

## **CHAPTER II**

# **DISILLUSIONMENT IN THE BEAUTYFUL ONES ARE NOT YET BORN**

## CHAPTER-II

### Disillusionment in *The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born*

#### Introduction:

In the previous chapter, the meaning, causes and repercussions of feeling of disillusionment in general and in Ghanaian society in particular are discussed. This chapter aims to analyse and interpret the disillusionment in Ayi Kwei Armah's first novel '*The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born*' (1968) on the basis of the discussion made in the first chapter.

'*The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born*' is his very first novel that gave him recognition as a prominent African novelist. It carved his name among the second generation major African authors after Chinua Achebe, Wole Soyinka and Ngugi Wa Thiongo. It is considered as a novel with revolutionary vision and naturalistic picture of the post-independent Ghanaian society. This attracted attention of several people to various acute socio-political problems in Ghana and Africa and it also received some negative criticism for naturalistic depiction of the society, very pessimistic tone and use of abusive language.

The novel is a story of a man's never ending protest against all social vices in pervasively corrupt and morally debased Ghanaian society. The protagonist of the novel is an unnamed married human male who is mentioned as the 'Man' throughout the novel. He works as a clerk in railway office in a city. He seriously does his job and he is very good at it. He is the voice of all the ordinary and honest citizens in the country.

The novel begins with the protagonists' journey from his rented house to his office in the city. The man goes to his office by state transport bus. When the bus is being stopped, its corroded and worn out parts create a strange noise and vibration, as if they are going to fall apart and anytime

anything can happen to the bus. The commuters are busy in getting off the bus, the conductor is busy in counting his illegal earning and the driver is busy in smoking and spitting.

The condition of the bus symbolically represents the condition of the country. The bus driver and conductor, and the passengers in the bus symbolically represent the leaders of the country and the common citizens in the country respectively. The worst condition of the bus, unethical and careless behaviour of the bus conductor, the driver and the ignorance of commuters clearly give indication of physically, economically and morally deteriorated condition of the citizens and the institutions in the country. The events and actions which take place in the course of the novel later on also prove this interpretation right.

The novel presents the story of betrayal of fellow citizens' trust by the native leaders and the failure of an overtly socialistic and covertly capitalistic government, which is as capitalistic as the white colonial regime it replaced. The conversation between the English Governor and native leader reveals how the native leaders convinced their colonial masters to hand over the power to them:

Native Leader: 'Sah,' our leader would say, 'mah country  
people no happy, sah.'

Governor: 'Now tell me boy. What is they want'.

Native Leader: 'Massa, if you make me head man, mah country  
people go happy again.' (Armah, *The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born*, 82,83)

The new black leaders with white souls have used their positions of power for personal gain. The corruption of all kinds has filtered down to all levels of society.

Lot of money spent on running various public organisations and implementing several schemes for the well being of the citizens. The organisations like health ministry, education department, public works department and regional transport department are some of the other which have failed to function properly to give some relief to common citizens in their troubles and difficult times. Due to massive corruption and irresponsible and insensitive behaviour of the government employees, the organisations and schemes have failed to achieve their goals.

Armah describes the failure of the sanitation campaigns. A lot of money is spent on keeping public spaces clean and raising awareness about cleanliness through advertisements and programmes on radio, in newspapers, etc. At the end only few waste collection boxes are put though large amount of money is paid for them to collect waste. Ironically, the boxes which were kept to collect were surrounded by it.

The government officials misuse their post and power to earn more and more money in the novel. Armah describes the mentality of the government officials in education department in the following words:

It is well known that the supervisor was once, before coming to the Railway administration, a bursar at one of the Ghana national secondary schools. As is the custom in the country, he had regarded his job as an opportunity he had won for making as much money as he could as quickly as he could and his handling of the of the school's finances had soon made his intentions clear. (ibid 110)

The anti-corruption campaign also creates a big hype in the country and it is implemented with unfairness and favouritism. Armah clearly describes it in the novel:

There was a lot of noise, for some time, about some investigation designed to rid the country's trade of corruption.

De-uncorrupt themselves? . . . In the end it was being said in the streets that what had to happen with all these things had happened. The net had been made in special Ghanaian way that allowed the big corrupt people to pass through it. A net to catch only the small, dispensable fellows. The big ones floated free, like the slogans. End Bribery and corruption. Build Socialism. Equality. Shit. A man just have to make up his mind that there was never going to be anything but despair and there would be no way of escaping it, except one. (ibid 154)

During the freedom struggle, the native leaders used to give high promises in their speeches to common citizens. Before achieving independence the native leaders used to pretend that they are really concerned about the severe problems of their fellow citizens. Armah quotes a leader's speech in this way: 'I have come to you. And you can see that I have nothing in my hands. And even what is there is not my own. I am ashamed of poverty. There is nothing shameful in it. But slavery . . how long. . . .' (ibid 87)

There were public meetings at which leaders used to give tall promises to their fellow citizens and used to present some mysterious plans to bring the sorrows of a people to an end. The leaders promised to adopt and implement socialism for the development of the country and for the well-being of the common masses. The citizens trusted the leaders and elected them as their representatives. The leaders, however, betrayed the trust of their fellow citizens and also betrayed the ideals of socialism. Armah rightly explains the attitude and behaviour of the ministers and the civil servants:

The civil servant who hates socialism is here. There is 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. And after their resign is over, there will be no

difference ever. All new men will be like the old. Is that then the whole truth? Bungalows, expensive cars with drivers in uniforms waiting ages in the sun. . . . Whiskey and cigarettes. How can Koomson return to us? (89)

The condition of Ghana worsened just within one decade after independence. Although there had been reign of independent and socialist government of native leaders under Kwame Nkrumah's visionary leadership, the situation did not improve at all for the common citizens.

Armah directly and angrily blames the leaders like Nkrumah who have totally failed to bring dreams of their fellow citizens into reality. Joseph Koomson tells that even the prime minister does not believe and follow the principles of socialism: 'The old man himself does not believe in it, but when people see you doing something to get ahead, they become jealous and shout the slogans against you. But they say we are socialist ministers, so we shouldn't do these things.' (136)

Armah insists that the representatives elected by their fellow citizens become like oppressive colonisers instead of saviours of their people. Armah describes it so clearly:

How long Africa be cursed with its leaders? There were men dying from the loss of hope and others were finding gaudy ways to enjoy power they did not have. We were ready here for big and beautiful things, but what we had was our own black men hugging new paunches scrambling to ask the white men to welcome them onto our backs. And they who would be our leaders, they also had white men for their masters and they also feared masters. What they felt after the fear was love and not hatred and anger. They felt gratitude and faith for their & our white masters. And they had come to lead us and guide us to promised tomorrows. There is something so terrible in watching

a black man trying at all points to be the dark ghost of a European. (ibid 80, 81)

The leaders and representatives joined hands with colonisers and became agents of imperialism and capitalism. So, the colonisers officially gave freedom to the colonised nations and indirectly joined hands with the native leaders and continued the exploitation.

The ministers, politicians and leaders are also involved in other immoral activities. The street vendor's perception tells it correctly to us: 'Ho, my white man, don't make me laugh. Have you ever seen a big man without girls? Even the old ones,' the seller laughs, 'even the old men'. (ibid 37)

Corruption has become a normal activity and it is practiced by almost every citizen, by ministers, government employees, contractors and even by common citizen. Most of the people, like timber contractor, ministers, lottery winner, policemen, employees in railway office, and Ghana lottery office, etc., are busy either in offering or in accepting bribes for works to get done. Koomson was the Man's classmate and he was very poor and now he has become a very rich person:

I had taken a piece of paper to calculate Koomson's total salary since he joined the Party. . . . So I got angry enough to tell her I had seen corruption. Public theft. Koomson was a railwayman, then a docker at the harbour, pulling ropes. I still don't know how Koomson got to Accra. They, people like Koomson, say they believe everything as long as the big jobs and money follow. Men who know nothing about politics have grown hot with ideology, thinking of the money that will come. (ibid 58, 89)

The common people have lost faith in all government systems. The lottery winner, instead of taking help of police, chooses to bribe an officer in the Ghana lottery and to get the amount. The common masses are helpless and they are forced to accept this way of life. The conversation between the Man and the lottery winner gives us the glimpse of the pervasive corruption in the country:

A lottery winner: “And everybody says the Ghana lottery is more

Ghanaian than Ghana. I know people who won more than five hundred cedis last year. They still haven't got their money. It costs you more money if you go to police, that's all. I hope some official at the lottery will take some of my hundred cedis as a bribe and allow me to have the rest.”

The Man: “You will be corrupting a public officer”

A Lottery winner: “This is Ghana.” (ibid 19)

Ayo, the Man's wife also forces the Man to get involved in corruption for the progress and prosperity of the family. She wants her husband, the Man, to earn money rapidly by hook or crook. She explains him how to do it. The Man shares it with the teacher:

Teacher, my wife explained to me, step by step, that life was like a lot of roads: long roads, short roads, wide and narrow, steep and level, all sorts of roads. . . . This is the point at which she told me that those who wanted to get far had to learn to drive fast. Accidents would happen, she told me, but the fear of accidents would never keep men from driving, Joe Koomson had learned to drive. The accidents are those who get caught. (ibid 58, 59)

The teacher understands the situation in the country and knows well how the things are done. He appropriately replies to the Man: She was right, but it was not philosophy she was talking about. It was Ghana'. (ibid 59)



Having studied the corruption in Africa, Abdou comments about the root cause of corruption- “The introduction of money by Europeans, gradually led to the corruption of the Africans’ ancestral values and customs.” (Abdou 111)

The common, well-educated, honest, sensitive, sensible and socially committed citizens like the teacher and the Man feel cut off from the community and world around them. They do not participate and cooperate in any unethical activity. Consequently, they are physically as well psychologically alienated by the corrupt citizens. They become helpless, when they realise that they are unable to control and stop negative activities happening around them in the country. The conversation between the Man and his wife reveals how these honest citizens are alienated:

Ayo: “Why are you trying to cut yourself apart from what goes for all of us?”

Man: “Somebody offered me a bribe today. One of those timber contractors. To get him an allocation.”

Ayo: “And like an Onward Christian Soldier you refused?”

Man: ‘But why should I take it’.

Ayo: ‘And why not? When you shook Estella Koomson’s hand was not the perfume that stayed on yours a pleasing thing? May be you like this crawling that we do, but I am tired of it. I would like to have someone to drive me where I want to go’. (Armah 42-44)

Non-cooperation and non-involvement in corruption is considered as something unnatural, cruel, unlawful, dishonest and miserable. The honest citizens like the man and the teacher are hated like criminals. The corrupt people are, however, respected and worshipped in the society like heroes.

One of the street sellers says to Koomson: ‘My own lord, my master, oh, my white man, come. Come and take my bread. It is all yours, my white man, all yours.’ (ibid 37)

Honesty has become the worst policy. The ‘Man’ is detested by his wife for not accepting the bribe. His wife calls him chichidodo, a bird that hates filth, but only eats the insects which grow in the dirt. He was not shaken a lot, when he was ill-treated by the conductor, the timber merchant and his colleagues for not supporting and involving corrupt activities. Amakwa, the timber merchant, hates the Man and says: “Ei, so you are here today too. Country, why you try to do me so? You don’t want me to eat, country? Okay. Take yourself. I get man who understands. Ei, my friend, why you to play me wicked? You. You are a very wicked man. You will never prosper. Da.” (ibid 107)

Instead of praising him, when his own also wife expresses resentment, he feels utterly helpless and even guilty for not doing anything wrong. The Man conveys his feelings to the teacher:

What I don’t understand,’ he said, ‘is my own feeling about it. I know I have done nothing wrong. I could even get angry with Oyo about this. And yet I am the one who feels strange. Yes, I feel like a criminal. Often these days I find myself thinking of something sudden I could do to redeem myself in their eyes. Then I sit down and ask myself what I have done wrong, and there is really nothing. (ibid 54)

The further conversation between the Man and the teacher clearly describes the place of honest citizens in the society:

Teacher: ‘You have not done what everybody is doing’ said the naked man, ‘and in this world that is one of the crimes. You have always known that. Are you surprised when your people are angry with you for not taking the one

way open to them? Exactly!’ said the naked man, That one way is a path you want to avoid. What will your people do, then? Pretend they have no desires?

The Man: ‘They will destroy me, Teacher’. (ibid 54)

The old pre-colonial Ghanaian society was community centred. The well-being of all the members in the community was the most important thing. Today’s post-independent modern Ghanaian society has become family centred. The progress, prosperity and well-being of one’s own family has become the most important thing. So, the focus has been completely shifted from the community to family. Nowadays no one cares about other members in the community. Koomson, the man’s boss and colleagues in his office, the contractor and the traffic police are busy in earning more and more money for their families.

Once traffic policeman stopped a vehicle and asked driver to show his licence which he did not possess at that time. So the driver gave 25 pesewas as bribe and the driver was allowed to continue. People use unfair means to earn money and to get rich. These kinds of people are considered good and even though they are caught, they are treated generously. People curse jealous man who informs police about it.

The ministers use their power to divert public funds for the interests of their relatives. Joseph Koomson, the minister, diverts public fund to manage expenses of his sister-in-law who studies in London. Estella says to Oyo about her sister: ‘She is in London now’. . . She has a scholarship. Joe arranged it for her. ‘She says she has fallen in love with a Jaguar, and she’s going to kill herself if she can’t have it. She wants us to get her foreign exchange for it’. (ibid 148, 149)

Joseph Koomson's speech reveals how public funds are misused by 'Yes. But money is not the difficult thing. After all, the Commercial Bank is ours, and we can do anything,' said Koomson. (ibid 136)

The atmosphere in the country is fully filled with decadence and disillusionment. The corruption, fraud, dishonesty, immorality have become normal ways of life in the country, in which honest people like 'the man' and the teacher feel confused, strange and helpless. The teacher's feelings convey the pessimistic atmosphere in the society:

And our troubles, too. How can I think I am doing the right thing when I alone and there are so many I have run from? It makes no difference. If we can't consume ourselves for something we believe in, freedom makes no difference at all. You see, I am free to do what I want, but there is nothing happening now that I want to join. No. Not any more. Not hope, anyhow. I don't feel any hope in me any more. . . When you can see the end of things even in their beginnings, there is no more hope. (ibid 60, 61)

The bus conductor has greed for money. He expects cedis than exact change in coins & feels helpless if he receives exact ticket fare. The conductor calculates the money & puts extra money in his pocket & feels happy, when the bus stops at the destination. When conductor realised that his theft is seen by a passenger left in the bus, he feels impotent and says: "You see, we can share" (ibid 05)

The common and honest citizens like the teacher and the Man feel utterly helpless and powerless. On the one hand, it is unbearable to them just see the pathetic condition of themselves and of their fellow citizens; on the other hand they are unable to do anything to get rid of the troubles. The Man shares his feelings with the teacher in this way:

But, Teacher, what can I want? How can I look at Oyo and say I hate long shiny cars? How can I come back to the children and despise? Teacher, said the man, ‘you know it is impossible for me to watch the things that go on and say nothing. I have my family. I am in the middle. (ibid 93)

Other citizens like Ayo, Ayo’s mother feel helpless because they are not getting the material comforts they desire because of the Man’s honest behaviour. Amankwa, the timber contractor, also feels powerless, because ‘the Man’ neither accepts bribe nor agrees to help him out by going out of the way to allocate the train to get timber out from the forest. Amankwa becomes extremely helpless and says to ‘the Man’:

Yes brother, the visitor said, And I will make you know that you have really helped me. Do you know, I cut timber a long time ago and it is still waiting in the forest. Half of it will be rotten soon. Why do you have to treat me like that? What do you want? (ibid 29)

The Man again feels helpless when he realises that Koomson is trying to fool Ayo, his wife and his mother-in-law by involving them in the business of fish catching ships. He shares it with the teacher: “Koomson is just going to fool them’. But Teacher, I cannot sit and watch Oyo and her mother getting fooled by this Koomson, can I?’ (ibid 57) Amankwa feels that there is something miserable, something unspeakably dishonest about the Man who refused to take and give what everyone around was busy in taking and giving.

Society has become extremely materialistic. Even poor people like the ‘Man’ wife also want to have material comforts like that of rich people around them. The ‘Man’ feels so confused when his own wife expresses similar desires. She says- ‘And why not? When you shook Etella Koomson’s hand, was not the perfume that stayed on yours a pleasing thing?’

May be you like this crawling that we do, but I am tired of it. I would like to have someone drive me where I want to go.’ (44)

The people are ready to welcome the things they want, even coming by unethical ways. It has become a way of life. The teacher aptly describes the changed attitude of the people to the Man:

Yes. Life gets very hard when veranda boys are building palaces in a matter of months. If you come near people here they will ask you, what about you? Where is your house? Where have you left your car? What do you bring in your hands for the loved ones? Nothing? Then let us keep quiet and not to get close to people. People will make you very sad that you do not have a house to make onlookers stumble with looking, or a car to make every walker to know that a big man and his concubine have just passed. Let us keep quiet and watch. (ibid 93)

The family members expect material comforts to be provided to them anyhow by the head of the family. Somehow they want to get their desires fulfilled. ‘The Man’ tells his wife’s desires to the teacher: ‘She talks about (salvation) it, Teacher. It is the blinding gleam of beautiful new houses and the shine of powerful new Mercedes cars. It is also the scent of expensive perfumes and the mass of a new wig’. (ibid 56) The teacher tells the man that it is a normal thing in the society: ‘It doesn’t matter. There are ways and ways. You, the husband, will have to find these ways. It is very simple, isn’t it?’ (ibid 54)

Physical slavery of high gravity is one of the age old problems in Africa that is also evident in the contemporary Ghanaian society. It has been one of the acute and long lasting problems. The citizens have been suffering for several years due to directly imposed physical slavery in pre-independence era and indirectly imposed physical slavery in post-

independence era by the foreigners and by the native chiefs and leaders. The slave trade is an example of the physical slavery. Armah aptly describes it:

The man when he shook hands with Koomson, was again amazed at the flabby softness of the hands. Ideological hands, the hands of revolutionaries leading their people into bold sacrifices. And yet these were the socialists of Africa, fat, perfumed, soft with the ancestral softness of chiefs who had sold their people and are celestially happy with the fruits of the trade. (ibid 131)

The European colonisers also gradually imposed psychological slavery through the means of their religion, language, and culture. The huge impact of the psychological slavery is clearly seen in the post-independent Ghanaian society. The colonisers in collaboration with the native chiefs and leaders have been practising this social evil even after the political independence.

The honest and sensible citizens like the Man and the teacher feel confused, even if they are following ethically right path of the life. They get confused and become doubtful about own attitude and behaviour. The Man says:

They are using this boat thing. Teacher', he said, They are using it to hit me on the head every terrible day, to make me feel so useless. And the bad thing is I know they have succeeded. I am asking myself what is wrong with me. Do I have some part missing? Teacher, this Koomson was my own classmate. My classmate, Teacher, my classmate. So tell me, what is wrong with me? (ibid 57)

The teacher also has similar kind of feelings: How can I think I am doing the right thing when I alone and there are so many I have run from? (60) The people have excessive obsession and love for foreign and imported products and dislike for local ones. Estella, Joseph Koomson's wife says to the Man: 'Really good drinks are European drinks. These make you ill. These make you ill. I don't like made-in Ghana spirits.' (ibid 116, 132) The taxi driver describes the mentality of his fellow citizens to the Man: 'The way things are going on, it seems everybody is making things now except us. We Africans only buy expensive things.' (ibid 140)

The leaders and the ministers are just busy in exploiting resources of the country and gaining more and more wealth, power and importance for themselves. They do not think at all and do nothing to improve standard of lives of their fellow citizens. 'The Man' says to the teacher: 'I had taken a piece of paper to calculate Koomson's total salary since he joined the Party. . .So I got angry enough to tell her I had seen corruption. Public theft.' (ibid 58)

Life has not changed for ordinary citizens. Economic inequality is growing day-by-day. Rich are getting richer and poor are getting poorer day by day. Only few people like Joseph Koomson, the minister, are growing by leaps and bounds by exploiting the country's resources. The teacher describes the miserable situation of common masses in the country:

Only some people have been growing, becoming different, that is all. After a youth spent fighting the white man, why should not the president discover as he grows that his real desire has been to be like the white governor himself, to live above all blackness in the big old castle? 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 white man. (ibid 92)

It is very difficult to manage the day to day expenses even for salaried citizens in the country. They are unable to catch up with the artificially growing prices of products and services. Armah describes hardship:

How much hard work before a month's pay would last till the end of the month? Rent going up and up. In the man's area the landlord is the uncle of the rent control man and both call themselves Party activists. One man had tried to get his rent reduced, writing to the Party secretary in Accra. Poor fool, he still believed. He was called by saboteur, a country wrecker and many other party words and then in the end, since he would not stop his talk of justice, he was taken by the police to Accra. (ibid 95)

The poor women like sister Maanan also have been badly suffering. They do not get enough food to eat and proper place to live. She feels so sad about sister Maanan's miserable condition:

Maanan has found refuge in lengthening bottles at port, passing foreigner gave her money and sometimes even love. She was a woman being pushed toward destruction and there was nothing she or I could do about it. I felt accused by a silence that belonged to millions and ages of women all bearing the face and the form of Maanan. I and all others who have been content to do nothing at all our lives and through all the ages of their suffering. (ibid 66, 72)

Nkrumah's government was overthrown by the military coup in 1966. This change in rulers, however, does not bring about anything hopeful for the common citizens. Armah narrates it vividly:

The change would bring nothing new. New men would take into their hands the power to steal the country's riches and to use it

for their own satisfaction. New people would use the country's power to get rid of men and women who talked a language that did not flatter them. (ibid 162)

Military leaders five times tried to overthrow the civil government and tried to take possession of the country's power till 1983. Armah rightly comments on the politics in the country: One man with the help of people, who loved him and believed in him, had arrived at power and used it for himself. Now other men, with the help of guns, had come to this same power. What would it mean? (ibid 157)

Armah seems to suggest that change in rulers has made no difference in the lives of common people in Ghana. Only names have been changed of owners of buildings and shops after independence. Same old stories of money changing hands and throats getting moistened and palms getting greased. Only this time, if the old stories aroused anger, there was nowhere for it go. The sons of the soil are now in charge. How completely the new thing took after the old. (ibid 10)

The change would bring nothing new. New men would take into their hands the power to steal the country's riches and to use it for their own satisfaction. New people would use the country's power to get rid of men and women who talked a language that did not flatter them. There would be nothing different in that. That would only be a continuation of the Ghanaian way of life. (ibid 162)

The ministers work in a very irresponsible manner in the parliament. They do not carry out their jobs seriously. They just go the parliament to make fun of the system. Joseph Koomson, a minister, describes the casual and irresponsible behaviour of the members of the parliament in the novel:

One day they brought a man to give the Ministers and the Parliamentarians and Party activists a lecture. The man had many degrees . . . They say he was telling us how to make poor

countries rich. Something called stages of growth. I have tried to find out what he really said, but it seems I wasn't the only one who slept that day. 'But the funny thing', he was saying, 'the funny thing was that only the Professor stood there, not laughing once. I hear he left this country. (ibid 132,133)

Almost all those present there were fully drunk and all slept through the lecture. The person after presenting the vote of thanks fell down there. All the characters in the novel feel disillusioned due to gloomy social milieu in the country. This shows that the people are frustrated by the leaders who are leading the country.

The citizens either succumb to the situation or they protest against it. Being helpless, confused and depressed, citizens either surrender to the situation or being optimistic, they protest against it in order to reform. Majority of the citizens surrender to the situation. They accept it and try to adapt to it. The helpless citizens like the lottery winner, Amankwa, the timber contractor just passively accept the situation and decide to offer bribe to get their works done. Amankwa, the timber contractor approaches a train allocation officer through a clerk and offers him bribe:

Take that one for yourself and give the other one to your friend. I will find myself some fine drink for you. Take it, take it, my friend'. . .Look I mean't. I offer you three times. Is a good money? You see, I don't want you to do anything bad. But I want to know what he wants. Only what he wants. I can give him what he wants. (ibid 30, 31, 32)

The helpless citizens think that there is no other way to do the things. When 'the Man' refuses to accept the bribe, Amankwa, the timber contractor, explains it to him: The foolish ones are those who cannot live life as it lived by all around them, those who will stand by the flowing river and disapprove of the current. There is no other way, and the refusal to take leap will help absolutely no one at any time.

Only few sensitive citizens the college students who raised voice against the highly corrupt official in the education department and a man who raised voice against artificial increase in house rent. These resistances and voices of opposition were crushed down by the ministers, politicians and their supporters.

Armah proposes that all citizens should take responsibility of eradicating these problems. He advises that his fellow citizens should not succumb to the corrupt socio-political atmosphere in the country. 'The Man' refuses to involve in agitation and says to an agitator: "They tell me so. But I know nothing about the men. What will I be demonstrating for? If two trains collide while I'm demonstrating, will you take the responsibility?" (ibid 158)

Oyo, the Man's wife, in the end appreciates her husband's honest behaviour and feels proud about her husband after observing the pathetic condition of Joseph Koomson, the corrupt minister. She says to the man: "I am glad you never became like him". (ibid165) It is an instance of poetic justice, eventually virtue is rewarded and vice is punished.

Armah here wants to prove that honest behaviour and peaceful protest can bring about awareness among the citizens and change in their attitude. Armah proposes some active solutions to the acute and long-lasting problems. He has realised that there have never been people to save Africans from these problems. He proposes that people themselves should awaken and protest against all social vices and be their own saviours. He mentions: "It should be easy now to see there have never been people to save anybody but themselves, never in the past, never now. No saviours. Only the hungry and the fed. Deceivers all." (ibid 90)

The honest persons like 'the Man' and the teacher feel trapped in such polluted atmosphere and suffer from helplessness, isolation and

disillusionment. 'The Man', however, peacefully protests against and refuses everything which is destructive for the well-being of common citizens and the society in general. Although he faces strong resentment from his family members and close relatives over his honest behaviour, he continues his hopeful and peaceful protest till the end.

Armah objectively describes unethical and immoral personalities and activities in the country. He naturalistically presents various long-lasting socio-political and cultural problems such as slavery, pervasive corruption, abuse of public power and money and deterioration of culture in the Ghanaian society. The characters repetitively and directly express their anger against the black African rulers who have betrayed their nations. This is clearly seen in the characterisation, tone and language of the novel.

Armah's characterisation in the novel perfectly suits the theme of disillusionment because he has properly chosen all the characters. The characters in the novel represent different classes and communities. He has chosen an insider that is 'the Man' who works as a clerk in railway office to expose the corruption in government offices. 'The Man' represents the class of very honest and responsible employees. He is also the classmate of Joseph Koomson, the minister and also friend of a teacher. He has chosen Joseph Koomson to expose the corrupt behaviour of the ministers, politicians and the leaders in the country. He has chosen some government officials in highest positions to show that they are also highly corrupt and to reveal the nexus between these officials and the politicians. He has also chosen the characters like traffic police and railway clerk to expose the corruption at lower levels. He has also rightly chosen the characters like Kofi Billi and Sister Maanan to reveal the sufferings and exploitation of the poor citizens and women respectively. He has rightly chosen the teacher as a commentator on the issues and happenings in the society.

Armah has accurately and thoughtfully connected various characters with the relationships to show the complete picture of the society. He has succeeded in presenting various socio-political problems, the atmosphere of disillusionment created due to them and way out of it through intentionally chosen several characters in the novel.

Armah has made use of powerful language to portray naturalistic and pessimistic picture of the post-independent Ghanaian society. He intentionally uses abusive and obscene language to convey the intensity of several acute socio-political problems in the country. The language is also used to properly express spontaneous reactions of the characters about the issues and events happening in the world around them. The disillusionment in the country is appropriately communicated through the words and images selected by the writer. The language perfectly performs the intended function of jolting and awakening the reader. Kakraba rightly comments about the intention behind using vulgar language as a tool to express resentment in the novel:

It is intended to shock the reader to calculatingly draw his or her consideration to the dreadfully shocking and repulsive things and behaviours like corruption, materialism, moral degeneration, filth and the pervasive moral, spiritual and physical decadence in the society so as to effect a change. (Kakraba 306)

*'The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born'* powerfully depicts the theme of disillusionment. It is one of the best examples of post-independence disillusionment in African nations. It is written in third-person, so it covers view points of all the major characters. The author has given voice to his views through the protagonist. It is like a picaresque novel in which the protagonist visits various places and people, provides lucid description of

them and also criticises wrong things. The title of the novel also clearly indicates that beautiful citizens are not yet born to make the country free of physical and psychological dirt and filth. The good citizens are yet to be born to eradicate the problems like corruption, slavery and economic dependence and make the country truly independent.

Hence, on the one hand, it is the story of exploitation and sufferings of ordinary citizens of any corruption-affected and morally degenerated country in the world; on the other hand, it is the story of endless and peaceful struggle of honest citizens to correct and transform the society. In other words is a saga of a lone man's struggle and continuous protest against all odds in the society. Armah naturalistically presents various socio-political problems responsible for the creation of the disillusionment in the country. He also proposes some realistic solutions to eradicate it. It is a comprehensive story of a country that is fully filled with the atmosphere of disillusionment.