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The Portrayal of Injustice in Rachid Boudjedra's *La Répudiation* and Ayi Kwei
Armah's *The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born*

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this dissertation is my own original work and that all sources used within this study have been properly acknowledged by means of complete references.

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Date



Dedication



Dedication

To

- My homeland Algeria, the warmest womb.
- The memory of great martyrs, the symbol of sacrifice.
- The University of 8May1945 and all my teachers.
- My beloved paternal grandmother who taught me the value of hard work.
- The memory of my maternal grandmother whose love for me knew no bounds.
- My treasured parents who never stop believing in me and who, along with God have been my footprints in the sand.
- My dearest bothers Salah Eddine and Nassim.
- My cousins, uncles and aunts who always stand by me when things look bleak.
- Aunty Naima, for making so many things possible.

Imane.



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Abstract

This work examines the portrayal of injustice in *La Répudiation* (1969) by Algerian author Rachid Boudjedra and *The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born* (1968) by Ghanaian novelist Ayi Kwei Armah. It offers an overview of the historical and socio-political backgrounds of the two selected novels. The study offers an analysis of the theme of injustice and puts emphasis on the individuals and societies. Furthermore, this research examines the choice of language in both novels and stresses the stylistics and writing style of Boudjedra and Armah as well as their relevance to the novel's purpose which is undoubtedly the denunciation of unfairness and corruption.

Key terms: Injustice, unfairness, Corruption, Rachid Boudjedra's *La Répudiation*, Ayi Kwei Armah's *The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born*.

التلخيص

خصص هذا العمل لدراسة جانب من جوانب الظلم من خلال رواية (1969) *La Répudiation* للروائي الجزائري رشيد بوجدره و رواية (1968) *The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born* التي ألفها الكاتب الغاني Ayi Kwei Armah حيث يقدم من خلال الروائيتين لمحة عامة عن الخلفيات التاريخية والاجتماعية والسياسية للبلدين. هذه الدراسة تقدم تحليلاً لموضوع الظلم المطبق و المركز على الأفراد والمجتمعات. مع مراعاة دراسة جانب اختيار اللغة في كليهما ، والتركيز على الأساليب و النمط المستخدم من طرف الكاتبين رشيد بوجدره و Ayi Kwei Armah ، فضلا عن دراستهما لغرض الروائيتين و الذي يتمثل في التنديد و الإدانة بالظلم والفساد.

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Epigraph

“Avoid cruelty and injustice...and guard yourselves against miserliness, for this has ruined nations who lived before you”

Riyadh-us-Salaheen, Hadith.



Introduction



Introduction

Usually in the realms of literature and arts, some artistic productions are governed by the prevailing political and social conditions of the epoch in which the piece is written. Despite their liberty, post independent African nations such as Algeria and Ghana, still suffer from the ineffectiveness of political and social constitutions. They repeatedly seek to clean themselves from the monstrous shadow of injustice. Thus, authors of newly independent countries take it upon themselves to depict the unfair life conditions and write about Africans' disillusionment after independence. This kind of literature is born out of a sentiment of hate and disenchantment with the governmental regime that replaced the European colonizer in Algeria and Ghana alike. In this regard, the post independent novel mirrors the cruel realities of the societies and denounces social inequality created by greed, exclusion and prejudice. However, even though the political reference is quiet present in the post independent literary pieces, it is not the main pretext of the postcolonial text. The two novels that the present paper attempts to analyze, reveal how historical and esthetic this literature of disenchantment can be. This latter focuses on the detailed description of peoples' sociopolitical misery and captures all forms of injustice they endured at a pseudo independent and democratic continent, finally free of colonial dependence but regrettably under control of dictatorial natives. Thus, central to this research is the explanation of the impact of injustice on the familial, social and political levels.

In its attempt to answer the question *'Does injustice disappear, if peoples' sincerity appears?'* the present study relies in its approach on a postcolonial comparative analysis of two distinct novels in terms of historical elements, themes, writing devices and style. It aims at demonstrating the effect of colonial encounter as well as the impact of new unjust governmental regime. It also portrays how the political, cultural, and psychological metamorphoses are inevitable after such experience. In so doing, it analyzes the different

forms and reasons of injustice in Rachid Boudjedra's *La Répudiation* (1969) on the Algerian society, ex-French subject and Ayi Kwei Armah's *The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born* (1968) on the Ghanaian society, former British colony. It therefore utilizes postcolonial theories, referring to notions such as, psychoanalysis discourse and subalternity as they are expressed in the two novels.

Furthermore, since the novels stress political injustice in Algeria and Ghana, they are particularly evocative of past time, which was one of crisis, for the young generations. The past governmental incompetence can be easily compared to the recent chaos that the Arab world is enduring under the shadow of unfairness and corruption.

This work is divided into five main parts, an introduction, three chapters and a conclusion. **Chapter I** stresses the crucial role of the historical events and circumstances that usually escort and provoke the production of a piece of literature. It also explains how the text can be a perfect reminder of real experiences, and how authors of any literary genre find inspiration in past events. For this purpose, the chapter lays focus on the historical dimensions of the conditions that Algeria has endured during and after the French colonization, and depicts the colonial and postcolonial Ghanaian life through the above mentioned novels respectively.

Chapter II attempts to clarify the common themes utilized by Boudjedra and Armah to exhibit the inequality and disillusionment deeply implanted in the spirits of the ex-colonized peoples. It exposes corruption, political incompetence and loss of identity which are widespread within the social, cultural and political circles.

Finally, **chapter III** examines the different literary devices that the two novelists use to put forward a large space to imagination and visualization of different situations, and allow a profound understanding of the theme of injustice. It therefore offers a comparison between

the authors' writing techniques, the style, structures, characters and the voices of the two stories which are grounded in their common historical experience of colonialism.



Chapter I



**Historical Dimension and Souvenirs of Injustice
in Rachid Boudjedra's *La Répudiation* and Ayi Kwei
Armah's *The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born***

Chapter I

Historical Dimension and Souvenirs of Injustice in Rachid Boudjedra's *La Répudiation* and Ayi Kwei Armah's *The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born*

Post-independent fiction is famous for its connection to the important historical events and political reforms. This chapter will analyze the different aspects of history and observe their role in inspiring Rachid Boudjedra and Ayi Kwei Armah's to produce *La Répudiation* and *The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born* respectively. Moreover, the chapter will examine the function of historical factors in the denunciation of injustice in the two novels.

Rachid Boudjedra, born in 1941 in Ain Beida, Eastern Algeria, within a wealthy family, he is viewed by many critics to be one of the most talented writers of postcolonial Algerian literature of French expression, affirms Adel LALAOUI in *L'écriture journalistique dans l'œuvre de Boudjedra. Timimoun : Roman autobiographique ou roman autofictionnel* (19). Boudjedra has a great literary repertoire rich of essays, poems and novels as diverse as *Pour ne plus Rêver* (1965); "To Never Dream Again", *l'Insolation* (1972); "The Sunstroke", *L'Escargot entêté* (1977); "The Stubborn Snail", *Les 1001 années de la nostalgie* (1979); "The 1001 years of Nostalgia", *La Macération* (1984); "The Maceration", *Le Désordre des choses* (1991); "The Disorder of Things", *La Vie à l'endroit* (1997), *Fascination* (2000); "Fascination" and; *Printemps* (2014); "Spring" his latest novel.

In his writing, the author uses –most of the time- a socio-historical context where he sheds light on the Algerian memories and endured conditions during the colonial confrontation, asserts Achour Hambli in *L'Interdit dans l'oeuvre de Boudjedra: Enjeux d'une Ecriture Subversive* (64). Boudjedra is known for his unique way to break the glace and write about taboos and the forbidden triangle of religion, politics and sex, that the traditional Algerian society always fears, adds Hambli (23).

Rachid Boudjedra's *La Répudiation* (1969); "The Repudiation" is a novel that had been forbidden in Algeria for a long period of time, mainly because it reveals the narrator's revolutionary attitude vis-à-vis the political system, avows Djamel Benyekhlef in *Retour à La répudiation* (83). The novel also stresses the issue of injustice as strongly linked to the different patriarchal historical events that the country went through immediately after its independence. The very first lines of the novel are written in the day that follows the military coup of Ahmed Ben Bella's regime (June, 1965), an incident that is viewed as a repudiation of the new ideal revolutionary Algeria, proclaims Benyekhlef (83). Through his narrative, Boudjedra associates this changing event in the history of his country to the repudiation of his naïve mother by his tyrant and heartless father. He furthermore illustrates the colonial fingerprint on Algeria, at the political and domestic levels alike. *La Répudiation* reveals an atmosphere of fear, hate and humiliation among the members of one clan (Hamblé 43-46).

Moreover, the novel's episodes are chained to the past experiences of the peoples of the country; the chief of the domestic clan, for instance, is introduced in the picture of a tyrannical and oppressive father who repudiates Ma (the protagonist's mother). Boudjedra undoubtedly represents the same chief of the political clan who repudiates the Algerian postcolonial dream. The story focuses on the character of Ma as oppressed, voiceless and naïve woman. It also shows the increased tension between men and women, and sheds light on their very intimate relationships, states Hamblé (41).

Ayi Kwei Armah born in 1938 in Ghana, which was at that time a British colony, is one of the leading figures of the contemporary African literature, Armah obtained his Bachelor degree at Harvard University in the United States and worked as a teacher in many countries. He has a remarkable number of novels; *Fragments* (1970), *Why Are We So Blessed?* (1971), *Two Thousand Seasons* (1973), *Osiris Rising* (1995), among others, in which Armah portrays the moral decadence and the postcolonial ills of Ghanaian society.

Another postcolonial novel that will be analyzed in this chapter, along with *La Répudiation*, is Ayi Kwei Armah's *The Beautiful Ones Are not Yet Born* (1968). This latter novel is connected to the time period in which it is written, thus it depicts the Ghanaian nation, former Gold Coast at the time of Kwame Nkrumah's government, when the white regime was replaced by incompetent black leaders, who were eager to realize their own benefits on the expense of the natives, affirms Moses Geoffrey Kwame Ayivor in *A Saga of Black Deglorification: The Disfigurement of Africa in Ayi Kwei Armah's novels* (43). The novel offers a picture of the individual who struggles to sustain the temptation of bribery, injustice and poverty within a corrupt society. It insists on the failure of the new power to conduct the national issues and provides an image of unequal wealth distribution through corrupt means, writes K. Ayivor (42). Armah attempts to prove the impossibility of positive change through a deep disillusionment, as long as the saviors of the society are not yet born, declares Gbemisola Adeoti in *Armah and the Narrative of an (Alter)-native Route* (9).

In *La Répudiation* and *The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born*, Boudjedra and Armah find inspiration in some historical facts that help deepen the knowledge of the reader about their own patrimony and evoke the postcolonial ills to comprehend the current unjust social problems. They also attempt to re-establish the truth of the time period during which the novels are written and make the understanding of central events dependent on the earlier historical eras. In both novels, the authors tell their stories through the lens of the past; they use characters who are not necessarily real in the official history of the two nations, but who show the same behaviors, emotions and attitudes of the peoples of that time. The narratives capture the different ways of life, the difficult social conditions and some memorable historical events and chronological details of the Algerians and Ghanaians in the period that follows the independence of the two countries respectively. Through inserting history in their

texts, both novelists offer a fictional image to denounce injustice and spiritual vacuity that are usually dehumanizing man.

Boudjedra's *La Répudiation* is published shortly after seven years of the Algerian independence (Benyekhlef 84). It reports the situation of the Algerian woman at that time and shows a derisory image of the Algerian naïve mother, sister and wife. The novel associates the female character to her sex and compares her to animals as will be clarified in the last chapter of this study. Women see themselves helpless, voiceless and owe their lives to their husbands, "... les femmes n'avaient pas d'opinion", reports the narrator (66). This demonstration is quiet similar to the French colonizer's biased description of Algerians during the era of occupation of the country as uncivilized and illiterate people (Hampli 24).

Like women, children in *La Répudiation* are intensely brutalized and ignored. Boudjedra gives the name of Rachid to his narrator to portray his own rough and violated childhood within a tribe where inequality and injustice take over. In this regard, the novel is considered to be of an autobiographical character (Benyekhlef 89). Much like the colonial past, the author makes reference to certain facts in the religious history. He uses Islam as background to limit the liberties of the characters. Thus the severe man in the story justifies the repudiation of Ma, as following the Prophet Mohamed's (Peace and Bless Be Upon Him) path of marrying many women; Rachid says: "on se marie Zoubia, le père n'a fait que suivre le chemin du prophète" (101).

Furthermore, the association of injustice to the historical truth in *La Répudiation* is quiet comparable to the unfairness in Armah's *The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born*. The novel relates injustice to the newly independent Ghana in a different way to attach the fictional work to the historical context. It examines the effects of colonialism as experienced in the so-called developing countries. Thus the issue of injustice and unequal partition of

properties is not specific to Ghana but to all African countries that had endured the bitterness of colonialism (Adeoti 3).

The story illustrates how the colonial encounter shapes peoples' behaviors and inner thoughts. The central character is an unnamed man who refuses bribes, despite his poverty. Thus, Armah focuses heavily on corruption and unfairness as essential prevailing problems at the level of society and government. Throughout the novel, the man meets several moral, physical and spiritual injustices; he encounters many characters, each of whom reflects an aspect of the postcolonial Africa in general and the Ghanaian society in particular, according to Christian Chukwuloo in *Portrayal of Corruption as Narrative Technique in The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born* (75).

Armah's work incarcerates the cheerless post independent life of Africans, where desperation and hunger drive blindly to the dehumanization and the pursuit of personal interests due to the misuse of power. The author portrays Ghana's hard struggle for independence, and this expresses his desire for a veritable rebirth and good governance after the liberation of his country through an expressive morality tale. Departing from this, a reader may take few minutes to imagine: What if I was born to be the beautiful one of my country! quotes Amina Charef (50). In connection to the time period in which it is written, the novel cheers the Ghanaians up and encourages Africans to resist all forms of injustice and dictatorial commands so that they build a better nation.

Another notable historical background that the story handles in the life of post independent Ghana is the insertion of some historical personas such as President Nkrumah and the black regime, in addition to the military coup that withdrew this administration and exposes people's response to it as well. The memorable date of 1966, when the Ghanaian president was ousted out of government is one of the controlling historical elements that construct the novel, and thus, Armah does not leave such event unnoticed. His main concern

is to illustrate the influence of past historical events on the current injustice that Ghana went through at the post independent epoch (Gakwandi 16).

The two novels analyzed throughout this chapter are equally historical fictions. They are based on real time and places in history and rich with national events and circumstances that contribute in formulating the individual and collective memories of the different characters in the two works alike. In the two texts, past history does not appear as forgotten events, but as vivid memories that still shape behaviors and thoughts, and still influence future generations. These individual memories of the protagonists, Rachid in Boudjedra's *La Répudiation* and the man in Armah's *The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born* reflect history, no matter how similar they may be, cannot be fixed, because they depend on how the reader interprets the events, and his belief of the impact of these historical events contribute in making or unmaking the individual, according to Jeanne Marie Gagnebin in *La mémoire, l'histoire, l'oubli* (9).

In *La Répudiation*, Rachid narrates his souvenirs to his French mistress Céline. He also confesses how his childhood was ruined by the repudiation of his mother. This crucial incident drives to the deep detestation of the tyrant father by his own son. Retelling the past history at the familial level shows the impact of injustice exercised over Ma on children. The novel includes a series of events told to the foreign mistress, such as Ramadhan, the father's remarriage, the death of the brother and "la fete non-dite" which is identified by the author in *L'Insolation*, a novel that follows *La Répudiation*, as the circumcision of boys, writes C.Bonn (180). The sensation of pain and unjust living stimulate Rachid's individual memory and consequently his own secrets are recalled and past memories are unveiled. Additionally, the author stresses an unforgettable collective memory of colonialism illustrates people's disenchantment with the established regime and the nation's combat to end up injustice and reach democracy. In this perspective, Boudjedra asserts the disenchantments of Algerians at

the postcolonial era and the betrayal of “le clan” or “M.S.C, les membres secrets du clan” says the narrator (214-215).

Rachid expresses his disgust and denial toward the unfair leaders of the country. He says in this regard : “cela avivait ma haine contre le clan” (215-216). Yet, he captures an image of a collective memory of Algerians by comparing the post-independent Algeria to a hospital of insane people “un hopital réel” (293) and denounces the overindulgence of the politicians and all men in power. Moreover, the collective history in *La Répudiation* replicates a collective accusation of the dominance over the subalterns. Hence, it captures the detention of children, a souvenir that reminds the reader of the imprisonment of Algerian opponents to the political system after the independence of the country, reports J. C. Vatin in *Littérature et Société en Algérie Rachid Boudjedra ou Le Jeu des Confrontations* (226). The narrator brings the national memory and writes about these tortured and jailed men during and after the French occupation.

The chief trigger of Rachid’s personal memories is Céline. She incites the narrator’s souvenir about the endured injustice. Through the lady, Rachid is taken back to the past moments he lived in the big family house among all his uncles, aunts, cousins, and the repudiation of Ma, “Inutile de remâcher tout cela, disait-elle, parle moi plutôt de ta mère” Reports Rachid (97). In the first pages of the novel, the French mistress insists on the protagonist to tell her everything about his mother; she says: “Parle-moi encore de ta mere (...) raconte, disait-elle” (98-99).

The stories told by Rachid to the foreign woman are memories drawn from his gloomy childhood and the unfair past of all Algerians. In *La Hiérarchie dans La Répudiation et FIS De La Haine De Rachid Boudjedra*, Jeanne Sarah De Larquier claims that through the description of social and political injustice, the author lines the importance of historical context as a background of his narrative. He offers an image of the life of the Algerian family

and handles several dramatic issues that we will discuss in the following sections of this research, such as taboos that shake the public opinion, the suicide of Zahir (Rachid's brother), governance issues and the lost postcolonial dream (88).

Another device that reflects a different historical measurement in the Boudjedrian text is the involvement of Muslim religion to address the reality of men's remarriage. The novelist refers back to the religious context and allows a new reading of the text. In this respect, Boudjedra's narrator reports how man justifies the act of repudiation. He inserts the religious history by tackling the Prophet Mohamed's (PBUH) story of marrying many women; "Ma organise la fête, la mort sur le visage (...) pouvait-elle s'opposer contre des récits coraniques et les décisions des Muphtis" (63) says Rachid in the novel. He goes on to add : "En se mariant à Zoubida, le père n'a fait que suivre le chemin du prophète" (101). These chronological dimensions in the novel are traced through recalling Rachid's memories about events that took place at a notable period in history. Thus, history is used by the novelist to provide his character with a daring voice to denounce injustice. Yet, the historical elements liberate the narrator from the chains imposed upon him by society, religion and government.

Similarly, the evocation of the past is perceptible in Ayi Kwei Armah's *The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born*. The novel is escorted by historical particularities that take the reader of the African continent regarding the year of its publication 1968, to explore individual and collective souvenirs of Africans. Through historical facts, Armah revives the colonial experience and demonstrates the deep deception with the post-independent expectations, acknowledges Kouamé ADOU in *La Problématique Du Genre Dans Les Romans De Ayie Kewi Armah* (287). Remembrance thus, shapes a big part of the novel and portrays the unforgettable souvenirs of an unjust colonial past in Ghana.

Specifically, the memory of struggle for liberation is the pretext of the majority of postcolonial African texts, and so is Armah's work. Edward Sackey argues in *What Is Africa*

Doing With The Novel that Armah aims to afford a depiction of a collective African past and endured injustice; however, it constructs a new political, as well as historical memory of the expected future by the individual and how this latter attempts to be *The Beautiful One* (40). The novelist circumscribes the story with the historical context of postcolonial phase. He thus, uses flashback (that will be discussed later in chapter III) to revive the former moments of the history and unfair livings of his characters. In this context, the memory is the only vehicle, always available whenever the individual wants to revisit the ancient sufferings, claims Mathurin Songossaye in *Les Figures Spatio-Temporelles Dans Le Roman Africain Subsaharien Anglophone et Francophones* (6-7).

The individual remembrance in the novel is flagrant in a number of passages, among them the man's souvenir about his days at school with the teacher: "In the examination hall he finds all movement impossible, so that he cannot even tell if he knows any answers" writes Armah (98). The man memory in chapter thirteen of the novel, displays a happy feeling about past moments, unlike Boudjedra's character Rachid, who recalls the past only to reveal pain. In this part of the novel, the man seems to find contentment in the past souvenirs; the narrator says: "When he got home the man felt almost happy, and like a happy man he did not climb up the four little steps onto the veranda, but leaped lightly up, thinking of youth and days in school when the sun had shone sweetly in the field" (160). By means of memories, the significant character of the man helps the reader understand some aspects of the individual's metamorphosis between a pleased past and disappointing present. The Man rethinks of the good attitude of his teacher before despair takes over. He says: "his soul once almost destroyed" (78) comparing the new moral values with the old ones saying.

The orientation of the novel toward a milieu of past historical memory contributes in valorizing the message that Armah seeks to convey. Thus, it encourages individuals to challenge the current domestic and political injustice through remembering the old values. In

The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born, Armah expresses his desire for rebirth to overcome corruption. He connects the novel to the historical reality and delimitates it within a particular time period that the country witnessed. Hence, he enables the reader to comprehend not only Armah's novel, but also African issues. With this aim, the author utilizes real historical names that are already well known (as stated previously). In other words, the novel portrays injustice and degradation of human values in Ghana at the time of this President Nkrumah's reign. Nevertheless, it urges people to lead a liberation movement so that they become the saviors of their nation.

Both Boudjedra and Armah understand significantly the importance of evoking the past to offer a clear image of the present. They focus on the element of colonial experience that Algeria and Ghana lived and depict its primordial role in the prevailing social and political unjust reality of the two countries. Driven by the sense of nationalism and belonging, the two writers feel an urgency to write about their past history; they are both committed to call for resistance and end up injustice (this will be explained in the next chapter). The use of their nations' history is an obligatory tool that gives a footprint of identity to their literary production. In this respect, names, dates and events in post independent writings are important not for what they are, but for what they signify vis-à-vis the real history of nations, claims Moses Geoffrey Kwame Ayivor from Gerog P Hagan's *Nkrumah's Cultural Policy* (13). Through their narratives, Boudjedra and Armah reproduce the important historical moments and facts of their motherlands.

Far from being a historian, the post independent novelist has to tell the story using the fictional instruments to impress the reader, with a sense of affection toward his mother country and profound sympathy vis-à-vis the subalterns' livings at the domestic, social and political levels. The authors write with a penchant to their nations and peoples. In this respect, Boudjedra's asserts in another text:

Voilà pourquoi je pense que j'ai voulu écrire tout jeune. Depuis que j'étais enfant, j'étais fasciné par l'écriture. Face à ce malheur d'être Algérien à dix ans, à l'époque où il y avait les prémices de la guerre qui allait commencer (je le savais parce que je suis issu d'un milieu nationaliste en même temps que bourgeois et intellectuel), face au drame familial dont j'ai été le produit littéralement parlant (j'ai beaucoup écrit sur ce sujet, je crois que c'est l'essentiel même de mon travail), face à cette perception de voir le malheur géré, en particulier, par les femmes (par la mère), j'ai voulu écrire très jeune pour refuser cela. D'autre part, j'écrivais parce que je lisais beaucoup ! Il y a aussi pour moi une façon d'atténuer le malheur du monde à travers une boulimie de lecture. La lecture en tant qu'art de la fuite en avant (*Ecrire pour atténuer la douleur du monde* 25-26).

Likewise, attachment to the country's past is apparent in *The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born*. Armah stresses Ghanaian cultural heritage and employs wisdom and morality through three important stories: The Chichidod Story (44-45), Aboliga the Frog's Tale (62-63), and the myth of Plato's Cave (79-80). Although they belong to ancient Ghanaian repertoire and oral tradition, these stories criticize the post independent administration and condemn injustice in the country, claims Emmanuel Obiechina in *Narrative Proverbs in the African Novel* (221-222). Thus, ancient African proverbs and old generation sayings contribute in spicing up the novel. They turn it to a veritable ancestral reality that remains linked to the unjust postcolonial life. Armah has the certitude that the old stories play a remarkable role in solving current problems of postcolonial times. In his book *Fragments* (1971), he writes: "You have a fullness you need to bring out. It's not an emptiness you need to cover up with things"(1). By "fullness you need to bring out", the authors clearly highlight out the importance of wisdom stories in building up nations.

All the above elements assemble the historical context and mark profoundly the spiritual state of individuals (as will be discussed in chapter III in characters' psychoanalysis). Furthermore, *La Répudiation* and *The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born* are different in the way they handle the past. In Boudjedra's novel, Rachid recalls bad souvenirs that people purposefully aim to forget in order to feel detached from the painful unjust past, while in Armah's text, the man remembers the past to find tranquility that the post independent black government cannot ensure. However, the two novelists equally denounce unfairness. The use of Algerian traditions, religious feasts, and heritage as well as the setting in *La Répudiation*, are all shaped by the historical background.

Focusing on the Muslim tradition that occupies the whole novel, Boudjedra stresses the repudiation of women as major, stifling tradition in the country. His narrator evokes patrimonial traditions through his own memory about the suffering of Ma and other personal childhood and adolescence experiences. Thus, the novel attempts to expose the origins of the illnesses of the current postcolonial society through the focus on its backgrounds. Contrary to Armah's fiction, Boudjedra's *La Répudiation* is an invitation to go beyond the past traditions that brutalize the society and individuals, it portrays the historical social, and familial reality that ruins a child's life, hence Rachid does not seem very proud of this heritage.

Apparently, history represents the back bone of the literary productions of both Armah and Boudjedra. Referring to the historical context helps the reader understand the origins of the text (Nokoko 28). Therefore, disciplines such as history, psychology, anthropology and others offer different orientations to literature at different artwork. For instance, all forms of colonialism and endured injustice in the history of developing countries provide the literary repertoire with revolutionary masterpieces and literature of decolonization. Additionally, novels of historical dimensions offer a space of imagination and interpretation to the readers

of new generations and thus enable them to live these moments through the narrative descriptions and the memory of characters.

Additionally, the historical scope determines the literary identity of the text and distinguishes the novel among other works. It develops the readers' perception through considering both, the literary and historical phenomenon alike, as pointed out in *History as Literature*, a paper of American Historical Association (6-7). The historical colonial past is the cornerstone of post independent literary writings. In this context, *La Répudiation* and *The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born*, are considered to be "la Littérature de Combat" or "Littérature engagée" (Adou 331). This notion of literary commitment principally emerged to deplore injustice thoroughly discussed in the next chapter of this research.

Boudjedra and Armah considerably use a socio-historical context to frame their texts; thus, the contribution of history in their literary productions is as important as the one of the colonial encounter. The two novelists address the theme of colonization in different ways, and describe it as a painful experience in both texts by remaining faithful to their writing task of commitment to end up injustice. Consequently, their literature is the one of testimony and description of peoples' sufferings.

By referring to history, cultural heritage, religion and colonial past, Boudjedra and Armah provide their novels with authenticity. In this sense, Boudjedra stresses the role of history in the literary production through another novel, *Hôtel Saint Georges* (2007), he writes: "L'écriture de l'histoire, affirme l'écrivain par la voix de Rac, son alter ego dans le roman, exige de déplacer les meubles et d'aller regarder derrière, de débusquer les êtres et d'aller voir à l'intérieur de leur vision" (252). In this short extract, it is apparent that history is crucial to literary productions and figures not only in the one of commitment but also in any other artistic masterpiece. In other words, Boudjedra and Armah assert their dependence on their past. They lovingly talk about their nations and try to remain faithful to its history,

though they strongly denounce the injustice conditions of natives. However, none can deny the fact that their literature aims at instructing the reading with cultural, social and political history (Adou 387).

Concisely, it is definitely true that history coexists with literature and contributes in its comprehension and analysis. The historical context of the text is a veritable identity that characterizes this latter. Hence, the literary production is born out of past conditions and unfair livings at the era preceding and following the European occupation which belongs to the nations' history as well. Thus, it is safe to safe that the utilization of the historical frame empowers the text and offers a huge amount of legitimacy to the moral values that are transmitted through the writings.



Chapter II



**Analysis of the Theme of Injustice in Rachid
Boudjedra's *La Répudiation* and Ayi Kwei Armah's
*The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born***

Chapter II

Analysis of the Theme of Injustice in Rachid Boudjedra's *La Répudiation* and Ayi Kwei

Armah's *The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born*

The emergence of a post-independent literature is an outcome of several social and political upheavals and is strongly linked to the clear commitment of the authors to denounce the outcome of a hostile encounter. All the consequences of the colonial experience, such as inequality, corruption and identity disorder are profoundly tackled in almost all the postcolonial writings that testify difficulties and denounce injustice. Moreover, the literary expressions contribute in creating a new revolutionary claim to end up all forms of injustice. Hence, the present chapter will provide data of literary commitment and its contribution condemning injustice in Boudjedra's *La Répudiation* and Armah's *The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born*. The chapter also presents a psychoanalysis of the characters in the two novels by demonstrating the responsibility of unjust circumstances on the psyche of the characters in the two novels alike.

A large part of the post independent literature is associated with third world's nations and the terrible conditions that accompany the dream of being independent. Through their novels, post independent authors attempt to sensitize the public opinion to change the life conditions and develop readers' critical thinking. This freedom of expression in literature provokes problems of censorship for Boudjedra's *La Répudiation* or the so called "Le roman scandale". The artistic production in this sense is no longer for the purpose of beauty but rather for the claim of positive change. The writers cannot detach themselves from the responsibility of defending the values of their nations; hence they use the only available weapon at their disposal "the pen" to react against any aspect of injustice. This notion of the committed writer comes to existence after the WWII, as Jean Paul Sartre theorizes it in *Situations II* (1948): "Je dirai qu'un écrivain est engagé lorsqu'il tâche à prendre la conscience

la plus lucide et la plus entière d'être embarqué, c'est-à-dire lorsqu'il fait passer pour lui et pour les autres l'engagement de la spontanéité immédiate au réfléchi ”.

In this context, the writer becomes committed if he talks for all, as Sylvie Servoise-Vicherat has mentioned in *L'engagement du roman à l'épreuve de l'histoire en France et en Italie au milieu et à la fin du vingtième siècle* (2008) in which she points out Albert Camus notion of “Parler pour tous” (274) referring to all the victims. Similarly, for Sartre and Camus the literary commitment is the one of a pen combat against injustice.

The commitment in postcolonial literature reveals a huge sense of rebellion against violence, both verbal and physical. It also traces the painful past of colonization, as discussed in the previous chapter, and captures the disappointment with the era of independence. This literature is a space of exchange between the novelist and the reader, to create a reciprocal critical thinking about the aspects of the society, the world and the humanity as a whole. It defends human values and sheds light on the several forms of injustice exercised on, and /or endured by man.

These images of injustice are differently depicted in the two distinct yet very similar postcolonial novels *La Répudiation* and *The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born*. In order to exhibit the social problems, Boudjedra and Armah offer a negative depiction of the members of society ,some as oppressors, others as oppressed subalterns, depressive and often violated by members of the same family, the society or the government leaders. This political and ideological denunciation contributes in the construction of the literary works, in which the authors expose the shock of nations after some historical chaos as Sartre asserts in *Qu'est-ce que la littérature ?* (Situations II, 1947). According to Sartre: “Un des principaux motifs de la création artistique est certainement le besoin de nous sentir essentiels par rapport au monde”, he hence affirms it to be a moral duty.

The commitment of Boudjedra and Armah is visible in their respective novels since they expose misery as an upshot of long years of suffering that the developing countries, mainly Algeria and Ghana, went through. They boldly write about religion and stress the social, familial, as well as political injustice. The two authors talk about women's sorrow, child abuse and hard life of poor people. *La Répudiation* and *The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born* treat the endless post-independent conflict between man and woman, adult and child, poor and rich, citizen and government. The way the writers illustrate the imposed injustice over these subalterns makes the reader dream about equality, human rights and mutual respect.

In the Algerian novel of French expression *La Répudiation*, Boudjedra denounces earnestly the political system that he calls "la trahison du clan" (214-215). The novelist associates the repudiation of his country by the military coup that eliminates the government of Ben Bella in 1965 to the grievous repudiation of his naïve mother (Ma) by Si Zoubir, the tyrant father. The utilization of art to criticize the political injustice makes *La Répudiation* one of the most disputable novels of the time, a novel that discusses the injustice exercised over the Algerian women, as well as the whole population.

Rachid, the narrator, is an opponent to the military coup of June 19th, 1965. The author chooses the name of Rachid to his protagonist to show how the story resembles his own experience. He reveals the hardship of Ma, when Rachid's father repudiated her and married a 15-year-old girl. The novel thus shows the derisory image of the Algerian woman, mother, sister, wife reduced to her sex, as affirmed by Jamel Eddine Bencheikh *Retour à La Répudiation*.(85). The repudiation of women is more or less justified by the legal right that Islam grants to man. From this perspective, a non-Muslim reading on this text may provoke many prejudices. Moreover, Boudjedra dares to stress certain religious issues such as prayers, Ramadhan, Aid, and the out loud reading of Quran. In this regard, debates are mainly around

religion in Boudjedra's novel. The author portrays his characters as hypocrite and not completely sincere in their religious practices; he says: "...les bébés qui font pipi sur les pantalons arabes sans égard à la religion qui interdisait la prière à ceux qui portent des traces d'urine" (48).

In his paper *L'Interdit dans le Roman de Boudjedra*, Achour Hambli stresses the theme of religion and associates it to unjust conditions of the Algerian society and women in particular. He points to the instrumentalization of Islam by the patriarch to dominate and alienate the tribe. Rachid revolts against the repudiation of his mother and the religion that legitimizes this act. Hambli goes on to say "Le père pouvait toujours ahaner au-dessus du corps glabre de sa jeune femme. Il aurait plus de paix! Traquenard. Je jurais haut, niais Dieu, la religion et les femmes. Zahir haïssant la tribu et pissait dans l'eau qui servait à l'ablution des saints hommes et des lecteurs du Coran" (73).

The novel tackles the problem of woman as a subject of injustice endured in the name of religion and traditions where "les hommes parlaient fort, donnaient des ordres strictes. Les femmes chuchotaient", reports Rachid (46) and that none can oppose. Rachid speaks for his mother and all the Algerian women repudiated by their unfair husbands. Although injustice was endured by Ma, the narrator's childhood and life are profoundly affected by this act. He consolidates the woman but blames her for being stupid, voiceless and unable to defend herself, saying: "j'en venais à reprocher aux femmes leur lacheté" (46).

Although Rachid loves his mother, he painfully calls her "stupide, ridicule et délaissée" (53). The narrator's loathing to woman's submission in a male centered society inside, as well as outside the familial circle, is well expressed in the author's words: "elle l'appelait Sidi, elle lui baisait la main, en signe d'un profond respect" (75). The above quote displays Rachid's detestation to the oppressor men in general and his own father in particular. Yet, Djamel Benyekhlef acknowledges in *Retour à La Répudiation*, that the narrator is

caught in his own trap, he becomes an oppressor and speaks for Ma ; he tells a story and reveals memories that do not belong to him (89). Thus the fact of reporting Ma's suffering by another person (i.e., Rachid) puts the son in the position of the oppressor. To this end, one may imagine a different testimony of Ma about her repudiation. Thus the woman may reveal things differently if she spoke for herself. Therefore, the novel defends the woman by giving her a voice that is not surely hers.

Much like Ma, Zoubida the 15-year-old girl endures a massive injustice when she marries Si Zoubir called "le chef du clan" throughout the novel: "elle allait être son otage" (65), says Rachid about his mother in law. Additionally, Boudjedra's novel may be read within the social and /or familial context. The author writes about the strong relationship between Ma and her son, and how her suffering ruins his childhood. The author estranges his protagonist from his father and makes him closer to his mother, thus tensions generate between the two men; "Il nous battait à mort (...), il nous menaçait de tout, nous tremblions, supplions, hurlions que nous l'aimions, (...) giflait, crachait sur nous, danse du père autour d'une enfance saccagée" reports Rachid. (86).

Beaten and imprisoned, the children hardships reflect to a great extent some injustice not only at the domestic level but also at the governmental one, because the father represents the political system or what Rachid calls "le clan". Children's distress is another aspect of injustice that the writer puts at the same level with the political unfairness exercised over Algerians. Rachid with his brothers, sisters and peers in the novel are locked up and represent the imprisonment of the opponents of the new political regime. Political injustice is also associated to the exile of the narrator, where he meets Céline, "L'amante étrangère" as Charles Bonn calls her in *"La répudiation", ou le roman familial et l'écriture-espace tragique* (175-180). In the exile, the narrator tells Céline the story of his mother (as mentioned previously in-Chapter I).

In *Le lecteur virtuel dans l'oeuvre romanesque de Rachid Boudjedra* (April,2005)

Valérie Lotodé claims that Boudjedra does not hesitate to point out other forms of injustice in his novel. Apart from the political one, he denounces suicide, immoral values, man humiliation, rape, pedophilia and homosexuality. This injustice on innocents contributes in ruining the human relationships mainly Father-Son relation. The fact of having a secret love affair with Zoubida (the mother in law), puts Rachid in a real apprehension and the fear that the harsh father discovers this adultery; this feeling creates in him an endless interior disorder. Rachid asserts: “ suicide, fugue ce n'était rien ! mais l'adultère ... tomber dessus et la livrer vivante au chef du clan” (74) this explains that everything is more or less allowed within the family.

Through his focus on the current social problems (political / familial oppression and sexism), Boudjedra matures the reader's thinking and offers a true image of the Algerian postcolonial society, where people enjoy their lusts and legitimate rights such as marriage under the shadow of corruption and injustice.

In parallel with Boudjedra's *La Répudiation*, Ayi Kwei Armah's *The Beautiful One Are Not Yet Born* offers an ugly depiction of Ghanaian society and examines the phenomenon of corruption and human injustice after the independence of Ghana. It takes the unnamed man as a protagonist who works at Ghana Railway Corporation of Takoradi and resists to social decay though he is unable to cover his family needs. Man's wife Oyo and his mother in law take the role of the motivators; both urge him to be involved in different affairs of corruption that permit gaining money and ameliorating their financial situation. Laurence Jay-Rayon confirms in *Poétique et politique traductive décolonisante: la traduction française d'Ayi Kwei Armah* that the wife encourages her honest husband to become like an old school friend Koomson who works at the ministry where he gathers an enormous wealth to meet his wife's demands.(38). “A man, even a man who has stumbled ones, ought to be able to pick himself

up and hurry after those who have gone before, a man ought to be able to do that, if only for the sake of the loved ones” says Armah in Chapter Five (46).

But as the novel’s events evolve, we witness how this corruption and injustice affairs put Koomson in serious troubles when he escapes to the man’s house. The author shows the materialistic society that Ghana becomes after the decolonization, and how money is the most important element that dominates people’s internal as well as external space; “sounds arise and kill all smells as the bus pulls into the dormitory town”(40) reports the narrator. The above quote carries the metaphor of the emptiness that money may create within people’s hearts and minds. In this regard, the narrator considers the sound of money as assassinating every vivid creature.

Very similar to Boudjedra’s commitment, Armah makes his stand against injustice and denounces the wrong doings of the post-independent men in Ghana. The writer defends his ideology of the necessity of radical change to reach the “Beauty”. He expresses his disgust towards the black leaders’ behavior. Corruption in the novel is incarnated in the characters working in the governmental sector and who manipulate, humiliate, steal and violate people’s rights. This new regime that replaces the British colonizer is unexpectedly abusing Ghanaians, with its thirst for richness and the greed for position. Injustice in this context is much associated to betrayal and lies over the helpless people who are never involved in the governmental decision.

The novel is about the immense disenchantment with the prevailing African regime. It attacks the governmental system that looks for its own good, at the expense of the natives. It also insists on budding people’s mind to make a revolutionary reaction. While Armah invites Africans readers, no matter the country they belong to, to be the saviors of their societies that the author calls “The Beautiful Ones”, he also expresses his pessimism about the future of his county, and every other nation under an unjust authority “Are Not Yet Born”. Pessimism is

communicated through the character of the teacher, an instructed man, very conscious about his country's disaster. The teacher reflects the nation's despair and hopelessness when he says:

Life has not changed. 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 older that his real desire has been to be like the white governor himself, to live above all blackness in the big old slave castle? (92).

The novelist believes that although the white reign is replaced by the black one, corruption and injustice persist. But this is not definitely the image of all Africans, because Armah makes use of some characters such as the man and the teacher who repeatedly refuse bribes though they belong to the poor Ghanaian class. This notion of pessimism in the novel is debated by many critics. In *The Re-Making of Africa: Ayi Kwei Armah and the Narrative of an (Alter)-native Route to Development*, Leonard Kibera considers Armah as a writer who "cultivates pessimism" (9).

In a number of pages, Armah portrays the corrupt social life and attacks the incompetent new black masters in power at the twilight of Nkrumah's administration. He transmits the shocking picture of these leaders' betrayal and unjust behavior vis-à-vis the natives. Although Nkrumah's government was replaced by another one, things did not change for better, because the new black governors were worse than the previous British colonizer: "a change of embezzlers and a change of hunters and the hunted" declares Armah (162).

The author asserts that Ghanaian leaders' conduct at the post-independent era resembles the English men attitudes. He thus, shows the mark of the colonial past on the current corrupt life conditions. This colonizer trace is also present in the way blacks attempt

to change their African names to make them sound like English ones, the narrator affirms; “Enough names of black men with white souls, and names trying mightily to be white” (147).

The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born is considered by many critics as an attack over the Ghanaian society. In his book *Pour une littérature de l'interdépendance* (2009), Julien Magnier affirms that the novel is a serious commitment for a change; it is a realist work deeply related to the political facts and feeds the reader's mind through the morality of denouncing all the forms of injustice and opposing the dominating regime. Magnier insists that the post-independent authors have a new vocation of maturing peoples' thinking (182).

In this dramatic environment, political injustice is viewed as a genuine aggression over the subalterns. The book categorizes Armah's work as one of the ground breaking African writings that refuse the victimhood discourse and encourage the revolutionary spirits. Being written by a great thinker, the novel can also be read as an educating one that demonstrates to the coming generations how to have a prosperous life, avoid fraud affairs and reject bad attitudes such as selfishness and cheating. Armah's absolute commitment to the post colonial African cause is described in Edward Sackey's paper, *What is Africa doing with the Novel?* In which he declares “I think it is no exaggeration to say that Armah writes Africa itself and not *about* Africa” (41).

Treating problems that post-colonial Africa confronts such as human exploitation and political manipulation, turns the novel to a call for a rebellion. According to Sackey, Armah expresses injustice in terms of inequality; he stresses the undemocratic role of the black regime (41). Others consider the novel as a key guide about the possibility of the development of African continent. In this connection, in *The Re-Making of Africa: Ayi Kwei Armah and the Narrative of an (Alter)-native Route to Development* (2005), Gbemisola Adeoti asserts that Armah's ideology analyzes the factors of the underdevelopment (corruption, election riggings, and bribes given by the bus conductor to the police-man, etc.) and calls for the

repudiation of the political system and the bad governance that exercise injustice, and appeal for a system that promotes equality, freedom, secularity, self-reliance, enlightenment and elevated self worth.

A further testimony that confirms Armah's commitment to the African cause is Nadia Naar's *Modern African Literature Revisited: A study of Literary Affinities in Selected Early Novels by Achebe, Feraoun, Kateb, Ngugi, Armah and Mimouni* (2014), in which she believes that Armah's novel plays an important role in the political transformation because it treats social sickness that Ghana suffers from. She refers to DuBois' notion of "the healer of the sick" (218). Thus, the novel is a bleak mocking depiction of injustice and corruption that destroys the post independent dream of Ghanaians, says Naar.

Much like many other post independent novels, *The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born* reveals injustice of the destiny that cannot offer prosperity which freedom and independence are expected to bring. It also expresses the painful disenchantment and the deep disappointment with the current conditions, because the real independent Africa is not like what Ghanaians have long expected and the ideals about a model country are not met, or "were no longer decipherable" writes Armah (7).

Furthermore, the novel portrays the injustice in the context of difficult life of an honest individual the "man" and his struggle to stay clean and never accept bribes offered by Amankwa, though the surrounding environment is corrupt and the moral values are absent. All through the novel we perceive the daily life of the man moving from his house to the Railway Corporation of Takoradi, or in some passages we read the man talking to the teacher while in some others we see him with his old school friend Joseph Koomson. The novel offers a representation of African reality through different individuals, each of whom has different visions about the social and political crisis. It also shows the attitude of the characters towards their surroundings.

This concept of Africans versus themselves inside their own land carries a sense of injustice in terms of infected and paralyzed society with non-productive and hopeless inhabitants who can no longer trust each other. This has profoundly influenced numerous literary critics (mainly Africans), among them Nadia Naar, that claim that the black leaders strategy in the novel is to seed the fear among people so that they remain dependent on their leaders. The politicians, declares Naar, attempt to turn the nation's attention away from the frauds and all forms of scandalous corruption.

The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born and *La Répudiation* meet at the social realism, defined by Oxford Dictionary as the realistic depiction in art of contemporary life, and a means of social or political comment. This literary genre, as defined in the realms of literature, is adopted by Armah and Boudjedra respectively. The two authors lay focus on discrimination, unfairness and hierarchy as the very common aspect of post-colonial era of the developing countries. They handle the theme of injustice as the essential problem at all levels: social, political and even the psychological echelon, and both novels under study are considered as very daring in terms of their concerns. They light up what should be hidden because of these issues are still viewed as taboo.

Some of these forbidden matters and non-revealed secretes have an incredible impact on the psyche of the characters in the two novels. Rachid, Zahir, the man, are different personas with identity disorder and each of whom endure injustice differently. In this relation, many critics affirm that the authors are inspired in their literature by their own experiences and may develop a sense of loss. Naar, for instance, refers to the critical view of Chinua Achebe on Armah's *The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born*, claiming that Achebe finds Armah alienated as long as he shows the same symptoms as his own society; a man is never more defeated than when he is running away from himself (Achebe, 1975).

The post colonial writers are considered as activists who aim to change the Orientalist/Western vision about their countries. In his essay, *La problématique de l'engagement dans la littérature africaine francophone: étude sur les oeuvres de Yasmina Khadra, de Mariama Bâ et d'Ahmadou Kourouma* (2014), Gorgui Ibrahima Tall affirms that the post independent African authors seek to correct their African identity by diagnosing the causes of its ills and find out treatments to the different troubles. The identity perturbation in the postcolonial novel proves the deep impact of social conditions on the writers themselves before their characters and they manage through their writing talents to transmit their trauma to their personas.

Similarly, in *A Saga Of Black Deglorification The Disfigurement of Africa in AYEI KWEI ARMAH'S Novels*, Moses Geoffrey Kwame Ayivor acknowledges that writers express a reality of a ravaged society, economically, politically, and psychologically by an exaggerated injustice of the past (essentially colonization as described earlier in chapter I) and present wrongness (basically the new post colonial government). He also affirms that all the psychological maladies that emerge in the post independent fiction are a result of real colonial dependence.

The two novels analyzed in the course of this paper demonstrate how materialism and injustice affect the state of mind of individuals who consequently develop many symptoms that prove the internal conflict of the characters. In *La Répudiation*, Boudjedra captures the gloomy reality of the post independent Algerian society and breaks the taboos (that we will observe in the following Chapter). The novelist shocks his readers and reveals the troubles that the characters suffer from, the most flagrant one is Zahir's homosexuality illustrated in the boy's attachment to his teacher. This malady is generated out of the rejection and hate of the tribe, the submissive mother, the absent tormenter father and all unjust deeds. Zahir escapes the daily emotional hypocrisy that his family endures because of woman and

children's abuse. As the novel's events develop, Zahir's depression and struggle with his own feelings push him to commit suicide. Rachid narrates "(...) L'énigme restait liée au mythe du fœtus inventé par Zahir lorsque nous étions enfants et qu'il n'avait jamais explicité; maintenant que mon frère aîné était mort, j'étais sûr qu'il m'avait caché quelque chose et qu'il avait un secret pour en finir avec cette obsession" (241).

Zahir is not the only character in Boudjedra's novel that goes through dilemma and psychological problems. As already mentioned in this chapter, the narrator Rachid, is also profoundly affected by the repudiation of his mother and all the atrocious injustice that he experienced with all the children of this tribe. The pity that Rachid feels towards his mother's hardship puts the child in a real psychological confusion. The image that the narrator constructs about his father is the one of oppressor; he lost gradually his love and affection towards him.

In *La Hiérarchie dans La Répudiation et FILS de La Haine de Rachid Boudjedra*, Jeanne Sarah De Larquier admits that Rachid is "cet être à l'enfance saccagée" (88). In line with this argument, injustice is in the fact of not having a happy childhood. Rachid's psychological nuisance is also portrayed through the blind obsession about sex that he boldly describes in his relation with Céline at the beginning of the novel and the repeated intention to have sex affair with his cousin: "ma cousine ne comprenait pas, puis ne voulait pas à cause de la religion" reports Rachid in *La Répudiation* (50).

As the novel's events progress, we discover that the sexual act described by Rachid was a mere hallucination of the narrator; he is lost between what is real and imaginary in his life: "(...) partir, laissant ma cousine bêtement femelle (...) malheureuse du péché consommé (...) je (Rachid) réintérais le sommeil que je n'avais jamais quitté" declares the narrator (52).

Furthermore, the protagonist is passionate about his mother in law's body "Zoubida" and attempts to seduce her; such act is a taboo in the Algerian society. For the Algerian

reader, Rachid is viewed as an insane character unable to think or behave normally as long as he makes efforts to have such adventure with Zoubida. Loads of critics consider Boudjedra's protagonist as mentally ill. Rachid's psychological disorder and hallucination take the reader back to think about the causes of such trauma and reconsider the unfair past that plays a remarkable role in making and /or unmaking the identity of the individuals, states Jeanne Sarah De Larquier who affirms that the psychological delirium of the characters in *La Répudiation* are as important in the novel as the veritable events experienced by Algerians in the real life.

Through attributing identity crisis to his characters Boudjedra refers to the social, religious, cultural and political injustice. He blames the merciless act of repudiating Ma and makes it the center of all the events that occur throughout the novel. The author dares to touch the very Muslim identity aspect of "hishma" as quoted by Achour Hambli in *L'interdit dans les romans: la répudiation et la macération de Rachid Boudjedra enjeu d'une écriture subversive* (94). Boudjedra upsets the reader to reach and increase his awareness about the existing causes of the current social and political problems and makes a call to revolt against the injustice endured by the nation and that affects every single person who belongs to it.

Therefore, the bizarre behavior of the characters in post independent literature is a mirror that reflects their pains and repressed feelings caused by unjust conditions. This depiction is again found in Armah's *The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born* through the naivety of the man, the pessimism of the teacher and the greed for richness of Oyo, the protagonist's wife. These attitudes of the different characters in the novel are justified by the treachery and the unfairness of the political system. Throughout the novel, Armah intends to confirm that the Ghanaian society is diseased and this sickness is transmitted to the citizens of the nation. The author associates the current personal and social psychic chaos to the past European

dependence (as explained earlier in Chapter I. He also portrays the diabolic and unjust selfish behavior of black leaders in the current post independent era.

As mentioned in the previous section, the man is Armah's main character. The chosen name for the unnamed protagonist explains to a great extent the loss of identity of the latter; in this regard, Kouamé Adou quotes Vincent Jouve in *Qui parle dans le récit?* ; "l'être du personnage dépend d'abord du nom propre qui, suggérant une individualité, est l'un des instruments du réel" (75-90). In other words, the man develops a sense of loss between hope and despair, which is noticeable through his daily movements between his house and the work place. The first pages of the novel show that the protagonist is a faithful person who refused bribes, which seems a pretty sane behavior. But as the novel unfolds, the man demonstrates troubles in his attitude and vision about life as an outcome of his wife's insisting attitude to get rich. This behavioral disorder and incertitude are clear in the way the protagonist discusses issues with his friend the teacher. He uses his wife's words and this reflects an identity mess:

Teacher, my wife explained to me, step by step, that life was like a lot of roads: long roads, short roads, wide and narrow roads, steep and level, all sorts of roads. Next, she let me know that human beings were like so many people driving their cars on all these roads. This was the point at which she told me that those who wanted to get far have to learn to drive fast. And then she asked me what name I would give to people who were afraid to drive fast, or to drive at all. I had no name to give her, but she had not finished. Accidents would happen, she told me, but the fear of accidents would never keep men from driving, and Joe Koomson had learned to drive. (58-59)

This changing attitude of the man is mostly the result of Oyo's pressure. The wife as well reveals identity problems that are traced back to the past colonial dependence. Eager to gather fortune and escape the unjust life conditions, she is mannered by the habits of the European women with whom she lived for many years. Oyo has instability of identity that

drives her think and look like British women; thus she is no longer proud of her African origins. The lady always reproaches to her husband his poverty and failure to cover his family needs: “It’s only bush women who wear their hair natural” said Oyo to her husband (129).

In order to host her guests, Oyo prefers to look like European ladies. Hence, she transforms her appearance, uses makeup and blames her husband for not having offered her a wig and perfumes for the occasion. This way, the wife is lost between what is natural and represents the African identity and what is artificial as an outcome of white’s influence. This identity trouble and desire to resemble Europeans attest the inferiority complex of the black in general and the black women in particular while they are doubly inferior by their sex and their color, avows Kouamé Adou in *La Problématique Du Genre Dans Les Romans D’AYI KWEI ARMAH* (83).

Oyo’s excessive jealousy of Mrs Koomson, Estella, does not help the lady to overcome her identity mess. She wants to have what Estella possesses, and forgets that this latter is the wife of a very important politician who obeys to all the woman’s desires and wants. The Koomson family’s visit to the man’s house provokes the detestation and anger of Oyo towards her husband’s refusal to ameliorate their life. She says: “She contemplated the diamond of the third finger, raised her hand itself in the manner of a languid white woman in the film, to raise a curl that was obscuring her vision and put it into the main mass of her wig” (131).

Armah handles the issue of the African identity and its abasement after the colonial era; he utilizes characters with proper names and leaves other personas anonymous to problematize their level of psychological dilemma caused by the unjust conditions, such as the teacher. Although the latter is a literate character, he evokes a sense of despair and pessimism about the Ghanaian future.

Similarly, the character of Koomson, although named and identified, represents another aspect of psychological depression generated from the colonial confrontation. He proudly calls his wife Eslie instead of Estella and his son Atingua in lieu of Ating, an act that erases the African origins of the name proclaims Adou (85). The names used by the novelist are important not for what they are, but for what they represent.

To sum up, this chapter offered an analysis of Armah and Boudjedra's works as committed literary masterpieces to denounce injustice in all its aspects at the heart of post-independent era. They both treat the sociopolitical incompetence of the different members of the society. Although the two authors write about the calamity of their nations, their novels may be read as educative books that encourage loyalty and empower the third world's countries to seek a positive change and free themselves from unfairness. Throughout the reading of *La Répudiation* and *The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born*, one can witness a profound despair about the prevailing systems and conditions. Yet, they carry a massive hope for a better future about the Algerian and Ghanaian societies respectively. These expectations are symbolized through the existence of the youth generation in the post-colonial works in general, and the African novels in particular, indicates Adou (99). All in all, the two novels put the culpability of the injustice endured by their countries on the selfish governors that replaced the British and French oppressors. Injustice, in effect, is heavily expressed in association to the colonial past, both in *The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born* and *La Répudiation* alike.



Chapter III



**When Injustice Justifies the Style in *La Répudiation*
and *The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born***

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The fictional works of Rachid Boudjedra and Ayi Kwei Armah bring a specific language into play. They attempt to transmit the suffering of post independent Algerian and Ghanaian societies through a chosen rebellious, sometimes very vulgar stylistic. In this chapter we will explore the revolutionary language in the two novels. It focuses on the way Boudjedra and Armah employ vulgarity and their evocative use of symbolism, intertextuality, repetition and metaphor.

Worried about the future of their nations after independence and conscious about the difficulty of the situation, the two novelists denounce unfair postcolonial conditions and call for an end to all forms of violence, dirt, hypocrisy and corruption through a daring usage of language. Thus, they attempt to express their disenchantment with the inhuman practices of the post independent era, at the familial, social and political level (as referred to in the previous sections). Through a selective choice of stylistics, the authors turn their literary pieces to a vehicle to communicate individuals and nations' experiences, testimonies and constructive opinions. Therefore, they utilize a vulgar language, employ insults and tackle sex affairs to enlighten the hidden unjust truth that their societies refuse to admit.

Boudjedra and Armah believe in the efficiency of harsh word to wake the nations up and heal their impurities. Hence, they challenge to fight fire with fire; or as Hafid Gafaïti puts it in *Rachid Boudjedra, Une poétique de la subversion*; "l'effacement des maux par l'inscription des mots" (210). The authors attribute to themselves a very distinguished style that mostly characterizes their literary identity and which we consider as the most common

element between them. In Oxford dictionary, a style is defined as the particular way in which something is done. Thus, this chapter analyses the way Boudjedra and Armah denounce injustice. It also treats their manner of depicting how the postcolonial society is eager for enjoyment and freedom. In *Dialogue des arts dans le Roman Africain, La fiction Cinématographique dans Rêves Portatifs de Sylvain Bemba*, Sylvère Mbondobari asserts that the insults, the heavy words and the sexual acts in the fictional works are symbols of liberation (72).

The Beautiful One Are Not Yet Born and *La Répudiation* are politically powerful and socially daring for the reason that they are of an extravagant style. Furthermore, this skillful usage of language is one of the aspects of postcolonial writings. This literature often associates the social and political instability to the colonial experience in order to provoke a sense of nationalism inside the reader (as explained in chapter I). Thus, an interesting connection can be made between the utilized language in the postcolonial literature and the valuable messages it seeks to convey in order to condemn injustice. Therefore post independent writers use a forceful language and poetic expressions that play a role of weapon to fight hypocrisy, decay and corruption. They attempt to liberate the society from the chains imposed by social taboo issues, political unfairness, and religious instrumentalization (see chapter II).

Interestingly, the post independent literature portrays the daily life with specific stylistic features that highlight the writer's personal concern. It also includes a figurative language, metaphor and repetition, in addition to the writer's point of view which remains an important element in the fictional work as long as it associates fiction with reality, clarifies the writer's commitment and helps understand the purpose behind such usage of language. The language in this context reflects some extralinguistic features that are more linked to the

communicative purpose. It more or less transmits the moral values that the text claims and calls for a radical positive change through the denunciation of the spiritual death. Hence one can say that the post independent writers make an appropriate choice of language that fits their messages, recognizes Acheoah John Emike in *A Stylistic Appraisal of Ayi Kwei Armah's the Beautiful Ones are not yet Born* (5-6).

In *La Répudiation*, Rachid Boudjedra tells the story of an Algerian society condemned by the injustice imposed by the politician men in power over the subalterns. He exercises his writing commitment through the rebellious behaviors of characters. The narrator of the story firmly expresses his rage towards injustice of his father and the political system. He often uses daring words to eject his internal pain (as clarified in the previous sections). Much like many post independent writers, Boudjedra employs issues from the real life, such as religions, sex and daily governmental decisions, each of which affects the subaltern class. This triangle of forbidden facts exists in the Boudjedrian novel as normality because it belongs to the collective unconsciousness affirms Jeanne Sarah de Larquier (89).

As daring and scandalous as it is, *La Répudiation* is rich for the stylistic features that contribute in conveying the author's message. The metaphoric description of man, woman and children reveal the contempt of the prevailing living conditions. Moreover, comparing people to animals portrays their total dehumanization. When he describes his mother's naivety for instance, Rachid says: "elle s'angoisse à la manière d'une vache ou d'un chien" (99).

Throughout the novel, Boudjedra offers a demonstration of the feminine character as minimized to her "sex" and equally compared to animals, asserts Jeanne Sarah de Larquier. She adds, this metaphoric depiction reflects the marginalization of Ma and other women (89-99). This metaphoric picture also confirms injustice of man in power over women in particular and the country's helpless men as whole. Therefore the comparison of the

repudiation of Ma to the one of the new post independent political system under which the country is at the moment when Rachid narrates the story; he says “Les femmes se vendent sur la place publique, enchainées aux vaches” (95).

A further metaphoric picture that reflects injustice in the novel is the association of the religious feast “Eid el Kbir” and the blood of sheep sacrifice, to a woman losing her virginity. This demeaning imagery is often an illustration of injustice at the social level, where the act of deflowering women remains a non-said truth. From this context, Boudjedra is daringly breaking taboos, his narrator reports : “Les femmes inconscientes de l’association que nous faisons entre la gorge de l’animal et leurs sexes moiles, se moquant de notre manque de virilité et jetant des exclamations horrifiées en constatant notre dégout et notre peur de voir le mouton saillir avant de mourir”(195).

Another stylistic tool that Boudjedra provides his work with is the use of compound nouns which are very recurrent in the novel and help analyze the theme of injustice in depth. The author supports his portrayal of unfairness with animal’s names to refer to woman, attributing her compound nouns, such as “femmes-sauterelles” (126) and “femmes-corbeaux” (132). As maintained by Jeanne Sarah de Larquier, the novelist attributes names of power and bravery to men. He often calls them “Cheval” (121). While in page (90), the narrator is uncertain about the description of his own dictator father, he hesitates between calling him a lion, a cat, a camel, an elephant... but affirms that he is all these animals. Departing from this, Boudjedra captures the image of a dehumanized man, quiet similar to an animal sometimes strong and heartless as a lion and other times coward like a camel.

Moreover, the representation of the phenomenon of spiritual death in the novel is shown through the real death itself. The suicide of Zahir, the protagonist’s brother provokes the rage of Rachid, hence, he describes impurity of men and declares them to be hypocrite to

the extent of enjoying the death (corporal and/or spiritual) of each others: “Que faire d’un mort qui a perdu toute sa sève et sa saveur dans le caveau climatisé d’une ville française, et qui ne donne pas l’occasion aux chenilles de s’engraisser?” declares Rachid (157).

Additionally, the novel treats the difficult reality and injustice that Algerian society endures through a particular vocabulary. Women are described as ridiculous, stupid and naïve housewives, vulnerable in front of their husbands’ repudiation. Besides, Boudjedra utilizes an exacting terminology to exhibit the serious problem of moral decay. He treats the issue of sexuality in general and stresses the illness of homosexuality in particular. This very selective vocabulary can be witnessed in Ma’s words, when she minimizes the dramatic sexual act of her son Zahir, telling the children that this is nothing but a brutal game (212). One may believe that Ma escapes the painful reality of her son’s homosexuality and attempts to find refuge in words such as “un jeu brutal” proclaim Jeanne Sarah De Larquier (93).

More to the point, *La Répudiation* focuses on many other complex problems, and treats with transparency the Algerian society under the shadow of injustice. Boudjedra opposes the narrator to his familial circle to measure all the other aspects of unfairness in the whole country. He uses a franc language, sometimes very extravagant in order to reach the same level of impurity in the real life through such impure and vulgar style, Rachid detailed his sexual act with Céline, saying :

...son sexe bavait sur mes jambes un liquide épais et collant, coulant de l’atroce tuméfaction ou j’aimerais pourtant m’engloutir... il fallait que ma chair molle allât dévaster la chair molle de Céline, et elle alors, bénissant le va-e- vient flagrant, s’écartait encore plus, prête, dans sa certitude de femme atteinte par la plus grosse horde, à engloutir l’immensité globale (130).

Hence, employing such expressions openly drives the reader to become aware about the degree of injustice and reconsider the poisoned reality that makes the language as vulgar as it appears. Additionally, the narrator in *La Répudiation* associates the sexual act with Céline to a dirty operation, he says: “je voulais pourrir en elle un peu plus” (2). Boudjedra intentionally evokes the image of dirty scenes to echo the impurity of the nation under a corrupt political regime. In this context the narrator declares: “Dans la ville, les hommes déambulent. Ils crachent dans le vagin des putains, pour les rafraîchir” (48).

Insincerity toward the religion is also treated in the Boudjedrian text. Thus, the quotation “Mon père a deux femmes légitimes et une quantité de maitresses” (90) reported by Rachid, can be viewed as a reaction to the hidden facts that the society does not admit. The hypocrisy and paradoxical behaviors of the characters in *La Répudiation* are an act of liberation from the taboo and banned subjects, often dictated by religion, traditions, and even law. Such literary style is a veritable revolt; it is then a literature that invites to a revolutionary stand.

Among the prominent writing instruments that add a test of high quality to the Boudjedrian text, is the use of intertextuality technique which is “Pas une rupture mais un petit air de fugue, ou d'évasion, comme une façon d'aller prendre l'air”, declares Abdelwahab Meddebin in *Talismano* (64). In *Memoire et Ecriture Romanesque de Rachid Boudjedra*, Mayumi Shimosakai writes about the intertextuality as another important writing technique that Boudjedra utilizes in his novel. He refers in many pages to other texts. Céline, the French mistress in *La Répudiation* talks about Tipaza : “comme elle eut prononcé le nom d'un fruit” reports Rachid (59). Thus, the author refers to *Noces à Tipaza* of Albert Camus.

Further in the novel, we see Céline who visits Rachid in the hospital, bringing André Gide's words, “des citations de Gide sur Biskra” (60). By evoking Algerian regions in the

novel, through texts written by foreigners such as Camus and Gide, Boudjedra attempts to remain fair toward his own country, though the latter went through an unfair circumstances. He brings a positive touch to the ugly reality he portrays. In this respect, the novelist asserts that in spite of injustice, Algeria continues to be a beautiful place that needs beautiful people.

Boudjedra makes a smart use of repetition in his novel to exhibit the amount injustice that his mother went through when Si Zoubir decides to marry a young girl, in this context, the protagonist says:

Ma mère est au courant. Aucune révolte ! Aucune soumission !
Elle se tait et n'ose dire qu'elle est d'accord. Aucun droit ! Elle
est très lasse. Son cœur enfle. Impression d'une fongosité
bulbeuse. Tatouage qui sépare hargneusement le front en deux.
Il faut se taire : mon père ne permettrait aucune manifestation
(7).

The repeated word “aucun” which mean; no revolt, no submission, no right reflects the extent of despair and helplessness of Ma.

Insisting on replicated expressions is -according to Mayumi Shimosakai- a powerful struggle against Céline who more or less, represents the French colonizer. As the novel begins, Céline is present but not for a long time. She disappears right after having asked Rachid to tell her more about his mother. Hence the narrator starts recounting his souvenirs with an immense sense of suspension. This is a fighting method to frustrate the foreign mistress and respond to the endured brutality, in short, it reverses the roles (dominator/dominated) to revolt against injustice: “Je restais avec cette envie de la faire souffrir en l'enfermant dans un voile blanc où elle se fût trémoussée comme une pieuvre tentaculaire” avows the narrator (105). Another element that characterizes *La Répudiation* is

the narrator voice. Though the novel defends women this latter reaches the reader's imagination only through Rachid's revelations of his own souvenirs.

With his unique style, Boudjedra attributes a specific delirium to each character, very different from the others' world but very similar in the sufferings and injustice they endured no matter their age, sex or mental state. Though the novel stresses the issue of injustice over the subalterns, as diverse as women, children and youth with identity trouble (as stressed in chapter II), it remains an unjust expression of reality as long as it speaks for women throughout a man's voice (Rachid speaks for his mother) with the excuse of fighting injustice of imposed silence. The text can also be seen as unfair towards man himself. It captures the image of the latter as a redoubtable enemy of woman and it describes him as cruel, tyrant and dehumanized person, while it is not fair to over generalize these flaws on all Algerian men.

This choice of language and stylistic features in the Boudjedrian text reflect commitment and views vis-à-vis a post independent Algeria. Interestingly, his writing style reveals how attentive is Boudjedra as reader. In addition to his splendid vocation of writer, "Je suis un grand lecteur avant d'être un modeste écrivain" reports Abdelouahad Mokhbi in *Monologue avec Rachid Boudjedra*, after meeting the novelist at the University of Mostaganem on December, 2004.

Similarly to the literature of Boudjedra, Armah's style in *The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born*, reflects his reflections toward the conditions of his country. Through a complex language, Armah denounces the destructive leading system in Ghana. The main focalization of the text is the loss of identity and the blind pursuit to resemble British leaders. The author felt the responsibility to play the role of a spokesman and give a testimony with a special language sometimes instructive, and other times destructive.

Departing from the definition of a stylistic as a manner of saying something for a specific purpose, *The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born* is thus, considered by many critics to be a novel of message, affirms Dr. Acheoah John Emike in his paper *A Stylistic Appraisal of Ayi Kwei Armah's the Beautiful Ones are not yet Born* (4-5).

Armah's communicative style is characterized with the third person omniscient narrative, and the use of personal pronouns such as 'she', 'he', 'they', 'it' expresses a clear view of the author vis-à-vis the prevailing system. He does not allow any detachment from his text and includes all Ghanaians, among them himself, to be the saviors of the society. The style of Armah is a clear reproduction of the reality of Africa. It sheds the light on the present time and questions the future of the situation.

It should additionally be noted that the novelist employs various stylistic elements to ease communicating his message and touch a wide range of readers. Through this, he encourages Africans to purify themselves from all aspects of prejudices and attempts to empower them to prosper and stay clean. Hence, he is considered by many critics to be an educator by means of symbolism that he uses excessively in the novel, unlike Boudjedra's work in which the repudiation of Ma is the exclusive symbol of the repudiation of the post independent political system. Armah's symbolism reflects the collapse of moral order and is relevant to the current social and political condition of Ghana.

In *Anatomy of criticism* (1957), Northrop Frye defines symbolism as an image, written word, sound or particular mark that represents something else through associating it to another across resemblance or convention. Armah rounds up the moral decay to the literary tool of symbolism, because he believes that this illness in the society (spiritual death) is in itself a symbol of a repressed injustice and oppression from which the characters suffered during the white colonization, and still endure after the black leaders took the control of the nation.

A flagrant symbol in *The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born* is the choice of names. Armah's unnamed narrator is a depiction of isolation from the society. In *Symbols Of Decadence In Ayi Kwei Armah's The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born*, Eboye Happiness Juliana, makes a critical analysis to the feature of symbolism in the novel and asserts that by giving the name of the man to the narrator, Armah aims at portraying the degree of disintegration in a corrupt society (21-22). The anonymous man throughout the novel represents a serious trouble at the level of identity (already analyzed in chapter II), which is an outcome of the injustice in a (pseudo independent) country that valorizes materialism (description of beautiful houses), gold, money (big salaries) and thirst for high position at government.

Moreover, the British sounding names in the novel symbolize a spiritual emptiness and a detachment from the traditional and ancestral values. Armah seeks to portray this European trace as an aspect of mental colonization. Preferring all the European products and buying the exported goods for instance, is a symbol of refusal to the returning to one's origins and more than this. It is noticeably explained through Mrs Koosmson's utterance in the novel. She says: "Really, the only good drinks are European drinks. These make you ill" (132). The quote reflects a refusal to work for the betterment of one's nation.

The novel represents the daily struggle of individuals to live in a fair society. It therefore focuses on transmitting the image of Ghana in the period immediately after independence. Hence, in this purpose, the text is full of symbols of hopelessness, disillusionment and loss of spiritual values. The repeated movements, walks and changeable stands of the characters (mainly the man) in the novel are symbols of running away from the society. Additionally the character of the teacher is a perfect symbol of this image of escaping the corrupt world to find justice in the books.

Considerably, symbolism in the novel reflects the wide imagination of the author and contributes in the making and categorization of the text in the realms of literature of commitment. Hence it indicates Armah's desire for a better Ghana, and exhibits his fight for a real freedom where society is cleaned up of the corruption and modern colonization that the colored leaders impose. The novelist believes that these corrupt leaders contributed in ruining the social and political life of the nation.

Convinced about the difficulty of overcoming the corrupt reality, no matter the efforts done by men, Armah writes about the undefeated force of injustice exercised over the Ghanaians. This may seem contradictory to the main purpose of the novel which is to claim a positive change and work on ones' self to correct the whole society's lacunas. The following quote reflects the author's deep pessimism about this change especially when the blacks come to govern the country; "The mode underneath world win and will till the end of time ... In the natural course of things it would always take the newness of the different kinds of polish. And the vaunted cleaning power of the chemicals in them, and it would convert all to victorious filth, awaiting yet more polish again and again" reports the narrator (14-15).

The writer points the needless efforts of the politicians and the different reforms at the level of government. Armah's words: "In the natural course of things it would always take the newness of different kinds of polish and the vaunted cleansing power of the chemicals in them, and it would convert all to victorious filth" (12), refer to the changes of ministers, and replacing leaders, that remain for the author useless as long as the corrupt thoughts do not change, all will go back to the zero point, confirms E.H. Juliana who finds this common for almost all the African countries today not only Ghana (40).

Another important means of injustice and corruption in Armah's work is the choice of the title itself, which is very symbolic in a way that it explains how people are enjoying their corrupt lives without caring about the condition of their country that is expected to be

independent. The title ironically refers to the lack of awareness about the bleak future, thus none of the inhabitants seek to be the beautiful one of Ghana.

For his revolutionary stand against injustice, Armah uses many other stylistic elements that are useful for his commitment cause. His powerful characterization demonstrates the seriousness of unfairness and corruption on the individuals, this means that through the despaired personality and troubled psyche of the characters that make the novel, one may feel the profound impact of the endured unfairness on these peoples. Besides from the elements of symbolism, and characterization, Armah employs the other writing techniques such as the repeated use of the present continuous: going (12), thinking (22), drawing (106), wondering (62), shaking (15), etc. This technique explains the author's belief in the permanence of injustice in Ghana, and that people are continually accepting bribes and oppress the subalterns. In this respect the narrator says: "Ghana is one giant stinking lavatory" (72). He adds: "And yet the wondering and the shaking and the vomiting horror" (62).

The novel is also rich with the figurative language. Imagery in particular has been of a great help to make the reader comprehend the severity of the situation. Armah utilizes imagery to send a mental picture to the African reader, a picture of black men eager to eat bribes and unconscious about the peoples' sufferings. This technique motivates the readers' reflection about the future of a post independent Africa. In this regard, Armah writes: "grown fat and cynical from eating centuries of power they had never struggled for" (81). He adds: "raised his right hand and in a slow gesture pointed to his teeth" (182).

Similarly to the Boudjedrian image of physical and spiritual impurity, Armah's images of dirt depict the social and moral corruption. The first pages of the novel display the picture of bribery and rubbish through the image of railway and harbor administration block with its "squat massiveness" (10). Further in the novel, Armah inserts: "course toward putrefaction" (12). He also presents the image of individuals' inner fight to find stability through the

expression: “Everybody seemed to sweat a lot, not from the exertion of their jobs, but from some kind of inner struggle that was always going on” (20). Armah employs the image of disgusting objects to mirror the impurity of peoples’ thoughts and the governmental incompetence, he writes: “...mixtures of piss and shit” (170).

In order to give more credible portrait of the unjust conditions of newly independent Africa, the author of *The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born* involves the metaphoric descriptions in several passages in his novel. He captures the figure of neocolonialism that reins over Ghana under the black masters and blames the moral degradation on it, as demonstrates Gbemisola Adeoti in *The Re-making of Africa: Ayi Kwei Armah and the Narrative of an (Alter) Native Route to Development* (13-14). Thus, the author illustrates how selfish the new political system is. He says: “the twisted desire of the slave not to abolish the stupidity of royal power, but to taste it” (88).

The above quote is a metaphor on the reality of the governmental system, which is not working for the sake of the nation but to gather money, possess beautiful houses and exercise authority and power over poor Ghanaians. Additionally, the author refers to the high degree of hopelessness and despair through interconnecting some opposites such as; Light and Darkness, Gleam and Gloom, Newness and Decay, Sameness and Difference. These contradictions reveal the disillusionment of people with the post independent system that failed to meet their expectations (E. H. Juliana 48).

Likewise, the intelligent usage of abusive words makes Armah’s novel a unique among the African literary masterpieces of the post colonial period. In order to distinguish himself, the author permits the involvement of certain irony, fun, humor, but also vulgarity to shake the reader and provoke critics. The novel is also accused for being a text of an inelegant, unpleasant language, says Alexander Dakubo Kakraba in his essay *Ayi Kwei Armah’s Vulgar Language in the Beautiful Ones are not Yet Born, a Therapeutic Tool* (306).

In some passages, Armah smartly manipulates the words to fit his message. He speaks about sex and the exploitation of the African women's bodies to reflect the ugliness of the society. To reinforce the image of dirt, the author associates it to woman's body, he writes: "the rich stench of rotten menstrual blood" (163). This makes him appear like a brutal and rude author especially in his description of sexual act (sexual practice) to evoke a sense of disgust. In this respect Armah writes: "Women, so horribly young, fucked and changed like pants, asking only for blouses and perfume from diplomatic bags and wigs (...)" (89). Hence condemnation of the corrupt system (political practice) and this vulgarity represents the mark of his originality. The vulgarity of the text helps tremble the readers' critical thinking and question the Ghanaian situation.

In short, the styles of Rachid Boudjedra in *La Répudiation* and Ayi Kwei Armah in *The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born* are very similar in their daring and abusive description of injustice in their post independent countries. Similarly, both authors provide a shocking picture of political incompetence, and social unfairness. Blaming the major part of injustice in the newly independent nations on the colonial past, the choice of language by the two authors may also be problematic. Furthermore, aware about the individual's state of mind after such colonial encounter, Boudjedra and Armah are convinced that the decolonization therapy has to start from the language. Hence, they use the language of the other to voice their own sufferings. The choice of language in this context may be viewed as a liberation process to fight injustice. Yet, the two authors noticeably meet at the vulgarity of their writings styles in order to convey their messages and accomplish their literary commitment missions.



Conclusion



**“Injustice anywhere is a threat for justice
everywhere.”**

Martin Luther King

Conclusion

The analysis of Boudjedra's *La Répudiation* (1969) and Armah's *The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born* (1968) revealed that while the two novels have they have significant differences in the language and the setting in which they are written. Boudjedra and Armah's works are about the realities of Algeria and Ghana at the heart of the post independent era. Hence, their literature is viewed as an attack to denounce incompetent leaders and sensitize the populations to be one single forceful voice to work for the betterment of their nations.

The paper brought to light the considerable role of the historical elements in the literary creation and the importance of evoking the past to better understand the ills of the present. In fact, because Boudjedra and Armah induce the historical events of their countries respectively through a series of souvenirs incarnated in many expressive personas, the study emphasized the role of their novels in recalling the real historical moments through fictional events. Moreover, it highlighted the different forms of injustice exercised over women, children, poor men and the subalterns as a whole and pointed out the impact of brutal living and sociopolitical inequality -that eat up the country- on the psychology of individuals. In other words, the study explained how these conditions lead to identity disorders through significant places such as the hospital and the prison in *La Répudiation* and names such as the man and the teacher in *The Beautiful Ones Are not Yet Born*. Additionally, the paper offered a brief investigation of the impact of injustice on Boudjedra and Armah alike, as long as they belong to the societies portrayed in their respective novels.

Further, the dissertation offered a study of the two authors writing styles and their use of a very selective language to convey their message. It stressed the different narrative techniques that are most commonly used by Boudjedra and Armah and which enabled the two novelists to exhibit the echelon of injustice in the post independent Africa. Furthermore, the

paper demonstrated how taboos of (homosexuality, pedophilia, polygamy and desire of women's body) are broken and how vulgar the utilized language is in the two novels, through a detailed description of dirt and impurity.

Through such harsh language, the authors mirrored how unjust the nations' livings were. Finally, *La Répudiation* and *The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born* raise the reader's attention to the serious problems born out of unfairness. Thus, *La Répudiation* and *The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born* prove how injustice in the governance may be tied up to social and familial injustice as well. They invite the readers to change themselves so that they may claim decisive changes at the government level.

Consequently, further research may read the two novels from diverse perceptions. For instance, a particular attention can be paid to the presence of the feminine character in the two works. Ma In *La Répudiation* and Oyo in *The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born* are different women each of whom has a distinct way to survive with men. They respond to the endured injustice in unusual way; Ma reflects an obedient passive behavior toward her husbands' dominance, while Oyo stands tall in front of poverty and imposes her thoughts to the faithful man. It is thus important to study the feminine character and traits to gain insight into feminine different attitudes.

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