

From Pessimism to Optimism in Ayi Kwei Amrah

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Abstract

Colonialism plays crucial role in the history of human beings from the third world, most of the third world countries from Asian and African continents still bear the brunt of imperial encounters. The voice of protest for the colonial atrocities and its brutal invasion on the indigenous culture and tradition is still perceived in the literature of the colonized world. The literature of resistance whether it is in the language of colonial masters or the vernaculars always inspire and exhort the country men for the deliverance of their mind from the imperial prejudices. One of the literary germs of the post-colonial literature from the African continent is the Ghana writer Ayi Kwei Amrah who always advocates the ones rich and prosperous culture of Africa as well as of Ghana. He reiterates this throughout his works wherein he asks his fellow countrymen to shun the colonial misconceptions that have made a huge scar on their African identity. He urges the Africans to dismantle the toxic colonial mentality of enslavement which is still perceived in African people. He not only focuses on the problems and issues which need serious attention but also provides the Panacea for the existence problems. His persistent insistence on the bright African past and culture provides an ample solution for the blind imitation to the European etiquettes in the false name of modernity and forwardness. He is one of the staunch supporters of the African glorious past which was misappropriated by the colonialist. This paper sheds light on Ayi Kwei Amrah's portrayal sorry state of the affairs of his motherland but he also leaves a room for optimism where the land will definite have a prosperous future.

Key words: Colonialism, culture, exploitation, future, imperialism, injustice, optimism and pessimism etc.

Introduction

Almost all the works of Ayi Kwei Amrah's have the beautiful pictures of its indigenous traditions and cultures which are brutally distorted by the invaders and unfortunately this distorted history is accepted by the current African generation as true. This is really terrible as far as the African youths are concerned, so it is the responsibility of the African intellectuals to revive the original past so that it is properly presented to the current generation, else the new generation will try to distance himself or herself from their past and eulogize the over glamoured Western culture and its way of livelihood. The literary world of Ayi Kwei Amrah is replete with the African social, political and cultural heritage which is of immensely diverse and vivid. It also presents the contemporary morbid world which is polluted because of the colonial encounter and invasion. Besides the dystopian conditions that are mostly prevalent because of the greed and selfishness of his own countrymen, he is not altogether pessimist. His work like *The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born* presents his faith in optimism and hope. He focuses on the present and future conditions through this work. He believes that the present and horrible circumstances will definitely come to an end. So he asks his fellow countrymen to distance themselves from the current rottenness as the best is coming soon. He also insist that the African culture is excellent, the contentment should not move towards to intolerance and fanaticism towards their past.

His works shed light on the precarious conditions which are the outcome of colonial contacts and this filth and dirt will be removed by following the African ancient precepts of livelihood and brotherhood. He is the spokesperson of the African masses which are trampled and muted because of the colonial subjugation and brutalities. He does not stop just by focusing on the present lethargy and malpractices but he investigates its origin and claims that most of the present evils are gendered from the colonial legacy. These pollutants will be removed only by moving away from the European shabby morals. African culture and civilization are the only options for the countries which are heavily plundered during colonial times. He states that the re jubilation of the African culture and history will be done only through the shunning of slavish mindset. He always focuses on the better prospect of his countrymen in particular and the

Africans in general. He emphasizes the African tradition wherein there is no place for discrimination on the basis of race and region, the Africans believe in the dignity of human beings which are equal in the eyes of the creator. The divide and discrimination are the colonial legacy which should be buried deep by the African themselves. By turning his tirade against the imperialists who are largely responsible for the misery of the black people, he also targets the indigenous stooges of the colonialists who have become reactionaries to the reformative initiatives taken by the freemen. So his literary canvas is more extensive and vivid.

Although the novelist makes direct and uncovered intent for the mass mobilization against the present wretchedness and filth that is caused by the corrupt leaders of his country, he always asks his countrymen to rise and protest against the prevailing state of affairs that are inimical to the development and upliftment of the people. This persistent insistence on the mass protest and activeness and rising from the slumber shows his burning desire for the upliftment of the people who were earlier plundered by the colonial people and are still used for the realization of the personal gains of the politicians and the so called new clan of leaders. It is his commitment for the welfare of the trampled generation that is perceived in most of his works. He is not only visionary but also a reformist and an activist who believes that the next generation is capable enough to bring an end to all forms of imperfections and malpractices which have become the hallmark of the present African social and political order. This is all because of the termination of the ties by the Africans to their culture the present precariousness is altogether removed only when the Africans take shelter in their own Africanhood. He neither limits himself to the national boundaries of his land, but he also broadens his vision in such a way that it encompasses the entire African continent.

Ayi Kwei Amrah surpasses the regional frontiers. His works are an excellent mixture of regional, national and pan African continental aspirations and sentiments. He is not of one country but the whole African race claim him. His works present the social, political and financial upheavals that are caused because of the departure of the colonial masters and as a result of it the emergence of various nationalities among the vast African continent. The political instability because of the conflicting political aspirations has made tremendous effect on the

future of the new born African countries. The colonizer left this land without bothering about the prospect of these countries in their absence. Most of the African countries witness the large scale violence that is caused by the military coups and unrest. The present corrupt totalitarian and authoritative people who replaced the earlier colonial masters never try to bridge the gap between haves and have nots. The new elites in many cases behave more brutally than the white masters. The rift between the leadership, the unprivileged and deprived class further widened. All these atrocities are focused in the works of Amrah who is considered as the spokesperson of the neglected and marginalized section not only of Ghana but also of the whole African continent. Almost all of his works are directed towards the orientation of the Africans. It is the vision which reflects in the thoughts and ideas of the novelist provide him the large-scale recognition as a man who speaks for the ever ignored masses. It is through his works the reader gets acquainted with not only the gradual transformation but also the drastic changes that the African society experience after the end of the imperial rule. It is his portrayal of the true nature of colonialism and African state of aspirations and expectations provides him the much appreciated authenticity and originality. He presents the debased and grubby conditions that are present in his times. His work like the *Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born* investigate the present state of affairs, its consequences and the remedies that will put an end to all the maladies and viles. This work mostly focus on the devastating consequences of the African and colonial tangency. This catastrophic intercourse is thoroughly depicted in this work. He states that the interaction between the altogether different and antagonistic culture fosters the never ending discord and confrontation. There is no compatibility between these two entities. His predictions are totally grounded in compassionate and generous principles wherein he prioritizes the wellbeing and development. Amrah's *Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born* is a protuberant novel that sketches the present precarious conditions of Ghana where fraudulence, adulteration and subversion and debasement are widespread. Most of the people have become disillusioned and embittered because of the misconduct and duplicity of the so-called leaders who have shown the dreams to their countrymen. The work focuses on the general temper of the commons who are become so feeble and impotent because of the wide ranging debasement and corruption and the

most vexatious thing is that these people do not perceive an immediate end to this flagrant manipulation and adulteration.

Like a common man the novelist himself is also intensely disheartened because of the prevailing social, political and financial conditions. He presents the agony and exasperation by presenting the pictures that are smeared and smudged. But one cannot miss the cheery and buyout attitude of the novelist. He foresees a propitious picture even in the smudges and grime. He is a firm believer in the enormous and whopping human capability as history shows that man achieves the zenith in the time of tenebrosity. This work focuses on the gloominess in the Ghana and the miseries and regulations of his countrymen after the end of the colonial rule. The people and society have become so perverse that the only aim of the degenerated souls is self-survival and pillage of national resources for individual development. Now most of the people have now maddened because of their unending lure and inducement of affluence and riches. It has become the most dominating factor that molds the general behavior and perception of an individual or group. As most of the African sacrifice everything for the liberation of their land who decisively grapple with the colonial masters for ending the chains of servitude but all the dreams and yearnings are impeded and crippled by the newborn selfish and authoritative dominion. The current elites disappointed the commons who now cognized of the real intentions of their leaders. The people in authority exercise every manipulation for plundering national wealth for their own wellbeing. They amassed asked the major chunk of national resources for their opportunistic ideas. This work is a denunciation of the indigenous administration and the people who are at the helm of every political and financial activity. The novelist reproves and rebukes the leaders as the new masters who are not different from their imperial counterparts.

Besides portraying the horrible and gloomy pictures, the novelist also provides a silver ray where the current chain of debasement will be splintered and fragmented in near future. Amrah in *Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born* expresses his indignation towards the blatant use of political power by the power hungry political leadership who ignores all conscience and plunders the whole country for their own selfish motives. The terrible condition of his motherland after its liberation makes him angry as well as sad. He depicts the current disgusting condition of Ghana

in this work. Through the protagonist Man he sheds light not only on the degeneration of a particular country like Ghana but also he brings the entire African continent which has just succeeded in splintering the imperial fetters. Man becomes the spokesperson of the novelist who still has the hope as everything is not so much adulterated that one cannot think about any purification efforts. Although there are a very few persons like Man who can understand what is good and dumb. As most of the people have become so passive and disoriented that they accept every form of injustice as natural. Their ability of identifying the just and unjust is marred by the continuous invasion of the brutes, but Amrah is not a thorough pessimist, he through the characters like Man and Teacher who is there to exhort the righteous persons like Man shows that the clouds of indolence and passiveness are momentary and there will be a definite beautiful dawn where the present order will be replaced with a more humane and compassionate world.

His work *Fragments* present the same line of thought that focuses on the degeneration in every walks of life. Here the nation is presented through a family where individuals are exploited like the imperialist who plunders the whole nation. The encounter between the white and coloured people becomes a cause of concern for the indigenous people and they get infected with the negative traits of European traditions, shows the extent of alienation and mental seclusion of the individuals in the society.

Conclusion

In this way Ayi Kwei Amrah throughout his works presents the pathetic condition of Ghana where common people are the worst sufferers. He never leaves the reader into the world of perpetual darkness and frustration. His optimism is vibrant and he foresees bright future for his motherland. Like many post-colonial writers, he criticizes the imperial world for all the woes of his countrymen. He also believes that only Africans can put an end to their tribulations as there will not be a savior from the outside and it will be done only when the Africans respect and cherish their culture and traditions. His protest and anguish towards the current filth does not eclipse his firm optimism.

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