

I. Introduction

Since the second world war, and particularly during and after the period of decolonization in Africa, African writing has been preoccupied by three major themes: the theme of colonial invasion and its deleterious after effects, the protest through the nationalist ideology and eventual obtaining of independence, and the continuing period of disillusionment when the promise of a better Africa for all Africans has not been realized. In this latter mode of writing, most African writers are conscious of the fact that in the post-colonial period, the destiny of the African people is in the hands of African politicians. So, they closely analyze the works of these politicians as the subject of discussion in their writings. Often they expose the discrepancy between people's expectations of political, social and economical changes in their lives after independence that stemmed during anti-colonial national movement and their thwarted findings in the newly independent African nations so as to show the failure of essential nationalism. They critique the elite African leaderships a lot. Ayi Kwei Armah's *The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born* and Wole Soyinka's *The Interpreters* also clearly share accounts of these questions.

In both novels, political disillusionment is a major theme. In *The Beautiful Ones*, Armah targets to explore Ghana's political corruption and failed development. It includes, too, the residual effects of colonization on a post-independent society and the continuance of a cycle of exclusion, both socially and economically. He vividly depicts the filth, rot and corruption of the man's surroundings, where "the public lavatory becomes the show-room of people's sins, the banister a symbol of civil and civic corruption" (17). The novel directs its criticism at Koomson, an embodiment of political leadership, but, corrupt practices are also shown throughout the Ghanaian society. The hopelessness of the nation is highlighted when the protagonist, the man,

feels burdened "with the knowledge that their future is forfeit, their birth right barded in advance to the occupants of the "white men's gleaming bungalows" (18). The man wonders about his children whether "one of them would grow up and soar upward with so much power that there would be enough left over to pull the others also up" (19). For the moment, however, there is nothing but dirt and human excrement that Armah uses to paint the man's surroundings.

Similar traits can also be seen in Nigerian society depicted in *The Interpreters*. Soyinka for eg. depicts the chase of a thief by community members who are also dishonest in their own way. Sagoe shouts at the farce: "Run you little thief or the bigger thieves will pass a law against your existence as a menace to society" (79). Similarly, the modern hopes of his interpreters are stymied by the cynical and corrupt old guard, Sekoni, an engineer, spends his boat ride home to Nigeria dreaming of the grand bridges he will build upon his return. His first project is, however, thwarted by a bureaucrat making money off his doomed project, and Sekoni soon winds up having a mental breakdown. Soyinka spends much of the narrative illustrating the rottenness and hypocrisy of the Nigerian elite. He also uses western objects to represent a void of true meaning in Nigerian society.

A.K. Armah is considered one of the Africa's leading prose stylists writing in English. He was born in 1939 at Takoradi, Ghana, and got his formal education in Africa and West. His works typically explore post colonial Africa and focus on human alienation. Though Armah's vision is one of a United Africa, he writes vehemently of the psychological effects of colonialism on the people of contemporary Ghana and Africa. His second novel *Fragments* (1970) recounts the story of Baako, who returns to Ghana after studying in New York for five years. His family expects him to flaunt his western education to gain prestige and wealth for the family. Baako,

however, rejects what he sees as the corrupt values of new Africa and only wishes to live a quiet life. In the end, he becomes so alienated he undergoes a mental breakdown and ends up in asylum. The same theme of return and disillusionment continues in the next novel *Why Are We So Blest?* (1972), which tells a story of an African student Modin Dofu, studying in United States who decides to return to Africa after becoming disillusioned with his experience with western education with the same theme, but with different ideas.

Arma's later novels- *Two Thousand Seasons* (1973) and *The Healers* (1978) focus on the idea of returning to African culture as a model to overcome the effects of colonialism. In *Two Thousand Seasons*, Armah borrows language from African dirges and praise songs to produce a chronicle of the African past. This novel covers one thousand years of African history and approaches epic proportions in its compressed meanings, descriptions of battles, and use of folk mythology. Armah condemns the Arab "predators" and European "destroyers" and calls for reclamation of Africa's traditional values. And his last novel *The Healers* dramatizes the struggle for African unity. The colonial invaders attempt to manipulate Africa's divisiveness while the healers in the novel attempt to strengthen Africa through inspiration and unity. It is remarkable that Armah's later novels are more optimistic in their tones than the former novels.

In his first novel *The Beautiful Ones* (1968), Armah recounts a sad chronicle of recently independent Ghana, documenting the replacement of European power with local elites who are unwilling or unable to follow through on the high promises of freedom, equality, stability and prosperity. The novel is set in the Ghanaian city of Takoradi before, during and just after the fall of Ghana's first post independence leader, Kwame Nkrumah in 1966. The protagonist of Armah's story is known only as

"the man" which Robert Fraser suggests "represents both his social obscurity, and partially, his representative quality" (445). He trudges through the monotony of each day, determined to be morally accountable, isolating himself from society that considers bribes and theft to be the 'national game'. His family, frustrated by their poverty, belittles the man for his failure to accept the bribes that would improve their lives. The man is contrasted by his old school friend, Komsoon, who has followed the corrupt path and is now a government minister, living a life of luxury and idealized by Ghanaian society. The man is in a state of constant suffering, uncertain about his moral objections and is wracked by guilt.

Since its publication in 1968, this novel has been widely read and reread. It has been well appreciated and criticized by critical readership. The book blurb reads it as a novel that "expresses the disillusion and cynicism engendered in Ghana in the last years of Nkrumah, which his fall seem to compound" (*The Beautiful Ones*). Similarly, Achebe declares it "a sick book", describing its author as an "alienated native" (25). Most of Armah's critics often label him as a pessimist who offer little hope for the Africa's future. As Robert Fraser observes: "this mold of critics shaped their vision to Armah's work in relation to his first novel *The Beautiful Ones* which is deeply pessimistic" (446). Adewale Majapearce is one of the Armah's critiques of this kind who note a lack of detail in his vision for Africa's future:

Armah is a visionary writer in the strict sense. This must at least be conceded, even if the details of what is effectively promoted as a blueprint for a social and political arrangement are far too vague and simplistic to be convincing at any but the most hopeful level. (104)

Another critic, Max Dorsinville, observes this novel in which "the story is told from the point of view of a main character whom we initially meet as a member of the

urban proletariat in the newly independent nation. No viable future is foreseen, while if, there is any change between the character's present condition and that under colonial rule, it is for the worst. Accordingly, we got a heady dose of bitterness if not despair in the work" (106).

Neil Lazarus comments: "*The Beautiful Ones* unifies the plethora of heterogeneous details by filtering them through the web of moral intelligence so as to show the political vision of the work as a whole" (11).

Almost all these criticisms available have successfully identified Armah's handling of theme of post colonial disillusionment through their political reading of the novel. But, they have not delved enough to expose and critique the responsible factors for that national disillusionment which any conscious reading of the novel demands so much to do.

Akinwande Oluwole Soyinka was born in July 13, 1934, at Abeokuta, in western Nigeria, is a recipient of the 1986 Nobel prize for literature is often referred to as one of the Africa's finest living writers. His plays, novels, and poetry blend elements of traditional Yoruban folk drama and European dramatic form to create both spectacle and penetrating satire. His narrative technique is based on the African cultural tradition where the artist functions as the recorder of the mores and experience of his society. Soyinka's works reflect this philosophy, serving as a record of twentieth century Africa's political turmoil and the continent's struggle to reconcile tradition with modernization. Through his novel, non-fiction works and essay collections, Soyinka has established an international reputation as an unflinching commentator on political injustice and knowing provocateur of social criticism.

It is very interesting to know that most of the themes and sources of Soyinka's writings come from his own personal history which is almost identical with the socio-

political and cultural environment of the country where he was living and interacting. African history and culture, Nigerian politics, ravaging influences of Colonialism are repeated themes of his writing that he encountered in his own personal life.

As a child he became increasingly aware of the pull between African tradition and western modernization. Ake, his village, was populated mainly with people from the Yoruba tribe and was presided over by tribal leaders (Ogboni). Soyinka's grandfather introduced him to the pantheon of Yoruba gods and other figures of tribal folklore. His parents, however, were the representative of colonial influences: his mother was a devout Christian convert, and his father was a headmaster at a village school established by the British. He left Africa to attend the university of Leeds in England. He returned to Nigeria in 1960, shortly after the country's independence from colonial rule. In 1965, he was arrested by the Nigerian police, accused of using a gun to force a radio announcer to broadcast incorrect election results. No evidence was ever produced, however, and the PEN writer's Organization soon launched a protest campaign, headed by William Styron and Normal Mailer. Soyinka was eventually released after three months. He was next arrested two years later, during Nigerian civil war for his vocal opposition to the conflict. He was particularly angered by the Nigerian government's brutal policies towards the Ibo people who were attempting to form their own country, Biafra.

In 1993, Soyinka began a period of self-imposed exile from Nigeria due to General Ibrahim Babangida's refusal to allow a democratic government to take power. General Ibrahim appointed General Sani Abacha as a head of Nigerian State and Soyinka, along with other pro-democracy activists, was charged with treason for his criticism of the military regime. Facing a death sentence, Soyinka left the country in 1994, during which time he travelled and lectured in Europe and the USA. Following

the death of Abacha, who held control for five years, the new government led by General Abubakar, released numerous political prisoners and promised to hold civilian elections promoting Soyinka to return to home land.

The Interpreters (1965), Soyinka's first novel, is essentially a plotless narrative loosely structured around the informal discussions between five young Nigerian intellectuals. Each has been educated in a foreign country and has returned on the eve of Nigerian independence, hoping to shape Nigeria's destiny. They are hampered by their own confused values, however, as well as by the corruption they encounter in their homeland. And the novel ends in confusion with open ending.

This work, like Armah's *The Beautiful Ones*, has been widely read and criticized. Wole Soyinka himself has described this novel *The Interpreters* as "an attempt to capture a particular moment- in the life of a generation which was trying to find its feet after independence" (753). Similarly, Soyinka's critic Thomas Bank observes: "Soyinka uses the interpreters to explore serious psychological and practical problem in Nigerian society. He looks at them from the inside" (3).

Another critic, Femi Ogo-Ade observes: "Soyinka, today's disillusioned writer trying to offer a vision to his society, depicts in his novel an ivory tower that is no less corrupt than the community to which it is supposed to offer intellectual leadership" (749). Likewise, Soyinka's another popular critic Joshue D. Esty comments the novel as:

The Interpreters seems to mark Soyinka's discovery of a problematic relation between private and public destinies in the post colonial novel. This text doesn't suggest that prevailing social conditions are bound for improvement, much less redemption. Nor- more importantly- at all affected by the moral, libidinal and aesthetic

preoccupations of his protagonists. The absurd conservation that ends the novel leaves the interpreters immured in their semi-thwarted individual existences. (45)

Thus, almost all critics agree that *The Interpreters* explores the situation of post colonial disillusionment in Nigeria. But their criticisms have sufficiently failed to read the theme of post colonial disillusionment in relation to the responsible factors which caused to bring the unpredicted situation there. The same happened with the reviews and critiques of Ayi Kwei Arma's *The Beautiful Ones*.

Thus, this methodological similarity opens a justified ground of comparing these two epochal novels. Besides this, these two novels also share some more obvious similarities. Both novels were published in late 1960s and are set only one year apart (*The Interpreters*- 1965 and *The Beautiful Ones*-1966). Nigeria and Ghana which the novels reflect respectively, share relatively similar historical circumstances: both were under British rule, both had nationalist movements and gained independence within a few years of another (1960 and 1957 respectively), both novels use ironic, grotesque imagery to portray post independent African society and their leaders, and are filled with images of filth and decay, representing both theft on street and major embezzlement by the state leadership. Lastly, since till the day, none of researcher has ever attempted the comparative study of these two African novels, this dissertation attempts at revealing new possibilities in African scholarship by giving a more comprehensive picture of the contemporary Africa in general.

II. Nationalism: Towards a Definition

Broadly defined as political and social philosophy, nationalism is a fervent commitment to the idea of nation on the part of its citizens. Often nationalism implies national superiority and glorifies various national virtues. It is basically a collective state of mind or consciousness in which and individual believes his/her primary duty and loyalty to the nation-state. As the idea of nation or nation-state is intensely felt in the definition of nationalism, one is required to understand what is nation.

Attempting to define the concept of 'nation' Wilber Zelinsky, a political scientist, views nation as "a real or supposed community of individuals who believe they share a common, unique set of traditions, beliefs and cultural attributes so precious that few sacrifices are too great for the communities' preservation and enhancement. Such a package of shared traits and values cherished by a given group, one that sets is apart from all other nations, is normally associated with idea of nation or nation-state" (46). Here in Zelinsky's definition, one is required to understand that the commonalities in question evoked here may have some basis in historical or anthropological fact, or they may have come into being belatedly, the result of some spontaneous inventiveness among community members or imposition from above by intelligentsia or government entities. But differences in the origins of these artifacts are immaterial; the actual behaviour of nations has little to do with their genesis.

Similarly, Alex Thomson, an expert of African politics, putting his ideas a bit differently while explaining and evaluating the idea of nation observes: "A nation is not so much a physical entity as a sentiment. It is

collection of people sound together by common values and traditions, often sharing the same language, history and an affiliation to a geographical area" (9). Explaining his idea further he argues that individuals within the groups will identify with fellow members of the nation, and define themselves in contrast to outsiders belonging to other nations (9).

Likewise, Benedict Anderson argues nation as "imagined communities" (18). For him this is because the members of even smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, but yet in the minds the image of their communion remain.

So, for people to express nationalism it is first necessary for them to identify themselves as belonging to a nation, that is a large group of people who have something in common, and nationalism without nation is impossible.

Nationalism: An Origin and Development

Although nationalism grew as a dominant phenomenon in modern times that is since 1600s or 1700s as W. Zelinsky views, some of its elements can be traced out throughout ancient histories. Explaining its origin *The Columbia Encyclopedia* (5th ed.) under the entry nationalism writes:

The first roots of nationalism are probably to be found in the ancient Hebrews, who concaved of themselves as both a chosen people, that is, the people as a whole superior to all other peoples, and a people with a common cultural history.

(550)

Like Hebrews, the ancient Greeks also felt superior to all other peoples and moreover felt a sense of great loyalty to the political community. Their feelings of cultural superiority (ethnocentrism) which are similar to nationalism, gave way to much more universal identifications under the Roman Empire and with the Christian church through its teachings of Oneness of humanity. But as strong centralized monarchies were built from petty feudal states, as regional languages and art forms were evolved and also local economies widened, popular identifications with these developments became increasingly strong. In areas, such as Italy, which were not yet single nations, recurring invasions led such thinkers as Niccolò Machiavelli to advocate national political federation. The religious wars of Reformation set against nation, though the strongest loyalty, continued to adhere to the sovereign.

In the 16th and 17th century, the nationalistic economic doctrines of “mercantilism” appeared. The growth of middle classes, the desire for political power, and the consequent development of democratic politics theory were closely connected with the emergence of modern nationalism. The theorists of French Revolution held that people should establish governments of equality and liberty for every one. To them, the nation was inseparable from the people and for the first time in history men could create a government in accordance with its general will. Although their aims were universal, they glorified the nation that would establish their aims, and nationalism found its first political expression.

Actually, as Bill Ashcroft and others believed French Enlightenment was thought to have heralded a shift in the theory of nation, a shift that

thought to relocate the legitimacy of modern nation-state in a theory of the 'people' based on the idea of universal sets of principles (The 'Rights of Man') rather than a mythic and historic origins.

Stressing the new historical beginning of the idea of nation in 1882, the French Orientalist Ernest Renan Writes:

Nations... are something new in history. Antiquity was unfamiliar with them; Egypt, China and ancient Chaldea were in no way nations. They were flocks led by a son of the sun or by a son of heaven. Neither in Egypt nor in China were there citizens as such. Classical antiquity and republics, municipal kingdoms, confederations of local republics and empires, yet it can hardly be said to have had nations in our understanding of the term. (149)

Renan traces the emergence of nation-state to the break up of the classic and medieval empires locating its cultural provenance in a specially European political and social environment.

Like Renan, focusing the causes behind the birth of nations in Europe in 17th or 18th century Wilbur Zelinsky argues, the birth of nations is a transformation that came about initially in Western Europe because of the several factors. According to him, prominent among them were "the growing complexity and productivity of local and regional economics along with technological innovations of all sorts but most notably in the realms of transport and communication" (16). Perhaps the most crucial development was the advent of printing press in the mid 15th century and the inception of universal literacy. With the widespread availability of

printed matter, and thus the awareness of distant places, events, and ideas the “imagined community” (to use B. Anderson’s useful term) became a practicality, and the world witnessed the emergence of first nations.

It was in the 19th century that nationalism became a wider spread and powerful force. During this time nationalism expressed itself in many areas as a drive for national unification or independence. The spirits of nationalism took an especially strong hold in Germany. However, as “The Columbia Encyclopedia” argues- “the nationalism that inspired the German people to rise against the Empire of Napoleon I was conservative, tradition bound, and narrow rather than liberal progressive and universal” (240). And when the fragmented Germany was finally unified as the German Empire in 1871, it was a highly authoritarian and militarist state. After many years of fighting, Italy also achieved national unification and freedom from foreign domination. In the USA where nationalism had convinced itself in the doctrine of Manifest Destiny, national unity was maintained at the cost of the civil war. In the later half of the 19th century, there were strong nationalist movements among the people's subject to the supranational Austrian and Ottoman empires as there were in Ireland under British rule, and in Poland under Russian rule. At the same time, however with the emergence in Europe of strong, integrate nation-states nationalism became increasingly a sentiment of conservatives. It was turned against such international movements as socialism and it found out-let in pursuit of glory and empire.

In the early 20th century, with the break up of Austria-Hungary and of the Ottoman Empire, saw the establishment of many independent

nations, especially through the peace treaties ending WW I. The Paris Peace Conference established the principle of national self determination upheld by the League of Nations and later by the United Nations. While self-determination a nationalist principle, it also recognizes the basic equality of all nations, large or small, and therefore transcends a narrow nationalism that claims superiority for itself. It was exactly this later type of nationalism, however, that arose in Nazi Germany preaching the superiority of the so called Aryan race and the need for extermination of the Jews and the enslavement of Slavic peoples in their “Living Space”. Italian ‘fascism’ was in a similar manner based on extreme nationalist sentiments. At the same time, Asian and African colonial territories, seeking to cast off imperial bonds, were developing nationalist movements. Perhaps the most famous of these was ‘Indian National Congress’, which struggled for Indian independence for over 60 years. After WW II, nationalism in Asia and Africa spread at such a fast pace that dozens of new ‘nations’ were created from former colonial territorial holdings.

Third World Nationalism

A series of movements that emerged in Third World Countries after WW II which put into practice the Leninist doctrine that nationalism could be a progressive force for revolutionary change within, colonized or neo-colonized societies. As Aijaz Ahmad puts it- “historically, nationalism has played a progressive role in opposition to colonial conquest, not because those who are conquered always already constitute a nation or because nations have some preordained right to exclusive sovereignty, but mainly

because resistance to foreign occupation tends to politicize populations that has hitherto remained outside the domains of modern politics, and inevitably raises the questions of the rights of the peoples thus politicized. In that same there is something profoundly democratic about anti colonial nationalisms. Some of these nationalisms also play a progressive role when they help to create solidarity across narrow exclusivities of tribal or ethnic or religious or linguistically defined communities among the people who thus get organized into a modern nation” (24).

The idea of nationalism in Third-World countries began seriously to challenge imperial rule in 1950s. It emerged as a reaction to colonialism, and its immediate aim was to rid the countries from the foreign rule. In this respect, Third-World nationalism was as Alex Thomson puts it, “a classic expression of the demand for self-determination.” The most leaders of these liberation movements, however only rejected imperial rule. “Unlike the European nationalists before them, as the Alex views, they were not seeking to establish a new nation to house their nation. Instead, they aimed to capture the existing colonial states for the Third-world people themselves to govern.” As such retention of the alien state would be wholesale including the reorganization of its associated ‘arbitrary’ boundaries. The mission was the build new African, Indian and Caribbean nations within the prefabricated structures of the already existing colonial states. This, nationalists argued, would bring Third-World people into the modern era of nation-states.

The need for national unity was as the heart of Third-World nationalism. The objective was to transform multi-ethnic, multi-cultural,

multi-religious, and even multi-racial societies into single unitary nations. A new nation would be built to fill the political state delineated by the borders of the already existing (colonial) state. In thin respect, cultural pluralism was frowned upon by nationalist leaders. Alex views- “where previously the Third-World people had rooted their identities in decent and electricity, rather than territory, now they were called upon to join the community of nation-state.”

We should note that the west never views then Third-World nationalism as positive which is clear from the remarks of the Partha Chattrjee: “nationalism is now viewed as dark, elemental, unpredictable force of primordial nature threatening the orderly claims of civilized life. What had once been successfully relegated to the outer peripheries of the earth is now seen picking its way back toward Europe, through the long-forgotten provinces of the Habsburg, the Czarist, and the Ottoman Empire like drugs, terrorism, and illegal immigration, it is one more product of the Third-World that the west dislikes but is powerless to prohibit.”

Limitations of Third-World Nationalism

Nationalism remained a dominant ideological underpinning in the post-independent Third-World countries. It remained popular not only because it helped to unite all the native people to fight against British colonialism successfully. It is also because it gave the promises, to all those native people, of political self-determination, cultural self-determination and progress and prosperity in all spheres of social life. But when these people got political independence as per their expectations, they neither got real political independence, not their other hopes

materialized as time passes there. National consciousnesses, instead of being the all embracing crystallization of the innermost hopes of the whole people, instead of being the immediate and most obvious result of the mobilization of the people, happened to be in any case as Fanon views- “an empty shell, a crude and fragile travesty” (156). Such retrograde steps with all the weakness and serious dangers that they entail are the historical results of the incapacity of the national-middle class to rationalize popular action, that is to say their incapacity to see into the reasons for that action.

Writing in this political context, Franz Fanon views- “this traditional weakness, which is almost congenital to the national consciousness of underdeveloped countries, is not solely the result of the mutilation of the colonized people by the colonial regime. It is also the result of intellectual laziness of the national middle-class, of its spiritual penury, and of the profoundly cosmopolitan mold that its mind is set in” (57).

Fanon especially criticizes the national bourgeoisies who replaced the colonial rulers but not with much differences who turned their backs more and more on the interior and on the real facts of its undeveloped country, and tends to look forward the former mother country and the foreign capitalists who count on its obliging compliance. Now the people, who for years on end have seen these leaders (national-bourgeoisies) and heard them speak, who from a distance in a kind of dream have followed their contests with the colonial power, spontaneously put their trust in these patriots. Before independence, these leaders generally embodied the aspirations of the people for independence, political liberty, and national dignity. But as soon as independence is declared, far from embodying in

concrete form the needs of the people in what touches bread, land and the restoration of the country to the sacred hands of the people, the leaders revealed their inner purpose: to become as Fanon views- “the general president of that company of profiteers impatient for their returns which constitutes the national bourgeoisies” (99). In spite of their frequently honest conduct and their sincere declarations, the leaders as seen objectively are the fierce defenders of these interests, today combined, of the national bourgeoisie and the ex-colonial companies. Their honesty, which is their soul's true bent, crumbled away little by little. Their contacts with the masses were so unreal that they came to believe that their authority is hated and that the services that they have rendered their country are being called in question. Now, the leaders judge the ingratitude of the masses harshly, and every day that passes ranges themselves a little more resolutely on the side of the exploiters. They, therefore, as Franz Fanon views -"become the abider and abettor of the young bourgeoisie which is plunging into the mire of corruption and pleasure" (100).

Fanon also equally blames the intellectual people of the post-independent countries for their cosmopolitan mind set which is near to those previous colonizers than to the masses who are looking to them for the changes in their fortunes. We should know that Fanon often demands the powerful, visionary and pressing role of intellectual people to give the proper directions to a country which is in its transitional phase. But in most of the post independent Third-World countries, he didn't get any.

In *The Wretched of the Earth*, Fanon, so, produced an excoriation critique of bourgeois anti-nationalism, an ideology aimed at the (re)

attainment of nationhood through means of the capture and subsequent “occupation” of the colonial states, and which on his reading represented only the interests of the elite indigenous classes. Fanon characterized bourgeois anti-colonial nationalism as “literally ... good for nothing” (176). Its specific project he wrote, was quite simply ... [to] transfer into the native hands” - the hands of bourgeois nationalists – “those unfair advantages which are a legacy of colonial period” (152). The social aspirations of the bourgeois nationalists were geared toward neo-colonial class consideration: this meant that their “historic mission” was to constitute themselves as functionaries, straddling the international division of labor between metropolitan capitalism and the subaltern classes in the peripheries. The “mission” of national elites, Fanon argued, “has nothing to do with transforming the nation; it consists, prosaically, of being the transmission line between the nation and a capitalism, rampant through camouflaged which today puts on the mask of neo-colonialism”(152).

Like Fanon, viewing the pitfalls of anti-colonial nationalism in Third-World countries, another popular post colonial critic and theorist, Partha Chatterjee talking especially in Indian context observes- “by merely replicating, in one form or another, the liberal-elitist narrative of the west, the Third-World nationalism problematised itself failing to represent itself” (153). He says that the project of Indian nations-making is “plagued by anxieties of imitativeness” (114), by the apprehension that Indian nationalism is just a poor copy or derivation of European Post-Enlightenment discourse. This is also the case with most of the African nationalisms. In this sense, anti-colonial nationalism remains trapped

within the structure of the thought from which it seeks to differentiate itself, and the real problem arises.

Unlike Fanon, Chatterjee is more liberal regarding the west and its, especially, material progress and development. Chatterjee, so, observes that: "Nationalism could neither ignore the west completely nor capitulate to it entirely: the west and its ideals of materials progress had to be assimilated selectively, without any fundamental damage to the native and inner Indian self" (246).

The real problem, according to him, regarding the failure of materialization of anti-colonial national's dream is not the west, rather the blind imitation of western values by the Third-World countries to modernize themselves, thus by forgetting their 'inner self'.

Trying to analyze the problematics of nationalism, Chatterjee says - "Forced by colonialism to negotiate with western blueprints of reason, progress, and enlightenment, the nationalist subject straddles two regions or spaces: internalizing western epistemological modes at the outer or at the purely pragmatic level, and at the inner level maintaining a traditional identity that will not be influenced by the merely pragmatic nature of the outward changes" (247). In other words, the place where the true nationalist subject "really is" and the place from which it produces historical materialist knowledge about itself are mutually heterogeneous. The locus of the true self, the inner/traditional/spiritual sense of place, is exiled from processes of history while the locus of historical knowledge fails to speak for the true identity of the nationalist subject. The result is a fundamental rupture, a form of basic cognitive dissidence, a radical

collapse of representation. Unable to produce its own history in response to its inner sense of identity, nationalist ideology is brought into crisis.

In his book *Nationalist Thought and Colonial World*, Partha Chatterjee addresses in great depth the political-epistemological predicament faced by nationalism. Nationalism, Chatterjee submits, should result in a double decolonization. Mere political decolonization and the resultant celebration of freedom, however, momentous, does not by itself inaugurate a new history a new subject, and a new and free sense of agency. It is of vital importance that nationalist thought coordinate a new and different space that it can call its own epistemological, cognitive and representation modalities. The break from colonialism has to be both political and epistemological. But it didn't become a reality in the practice of nationalism in Third-World countries.

The problem with nationalism, in Chatterjee's view is that "it sustains and continues the baleful legacies of Eurocentricism and Orientalism" (248). The real tragedy is when post colonial nationalism internalize rather than problematize the western blueprint in the name of progress, modernization, industrialization, and internationalism. This process seems difficult to a void if not impossible since the immediate history of these nations happen to be western and there are no easy ways available to reclaim a pure and uncontaminated history prior to the ravages of colonialism. In this context, Chatterjee reminds us that "it is crucial for the postcolonial subject to produce a critical and deconstructive knowledge about nationalism. Only such a critical knowledge will help us identify and elaborate the complicity of the nationalist project with that of the

enlightened European subject. It is on the basis of such knowledge that postcolonial subject can produce a genuinely subaltern history about themselves, and not merely replicate, in one form or another, the liberal elitist narrative of the west” (249).

In a popular interview with Slovenian journalists (18), taking about the problems of nationalism, Aijaz Ahmad, eminent left-wing postcolonial critic and theorist, puts forward especially two major problems in the practice of nationalism in Third-World countries. He observes “the difficulty is that the logic of most of the nationalisms goes not towards cultural diversity inclusiveness, and heterogeneity but towards exclusivity, purification, or at least majoritarianism. It is in this other slant, so common in our time, that nationalism tends to become a close cousin of racism” (39). For Ahmad, socialism is the solution for this problem so, Speaking in the favor of Utopian socialism, he says- “with the dream of socialism, we would move toward a human civilization that was at once egalitarian and universal, and one that would at once affirm the right of nations to self determination but would also materially create multinational societies in which none would have any special privilege” (38).

The second problem that he observes in the failure behind successful implementation of nationalist dream is imperialism or what he frequently calls “capitalist universalization”. Analyzing and explaining this phenomenon he views that what we call western domination is actually a capitalist universalization, in which the dominant ideologies and cultural artifacts are produced in the core countries and either exported to or copied in the rest of the world. Even at its best, nationalism alone cannot be the

answer because capitalism can and does break down all the national boundaries, especially in its cultural forms, and because most kinds of nationalism can easily accommodate themselves to this capitalist universalizations. He further views that in the face of this capitalist universality, which is accepted by all the bourgeoisies of the world, no one is allowed simply to recoil into the folds of some pure national culture. To be away from what Gramsci views “hegemony” of this kind, Ahmad argues one is required to establish and follow what he calls “socialist universality”, which will successfully fight against the monopoly of capitalist universality. In the same interview, he also observes the possible transformation of nationalism into fascism. Here he argues – “all fascisms are built around a core ideology of ultra-nationalism but not all nationalisms necessarily tend toward, fascism" (41).

Like Ahmad, Lenin is also very much positive regarding the democratic content of nationalism even if he frequently condemns the oppressions effected in the name of nationalism. In his pamphlet on “The Right of Nation of Self Determination”, Lenin argues that while in an absolute sense socialist politics entailed an opposition to nationalism as such, it is essential for socialist to recognize and “unconditionally support” the “democratic content” of those nationalist movements (including bourgeois nationalist movement) that are “directed against oppression” (16). At a time when bourgeois- democratic revolutions in eastern Europe and Asia have begun he wrote:

In this period of awakening and intensification of national movements and of the formation of independent proletariat

parties, the task of these parties with regard to national policy must be two-fold: recognition of the right of all nations to self-determination, since bourgeois democratic reform is not yet completed and since working class democracy consistently, seriously and sincerely ... fights for equal rights for nations; then, a close, unbreakable alliance in the class struggle of the proletarians of all nations in a given state, throughout all changes in its history, irrespective of any reshaping of the frontiers of the individual states by the bourgeoisie. (18)

In this extract, Lenin clearly suggests that if the right of self-determination on the parts of its nationals is not respected and implemented, the nationalist politics will turn out to be a mere ideology and, more importantly, it will turn out to be a problem rather than the solution for the troubled phase of the particular country's history. Here, while talking about Lenin, it is also note worthy to know his popular asseveration that "without revolutionary theory there can be no revolutionary movement" (19). In a way this also means in third world politics nationalism became that revolutionary theory which ultimately contributed for revolutionary anti-colonial movements there, which at least brought political and cultural independence explicitly, if not implicitly.

Here, while talking about Lenin, it is also note worthy to know his popular asseveration that "without revolutionary theory, there can be no revolutionary movement" (92). In a way this also means in third world politics nationalism contributed for revolutionary anti-colonial movements

there, which at least brought political and cultural independence explicitly, if not implicitly.

A profound critique toward nationalism is also much in evidence in the work of Homi Bhabha. Nationalist discourse both metropolitan (i.e. colonial) and anti-colonial- emerges variously in his writing as coercive, totalizing, elitist, authoritarian, essentialist, and reactionary. In his writing, nationalist discourse is disparaged for precisely the same reasons as metropolitan nationalist discourse, and for one additional and paramount reason besides: it is held to amount to a replication, a reiteration, of the terms of colonial discourse itself.

Here, it is important to understand that in nationalist theorists, including Bhabha's case, to read the discourse of anti-colonial nationalism in this way, as corresponding to a repetition, a doubling of colonial discourse, is not necessarily to conflate the two. After all, as Bhabha point out, "the repetition of the 'same' can in fact be its own displacement, can turn the authority of culture into its non-sense precisely in its moments of enunciation. For to imitate is to cling to the denial of the ego's limitations, to identify is to assimilate conflictually" (318).

III. *The Beautiful Ones and The Interpreters: The Politics of Nationhood*

Both novels under consideration are nationalistic in its spirit. Like other contemporary African writers, Wole Soyinka and Ayi Kwei Arma have an enduring propensity for the then social and political commitment in their texts. Their texts reflect and refract the socio-political events in their societies. In this context, it will then be possible to assert surely with very considerable exaggeration but possible to assert none the less that- "all third-world texts are necessarily...national allegories" (67) as Fredric Jameson puts it.

Initially, African Literature was a tool for celebrating the heroic grandeur of the African past; later it was used for anti-colonial struggle. Presently, it is being employed a veritable weapon for depicting the post-colonial disillusionment in African nations. Therefore, African literature is always chained to the experiences of the people of the continent.

In this context, so, we can claim that the individual isolation, uneven development, corruption and wasted potential in newly independent Ghana and Nigeria, against a backdrop of centuries of colonial rule, projected by Armah and Soyinka depend on the idea that there could be or should be an allegorical connection between the hero (s)', representing whole people, general expectation (s) and the society's political commitment. The counter example thus in a sense confirms the basic logic of Jameson's original thesis. Jameson proposed, roughly, that western literature tends to assume and perpetuate the separation of alienated and fragmented subjectivities from the social collective, whereas third-world literature tends not to assume such a "radical split" (69). It make sense, then, that Armah's and Soyinka's texts under investigation registers the absence of national allegory as a shock or problem.

Of course, there are many causes which normalized the nationalistic aspirations stemmed especially during anti-colonial struggle in those countries. Obsessively concerned with the west some forms of local elitism, and intellectual laziness nationalism fails to speak for its own people; on the contrary, it suppresses the politics of subalternity. The very mode in which nationalism identified its inner identity privileges the externality of the west, and so called inner or true identity of the nation takes the form of a mere strategic reaction formation to or against interpellation by western ideologies. This inner self is not allowed to take on a positive and hegemonic role as the protagonist or agent of its own history. Nationalism as a mode of narration thus fails both to represent its own reality and to represent its own people.

Limitations of Nationalism and *The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born*

Ayi Kwei Armah's novel *The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born* portrays the independent state of Ghana, revealing a society whose aspirations have slid into disillusion. In place of "greatly beautiful" things expected from independence, we are shown the stark and ugly reality that is embarrassingly far from those former ideals, ideal evoked during anti-colonial struggle in the contemporary Ghana, which the novel depicts from sole to crown. Leaders who shouted against the "enslaving things of Europe" (44) used the "same power for chasing after the same enslaving things" (45). It is shown that only disillusion is to be had from faith invested in leaders, and condemnation reaped for despising greed and possessiveness.

...there will never be any saviors if each will not save himself. No savior. Only the hungry and the fed. Deceivers all. Only for that is life the perfect length. Everyone will tell you, printing, 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. But remember, getting takes the whole of life. (124)

The bleak and sour picture of recently independent Ghana is that which is observed in *The Beautiful Ones*. So overwhelming is the sense of decay which is created in the novel that the death-cycle of life becomes the reflecting medium in which everything of author comes dangerously close to the edge of despair. We are presented with a world in which the sewage pipes of history have exploded and everything is polluted. The senses of deader are vigorously assaulted to the point of being numbered by the persistent imagery of decay, putrefaction, and death. We meet a child, its nose overflowing with mucus and her body disfigured by "creases of a prematurely tired skin" (56). We are not sure whether she is a horse or human, dead or alive. Streets are littered with rubbish that overflows from dustbins onto the pavements, banisters on building lavatory walls are streaked with organic brown matter "about the level of the adult anus" (59). Everybody is described as sweating, coughing, spitting. "All around decaying things push inward and mix all the body's juices with the taste of rot" (40). The stench of putrefying matter becomes one with the stench of despair in the men who are walking about. The sounds, smells, the slights and the thoughts of the people all mingle into a single rhythm of decay and death. So, the recently won freedom, contrary to its positive progression, is portrayed as nightmare. It is problematized to its apex.

The cumulative effect of this "network" of details and symbols in *The Beautiful Ones* is to present the reader with a harrowing and relentless vision of

Ghana as a neo-colony. The novel's "Ghana" is a society that seems bent on self-destruction. A critic Neil observes:

Crippled, both materially and psychologically by its recent and not-so recent history, it is perversely engaged in the process of entrenching the divisions and systematic brutalities wrought by this history. As though primed by some monstrous and self maintaining logic it continues to main itself in a futile effort to satisfy and insatiable, alien master. It is sick to the very core, rotten with the congealed decay of centuries of domination, capitulation, and betrayal. The society limps into tomorrow: riven, benef, corrupt, dependent its citizen engaged in a ceaseless, debased, and dehumanizing struggle to eke out their lives from day to day. (11)

From the first sentence of *The Beautiful Ones*, a composite picture of Ghana as a postcolonial African state begins to be sketched. In the world of novel the aspect of post colonialism is disturbingly reminiscent of that of colonialism proper. The new seems to have taken after the old so thoroughly and in such indecent- haste, that it is as though the old had never gone at all. This mimetic nature of the novel throughout. This motif is introduced at a very early point in the novel. As Armah describes his principal character's walk to work:

He passed by the U.T.C., the G.N.T.C., the U.A.C. and the French C.F.A.O. The shops had been there all the time, as far back as he could remember. The G.N.T.C., of course, was regarded as a new thing, but only the name had really changed with independence. The shop had always been there, and in the old days it had belonged to a rich Greek and was known by his name, A.G.LEVENTIS. So in a

way the thing was new. Yet the stories that were sometimes heard about it were not stories of something young and vigorous, but the same old stories of money changing hands and throats getting moistened and palms getting greased. Only this time if the old stories aroused any anger, there was nowhere for it to go. The sons of the nation were now in charge, after all. How completely the new thing took after the old. (9-10)

Later these "Sons of the nation" are themselves presented. The portrait is of men with the stench of centuries of betrayal and compromise upon them. The elite that such individual make up is described as contributing directly to the squalor and deprivation of the community at large. It is not only that the bankruptly and exocentrism of the society's economy has resulted in a situation in which, as a taxi driver in the novel puts it, "it seems everybody is making things now except us. We African only buy expensive things" (140). It is rather that the "men of substance" (to adopt Basil Davidson's felicitous phrase) are living on the backs of their fellow countrymen. Their wealth is built upon their countrymen's poverty; their power is the corollary of the powerlessness of their countrymen their ease is the product and the enduring cause of the degradation that surrounds but doesn't touch them.

Armah returns again and again to this point. He insists that for every bottle of white horse, black and white, seagrams of Gilbeys that is imported to cater to the elite's ethic of conspicuous consumption, ten or twenty or a hundred of individual like "the man" are deprived of the wherewithal to purchase even the most basic of foodstuffs. More importantly the people like "the man", are more plagued by the obsession of European exports by their wives, who see the aristocracy and honor if they get chance especially to serve these things to their guests. When Koomson, a

newly appointed government minister and friend of 'the man' and his European accustomed wife are invited in the man's house, his wife, Oyo, is dissatisfied with her husband when the latter doesn't bring the expensive European drinks instead of Ghana-made beer to serve the Koomsons:

'And you don't like the made in Ghana-spirits'. The woman put her hand to her throat in a swift movement of disgust, then smiled. 'No', she said, 'I don't like made-in-Ghana spirits. But there are good European drinks in the country still.'...'Besides', said the man, 'there is nothing wrong with beer'. His wife looked at him in such a way that he could not mistake her contempt. After all the Koomson knows we are not rich, so why should we pretend?' 'Are we pretending if we just try to give them the best?' 'May be we should wait till we have the money', 'he said apologetically. 'May be we won't live that long'. She replied...(116)

Unlike in the man's in the Koomson's party given to the man and his wife Oyo, everything best is served to them. This humiliates Oyo a lot, and in effect she begins to question her relationship with the husband like 'the man'.

The novel's contrasts in this vein between and among haves and have not, overt or implicit, are telling. "The men of substance" like Koomson emerge as merely the new wilders of old corrupt power. So, independence has given Africa not its freedom but only "a change of embezzlers" (162). The new leaders are the direct heirs of the chiefs of the past, concerned always with privilege and the consolidation of their power rather than with progressive leadership and public accountability.

The moral intensity of *The Beautiful Ones*, however, is fueled not simply by this insistence that Ghana's postcolonial rules are as corrupt and self serving as previous rulers had been. Rather, the novel gains its distinctive moral flavor from Arman's additional insistence that in the decolonizing years there existed the real potential for radically transforming Ghanian society. Teacher, friend and mentor of "the man", observes of these years that "we were ready here for big and beautiful thing" (81) and that "the promise was so beautiful things" (81) and that too young to understand it all knew that at last something good was being born. It was there, we were not deceived that"(85).

The embodiment of this promise, and of these general aspirations, was kwame Nkrumah, the man who rose to power on the basis of massive popular support in the decolonizing years and who led Ghana to independence in 1957. In Armah's esteem, Nkrumah was quite unique. Far from being a "typical" leader, born into wealth and power and regarding social division as nothing less than the sine qua non of his own elite status, Nkrumah was a popular hero, a "man of the people". In *The Beautiful Ones* the authenticity of socialist leader Nkrumah's public stance is emphasized. His campaign speeches are described as reflecting his private passions, and their felicity is seen to have rested in the pact that they tapped exactly the mood of the masses. But it is for this very reason that when Arham comes to contemplate the dissolution of Nkrumah's promise in the era of independence, he presents its as something sickening, something more truly obscene than any "conventional" political betrayal, of the type that one might have expected from a different leader at a different time. For in Armah's eyes, Nkruham and his party have taken Ghana through a full circle: from hardship and disaffiliation, through the promise and even the beginning of real change, to hardship and disaffiliation once

more. This argument is lucidly mounted and persuasively sustained in *The Beautiful Ones*.

At the outset, in discussing the promise of Nkrumah and his party, Armah goes to great lengths to differentiate between them and the "nationalist agitators" of the years preceding independence. He gives us an unambiguous picture of the nationalists, describing them as members of a political elite that owed in exalted position to its cooperation with, the deference to, the colonial administration. The portrait is of "black Englishmen", of a small group of "yes-men" trying at all point to be the dark ghost of a European" (81). Armah's characterization recalls Basil Davidson's idea:

Such men desired Ghana's independence, but if it could be independence 'in the British way' shaped on British models, enjoying British approval, and therefore, by the logic of this attitude fulfilling Britain's interests. (qtd. by Neil Lazarus 27-28)

These men Armah writes in *The Beautiful Ones*, were motivated above all by greed for power. Opportunism was their preeminent political characteristic. Ignorant of the indifferent- not to say hostile to the aspirations of the general population, they, nevertheless, sought to assume governance over them. Increasingly as the anticolonial "wind of change" blew ever more briskly over Ghana, their political ambitions obliged them to over reach themselves in seeming to champion the rising tide of grassroots militancy:

Men who had risen to lead the hungry came in clothes they might have been hoping to use at Govenor's Balls on the birthday of the white people's queen, carryin cuffs links that shone insultingly in the faces of men who had stolen Pennies from their friends. They came

late and spoke to their servant in the legal English. They had spent their lives struggling to imitate, taking of constitutions and offering us unseen ghosts of words and paper held holy by Europeans and they asked us to be faithful and to trust in the. They spoke to us in the knowledge that they were our magicians, people with some secret power behind them. (81)

Armah's historical analysis in *The Beautiful Ones* really commences here, for he suggests that the machinations of the nationalist elite proved futile because the mass of the people repudiated them. He maintains that more and more as the struggle for independence gathered momentum in the years following World War II, the "Black Englishmen" found themselves confronted in the population at large not by the admiration and sense of loyalty they had hoped-even expected- to command but by disgust and outrage.

This development they were incapable of comprehending, let alone reversing nothing in their training had prepared them for it. Armah in this context writes:

They were not able in the end to understand the people's unbelief. How could they understand that even those who have not been anywhere know that the black man who has spent his life felling from himself into whiteness had not power if the white master gives him none? How were these leaders to know that white they were climbing upto shit in their people's faces, their people had seen their arseholes and drawn away in disgusted laughter? We know then, and we know now, that the only real power a black man can have will come from black people. We know also that we were the people to

whom these oily men were looking for their support. Only they did not know this. In their minds it was some great favor they were doing us, coming to speak to us in words designed not to tell us anything about ourselves, but to press into our minds the weight of things coming from above. (82-83)

This suggests that the masses rejected the nationalist leadership in the decolonizing years is absolutely central to the mood of *The Beautiful Ones*. Quite clearly, it implies the existence of a rare and precious level of political awareness on the part of the masses: These were times, the novel speculates, in which the masses were beginning to find and test their strength. They were beginning to entertain thoughts about shaping their own future. Indeed, they were beginning to put such thoughts into practice, secure in their unity and in the felt justice of their cause. However, still more than this is entailed in the masses' supposed repudiation of the nationalist elite. In *The Beautiful Ones*, Armah speculates that this repudiation paved the way for Nkrumah's decisive intervention onto the political stage, since it created a breach, a "crisis of leadership" into which Nkrumah was able-and-ready to step. Nkrumah is thus presented as a leader who captured the people's hearts and minds by speaking directly to them, without patronization, about their responsibility to free themselves, about strength, solidarity, and action. AS teacher reflects, "It is so simple. He was good when he had to speak to us, and liked to be with us" (88).

It is Armah's contention that this spirit which Nkrumah seemed to embody during the decolonizing years was subsequently betrayed by Nkrumah himself, once independence had been won. Not, of course, is it only, the individual, Nkrumah, alone, who is considered responsible for the collapse. (KOMSTON PARA ADD)

Armah accuses the Nkrumahist- leadership as a whole of having failed its people in their hour of greatest need. For in his vision it is the party as a whole that with Nkrumah, roused the mass of the population, organized them, taught them to feel the power in their numbers, molded them into an unstoppable political force, and then betrayed them abruptly by turning the central thrust and logic of the revolutionary movement in upon itself.

The passage of Nkrumah's political careers is traced through the moral filter of Teacher's consciousness, and it is apparent that it is the thought of the disparity between what might have been and what is that persecutes teacher and those like him in the novel who try to comprehend the significance of Nkrumah's "Judas Kiss" of Africa.

The beauty was in the waking of the powerless. Is it always to be true that it is impossible to have things strong and at the same time beautiful? The famished men need not stay famished. But to gorge themselves in this heart breaking way, consuming utterly destroying the common promise in their greed, was that ever necessary?. (85)

In *The Beautiful Ones*, the party's inability to lead the people of Ghana out of the wilderness of foreign domination (indeed, its increasing complicity with the agents of domination) is not simply documented as fact. Rather it is invested with ethical significance and cast as an act of world-historical enormity. "How horribly rapid everything has been, from the days when men were not ashamed to talk of soul and of suffering and of hope to these low days of smiles that will never again be sly enough to hide the knowledge of betrayal and deceit. There is something of an irresistible horror in such quick decay" (62). Within the space of a short few years,

the partymen are seen first to have started to forge a revolution and then subsequently to have sabotaged it absolutely. As teacher observes:

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, 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. After a youth spent fighting the white men, why should not the president discover as he grows older that his real desire has been to be like the white governor himself, to live above all the backness in the big old caste. And the men around him, why not? What stops them sending their loved children to kindergartens in Europe? And if the little men around the big men can send their children to new international schools, why not? That is all anyone here ever struggles for: to be nearer the Whiteman. All the shouting against the white men was not hate. It was love twisted, but love all the same. Just look around you and you will see it even now, especially now. (92)

Teacher's feeling is that the Nkrumahist party men such as the man's acquaintance Koomson, who once seemed to be fired with revolutionary zeal, have latterly become indistinguishable from the pre independence elite, who never bore about them the stamp of sincerity in the first place. Koomson, the representative of the 'New Ghana', has assumed a life style identical to the life-styles of generations and generation of powerful men: "He lives in a way that is far more painful to see than the way the white men, have always lived here...There is no difference then no

difference at all between the white men and their apes, the lawyers and the merchants, and now the apes of the apes, our party men" (89).

The transition from colonialism to neocolonialism, thus perceived, has served to puncture Africa's degradation only to underscore it. The unfree masses first are afforded a vision of freedom and are exerted to move toward it then, once they have wrestled themselves to within touching distance of it, it is snatched from their grasp, and unfreedom is cynically reimposed in its steal. In independence, according to *The Beautiful Ones*, the masses are still unfree. The novel categorically suggests that the only real gainers from independence are those who have contrived wittingly or unwittingly to service the interests of the departing colonial power. This is so much the case, indeed, that the path to power is represented as the path toward a white, dependent, western-oriented cast of mind, a cast that recalls Fanon's black skin, white masks" syndrome. Like the pre-independence nationalist elites who spent their whole lives "fleeing from [themselves]...into whiteness" (82), the new leaders also finally settled for living "above all blackness" (92). Koomson, for example, names his daughter "princess", the name embodying the twin dimensions of Anglophilia and governance, both important. It comes as no surprise to discover that the little girl has about her "the fearless, direct look of a white child" and that she refers to her father as "daddy" (144). In the officially presented serenity of what used to be known as the "white men's hills", far from the squalor of his own neighbourhood, "the man" encounters further evidence of blackmen falling over themselves in their frantic desire to escape the burden of being black. In these hills are the opulent "Estates", still looking exactly as they had done in colonial times:

And yet not everything was entirely the same...Here and there the names had changed. True, there were very few black names of black men, but the plates by the roadside had enough names of blackmen with white souls and names trying mightily to be white in the forest of white men's names, there were signs that said almost aloud: here lives a black imitation: MILLS-HAYFORD...PLANGE-BANNERMAN-ATTOH-WHITE...KUNTU-BLANKSON. (126)

When analyzing *The Beautiful Ones*, we should be aware that some critics have interpreted Armah's expose and reputation of the Eurocentrism of Ghana's elite as the expression of a misanthrope's disapproval of people in general. S.A. Gakwandi, for instance, seems to have misunderstood the basic thrust of Armah's anger. Where the novelist condemns the elite's active participation in the neocolonial complex, Gakwandi sees only arrogance and self-righteousness. He charges Armah with exhibiting a profound "disgust [towards]..humanity, especially the African part of it and in particular, Ghana. So wicked, so dirty and so corrupt is humanity that there is no point in the individual's trying to change it" (97). This is very far from being accurate. A close reading of this novel reveals that the author's contempt is reserved exclusively for the Koomsons or would-be-Koomsons of his novel's world. The wealthy, the powerful, those engaged in corrupt practices, and those who look at the world through western tinted eyes left some parts. Critics of this novel seem to have been much to eager to dismiss Armah's hatred of crass materialism, conspicuous consumption and neo-colonial thinking as a loathing of mankind in general. They have tended to ignore the mass of evidence that suggests very clearly that characters like Koomson and his wife, Estella, are condemned for what they

represent as Eurocentric Africans in a neocolony, rather than for what they represent as members of the universal class of human beings.

It is not worthy to understand that the way we have studied *The Beautiful Ones* is largely based on the Frantz Fanon's classic essay "The Pitfalls of National Consciousness", where Fanon mounts a stinging critique of bourgeois nationalist ideology in Africa. "National consciousness", he argues, was parasitic, unimaginative, and wholly lacking in energy or initiative. He writes:

The national bourgeoisie of under-developed countries is not engaged in production, nor in invention, nor building, nor labour, it is completely canalized into activities of the intermediary type. Its innermost vocation seems to be to keep in the running and to be part of the racket. The psychology of the national bourgeoisie is that of the businessman, not that of a captain of an industry... The historic mission of the national bourgeoisie has nothing to do with transforming the nation; it consists, prosaically of being the transmission line between the nation and a capitalism, rampant through camouflaged, which today puts on the masque of neocolonialism. The national bourgeoisie will be quite content with the role of the western bourgeoisie's business agent and it will play, its part without any complexes in a most dignified manner. But this same lucrative race, this cheap-jack's function, this meanness of outlook and this absence of all ambition symbolize the incapability of the national middle class to fulfill its historic role of bourgeoisie. Here, the dynamic pioneer aspect, the characteristics of the inventor

and the discover of new worlds which are found in all national bourgeoisies are lamentably absent...

Because it is bereft of ideas, because its lives to, itself and cuts itself off from the people, undermined by its hereditary incapacity to think in terms of all the problems of nation as seen from the point of view of the whole of the nation, the national middle class will have nothing better to do than to take on the role of manager for western enterprise, and it will in practice set up its country as the brothel of Europe. (*Wretched of the Earth* 120-23)

Fanon's essay was written at the time of independence and was intended to serve as an admonition. The end of colonialism was in sight, but Fanon wanted to show that if the places of the departing colonial officers were filled by members of national bourgeoisies, independence would not have been won. Armah's presentation in *The Beautiful Ones* was first published in 1968, ten years after Ghana's acquisition of political independence. What Fanon had posed as a potential threat is taken by Armah unambiguously to have come true. And even more than this is involved for Armah: for what Fanon had spoken of as "National consciousness" the ideology of small, if powerful elite within the wider society seems to Armah in the years since independence to have imprinted itself upon the society at large.

Pitfalls of Nationalism and The Interpreters

Wole Soyinka has described his novel *The Interpreters* as "an attempt to capture a particular moment in the life of a generation which was trying to find its feet after independence." (753). This complex novel, the five protagonists observe and comment critically on each other and on the corruption, materialism, and hypocritical pretensions of Nigerian society in the early 1960s. During the time of

independence movement, the corruption, loathing materialism, and hypocritical pretensions were not expected by the general mass. They were expecting a "New Nigeria", where a moral integrity of political vision, political self determination, progress and development in all spheres of social life, opportunity for all capable natives would be found. But after independence, this general dream remained unmaterialized. People were disillusioned, intellectuals got confused. They failed to give an intellectual leadership to the country when it is in need of it. This novel rather than discussing about the country's problem and their necessary responsibility in obvious term, all the five major interpreters intellectuals in the novel seem preoccupied with their personal problems and interests. They seem totally perplexed by the imperiling malaise of the society. Their university life totally fails for they have not concrete vision to lead the country away from that malaise. So this reading is an attempt to capture this lost dream of nationalism in the contemporary Nigeria.

The role of intellectuals in substantializing the innermost hopes of nationals is immense. For Edward said it seems, what intellectuals have been able to contribute to the anti-imperialist struggle- the opening up of horizons, the crystalizing of memories and experience as legitimate aspects of a cultural heritage, the globalizing of resources etc.- could not have been provided by other form of labor-power, by any other social practice, in any other arena. Elsewhere, Said has commented on the immense significance of the role of intellectuals being able to play in advancing the cause of anti-colonialism in the post-1995 era.

In the decade long struggle to achieve decolonization and independence from European control, intellectuals have played a crucial role in the reestablishment of a national cultural heritage, in

the reinstatement of native idioms, in the re-imagining are re-figuring of local histories geo-graphies, communities. As such, then, intellectuals not only mobilized active resistance to incursions from the out-side but also contributed massively as the shaper, creator agent, and illumination within the realm of the colonized. (79)

Said's point here is that the intellectuals have contributed most decisively to decolonization on the basis of their specific labor as intellectuals: by writing, thinking, speaking etc. It is in these terms alone that they have been able to constitute themselves as "agents of illumination within the realm of the colonized" (30). But in the case of Soyinka's interpreters, we don't find any of the above mentioned traces. They are all seemed preoccupied by their personal interests. So, country in need of their true help, couldn't get any help, and consequently national disillusionment resulted

At the beginning of the novel, the five main interpreters are shown at club cambana, a setting that serves as a symbol for the drama of their lives. A club is a melting pot of all sorts, a source of penance, a center of socialization; it is also a meeting point of solitudes, a refuge for alcoholics and pariahs, a home for defeated and disgruntled. A fortnightly affair, now in Lagos, now in Ibadan, the friends' get together soon become a systematic exorcism of social demons as well as gradual descent into a personal hell, with Egbo's final "choice of drowning" (251) standing out as the symbol of their tragedy. At that final moment, the paradox becomes patent that the exorcism itself has been but an aspect of the descent. Yet, all along the reader has had occasion to wonder, and the heroes' words and acts have given out signs of the final tragedy.

Now, each of the five main interpreters is socio-politically conscious, and one might even call them patriotic in as much as they are vocal about the society's sickness and the necessity for change. Nonetheless, actions, they say, speak louder than words, and as Soyinka himself would say "words ought to be put into action so as to show true commitment" (739). Not only do the five fail to fulfill any promise arising from their image, but they often reveal a certain obsession with personal problems. Egbo, the diplomat, is never seen to practice his profession; he is perhaps the most undiplomatic of the group. Sekoni, the engineer is so frustrated by the civil service that he becomes mad; but the most interesting fact of his life is that he reveals the sculptor hidden in him and craves an excellent sculpture, "The wrestler", that arouses the ire of the lecturer/ artist Kola, who is never seen teaching but is forever searching for perfection in his Canvas "The pantheon". For his part, Bandle, the lecturer/ economist teacher or an economist. Sagoe, the journalist, is the only one seen practicing his profession, although the overall impression he projects is not that of a social critic or builder, but of a megalomaniac.

Egbo, an atheist, is an orphan definitively marked by his parental death by drowning when, as a child, he was miraculously saved. He has just been invited to his mother's home, a Creek town, to become in long-awaited "enlightened ruler" (12) in succession to his, but he wonders what such an existence could hold for him. The our attention here, for power constitutes a particularly important Egbo, Bangele, and Kola discuss the point thus:

'Who will stop it? Your tired grand father?'

'No, but we could'

'But do we want to? or try?'

'No. Too busy, although I've never discovered doing what. And that is what I constantly ask- doing what?...Don't you ever feel that your whole life might be sheer Creek-surface bearing the burdens of fools, a mere passage, a mere reflecting medium or occasional sheer mass controlled by ferments beyond you?' Bandede shrugged. 'I don't work in civil service.'

'But you acquiesce in the system you exist in it lending pith to hollow reeds.'

"Is that why power attracts you?" Bandede asked

"I merely want to be released from the Creek-surface."

"From a postasy" Kala said. (13)

The thrust of the discussion is the shallowness or sham of the proposed power. Egbo also comments realistically upon his position as a civil servant, with the emphasis upon service which is more or less equivalent to slavery to those masters, monstrous and mediocre, making history when the slave is bearing the burden of history. Ebo is a failure, and it is not surprising that, at the end of the novel, we do not know whether or not he is going "with the tide" away from his hometown; indeed we are not even sure where the tide is going.

More than the question of political power, the power of phallus is Egbo's concern. As critic Anny Claire Jaccard has rightly affirmed- "The interpreters depicts young men who are searching for themselves and who situate themselves in the world, above all in relationship to women" (qtd. by Femi Ojo-Ade 740).

Egbo, the shy child, has grown up to adore women. He cannot take his eyes away from the big buttocks of Semi, the dancer. The nameless university girl is deflowered by the brooding, almost enigmatic philosophizing lover man. Egbo's

combination of philosophizing and philandering actually sets the tone of funky five lives towards the end, he is bitterly caught between the two girls, Simi and the nameless university girl:

For he was truly trying to discover why he had sought the power of that stranger girl to erode the week-end hold of Simi's love, and his mystery was strong with him again, so that he longed almost to leap up as soon as the love-making was over, to leap up and run to seek wherever she was hidden. And he couldn't understand, because she had sent the note to console him when Sekani died ... he could, in such situation, not forget neither her nor Simi, who also had her ritual towards him. In such a different sense that his head spums in confusion and he lays back, bitterly frustrated. (236-37)

Sagoe also does nothing substantial like Egbo to lead the country from its utter state of confusion and evils. He like, Egbo, is busy indulging with his own personal trifles, and he is also left with utter sadness in the end of the novel. His obsession with his "drink lobes" matches Egbo's aquatic daydreaming in tragicomic poignancy, although Sagoe is much more sarcastic, sadistic, and sad. When he talks of Whisky's burning out his Negritude and spits beer with the newspaper messenger to whom he pontificates on his "philosophy of shit", he cuts a truly depressing figure of the decadence of the novel's neo-colonial present. Here, as in the other four, is talent being wasted, bathed and burnt in boogie. Sagoe's journey into living hell is not so fast as Sekoni's but there is an indication that this young man, who is forever fearful of the ghost of the dead Sir Derinola, corrupt chairman of the newspaper board, is but steps away from giving his soul perpetually to viodancy. Sagoe is the greatest prankster of the group, carrying out petty thievery, gate-

crashing parties and funerals in search of news, and being generally irresponsible. The image of him that sticks in our mind is that of a child, pampered, in need of protection, cuddled in the lap of Dehinwa, his woman/ mother. It is another proof of the society's sickness that Sagoe is tagged as a communist. Sagoe, in the novel is especially disillusioned when he finds no professional freedom, moral, strength, objectivity and professional fairness in journalism where he is engaged. This is obvious from the remarks of Nwaug, an employer to Sagoe.

Sagoe, look, I have been in this game for thirty years. Believe me there was a time when I held these ideas. I moved from one paper to other, leaving in a flurry of righteous indignation. But look man, journalism here is just a business like any other. You, do what you employer tells you. Believe me, Sagoe, just take my word. (95)

Actually it is Sagoe and Sekoni who work as central symbols in Soyinka's overall aesthetics in the novel. But these two also cannot give a particular direction to the society in which they are living and interacting with. For between Sekoni and Sagoe, Soyinka provides a socialist cliché which believes that these philosophers have only interpreted the world, the real task is to change it. Soyinka, however, swamps in madness the socialist Sekoni attempting to change the world, while the philosopher Sagoe is left with the post colonial task of interpreting, and houseman, a culpable world. The philosopher is only too painfully aware of the road to madhouse like Ayi Kwei Armah's Akan and bird metaphor 'childhood', the philosopher is the quintessence of the chichidodo that hates excrement with all its soul. But Chichidodo only feeds on maggots and you know the maggots grow best inside the lavatory. This is the chichidodo. The analogy becomes even clearer,

when Sagoe, the philosopher's musing is placed side by side with Sekoni's socialist ideal that is swamped in madness:

Sekoni, qualified engineer, had looked over the railings everyday of his sea voyage home. And the sea sprays built him bridges and hospitals, and the large training furrow became a defening waterfall defying human will until he gathered it between his fingers, made the water run in the lower channels of his palm, directing it against the primeval giants on the forest banks. And he closed his palms again, cradling the surge of power. (26)

Without Sekoni's stuttering explosions, which insist on situating all these scenes in a social context, virtually every one of the interpreters is content with offering criticism that are devoid of positive action.

Before we witness Sekoni's first serious argument with the rest of the group, leading to the articulation of his dome of continuity analogy, he has established a voice for himself as one who will not acquiesce in sterile social comments. In the first of these instances he makes clear his belief that both socially and culturally motivated choices are themselves historically determined phenomena. Thus, in response to the question directly addressed to him, "if the dead are not strong enough to be ever-present in our being, should they not be as they are, dead? he retorts:

'T-t-to make such d-d—distinctions disrupts the d-d-dome of C-c-continuity which is wwwwat life is'

'But are we then', Egbo continued, to continue making advances to the dead? Why should the dead on their part fear to speak to light?

Th that is why wwe must acc-c-cept the univeral d-d-dome, b-b-
because ththere is no d-d-direction. The b-b-bridge is the d-d-dome
of rrreligion and b-b-bridges d-d-don't jjjjust g-g-go from hhhere to
ththere; a bridge also faces backwards.

Obstensibly, it is Sekoni's madness, the cause of which is his inability to stand up to the system, that opens the window to the novel's other preoccupation: the exploration of spiritual depths, and the evocation of myth. Sekoni's protest against a system that is all too prepared to swap his engineering skill for less demanding but unfulfilling position 'singing vouchers and letters and bicycle allowances' is the novel's first and only serious sign of rebellion against the organized fraud prevalent in the colonial state. The experimental power station he builds at Ijioha with indigenous raw materials is classified as 'junk' by the chairman of his board with the aid of the chairman's self-appointed expatriate expert: "not from his last lucrative 'evaluation', came the expatriate expert. Expatriate therefore impartial" (28). The chairman's substitute for Sekoni's power station is a replacement from abroad and one that is supplied by "his subsidiary company registered in the name of his two-month old niece" (28). The company becomes 'the sole contractor for project Ijioha'. This is how Sekoni's good intentions as engineer are thwarted by the postcolonial ugly power. This ultimately causes the death of nationalist Sekoni.

Similarly, the philosophy of shit which comprises among other things, the spurious solution to a national tragedy proposed by Sagoe and taken seriously by the other interpreters raises the large question of whether "One sees what the interpreters see, but does one not also question the quality of their vision" (222). Driven to the depth of despair with the death of Sekoni, the group retires inward in varying degrees of admission of guilt. Kola withdraws in painting, Egbo retires "to

the rocks [...] where unseen he shed his bitter and angry tears" (155), Bandeie is left with the task of consoling Sekoni's father, Alhaji Sekoni, while Sagoe constantly get drunk and becomes inconsolable unless Dehinwa agrees to read sections of his voidancy philosophy to him. All the emotional reactions of these characters are frustrating. It is resulted not simply because of their intimate friend's untimely death, but more importantly because of their conptetation on the horrific socio-political and economic environment which affected him so perversely to that death. But it is contemplete the country's political, social and economic environment, but they are not consistent to i.e. Except, Sekoni most of the characters are seen engaging in triffies.

In an interview on Nigerian television on 15th July 1987, Soyinka affirmed that he was a socialist. Although the interviewers failed to pin him down to specifics, his socialism would seem to be based upon a concerted effort by truly conscious committed compatriots to concretize their ideas for the socio-political and economic progress of the people. The emphasis would be on action by a common front of dedicated men and women; no doubt such action is absent in the five young heroes of the novel. Rather than act, they seem to react, and their most poignant reaction comes at the moment of Sekoni's death:

...they all felt a little like that, flat Sekoni's death had left them all wet, bedragged, the paint running down their acceptance of life where they thought the image was set, running down in ugly patches. They felt caught flat-footed and, Kola thought, not a bit like the finished work... (158)

They are doomed to live out the dilemma and the defeat; even Kola's finished work *The Pantheon* lacks conviction when Sagoes tries earlier to make Sekoni's plight

public by writing an article, his editor in chief rejects it: "I know you think you owe some loyalty to you friend; believe me, you don't. In the end you will find it's every man for himself."

None of the friends does anything noteworthy to change the new chief's tragically capitalistic, reactionary position. On the contrary, another event- the sage and lazarus, the self-rproclaimed born again and Noah, the chief redeemed by him- shows the force of each protagonists' personal pursuits. Bandele declares:

'Sagoe has his story, Kola has filled another heavenly space on his canvas, what are you getting out of this Egbo?'

Egbo turned angrily on him. 'What are you getting out of it?'

'Knowledge of the new generation of interpreters...It didn't matter whether I believe it or not. But at least one thing was obvious, this man did go through some critical experience. If he has chosen to interpret it in a way that would bring some kind of meaning into peoples lives, who are you to scoff at it, to rip it up in you dirty pages with cheap cynicism...None of you minds much what suffering you cause.. (178-79)

IV. Conclusion

In these novels under investigation, an attempt is made to examine the plight of the masses in neo-colonial African societies as they are reflected in these two fictions. This is premised on the awareness that there is always a close relationship between African literature and its historical context (s). Essentially, these two novels of post-independence criticism- *The Interpreters* and *The Beautiful Ones*, are explored with a view to highlighting how the authors have contributed to the discourse of the motifs of pains and disillusionment in the post colonial African novels. The multiple paths that are followed include a thorough examination of the ideologies and contexts within which the works were produced, the consideration of the expression of life of disenchantment and pain in the novels and the analysis of its aesthetics. All lead to the unmasking of the novels as a socially symbolic act, that is, a reflection of the problems of the authors' immediate society in particular.

In *The Interpreters*, young, energetic, enthusiastic, patriots return to their newly independent country Nigeria by collecting optimism of progressive plans, intending to make their country developed. But these intellectual heroes of the novel do not succeed in changing their societies or even affecting the mores of their people. Their critical, progressive and well-intentioned voices are drowned out in the din of corrupt context which may operate and consequently we see these heroes as quixotic marginal and bohemian characters who end up frustrated. It is not only the result of the mutilation of the colonized, including these interpreters, by the colonial regime. It is also the result of intellectual laziness of almost all interpreters who belong to national middle class, their spiritual penury, and of the profoundly cosmopolitan mold that their mind is set in. Actually in the disordered upheaval of

contemporary Nigerian society which is passing through the perilous "transitional gulf" from colonization to independence, from a rural to urban culture, from tradition to modernity, leaders (here the interpreters) are needed with the strength of will to link the past with the future, the material with the spiritual, the human with the divine. But during the period of their lives depicted in the novel, only Sekoni and to some extent, Bndele are seen sustained by the will in the service of society even if in the end they fail but Sagoe, Kola and Egbo and others, as assessed by the criterion of Ogun, have failed to find and show the way to the society. Most of the interpreters are seen engaged with their own narrow self-proclaimed eccentricities and trifles. Because of these reasons, the nationalist dream of Nigeria didn't get chance to be materialized.

Similarly, in Armah's *The Beautiful Ones*, the disillusionment and cynicism engendered in Ghana in the last years of Nkrumah, which his fall only seem to compound, is vividly sketched. The unnamed protagonist "the man" who represent the general mass of contemporary Ghana, is seen struggling through the monotony of each day, determined to be morally accountable, isolating himself from a society that considers bribes and theft to be the national game. As the novel progresses, the man's frustration is seen increasing, which is typical to common people living there. This is seen resulted because of the mutilation of national elite rulers, who replaced the white colonizers, by colonial regime, and also because of absence of moral strength and confidence in their character to tackle the problems there.

In both novels, there is a concentration on the perennial dissonance among individuals, especially as this discord manifests itself in the areas of prime interest to the novelists-politics, social classes, genders, races, and domestics. They present a harsh account of urban life in postcolonial Ghana and Nigeria. Their fictions

reveal one major unfortunate problem that runs through the neocolonial African society's- frustration or betrayal of trust. In fact, the novels are chronicles of the existential and societal realities of the neo-colonial two African nations-Ghana and Nigeria. The theme of post colonial decadence in the texts thus becomes a metaphor for the history of neo-colonial African nations, which are encumbered with dislocation, alienation, depression and deprivation. Resonating through the novels is an echo of painful existence of the masses in the neo-colonial society, which creates a motley array of failure and ridiculous figures.

Like many other post colonial novels of the time these novels also reveal an atmosphere of fear, hate, humiliation, and an aura of repression. They highlight the dictatorial and oppressive tendencies of the neo-imperialists and neo-colonial rules in African nations. According to Josaphat Kubayanda, "this is the general visceral sentiment that forms the background of Armah's and Soyinka's fictions as well as most post colonial African texts" (229). At a point Edward said declares: "domination and inequalities of power and wealth are perennial facts of human society" (229). This seems a living reality in both novels. The social injustices of neo-colonialism constitute the driving dynamic in the novels. The problem of class stratification in neo-colonial African societies is captured vividly.

Like true naturalists, A.K. Arma and W. Soyinka observe the panoramic views of their respective societies and fictionalize them as they are. They expose their society's filth, decay, contradiction and conflicts with a view of presenting a true picture of it. Unlike the socialist realist who believes in the inevitability of change, the authors simply depicts their societies in the way it is, without suggesting how to change the situation. Their literary agenda seem to present life in all its details, free of any preconceived notions of its meaning. The sense of dismay

with which the authors confront the corruptions and divisions in the new post independence regimes is unmistakable. They give a scathing indictment of the failure of the new states to provide opportunities especially for the youths.

On its thematic level, both novels foreground the exploitation of masses by the ruling class, betrayal of public confidence, corrupt administrative bureaucracy, highly decadent and socially stratified societies that breeds and nurtures exploitation and oppression of the less privileged in the societies. In the main, the texts dwell on the suffering endured by innocent humanity as a result of exploration and cries of the world. Social relationships are permanently tense in these novels and are marked by continuous dissonance, frustration and incompatibility.

Although the independence sought is achieved in both countries which the novels reflect, nothing tangible has happened to the hopes and aspirations of the common people living there. The economies still reflect the interest of imperial power and the associated dominant groups. New forces and ideas come to the fore, presaging major social and economic changes. The society still reflects some characteristics of social and economic structures created by colonial rule. Judo Agho comments on this:

Post-independence Ghana and Nigeria, like many other countries in Africa, is faced with another rift: a horizontal rift dividing the elite from the mass of the people. Contemporary Ghana and Nigeria has not only witnessed the frustration of the peasants who had hoped for a better life after independence, but their deepening impoverishment and exploitation. (231)

As predominately social realist novels, *The Interpreters* and *The Beautiful Ones*, emphasize the mimetic and didactic and therefore socially oriented ethos. In

justice, inequality, poverty and corruption form the thematic concerns of these novels.

In fact, Soyinka and Armah depict the problems of nationalism in these texts. They show their disenchantment to the contemporary landscape and socio-political structures of their nations. As objective analysts of the malaise of post colonial African nations, the authors don't lay all blames for the avalanche of pains in Africa at the doorstep of the colonial masters, rather they tend to believe that the neo-colonial indigenous rulers are may even worsen than the white colonialists. So, they assert bitterly that the collective joy of the events of independence in which the entire nations at different times seemed to be swept up as an enormous celebration has been a nightmare and betrayal. Like many other postcolonial African writers, the authors depict their respective countries where the rulers have failed woefully to protect their nations' truncated authority and integrity from the ravages of neo-colonialism and globalization.

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