

Armah's Intellectual Historiography in *The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born, Fragments and Why Are We So Blest?*

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ملخص:

هذا المقال يتعرض إلى العلاقة بين الواقعة التاريخية والمخيلة الأدبية توظيف الروائي للوقائع التاريخية في حبكة للرواية يعكس رفضا غير موضوعي لتقييم سيرة بعض الشخصيات التاريخية عدم الانصياع للحقيقة التاريخية غالبا ما طبع روايات الكاتب الغاني أي كواي أرما الفحص الدقيق للمادة التاريخية في هذه الروايات يكشف عن هوة في معالجة الكاتب لهاته الحقائق وي طرح أكثر من سؤال حول كيفية قراءة التاريخ والمعطيات التاريخية في الأعمال الأدبية لبعض الكتاب البلاغة الأدبية ربما قد تكون في بعض الأحيان وسيلة رخيصة في الوصول إلى قلوب القراء ولكن حتما ليس إلى عقولهم.

Abstract:

The article treats the interplay that goes on between facts and fiction. A novelist's deployment of historical reality in his story-telling often reveals a visceral rejection to interpret certain peoples' careers. Sliding from objectivity has been often the case with Ayi Kwei Armah in his first three novels, *The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born*, *Fragments* and *Why Are We So Blest?* Thorough examination against historical evidence illustrates what we call a gap between a writer's perspective and his very materials. Rhetoric, in some instances, can turn into a plight blinding readers by casting doubt on their nationalists and their legacy.

Introduction:

If fiction is supposed to be 'a mirror held up to nature', reality has shown that this supposition is often elastic and never exact like in science. The portrayal of people and events in situations that are imbued with historical significance in literary works is an engagement in historiography. The aim of this article is to investigate the way in which Armah interprets inside his fiction certain historical events and figures. The argument made here is that the way in which he allows himself to divulge and wrestle with real rather than fictional events

and people who were part of the historical evolution of his country Ghana or his region, Cape Coast, or Africa in general, can be interesting. In other words, what comes in this section is the way in which Armah reads his immediate history and therefore shapes his vision about both self and other. His understanding of the conditions of how Western education has become encroached in the Africans' daily life impels Armah to think of, or assume, a position that he has found the solutions for all of Africa's ills. Like any authoritative doctor, who is filled with a self-importance concealed in irony, Armah starts his bold undertaking about Kwame Nkrumah, Africanus Horton, William Blyden, Casely Hayford, W. E. B. Du Bois and, of course, Frantz Fanon.

Armah's Reflection on Nkrumah's Nationalistic Project:

The *Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born*, to start with, mentions Nkrumah at least three times by name¹ and blames him for missing an opportunity of tracing a genuine path on which other African states could have followed. But even before referring to Nkrumah in person, Armah seems to seek danger by making allusions to what he takes as the misconducts and mismanagements of president Nkrumah before the latter was deposed in the military coup of February 1966. Later in chapter six, it seems that the narrator stands grotesquely reading or recalling some short sections of one of Nkrumah's own speeches, "[w]e do not serve ourselves if we remain like insects, fascinated by the white people's power. Let us look inward. What are we? What have we? can we work for ourselves? To strengthen ourselves?" The narrator's only reaction is: "I stood there staring like a believer at the man, and when he stopped I was ashamed and looked around to see if anybody was watching me." (1968, 86) In a tone both of regret and mockery, the narrator cannot deny the fact that Nkrumah's call at first was captivating; yet in subsequent years later disappointment replaced the high optimism, "[i]f he could have remained that way! But now he is up there, above the world, a savior

¹ In regard to Armah's mentioning of Nkrumah in his text, Professor Arab thinks that: "[t]he reference to politics is more overt in *The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born*. Armah refers openly to Nkrumah. He pours scorn on his regime, on the breed of socialist 'manufactured' at the ideological college of Winneba. The *coup*, which holds a central importance in the second part of the novel, is definitely that which brought Nkrumah's downfall. We [the student] have already underlined the aesthetic *gaucherie* resulting from the introduction of genuine historical events in a work which purports to be a fable. This is a weakness in Armah's novel." S. A. Arab, *Politics and the Novel in Africa* Algiers, O.P.U. (1982), p. 351. (Italics in the original)

with his own worshippers, not a man with equals in life." Just on the next page, Nkrumah is referred to as the verandah boy; somebody that is homeless, not only because he is committed to the cause of liberty (as it is likely to be understood) and so much in a hurry so he does not care where to put in for the night, but because he might be suspected of as being essentially an 'adulterate'. The sentence refers to him as someone who does not care what shelter can be, for in the final analysis, he does not own a house or see the rationality of having one. Only the people's hospitality helps him to establish himself in our verandas or inside our houses. Again the sexual analogy (adulterate boy = verandah boy²) is interwoven inside Armah's text as the best means for inserting his identity quest.

Apropos Nkrumah's implicit and explicit appearance in Armah's text, I think it is important to put the following queries. Given Nkrumah's possible deviations from the revolutionary ideology he brought, and thanks to which Ghana and other parts of Africa gained political independence, is it just to blame only one man, Nkrumah, for the failure of the liberating project? Said differently, if Armah blames in his first book, as well as in the second one, the general populace for not keeping faithful or in line with their own 'authentic traditions' (given his loud wailings, not to say naggings, against depersonalization which is shown in the people's run after Western consumer-durables, imitation after their manners, films and ways of speech), why does he not justify Nkrumah's failure on the ground of the same massive depersonalization and, therefore, cultural defeatism? Is Nkrumah to blame even for the Ghanaians' unreadiness to see the value of his plans? Why doesn't Armah seem to give second thoughts to his siding with the famous 1961 Railway Workers' Strike that was followed by workers from other sectors and to which the government responded rather strictly? Again, is Nkrumah safe from change? Why does Armah seem unready to accept that some foreign plotting against socialism in general and Ghana's leading experience, together with its active role in the unification of the black continent, had also a hand for

² Edmund O. Bamiro taking a stylistic approach on Ghanaian English, argues somehow differently. For him, Verandah boy does not relate directly to Kwame Nkrumah. For him "[a]rdent follower of Dr. Nkrumah from his early days as a political agitator in the Gold Coast." Edmund O. Bamiro adds that Verandah boys "...were supposed to be the champions of the masses suffering under colonial rule. The implication of the term is that they were willing, like the poor they professed to represent, to accept habitations on verandahs rather than live comfortably like colonial rulers in mansions. The ideal was kept up throughout the rule of Nkrumah, but in practice it was completely reversed, and with this the term acquired an ironic tinge, which it still has." Edmund O. Bamiro, "Lexical Innovation in Ghanaian English: Some Examples from Recent Fiction", *American Speech*, Vol. 72, N° 1 (Spring 1997), pp. 110-111. Very probably, Armah has in mind the early Nkrumah who distinguished himself first a verandah boy busy giving speeches in various parts of the country, and supporters later followed into his step.

turning Nkrumah's first idealism into bottomless despair? Could it not be more rewarding had Armah tried to stress objective factors that
Armah's Intellectual Historiography in *The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born*, *Fragments and Why Are We So Blest?* ...innings, like Nkrumah's socialist Convention People's Party, wither or simply age by time?

Young Francis Nkrumah, as Peter Abrahams recalls him, was "the poor struggling student... [whose] eyes mirrored a burning inner conflict and tension. He seemed consumed by a restlessness that led him to evolve some of the most fantastic schemes."³ One such scheme came soon after Nkrumah's arrival in London from Lincoln, in the United States. Nkrumah proposed the formation of a secret society called "The Circle" where "...each [one of the prospective member had to] spill a few drops of [their] blood in a bowl and so take a blood oath of secrecy and dedication to the emancipation of Africa." Jomo Kenyatta, acting as the president of the African Congress in London, then, laughed at the idea and dismissed it as some tribal magic, whereas Nkrumah seized the same reaction for his own advantage and founded the West African Students Group. Abrahams qualifies him then as "an angry young man in a hurry"⁴ who stands in contrast to the tranquil, firm and strategy planner of the later days at the end of the 1950s and striving against all odds to win his battle against tribalism and societal division. It seems that even Armah himself esteems Nkrumah for getting rid of the Ashanti traditionalists and unifying the country on more or less modern, secular and progressive basis. We read that the man, who in reference to Nkrumah, "...was not afraid of the old ones, the jokers. They could not have come and buried him." (p. 86) By the old ones Armah could be hinting at K. A. Busia and J. B. Danquah and the support they both enjoyed from the traditionalists who drew support in their turn from the Fanti and even *Asantehene*, king of Ashanti.

Very likely Armah is critical of the Nkrumah of the late period rather than the Nkrumah of the early days, that is when this latter seized civil liberties and introduced legislations in favour of imprisonment and even executions without trial. Armah tacitly acknowledges the fact that as far as the independence ticket and the

³ Peter Abrahams, "Nkrumah, Kenyatta, and the Old Order" (1959) in: Jacob Drachler, *African Heritage*, (1964)

⁴ Peter Abrahams, "Ibid.", p. 37

battle of freedom from the British go, Nkrumah deserves full thanks and admiration. In the following phrase, it is obvious that the man regrets Nkrumah's change from the charismatic leader to an authoritarian ruler: "[i]f he [meaning Nkrumah] could have remained that way!" (p. 86) is an indication of Armah's first high regard *vis-à-vis* the early Nkrumah. Nevertheless and in the midst of his fueling battle with, the traditionalists of every sort, Nkrumah justified his break of civil liberties (1958 *Prevention of Terrorism Act*) on the ground that it was a necessary measure aiming at achieving the needed stability that could ensure obedience to the law which, in the end, is aimed at planting or diffusing the spirit of civil society which Ghanaians, functioning as tribal communities, generally lack. The death of the opposition leader Danquah in prison very possibly may have been just accidental and does not relate directly to Nkrumah's good intentions⁵. The objective observer can see that he only sought indispensable hegemony through such measures which unfortunately were taunted with some mistakes. Caught in the midst of trying circumstances full with distrust and intrigues, where at least two assassination attempts were reported, in addition to very hostile attitudes pursued by the Western press⁶, Nkrumah might have mistaken usual political opposition and popular rioting or agitations with real subversive activities on the part of some Ghanaians with neo-colonial powers. Even with material threats on his life, Nkrumah never lost control either of his temper, demeanor, sincerity, and clarity of thought, or better still, confidence in the work ahead of him as he believed it must be done. In a letter dated February 26th, 1964 and addressed to the U. S. President, Lyndon Johnson, we can still spot some touches of the vigorous and passionate man he always was. He took on himself the trouble of re-explaining before his addressee all

⁵ Similarly, Hensbroek in his study thinks that "[t]he extensive use of the 1958 *Prevention of Terrorism Act*, which caused the death of the leader of opposition J. A. B. Danquah in detention, was not, as far as principles are concerned, ruled out by the discourse of *Nkrumahism*." Pieter Boele van Hensbroek, *African Political Philosophy, 1860-1995*. Centre for Development Studies, University of Groningen (1998), p. 98. In the same way, too, Tsatsu Tsikata, the former Chief Executive of the Ghana National Petroleum Corporation, reviews the events leading up to Danquah's death by saying "that the use of the Preventive Detention Act (PDA) as a political instrument by the first president of Ghana, Dr. Kwame Nkrumah, made a personality like Dr. J. B. Danquah look bigger than his real political stature was." Later in the interview Tsikata asserts that "Clearly, Nkrumah was steps ahead of many of these opponents politically; he had the support of the masses than any of these opponents have, and in creating the sort of situation where somebody like J. B. Danquah dies in prison, would rather make him bigger than his real political situation was!" J. Ato Kobbie & Bismark Bebli, [Ghanaian Chronicle](http://fr.allafrica.com/publishers.html?passed_name=Ghanaian%20Chronicle&passed_location=Accra) (Accra) 27 Février 2006 <http://fr.allafrica.com/publishers.html?passed_name=Ghanaian%20Chronicle&passed_location=Accra>

⁶ See Appendix 01, p. 14

his socialist choices both the immediate and the long term ones⁷. The letter is simply a blend of modern diplomacy, African courtesy together with sharp intellection made palpable through its commitment for positive social change.

Meanwhile, and even if we accept the despotism theory, it is said that: "[Nkrumah's] less sophisticated ministers frankly talk the tribal language of strength, frankly express the tribal impulse to destroy those who are out of step."⁸ Hence, it is Nkrumah's own cabinet ministers and party men in general who were not at his level of caution and diligence which their posts demanded of them; for they fuelled reactionary opposition and indirectly helped the military to dispose of him⁹. Armah seems at various moments ready to embrace this opinion; his production of *Koomson* in the first novel can be proof for that; yet at other moments he also finds himself lost or unsatisfied before the weight of evidence for this explanation and pours all his anger on the ex-president all over again. Armah, once more, "...pours scorn on"¹⁰, as Professor Arab puts it, the ideological school of Winneba knowing that Winneba was meant primarily to be a means of raising the consciousness of the populace to be aware of the challenges ahead and not a cheap and mucky attempt at conversions to ideologies of neo-Nazi orientations. In his assessment, Nkrumah, at the height of his political glory and of sharp intellectual analysis, found out that it is the ideological factor which was lacking among Ghanaians, and he sought to address this lack through such a school. Again, Winneba is the result of a whole body of knowledge for it summarizes, in many ways, the theoretical monographs the president was composing one after another. In other words and for purposes of objective assessments, the Winneba experiment should be reflected against seminal works such as *Consciencism: Philosophy & Ideology*

⁷ See Appendix 02, p. 15

⁸ Peter Abrahams, "Opcit.", p. 45

⁹ An example that, despite all his diligence and commitment, Nkrumah of the later days, was somehow helpless and as a result grew more and more suspicious and isolated from the people working for him is his decision based on falsified intelligence to imprison his former friend Dr. Ebenezer Ako Adjei soon after one failed assassination attempt in 1962. In a historic letter addressed to Dr. Ebenezer Ako Adjei, Dr. Okechukwu Ikejiani testifies that Nkrumah acted on false intelligence made by his senior police officer for malicious purposes resulting from very possibly cheap tribal plotting. With direct intervention from the venerable Nigerian Nnamdi Azikiwe or the legendary 'Zik' that "...Nkrumah told me that you were the person who planted the bomb that hurt him. I did not believe it but he swore it to be true. I met Nkrumah again in exile in 1970 at Conakrey, in Guinea. At that meeting, he confessed to me that he had found out that it was his Chief of Police who planted the bomb and laid the blame on you. He swore he did not learn about this until he was in exile in Guinea..." Okechukwu Ikejiani, "The Big Six", <<http://www.niica.on.ca/gahana/AkoAdjei.aspx>>, NiiCa Production Copyright © 2002 NiiCa

¹⁰ S. A. Arab, *Politics and the Novel in Africa* Algiers, O.P.U. (1982), p.

for *De-Colonization* (1964) or *Africa Must Unite* (1963). One of the principal objectives of the college was "to train African Freedom Fighters in the spirit of the African revolution, pan-Africanism and socialism in such a way that when they return to their homelands they will be better armed to take an active part in liberating their countries from imperialism; colonialism and neocolonialism."¹¹

Winneba, in this context, can be seen as an attempt at turning theory into practice. Nkrumah was trying in haste to break the mantle of traditionality which has always striven to place an inventory for human phenomena, and thus put Africans at a disadvantage from any active participation in their daily life. According to him, attempting to find a cause might be a way of blaming man's trouble all on the first cause, that is, on God. When someone really holds fast the idea of the inventory, he or she is automatically liable to develop a negative attitude towards life. He or she is likely to be qualified as a man with parochial mind, always finding ready-made excuses for his inactivity and negativity. We read in the early part of *Consciencism*:

If the cause is a product of the basic raw material, then an effect is being said paradoxically to cause its own cause! A circle of a very vicious kind is thus described. Furthermore, to say that 'what there is' is self-caused is, speaking without bias, to deny that it has a cause at all. In this, there is as broad a hint as one can desire that the question of the origin of 'what there is' has no affirmative answer. [...] Nor indeed is the vicious circle the only tribulation which awaits an affirmative answer. If a cause is suggested for the cosmic raw material, this neurotic insistence on a cause will open up an infinite regress about the cause of the cause of the cosmic material, and so on¹².

The *raison d'être* behind this cold and abstract piece of thinking, as the reader who is aware of the Ghanaian context can find, is located in the arcane practices which find justification in mummified cultures that are imbued in the mantle of traditional chiefs and unchecked loyalty to the Asantehene. Peter Abrahams actually

¹¹ Quoted in: <http://www.niica.on.ca/ghana/deology.aspx> retrieved on October 2006

¹² Kwame Nkrumah, *Consciencism*. (1964) <<http://members.aol.com/aappr/cons.html>>

reports that while paying his visit to the Ghanaian Premier, he found him very upset with disturbing news coming from Kumasi, where it was reported that some blind loyalists had have to crawl on their bellies for twenty meters before raising their faces in front of the Asantehene!¹³ By withdrawing civil liberties, Nkrumah showed his alarm at allowing the same culture further fertile ground to continue infesting and therefore wasting an opportunity which after all might not be repeated. He was very clear about seizing the historical moment stretching itself before Africa when he said "[t]here is a tide in the affairs of every people when the moment strikes for political action... This is our chance. We must act now. Tomorrow may be too late and the opportunity will have passed, and with it the hope of free Africa's survival."¹⁴ For him, it cannot be harmful if we follow a rigidly secular line of action since this line would be only momentary. The secularism, he has in mind, is synonymous with that of Albert Memmi. Some knowledgeable secularism does not mean complete denial of God as the prime cause. Rather, this secularism which Nkrumah was busy trying to introduce in the Ghanaian society can be seen as the only way at breaking the manacles of the African present day culture. This culture that uses religion to expand its ground gained only through intrigue, suspicion and distrust. Secularism means cutting short the way before tradition and freeing the energies that stand imprisoned inside the ordinary African¹⁵. It is in this context that Nkrumah's breach of civil liberties could be interpreted, and in this spirit, too, the Winneba College experiment could be approached. He meant cutting the way before the reactionary forces of tradition and its apologetics and enabling the people in general to make the giant step forward.

Reading his address at the first seminar held in Winneba, one can detect the immensity of the step which Nkrumah wanted Ghanaians to make. After tireless, lengthy but lively re-explanations of the challenges a young country like Ghana may face as a result of

¹³ Peter Abraham, "Op cit."

¹⁴ Kwame Nkrumah, *I Speak of Freedom: A Statement of African Ideology*. London: William Heinemann Ltd., (1961), p. xiv

¹⁵ *Apropos* Nkrumah's assessment of religion in the present moment, he had to say "[I]nsistence on the secular nature of the state is not to be interpreted as a political declaration of war on religion, for religion is also a social fact, and must be understood before it can be tackled. To declare a political war on religion is to treat it as an ideal phenomenon, to suppose that it might be wished away, or at the worst scared out of existence. The indispensable starting point is to appreciate the sociological connection between religious belief and practice on the one hand, and poverty on the other." Kwame Nkrumah, *Consienstim. Op cit.*

unawareness in all forms to the threats of global neo-colonialism, Nkrumah gives suggestions at practical and sensible steps whereby the party can infuse its ideals in the masses. At the end of his address, he does not forget to remind his senior party officers and ministers of the ethics of humility by way of familiarity with lower officials in the party and state. In short, he provides big lines of policy but always with a keen eye on the details, which for him, are all paramount in fostering the party's ideology¹⁶. Now, whether those plans were effectively carried on the ground or not; one is inclined to assert that the former president, both as an individual and man, empowered with the constitutional authority bestowed on him, never lacked the good will and actually did his best.

Perhaps, had Armah referred in his novel(s) to the Volta River Project and how Nkrumah pinned almost all his hopes of Ghana's development, he would have been somehow objectively justified in his attack on the former president. What is strange is that Armah nowhere mentions or even hints at this massive project and its massive ecological, political and financial disaster despite the fact that Armah embarked on writing his novels much after the dam's completion. His silence on this debacle is indeed puzzling for how can he afford not to speak about such a catastrophe of such a scale! It is said that up to 80 thousand people were forced to move and resettle in order to leave space for the lake that surround the two dams. Nkrumah's opinion with regard to the Volta River Project was "an ever-growing and prospering modern sector will then reach out and, in turn, modernize the traditional sector until the whole nation is developed by having been entirely brought into the industrialized, capitalized modern sector". Yet while thinking this way, Nkrumah and his team never give second thoughts about the utility of the land for the resettled people not as a commodity but as commons. Those displaced identified with their ancestral land which they inherited for centuries and identified with it. That is why they were in no way prepared to abandon it, because for them leaving simply meant extinction. Perhaps, the government disregarded this conception of the land on the ground of its unscientificity, and very possibly took

¹⁶ Kwame Nkrumah, "Address at the First Seminar at the Winneba Ideological School", 3rd February, 1962 in: Kwame Nkrumah, *Revolutionary Path*. Panaf Books Ltd., (1973), pp. 170-180.

their complaint as some form of traditionality and hence backwardness. Yet, in this disregard, "they [Nkrumah and his team] answered the wrong questions."¹⁷ Besides their trust in Western capital for the erection of the huge structure of the dam, while not being on very good terms with the West; and also even in tracing a socialist line policy in a Cold War climate, results proved to be unfavourable for any humanistic good will¹⁸. While in haste to press Eastern and Western blocks to meet his ends and find a space where he could coexist, that is, benefit from the antagonism existing between both, Nkrumah could not see the limitations involved in just his being eclectic, particularly as a long term strategy.

In *The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born*, Armah never mentions these shortcomings of Nkrumah's strategic priorities in charting policies. Obviously, he is not ready to discuss the details of Nkrumah's policies, because has he just tried, he would find that these mistakes are perhaps inevitable with any human venture together with the fact that they spring from the best of intentions. But Armah never discusses these mistakes. In just refusing to discuss them by dramatizing them fairly and roundly, Armah shows that he bears a kind of puritanical mood that takes the former president as evil personified and never as a human capable, because endowed, of both goodness and shortcomings. One wonders why Wole Soyinka, in his first novel, too, *The Interpreters*, was able to discuss Nigeria's shortcomings without directly blaming political figures. The sabotage of Sekoni's leading electrical experiment by corrupt civil servants, though affecting sensibility, keeps with its representative framework as a work of art making a point to sensitize the public to the gravity of the issue. But it never attempts to make this grave issue a battleground for personal settling of scores, the way Armah might be doing. Yet,

¹⁷ Lawrence Agbemabiese & John Byrne, "Commodification of Ghana's Volta River: An Example of Ellul's Autonomy of Technique", *Bulletin of Science, Technology & Society*, Vol. 25, No. 1, February 2005, pp. 20-21

¹⁸ Examples of Nkrumah's good will that might have developed into being disserviceable with his developmental policies is his complete trust, not to say, reverence for the major financier of the Volta River Project, Edgar Kaiser. No less incongruous is Nkrumah when he praises the US government and its presidents for the guarantee they gave to the various investors, a respect that goes beyond the demands of diplomacy. One just wonders what happened to Nkrumah's neo-colonial ideologies which distrust Capitalism while welcoming its capital as a prime option for the country's development. In order to illustrate this idea, below there is a part of Nkrumah's inauguration of the Volta River Project speech, dated on January 22nd, 1966, nearly a month before he was disposed off by the military. "Edgar Kaiser, President Eisenhower, and President Kennedy were genuinely interested in this project because they saw, behind the cold figures and the rigid calculations, that the Volta River Project was not only an economically viable project, but also an opportunity for the United States of America to make a purposeful capital investment in a developing country. In other words, they saw in the Volta River Project a scheme with new dimensions of growth and development which they felt could benefit both Ghana and the United States." Source: amaah, *Africa Report*, (1966) <<http://home.comcast.net/~amaah/writing/ghana-without-Nkrumah-men-in-charge.html>> Uploaded on February 20th, 2006

by some twists of irony, illustrated in his striving in the face of all evidence, to cast a shadow on Nkrumah's efforts, Armah simply pleads with his reader to exempt his fictional materials from historical evidence. As to allegations of corruption and economic mismanagement which Armah also complains of, an explicit explanation comes from the deposed president himself. While in exile, Nkrumah accounted for these accusations in a long article entitled: "The Big Lie". Sheer figures and tables may at first induce us to think that the former leader was simply hiding his failures in them or may be busy clearing himself before the coming generations. But to take only one argument which no one can deny that it strikes a special chord in every objective observer: "If Ghana was in such a serious economic condition, why was there no lack of investment in her growing industries? Investors do not put their money into mismanaged enterprises and unstable economies." 19

1- Visceral Attitudes Extended to other Nationalists: Fanon, Du Bois, Horton, Blyden, Hayford & Ahuma

In reference to Armah's reading of historical events the young nation Ghana has come across, one has not to forget Kofi Owoonor's criticism. Owoonor, Armah's fellow countryman, in a deriding accent refers to Armah as "Our Harvard African novelist,"! who:

...once the brother was no longer talking about revolution and Fanon, had lost interest. He [Armah] showed no signs of irritation about this whole conversation about brotherhood, independence, Nkrumah and whatnot. These were nothing, nothing, compared to Fanon and revolution, and the theory of mystification. Ghana under Nkrumah was nothing but excrement, corruption and thieving. It was nothing²⁰.

Perhaps more than being a mere ground for settling scores between the two novelists, Awoonor is right to point out to Armah's

¹⁹ In addition Nkrumah added that his attempts at diversifying the country exports were seriously damaged by the lower prices of Ghana's main import, coca. He remarked that "[t]his pressure [of putting lower prices and threats at economic isolation and withdrawal of foreign investments] ended smartly after 24th February 1966 when the US State Department's political objective had been achieved. The price of cocoa suddenly rose on the world market, and the IMF rushed to the aid of 'NLC' Kwame Nkrumah, "The Big Lie" in: *Revolutionary Path*. Panaf Books Ltd, (1973), pp. 394-413

²⁰ Kofi Nyidevu Awoonor, *Comes the Voyager at Last*. Africa World Press, Inc. (1992), p. 90.

visceral reading of Nkrumah and as shown below, nearly all the Gold Coast nationalists. For not only does Armah not attempt objective presentation of Nkrumah's eventful career, but he also goes on attacking other historical nationalists as well. Decrying the depersonalizing attitudes of modern days Africans, we read in the first novel:

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 black men with white souls and names trying mightily to be white. In the forest of white men's names, there were the signs that said almost aloud: here lives a black imitator. MILLIS-HAYFORD... PLANGE-BANNERMAN...ATTOH-WHITE...KUNTU-BLANKSON. Other that must have been keeping the white neighbors laughing even harder in their homes. ACCROMOND...what Ghanaian name could that have been in the beginning, before its Civil Servant owner rushed to civilize it, giving it something like the sound of the master name?... (p. 126)

Perhaps it is of little importnace to identify all the names, but there is no way of mistaking the first one, at least²¹. Inserting the name of Hayford in this way and within this context could only means that Armah shows disrespect to the entire group of early West African nationalists of whom Joseph Casely Hayford was one. Even Armah's early inspirer, Frantz Fanon, comes to be decried in *Why Are We So Blest?* While poking fun at the fake nationalist, Jorgue Manuel, Fanon's nationalism as a way of addressing African development is

²¹ Concerning the third name that occurs in the list of depersonalized Africans, there might be good reason to believe that with ATTOH-WHITE, Armah meant the famous Reverend Samuel Richard Brew Attoh-Ahuma (formerly Samuel Solomon), a distinguished clergyman and educator, a founding member of Aborigines' Rights Protection Society together with Hayford and others in 1898 and leader of the so called Backward Movement. He also wrote a book entitled *The Gold Coast Nation and National Consciousness* (1911) in which he advocated his call for a Back to the source vision. A group of western-educated Fanti intellectuals, backed by traditional chiefs, agitated against the Colonial Office when it tried to introduce the Land Bills in 1894. They organized themselves in the form of a civil society designed after the anti-imperialist British society, the Aborigines Protection Society (APS), led by its secretary, F. H. Fox Bourne. Their success in securing the Colonial government respect for the long-established customary laws governing the distribution of land triggered other possibilities of cooperation between the educated elites and traditional ruler. LaRay Denzer, "Aborigines' Rights Protection Society: Building the Foundation of Modern Ghana", <<http://diaspora.northwestern.edu/mbin/WebObjects/DisasporaX.wa/displayArticle?atomid=905>>. Concerning the fourth name, KUNTU-BLANKSON, Armah might have in mind George Kuntu Blankson, an educated activist and a member founder with other educated the famous and short-lived Fanti Confederation of 1871. Sudden change in British policy from free trade to aggressive forms of imperialism was the reason for the Confederation demise. George Padmore considers this organization as the forerunner of the Aborigines' Rights Protections Society. Indeed, it was one of the earliest and most articulate bodies of nationalist expressions in the whole of the British West Africa. George Padmore, *The Gold Coast Revolution*. Dennis Dobson LTD, London, (1953), p. 34. As to the second name, Armah might have been illuding to James Bannerman, a multato merchant of a Scottish father and African mother. Highly respected and experienced to the extent that a group of European and African merchant, and upon the death Governor Winniett in 1851, wrote to the Colonial Office to appoint him as Governor. David Kimble, *A Political History of Ghana*. Oxford University Press, (1963), p. 65.

forced to be seen at stake simply because of the sheer physical location of Jorge Manuel's Bureau in Lacryville. Solo with an ironic twist in his tone comments: "The Bureau would then have on paper a fitting address for a center of revolutionary activity: BUREAU OF THE PEOPLE'S UNION OF CONGHERIA 1 RUE FRANTZ FANON" (p. 48) By dramatizing it this way, the writer leaves the reader to take Jorge Manuel himself as Fanon. This identification is deepened even further when later Manuel makes the remark that "an African in love with a European is a pure slave", yet he was found by Solo later with a 'White haired woman', meaning Aimée's immediate superior. Fanon, we may recall also, made nearly the same remark "Historiquement, nous savons que le nègre coupable d'avoir couché avec une Blanche est castré."²² and he, too, married a French woman later. Again, there exists every reason which indicates that by Dr. Earl Lynch Armah has Dr. William E. Burghardt Du Bois in mind. For, it was Dr Du Bois who studied at Harvard and perhaps would have been entertaining the idea of gaining a teaching position in Harvard, had white Americans been fair *vis-à-vis* his talents²³. Meeting Dr. Earl Lynch in his home library, Modin recalls "the snide remarks Professor Jefferson's friends had made about him: that in twenty-five years he might qualify as the first black full professor at Harvard." (p. 33), implying the way African Americans are deceived by the calls of equality since they are made to consume all their intellectual energies in solidifying the imperial system for little reward.

Perhaps what makes Armah's novels so daring and so thought-provoking is their capacity to break consensus about intellectuals and ways of translating intellection in practice. The illusion and sometimes direct reference to some historical figures prove that the same novels can be approached as books about book writers. They uncover and testify to a long history of African intellectuals' contact with Western knowledge. In these novels' design there lies an intention of disapproving the purported claims for mutual support celebrated by generations of African intellectuals. Africanus

²² Frantz Fanon, *Peau noire masques blancs*, Edition du Seuil, (1952) p. 58.

²³ Donald B. Gibson, in his introduction to Penguin edition of Du Bois' *The Souls of Black Folk*, comments that despite Du Bois' firm belief in reason as a value and guiding principle for progress and self-betterment in life, he was denied a teaching position at The University of Pennsylvania. For "[h]ad reason prevailed, Du Bois would certainly have been invited to join the faculty of the University of Pennsylvania, . . . As it was, racial consideration alone prevented his even being considered a bona fide member of the faculty." Donald B. Gibson, "Introduction", in: W. E. B. Du Bois, *The Souls of the Black Folk*. (1903), Penguin Books, (1989), p. x

Horton, Edward Wilmot Blyden, Joseph Ephraim Casely Hayford, W.E.B. Du Bois are all, to some extent, implicitly disapproved of, if not obliquely ridiculed in Armah's novels. These novels are strongly biased since the writer never hesitates to express his heartburning hostility towards the West, and most of all, African intellectuals who sought development in Western conceptions, like national spirit, massive formal education, market economy, high scale policies of industrialization. Meanwhile, we cannot fail to trace the reasons behind this enmity. The writer is perhaps more discontented with the types of intellectuality, which according to him, take on board or neutralize Western enmity towards Africa. For him, by ignoring authentic traditional voices and adopting protest for civil rights within parliamentary representation instead of more militant resistance, African intellectuals prolong rather than hasten the end of Western domination and control.

For Armah, Modin's early experience in Harvard is proof enough of what would happen to a would-be-historicist traveling to receive knowledge in a metropolitan university. Given the colonial context, an African student has been already under pressure to undergo not only cultural surgeries, like Baako's mother or the man's wife of the earlier two novels, but epistemic repackaging or mutation in line with the globalizing tail ends of European Modernity. The scholarship Modin won, in the writer's perspective, was meant to forestall trust in an imaginary better future which in actual fact can be just a smoke screen derailing the same student's intellectual potentials from thinking beyond his people's concerns. Nothing is concrete about the nature of this better future or for whom it is meant for. Once mistaken or fooled by imaginary instead of real apprehensions of Africa's problems, the would-be historicist is provided with an *ad hoc* set of ideals that allows him to embrace this alien education almost with religious zeal. If this is what is meant out of Modin's education in Harvard, then it is safe to say that Armah reads all African intellectuals' experience in the Western academy as an activity leading to the corruption of their talents. The same corrupting process is meant to be transferred to their offspring with the aim of devastating the futures rather than offering the blessing of heaven, which reflects the irony we find in the title of the novel. The persistent question that

remains, however, is to what extent Modin's experience, thus narrated and dramatized, is expressive and representative of the historical figures he meant to decry and criticize? In other words, to what extent is Armah's reading of Africa's late nineteenth century nationalists valid and genuine?

In the remaining part of this article, there is an attempt at contrasting Armah's historiography with some proof materials concerning those historical intellectuals' venture in the metropolitan university and their on-ground achievements or, possibly, limitations. Precisely, below there is a reflection on how Armah reads the careers of Casely Haford, Blyden, Horton, Du Bois, together with Fanon. In the next section, the argumentation runs that Armah's recourse to literary Modernism might be the source behind his misapprehension of the truth about these intellectuals' historical efforts at bettering things around them. By keeping in mind that the betterment is relative rather than sweeping, the way Armah wants it, it becomes easy to note the confines the author puts himself in while reading history. Modernity can play one dubiously, as it has been clarified in the introduction. Hence Modin's life, both in America and back in Africa, while relevant and to a large extent biding might not be directly insightful, particularly when it moves to make sweeping generalizations about plans to ruin African minds. In addition, attentive reading proves that after all Modin is not that helpless weakling despite his apparent naivety and innocence; he has a space where he can actually, not only rhetorically, defy his spatio-temporal epistemic conditioning, in case that conditioning really exists. Regrettable, though, is the fact that *Why Are We So Blest?* gives the impression that Africa's case before European Modernity is hopelessly dashing. Therefore, not all unjustifiably the narrative's scope can be self-defeating and contrary with the warning objectives its writer might have first in mind.

Joseph Ephraim Casely Hayford, or Ekra Agiman, his Fanti name, "was born a British subject, and a second generation member of a new group of western educated or 'creolized' Fanti traders and professionals." Perhaps only the fact that "[h]is family, a comparatively wealthy merchant dynasty, claimed at least one

Scottish ancestor: the presence of European traders in this region for several centuries had created a substantial mulatto population among the Fanti"²⁴ leads Armah to qualify him 'as one of the black men with white souls and names trying mightily to be white'. In reviewing Hayford's active life and the historical context that shaped that life, it becomes increasingly difficult to endorse Armah's assessment. Rising to consciousness at a time where the British were in no way ready to argue with natives, notably after their military victory over the Ashanti in 1874 and the Berlin Conference of 1884, Hayford strove with other Western educated campaigners to help snatch from the British the little they used to concede. His intellectual prowess is genuinely translated into organizational commitments to secure the rights of the African colonial. He was very cautious in his activism, because he knew that times could not permit strategy mistakes. He fashioned that activism of his in the form of an agitation from within, rather than from without, the British Empire. His contribution to the establishment of the Aborigines' Rights Protection Society (ARPS) marked the nucleus of what later come to be known as movements of African personality and African Nationalism.

Indeed, it is through the ARPS that Armah can acknowledge his obligations to Hayford, not the contrary, that is, looking a gift horse in the mouth. Puzzled over the gap existing between the educated elite, presumably 'westernized' intellectuals, and the traditional chiefs whom the British were abusing to the detriment of their own people, Hayford sought to unite both the educated and the chiefs in one common elite with the same cause against the occupiers. Opportunity came when the British decided to seize the land for their agriculture and mining explorations. Here Hayford and his group intervened through massive manifestations, press campaigning and even sending delegations to London seeking support from the British civil society and lobbying with pressure groups in the heart of the metropolis. Although in many ways a disciple of Blyden and Africanus Horton, Casely Hayford knew that there were many challenges which did not allow him to pursue Blyden's line of action. One such challenge, Hayford realized, was changing times. According

²⁴ Tom Lodge (ed.), "Introduction", *Writings of Ekra-Agiman (J.E. Casely Hayford)*, Bristol: Thoemmes Continuum, (2003), <<http://www.thoemmes.com/african/ekra-agiman.htm>>

to him, the mid-Victorian optimism which framed Blyden's and Horton's thought came to be no longer serviceable by the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth²⁵. For Hayford, conditions after turning into aggressive forms of imperialism require knowing well how to force the colonial government into making concessions. Meanwhile, Africans for their parts, should stop toying with the idea of a holistic militant resistance and staunch refusal of everything western. The brutal suppression of the Ashanti army was a priceless lesson to learn, Hayford thought. But if they could not defeat the British on the battlefield there was no reason why they should not resist them otherwise or force them to make concessions. The procession of the Colonial Office with its plans to seize lands from traditional owners was a signal for Hayford to hurry and accept any concession the British would make. For him, it was better to play the colonial game and stop looking at Modernity as something spoiling the Africans' sense of who they were, particularly if there were people who were qualified enough to match the colonial power at its machinations.

Hayford's legacy, then, and which Armah refuses to consider seriously (since the remark against him comes in a casual tone of general rather than a specified condemnation), is his reflection over possibilities of survival of the authentic substance of identity even if that substance can undergo some transformations, reshaping and readjustments with present realities. Modernity, in case is evil and as Hayford's own novel, *Ethiopia Unbound* (1911) illustrates, it has to be conditioned to one's advantage rather than being allowed to condition Africans the way it pleases. There is no way of turning a blind eye at it because Africans cannot afford to neglect it, otherwise they would stand at odds with reality. According to Tom Lodge, through the dramatization of the novel's protagonist, Kwamankra, Hayford developed ideas which were borrowed principally from Edward W.

²⁵ Pieter Boele van Hensbroek is of the same mind. Colonial rule that took over in Africa soon after the Berlin Conference of 1884 put an end to Horton and Blyden's positive kind of looking at colonial rule. Given the fact that Horton's father was a receptive slave, but was able nevertheless to establish himself as a solid businessman and provide sound education for his children, gives more hope and optimism than first expected. In a sense, helps us see that comparative material success are more than possible for triggering genuine cultural advancement and social betterment within European modernity in the context of 19th Century West Africa. Hensbroek thinks that "[b]y focusing on the movement of the *Aborigin's Rights Protection Society* (ARPS) and its struggles in the Gold Coast around 1900, this third type of political discourse, different from the optimistic Krio and African Regeneration discourses, discloses itself. The discourse represents the end of the old nineteenth century political horizon which was 'open' in the sense that it left room for African aspirations "to work out our own salvation." At the same time, however, the discourse absorbed several fundamental assumptions that betray its tribute to the colonial situation, and it can thus be said to represent the beginning of a new type of political discourse." Pieter Boele van Hensbroek, *Opcit.*, p. 70.

Blyden. It is from Blyden that Kwamankra draws the idea of essential races where Africans can look different from Europeans or Asians since each race is endowed with essential qualities that shapes its own role in the human family. These essences are more conceived as vocations instead of rigid divisions. Technical knowledge gives Europe its vocation to offer humanity order or discipline whereas Africa's role ever since the dawn of history has been that of service.

But where Blyden stops before the cemented walls of his essentialisms and sees no possibilities for a syncretic midway in between²⁶, Kwamankra finds it quite easy to break the manacles encoded in the essentiality of his race, learn from the technically advanced Europeans and keep meanwhile in touch with the African roots. Indeed, and in a realization that escapes Blyden, Kwamankra strongly hopes for a better Africa in respect of the educated Creole community down in the coast. Their distance from the feudal overlords in the hinterlands places them in a position where they can take the step forward on behalf of all downtrodden Ethiopians. What is important for the protagonist is the fact that there is no strict definition of what an Ethiopian is as long as he keeps faithful to his role in history which is his essentialism, too. Hence, the title of the book that derives meaning from unlimited Ethiopia which connotes freedom from the restriction of the die-hards. Only on his death bed, Kwamankra longs for the Ashanti who are still 'unspoilt'²⁷. But this ambivalence again shows that Hayford wants him a round character; someone who keeps some mystery of himself, and in Kwamankra's case, explains why people generally turn conservative as they grow later in life. Is he finally worried about too much exposure to the West to the extent that African essentialism becomes endangered? Or, is he just breeding some cheap jealousy against the younger generation who are to reap the fruits of his efforts? Or might he simply be enchanting his words as he if in communion with his long-dead Ethiopian wife,

²⁶ When saying that Blyden stops before making a "syncretic midway in between", I am still aware with his 'complementarity thesis', or the idea that though races are essentially different they can nevertheless complement each other. This idea still meets powerful criticism if not outright rejection. A case in point would be Robert W. July who finds that "His [Blyden's] image of the world's races complementing each other in the Godhead implies physical segregation and genetic purity, a concept familiar enough on the Mississippi Delta or in Transvaal, but not lacking its proponents in the Negro world—Marcus Garvey for one, or today more extreme advocates of Black Power. At such a point, Blyden's views suddenly lose their attractiveness and his thought takes a disquieting turn which disturbed many of his contemporary West Africans. Was he conscious of where his logic was leading him? Was it bitterness or insouciance which brought him to such expressions of apartheid?" Robert W. July, "Book Review on Blyden", *Journal of African Studies*, V, 1 (1964), pp. 486-487.

²⁷ Tom Lodge (ed.), "Op cit.", p. 56

Mansa who died in childbirth and denied him a son? Interesting is the end for at least it keeps its reader thinking and wondering over a range of possibilities that can be equally for the better as well as for the worse. Readers have the right to judge Kwamankra's career as they see fit; yet Armah almost always condemns and does not allow readers to judge by themselves.

Armah seems to find nationalism the hardest kernel before him to break. According to him, Africa has to try without nationalism before any hopes of material advancement can be really achieved. Therefore, he is not even on speaking terms with somebody like Atto Ahuma; someone who called for "a Backward Movement" where "...Intelligent Retrogression is the only progression that will save our beloved country."²⁸, which is something similar to what Armah actually advocates, yet dismissed on the ground that the same call is tailored to a nationalist vocabulary. Armah seems here to reecho what some cultural historians like E.A. Ayandele and Basil Davidson have commented on in relation to early Gold Coast nationalists. Both scholars interpreted these activists' agitations in negative terms arguing that these nationalists were the forerunners of all of Africa's misfortunes. Ayandele, in particular, does not refrain from calling the likes of Atto Ahuma and Casely Hayford together with their Nigerian counterparts as "deluded hybrids throughout the nineteenth century; hybrids in the cultural and sociological sense that whilst they were black in their skin, with pure Negro blood, they were superficially and artificially white in their cultural and social ambitions."²⁹ For his part, Davidson also looks at colonial education as a means to uproot colonial subjects from their ancestral heritage, for "It could easily seem then, and perhaps it still does, that this enterprise of civilizing Africa by alienating Africa from itself had become necessary to meeting the challenge of self rule in the modern world."³⁰

According to Harvey Whitfield, there is a serious methodological failure in the opinions sketched by Davidson and Ayandele. The problem can be identified in the presumption of the

²⁸ Atto Ahuma, *The Gold Coast Nation and National Consciousness*. (1911) Quoted in: David Kimble, *A Political History of Ghana*. Oxford University Press, (1963), p. 524.

²⁹ E.A. Ayandele, *The Educated Elite in the Nigerian Society*. Ibadan: University of Ibadan Press, (1974), p. 28.

³⁰ Basil Davidson, *The Black Man's Burden: Africa and the Curse of the Nation-State*. New York: Times Books, (1992), p. 42.

binary cultural opposition between Europe and Africa. Should Africans understand the dynamics of cultures or what Whitfield calls 'fluidity' of ideas as they first operated on ground, it is certain that a more positive approach to these nationalists can rise to the fore.³¹ Within this framework of fluidity and reverberations, one has to resist the temptation that Attoh Ahuma should be disregarded on the ground that his vision is likely to be that of a simple nostalgic and therefore, a collaborator. His call for a backward glimpse was always associated with a keen eye on future and the promise for progress. According to Olufemi Taiwo, "[t] he man who seemed to be looking backwards wrote on Progress and the importance of the individual in language that conceded nothing to any modern conceptions of both terms. Quite the contrary, he called on the youth to make self-improvement their vocation, patriotism their cause, and the advancement of Africa their mission."³² For practically the same reasons, not even Casely Hayford's early calls for crossing the tribal divide between Ashanti and Fanti in order to help foster the nationalistic spirit of all Gold Coasters made him immune from Armah's indiscriminate attacks.

1- In Conclusion:

All in all, one perhaps cannot but ascribe to Armah visceral attitudes when it comes to his reading of the nationalists' efforts at getting Africa from its present hard-hitting situation. What is certain is that those nationalists were and are no less zealous and serious, than he is. Strong emotional charges, rather than pure logic, predominate most of his viewpoint. His case might be not unique. While giving the illusion that there is some kind of objective thinking going on, readers are simply called to shun at the same people who committed all their active loves to help Africa bridge to the modern world. However this situation calls for a critical revision to the body of literary production and its compliance with rigorous historical investigation and findings. In case historical figures are deliberately misread and attacked on the same level with Africa's abusers, if not more, then how can African

³¹ Whitfield argues: "Herein [absence of fluidity on the part of historiographers] lies the problem with the work of Ayandele, Davidson, and other treatments of the educated elite. These scholars invest in an opposed history and did not examine the fluidity that was part of the elite's ontology, but rather a mythical in-betweenness that was grounded in their adherence to racial/cultural difference. The educated elite were too complex to be subjected to an historical paradigm that only allows them to be nationalist heroes or collaborators. Thus, the opposed historical perspective has produced scholarship that may benefit from revision." Harvey Whitfield, "The Gold Coast intelligentsia: A Historiographical Reassessment", *Gateway*, Issue2, Summer 2001, <<http://grad.usask/gatewa/currentissue.html>>

³² See Appendix 03, p. 15

intellectuals expect the arrogant West to respect and look equally at them?

Appendices:

01-As early as Nkrumah's declaration of independence in 1961 criticism was voiced and one is inclined to call it natural because it put an end to British interests in the region. But with the beginning of 1962, the same criticism seems to take new levels for it was deriving scorn from the nationalist achievements, Nkrumah and his team, were able to score in short time and with humble means. Here are only three major British dailies to illustrate this point. In its issue dated October 9th, 1961, The Guardian put under a big title: "Accord with Dr Nkrumah not Likely to Last" and in block letters it wrote the following subtitle "TRENDS TOWARDS DICTATORSHIP". According to the reporter, "In the last two weeks, Ghana has taken more step sideways towards the Left and two more steps downwards towards effective dictatorship. In dismissing General Alexander and some 70 other British officers from the Ghana Army Dr Nkrumah may be only preparing the way for one of his pet Pan-African schemes—the establishment of a joint African military command. But accompanied by a cabinet reshuffle that has installed in the two most sensitive Ministries—of Information and the Interior—two of Dr Nkrumah's most left-wing colleagues, Tawai Adamafio and Kwaku Boatong, the dismissals look like an inescapable part of a process designed to make Ghana the headquarters of a pan African policy that will be more positive than neutral and less non-aligned than uninhibited." The Daily Telegraph, in its issue dated Tuesday, March 27th, 1962 and on the front page starts its editorial with a shocking title: "GHANA WITHOUT THE LAW". The editor has the audacity to write "By rushing bills through Accra Assembly, they [Nkrumah and his team] have bent the Courts to their political will and made a mockery of the independence of the judiciary." In the same spirit, New Statesman of the 30th March 1962 started an editorial entitled: "The Age of Tyrants" and it reads: "Comment from the Left on President Nkrumah's apparent progress towards an authoritarian and one-party state is inevitably cautious." One, of course, cannot fail to see the implicit highhandedness in the use of irony. The word 'progress', particularly in the Cold War context almost always denotes

'material advancement for people of developing nations'. Yet, it is here used to suggest the opposite which is a way of expressing nostalgia for the old colonial times where things were supposed to be in order and law was seriously implemented. The editor hints that things got worsened once these Nationalists took over governance which in the first place they should not take because they cannot know how to govern.

01- Instances of Nkrumah's sincere appeal to make things better in Africa can be easily detected in the following lines. Note that the context is infested by the Western press and the internal agitation inside, as the note above shows; nevertheless Nkrumah kept composed and was prepared for lengthy argumentation and simplification of his agenda before the American President. "I am sure, in these circumstances, Mr. President, that you could appreciate the aims and aspirations of Ghana. It seems to me, however, that a large section of the American Press either does not understand our way of life, or is unwilling to appreciate the changing scene in Africa. This section of the Press continues to indulge in scurrilous and unjustified attacks, not only on the policies of my Government, but also on me personally. As long as this continues, we can be sure that a kind of Press warfare between Ghana and the United States will continue to be an embarrassment to our two Governments.

Mr. President, I have attempted to write as frankly as I can to let you appreciate Ghana's position. I hope I have been able to indicate that all we wish to do in Ghana is to establish a happy and prosperous State for the good of our people. In this endeavour, all that we wish to do in Ghana, which I know you, Mr. President, generally support, is to establish a happy, prosperous and stable State for our people. In this endeavour we expect nothing but understanding and goodwill from our friends." Source: 242. Memorandum of Meeting/1/ (The US Department of State, Central Files, POL GHANA-US)

03- Olufemi Taiwo, "Prophets without Honour: African Apostles of Modernity in the Nineteenth Century." West Africa Review: Vol. 3, N^o 1, (2001), p. 22. Olufemi cites from Ahuma's book in order to prove Ahuma's keen awareness with the complexities of

the African self faced with the challenge of winning modernity in the context of the colonial presence. Ahuma seriously thinks that "[t]he first essential prerequisite in the voyage of the discovery of ourselves as a people is the consciousness of ourselves. "I AM" is the keynote to all the harmonies and concords of individual advancement and power. Not "I AM" simply as a psychological abstraction, but the realization of the living personality and all that it denotes and connotes. The first person singular of the verb To Be is, after all, the most formidable word in the vocabulary of human thought and progress..." What is should follow from this detail is: "'I AM" and to know it, is the head and front of all true and genuine success in life. It is the fount from which bubble those graces and virtues which minister to the growth of a nation's vitality and productivity. The horse, the elephant, and the greyhound cannot testify to such consciousness; science may, in its ultimate deductions, credit them with the possession of intuitive faculties marvelously akin to the perfection of instincts on the borderland of human psychology, but the creatures can never know that they know. To save the country, to develop its resources, to maintain its rights and privileges, and to advance its interests in all directions without bungling and blundering and against fearful odds, our young men must "see visions" and "multiply visions;" and this is impossible of accomplishment unless they know themselves." Attoh Ahuma, *The Gold Coast Nation and National Consciousness*. (1911) Quoted in: Olufemi Taiwo, "Opcit.", p. 22. Similarly, Harvey Whitfield, who actually wrote an MA dissertation entitled *Colonial Complexity: The images and ideas of John Mensah Sarbah and S.R.B. Attoh Ahuma, c. 1895-1912* (unpublished M.A. thesis, Dalhousie University, 1998), and who therefore can be taken as a specialist, thinks that the idea of 'Black men with white souls trying mightily to be white' does not stand on solid ground. He insists that: "My research concerning the work of the Gold Coast intellectuals, S.R.B. Attoh Ahuma and John Mensah Sarbah, indicates that their images of England and Africa were not the result of nationalist sentiments or sycophantic musings about European culture. They wrote about Africa and England in a variety of different ways because these images or inventions were contingent on the point either man wished to make in a given article, pamphlet or book. Let us take Ahuma as a brief example. In his book, *Gold Coast Nation and National Consciousness*,

Ahuma argues that outward examples of British culture were worthless without an understanding of the inner traits that they were intended to reflect." Harvey Whitfield, "Opcit.,"

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