and economic independence also become impossible. In *Readings African Political Thoughts*, Lenin argues that:

A form of financial and diplomatic dependence, accompanied by political independence, is presented by Portugal. Portugal is an independent sovereign state, but actually, for more than two hundred years, since the war of the Spanish succession, it has been a British protectorate. Great

Britain protected Portugal and its colonies in order to fortify her own position in the fight against her rivals, Spain and France. In return, Great Britain has received commercial privileges, preferential conditions for importing goods and especially capital into Portugal and Portuguese colonies, the rights to use the ports and Islands of Portugal its telegraph cables. (419)

As seen above, Africa is suffering a similar effect. Even when they are independent, they are still being controlled by the imperialist powers. The latter give them some aids in order to fortify their positions in Africa. It is remarkable that the end of European rule is characterized by the ascendant of its economic interests, whereas its political and cultural influences are strong.

From comments made by many historians and writers, independence or liberation from colonial rule brought nothing new to Africa but political instability, civil wars, coups and counter-coups, brain drain and corruption. The main cause of all these vices is the lack of a policy of national integration, the inadequate and unevenly distribution of social facilities and the neo-colonial nature of the civilian and military administrative structures. Ayi Kwei Armah is one of those writers who detest these neocolonial structures in Africa. For him, disillusionment is masterminded by the political leaders and bureaucratic bourgeois, who pretend to be socialists, while their actions are the reverse. Ayi

Kwei Armah in *The Beautiful ones are not yet Born* gives the example of Koomson who becomes prosperous within a very short time because of corruption. He is among the African politicians who pronounce demagogic speeches to win the people's confidence .

“Oh, you know the ideological thing. Winneba.”

True. That is where the shit of the country is going nowadays, believing nothing, but saying they believe everything that need to be believed, so long as the big jobs and the big money follow. Men who know nothing about politics have grown hot with ideology, thinking of the money that will come.

(89)

Armah expresses his disappointment by showing the bad behaviour of the politicians, who betrayed independence by ignoring the masses. In his writings, he is opposed to the leader's behaviour, who instead of saving Africans, frustrated by the colonial rule, continue to perpetuate suffering and exploitation. Janheinz Jahn is among the writers who shares Armah's view. In *Neo-African Literature and Culture*, he postulates that

How long will Africa be cursed with its leaders?

There were men dying from lost of hope, and others were finding gaudy ways to enjoy power they did not have. We were ready here for big and

beautiful things, but what we had was our own black men hugging new pounches scrambling to ask the white man to welcome them into our backs. These men who were to lead us out of our despair, they come like men already grown fat and cynical with the eating of centuries of power they had never struggled for, old before they had even been born into power, and ready only for the grave.(130)

Armah and Janheinz Jahn seem to have the same point of view about the situation after colonization. They agree that the situation remains the same once the colonizers departed. The ruling elite's greed, selfishness, and corruption matches the colonial order. They work for themselves, and not for the country. The masses are the first to be victimized because of the inequality observed in the new social stratum. Gitutu Wa Gataanguru in *Devil On The Cross* like Koomson in *The Beautiful ones are not yet Born* has no fear of exploiting his countrymen. He agrees that he will never abandon the lucrative business of land speculations in one of his political speeches.

Today I'm about to join hands with some foreigners from Italy, who are planning to purchase an entire country in Meru and Embu to grow rice and sugar. But I have not abandoned the lucrative business of land speculations. (107)

People like Gitutu Wa Gataanguru, Koomson and others collaborate with the elite who are in the control of the administrative machinery to constantly rob the poor. They manipulate this machinery to their own advantage, and often to the detriment of the masses. They only deceive the masses, who expect freedom, peace, and stability from their new leaders. Kihaahu Wa Gatheeca in the *Devil On the Cross* expresses this unchanged situation of the masses:

Long may the masses stay as they are, singing  
praises only to the size of a man's pockets. This  
will give us more time to live off the fat of the land,  
and as you know, that which is safely in the belly  
never betray its presence to inquisitive eyes and  
ears. (117)

The main preoccupation of African new leaders is not to save the masses. Instead, they are preoccupied with boozing and other private interests. That is why the hope of the masses have collapsed and only disillusionment has set in, as is the case in *The Beautiful ones are not yet Born* and *Devil On The Cross*. A new black power elite has stepped into the place vacated by the former imperialists. Here, the example is always Koomson in *The Beautiful ones are not yet Born* who enters politics for the purpose of getting more money. They have passed through the ideological schools, but

they do not let the ideology pass through them. Armah is not mistaken when he describes these politicians:

Believing nothing, but saying they believe everything that needs to be believed, so long as the big jobs and the big money follow. Men who know nothing about politics have grown hot with ideology, thinking of the money that will come.

(89)

From all indications, Armah and Ngugi are inspired by the misery in Ghana and Kenya after colonization. In their respective novels, the most outstanding feature is the uncompromising way in which these authors attack the post- independence elite of Africa. They are accused of consuming the fruits of independence alone. The failure of independence is evident in the activities of the elite. Armah and Ngugi see post-independent leaders as traitors, who betray the promises made at the eve of independence. They promise to create equality between people, to construct new states out of the colonial robbery, but unfortunately, they fail in their mission. What they are doing is to complete the white man's mission of exploiting Africans. Armah, Ngugi and other writers of post- independent Africa openly criticize this poor behaviour. They accuse them of creating for themselves higher standards of living, to the detriment of the common man. Ngugi illustrates this through Gitutu Wa Gataanguru in *Devil*

*On The Cross* during his testimony when he enumerates the cars he has while the masses and workers are dying because of famine:

As for my car, I normally go about in a chauffeur-driven Mercedes Benz 280. But in addition I have a Peugeot 604 and a Range Rover. Those are for personal use. The matter of my children drives a TOYOTA Carina. That is a little shopping basket for carrying goods from the market. There are other vehicles-lorries and tractors- that I need for my business activities. (100)

This projects the target of the new administration in power. They use their political might to rob the country of the national resources. Koomson in *The Beautiful ones are not Born* serves as an example. David B. Abernathy has tried to find explanations for his situation. He notes that:

The government had committed itself to bring about greater equality, yet it was the government officials themselves who were far above the masses in education, income, social status and political power hence the officials would be the first to suffer losses from any levelling reforms they might institute. (Qtd *Neo- African Literature and Culture*, 129)

Africans are complaining about the situation in which they live. They accuse their leaders of reaping all the fruits of independence alone. In a similar vein, Bernth Lindfors Bala Kothandaraman notes that

“Let me eat” was the people’s opinion, after all when white men used to do all the eating, did we commit suicide? Of course not! And where is the all-powerful white today? He came, he ate and he went. But we are still around. The important thing then is to stay alive... Besides, if you survive, who knows? It may be your turn to eat tomorrow. Your sun may bring your share. (Qtd south Asian Responses to Chinua Achebe, 24).

Previously, no one could think that white man would be chased from Africa. For Achebe, these African leaders will be chased like white men and African people will be free, happy, like the times before colonization. He invites the masses not to be pessimistic but optimistic because the situation is not hopeless:

If you were convinced that it was absolutely hopeless, then you would just drink and wait for your death. But the fact that are talking about it implies some optimism that somebody may listen,

that there is still a possibility for change. (Qtd  
*South Asian Responses to Achebe, 24*)

To Achebe, to talk about the problem is a step at resolving it. So Africans should have hope that things will change.

The novelists go on to denounce the post- independent elite's greed by saying that they eat the national cake instead of sharing it with masses. They accuse them of using their position of dominance, not for stepping up production and distributing weath equitably but for developing their "great appetites" and devouring this wealth almost exclusively. Normally, the "national cake" should be shared between all Africans because all of them have contributed directly or indirectly during the fight for independence. "Eating and sharing" among political thieves is a tradition in post-independent African politics. This is observed in *The Beautiful ones are not yet Born* when the bus conductor steals money from the passengers and later propose to share it with the Man : "you see, we can share" (5). By saying so, the bus conductor has the objective of bribing the Man, in order to silent him. Surprisingly, the Man refuses to take the bribe. It also dissociate himself from the shoddy boat deal between Koomson and his mother in law. The Man is against people like Koomson. Koomson is the Minister plenipotentiary, member of the Presidential Commission, Hero of Socialist Labour, but does everything for himself. He is the first to corrupt the poor people. He exploits

his public office to enrich himself, destroy the promise of independence and trample down Socialism:

The promise was so beautiful. Even those who were too young to understand it, all knew that at last something good was being born. It was ~~a~~ there. We were not deceived about that. How could such a thing turn so completely into this other thing? Could there have been no other way? The beauty was in the walking of the powerless. (*Qtd in The Beautiful ones are not yet Born* , 85)

Here, Armah expresses his disillusionment after seeing how the new leaders who are supposed to put in order what was destroyed by whites, continue to perpetuate the malpractices of the colonizers. Armah comments that:

There is something so terrible in watching a black man trying at all points to be the dark ghosts of European, and that was what we were seeing in those days. Men who had risen to lead the hungry came in clothes they might have been hoping to use at Governor's Balls on the birthday of the white people's queen, carrying cuff links that shone insultingly in the faces of men who had stolen

pennies from their friends. (*Qtd The Beautiful ones are not yet Born*, 81)

The passage above shows us how Armah is against the likes of Koomson, who turn out to be white men in mind. He says that the neo-colonialist system is just a continuation of colonialism, this time, with Africans as protagonists. Armah does not stop to criticize the new political elite. He says that it is not easy for Koomson to speak with the people he used to work with:

How can Koomson return to us? What has he got to say those he used to work? Will he become down to see the bodies he left behind and not say a word? Can he sit down with men and smoke well and curse stupid magistrates for jailing men who have harmed no one? (89)

Here, Armah is talking about the people represented by the Man who is also called the protagonist in *The Beautiful ones are not yet Born*. The Man used to be Koomson's classmate, but chooses to remain among the poor, because he refuses to envy the new political machinery of liars. To show the dishonesty of some African leaders, who corrupt the poor, Armah gives the example of Koomson when he borrows state credit under cover names to invest in fishing boats. He says :

I had asked Oyo's mother who would pay for the boats, and with a great deal of pride she said the Minister would. Which minister? Koomson, of course. Only she called his bóther Joe. Brother? Aoch, so. I said I didn't know Koomson had enough money to buy even one boat. Those things cost thousands and thousand of cedis. My mother-in-law asked me very patiently whether I didn't know also that Brother Joe has influence. She called it infrunce. I had taken a piece of paper to calculate Koomson's total salary since he joined the partly. Now I dropped the paper and said, "Oh, I see" and again with this patience of hers my mother- in- law asked me what I had seen at last. So, I got angry enough to tell her I had seen corruption. Public theft. (*Qtd The Beautiful ones are not yet Born, 58*)

Koomson here is a typical example of African Leaders who uses the country's resources for his own interest. He uses the money of his ministry to buy a fishing boat for himself. He cares little about the common man. He forgets those who are not in power, especially the peasants. At this point, he is not different from Kihaahu Wa Gatheeca who says :

Mr Chairman, to thieve, to rob and to cheat the poor is alright. Where else would our wealth come from? Nobody worth his salt would ever question such a scheme of things, for that's how the world has always been and that's how it will ever be. But this man, who thieves, robs and cheats his own class, what kind of thief and robber is he? (*Qtd Devil On The Cross*,121)

People like Koomson and Kihaahu Wa Gatheeca focus on enriching themselves. They do not have any idea of ameliorating the conditions of peasants and workers. Instead of doing this, they exploit them in order to become rich. Chinua Achebe in *A Man of the People* creates a similar picture to that of Koomson and Kihaahu Wa Gatheeca in the person of Chief Nanga. Chief Nanga is a minister of culture, but he is the most corrupt amongst the lots of government ministers. His selfishness is shown by the fact that the majority of peasants and the workers live in shacks, while Nanga lives in a princely seven-bed-room mansion, with seven gleaming silent action water closets. Another example is shown by T.M Aluko in his novel *One Man, One Matchet*, when Mr Udo Akpan talks and acts like any white expatriate. He is described as the "black- white man", to mean, he behaves like the whites. Benjamin, a Nigerian rabble-rousing politician and journalist, describes the man as someone who uses public platforms and public facilities to his personal ends. This case is

observed not only in Udo Akpan, Chief Nanga and other leaders. For those people, independence has been the opportunity to get power and to become wealthy, whereas for the nation in general, it is only a change of embezzlers as expressed in *The Beautiful ones are not yet Born*: “For those who had come directly against the old power, there would be much happiness. But for the nation itself there would be a change of embezzlers and a change of the hunters and the hunted” (162). The changes are apparent only to the leaders who become wealthy in very short time, but for the poor, there is no change. Because of this situation, Arab Abderrahmane in *Politics and The Novel in Africa* invites the masses for a revolution against such malpractices:

I believe the Africa masses will build a place to feel at home. For they are not alone. In Asia, in Latin America, in Black America, the people are fighting the same battle. I believe the African novelist can help in this struggle. But he must be committed on the side of the majority. Whose silent and violent clamour for change is rocking the continent. By dividing into himself, deep into the collective unconscious of his people, he can seek the root, the trend in the revolutionary struggle.  
(196)

Abderrahmane invites African writers of the post-independence period to help the masses to revolt against the leaders who ill-treat them. He gives the example of Asia, Latin America where people fought for their freedom. So, to him, African masses must continue, the struggle in order to achieve the freedom they have longed for since colonization. Abderrahmane accuses the African leaders of being greedy. This invitation of Abderrahmane to the masses shows us how he is against the poor administrative set-up in Africa . The consequence of this deceptive governance is that leaders end up miserably. After Koomson's political corruption becomes very glaring, he is trapped and imprisoned in a dark room on the day of the military coup. During that day of Koomson's final tragedy, he escapes in man's house:

“He is inside, she said with a wild look. Koomson”

“When did he come?”

“About an hour, two hours”

“By why?”

“They are arresting them. He fears they will kill him.

It is terrible. (*Qtd The Beautiful ones are not yet Born*,160).

Koomson is described as a miserable man imprisoned in a dark room because of the fear of being caught: “The shiny eyes closed for a brief moment to have recovered from his fright and he leaned forward and whispered into the



man's face. "They will kill me"" (163). He begins to disintegrate and decay physically as shown by Armah:

His mouth had the rich stench of rotten menstrual blood. The man held his breath until the new smell had gone down in the mixture with the liquid atmosphere of the Partyman's farts filling the room. The man thought he would surely vomit if he did not get out from this foul smell. Hoping to steal a breath of uncorrupted air, he moved toward the window. (*Qtd The Beautiful ones are not yet Born*, 163)

This passage is the evidence of Koomson's disintegration. Ghanaian people need a change because of the bad situation in which they live. They want new leaders, who are not the likes of the Koomsons. That is why there is military coup. This military coup signals Koomson's demise. Because of the fear of being caught, he imprisons himself in The Man's house on the day of the military coup. Armah caricatures him in his new state when he says:

Koomson ate in darkness. It was again hard to see, since Koomson did not want the door open. Only the sounds coming from him told the man how eagerly he was eating. They were greedy noises, the sucking noises of an impatient man hungrily

pushing food into his face. His fear must have increased his appetite. Now the man could leave alone. (165)

Koomson, from all indications is the main root of many evils observed in Ghanaian society, because he continues the same practices as his predecessors. At the end he is disgraced by the military forces who intervene to change the regime. The question one needs to ask is whether the military regime can truly resolve the Ghanaian problem. The answer is, obviously no. Koomson is compared to the politicians like Gitutu wa Gataanguru, Gihaahu wa Gatheeca, Mwireri wa Mukiraat, Nditika wa Nguunji who are ready to auction Kenya again. Like Koomson, the end of some of these people is usually pitiful. For instance, Warĩnga kills the rich old man, who is Gaturia's father, the fiancé of Warĩnga on the day of their visit to Gaturia's parents:

“Look at me!” Warĩnga commanded, with the voice of a judge. When Gaturia's father saw the gun, his words suddenly ceased. The people outside heard the shots. When they entered the room, they found Gaturia's father kneeling, still clinging to Warĩnga by the knees. But three bullets were lodged in his body. (253)

Gaturia's father is a respectful man, who has so much money but his end is tragic. Warĩnga represents the exploited people: peasants, workers and women. Kenyan women have no right in the society. Wherever they go, to ask

for a job, they are usually under-estimated. Instead of giving them a job, they are asked to exchange sex with a job:

What do you want? A job ? I see. I 'm very busy right now. Let's meet at five. Kareendi waits impatiently for the hour to come ...The target is Kareendi's thighs. The modern love Bar and lodging has become the main employment bureau for girls and women's thighs are the tables on which contracts are signed. (19)

Warĩnga is frustrated by this situation. She is against all the people who are exploitive, unjust, and selfish. That is why, when she leaves the room in which she kills Gaturia's father, she also kills Kihaabu Wa Gatheeca and Gitutu Wa Gataanguru as indicated by the narrator:

Warĩnga left the room. People gave way before her. Outside the door she met Kinhaahu Wa Gatheeca and Gitutu Wa Gataanguru. And suddenly, remembering Wangari and Muturi and the student leader, the people who had roused her from mental slavery-she felt an anger she had not felt as she killed Gitahi "you too, and you!" And she shot at both Kinhaahu and Gitutu, splintering their kneecaps. (254)

Warĩnga becomes more entrenched when she remembers what the politicians in power have done to their spokesmen like Wangari, Muturi and the student leader. The day they denounce what is being done in the cave by some businessmen, the police imprisons them, instead of imprisoning the businessmen. Warĩnga does not understand this phenomenon. She is shocked by the situation until she decides to kill some of these political leader who disturb the progress of the nation.

In a nutshell, this chapter talks about the political situation in Ghana and Kenya after colonization, focussing on their new leaders. The latter are responsible of all the problems observed in the Ghanaian and Kenyan societies. Armah and Ngugi accuse the new leaders of being black in colour and white in thought, since they continue to perpetuate suffering in Africa.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL ROT**

This chapter has as objective, the examination of the economic and social problems in Africa as a whole, Ghana and Kenya in particular. It also shows clearly the disillusionment among the masses. To understand this better, references will be made to other authors to expose better this economic and social rot in Africa.

As earlier indicated , Pre-colonial Africa anchored its systems on a socialist stand. African Socialism did not necessarily coincide with the western socialist concept of the ownership of capital and land by the state. Instead, the African variety included the following: an understanding, the help of each other and the share of everything. Early proponents stressed that socialism was in harmony with Africa's communal tradition. Land was held by the community, and work was organised on a group basis. Kinship was strong, individualism was weak, and class struggle and distinction were alien to Africa especially in the traditional sector.

Kenyan rulers represented themselves not only as African socialists, but also nationalists and pragmatists, putting Kenyan interests first, and driving out radical socialists aligned with socialist countries. African socialism emphasized on rapid economic growth; stated a lack of class division among Africans; and promised an equitably distribution of income.

However, inequalities in pre-colonial Africa existed; but comparably, family or social responsibilities tempered them, and they could never become gross and offensive to the social equality, which was at the basis of the communal life. In *Inequality in Africa*, radicals with the Kenya people's union (KPU) criticized KANU, Africa Socialism:

African socialism is a "meaningless phrase", a cloak for the practice of total capitalism. According to the radicals, the government was promoting the development of a small privileged class of Africans in the name of socialism. But even KPU's promises were limited to distributing white settler land only to the loudless, and providing free primary education for all. KANU's response was to harass the KPU, detain its activists without trial, and repulse most KPU nomination paper. (76)

This passage shows that even in socialist Africa, the problems of inequality, injustice and other vices existed, but not in an exaggerated form. The managerial bourgeoisie used the economic level of the state to enlarge their size and property. These ills became the root of rot in Africa, especially after independence. Some writers like Rodney, Cabral and NGUGI condemned colonization as the brain child to many problems. They claim that neo-

colonisation prevails today in Africa because of the continuation, after independence, of the economic and social practices established by colonialism. An analysis of the economic and social contradictions created by colonialism is, therefore necessary in understanding and effectively countering neo-colonialism. The contradictions created by colonialism are still realities in contemporary Africa's development. Walter Rodney in *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa* analyses the colonial relations of production, the economic and political contradictions that produced Africa's underdevelopment and continue to plague Africa till date. Rodney, who describes colonialism as a "one-armed bandit", claims that colonialism, more than anything else, underdeveloped Africa. According to him, colonialism laid the roots of neo-colonialism in Africa, by creating Africa's dependency on the international capitalist system. The introduction of capitalist relations of production and distribution, for instance, the International Trade Commodity (ITC) exchange systems and values created such dependency. Rodney asserts that: "Previous African development was blunted, halved and turned back by colonialism without offering anything of compensatory value" (244).

According to Rodney, colonialism hampered Africa's development. Before colonization, Africa was in the way of development. The Egyptian civilisation, the great empires of Mali, and South Africa served as evidence.

Many works of African literature record the kind of exploitation Rodney describes. In *Mayombe*, for example, the narrator notes that:

My land is rich in coffee but my father was always a poor peasant... In Dembos, men lived wretchedly in the midst of wealth. Coffee was everywhere, hugging the trees. But they stole from us in the prices, sweat was paid for with a few worthless coins. (19)

Meka, the protagonist in Ferdinand Oyono's *the Old Man and Medical*, and other peasants grow cacao for export to France; in Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*, the opening of trading post and selling of yams, marks the beginning and entrenchment of a capitalist economy. Similarly, in Mongo Beti's *Mission to Kala*, *The Poor Christ of Bomba* and *King Lazarus*, the production of cacao for export marks the beginning of an international capitalist economic order, so detrimental to Africa. Mono-culture "introduced by colonialism; made the African producer helpless, in the face of capitalist manoeuvres. There was little development of local industry. *In I will Marry When I Want* , Gicaamba says:

I wouldn't mind , son of Gathoni,  
 If after selling away our labor,  
 Our village be refilled. But look  
 now at this village! There is  
 no property, there is no  
 wealth. (36-37)

Rodney writes that “roads were built to make business possible”(11) and argues that “any coting to African interest was purely occidental. For instance, in Mongo Beti’s *Remember Reuben*, the colonial road in Ekoudom is a symbolic means of the oppressive exploitation of the African. The narrator adds that: “The road was a world apart from ours”(32). Rodney further argues also that the social services in colonial Africa reflected the pattern of domination and exploitation geared toward the well-being of the settlers. In *Mayombe*, the narrator says:

You earn twenty escudos a day, for chopping down trees with an axe... and how much does the boss earn for each tree? A pile. What does the boss do to earn this money? Nothing, nothing... so how can he earn many thousand a day and give you twenty escudos? What right has he? This colonialist exploitation. (19)

Rodney maintains that the African dependency upon the European also ultimately produced neo-colonial class stratification and Africans, who manipulated the colonial economic structures for their own benefit. In *Mission To kala*, the colonial authorities nominate the Chief of Vimili, who goes on to live an opulent life at the expense of the people:

The colonial Administration (which had nominated him in the first place) buttered him up. In return, he

obeyed their commands like a robot and knew they would not throw him out. In the clout of the forced labour gangs he had been feared by everyone because he betrayed fugitives to the authorities and acted as an informer. He used our traditional tribunal hierarchy as a vehicle for his underhand intrigues, and flouted our laws and customs when he no longer needed them. (18)

Like the Chief of Kala, the neo-colonialists work in league with the colonial administrators to exploit the local society. Medza's father also becomes rich from collecting money and livestock from his insolvent debtors. He is to Medza an epitome of the successful grafting of western hypocrisy and commercial materialism onto a first rate African intelligence. This class of petty accumulators and educated black people form the basis of neo-colonialism. They are the progenitors of characters like Gitutu Wa Gataanguru and Kihaahu Wa Gatheeca in Ngugi's *Devil on The cross* and Koomson in *The Beautiful ones are not yet Born*. Like Medza's father who becomes rich for collecting money from people, Gitutu Wa Gataanguru's father becomes rich because of theft and robbery. Gitutu Wa Gataanguru had been taught by his father how to become rich. He is convinced that no one can be rich with his salary alone:

A salary is nothing for a man with a family to work up to. But at the same time, we black people can not manage petty trades that need patience. It's only Indians who have that kind of patience. My son, listen to your father's words of love. I know you have book learning. But the wise man is he who has been taught by someone who has seen it all before and has learned from the experience. A career of theft and robbery is the only one for anybody who calls himself an adult. (*Qtd in Devil on The Cross*, 102)

Gitutu Wa Gataanguru and Kihaahu Wa Gatheeca are similar because both glorify the system based on theft and robbery. Other similar people are Obi Okonkwo in Achebe's *No Longer at Ease*. The honorable, M.A Nanga "The bush politician" and the young intellectual, Odili in Achebe's *A Man of the People*, the railway freight in Armah's *The Beautiful ones are not yet Born*, and Ahab Kiawa Kanuru and Ikuva Wa Nditika in Ngugi's *I will Marry When I Want*.

The age of independence also witnessed the emergence of social classes and class contradictions, a development that disappointed and shocked many African writers, who created artistic works, expressing their disillusionment with post-colonial African society. Achebe's *A Man of the People* and

*Armah's The Beautiful ones are not yet Born*, are the most representative of this period, but do not fully grasp the source of the manifest contradictions. They argue that the cause of Africa's problems is in the new leader's lack of moral direction.

Teacher in *The Beautiful ones are not yet Born* argues that the situation of colonial period remains unchanged in the post-colonial period because of the selfishness of Africa's new leaders. Teacher expresses his hopelessness in the following lines:

But in my mind the time is buried under centuries  
now. True, I used to see a lot of hope. I saw men  
tear down the veils behind which the truth had been  
hidden. But then, the same men, which when they  
have power in their hands at last, began to find the  
veils useful. They made many more. Life has not  
changed only some people have been growing,  
becoming different, that is all. (92)

Here, teacher accuses African new leaders to be black on colour, not in mind. They have been deformed by the white man's system. To illustrate this more in *Devil on The Cross*, Gitutu Wa Gataanguru invites his friends to match the European's systems in order to become rich:

The white men came to this country holding the  
Bible in his left hand and gun in his right. He stole

the people's fertile lands. He stole the people's  
cattle and goats under the cover of fires and taxes.

He robbed people of the labour of their hand. (102)

In writing *Devil on The Cross*, Ngugi wants to show how far he is against the situation implanted by the white man. Ngugi defines neo-colonialism as that process in which a country is nominally independent, but its economy is still in the hands of the imperialist countries. In the Neo-colonialist State, nothing has changed from the colonial condition regarding the management of the country's economy. Ngugi has the task of denouncing all vices that plagued the Kenyan society. In other words, he is concerned with the social and economic rot. To differentiate political, economical and social rot is not easy because a society, which is politically rotten, is bound to be socially and economically rotten.

By only looking at different testimonies in *Devil on The Cross*, one can picture the general rot in Kenyan. During this period, it was not easy to be rich without being a thief. Mwireri argues that: "Let's not be fooled by socialist cant. To banish theft and robbery from a country is to stifle progress" (79). What Mwireri says is typical of the nouveau riche of post colonial Kenya. Victor Edusei in *The Visions of Africa* accuses the African new leaders of being the base of the deterioration in Africa. According to him the enemy is no longer the white man, but fellow black man:

With independence the role of oppressor will transfer into black hands and then it will be one black man oppressing another. Constitutional independence simply sets another cycle of political tyranny rolling over society and the peasants continue to be its victims. (163)

African peasants are victims because of their new leaders. Instead of responding to the needs of the masses, They end up protecting the interests of the colonial masters ,as well their own individual interests.

To continue with social and economical rot in *Devil on The Cross*, Gitutu Wa Gataanguru relates how he has taken over estates from white settlers, subdivided them into derisory plot, and sold them at exorbitant prices to citizens:

The land wasn't mine, and the money with which I'd paid wasn't mine, and I hadn't added anything to the land. Where did I get the 200,000 shillings? From the pocket of the people. Yes, because the land really belonged to the people and the money with which I bought it came from the people. (106)

Ngugi does not wish simply to repeat again the pattern established with Gitutu for each of the area of Kenyan life he wishes to satirize. It is by rigging the elections and bribing his way into office against equally ruthless opposition

that Gitutu reaches his goal of chairmanship of the local housing committee. Now, he can pocket the fabulous percentages offered by foreign spectators, in exchange for building contracts ,and then corruptly allocate the Jerry-built maisonettes that result to line his pockets. Through Gitutu Wa Gataanguru, Ngugi exposes the economic rot, hypocrisy and ruthlessness of the compradors, the development of the comprador land grobbers, the use of credit facilities by the comprador, while the producer of wealth live shanty areas, with little or no hope for survival.

Before Gitutu, there is another thief called Ndaaya Wa Kahuria who had been chased off the stage for confusing his own petty thieving with great feats of exploitation achieved by the rich and the powerful. He is the one of the local watchdogs of the foreign thieves or robbers. He invites other watchdogs to be united like western thieves and robbers:

Therefore, their local watchdogs are also one umbilical cord, one age-group, one house, one clan, one kind. We who have gathered here today, whether loo, or Kallenjin, or Mkamba, or Mswahili, or Mmaasai, or Mkikiyu, or Mbalutiya, are brothers in theft and robbery, related to one another through our links with these foreign expert. Master of ceremonies! We all belong to one organization. Let us always remain united. (97)

Gitutu Wa Gataanguru is convinced that no one can become rich without proceeding by burglary and robbery. He admires the European procedure, that is why he invites his friends to copy them. To enumerate all vices characterising independent Kenya is difficult. What we can say is that: the ones who fought for independence are not the first to taste the fruit of independence. Ngugi warns us in his epigraph to *A Grain of Wheat* that “ the masses who fought the British yet who now see all that they fought for being put on one side” (43) have been disposed of their heritage. This is how Gikoyo sees it as he talks to Mugo:

It is people like you who ought to have been the first to taste the fruits of independence. But now whom do you see riding in long cars and changing them daily as if motors cars were clothes? It is those who did not take part in the movement, the same who ran for shelter of schools and universities and administrations. At the political meetings you hear them shout Uhuru, we fought for. Fought where? They are mere uncircumcised boys. They knew suffering as a word. (80)

The expectations has been achieved for the businessmen for whom independence means, to get more money, and more business to be prosperous. The best example is Gitutu Wa Gataanguru, who glorifies and sings praises to

modern theft and robbery. To sustain Gitutu's idea, Mwireri adds that: "theft and robbery are the measure of a country's progress" (79). To the peasants, independence is disillusionment. In *The Vision of Africa*, Victor Eudusei portrays the picture of disillusionment focussing on Ghana:

You put your fouth in Ghana, don't you? The new life. Well, that's fine boy. That's fine for you. But as far as I am concerned, it's a dead body lying unburied. You wait until after independence. You'll see such oppression as you never believed possible. Only of course it will be all right then, it will be black men oppressing black men and who could object to that? (144-145)

Here, Victor is only facing the sheer reality of the situation. After Gitutu, we have another businessman called Gihaahu Wa Gatheeca. The later is allowed to expound three key areas in which social welfare is transformed into big business: education, local government and housing. He relates the life he had before entering the field of theft and robbery:

Long ago, before Uhuru, I lived with duster and chalk in my hand, teaching children their ABC at Ruuwa-Ini primary school. Oh, those were terrible days! I used to eat ugali with salt as soup or with

ten cents worth of vegetables when a bird of good  
omen had visited me. (110)

After playing with theft and robbery based on housing, his life changes.  
He becomes wealthy and begins to sing theft and robbery to his friends:

As for me, I'll never abandon theft and robbery  
based on housing. There's nothing on Earth that  
generates as much profit as people's hunger and  
thirst for shelter. So I never want to see this  
appetite diminish, even by the amount. (118)

By comparing these two passages of Gatheeca, the first shows Gatheeca's situation during European administration, and the second paints the situation after their departure. Gatheeca becomes rich after independence. The Whiteman's departure permitted the neo-colonialist to exploit his fellow brother. In *Devil on The Cross*, there is a tale about the ogre and the peasant. The peasant was the one who went to the fields to get food, the one who went to the fields to get food, the one who went to the valleys to fetch water, the one who went to the forest to get fire wood and the one who did the cooking. The ogre's job was to eat, and there after to sleep soundly on the back of the peasant; and made the peasant to become progressively thinner and more depressed at heart. The ogre is compared to the colonialists or African new leaders, who becomes rich because of the peasant's sweat. Gitutu argues that: "Hunger x thirst = famine, famine among the masses= wealth for a man of

cunning” (104). Like the oppressor during colonization, the ogre advises the peasants to endure his lot on earth with fortitude, for he would later find his rest in heaven. In Mongo Beti’s *The Poor Christ of Bomba and King Lazarus*, father Drumont and father Leguen respectively use similar Christian doctrines to consolidate their control over the indigenous people, and thus maintain the security of the oppressor. Gicaamba in *I’ll Marry When I Want* notes that:

Religion is the something as God. When the British imperialists came here in 1895, all the missionaries of all the churches, held the Bible in the left hand, and the gun in the right hand. The Whiteman wanted us. To be drunk with religious ,while he,in the meantime,was mapping and grabbing our land, and starting factories and businesses on our sweat.

(56-57)

Religion has been used by the colonizers in order to colonize the mind of Africa ,and in return, rob them in the name of God. Like the colonizer, Mwireri Wa Mukiraai invites other businessmen to blind the masses:

Wananchi, don’t complain! When the foreigners were eating, did you ever moan? Did you ever scratch yourselves? Our people, the plague that is talking the country is not alien as the one in Europe. You should be rejoicing at the fact that

your sweat and blood has produced ten native millionaires. (167)

The blindness of the African masses began with colonization. Some people had hope that, with independence, all Africans will be free. Unfortunately, independence came, and there was no change. Among social and economic rot in Kenya, we can not forget to mention “money”. In traditional society, money was restricted by reason of closed economy, an economy based on charter. It had a purpose of developing a country only. But in post-independent Africa, nothing else matters but money. Everyone is moved by material comfort. In traditional society, the society protected the individuals by offering them basic necessities, and the individuals in return, worked together to form a cohesive body. Today, an individualistic approach to life is being observed everywhere. Africa is being westernized. An individual will do all that is possible to enrich himself to the detriment of the rest of the population. Ngugi through Mwara and Gaturia notes that: “Me? Youngman, I don’t belong to those churches of yours. Business is my temple and money my God. But if some other God exists, that’s all right”(56).

This importance attached to money helps to tear, rather than build post-colonial Africa. Nditika Wa Nguunji, adds one more area of exploitation to those already enumerated: “Magendo”, a generic term from Swahili for the whole practice of smuggling, black marketeering, of cornering goods and forcing up prices of essential commodities. He suggests a final state of

“Magendo” concerning the market in human organs, for transplants, so that, the rich man will purchase physical immortality:

It was revealed to me that night that in this country we should have a factory for manufacturing human parts like mouths, bellies, and hearts and so on, spare parts for the human body. This would mean that a rich man who could afford them could have two or three mouths, bellies, two cocks and hearts. If the first mouth became tired of chewing and his belly could take over. When an old man like me had a sugar girl, instead of falling a sleep soon after the first engine had stalled, he would simply start up the other engineer and continue with the job in hand... We could coin some new sayings! A rich man's youth never ends. When a man possesses two hearts, he virtually possesses two lives. This would mean that a rich man never dies. There's another possible proverb: A rich man never dies. We could purchase immortality with our money and leave death as the prerogative of the poor.(180)

The reason which pushes him to say so is his wealth. He remarks that he has so much money, but he is alone to eat it. Instead of stopping the

exploitation of the masses, he suggests a factory for manufacturing human parts. He is not satisfied with the money he has. He ironically does not see the difference between him and the peasant:

With all my property, what do I have, as a human being, that a worker, or a peasant, or a poor man does not have? I have one mouth like the poor; I have one belly, just like the poor, and I have one heart, just like the very poor and I have one... You know what I mean, just one like the poorest of men. (179-180)

The poor men are always defenceless, unprotected, neglected as *Devil on the Cross* depicts it. The people who are constantly ready to produce all the wealth the country needs are the first to exploit them. Here is Nditika Wa Nguunji, who has enough money and property, which can supply food for a thousand people, but he is satisfied with one plateful, just like other people. Nguunji's money and property can bring wealth to the peasant, but the problem is that he is overwhelmed by individualism. Mwireri Wa Mukirai notes that: "Money is supreme, money rules the world" (173). Nditika Nguunji is the one who is proud of exploitation. He is convinced that theft and robbery are the only way to get more money. He invites the other to join the tendency:

To grab, to extort money and to confiscate. The holy trinity of theft: Grabbing, extortion and

confiscation. If you find anything belonging to the masses don't leave it behind, for if you don't look after yourself who'll look after you? (177)

Here, Nguunji shows that he sustains the exploitation of the masses. He places money before everything, the way he gets it is not a problem.

Many African intellectuals, nationalist leaders and politicians believed that laissez-faire capitalism rigidly adhered to during the colonial period was responsible for slow economic growth. Once independence was won, most African leaders opted for systematic, state economic planning, to remove these deep-seated capitalist obstacles. Africa's dependency on capitalist countries like USA, Canada, Western Europe, and Japan ended up to hamper Africa's economic development. These countries use military and political strength, superior resources, and trans-national economic ties with Africa to keep it dependent. Domestic elites, because of their dependence, protest foreign interests, often at the expense of local economic interest. Galting points out in *Inequality in Africa* that: "African elites often act in harmony with outside economic interest, even when military force and aggressive diplomacy are absent" (Qtd *Inequality In Africa*, 14).

As already mentioned, the African leaders forget the problems that threatened Africa during the colonial period because, once they got the opportunity to replace them, they worked in harmony with them. Instead of protecting local economy, and if possible see how to develop it, they executed

the colonialists ideology with little or no reflection. Wayne Nafziger in *Inequality in Africa* calls this period neo-colonial:

Africa usually involves alliances between foreign capital and domestic political leaders, bureaucrats and intermediaries. These domestic elites usually benefit from invitation to MNCS (Multinational Corporations) which often use high technology inappropriate to Africa's resource endowment. (38)

From the above-mentioned, we can say that independence was just a physical departure of the white. Gitutu Wa Gataanguru is the one who maintained this strong collaboration with the west: "Here are letters from some white men with whom I have worked and who have been very pleased with my services. I am their friend. They are my friends" (102).

In *Devil on the Cross*, Gitutu Wa Gataanguru is the example of those businessmen who exaggerate the exploitation of the masses. He plans many ways of getting money, and takes even the option of importing air from abroad and sell to the peasants:

Imagine the profit we would reap if we were to sell the masses air to breathe in tins or, better if we could meter it! We could even import some air from abroad, imported air which we could then sell to the people at special prices! Or we could send

our own air abroad to be packaged in tins and bottles- yes, because the technology of foreigners is very advanced. (107)

Gitutu Wa Gataanguru has embraced capitalism and has lost his African identity. What is bad is that, he oppresses the masses in his quest for money. The masses are always disillusioned because he exaggerates his greed. Ngugi on this writes:

There are two ideas that I'd like to develop now. The first concerns the ways and means of increasing hunger and thirst for land in the whole country, this will create famine and the people will then raise top-grade tycoons. The masses will do that in this way: as soon as a hunger and thirst for land have increased for beyond their present level, we who have the land will be selling soil in posts and tins, so that a man will at least be able to plant a seed in them and hang from the roof of his shelter. (107)

In *Devil on the Cross*, Ngugi expresses the suffering of the masses with much bitterness. He is unhappy because of deplorable economic and social conditions of the masses.

Armah on his part in *The Beautiful ones are not yet Born* deplors the disillusionment in post-independent Ghana and satirizes the nouveau riche. The world the writer presents to us is threatened by decay, and more importantly, the general pollution of the masses. Armah presents characters as victims of circumstances masterminded by the hardhearted capitalists like Koomson. In all the instances enumerated, we can not see any attempt at alleviating the poor situation because, even the Man or the Protagonist is introduced as a Man sitting at the very back of a bus, alone, sleeping on his saliva:

The Man was sitting in the very back of the bus,  
with his body angled forward so that his chin was  
resting on the back of the seat in front of him,  
supported by his hand. (4)

This description of the man can be interpreted as non-partisan. But after knowing more about him, we realise that he is the only one who is aware of the situation in which they live, but can do nothing since he is alone. In *The Beautiful ones are not yet Born*, like in *Devil on the Cross*, an individualistic approach to life is noticed. Armah gives the example of Koomson who has followed rotten ways to get money and power. Before he was known as a docker who pulls ropes at the harbour: "Koomson we all know for a long time here. A railway man, then a docker at the harbor. Pulling ropes. Blistered hands, toughness, callused hands" (88). Like Gitutu Wa Gataanguru and others in *Devil on The Cross*, Koomson becomes rich after the Whiteman's departure

through corruption. That is why the Man who used to be Koomson's classmate, wonders why Koomson has suddenly become rich:"Aaah! So, I said I didn't know Koomson has enough money to buy even one boat. Those things cost thousands and thousands of cedis" (58). The boats that the man is talking about belong to Oyo, The Man's wife. Because these boats are very expensive, The Man does not understand how Koomson can buy them. After calculating Koomson's salary, he concludes that Koomson is corrupt:

Now I dropped the paper and said: "Oh, I see" And again with this patience of hers my mother in-law asked me what I had seen at last. So I got angry enough to tell her I had seen corruption. Public theft. (58)

During Koomson's reign, no one is allowed to own any property because the state is supposed to be a socialist state, but Koomson owns a fishing boat, which officially belongs to Oyo. Armah in *The Beautiful ones are not yet Born* shows us that the man is always isolated and frustrated, because he is not happy with the situation he observes everywhere. In his society, to be honest is a social vice. Seeing the situation, he feels really confused:

The Man was left alone with thoughts of the easy slide and how everything said there was something miserable, something unspeakably gives what everyone around was busy taking and giving!

Something unnatural, something very cruel,  
something that was criminal, for who but a criminal  
could ever be left with such feeling of loneliness?

(31-32)

The Man is called a failure because he refuses to involve himself in the corruption which is prevailing in Ghanaian society. No one understands him, even his wife Oyo is against him. When he tells her that somebody offers him a bribe in order to give him an allocation, his wife does not understand why he refuses bribes. The woman insults him until she compares him to a chichidodo:

Ah! You know, the chichidodo is a bird. The  
chichidodo hates excrement with all its soul. But  
the chichidodo only feeds on maggots, and you  
know the maggots grow best inside the lavatory.

This is the chichidodo. (53)

Oyo is for corruption, she admires Koomson, and blames her husband for dancing a strange dance. She needs to be like Koomson's wife, who is always in a good car. To Oyo, the true salvation is in money, shiny cars, expensive perfumes, wigs and other luxuries. She does not care about the source. Oyo wants to force the Man to do what he hates. He tells the problems to his friend teacher:

But, Teacher, what can I want? How can I look at Oyo and say I have long shining car? How can I come back to the children and despise international schools? And then Koomson comes and the family sees Jesus Christ in him. How can I ever feel a human being? (63)

Because the Man and Teacher share almost all the problems, the latter advises him not to be ashamed:

Yes. Life gets very hard when Yeranda boys are building palaces in matter of months. If you can come near people here they will ask you, what about you? Where is your house? Where have you left your car? What do you bring in your hand for the loved ones? Nothing. (14)

Here, Teacher says that people will always have to say about them, to mean teacher and the Man because they are alone not to sustain what others are busy with.

The world Armah describes in *The Beautiful ones are not yet Born* is materialistic. He depicts also a situation in which driving is the guiding principle of life. "How to drive", explains the central conflict of the novel. It becomes a way of surviving. According to Oyo, The Koomson's are very wealthy because they know how to drive: "I am tired of it; I would like to have

someone drive me where I want to go... Like Estella. Koomson's wife. And why not? Is she more than I"? (54). Oyo accuses his husband that he is poor because he has refused to learn how to drive. Walking is self-counselling in that society. Either you "drive" or you "crawl", which simply means, it is a matter of life or death. What Oyo claims is understandable, because in her society everyone is rotten.

Materialism is also apparent in Ayi kwei Armah's *Fragments* with the encounter of Baako and another Ghanaian, whose main concern is only to show off the possessions he has acquired in Europe: "There are important things you can't get to buy at home.... I got two cars on this trip" (28). Baako feels desperate when his family asks him where is his car instead of welcoming him. This shows the installation of capitalism in the African mind. *Fragments* becomes in this way a terrain for the exposure of corruption, just like *The Beautiful Ones are not yet Born* and *Devil On The Cross*. Bernth Lindfors and Ulla Schild castigates that:

How could the Koomsons, the Nangas and the Oguazors really understand the crushing poverty of the masses? Enscenced in ministerial mansion and surbuban villas or in the artificial cosiness of a professorial mansion in the sedate little world of the academics, how could these people really understand the plight of Armah's the Man and the

naked Man and the other unfortunate people trapped in the permanent maze of poverty and insecurity.(Qtd *Neo-African Litterature and Culture*,136)

Bernth Lindfors and Ulla Schild want to expose the inequality existing between the wealthy people and the poor in Africa through the above quotation. Koomson and his friends live in good places, because they have a lot of money. Consequently, their children are admitted into good schools. *The Beautiful Ones are not yet Born* gives the example of Koomson's daughter, absurdly named "Princess". The latter studies at a school reserved only for rich men's children:

These schools are so called "corona and Santa Maria" schools for the children of the black bourgeoisie who can pay the high fees demanded and board and in different school for the children of the poor.(136)

Dr Barbara B. Liyod adds that :

Children of the educated elite are taller, heavier, healthier and begin schooling earlier and with more skills than the product of illiterate or traditional Yoruba homes. These are the most abvious results of superior housing, diet, medical care, in fact of

privileged.(Qtd *Neo- African Literature and Culture*,136)

Dr Barbara's idea coincides with Fanon's idea in *Black Skin, White Masks* when he says:

The masses have no illusion. They are hungry and the police officers, though now they are Africans, do not serve to reassure them particularly. The masses begin to sulk, they turn away from this nation in which they have been given no place and begin to lose interest in it. (137)

According to Fanon, the African masses are getting more and more disillusioned. Their leaders maintain neo-colonial dependence in accordance with the necessities of its objective situation. In so doing, they forget the masses.

Briefly speaking, the two books *Devil on the Cross* and *The Beautiful Ones are not yet Born* reveal more clearly the contemporary economic and social rot in Africa. It is a simple comparison of these two books regarding the bad things done economically and socially by African new leaders.

### CHAPTER THREE

#### STYLE.

This chapter analyses the style used by Ngugi Wa Thiong'o and Ayi Kwei Armah in *Devil on the Cross* and *The Beautiful Ones are not yet Born* respectively. Before one embarks on an examination of the style, one needs firstly to explain briefly the word style. According to *Websters ninth New Collegiate Dictionary*, style means a distinctive manner of expression as in writing or speech. These distinctive manner is seen in his sentence construction, structural devices and figures of speech. Some of the figures of speech which are recurrent in these texts are irony, biblical allusions, metaphor and symbolism.

If one tries to analyse Ngugi's style, in *Devil on the Cross*, one will realise that his structures vary and are highly concentrated. His diction is at once spontaneous and exact. In working more closely at his sentences, one may find that he achieves sophisticated effects, without departing from the ordinary. His style is comprehensible, with short, concentrated sentences.

This case is evident in *Devil on the Cross*:

Hurry up, Warĩinga! Faster, Warĩinga!

Move Warĩinga!

“Why are all you people looking so sad?”

“Don't ask any question, friend”

No, tell me! (222)

It is also easy enough to find passages of a page or more in *Weep not, Child* or in *The River Between* where at least, half of the sentences have ten words a piece or less, among which a surprising number have no more than three, four or five words. Sentences of more than twenty words on the other hand are the exception: “ the boys threw them away and one piece touched a cow which stood up quickly, frightened” (*The River Between*,5) “ the plain, more or less rectangular in shape, had four valleys leading into or out of it at the corners” (*Weep not, Child*, 7)

If one analyses Ngugi’s sentences, he can imagine that it is very hard to keep such a style flowing easily and harmoniously, and even harder to make its effects echo in the reader’s mind. But the remark is that it does not cause any problem. In his early novels, except in dialogue, even the shortest sentence is a fully expressed grammatical structure according to traditional criteria as Ngugi expresses it in his *The River Between*, *Secret Lives*, *Weep not, Child*, respectively: “He felt guilty” (83),

“I found it” (16)

“Njoroge was pleased” (15)

More significantly, one finds sentence of some 15 or so words involving three clauses, or even more. Ngugi brings this out in *The River Between*: “so when Kabonyi said that Waiyiki had broken that oath people roared back “No-o-o” (172). Also he draws similar resemblance in *Weep not, Child*. “When the time for circumcision came, it was Kamau who met the cost” (95). Ngugi does

not forget to show that this case is still true also in *Devil on the Cross* and *Matigari*: Mûturi and Wangari, because you know that what is done can never be undone, leave these people alone” (*Devil On The Cross*, 159). “ I slowly crept up to where he lay, just in case he was pretending to be dead” (*Matigari*, 22). It is evident therefore that these are natural and easy English formations. Nothing is strainous. In using the full resources of the English language, Ngugi tend to make use of each separate element in its most straightforward form. It is this neat and unforced combination, which creates the variety and richness of his language.

To go on with Ngugi’s style, repetition of the word “and” and rhetorical questions become much more frequent in Ngugi’s writings especially in *Devil on the Cross*:

You people, the Haraambe of home guards and imperialists was an organisation designed to encourage bestiality: a man would throw children and the disabled into the fire as he rushed for the debris and leftovers of the imperialists. (39)

Here, even if there is a repetition of the word “and”, there is not a repetition of the subject, to mean that, this is not a figure of speech, but a simple repetition which is Ngugi’s style. As far as rhetorical questions are concerned, they are used in order to find solutions to the problems that plague African people. The narrator asks himself a question and anyone who wants

can give the answer as Ngugi puts it out in *Devil on the Cross*: “what marvel could be greater than that?” (52) This question does not necessarily need an answer, because the narrator asks a question in order to persuade African only. He does not expect an answer.

Generally speaking, in *Devil on the Cross*, Ngugi decides to use the present tense not only in lengthy speeches but also in dramatic passages of the historic present, which both heighten and generalise the more stylized presentation. Here is the example:

This is a competition for thieves and robbers international. Yoani, thieves and robbers who have attained international status. So we don't want any novices or amateurs to come here and waste our time. Time is money, and time is robbing time. (95)

Anyone who reads Ngugi's writings, argues that he is simple in the sense that he writes prose, which is easy to read, but not in the sense of avoiding the full range and variety of English language.

As already indicated in the introduction, *Devil on the Cross* is highly metaphorical. The title itself is metaphorical. In *American Aencyclopedia*, metaphor is figure of speech, which consists in the transference to one object of a attribute or name which strictly and literally is not applicable to it, but only figuratively and by analogy. It is thus in essence an emphatic comparison

which if expressing formally is a “smile”; thus it is a metaphor to speak of a ship ploughing her way through the waves, but a simile when it takes the form of “the ship, like a plough, moves”, etc. In Webster’s *Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary*, metaphor is a figure of speech in which a word or a phrase literally denoting one kind of object or idea is used in a place of another to suggest a likeness or analogy between them. Ngugi uses metaphors and biblical references to title the novel. Generally, “devil” represents all bad things. Thus, Africans have always seen colonisation and its aftermath with a bad eye and therefore, consider colonizers and neo-colonialists as devils. As far as Ngugi is concerned, devil stands for those black leaders, who, after independence became thieves and robbers. In addition, he presents the “devil” in his novel as capitalism, that enslaves people’s mind. Money and property are the two devils that Ngugi places at the centre of his novel. Another metaphor behind the “devil” is corruption. Kenyan institutions, police, courts, tribals are corrupted and favour only high class people. Workers and peasants do not have any law to protect them. As “devil” represents all bad things, Ngugi gives us the example of “devil”, by telling us what happens to Warĩnga:

Misfortune is swifter than the swiftest spirit, and one trouble spawns another. One Friday Warĩnga was dismissed from her job for rejecting the advances of boss Kihara, her employer, who was the managing director of the firm. That evening

Warĩnga was abandoned by her sweetheart, John Kimwana, after he had accused her of being Boss Kihara's mistress. (10)

Warĩnga here stands for Kenyans especially the peasants, who are plagued with problems caused by their leaders. What is sympathetic is that, Warĩnga is caught in a web of misery as her fiancé abandons her, and accuses her of being Kihara's mistress, despite her rejection of Kihara's proposal.

On the other hand, the "cross" has a biblical implication: the sign of victory. As Christ died on the cross to save mankind, so, Kenyan patriots have to crucify all devils, for the sake of all Kenyans. Ngugi Wa Thiong'o asserts that:

The devil who would lead us into the blindness of the heart, and the deafness of the mind, should be crucified, and care should be taken that his acolytes do not lift him down from the cross to pursue the task of building hell for the people on earth...(7)

By talking of the hell, Ngugi makes allusion to the miserable condition in which workers and peasants live. He portrays them as victims of the colonial and neo-colonial imposition of European culture and language. Ngugi adopts biblical imagery and references because they constitute the most complex mythology that exposes the new belief system and philosophy of a colonised mind. He also invokes biblical mythology to make abstract concepts of good

and evil, so often referred to as warring opposites, concrete and substantial. Gaturia, deliberately tries to determine whether or not the Devil exists, and at length, he realises that the terms, heaven, hell, Christ and Satan, is a vast and deeply significant metaphor, which enables human beings to think, tell and act in the light of abstract principles of rightness and goodness. In *Devil on the Cross*, Warīnga asks Gaturia if he does not find a devil, even among the foreigners: “So you didn’t find a single devil, not even among the foreigners, for instance?” (132). In response to Warīnga’s question, he says: “What I am saying is that, it doesn’t really matter if the devil actually exists or if he is merely a certain image of the world” (132). Gaturia replies like this because he is confused of the word devil. Who is a devil and who is not? The foreigners? Why not the African leaders? For him it is a long discussion. What he knows is that it is a metaphor. It can signify anything. Warīnga is a Christian woman. In *Devil on the Cross*, she plays the part of Christ being tempted by the devil. She cries in response that: “No! No! Get thee behind me Satan...” (194). Here, Warīnga tries to take over Christ’s role and eliminates any suggestion of god head in doing so. In her mythical role, she totally rejects the materialistic worldly wisdom of Satan’s proposal as Christ. Here, Satan stands for the bosses to whom Warīnga asks for job. These bosses give her a condition in having a job. Warīnga refuses their propositions as the narrator notes it:

Kareendi is determined to make no beds: she would rather leave her case unsettled. And because God is truly no ugali eater, one morning Kareendi lands a job without having to visit any hotel for modern love. (19)

Warīnga trusts a lot in God, she knows that her God will give her a job. Surprisingly, it is the wealthy and the socially complacent, who minister to devil as they lift him from the cross. Warīnga is a poor woman but refuses the opportunity of getting a job in exchange with sex. When Warīnga enters one office seeking for a job, the boss she finds inside tempts her like Satan did to Jesus. He proposes to sleep with her in the Modern Love Bar and Lodging, which has become the main employment bureau for girls (19). Warīnga refuses the proposal and prefers to stay without a job:

Then Mr. Boss takes the desk top with his finger or with a pen, saying, “Ah, Kareendi, jobs are very hard to come by these days. But a girl like you... it should not be too difficult to find something for you to do. But, Kareendi, a matter like this cannot be finalised in the office. Let’s go across to the Modern Love Bar and Lodging to discuss the question more fully (19).

Mr. Boss belongs to the wealthy people and Warĩnga is among the oppressed.

As Christianity has become a means of conditioning people into accepting colonial and neo-colonial exploitations, biblical allusions are very much employed, with an increasingly ironic edge. In *Devil on the Cross* religious references are primarily critical and satirical: Mwireri earnestly assures his fellow passengers that: "The majority of those who will be attending the feast believe in God. I, for instance go to PCEA Church at Thogdo, the church of the Torch, every Sunday"(76). This is satirical because one cannot imagine that a man like Mwireri goes to the church but it is at the center of all evils. In church, people are supposed to learn how to love each other, how to live with others, but instead of doing this, they do the contrary.

In Longman *Dictionary* of Contemporary English, satire is defined as a way of talking or writing about something, for example politics and politicians, in which you deliberately make them seem funny so that people will see their faults. In the above quotation of Mwireri, is satirical because, he wants to prove that he is a Christian, which means, he cannot do bad things as pagans. But really, he is the first to sustain the exploitation of the masses. Christianity is at once a façade for the unscrupulous and a narcotic for those who are suffering:

If you prevent people from breathing what would  
prevent them from taking up clubs and swords and

guns? Isn't that tantamount to showing how much you despise the masses? Better meanness that is covert: better a system of the theft that is disguised by lies. Or why do you think that they were foolish when they urged workers and peasants to close their eyes in prayer and told them that earthly things were vain? Why do you think I go to all the church fund raising Haraambe meetings? (Qtd in *Devil On The Cross*,123)

This phenomenon begins with colonization when the colonizers blind the masses with the Bible. They made them to understand that if they refuse their orders, it is sinful, and consequently, will lead them to the hell.

Another stylistic device which is central in *Devil On The Cross* is the use of irony. According to Longman *Dictionary* of Contemporary English, irony is the use of words that are the opposite of the intended meaning. Ngugi's writings are judged to be ironic because the complexity of his vision is determined by an ability to see many facets of every action, every situation, and every impulse. When he wants to repeat an event, he is aware of the conflicting motives that have shaped it, the different ways it may be viewed and reported by different people, and unintended result that may spring from it. In Ngugi's style, things are not simply as they appear on the surface. Irony is used in Ngugi's writings in order to ridicule the colonizer and the neo-

colonialist. An instant of irony is seen when Mwireri Wa Mūkiraāī, criticizes and rejects exploitation but ends up as a thief or robber:

I am very sure, the Kenyan thieves and robbers, can stand on our own feet and forever this habit of sharing our loot with foreigners...Let us steal from among ourselves so that the wealth of the country remains in the country, and so that in the flesh of ten millions poor we can plant the roots of ten national millionaires. (166-167)

On this note, he adds: “Every robber should go and rob his own mother that is true democracy and equality of nations!” (171) Ngugi sees this as double irony in the sense that he does not see any difference between the exploitation made by the foreigners and that made by nationalists. To Ngugi, Mwireri is selfish: he wants to show the masses that he is against the foreigners, in order to push them to trust him, and after, uses the opportunity to exploit them.

Other aspects of style used by Ngugi in *Devil on the Cross* are songs and proverbs. In Webster’s Ninth New Collegiate *Dictionary*, song is a short musical composition of words and music. The use of songs develops in an interesting way in the text: Muturi consciously describes himself as talking in song, when he regrets the perversion of traditional morality: “they have been taught new songs, new hymns that celebrate the acquisition of money. That is

why today Nairobi teaches: "Crookedness to the upright, meanness to the kind, hatred to the loving, evil to the good..." (15-16). Warĩnga also employs song consciously in her semi autobiographical narrative: "For today Kareendi has decided that she does not know the difference between":

To straighten and to bend,  
 To swallow and spit out,  
 To ascend and to descend,  
 To go and to return. (25)

In the above quotation, Waringa says so to show the problem she has because of the selfishness of the leaders.

As far as the use of proverbs is concerned, proverbs are the collection of moral sayings and counsels forming a book of canonical Jewish and Christian scripture, (Webster's Ninth New Collegiate *Dictionary*). Ngugi uses proverbs to comment on human affairs, such as oppression, laziness and many other evils in the society, including the rotten nature of the society. They are used by adults to comment on the behaviour of others. So, they are used as warnings.

In *Devil on the Cross*, if we try to blend proverbs into modern thematic commentary, we will realize that Warĩnga vindicates her choice of a student lover in preference to Boss Kihara when she says:

The Yam that one has dug up for oneself has no mouldy patches. The sugar cane that one has picked out has no unripe edges. Those whom one

loves do not squint. The young man who you claim  
is uncircumcised is my chosen one. (22-23)

By saying all these things, Warĩnga wants to tell the Boss Kihara that she prefers Gaturia for she knows him better than the boss who is known for his filth life.

Ayi Kwei Armah, like any writer of his period is more concerned about picturing corruption and its effects in Ghana. To express the problem of corruption seen in all domains, this writer chooses symbolism as a vigorous device to purge out his emotions. Some critics have attempted to give definition to the term symbolism. Among them are Patrick Murray and M.H Abrahams. According to Patrick Murray in *Literary Criticism: A Glossary of Major Terms*, symbolism can be described as

The art of expressing emotions not by describing them directly nor by defining through over comparison with concrete images but by suggesting what these ideas and emotions are by recreating them in the mind of reader through the use of unexplained symbols.(157)

Another critic who has attempted to give a definition of symbolism is M.H Abraham's, in *A Glossary of Literary Terms*:

In the broadest sense, symbol is anything which signifies something; in the sense, all words are

symbols. In discussing literature, however, the term “symbol” is applied only to a word or a phrase that signifies an object or event which in its turn signifies something, or has a range of reference beyond itself.(311)

In *The Beautiful Ones are not yet Born*, most characters are not individuals, but types. They symbolise particular roles which are indicated by generalized names. Eustace Palmer in *An Introduction to the African Novel* notes it:

The hero himself is known only as “the man” and is referred to variously as “the watcher”, “the giver” and “the silent one”. His immediate dependents are called “the loved ones” and one of the most important characters is called “the teacher”. Although Maanan Oyo and Koomson have names, it is clear that their function is mainly symbolic. (129)

Among the characters, some stand for positive values, and others stand for negatives ones. For example the Man stands for positive values, and all the names he has show his kindness. The Man shares the same qualities with his friend Teacher, in the sense that, they are alone to fight against corruption. Other people like Oyo, Koomson, and Estella have names which show their

individual behaviour. They are among those African people who sustain corruption.

Armah sees Ghanaians as dead people because they are indifferent to the increasing state of corruption. The characters are seemingly dead and Armah presents them symbolically embracing death. In *The Beautiful Ones are not yet Born*, Armah attacks the effects of corruption by using terms, which express bad smell such as excreta, putrefaction and so on. So, according to Armah, bad smell symbolizes corruption, and many other evils that characterize Ghana, after independence. As already indicated in the introduction, *The Beautiful Ones are not yet Born* is full of symbolism. The bus stands for the state in decay. What happens in the bus is generally what happens in Ghana. The passengers in the bus suffer like Ghanaians and the bus conductor behaves like Ghanaian leaders as expressed in *Introduction to the African Novel* by Eustace Palmer:

What happens in the bus is a parable of what happens in the country as a whole. The bus, like the state, is in a state of decay, its pieces only held together by rust. The passengers represent the ordinary citizens, and the driver and the conductor are authority, conniving to defraud the citizens and, if caught, to bribe them into silence. (131)

Armah tries to choose appropriate diction to describe things, and people, in order to achieve his aim, which is to denounce the evil nature of corruption. He gives the example of what happens in the bus in order to reveal the situation in Ghana. To show the practices of Ghanaian leaders, he portrays symbolically how the conductor extort money from passengers who stand for Ghanaian masses. In *The Beautiful Ones are not yet Born*, the driver and the conductor stand for Ghanaian leaders. What they do to the passengers is what Ghanaian leaders do to the masses. When Armah talks about the bus in a state of decay, he wants to tell the readers that African countries, especially Ghana is rotten. He adds that its pieces are held together by rust, to mean that everything is rotten, and consequently Fall off as Koomson does at the end.

The language used by the writer is very symbolic and shows that he is concerned with serious problems. It describes filthy situations. It shows sometimes the falling apart of moral standards as expressed by the words pronounced by the conductor of the bus, in which the man is travelling: “you bloody fucking! Article of no commercial value! You think the bus belongs to your grandfather?” (6) All these symbolize the falling apart of moral issues in postcolonial Africa. The bus conductor reacts in like manner because the man is the only one in the bus who is aware of what is being done. The latter does not understand why he is not sleeping like others. In fact, this language interprets, paints and communicates the set of values the people live by. In Armah’s language, one can understand that he is against all sort of corruption

,be it political, social or economic. A good example is illustrated when he describes four Ghanaians, with prosperous looking bellies, of which one of them laughs in a pretentious senior service way, and when he speaks, he tries to imitate the whites: "...and the sound that out of his mouth reminded the listener of a constipated man, straining in his first minute on top of the lavatory seat" (125).

Armah does not tolerate the people's corrupt practices. That is why he uses that language. He does not stop on the language of corrupt people, but proceeds to show how the corrupt use rude language, which depicts the ugly system, in which they are operating.

As far as other figures of speech are concerned, contrast is more apparent. In whatever he says, he seems to describe two opposite sides. He describes the world of poor people and that of the wealthy. Paul Njoroge in *Literature and Contemporary Reliance: The West African Example* intimates that:

In the Beautiful ones, physical condition of material squalor (bad feeding, lack of proper sanitation facilities) are contrasted with material conditions of affluence and luxury. (7)

In this quotation, Njoroge seems to complete Ngugi in *Homecoming* when he says: "Now there are only two tribes left in Africa: the 'haves' and the 'have nots' (17). These words of Njoroge and Armah push us to recall what

Armah says in *The Beautiful Ones are not yet Born* that: “No saviours. Only the hungry and the fed” (90). Some concepts used as symbols are sometimes juxtaposed. The concepts like light and darkness are used as symbols by Armah, when he wants to talk about good and evil. In other words, they carry a biblical allegory, probably because of the new religious background of the Ghanaian people. Armah chooses to use biblical allusion to regain Ghanaian people who have lost their spiritual status. He borrows these themes of light and darkness from Saint Matthew, chapter 5. For example when Jesus wanted to address the people who had followed him from Galilée and other regions around, he says:

You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hid. Nor do men light a lamp and put it under the bushel, but on a stand, and gives light to all in the house. Let your light shine before men, that they may see your good works and give glory to your father who is in heaven. (*Matthew 5: 14*)

These terms are associated to some characters in *The Beautiful Ones are not yet Born*. For instance, there are some who are persecuted because of their righteousness. Among them, we have the Man, who is the only one, who is seemingly virtuous among most of new Ghanaian thieves, as far as the crime of corruption is directly concerned. Armah frequently uses the bus scene. He does not forget to say something on the light of the bus. To show that the Man is

insufficient to illuminate all the people in the bus, he says that the lights are too weak to illuminate all people who are in darkness. In this case, except the Man and Teacher, others are in darkness. The latter symbolizes a society in which Ghanaian people live. The lights symbolize many things according to Armah. When the Man becomes confused because of his attitude, Armah says that the light from the bus moved uncertainly down the road...(1) to mean that, like the Man who hesitates about his attitude, the light is also not clear. The light from the bus is different from the light in the latrine at the office where the Man works. They are brighter than anywhere, whereas the things found in Koomson's house are negative. They are called so because the writer knows that Koomson's property is obtained through corrupt means. To ironically talk about these things, he says:

It was amazing how much light there was in a place like this. It glinted off every object in the room. Next to each ashtray there were two shiny things: a silver box and a small toy- like pistol. (145-146)

This is ironical because, we read that, after the coup, Koomson leaves all the shiny things he has, and escape in darkness, towards the Man's house, where probably, there is light. After seeing all this, one sees that light and darkness are juxtaposed to expose the postcolonial Ghanaian society, which knows the right things, but insists on the wrong ones. The Man and Teacher symbolize the light, and Koomson and his likes symbolize darkness. Though

the Man and the Teacher symbolize the light, this light is not sufficient to light the post-colonial dark Ghana, and that is why sometimes, this light is misused.

Another symbol found in *The Beautiful Ones are not yet Born* is the suffering of a woman whose name is Maanan. The latter is the one of millions of Ghanaian women betrayed by their husbands on one hand, and on the other hand, she represents the poor masses exploited by the politicians. Eustace Palmer in *An Introduction to the African Novel* remarks that:

When we last see her she looks like something that had been finally destroyed a long time back. She is sifting the fine sand through her finger and muttering: they have mixed it all together! Everything.(43)

In this case Manaan represents the African masses, who suffer because of the ill-treatment given them by the leaders. So, one can say that Manaan is a symbol of suffering.

Ayi Kwei Armah raises many symbols in his book. He presents Amankwa's ugliness symbolically . Amankwa's physical ugliness symbolises the corrupt nature of Ghanaians. Armah describes him as an ugly man, to show how far he is against corrupt people. He exaggerates by saying that he is not good to look at:

The visitor's mouth was a wolf shape and when he spoke, the reason appeared. Children had a name

for such teeth. Nephews, they called these teeth which come in rows, a second and even a third set pushing impatiently out against the first. (27)

Here, Amankwa's ugliness symbolizes his decadence, and that of Ghana. Amankwa is a microcosm for corruption.

The final symbol is that of chichidodo. Oyo calls his husband a chichidodo when he tells her what happens when a man attempts to bribe him. Oyo does not understand why he refuses bribes but abets criminals like Koomson. After a long discussion, she says:

Ah, you know, the chichidodo hates excrements with all its soul. But the chichidodo only feeds on maggots, and you know the maggots grow best inside the lavatory. This is the chichidodo. (45)

Here, the man is compared to a chichidodo, which hates excrements but feeds on maggots. This image help ridicule The Man who hates corruption but abets criminals like Koomson.

Another style used by Armah is Sarcasm. According to Webster's Ninth New Collegiate *Dictionary*, sarcasm is defined as a mode of satirical wit depending for its effect on bitter, caustic, and often ironic language that is used, directed against an individual. Armah's preoccupation of denouncing the ills of his society sometimes drives him to resort to sarcastic language. As an example comes up when Koomson is in the Man house for a visit. He tells

them a story of an Attorney General who delivers a speech while drunk. Because of his state, he talks nonsense. What is surprising is that he does this even when addressing important Party men, Ministers and Parliamentarians. The sarcasm becomes more apparent when the people who are listening to him say: "Then the Attorney General fell down. He was in the final stage himself. We all said: "yeaaaah yeah" it was a fine day indeed" (133). Normally these people should not say that it is a fine day, because what he utters is all nonsense. So, in what they say, one can find a type of irony. Also, it is sarcastic language because the Attorney General is supposed to speak orderly. They use sarcastic language to partly ridicule the Attorney General.

In nutshell, the style of both authors sheds more light on the rot in Ghana and Kenya. It also projects the committed nature of Armah and Ngugi.

## GENERAL CONCLUSION

This study sets out to prove that the postcolonial discourse in Africa is a discourse of filth. In this light, Ayi Kwei, Ngugi Wa Thiong'o and others opt as the spokesmen for the masses, in order to redress the degrading situation.

We have seen that the main concern of these authors is to analyse the vices of post-independence Africa. Apparently, these authors are both against the exploitation of Africans by Africans. Armah and Ngugi view the post-colonial period simply as a continuation of colonialism. Instead of changing the situation, African leaders become architect of all the vices in the societies. For the masses, independence has been disillusionment, whereas for the leaders, it has been seen as a means of acquiring money and wealth, of moving into the former positions occupied by the white colonialists. In *The Beautiful Ones are not yet Born*, Armah's dominating image is that of total disillusionment and hopelessness in leadership. As example, he projects "His Excellency Joseph Koomson, Minister plenipotentiary, Member of the Presidential Commission, Hero of Socialist Labour" (56) who represents African leaders and the Man who represents the armless masses as cases in point. In *Devil on the Cross*, Ngugi denounces the exploitation he sees in his society. The wealthy persistently exploit the poor. He gives the example of Gitutu wa Gataanguru, Kihaahu Wa Gatheeca, Nditika Wa Ngūunje and Mwireri Wa Mukiraaĩ who have no fear in exploiting the Kenyan masses. These people place before everything their interests, and consequently forget

their brothers. People like Koomson, Gitutu Wa Gataanguru, Mwireri Wa Mukiraaĩ, Kihaahu Wa Gatheeca and Nditika Wa Ngūunji are compared to Nderi Wa Riera in *Petals of Blood*, Chief Nanga in *A Man of the People* because they are both animated by hopes of self- aggrandizement, rather than a nationalist spirit.

It is realized that Ghanaian and Kenyan masses are not only politically oppressed but also economically and socially. Socially speaking, we have seen that there has been general disintegration in many things- the city, customs, education, etc. Economically, it has been realised that many problems turn around the widespread of corruption in all domains. That is why Ngugi ponders much about the meaning of independence. For him, independence means nothing for peasant and urban workers; it is a period of betrayal and disillusionment, or a system which denies the freedom and dignity, whereas their leaders live comfortably. Also it has been realized, that there is a very big difference between the leaders and masses in the Kenyan and Ghanaian societies.

Another concern in our study has been that of analysing the style used by Armah and Ngugi in their works already cited. To denounce the rot of their societies, each writer has his way. For instance in Armah's *The Beautiful Ones are not yet Born*, we have analysed that the dominant style is the use of the symbol. He also uses some figures of speech such as irony and contrast. Some of those symbolic images used include the image of the light and the image of

the chichidodo. Here, the bus stands for Ghana, the Man for the masses, and the bus conductor to for the leaders. In Ngugi's *Devil on the Cross*, he chooses to use metaphors and biblical references with some ironies. For instance when he wants to say any bad thing, he calls it "devil". So devil in Ngugi's *Devil on the Cross*, represents the new black leaders, who exploit the masses on one hand, and the colonizers on the other hand. To Ngugi things like corruption, thief and robbery are all evils.

As far as the contribution to scholarship is concerned, this study is a continuation of the discourse of filth in African literature, with Ngugi and Armah as cases in point. It calls for all Africans of the post-independent Africa not to be selfish, but see how they can construct Africa, which has been destroyed since the advent of the colonial encounter.

Future researchers can scrutinize the question of inequality in Africa and the freedom of every people. In addition, they are asked to respond to this question: is there any difference between the present African leaders and the ones who ruled just after colonisation?

As earlier indicated, African leaders are the main causes of many problems observed after independence. African governments are recommended to create transparent structures, in order to reduce the alarming rot in all sectors within the administrative machinery in Africa. Also, the African Union should redefine its position.

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