

## SOCIAL REALITIES BEHIND AYI KWEI ARMAH'S THE BEAUTIFUL ONES ARE NOT YET BORN

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### ABSTRACT

One day, a professor of English literature from the Akan tribe of Ghana was teaching his students Ayi Kwei Armah's *The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born*. At a point, he said that he did not see why the novelist should splash on almost every page, images of putrefaction and corruption. In view of this, the present researcher had to study some records of what transpired during Kwame Nkrumah's reign which the novel is all about. When comparing what he found and what the novelist wrote, he discovered that what baffled the professor in the novel are actually the realities in the days of Nkrumah although they were artistically masked and presented. Some of them are extreme corruption and financial mismanagement which at the end, saw the nation being involved in a coup d'état just after seven years of her being a republic. The actualities of those days are referred to here as social realities. The conclusion is that what Armah wrote was in consonance with actual happenings during the regime of Nkrumah.

**Keywords:** Corruption, Putrefaction, Nkrumah, Reality, Bribery

### INTRODUCTION

One professor of English literature from the Akan tribe of Ghana while teaching his students Ayi Kwei Armah's *The Beautiful Ones are Not Yet Born* was at a loss on that prompted Armah to splash "all these images of putrefaction, corruption and decay on almost every page of the novel". It was not that he did not know about the corruption in his country at the time the novel is referring to but to him, there are many of such portrayals in the novel. This erudite man whose identity the present researcher would not reveal is not alone in looking at the images of putrefaction. In fact, almost all analysts of the novel have one thing or another to write about the corruption in the country during the reign of Francis Nwia Kofi Nkrumah popularly known as Kwame Nkrumah.

One of such critics is Christian Chukwueloka. According to this scholar, Armah in his usage of the progressive tense as a narrative technique depicts the "continuous wearing away of life, of morality in Ghana -- a society where corruption stinks at every nook and cranny during the reign of Nkrumah" (73). In order to show the veracity of his assertion, the critic cites instances from the novel. Such instances are:

Zacherias Lagos who sells “great length of healthy wood he has written off from the saw-mill.” “Abednego Yamoah in his corrupt practices sells government petrol for himself so smartly that there is always someone else -- a messenger, a cleaner to be jailed and never Abednego,” and so on (75).

In highlighting Armah’s exposition of the corruption during the era of Nkrumah as the President of Ghana, Francis Etse Awitor points out that throughout the novel, the writer exposes the pervasive corruption in the Ghanaian society and the failure of the economic and socio-political policy of Nkrumah’s regime which Armah exposes using filth, putrescence and excreta. Armah thus presents the insalubrious environment of the protagonist. To this critic who likes the professor above sees the pervasive images of decay, “This insalubrious environment shows the decadence of the system, the reality of a dirty landscape in Takoradi or Accra, the probable setting of the novel” (48).

In showing instances where the novel depicts such, the critic cites the “K. C. C. RECEPTACLE FOR DISPOSAL OF WASTE”. The venture is used as a siphon for stealing the government’s money by those who are given the project (Awitor 47). Also cited is the bannister in the protagonist’s office where the novel records “Left-hand fingers on their careless journey from a hasty anus sliding all the way up the bannister. Right-hand fingers still dripping with after piss and the stale sweat from the fat crochet” (Awitor 49).

Another critic that sees the state of decay in the Ghanaian society as depicted in the novel is Alexander Dakubo Kakraba. To him, “Armah is bent on shocking his readers and in so doing, awaken them to the rottenness in the society, which occurs as a result of the lack of a culture of maintenance” (307). He then points out the Teacher’s discussion with the protagonist. The teacher points out that the leaders do not know that “While they were climbing up to shit in their people’s faces, their people had seen their arseholes and drawn away in disgust laughter” (309).

But unlike the already referred to a professor who sees images of decay but does not know why Armah has to splash such on almost every page of the novel, Kakraba has this as his own answer: “It is therefore clearly observed that the author uses the vulgar language to criticize the corruption, decadence and the lack of the culture of maintenance that crop up in Ghana and other African countries immediately they attained independence” (313).

As was earlier pointed out, many people are aware of such corruption. One of such people is John Chukwuma Ajakah in his newspaper article. To him, Armah presents the protagonist, the unnamed railway freight clerk who is simply referred to as the man to be “a nonentity without a name”. According to this critic, the villain, Joseph Koomson who is his former classmate, has accolades such as “His Excellency,” “The Minister,” “Brother Joe” and so on. What this critic wants to point out is that those who are not corrupt die off as nonentities but the corrupt ones have innumerable accolades heaped on them. The result is that corruption must be in the increase and gradually, honest conduct and rectitude are jettisoned.

In all these analyses many of which the current researcher does not want to mention, the unanimous agreement is that Armah has a lot to say about corruption during the reign of Nkrumah as the president of his country. However, only a few of these critics highlight what

motivated the novelist to depict those images of decay. In other words, what are the social realities in those days which motivated Armah to write the novel? So, is it true that Nkrumah and his government were in reality very corrupt? What social indices can we lay hands-on and so state firmly that what the novel depicts is a reality in its start enormity?

This is more so when we recall the view of Elizabeth Pryse: "Literature has been described as a 'mirror of its time'. It is important if we are to understand and appreciate it fully, to know something of its place in history and the social conditions of the time in which the author lived" (7).

Such literature as was written during Nkrumah's era can enable us to know the prevalent conditions that were available and so, inspired Armah to write as he did. Can we really recollect the events of those days from the novel knowing that it is a figment of somebody's imagination? In other words, is there any element of truth in fictional narratives?

Yes, there is because the writer is motivated by what is around him for him to effect corrections, to distance himself from or even to criticize and satirize people and the ugly conditions they generate. That fiction is not there just for entertainment or to be used to while away hours of boredom due to idleness, Robin Mayhead states that: "The reading of good literature can bring a man more closely into contact with the real world than he could ever have been brought without a degree of personal experience for which the span of most lives is sufficient" (10).

So, after a thorough reading of the novel *The Beautiful Ones are Not Yet Born* and comparing its details with actual happenings as recorded in history books, one can really know how it was in Ghana when Nkrumah was on the presidential seat. Since this novel is a mirror of those days, one can know what actually happened that inspired Armah. Therefore, the current research is geared towards the specifics that motivated Armah to produce the work.

This deviation from just highlighting the corruption as seen in the novel will help to clear the minds of those who see Armah as overblowing the issue. To Ghanaians and indeed all Africans, this work will go a long way to prop up Chinua Achebe's statement that his "theory of the uses of fiction is that beneficent fiction calls into full life our range of imaginative faculties, gives us a heightened sense of our personal, social and human reality" (113).

Therefore, the essence of the following segment is to show the social and human reality that used to be obtained in Ghana. Since all African countries passed through similar experiences after obtaining independence, Nigerians can do well to read Achebe's *A Man of the people*, Kenyans can read Ngugi's *Devil on the Cross* and so on.

### **On the Conditions that Inspired Armah**

Maanam, a female and enigmatic character in the novel after disappearing for some time, comes back and tells her friends among whom are Etse, the man, Kofi Billy and so on, of "the new man". They decide to see this new saviour of Gold Coast. Before they arrive at Asamansudo where this new man is, he has started delivering his speech to the crowd that

gathered to hear from him (Armah 86). His words are enthralling, drawing numerous others to his view and vision of the nation which, with their collective effort would be independent and then, all the citizens would enjoy.

This is Armah's introduction to Nkrumah who "is from an undistinguished family [and who] learnt from the beginning to identify with the very humble in society (Djaba-Mensah 138). This scholar further refers to these people with whom Nkrumah surrounds himself as the verandah boys which is actually the name with which Armah refers to them. According to Armah while narrating how the new man refers to himself: "I slept on other people's verandahs. It is the truth; so, why should I feel ashamed when proud men look down and say "Veranda boy"? I am not ashamed of poverty. There is nothing shameful in it. But slavery. How long ..." (87).

These people with whom he surrounds himself and who want to be like him in rising from nowhere to be towering overall, are referred to in the real Ghana as the veranda boys. Again, according to Stephen Djaba-Mensah:

It was this class of people: the veranda boys made up of a fairly a good number of the educated, semi-educated and illiterate Gold Coasters of middle and lower class origin who later led by Nkrumah formed the fourth political force in the Gold Coast, apart from the colonial authorities, the traditional rulers and conservatives of the UGCC (153).

To fill the gap made by the last acronym, UGCC, let us point out the part of the history of Ghana. UGCC means the United Gold Coast Convention which was a political party led by a prominent lawyer and intellectual known as J. B. Danquah. The sole aim of this organization was to win independence from Britain. As the people were "looking for a competent person to fill the position of a General Secretary, the personality who caught the attention of the leaders of the UGCC was Kwame Nkrumah" (Djaba-Mensah 136/137).

This is the foundation of the financial corruption which all the critics are commenting on. This corruption came about when differences arose between Nkrumah and the leaders of UGCC. They fell apart "and this led eventually to his resignation from the convention and to the formation of his own party, the Convention People's Party (CPP) in 1948 (Djaba-Mensah 148).

Clustering around him both the educated and the uneducated, the rich and the poor, and in short, all those who wanted to "reach to the gleam", Nkrumah and all these "veranda boys" won the independence of Ghana. For them to consolidate their stand, they aimed to do two things. According to Djaba-Mensah, these two things are:

First undertake effective measures to maintain the support of its cohorts and second, weaken the economic base and organizational abilities of its opponents. And these were to be carried out systematically. This means that the government would have to be selective in the giving of jobs, appointments to public officers and award of government contracts and in this, only the CPP faithful were to be given access (157).

As was already stated, members of the other parties who were excluded had to devise ways of survival. Being so hampered, they had to lay hands on whatever was possible for them and that can account for the pervasive corruption then engendered. Again, according to Djaba-Mensah: "The excluded, other than employing legitimate and appropriate means to influence the decisions of government did so by resorting to quiet illegitimate means such as bribery and other unorthodox methods of making demands" (157). In this way, Nkrumah knowingly and unknowingly hoisted corruption on Ghana and succeeded in destroying her economy.

It is in view of this that financial corruption came into the country. The result was that Ghana's economy shattered and the erstwhile strong economy under the British management of gold mining and timber industry, got shattered, and to satirize and rectify the situation, the novel, *The Beautiful Ones are Not Yet Born* was given birth to. As F. B. O. Akporobaro sees it, the story of the novel is about this intense corruption and greed for money. To him, this has infected all-black societies (97). An online article of the Department of Economics, San Jose University states that Nkrumah, "took a much more promising economy and basically destroyed it" (n.p.).

### **Financial Impropriety in the Novel**

Financial impropriety in the Ghanaian society of those days was so pervasive that almost everybody who had the opportunity was involved, starting from the President himself down to the lowest in the official rung. Anybody who failed to participate was seen as being odd. Even, when somebody refused to take from another who willingly gave so as to be helped, then the person who refused would be seen as being evil, vindictive or just being odd.

As Armah himself puts it in the novel under discussion:

Everyone will tell you, pointing that only the impotent refuse. Only those who are too weak to possess see anything wrong with the possessing fashion. Condemnation coming from those who have never had comes with a pathetic sound. Better get it all first, then if you still want to condemn, go ahead (90).

On this issue, a critic by name Christian Chukwuloo Chukwueloka reminds all how the man refuses to take bribe from Amankwa, the timber merchant despite the pressures from the merchant himself (76). In this situation, it is not that the man wants to be bribed. The owner who sees the possibility of his hard-acquired timber rotting away in the forest wants to cart away his goods. This is a jibe against a government that is not well organized knowing that timber was part of what earned the Gold Coast her elevated position during the British rule.

The corruption being discussed here was so contagious that almost everybody was involved. That can explain why it is observed in the online paper of the Department of Economics of San Jose State University earlier cited that "Government officials took bribes and embezzled state funds. This included Nkrumah himself. He was found to have about \$5 million in hidden bank accounts".

That there is an element of truth in this statement can be seen from the words of Djaba-Mensah in which the researcher states that:

In 1966, the Apollo Commission published that at the time of the coup, Nkrumah had enriched himself through illegal and inappropriate dealings to the tune of 2,322,009 pounds in both cash and physical properties. In 1971, this figure was counteracted and disproved by Ikoku [S. G.] to stand at only 363,000 pounds (122/23).

But then, when did birds of a feather stop flocking together? The person who disproved the assertion, according to John C. Hagan was the person who was in charge of Nkrumah's Ideological Institute at Winneba. The two of them worked together. Therefore, how reliable is his assertion, taking into consideration the time lag it took him to come up with his disproof?

That government officials of Nkrumah were corrupt has been reflected in the novel. For one, since important positions were filled with party loyalists, the truth is that competence was thrown overboard for those who can holler party slogans to come in. These see nothing but avenues for self-enrichment. That can be seen in the minister, Joseph Koomson, the man's former classmate. Now he is referred to as "His Excellency," "The Minister," and so on. His Excellency is able to furnish his house free of charge by the State Furniture Corporation (Armah 149). From the commercial bank, His Excellency is able to get a loan to buy a boat which he wants a member of the man's family to act as a cover-up. Why having such a stooge if what he is into is genuine? In addition, The Minister is able to obtain a scholarship for his sister-in-law whose cranial ability is doubtful. In abroad where she has gone to, she is studying dress-making and if a Jaguar vehicle is not given to her, she threatens that she would commit suicide.

What will her fellow Ghanaian students think when they see such affluence around her? Everybody wants to be well off and live affluently. Either such students become envious or they befriend her so as to enjoy a modicum of the wealth, or they themselves would like to see a way out. Whatever is the case, something must happen.

In the case of the protagonist, the unnamed man, after seeing the affluence around him, he is in double minds in spite of his rejecting bribes. According to him: "How can I look at Oyo and say I hate long shiny cars? 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 like a human being?" (92/93).

Feelings like this which were engendered by Nkrumah and his party, the CPP must have triggered out the actions of such men like Zacharias Lagos who has been:

living so long here that he had forgotten he was ever a Nigerian working for a sawmill and getting in the days of pounds and shillings, ten pounds a month. But Zacharias lived like a rich man. Every evening, a company truck brought home great length of healthy wood which Zacharias in his wisdom had written off and he sold all of it. When he was caught, people called him a good, generous man and cursed the jealous man who had informed on him (Armah 95).

There are numerous instances in the novel for the country which it is satirizing is corrupt through and through. This is because "there would always be only one way for the young to reach the gleam. Cutting corners eating the fruits of fraud" (Armah 20).

Some of the areas tampered with were those which sustained the economy of the nation. This is how we are to look at the timber which the foreigner Zacharias Lagos is using to enrich himself. But among the indigenes who ought to know better, what goes into private purses is better than what goes into the national coffers. That can explain what happened in 1963. In that year:

The timber producers of Ghana felt that the creation of the Timber Marketing Board, the body which was given the sole responsibilities of purchasing all timber produced in the country for export, was detrimental to their existence and desired that the board be dissolved. The producers who knew the influential potency of bribery in government decided shrewdly to adopt that method. The producers came together and contributed various sums amounting to \$15,000. Of this amount, \$2000 ... went to Krobo Edusei, the then Minister of Agriculture, \$7000 [was] allegedly paid to the Ghanaian president (Djaba-Mensah 158).

This pandemic disease called bribery and corruption can also be seen in Ghana-foreign relationships. Whatever that is associated with Ghana must have this imprint of bribery and corruption which unfortunately is pulling the country down. Therefore, Armah's laments in his novel must be true for according to him:

The shops had been there all the time. The G. N. T. C., of course, was regarded as a new thing but only the name had really changed with independence .... In the old days, it had belonged to a rick Greek and was known by his name, A. G. Leventis. Yet, the stories that were sometimes heard about it were not stories of something young and vigorous but the same stories of money changing hands ... the sons of the nation were now in charge (9/10).

On indigenization of foreign establishments, as can be seen above, the essence is to bring the gains of independence down to the people. But what happens is that these indigenes, some of whom are not trained, may end up ruining a thriving establishment. In the case of Ghana, it is business as usual for bribery and corruption must bear on whatever the people do. Therefore, when A. G. Leventis was indigenized for the sons of the nation to be in charge, the result is the same story of money changing hands.

On the idea of indigenization of foreign establishments, Akwasi Kwarteng Amoako-Gyamph in an online article has this as his observation: "Only one foreign firm has been nationalized-and-generously compensated. Ghana's trade is still largely with Europe, and most foreign aid still comes from the West. Nkrumah has repeatedly insisted that there is plenty of room for private foreign investments" (n.p.).

This, in other words, was the situation when A. G. Leventis, as recorded by Armah, was indigenized. That act yielded no benefit for the nation because of corruption. It is no wonder that the following online lament comes from the Department of Economics already cited, "Kwame Nkrumah took a much more promising economy and basically destroyed it" (n.p.).

The corruption and mismanagement associated with Nkrumah's administration as can be seen in Armah's *The Beautiful Ones are Not Yet Born* can never be complete without explaining

the already seen “K. C. C. RECEPTACLE FOR DISPOSAL OF WASTE”. This project was handled by a senior lecturer from the University of Legon ( Armah 7). The amount of money invested is staggering but the result was nothing to write home about. Not only were few of the boxes finally came out to be used by the people, in the end, but those brought out were also well used by the people and so:

They overflowed with banana peels and mango seeds and thoroughly sucked-out oranges and the chaff of sugarcane and most of all, the thick brown wrappings from a hundred balls of kenkey. People did not have to go up to the boxes any more. From a distance, they aimed their rubbish at the growing heap, and a good amount of juicy offal hit the faces and sides of the box before finding a final resting place upon the heap (Armah 8).

One blunder leads to another. On seeing peels of fruits thrown away, Nkrumah felt like industrializing his country. Who knows whether the mango seeds in the K. C. C. receptacle motivated him to build an industry that would be used to process mango fruits? As usual, he failed for it is on record in the online article of the Department of Economics that:

One of the most outrageous economic industrialization plans was the building of a plant to can mangoes. The plant had the capacity to process 7,000 tons of mangoes a year but after it was built at a cost of 80 per cent over the original budget, it was found that there were hardly any wild mango trees near the plant and it would take seven years to grow bearing-mango trees (n.p.).

Many are the references in Armah’s novel that remind readers of the destructive reign of Nkrumah. But not all of them can be discussed here. But then one of the ways he used in indoctrinating his party members which also helped in his corrupt propensity should be looked into.

### **The Ideological Institute at Winneba**

At Winneba, Nkrumah built an institute where his people could be taught socialism. What are the entry qualifications for somebody to be a student there? To most critics, when somebody can holler party slogans more than others and the person is good at fawning, he has qualified.

From *The Beautiful Ones are Not Yet Born*, one can see how this is commented upon using the case of His Excellency, Joseph Koomson who failed his examinations when he was the protagonist’s classmate. But then, he has succeeded more than our protagonist who passed. In the novel, it is stated that:

I still do not know how Koomson got to Accra. Everybody says with a wave of the hand, “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 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 (88/89).



Even to Koomson, a graduate of the Institute who has made it, Nkrumah does not quite believe in the teachings of the place which is socialism. In his discussion with the man and their family members, the conversation goes like this:

“It is a nuisance,” said the party man, following the statement with an uncertain laugh. “It is not possible here”.

“But isn’t it the thing you people say you believe in?”

Koomson laughed outright now. “The old man himself does not believe in it. But when people see you doing something to get ahead, they become jealous and shout the slogans against you” (136).

To show that what they do is to be in the good books of the President and his aides in the party, consider what happens when a professor is brought to lecture the party members, ministers and parliamentarians. Almost all of them get so bored that they fall asleep only to wake up at the end of the lecture. To further show that the gathering is one of buffoons and anti-intellectuals, the Attorney General in his vote of thanks wants to teach the professor the stages of booze:

Stage One – The Mood Jocose.

Stage Two – The Mood Morose.

Stage Three – The Mood Bellicose.

Stage Four – The Mood Lachrymose.

Stage Five – The Mood Comatose.

Then, the Attorney General fell down. He was in the final stage himself (Armah 133). One wonders how a bunch of individuals like that can ever benefit a nation. The result is that the situation keeps on being disorganized since drunkards are never known to achieve much. For the Attorney General of a nation to fall in public because of intoxication, that points to how he handles the judiciary. Apart from that, all who is who in the government is involved and they all passed through the transformation Institute at Winneba.

From the editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica, the following online observations are worth noting about the ruling team of Nkrumah’s government:

While the administration of the country passed increasingly into the hands of self-serving and corrupt party officials, Nkrumah busied himself with the ideological education of a new generation of black African political activists. Meanwhile, the economic crisis in Ghana worsened, and shortages of foodstuffs and other goods became chronic (n.p.)

The above citation shows that Nkrumah’s ideological training of his people yielded no positive result.

### **Nkrumah’s Enculturation of His People**

From the foregoing, one would think that Nkrumah’s corruption was limited only to financial mismanagement. That is far from the truth for he went further to raise a generation that would

de-culturize the society by tampering with names of people. Unknown to him and those singing his praises, somebody's name is a very important index to his character, identity and destiny. Any doubting Thomas can read books on numerology, an example of which is Mary Anderson's Numerology. It is only in Elizabethan England that one can ask:

What's in a name? that which we call a rose  
By any other name would smell as sweet (Shakespeare 901).

When somebody reads *The Beautiful Ones are Not Yet Born*, the person can see how those in government try to make their names to sound like English ones and in this way, corrupt their African identity:

True, there were few black names of black men, but the plates by the roadside had enough names of black men with white souls and names trying mightily to be white. In the forest of white men's names, there were the signs that said almost aloud: here lies a black man imitator. MILLS HAYFORD ... PLANGE-BANNERMAN ... ATTOH-WHITE ... KUNTU-BLANKSON. Others that must have been keeping the white neighbours laughing even harder in their homes. There was someone calling himself FENTENGSON in this wide world and also a man called BIN FULL (126).

What happens is that these blacks trying to be like their erstwhile colonizers change their names so as to be like the whites and at the same time be intimidating those under them. By appending the suffix "-son" in their names, they hope to replace the British people who have been sent packing.

To know the social reality behind Armah's depiction of the issue in this section, the researcher had to contact a Ghanaian indigene from the Akan tribe. He is a professor of English literature by name, John C. Hagan. He took the names one after the other. Some of them made the researcher to laugh. One of such names is Kuntu-Blankson. Kuntu means blanket. The word that follows it, Blankson was derived from the same blanket thereby rendering the whole thing Blanket Blankson.

The professor took the time to explain more names to him, starting from his own, Hagan. According to him, Hagan is the anglicized form of Egyma which means bulwark, defender or protector. Talking of the name Attoh-white, he said that the first segment of the word, Attoh originated from Attah which means twin. Attoh is a pet name for Attah. What this means is that the bearer by appending the word "White" to it wants to make people to believe that he is a twin to the Europeans who relinquished the government to them. In this way, he wants people to see him to be higher than he is. Concerning another name Binful, Hagan pointed out that it is an extension of the putrefaction images with which almost every page of the novel is smeared because it means shit.

In view of everything being in disarray -- economy, culture and so on -- it is not surprising that on February 24, 1966, while Nkrumah was visiting Beijing, the army and police in Ghana seized power. Before coming to this conclusion, the source which is the online edition of Encyclopaedia Britannica showed how the "country passed increasingly into the hands of

self-serving and corrupt party officials [and at the same time], Nkrumah busied himself with the ideological education of a new generation of black African political activists" (n.p.).  
Seven years of Aboliga the Frog

Although Ghana obtained her independence in 1957, there was a national referendum in 1960. This referendum created Ghana as a republic. All along, Nkrumah was the country's president. Due to the pandemic corruption and cluelessness of the government, vindictive nature of even Nkrumah's rule where there were incessant arrests due to any reason even due to mere suspicion, Lieutenant General Joseph A. Ankrah, chairman of the National Liberation Council in collaboration with even the police force carried out a coup on 24th February 1966. Historically, Ghana lasted as a republic for approximately seven years.

The creative artist in portraying this fact uses the protagonist's standard five classmates whom the pupils nicknamed Aboliga the frog. As it is in the novel:

Aboliga the frog one day brought us a book on freaks and oddities and shared us his caption called an old manchild. It had been born with all the features of a human baby, but within seven years it had completed the cycle from babyhood to infancy, to maturity and old age, and in its seventh year, it had died a natural death (63)

The novelist then explains that this freak is completely old except in the smallness of its size. This freak is thoroughly more decayed than any ordinary old man that ever existed (63).

What Armah wants the readers to see is that Ghana despite her years of being a republic is as decayed in seven years like the young-old manchild. Here, he has to resort to his pervasive image of decay and putrefaction.

In agreement with this view is Rosemary Colour who in explaining the old manchild is of the view that it is:

A child who was born in hope, aged within seven years and became far more thoroughly decayed than any ordinary old man ... The "old manchild" represents Ghana. Ghana was born in the hopeful years of independence but decayed into corrupt stagnation with indecent haste (51)

It is both strange and appalling that a nation developed and disintegrated in just seven years. But fortunately, the coups and counter-coups that brought President Jerry Rawlings and his Economic Recovery Programmes of the early 1980s rectified the situation. From that era, "the beautiful ones were born". Also, the old manchild has revived and the corruptive influence of governance has been put on hold.

## CONCLUSION

A thorough look at Armah's novel, *The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born* can reveal that behind the story, there were certain things that happened that prompted him to produce what he wrote. These things that happened in the Ghanaian society are what the current researcher referred to as social realities. These realities were what motivated Armah to write the novel

so as not only to satirize the Ghanaian society but to alert his fellow citizens on the dangers ahead.

Among those realities that motivated him were the extreme corruption obtainable in the country during the reign of Nkrumah. This corruption was so pervasive that there was hardly anything written about the country than without mentioning it. Because of this situation, it did not take long before the army and the police teamed together to oust Nkrumah from the presidential lodge.

In writing the novel, Armah so emphasizes this situation that there is hardly a page where he fails to splash images of decay which now stand for the state of the country. These are so many that one Ghanaian professor from the Akan tribe wondered why Armah did what he did. It was this statement of this erudite scholar that motivated the current researcher who then had to search the documentation of what happened in the Ghanaian society of those days so as to discover that behind most of what Armah wrote, there was something that transpired in order to inspire him.

It was in view of this that the researcher presents part of what he discovered. One of them is that when Maanam talks of the new man, she is referring to Nkrumah coming to power with his new political party. Also discovered is the level of Nkrumah's corruption that rose to the extent that the citizens could bribe him for them to have their way. In addition, Nkrumah's Ideological Institute at Winneba was just an establishment to deceive his people for he did not believe in socialism which was taught there. Also behind Armah's description of Aboliga the Frog showing his classmates the old manchild that grew old and died within seven years, it has been discovered what motivated Armah. Indeed, in spite of the fact that the novel is a work of fiction, there are many real situations that motivated the writer which he craftily presents but masked artistically.

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