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**PROPHECY IN NGUGI WA THIONG'O'S DEVIL ON THE CROSS
AND
AYI KWEI ARMAH'S THE BEAUTYFUL ONES ARE NOT YET BORN**

BY

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**A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfilment Of the Requirements for the Degree
Of Master of Arts in Literature**

The University of Zambia

September, 2016

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the work in this research report is mine and that it has not previously been submitted for any other degree at this or any other university.

SIGNED:.....DATE:.....

APPROVAL

This dissertation by Kangombe Munalula is approved as fulfilling part of the requirements for the award of the Degree of Master of Arts in Literature of the University of Zambia

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ABSTRACT

From fourteenth century medieval literature to contemporary American and African American literature, researchers have singled out and analyzed writing from every genre that is prophetic in nature, predicting or warning about events, both revolutionary and dire, to come. This comes against a background of over-reliance on the Bible or religious works for prophecy. Two twentieth-century African texts which embody the essence of warning and foretelling are Ngugi wa Thiong'o's *Devil on the Cross* and Ayi Kwei Armah's *The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born*. The purpose of this study is to investigate prophetic traits in the two texts in accordance with some definitions of prophecy. This investigation makes use of historical and biographical, moral-philosophical and Marxist theories. Philosophy reveals that the two novels' prophetic platforms bear witness to the challenges of a commoner before and after independence, and later years of social, economic and political injustices, or rather deleterious societal conditions. The two texts also make predictions, criticisms, warnings and promises of restoration if their warnings are heeded. Also the media through which this prophecy is disseminated are songs or music, history, stories, unique language - nauseating, scatological and vulgar in the case of Armah, and metaphorical and satirical in the case of Ngugi. However, restoration is minimal and there are no demonic predictions in Armah's text as compared to Ngugi's. Moreover, prophecy in the two texts is significant as it: guides people to liberate themselves from their plight; alerts people to read the two texts as prophecy; helps people to invent the future; paves the way for investigation of prophecy in other fictional works and fills the gaps which might have been left in the course of this study. Unlike ancient Biblical texts, the two texts under this study are contemporary to our own time, place, and circumstance and can easily be read in contemporary ways. In order to cement the prevalence of prophecy in the two texts, however, allusions or echoes to the Bible have been made where possible as religion seems to be the foundation of prophecy.

DEDICATION

First I would like to dedicate this dissertation to my wife Monde, my three sons Munalula, Kangombe, Chilala, my daughter Namangolwa, and my mother Judith Namangolwa, for her words of wisdom that “Education is a liberator.” It is her words which have quietly inspired and resonated with me during this long journey to finish this project.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

As I reflect upon the completion of this dissertation, there are several people that are worthy of acknowledgement. First, I would like to thank God, for blessing me to complete this project. Many people contributed to the success of this project, and my deepest and sincere gratitude goes to my supervisor Prof Stewart Crehan, who remained committed until the end. This cannot go without thanking other lecturers, who as well mentored me. I would like to thank the friends that I treasure the most for their various ways that they each strove to be supportive - Mutakwa Earnwell, John Matakala Mwitumwa, Nyelukwa Sepiso Promise, Kelly Malumani and Muwana Stanley. Also I am thankful to the University of Zambia for offering me the required moral and material support. And my gratitude goes to my wife Monde and my mother Namangolwa for being very supportive, understanding and providing calmness during this long period of demanding work.

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CHAPTER ONE

1.0 GENERAL INTRODUCTION

In this chapter the statement of the problem, aim, objectives, significance of the study, research questions, theoretical framework, methodology, and scope of the study and definition of terms are presented. Also a detailed introduction or background has been included.

1.1 INTRODUCTION

From fourteenth century medieval literature to contemporary American and African American literature, researchers have singled out and analysed writing from every genre that is prophetic in nature, predicting or warning about events both revolutionary and dire to come (Watson, 2009). The foundation of this study begins with the definition of prophecy and the role it has played in religious, cultural and literary history. According to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, prophecy is “an inspired utterance of a prophet, especially Biblical; the function or vocation of a prophet; specifically: the inspired declaration of divine will and purpose; a prediction of something to come” (2008:666). Thus, prophecy is defined not merely as the specific utterance or the words of the prophet and how the prophet carries out his or her role, but as inspired utterances of a higher being or we might say simply a higher than ordinary human purpose. Precisely, prophecy is the act of one predicting what is to come and often what the prophet’s audience must do to escape or accept future events. In its narrower sense, the term prophet refers to an inspired person who believes that he has been sent by his god with a message to tell (Alcalay, 1996). He is, in this sense, the mouthpiece of his god. In a broader sense, the word can refer to anybody who utters the will of a deity, often ascertained through visions, dreams, or the casting of lots; the will of the deity also might be spoken in a liturgical setting. The prophet, thus, is often associated with the priest, shaman, diviner, and possessor of psychic powers. In a much broader sense, the term prophet has been used in connection with social and religious-political reformers and leaders.

In exploring the topic, the study will focus on the works of the two authors - Ayi Kwei Armah's *The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born* (1968) and Ngugi wa Thiong'o's *Devil on the Cross* (1982). In order to understand the two authors, that is Ngugi and Armah, we shall seek the various origins of the word "Prophecy", and given the authors' own social context and sense of the prophetic tradition, we must begin with the prophetic traditions in existence.

The root of the English word prophecy is derived from the Greek "prophēteia", Latin "prophetia" (Wuzgberger, 1971). The root of "prophēteia" is derived from "prophēmi", which means to speak before or for someone or something. A cognate Greek word is "prophētazō", which indicates the reception of the gift of interpreting the will of the gods - that is, the gift of prophecy (Wuzgberger, 1971). Prophecy sees ahead, and providence (from 'pro', forward, and 'videre', to see) sees God's hand or the hand of fate or fortune guiding human destiny. Usually the end is good, but getting there involves much suffering and confusion. The gift of prophecy apparently is a universal attribute since many civilizations and their religions claim to have experienced divine revelation through those who have received the gift of prophecy.

According to Lewis (1989:79), types of prophecy can be classified on the basis of inspiration, behaviour, and office. There are divinatory prophets, who include seers, oracle givers, soothsayers, and diviners all of whom predict the future or tell the divine will in oracular statements in the frenzied state of ecstasy (Lewis, 1989). In other words, fortune telling, the art of forecasting the future supposedly by supernatural means is an ancient practice which is still popular today. It is also known as divination and the person who practices this activity is known as a diviner. Fortune tellers include all those who claim to predict the future or advise on one's life through such means as ouija boards, mirror mantic such as crystal balls, mirrors, rock crystals, extra sensory perception (ESP), horoscopes, astrology or biorhythm, telepathy, palm-reading (palmistry, chiromancy), clairvoyance, kabala (Jewish mysticism), pendulums, tarot and other card readings (cartomancy), coffee grounds, tea leaves, beans, candles, and use of certain devices such as throwing special sticks or dice, automatic writing and handwriting analysis (Lewis, 1989). Predictions and foretelling, however, may also be

the result of inspiration as in ancient prophecy, or common sense by the intelligent observation of situations and events as in modern prophecy. Contemporary writers such as Ngugi and Armah, may not be religious per se, but observe events in their contemporary world and by this are able to prophesy. This is because prophecy in modern times has come to mean almost exclusively the prediction of future events (Simpson, 2005).

Lampsas (1984) notes that prophets are familiar with the signs, omens, pointers, clues and tell-tale happenings that symbolize or presage an apocalyptic event or a great change in human affairs. In other words, prophets are like detectives who pick up clues which others miss and who therefore see better and further and more clearly than others and can predict or warn based on knowledge of the signs. For instance, in Greco-Roman times a bird was a prophetic omen (good or bad). If the bird appeared at a particular place or flew in a certain direction one could “read” the sign or omen and declare its meaning. Prophets interpreted the flights of birds, their species and flying style (Lampsas, 1984:43). In China local people used to observe the behaviour of certain animals that told them an earthquake was coming because animals are much more sensitive to subterranean movements. Also farmers and rural people can predict the weather based on wind and cloud formation. So “prophecy” is not restricted to prophets but is simply a reading of certain phenomena interpreted as predictive indicators, that is, as indexical signs (Lampsas, 1984). In the two texts under this study there are signs read by some characters.

With reference to Lewis (1989), a cult prophet or priest-prophet may be an ordinary priest who says the divine oracular word at an appropriate point in a liturgy. In the Bible, prophecy is often defined as preaching, teaching and exhorting. Though it may not be in a temple, the two texts seem to be preaching to the readers by showing the iniquities of people to help them change and become good citizens. In a nutshell, the two authors’ texts give valuable advice or information by raising their voices against social, economic and political injustices prevalent in their society and seem to stand for the cause of the poor and the vulnerable. Here it can be argued that this is what even prophets who claim to be God-sent stand for.

Also there are missionary (apostolic) prophets who maintain that the religious truth revealed to them is unique to them alone, and so acquire a following of disciples who accept their religion which eventually leads to a new religion (Forbes, 1997). On the other hand, modern literary prophetic texts under this study seem to fight against social, political and economic injustices or rather ills.

Furthermore, a reformatory or revolutionary kind of prophet looks at the past, present and the future, and is closely related to the restorative type (Lewis, 1989). African prose fiction writers under this study are reformatory or revolutionary for they are advocating change against injustices.

The Communist Manifesto, by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, was viewed as a “prophecy” of things to come (Forbes, 1997). According to Marx and Engels (1848), one main idea of the Communist Manifesto is that all of history until now is the story of a series of class struggles. Each society has a characteristic economic structure. According to Hobsbawm (2011), this structure breeds different classes which are in conflict as they oppress or are oppressed by each other. The most significant trait of the proletariat, however, is that they have no property. Because of this, when they have their revolution, they will destroy the entire system of class exploitation, including all private property (Marx and Engels, 1848). Thus, the stage of history that Marx is describing is the last stage. The Communists integrate observations and predictions, and also advocate those predictions, and attempt to accelerate their realization. They call on workers to unite, promising them freedom and a better world. In Ngugi’s *Devil on the Cross*, Muturi, Wariinga and the student leader lead the peasants’ and workers’ revolution against the private businessmen. However, this is modern prophecy in which the people avenge as opposed to biblical prophecy where God punishes and levels palaces.

In a Hittite text King Mursilis II, who ruled from 1334 to 1306 BC mentions the presence of prophets, but more informative are texts from Mari prophets in northwest Mesopotamia, where some striking parallels to Hebrew prophecy have been discovered (Aune, 1963: 47). The Mari prophets’ sayings are political in nature, but there are also

oracles that deal with the king's duty to protect the poor and needy, indicating that an ethical dimension was present among the Mari prophets (Thompson, 2008:23). The messages also contain admonitions, threats, reproofs, accusations, and predictions of either disaster or good fortune. Similarly, Ngugi's and Armah's texts contain admonitions, threats, reproofs and predictions, which among others are the traits of modern literary prophecy under this study. Unlike ancient prophets who claimed to have been sent by God to deliver certain messages, modern-day prophecy is defined down to a form of cultural criticism aimed at the church or society-at-large (Allen and Williamson, 2011:23). In line with this, Ngugi's and Armah's texts criticise societal ills. It must be noted that these are not God's inspired warnings and denunciations as are biblical prophecies. Here it is the people who enact change as opposed to ancient prophecy in which the prophet prophesies against oppressors and then God accomplishes the prophecy. For instance, Isaiah 16 describes a number of kings and tyrants, who are brought down from the place of pride and power by the shaking of God. He gives relief from suffering and cruel bondage by destroying the aggressive and oppressive rulers. God was able to stretch forth his hand and accomplish his purpose, because prophets like Isaiah have prophesied against them (Isaiah, 12:23).

The historic order of Hebrew prophecy begins with Moses in 1200 B.C (Thompson 2008:89). He was the typical combination of civil and religious director in one. He introduced the worship of Yahweh among his people, and gave them the rudiments of law and a new sense of justice wider and deeper than that of the tribal system. Geoghegan (2003:199) notes that the most common tasks of biblical prophets are: predicting the future; advising leaders; enacting change; performing symbolic acts; and declaring oracles. The ancient prophets claimed to communicate with God through dreams, visions and even meeting god face to face to receive inspirations to prophesy. It is important to note that in the ancient times there were as well demonic predictions. For example, the Hebrew word for prophet "nabhi" means one subject to the inspiration of a god or demon and designates the behaviour associated with a prophet (Robinson, 1932:47). Thus the word "prophet" could be applied to the prophets of the Bible and to the devotees of Baal. Therefore the dark aspects were surely present among the

Hebrews, as witnessed by God's destruction of almost all of his creation because of humanity's sinfulness.

The two authors of the texts under this study are able to predict by using common sense. This is as Simpson (2005) notes that prophecy in modern times has come to mean almost exclusively the prediction of future events. Also Classical Confucian religion of China emphasized the importance of rational process over inspiration and divination (Rowley 1956:159). In modern times, this movement became a political-religious one.

According to Reagan (1996), in many non-literate cultures, especially those of Africa, shamans, seers, and prophets are quite common. When tracing the history of prophecy in Africa, scholars usually find that it arises in times of confrontations with foreign cultures and with the advent of new religions. Many of these prophets took up Christian ideas, especially from the book of Revelation, focusing on millennialism and apocalypticism (Landes, 2011). This entails the destruction of the world when evil doers will be punished, followed by the establishment of a kingdom of God for a thousand years or more - a millennium. The author of Revelation is John, and the introductory message is: the end of days is at hand, and the final message is: "The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Messiah, and he will reign forever and ever" (Revelation, 11:15). The moment for justice, punishment, and triumph has arrived, with lightning, hail, thunder and earthquakes. In the modern world, economic rules or vast conspiracies are seen as generating oppression. With reference to Landes (2011), only dramatic events are seen as able to change the world and the change is anticipated to be brought about, or survived, by a group of the devout and dedicated. In most millenarian scenarios or movements, the disaster or battle to come will be followed by a new, purified world in which the believers will be rewarded. While many millennial groups are pacifistic, millenarian beliefs have been claimed as causes for people to ignore conventional rules of behaviour, which can result in violence directed inwards such as the Jonestown mass suicides or outwards such as the Aum Shinrikyo terrorist acts (Wessinger, 2000). Linden (1971:632) says that Tenskwatawathe "Shawnee Prophet" called for a return to ancestral ways and defeat of European colonial power, and the Chilembwe uprising of 1915 in Nyasaland was led by

a millenarian priest. According to Wessinger (2000), Marxism is a millenarian movement, and Ngugi is writing from this ideology in *Devil on the Cross*.

Just like Biblical prophets, the oracle in *Things Fall Apart* foretells the coming of whites (Achebe, 1958:97). Also in *The River Between*, Chege, a seer descended from the legendary Mugo, is the elder leader of Kamenno, where traditional Kikuyu have ignored Mugo's prophecy foretelling the coming of white settlers, "for he saw many butterflies of many colours, flying about over the land, disrupting the peace and the ordered life of the country. Then he cried aloud and said: 'There shall come a people with clothes like butterflies...' People did not believe him" (Ngugi, 1965:24). This simply shows that there are other prophecies which were not documented due to high levels of illiteracy at that time in Africa. This prophecy is spiritual and tends to be forgotten the moment the prophet recovers from his trance. Moreover, when Chege takes Waiyaki to the sacred tree and mountain of Murungu, he reveals an ancient, secret prophecy: A leader from the hills will bring salvation to his people (Ngugi, 1965). In the following passage, Waiyaki's father Chege discloses to Waiyaki his foreseen responsibility:

Now, listen my son. Listen carefully, for this is the ancient prophecy....I could not do more. When the white man came and fixed himself in Siriana, I warned all the people. But they laughed at me. Maybe I was hasty. Perhaps I was not the one. Mugo often said you could not cut the butterflies with a panga. You could not spear them until you learnt and knew their ways and movement. Then you could trap, you could fight back. Before he died, he whispered to his son the prophecy, the ancient prophecy: 'Salvation shall come from the hills. From the blood that flows in me, I say from the same tree, a son shall rise. And his duty shall be to lead and save the people!' He said no more. Few knew the prophecy. Perhaps Kabonyi, who has betrayed the tribe, knows about it. I am old, my time is gone. Remember that you are the last in this line (Ngugi, 1965:24).

From the foregoing quote Chege reasons that as other heroes have gone beyond the knowledge of the immediate region, Waiyaki must do so as well (Ngugi, 1965).

A Wreath for Udomo by Peter Abrahams and *Animal Farm* by George Orwell elaborate the theme of political betrayal (Abrahams, 1956; Orwell, 1989). Paralleled to Abrahams' and Orwell's texts are Armah's and Ngugi's postcolonial novels which have

predictive prophecy, in the modern sense of the term. However, unlike *A Wreath for Udomo* and *Animal Farm*, this study will do thorough discussion of the theme of political betrayal and other themes in relation to the traits of prophecy prevalent in Armah's *The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born* and Ngugi's *Devil on the Cross*.

Having looked at the prophetic traditions, we now focus on the current study of the topic which is "Prophecy in Ngugi wa Thiong'o's *Devil on the Cross* and Ayi Kwei Armah's *The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born*." What will be of interest are the traits or elements of prophecy which are prevalent in the two works, in accordance with some definitions of prophecy. Thus in relation to this, it is important to look at the similarities and differences between ancient and modern prophecy. This is because the two fictional writers are prophesying in the modern world.

Both the ancient and modern prophets bear witness to social, economic and political injustices, or rather deleterious societal conditions. In the first place, it should be pointed out that literary prophet is a name given to the Biblical figures who wrote down their prophecies and personal histories, rather than histories of the Israelites (Maxwell, 1994). However, *Devil on the Cross* and *The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born* are novels which have traits of modern literary prophecy. The majority of the writing of the biblical prophets is attributed to Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and Moses, while the minor works were written by Hosea, Micah and Amos (Brueggeman 1978:70). The deleterious societal conditions Isaiah deals much with are the same themes as those of Amos and Hosea: the sins of luxury, fashion, and frivolity in men and women; land grabbing... (Chapters 1, 2, 3, and 4). Hosea lists the offences of Israel related to Sinai – swearing, lying, murder, stealing, committing adultery (Deuteronomy, 14: 28; 24: 19-22). It can be noted that these biblical prophets testified to the corruption, exploitation and other injustices in their societies and urged people to change for the better. Similarly, modern day prophets attest to all that ancient prophets bore witness to, but in a world of today rather than that which existed about 3000 years ago. Ancient prophets testified in monarchical states, especially during the divided kingdom of Judah and Israel, with no industries and big market systems as compared to the time of modern prophecy.

The modern and ancient prophets are to speak for the Lord (McTernan, 2011). On a global scale, we see God speaking in the Protestant Reformation under teachers like Luther and Calvin, and in the evangelical awakening under preachers like Wesley and Asbury (Csordas, 1997). Their similarity to the Old Testament prophetic movement is their demand for a just society. At a time when the institution of monarchy jeopardized the Exodus and the covenant vision of a society based on principle, justice, equality and love to promote the economics of affluence and triumphalism without listening to the cry of the marginalised of the society, the prophets arose to become the voice of the voiceless and took care that the ideals of the Exodus and Covenant be remembered (Brueggemann, 1997:645). They raised their voices against the corruption, exploitation and injustice prevalent in their society and stood for the cause of the poor and the vulnerable, while modern-day prophecy is defined down to a form of cultural criticism aimed at the church or society-at-large (Allen and William, 2011:23). There are no literal burning bushes in this form of prophecy, no audible voices calling in the temple. Instead, inward conviction or a burning sense of injustice drives the prophet. The modern prophet actively thinks and reflects on the issues of the day; he or she is not merely a passive instrument who passes along the very words of God (Gabel, 2000). The theophanies (manifestation) of God and miracles are insignificant; it is the message of social justice, cultural change or ecclesiastical righteousness that really counts.

Moreover, ancient and modern prophecies have predictions of the future. However, most of ancient predictive prophecies were inspired by God. For instance, Isaiah 9:6-7 says that there would be a son called God and this comes to pass. Similarly, modern prophets such as the charismatic prophets get “a word from God” or “a word of knowledge” that very literally reveal the hidden mind of God (Csordas, 1997:322). The word can pertain to things both great and small, perhaps telling someone to take a particular action or perhaps explaining why a particular event occurred or even predicting an event that will occur (Csordas, 1977). These are charlatan prophets of today such as T.B Joshua who focus on trivia not large changes. Here it should be as Simpson (2005) notes that prophecy in modern days has almost exclusively come to mean the prediction of future events.

Both modern and ancient prophets warn people of dire consequences for doing wrong, but it is God who punishes in the Bible and people who avenge in modern times or texts. Ancient prophets were sent by God to warn Israel of the coming judgment; when Israel rejected the prophets' warnings and based on the second covenant - obeying the Law of Moses, the nation was destroyed (Deuteronomy, 28:64). The first destruction, by the Babylonians, began in 586 BC and lasted 70 years, and the second began in 70 AD and lasted until 1967 when Jerusalem was once again the unified capital of Israel (McTernan, 2011). However, this is controversial because according to the United Nations, Jerusalem was to be an international city. Moreover, it is fully noted in both ancient and modern prophecy that the high are brought low and the low are exalted as the findings of this study show.

Moreover, both ancient and modern prophets prophesy restoration. The theme of the dispersion and restoration of Israel is one of the major focuses in the Bible. This future age is described in many of the chapters from the beginning to the end of Isaiah: all animals will live at peace with man and one another, and "the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD" (Isaiah 11:6-9). There is another restoration in which after the punishment of those disobedient to God's law, as in the case of ancient prophets, and generally sin, in the case of modern prophets, Jesus Christ will come and establish his rule. Here it should be observed that there is return to innocence in biblical as opposed to forward with justice in modern prophecy.

Most of the ancient prophets claimed to have been sent by God to deliver certain messages to the people. This entails that they were all inspired by God. For example, God appeared to Moses in the form of a burning bush, telling him exactly what He wanted him to do - he met God face to face (Exodus 24:9-11). Modern preachers interpret biblical passages which are delivered in church. Some ancient prophets went to the extent of acting out or dramatising God's messages as was the case of Isaiah, who walked barefoot and naked for three days (Isaiah, 20:2), to get people's attention to deliver a message. It can also be observed that ancient prophets' inspired words and histories contributed to the writing of the Bible. Today's prophets rely on the Bible to

prophecy, and most of them if not all, write commentaries or comment on the biblical prophecy and try to relate it to today's events.

While some critics have analysed the two texts in terms of other topics such as symbolism, metaphor and didacticism, I sought to investigate the traits of prophecy in the novels, *Devil on the Cross* and *The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born*.

1.1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The overall problem is that so far there has not been a thorough investigation of prophecy in Ngugi's *Devil on the Cross* and Armah's *The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born*. Thus the study seeks to demonstrate that fictional works such as these under this study have traits or elements of prophecy. Therefore the study seeks to enlighten us to read and understand *Devil on the Cross* and *The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born* as such. In a nutshell, the question is "What prophecies are in Ngugi's *Devil on the Cross* and Armah's *The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born*?"

1.1.3 AIM OF THE STUDY

The aim of the study is to demonstrate the occurrence of prophecy in Ngugi wa Thiong'o's *Devil on the Cross* and Ayi Kwei Armah's *The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born*.

1.1.4 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

In order to help the researcher come up with data on this investigation, the objectives of the study were listed as follows:

- (i) Investigate traits of prophecy in the two texts.
- (ii) Analyse the similarities and differences of prophecies in the two texts.
- (iii) Examine the significance of prophecies in the two texts.

1.1.5 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

In order to fulfil the objectives of the study, the following questions were asked:

- (i) What forms of prophecies are there in the two selected texts?
- (ii) What are the similarities and differences of prophecies in the two texts?
- (iii) What is the significance of prophecies in the two works?

1.1.6 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The study focuses on the prophetic nature of the novels of Ngugi wa Thiong'o's *Devil on the Cross* and Ayi Kwei Armah's *The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born*. So far there have not been scholars of African literature that have seriously taken the task of measuring the strength of the prophecy in Ngugi's and Armah's prose fictions. All along it has only been the Bible or other religious works and many other prophetic writings such as those of William Blake (1790s) and science fiction of H.G. Wells, which some people considered to be prophetic, yet there are some prose fiction works other than these which have prophetic traits. This study is therefore an attempt to demonstrate prophecy in African prose fiction as portrayed in the works of Ngugi and Armah. Also the study attempts, if only in a small way, to break some fresh ground on the scholarship on Ngugi and Armah by endeavouring to probe an area that seems to have remained unexplored. Additionally this study is significant as it might attempt to demonstrate that artists can also play a prophetic function, and are pre-eminently the ones who help their contemporaries to invent the future (Booker, 1996:405). It is hoped that this study might stimulate further inquiry into prophecy not only with respect to Ngugi's and Armah's works but also those of other African writers, and contribute to debate on the extent to which various literary devices can be used to foster the aim of this study.

1.1.7 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The study used the historical and biographical approaches as the main one, supported by the moral-philosophical and Marxist approaches.

1.7.1.1 Historical and Biographical approaches

According to Guerin et al (2007:51), historical and biographical approaches see a literary work as a reflection of its author's life and times, and times of characters in the work. Thus historicism was highly used as the novel's milieu and that of its authors were vital to the investigation of prophecy in the two postcolonial texts. This applies even more to ideological or propagandist novels. Also this approach was very useful as novels are affected by extrinsic factors such as the prevailing economic, social and political situations (Daiches, 1956:72). Even poets have from the earliest times been the historians, interpreters of contemporary cultures, and the prophets of their people (Guerin et al, 2007:53). Just like poets cry against the oppression of human beings by society so do Ngugi and Armah lash out at injustices of theirs and ours. As has been noted, the two prose fiction writers ridicule contemporary situations and persons as a way of correcting behaviour. All these situations may be understood and appreciated with extensive historical or biographical background. Most readers would probably agree with T.S. Elliot that no poet, no artist of any art, has his complete meaning alone and with Richard D. Atlick that almost every literary work is attended by a host of outside circumstances which, once we expose and explore them, suffuse it with additional meaning (Guerin et al, 2007:53). Thus the following approaches were also used to supplement the main one.

1.7.1.2 Moral-Philosophical approaches

Guerin et al (2007) says that literature has a simple function of teaching. The emphasis is on moralism and utilitarianism – the belief that the right course of action is the one that will produce the greatest happiness of the greatest number of people, and that literature should be delightful and instructive (Guerin et al, 2007:77). Also it is noted that a great literary work must possess high seriousness, the important thing being moral and philosophical teaching. Such teaching may also be of a religious nature. Since we are dealing with prophecy, which is a very serious issue, it is justified to use this approach to interpret events in the two texts. This is because the two texts probe moral and philosophical issues. As can be noted the two texts deal with moral issues which are

a serious factor in the well being of the society. However, it should be pointed out that Romantic poets such as William Blake wrote prophecies in the 1790s such as *America a Prophecy*, *Europe a Prophecy* and *The Song of Los*, divided into "Africa" and "Asia", which all portray events with a focus on satire, society, liberty found in revolution, and the apocalypse (Frye, 1966).

1.7.1.3 Marxist criticism

Undoubtedly, Ngugi writes from the Marxist ideological point of view. The Marxist critical approach is also used to interpret events even in Armah's text. According to Marxists, literature reflects those social institutions out of which it emerges and is itself a social institution with a particular ideological function. Abrams (1999:149) says that literature reflects class struggle and materialism, and so literature should not merely be viewed as works created in accordance with timeless artistic criteria, but as products of the economic and ideological determinants specific to that era. In a nutshell, literature reflects an author's own class or analysis of class relations, however piercing or shallow that analysis may be. This analysis is based on the Communist Manifesto which sees the last stage of history being the proletarian revolution culminating in the set up of a communist society, as prophecy, the exploitation of the proletariat and love for material things. Thus the Marxist critic keeps in mind issues of power and money, and any of the following kinds of questions:

- What role does class play in the work?
- In what ways does the work try to undermine the status quo?
- What does the work say about oppression; or are social conflicts ignored or blamed elsewhere?
- Does the work propose some form of utopian vision as a solution to the problems encountered in the work?

These questions are answered and analysed in relation to how prophetically the ideology has been used in the texts.

1.1.8 METHODOLOGY

1.8.1 Data Collection

The study used the qualitative approach. It was based on two primary texts - Ngugi's *Devil on the Cross* and Armah's *The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born*. Also various websites, electronic and manual books were used as secondary sources.

1.8.2 Data analysis

The data collected from the two primary texts, alongside data from related texts, was analysed thematically to arrive at findings.

1.1.9 THE SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The main focus of the study is on two selected novels namely Ngugi's *Devil on the Cross* and Armah's *The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born*. The two texts represent two major regions of Africa, notably, Ngugi is from East Africa and Armah from West Africa. Here again, it should not be taken that the two novelists are the best in Africa, but were chosen due to the focus of the study. The study focuses on prophecy in literature with religious prophecy as a foundation, and so it calls for intertextuality at certain points.

Despite acknowledging the existence of prose fiction in African languages and other languages outside Africa, the study focuses on prose fiction written in English. Though *Devil on the Cross* was first written in Gikuyu with the title *Caitani Mutharaba-ini* (Booker, 1996), and later translated into English by the author himself, it has been included on the basis of the English version.

1.1.10 CONCLUSION

According to Foad (1994), a literary prophet discusses in contemporary terms the overall conditions that create disparities in human treatment leading to negative and destructive perspectives of self and others. Thus the prophet gives guidance to the future and present generations to break the cycle of false hope and despair. In this case,

prophets do so by conveying the message concerning the past, the present and the future. They are able to prophesy using history, culture, observations and experiences from their immediate environment. It is for this reason that social prophets such as Ngugi and Armah critique and provide guidance to the society that they quietly observe so as to correct behaviour and bring about societal reformation. Therefore a literary prophet considers the historical events in the context of the present, and then provides the critique, the warning and the challenges of the audience about the deleterious societal conditions and the need for human reformation. Apart from this, a prophet fulfils an extraordinary role as an exhortative writer, who tries to persuade or rather teach people to liberate themselves from their plight. All these prophetic traits in accordance with the definitions of prophecy, and the devices and media through which prophecy is disseminated were investigated. Thus apart from the Bible or religious works, Ngugi's *Devil on the Cross* and Armah's *The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born* are prophetic, and so should be read as such. It was for this reason that some allusions to biblical prophecy were made in relation to the prophecies prevalent in the two texts. This is as put forth by Booker (1996:405) that the true artist has this prophetic function: he is pre-eminently the one who helps his contemporaries invent the future. All in all literary prophets bear witness to the cultural, political, social and economic injustices and ills, and suggest how such can be corrected.

It has been noted that Chapter One is the Introduction - Background information on prophecy. In Chapter Two there is Literature Review while Chapter Three has the synopses of *The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born* and *Devil on the Cross*. Chapter Four will look at Prophecy in *The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born* and *Devil on the Cross* respectively. As for Chapter five, there will be the significance, similarities and differences of prophecies in the two texts while Chapter six will deal with the Summary of Findings and Conclusion. Thus we shall move to the next chapter which is Literature Review.

1.1.11 DEFINITION OF TERMS

Bourgeoisie is the property-owning capitalist class in conflict with the proletariat.

Capitalism is an economic system in which the means of production and distribution are privately or corporately owned and development occurs through the accumulation and reinvestment of profits gained in a free market.

Capitalist is a person who owns capital, especially capital invested in a business.

Corruption is a departure from the original or from what is pure or correct.

Deleterious societal conditions are harmful and damaging conditions in society.

Disillusionment is the state or fact of being disappointed / disenchanted because the person you admired or the idea you believed to be good and true now seems without value.

Eschatology is a part of theology concerned with death and judgement.

Exhorting is urging by strong, often stirring argument, admonition, advice, or appeal.

Imperialism is the extension of a nation's authority by territorial acquisition or by the establishment of economic and political dominance over other nations.

Land speculation is buying land cheaply in large quantities, and withholding it from market until rising prices bring profits.

Land grabbing is the seizing of land by a nation, state, or organization, or individual, especially illegally, underhandedly, or unfairly.

Literary prophet is a writer who is bent on correcting the political, social and economic injustices / ills in society.

Marxism is a theory and practice of socialism including the labour theory of value, dialectical materialism, the class struggle, and dictatorship of the proletariat until the establishment of a classless society.

Materialism is preoccupation with or emphasis on material objects, comforts, and considerations, as opposed to spiritual or intellectual values.

Neo-colonialism is the policy or practice of a wealthy or powerful nation in extending its influence into a less developed one, especially in exploiting that nation's resources.

Proletariat is the class in society which makes a living by selling its labour and possesses no capital.

Revolution is the violent and historically necessary transition from one system of production in a society to the next.

Socio-economic exploitation is a situation whereby those who work to produce the wealth of society are treated in an unfair way economically in order for somebody else to make money from their work.

Utopian dream is used to describe political or religious philosophies which claim that it is possible to build a new and perfect society in which everyone is happy.

CHAPTER TWO

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

From the outset it must be noted that one way by which society strengthens prophecy is by written literature. Thus it is possible to understand prophecy by studying the literature of a particular society, and so it is important to review what has been written on the subject.

2.1.1 Biblical Prophecy

In order to understand the role of the prophets in the Bible, we will have to understand the historical background involved in each case. Biblical texts did not spring out of a vacuum, or as expressions of idealistic theories, but from the lives and experiences of real people. This is paralleled with the novel's milieu and that of its authors which are vital to the understanding of prophecy in the two postcolonial texts under this study. In a nutshell, both the Bible and novels are affected by extrinsic factors such as the prevailing economic, social and political situation. Hebrew biblical prophets often warn the Israelites to repent of their sins and idolatries with the threat of punishment or reward (Aune, 1963). Though not biblical, Ngugi's and Armah's texts are prophetic as well.

Bible prophecy is typically the prediction of future events based on the action, function, or faculty of a prophet (Gabel, 2000:72). Such passages are widely distributed throughout the Bible, but those most cited are Ezekiel, Daniel, Matthew 24, Matthew 25 and Revelations. Believers in the biblical prophecy engage in the interpretation of scriptures which they believe contains descriptions of global politics, natural disasters, and the future of the nation of Israel, the coming of the Messiah and a Messianic kingdom and the ultimate destiny of humankind. The Biblical prophets are usually considered to have received revelations from God, subsequently recording them in the relevant writing.

Therefore the interpretation of practical life is vital to the explanation of the prophetic role; thus, the roles of the prophets mentioned in the Bible are applicable to others in the secular realm, including contemporary writers - that is, writers who in their own time take on the burden of bearing news and warning humankind. Time and time again, history demonstrates, how prophetic voices are continuously chosen and sent to a people in need of guidance.

2.1.1.1 The Prophecy of Moses

Starting with Moses, we see that revelations to prophets often come when a new social reality has become necessary. Moses' message was a radical break with the social reality of Egypt (Forbes, 1997:25). The Israelites are the victimized "good guys", and Pharaoh and the Egyptians are the cruel "bad guys." Moses leaves the palace of power to join with his oppressed brothers and sisters. God through Moses tells Pharaoh: "Let My people go!" (Exodus 5:1). The role of the prophet is to liberate those who have been crushed under the burdens of social injustice. Thus the liberation from Egypt is an imperative, a directional sign of what we must strive for in every generation and should undermine the false narratives and distorted social practices of human kingdoms.

2.1.1.2 The Prophecy of Isaiah

Isaiah is focused on the main role of Jerusalem in God's plan for the world, seeing centuries of history as though it were all the single vision of the 8th century prophet Isaiah. While the political scene in Judah was different from that in the northern kingdom of Israel, the sins of the people were distressingly similar: idol worship, the oppression and marginalization of the poor for personal gain, and business practices that fundamentally threatened God's Law (Jensen 1984). Like his contemporary Amos - who delivered God's messages at the shrine in Bethel to the unrepentant people of Israel, Isaiah clearly saw that lip-service worship leads to self-serving social ethics. Isaiah speaks out for the poor and the oppressed and criticizes corrupt princes and judges, but unlike the prophets Amos and Micah he roots righteousness not in Israel's covenant with God but in God's holiness. As can be noted God is using Isaiah to speak while the two authors are using people. In other words, they bear witness to the

challenges of a commoner after independence and the later periods of social, economic and political injustices, though Isaiah during the feudal stage and the two novelists in the postcolonial capitalist stage.

In terms of content, the largest single subject in the book of Isaiah is warnings to Israel and Judah both for Isaiah's age and for us today. The first 11 chapters describe many social, moral and religious sins that are similar to the sins that the modern descendants of Israel and Judah are presently committing. Isaiah warned of God's judgment on the Day of the Lord - the punishment that will come upon the disobedient for one year before Christ returns, but also spoke of restored peace and prosperity that will follow the judgment (Brueggemann, 2003:159). This future age is described in many of the chapters from the beginning to the end of Isaiah: all animals will live at peace with man and one another, and "the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD" (Isaiah, 11:6-9). As noted there is return to innocence in biblical unlike forward to justice in modern prophecy.

The book of Isaiah contains many predictive prophecies that are interpreted by Christians as being about the Messiah Jesus Christ. For instance, Isaiah 7:14 foreshadowed the virgin birth of Jesus and in Isaiah 9:6-7, it is said that there would be a son called God. Today, we can see with our own eyes that many of Isaiah's prophecies have found fulfillment with the worldwide dispersion of Jews, the worldwide persecution of Jews, the recent worldwide migration of Jews back to Israel during the past century, the recent re-establishment and restoration of Israel, and the worldwide impact that Jews have had on the world. This is as stated in Isaiah 27:12-13 that God promised to restore the Jews. As earlier alluded to it is not only biblical texts which have predictive prophecy but also fictional ones like these under this study.

Isaiah 16 describes a number of kings and tyrants, who were brought down from the place of pride and power by the shaking of God. He gave relief from suffering and cruel bondage by destroying the aggressive and oppressive rulers. God was able to stretch forth his hand and accomplish his purpose, because prophets like Isaiah had prophesied

against them (Isaiah, 12-23). On the other hand, it is people who act to bring about positive change in the two works under this study.

It must be noted that the book of Isaiah is highly alluded to because it is a Bible in miniature. This is because as the 66 books are divided into 39 (Old Testament) and 27 (New Testament), so the 66 chapters of Isaiah are divided into 39 and 27. Furthermore, as the 39 books of the Old Testament deal with law and judgement that befalls those who disobey it, so the first 39 chapters of Isaiah are concerned with the thought of judgement on the covenant people because of their disobedience to the law; and as the 27 books of the New Testament are mainly occupied with the message of Divine grace and salvation, so the last 27 chapters of Isaiah speak of the coming day when that grace and salvation will be made available to all men through Christ (Deals, 1975). Thus Isaiah is a kind of Bible in itself.

2.1.2 The Critics

In the *Poetic Prophecy in Western Literature*, Jan Wojick and Raymond Jean Frontain (1984:21-22), survey British literature with reputation for being prophetic:

From England, the Gawain poet, and the Chaucer of the great visions; through Spenser, Shakespeare whose career concludes in the visionary *Tempest*, and Milton; down through Smart, Gray, Blake, Wordsworth, Coleridge, Shelley..., the English poetry has been concerned with how and what man sees and has been determined to reveal or uncover whether in dreams, vision, opium state, or psychic trance - the world beyond the one the average man sees but that actually determines the moral and spiritual significance of the quotidian....

Here the operative word is visionary, a term we returned to later in this study as African novelists' prophecy was established. The prophet speaks of things that will be true in the future because they are true in all time (Hydes, 2002:122). In this statement Hyde is suggesting that there is an intimate relationship between the prophet and history, as well as between the prophet and the future. The poet-prophet can speak about the future because he is aware of what happened in the past, which if not learned from, will dictate dire future occurrences. In line with this Armah is able to prophesy about endless corruption because he is aware of the corruption of African leaders before, during and after colonisation, and so he is speaking about the future remaining morally decadent –

corrupt if nothing is learnt from the past and present events. This is also learnt from the exploitation of Africans by whites during colonialism, Africans struggling and gaining independence but now being exploited by their fellow Africans in collaboration with whites, as in the case in Ngugi's text.

Apart from the poet-prophet's role in knowing the past in order to foretell future consequences of human action, another dimension of prophecy has simply to do with the power of language because it is in the eloquence of words chosen by the prophet that his prophetic message becomes even more powerful. John Leavitt's *Poetry and Prophecy: The Anthropological of Inspiration* provides another historical-spiritual reading of the intricate relationship between prophecy and poetry. The introduction of prophecy as explanation of the divine power that lies within the forms of expression which great writers have in command:

Some words are so powerful that they are attributed to super human agencies: this is what in Western tradition, has been called prophecy,Some words are so moving and beautiful that they are attributed to a special faculty or skill on the part of the speaker or writer: this is what in Western traditions, has been called poetry or poetic language. Both poetry and prophecy are culturally marked forms of speech, and one criterion, at least, of the marking of both of them is power (Leavitt, 1997:3).

Musical prophecy, Albert Rousit (1975:74) observes, is another form of bearing witness though it does not necessarily have a biblical or spiritual connection. Like the kind of graphic and oral art, prophecy in music functions as an abstract mirror for the society from which it comes:

Drawing its inspiration from everything which surrounds it, music contains everything that man has been able to see and to experience throughout the course of history from the influence of religion up to freedom of the people. However, prophecies concerning men appear as revelation, with men free to choose their own way; the characteristic of musical prophecy is fatality, since it appears after the destiny of man has taken a new orientation. Prophecy about mankind announces how things are going to happen... (Rousit, 1975:74).

Here it should be pointed out that in the texts under this study, there are songs which the two authors are using to musically prophesy.

All of these observations and definitions share the sense that the prophetic voice proceeds from the deep knowledge of either the history or the culture from which it comes, along with the prophet's critical examination of human nature in general. The act of the prophet is especially exercised by what she or he perceives going on in the world; the vision can be expressed in parables, metaphors and in simple or elevated language. All prophetic messages share a common thread – which is to convey a seriousness of intent, to employ an uncommonly powerful expression, to express a deep-seated morality, and to demonstrate the power of concentration – of all, which makes the medium of prophetic utterances far more striking than everyday expressions (Leavitt, 1997:5).

In closely examining the role of African writers, whose first articulation appeared in the form of protest literature, one discovers that the African writer has long manifested a literary prophetic tradition – as the writer that bears witness to African life and exhorts action for a change of life. The overriding African communal truth that is publicly told in the early history, is also serving as a witness bearer. Early articulation of witnessing links back to African mythology that existed before the African church tradition of witnessing, including the significant tradition of African folklore and story-telling (Hale, 1998:11).

2.1.2.1 General Criticisms of African Writers

Initially African literature was a tool of celebrating the African past: later it was used for anti-colonial struggle and at present, it is being employed as a weapon for depicting the postcolonial disillusionment in African nations (Gakwandi, 1986). Therefore, African literature is always chained to the experiences of the peoples of the continent. Chinua Achebe says that African novels are not simply entertaining but rather qualitative evaluation of the African society whose authors perceive themselves as social critics rather than entertainers (2007).

According to Gakwandi (1986), the demand for freedom, social justice and equality runs through African literature before and after independence. While for Gakwandi these aspects represent more of a political sentiment for nationalism, one cannot help

but note parallel concerns in the Bible: the call for justice, the experience of exile, struggles with hope for a better world, and the plight of humanity, peace and the question of evil. This being the case, one is inclined to anticipate relationship between the Biblical prophets and some African novelists as far as addressing these key issues is concerned.

The challenge offered by African novelists is complex. Gakwandi (1986) says that it ranges from method to ethics and justice, commitment and involvement, interpretation and vernacular hermeneutics, liberation and emancipation, and imagination and hope. Because of their commitment and engagement to the social ills, African novelists, like the prophets in the Bible, usually find themselves on the wrong side of the establishments (Sugirtharajah, 2001:195). It is not uncommon for African writers to be detained and exiled for critiquing ills of society and the corruption of government and the elites, including those in the church. For instance, Ngugi wa Thiong'o was detained without trial in Kenya for trying to organise a play with peasants in Kamirithu village.

Furthermore, the African novel as a genre may also be shown to share certain characteristics with the biblical parables employed by Jesus (Mofokeng, 1988:34-42). Like the parables, the African novel challenges the hearer or reader to action. Some literary critics say that the parable not only provides food for thought, it also stretches the imagination in its attempt to highlight a truth. Therefore the African novel calls for a committed and socially engaged Gospel that is grounded on justice and human dignity. According to Sugirtharajah (2001:195), it is an interpretation of the Bible that engages the daily affairs of the common folk whose only encounter with the Bible would have been an oppressive tool of the coloniser. In line with this, the African novel, adopted from its original function as a colonising tool, has been embraced by the African writer essentially as a subversive literature that challenges the status quo and demands justice and truth that emanate from the same biblical text.

2.1.2.1.1 Criticisms of Ayi Kwei Armah

With the publication of his first narrative, *The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born* (1968) to *The House of Knowledge* (2002), Ayi Kwei Armah has constantly focused on the pre-

colonial, colonial and post-colonial critical history of the African continent. Brown (2009) says that Armah has portrayed a controversial reputation among African literary critics which hinges on his uncompromising stance on some sensitive problems facing post-independent African countries.

While many critics laud his narrative style and techniques, others like Frederiksen (1987) and Wright (1989), focus and criticize him for what (Brown, 2009) describes as his “searing novelistic indictment of postcolonial society.” Yet, others like Chinua Achebe see Armah to be too pessimistic. In spite of all these controversies, Armah’s soaring commitment to justice and the retrieval of African traditional values are unquestionable. Ogede (2000:2) notes that Armah’s novels, apart from their aesthetic beauty, are deliberately crafted as tools of resistance and liberation. They are meant to fight what Armah considers to be the injustices, prejudices and atrocities perpetrated over the years. The novels of liberation, like some of the world’s oldest literature, are designed to speak of revolutionary changes in social, economic and political structures in a language that is unambiguous (Armah, 2007:496-503). Thus Armah’s use of vulgar and scatological language in the novel under this study is aimed at revolutionarily transforming a society which is so decadent. According to Ogede (2000:4):

With the exception of Chinua Achebe, Wole Soyinka, and Ngugi-wa-Thiong’o, no other African writer has confronted and dealt so honestly and courageously with the problem of contemporary Africa as Armah has. Armah’s fight can be defined as a radical quest for a new direction that can change the fortunes of Africa and the black people.

Nevertheless, a few reviewers also note a lack of detail in his vision for Africa's future, but Ogede (2000) says Armah is a visionary writer in the strict sense. Despite these criticisms, Armah is widely appreciated for the strength of his convictions as far as fighting moral decadence is concerned.

Armah demonstrates his eloquence and establishes his trademark as a profound moral writer when he makes his stand against corruption pointedly clear. It is a kind of strong protest against the vulgar behaviours in the society. It is common knowledge that most satires heavily depend on humour as a tool to criticise, but in *The Beautiful Ones Are*

Not Yet Born, though Armah's language is sometimes humorous, it is very often vulgar (Ogede, 2000). For a society which was in a major depression as a result of the pervading decadence and could not respond to any other treatment, Armah's vulgar language, a therapeutic tool becomes the perfect weapon to induce the seizures for the best therapeutic effect to cure the society of the disorder, a society totally conditioned to despair (Fraser, 1980).

According to Lazarus (1990), *The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born* is formulated upon the premise that it is only by knowing one's world, by seeing it for what it is, that one can ever genuinely aspire to bring about its revolutionary transformation. Thus Armah's iconoclastic stand and his use of vulgar language in the novel are aimed at revolutionarily transforming a society which is so decadent. Achebe (2007), talking about the role of the African novelist in his article "The Novelist as Teacher" contends, "He must remain free to disagree with society and go into rebellion against it if need be."

2.1.2.1.2 Criticisms of Ngugi wa Thiong'o

Some critics say that Ngugi's fiction has been noted for its overtly political agenda, its attempts to give a literary voice to the poor of Kenya, and its consistent critique of colonization and oppressive regimes. Ngugi's texts focus on corruption, neo-colonialism, land and the category of religion and its ties and link to both imperialism and colonialism (Dube, 2000:7). Also Ngugi subverts biblical language in his work, especially dealing with justice advocated by both Christianity and the Bible. Fully aware of the tension between the effects of imperial Christianity and Christianity as a religion of the masses, Ngugi writes in *Writers in Politics*:

Christianity, for instance, had always been used by the colonial system to rationalize inequalities; the colonial state encouraged that brand of Christianity that abstracted heaven from earthly struggles. So Mau Mau took the same Christian songs and even Bible, and interpreted them for themselves, giving these values and meaning in harmony with the aspirations of their struggles (1981:15).

Therefore, it can be argued that with his appropriation of the biblical form of language intertwined with culture, Ngugi creates a Postcolonial Bible (Mofokeng, 1988:34-42). In fact *Devil on the Cross* (1982) is an intertext of the Bible. For instance, biblical

structures, language, symbolisms are used to “think with,” to reinvent and to subvert the colonial Bible. However, we are interested in exploring prophetic features that are the essence of Ngugi’s *Devil on the Cross*.

Some critics have commented that his early novels - including *The River Between*, *A Grain of Wheat*, and *Petals of Blood* - act as important documents in the history of postcolonial writing, distinguished by the urgency of their political engagement and the subtlety of their historical grasp. His essays and critical works have been acclaimed as powerful and insightful explorations of relevant political, social, and literary issues in Africa (Gikandi, 2000). Some scholars have also examined Ngugi's emphasis on language, viewing his switch from using English to African languages as an outgrowth of his political ideology.

It is important to note that it is Maoist reasoning that Ngugi (1981:11) echoes when he concludes without reservation that:

Literature cannot escape from the class power structures that shape our everyday life. Here the writer has no choice. Whether or not he is aware of it, his work reflects one or more aspects of the intense economic, political, cultural, and ideological struggles in society.

Though a perpetual “prisoner,” literature does not merely reflect society’s “intense struggles,” it is not an impassive mirror which throws back only what is before it - no more no less. Ngugi (1983:57) defines literature as:

a form of knowledge about reality acquired through a pile of images. But these images are not neutral. The images given us by the arts try to make us not only see and understand the world of man and nature, apprehend it, but to see it and understand it in a certain way or from an angle of vision of the artist.

The definition reveals one of Ngugi’s rhetorical devices - piling up images; repetition of words and phrases or even clauses - a device he uses both in his critical writing and in his fiction to ensure his points sink home (Gikandi, 2000). The definition also explains his attitude to his readers whom, we might say, he regards as his flock waiting to be led out of bondage, just like prophet Moses leads the Israelites out of bondage from Egypt. Ngugi sees the writer’s position as a special one because the writer has a

“better vision” of society; the writer has the answers which he may write on the “blackboard” in big capital letters.

Ngugi understands the world in terms of polarities - good and evil, love and hate, wealth and poverty, exploiter and exploited, oppressor and oppressed, et cetera (Ngugi, 1981: xi). Literature, in Ngugi’s view, often chooses one or the other of these poles: it is partisan - it takes sides. It follows too that the writer cannot stand aloof and claim neutrality in the ongoing struggles between the privileged classes and the underprivileged peasants and workers. Writers, Ngugi (1981:xi) argues, have: “to choose whether they use their art in the service of the exploiting, oppressing classes... or in the service of the masses engaged in the fierce struggle against human degradation and oppression.”

His stand is unequivocal: “I have dedicated my preference. Let our pens be the voice of the people” (Ngugi 1981:xi). For Ngugi (1981:xi), there has been no nobler cause than this: to write for, speak for and work for the lives of the peasants and workers was the highest call of patriotic duty. Thus a literary prophetic writer helps an African reassert himself/herself, he has to help Africa, and according to Gikandi (2000), help Africa re-examine herself critically...discover her true self, and rid herself of all apemanship.

To locate Ngugi as a postcolonial novelist and historian, is to simply signify him as an author who “writes back” to both the empire and colonial Bible. “Writing back”, according to Kwok, is both a mode and a decolonizing strategy that is oppositional and resistant in its stance (2005:125). It is a process of interplay where a cultural practice, the West, is resisted to give room for alternative modes of expression and creation. It produces new realities and maps out new experiences. This entails being a writer who is visionary and so prophetic.

Thus authors are like Moses, a celebrated biblical prophet, and the prophetic statures of Ngugi and Armah as seers. However, though Ngugi seems to write from the Marxist point of view, his desire to see the exploited or oppressed liberated may be paralleled to roles of biblical prophets. As literary “Moseses”, authors must “deliver” people from the suffering that their irresponsible governments have caused in their countries. The

writers' role as literary prophets becomes further defined, revealing their efforts of "bearing witness" to the importance of African history and further culture.

Now we shall move to the next chapter which consists of the synopses of Armah's *The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born* and Ngugi's *Devil on the Cross*.

CHAPTER THREE

3.0 SHORT SYNOPSES OF TEXTS STUDIED

3.1 Introduction

This chapter will provide the necessary background information and synopses of the two texts which were investigated in the study: Ayi Kwei Armah's *The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born* and Ngugi wa Thiong'o's *Devil on the Cross*. These are two fictional texts which were found to be prophetic in content, thereby making them suitable for this study.

3.1.1 The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born – Ayi Kwei Armah

According to Fraser (1980), Armah, the author of this text was born in 1939 in Takoradi, Ghana. He graduated from Prince of Wales College and received a scholarship to attend Harvard University from 1959 to 1963. In 1966, a coup d'état toppled the government of Kwame Nkrumah, the Ghanaian leader who held power since 1957 when Ghana gained its independence from Britain (Lindfors, 1992). After the coup, Armah worked as a teacher at the Navrongo Secondary School in northern Ghana. Ogede (2000) says that the 1966 coup significantly influenced Armah's views about corruption in politics and he harshly criticized Nkrumah's administration in his 1968 novel, *The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born*. Armah's first three novels are often grouped together in critical commentary. They each are heavily symbolic representations of life in contemporary Africa. The first, *The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born*, tells the story of a simple railway clerk during the regime of Kwame Nkrumah. The protagonist, known only as "The Man," acts as a representation of the common man Nkrumah has promised to represent. The novel dramatises the conflict between hope for change and the betrayal of that hope by the nation's leaders and serves as a stinking indictment of the Nkrumah regime.

The events of the novel take place between Passion Week in 1965 and February 25, 1966, the day after the overthrow of Kwame Nkrumah, Ghana's first president. On the

political level, they describe the failure of a purportedly socialistic government, which is, in fact, as capitalistic as the white colonial regime it replaced. The new black leaders with white souls have, according to Ayi Kwei Armah, used their positions of power for personal gain (Armah, 1968). The corruption has filtered down to all levels of society, all economic relationships being based on intimidation, bribery, and fraud. What makes the society appear so bleak is that Armah reports it through the eyes of a rare individual who has retained his integrity: the Man, an unnamed protagonist, has failed professionally because he has been too soft; he has been unable to play the bribery game. The only heroes in the society, that is, the only ones who succeed are the hard ones who no longer feel moral or emotional hypocrisy. For the Man, who speaks for Armah, the leaders of society are no different from the old African chiefs who sold their people in the slave trade for the trinkets of white society (Armah, 1968).

In *The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born*, this deeply symbolic book published in 1968, Ayi Kwei Armah vividly captures the seemingly endless spiral of corruption, moral decadence and spiritual death in postcolonial Ghana (Armah, 1968:90). Armah does attempt to offer us pictures of hope, like the seagull in chapter eight, but along with the image of hope come the thoughts of the Man, which have a “painful hopelessness” (Armah, 1982:113). Also, at the end of the book, although the bus poster proclaims hope in *The Beautiful Ones Are Not yet Born*, the Man is witness to a worse system that has taken over Kwame Nkrumah’s reign of corruption. He sees the bus driver bribing the policeman, but the method of bribery was subtler, and harder to catch. The policeman did not say anything, but just pointed to his teeth, and the driver understood (Armah, 1968:182). The outright bribery and corruption of the country has been replaced by a similar system, equally corrupt, only that the corruption goes on with more stealth and cover-up now. Notice that the policeman pretends to check the driver’s documents. The corruption has “gone underground” and is covered up with the pretence of honesty. Armah’s prophesy in chapter six is that “after their reign is over, there will be no difference ever” (Armah, 1968:89).

We believe that Armah’s aim of writing the novel was to tell his reader of the sad state that his country was in, what with all the corruption and bribery. Also, taking into

account Armah's own history, we could also say that his is a social commentary swayed by his own disillusionment with his country as a whole (Lindfors, 1992). Lorentzon (1998) notes that by having one dominant viewpoint, that is, the Man's, we can see deeper into the root of the problem that Ghana faces because we see the mental thought processes of the Man and what he feels about the entire situation. Taking into account Armah's aim of the novel once again, we see that having one dominant viewpoint is the best way to convey the ideas that Armah wished to convey as it would be very confusing to have more viewpoints. He wished to present his own case and thus uses the voice of the Man as a cover to project his own opinions.

The book tells the story of a nameless man who struggles to reconcile himself with the reality of post-independence Ghana. Referred to throughout the book, as simply, "The Man", he refuses to take a bribe, something that angers his wife (Armah, 1968:43). The Man keeps a humble job, and despite the constant naggings of his wife, he lives an honest life, even if that condemns him to a life of poverty. The Man is firm against corruption as he refuses to take a bribe from Amankwa - the timber merchant, when he tells him, "To make a booking, you have to come during working hours" (Armah, 1968:32). When he tells his wife this, she calls him a *chichidodo*, a bird that eats maggots but denies the fact that it eats faeces as well since maggots live in faeces (Armah, 1968). The Man seems to be very passive in his struggle against corruption and this does not help matters in a rotten society. Also the Man seems to carry the sins of many people in society. The dumping of others' disappointment at the corrupt system on the Man is also reinforced by the result of the boat deal between Koomson and Oyo and her mother: a deal which the Man opposes but is ignored. The Man is disenchanted with Koomson that he rejects even to eat the fish sent to him by Koomson. But when Koomson appropriates the profit and rewards the Man's wife and mother-in-law with the occasional supply of fish, Oyo's mother, who now realizes that Koomson has no intention of sharing the profits from the venture with her and Oyo, fails to confront Koomson. Instead, she heaps insults at the Man as carrier source for the release of her anger and frustrations (Armah 1968). The man chooses to endure the family scorn and not escape, indicating optimism for the future generation of Africa.

The most outstanding symbol is “the gleam”, which proceeds initially from the Man’s perception of the Atlantic Caprice, which is an “insulting” gleaming white (Armah, 1968:12). Immediately it is established as an image, however, the gleam frees itself to become a symbol associated with a number of manifestations of such ideas as success, speed, wealth, and power. Also one of the images is on the back of the bus, the flower, which becomes the title of the novel. The allegory of Aboliga the frog and his Old man-child show cyclical nature of filth, that is, historical nature of immorality from pre-colonial, colonial, post-colonial, and even in the future if nothing is done. As for the myth of Plato’s cave, just like cave dwellers it is very easy for us to get consumed by the things around us, focused on the shadows inside the cave, lured by the promise of riches and material goods, that we forget there is more to life. However, this myth has many interpretations. Armah’s use, in his first novel, of an interaction of narrative situations with imagery and metaphors has significant patterns of disillusionment and degradation.

The Man represents the lot of the common man in Ghana – who has no choice, but to reside in the poorest slums and live from hand to mouth. On the other hand are Ghana’s new leaders, “the black masters” who prove to be worse than the colonialists. They partake of corruption and other vices with such impunity that it has become the way of life for some. Koomson, the Man’s friend, is one such politician. His immense wealth results from his corrupt activities. Similar stories of corruption and moral decadence abound throughout the book. In another incident, we are told of a bus conductor who is abusive to his passengers and other road users, including a pedestrian crossing the road. The abusive conductor and his derelict bus are symbolic of the newly independent Ghana, heavily ridden by corruption and indigence (poverty).

Other notable characters in the book include “The Teacher.” Like “The Man”, he abhors the corrupt society that Ghana has become. He chooses to stay away from it all by becoming a recluse. He has given up hope that society will ever shake off corruption, hence his symbolic exit from the society. When a military coup occurs, there is some hope that things might change, but sadly, life continues as usual. The military officers join in and start to take bribes too (Armah, 1968:182).

The Man helps Koomson, the politician escape from the country through a faeces-ridden toilet-bucket crevice (Armah, 1968:167). Ironically, the Man also follows Koomson through the “shit-hole” implying that even those who have avoided corruption are affected by those who engage in it. Although *The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born* focuses on post independent Ghanaian society, it is symbolic of many other developing countries, where corruption remains a major problem at all levels. For the common man, there seems to be no end to the scourges of corruption and moral decadence. Indeed, it appears the saviours or the “beautiful ones” as Armah calls them, are not yet born.

3.1.2 Devil on the Cross – Ngugi wa Thiong’o

Ngugi wa Thiong’o, the author of this text was born on January 5, 1938, in Limuru, Kenya, and was one of the few students from Limuru to attend the elite Alliance High School (Robson, 1980). Ngugi became influenced by the writings of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, developing an ardent opposition to colonialism, Christianity, and other non-African influences in Kenya. Due to his vocal opposition of the injustices perpetrated by the postcolonial Kenyan government, Ngugi was arrested and imprisoned without charge in the Kamoto Maximum Security Prison from December 1977 to December 1978 (Sicherman, 1990). While imprisoned, Ngugi wrote his memoirs, *Detained: A Writer's Prison Diary* (1981), and vowed to write his creative works only in the Gikuyu language. He began writing his first Gikuyu novel, *Devil on the Cross*, on sheets of toilet paper from his cell, with the title *Caitani Mutharaba-ini* (Booker, 1996). Upon his release from detention, Ngugi lost his position at the University of Nairobi (William, 1999). When his theatre group was banned by Kenyan officials in 1982, Ngugi, fearing further reprisals, left his country for a self-imposed exile.

Devil on the Cross focuses on four major characters - Wariinga, a young secretary whose promising academic career has been ruined as a result of her impregnation by a wealthy older man; Gatuiria, a radical music student attempting to compose an oratorio that will convey the whole of Kenya's history; Wangari, a heroine of the liberation

struggle and dispossessed peasant arrested for vagrancy in Nairobi; and Muturi, an enigmatic leader of an undefined workers' revolutionary movement. The four meet on a bus going to attend, as spectators, a "Competition in Theft and Robbery" (Ngugi, 1982:36).

Set against the backdrop of the postcolonial era in Kenya, Ngugi wa Thiong'o's text is ironic, with the devil on the cross instead of Jesus. Written entirely in Ngugi wa Thiong'o's Gikuyu language after he declared he would no longer write in English, the book is a critical examination of Kenyan society.

The novel tells the tragic story of Wariinga, a young woman whose parents are arrested and detained while she is still two (Ngugi, 1982:138). Then, she is taken by her aunt as caregiver, but the latter's husband becomes Wariinga's executioner and defiler together with the Old Rich man from Ngorika. This old man makes her pregnant and consequently she drops out of school and gets deprived of the chance to study, her only key to repay the corrupt society.

Through the characters of Wangari, Wariinga, Gatuiria, Mwaura and Muturi, Ngugi explores various themes including exploitation, independence - sham freedom, education, religious hypocrisy, and sexual harassment. *Devil on the Cross* opens with a devastated and disillusioned Wariinga who is fleeing modern Kenya. Wariinga starts pondering over her misfortune very early and the scary possibility of the end of her studies looms large in her mind to the extent she becomes traumatized (Ngugi, 1982:147). Trauma pushes her to think suicide would be a solution to her plight as she notices that her dearest ideal is trampled upon. But in order to earn her living, Wariinga accepts to pursue her studies and learns typewriting and shorthand. She then emigrates from her small rural town to the city of Nairobi but there also only to be requested sexual service by her boss Kihara so as to safeguard her job (Ngugi, 1982:19). As she refuses to offer sex, she is dismissed on Friday morning and her lover John Kimwana, instead of comforting her, rather abandons her the same day, Friday in the evening, as she can no longer earn anything. The next day, Saturday, her landlord evicts her after having increased the rent. The heroine is therefore overwhelmed by series of ordeals

and attempts to commit suicide for the second time. Fortunately, she is saved by a fantastic character, as this quote shows:

A city bus came speeding towards her. Wariinga shut her eyes. Her body shuddered. She swallowed a lump, and her heart began to beat as if to the rhythm of a prayer: in times of troubles, do not O Father, look the other way. Do not hide your face from me at this time of tears...Now...receive me...Suddenly Wariinga heard a voice within her: why are you trying to kill yourself again? Who instructed you that your work on earth is finished? Who has told you that your time is up? (Ngugi, 1982:12).

Faced with these problems, she heads back to Ilmorog as thoughts stream through her mind. As a young girl she had always dreamed of being an engineer but her dreams were shattered by the old rich man from Ngorika, the hairy chested Waigoka. Moreover, Wariinga does not like herself. She uses ambi cream to bleach herself (Ngugi, 1982:11). In her nightmares, while at school, she had always seen the devil on the cross instead of Jesus. Wariinga then decides to journey back home, but not knowing what to do and from where to start.

She faints along the way and is helped by a young man who then invites her to the devil's feast in Ilmorog. On the way, they are joined aboard Robin Mwaura's car - the matatu matata matamu model T. Ford - by Wangari, an old woman, who is a victim of modern Kenya's problems. Despite her sacrifices, Wangari has reaped nothing from her fight for an independent Kenya (Ngugi, 1982:45). The poor woman does not have money to pay her fare. Robin Mwaura threatens to throw her out. Fortunately, other passengers collect money and pay for her. As the passengers make their way to Ilmorog, they converse about Nairobi, Kenya's capital, the Mau Mau, and the modern harambee. Wariinga meets with helpers such as Wangari who confronts the black short man and his white boss for raising their awareness about neo-colonialism, capitalism and their practices as the scourge of all the fellow men and women. Thanks to this awareness raising, the helpers come to understand the cause to fight for is common, noble and worthwhile to engage in.

Eventually, they make their way to the devil's feast, where a competition is on to choose the best thief. The competitors talk about their wives, the cars they drive and

those driven by their wives, and how they got their wealth. Then they all boast of the ways they have exploited the masses in the past and outline new plans for doing so in the future (Ngugi, 1982). At the devil's feast Muturi and the group gather masses of peasants, workers and students. But Wariinga somehow passively watches their procession towards the cave to fight against the devil and his followers for she does not find it worthwhile to take an active part in the struggle while she has not mastered all the lessons on self-reliance, constancy to purpose, sacrifice, courage and endurance. As the masses' struggle only succeeded in scattering the private businessmen and resulted in killings of the marching people, the arrest of Wangari and Muturi's clandestine life, the victory is seen as partial. Yet it sheds light on Wariinga's way to the total victory of the devil for thanks to this partial failure, she happened to think more on how to dismantle the devil. Galvanized by lessons learnt from the past and present experiences, the different trials encountered by Wangari, Muturi, Mwireri and all her other duplications, Wariinga takes the responsibility as community spokeswoman and therefore sharpens her forces against forces of evil, gathers means and skills, and shows her concern for masses of workers, peasants and students' welfare above her personal pleasure and satisfaction.

Meanwhile, Wariinga and Gatuiria fall in love after meeting aboard the car (matatu), and Gatuiria plans on introducing Wariinga to his parents (Ngugi, 1982:242). However, Wariinga finds that the old rich man who impregnated her is Gatuiria's father (Ngugi, 1982:249). She takes her revenge and kills him. She bravely decides to put an end to her betrothal and love with Gatuira and chooses a place among the peasants, workers, students and all those who pay by their brain, sweat and body. She also shoots at some of Mister Hispaniora Greenway Ghitahy's capitalist guests of honour (Ngugi, 1982:253).

This chapter presented the synopses of Armah's *The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born* and Ngugi's *Devil on the Cross*. The two texts deal with the themes of corruption, independence disillusionment, materialism, neocolonialism, capitalism and exploitation or oppression and sexual immorality. The two authors bear witness of these deleterious societal conditions which cause disparities among people. Armah's and Ngugi's texts

criticize, warn, exhort, teach or rather guide readers in line with such social, economic and political injustices. The next chapter focuses on the presentation of the findings.

CHAPTER FOUR

4.0 PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

The historical and biographical, moral-philosophical and Marxist approaches will be used in the presentation of the findings.

4.1.1 Prophecy in Armah's *The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born*

4.1.1.1 Bearing Witness

The prophetic platform of Armah's text testifies to the challenges of a commoner before and after independence and later years of social, economic and political injustices. Armah through the Man shows corruption, socio-economic exploitation, betrayal by leaders, neo-colonialism, sexual immorality, and materialism - generally moral decadence (Armah, 1968). By bringing these issues to light Armah wants to show his readers the ills in the society.

4.1.1.1.1 Testimonies

Materialism and love of money is borne out in the text. The conductor's love for money is seen at month ends when passengers do not ask for change as he puts it, "They do not look in their palms to see how much change is there" (Armah, 1968:2). Still on money, among the street vendors, Koomson's driver steps out and swings the door shut with the satisfied thud of newness....The girl runs after Koomson with his change, but he does not want it and the girl returns to her box (Armah, 1968:36). It should also be noted that there is life of luxury which is attested to in the text. For instance, inside the big car the pointed female voice springs and coils around, complaining about fridges too full to contain anything more and of too much bread already bought (Armah, 1968:37). The Man describes Estella's hand when he greets her, "Moist like lubricated flesh. It is withdrawn as quickly as if contact were a well known calamity, and the woman inside seems plainly to have forgotten about the Man outside" (Armah, 1968:38). Moreover, the teacher tells the Man this about women:

But you know that the loved ones are dead even when they walk around the earth like the living, and you know that all they want is that you throw away the thing in your mind that makes you think you are still alive, and their embrace will be a welcome unto death (Armah, 1968:57).

The Teacher continues by saying there is salvation of some kind, but only within the cycle of damnation itself (Armah, 1968:56). As Jensen (1984:69) notes, "like Amos, Isaiah seems to see the women sometimes responsible for the oppression practiced by their men." In the text, Estella seems to influence Koomson in his corrupt activities so as to live a luxurious life. In line with this, the Man says his wife has seen true salvation in the blinding gleam of beautiful new houses and the shine of new Mercedes cars, the scent of expensive perfumes, the mass of a new wig, money and power, all in the person of Koomson (Armah, 1968:56). Also while taking drinks to his friend's fridge, the Man's daughter and son admire other people's cars, radios and television (Armah, 1968:121). All this demonstrate the characters' love for riches which they seem to worship. The prophet, observes Carl Nagelsbach, condemns "the prevalent excess of female luxury, not only as sinful in itself but also as a chief cause of the violence and social disorder" (1906:73). As noted, the moral-philosophical approaches which tie in with this study states that the function of literature is to teach, and since we are dealing with prophecy, this preaching should be of religious nature with emphasis on moralism.

There is corruption which is shown in the text. For instance, there is theft of money meant for the purchase of the Keep Ghana Clean boxes as the Man notes, "In the end not many of the boxes were put out, though there was a lot said about the large amount of money paid for them" (Armah, 1968:8). Also the Man tells us it was not true that Egya Akon had ever had much money, "But a few pounds then were not things to disappoint men desperate with the disease of the time....Money was not pieces of paper the farmers burned to show their wealth. Money was life" (Armah, 1968:77). Furthermore, Zacharia Lagos and Abednego Yamoah thrive on theft of timber and petrol respectively, but are praised, and someone else is jailed instead (Armah, 1968:95-96). In another incident of corruption, the messenger is afraid that he might not be paid the money he won at Ghana lottery as he notes, "I know people who won more than five hundred cedis last year. They still haven't got their money....I hope some official at the

lottery will take some of my hundred cedis as a bribe and allow me to have the rest” (Armah, 1968:19). The Man informs us of the corrupt transaction between the allocation clerk and Amankwa, the timber merchant he refused to receive a bribe from, “When he opens the door there is loud, pleased laughter inside, and a voice with a vague familiarity says, ‘No. This is only kola. Take it as kola.’... ‘I was sure you would understand, if only I could find you properly. My friend, if you get the logs moving for me, I will see you again. Don’t worry I will take you to my house’” (Armah, 1968:107). Thus these corruption incidents are brought to light so that readers can re-examine themselves and if possible right things, which is in accordance with the moral-philosophical approaches whose emphasis in moralism and utilitarianism.

Also the text shows that workers are exploited for we are told that after eight the office began filling up as the day clerks came in with their little jokes and the talk of brief pay days and perennial passion weeks (Armah, 1968:19)—when the majority of the people have exhausted their money and can barely survive. Towards lunch hour, the Man says, “At a time like this when the month was so far gone and all there was was the half life of passion week, lunchtime was not a time to refresh oneself” (Armah, 1968:22). When the Man is left alone after other clerks have knocked off, he remarks, “It was terrible truth that the oppressiveness of the office was not so heavy with the others gone. It was there still, but there were not all those faces and thick bodies confirming it... (Armah, 1968:26). Ex-service men like Koffi Billy are ill-treated at home, and he even loses his leg while working but not compensated by the Englishman for whom he works who says he deserved it because he had been playing at his work (Armah, 1968:66). In the text it is questioned how much hard work before a month’s pay would last till the end of the month. All these are instances of exploitation of workers. Moreover, rent is going up and up:

In the man’s area the landlord is the uncle of the rent control man, and both call themselves Party activists. One man had tried to get his rent reduced, wiring to the Party secretary in Accra. Poor fool, he still believed. He was called a saboteur, a nation wrecker, and many other Party words, and then in the end, since he would not stop his talk of justice, he was taken by the police to Accra (Armah, 1968:95).

This is as put forth by the Marxist theory that literature reflects class struggle (Abrams, 1999:149). This struggle involves the exploiters / oppressors and the exploited / oppressed as in the text under this study. Moreover, this oppression is shown in order to help readers re-examine themselves and change for the better.

In addition, sexual immorality is demonstrated in the text. There is a prostitute in the street and the Man laments:

At times the hiss is meant only for the heroes, but now it comes clearly over. In the space between weak lamps opposite can be seen the fragile shine of some ornament on her....In a moment the air is filled with the sharp sweetness of the arm-pit powder, hot and moist, and the keenness of perfume trapped in creases of prematurely tired skin. At interval comes the vapour of a well used wig. Horse or human? (Armah, 1968:35).

According to Pineau (2006:493), “cosmetics could play a significant part in increasing attractiveness because they may, in part, enhance facial symmetry.” Thus in the case of this prostitute in the text, men are attracted to this. Again as the Man walks the whole distance of the Essei area he notes this about sexual immorality, “Near the Essei market, the long row of small windows where the prostitutes lived had a strange beauty, and from one of the rooms there came a long, happy laugh that ended as if the young woman who had laughed so long had grown quite exhausted with the effort” (Armah, 1968:49). We also learn that Sister Manaana turns to prostitution, and that “There were fights of course, between man and man, not so much over women as over white men asking to be taken to women... (Armah, 1968:66). There is fetishism of women as Manaana's journey of life evokes the general position of how women are treated by the Nkrumahist big shots. Using the moral filter of the Teacher, the text declares that “Women, so horribly young, fucked and changed like pants, asking only for blouses and perfume from diplomatic bags and wigs of human hair scraped from ... decayed white woman's corpse” (Armah, 1968:89). Thus in accordance with the moral-philosophical approaches, the text is teaching people to be sexually moral.

4.1.1.1.2 Music or Songs

It should also be noted that Armah's text testifies by using a song. According to Albert Rousit (1975:74), music is an abstract mirror of the society it comes from. In the text, there is a song urging people to be patient and honest as their turn to be powerful and rich will come. The song is as follows:

Those with the power who are blessed
And the soaring swiftness of the eagle
And have flown before,
Let them go.
I will travel slowly,
And I too will arrive.
And have climbed in haste,
Let them go.
I will journey slowly,
But I too will arrive (Armah, 1969: 51 -52).

Through this song, the novel demonstrates the fact that there are some people who have used crooked ways to acquire wealth. It is also urging people to desist from corrupt means of acquiring riches, but to be patient and honest. Therefore this song is prophecy, preaching according to the moral-philosophical approaches which say that literature has a simple function of teaching, and the emphasis is on moralism and utilitarianism (Guerin et al, 2007).

4.1.1.1.3 Stories

Armah through his narrator the Teacher uses stories of Old man-child, Manaan, Koffi Billy and the myth of Plato's cave to bear witness to the filth, rot, or rather corruption in society (Armah, 1968).

The Teacher is the major storyteller in the novel, and as well listens as a character to the embittered remarks which Armah showers, not just on him alone, but on all the corrupt inhabitants of Ghana. Chapter six of the text is regarded by most critics as poetic – especially because it shows imagination and deep feelings (Lazarus, 1986:49). There are moral and philosophical teachings which go with these stories. This section of the novel is about the whole life activities in Ghana, from Aboliga the frog and his story of

the Old man-child, to Maanan [and initiation of people into the world of wee] and to Kofi Billy and his life style (Olaniyan, 2009:70-89). It must be noted that Aboliga the frog and his Old man-child's stories show the cyclical nature of filth, that is, the historical nature of immorality from pre-colonial, colonial, post-colonial, and even in the future if nothing is done. Just as the man-child is not destined to its full potential, the contemporary Ghanaian situation portends a life-negating and self-annihilating streak. Maanan's story teaches that passive revolution does not bring change in a rotten society, and Koffi's shows betrayal of servicemen, and the impoverished and exploitative lifestyles they lead (Armah, 1968), and it is in line with the moral-philosophical approaches which see literature as being instructive. The myth of Plato's cave shows that just like cave dwellers, it is very easy for us to get consumed by the things around us, focused on the shadows inside the cave, lured by the promise of riches and material goods, that we forget there is more to life.

It should be noted that in Marxism idol worship is reformulated and theorised as commodity fetishism. This is seeing social relationships involved in production, not as relationships among people, but as economic relationships among the money and commodities exchanged in market trade (Lukas, 1971:93). Hence, commodification pervaded every conscious human activity, as the growth of capitalism commodified every sphere of human activity into a product that can be bought and sold in the market. For instance, Koomson lives in a way that is far more painful to see than the way the white men have always lived here....Bungalows, white with a wounding whiteness....Cars, long and heavy, with drivers in white men's uniforms waiting ages in the sun (Armah, 1968:89). Moreover, the idea of worshipping material things is also seen in the Man's wife when Koomson and his wife are about to visit them:

The Man had exchanged time off and gone down High Street, shopping for the special food and drink his wife had decided to feed Koomson and his wife with. It had been impossible, of course, to find any of the really expensive drinks his wife would have wanted, like the British White Horse whisky and Vat 69 (Armah, 1968:114).

These stories help in exposing the disillusionment of the citizenry of their independence leaders. Thus by using the stories Armah is a liturgical prophet delivering sermons showing how extravagant politicians like Koomson, and even the Man's wife, Oyo are

in trying to entertain an important person. According to Fine (2004:25), to avoid the status anxiety of not being of or belonging to "the right social class", the consumer establishes a personal identity (social, economic, cultural) that is defined and expressed by the commodities (goods and services) that he or she buys, owns, and uses; the domination of things that communicate the "correct signals" of social prestige, of belonging. This is also seen in the man as Armah (1968:114-115) says:

The day before going into the shops with his new money in his pocket, he had had uncontrollable feeling of happiness and power, even while knowing somewhere in the back of his mind that the expensive things he was buying would deepen the agony of his next Passion Week. When he had asked for all that white man's food, the beautiful long rice in the packet with the Afro-American uncle Ben smiling on it, the tinned cake which had travelled thousands of miles from rich people's country, and the New Zealand butter, he had known it was stupid to be feeling so good just because he was buying these things he could not in the end afford, yet he could not help the smile that came to his lips and spread the feeling of well-being over all his body.

Furthermore, the prophet has a special vision that allows him to pierce the veil, to see through the appearance to the reality. He therefore uncovers, takes away the covering, to reveal the truth. This means that a prophetic vision is one that sees through the surface reality and exposes it as a lie or a deception. Most people take the moving shadows on the wall of the cave as the reality, but the prophet (or philosopher) is able to distinguish between truth and appearance and knows that the shadows are mere tricks or appearances and that outside the cave is blinding sunlight. This is in accordance with the moral-philosophical approaches which look at literature's simple function of teaching, putting emphasis on moralism and utilitarianism (Guerin et al, 2007:77).

4.1.1.2 Predictive Prophecy

Armah's text uses common sense or intelligent observation of historical events or situations to prophesy. He prophesies the unending corruption and immoral decadent leaders who were, are, and will never be there, as even the title of the text suggests (Armah, 1968:89). This prophecy is in chapter six where Armah (1968:90), through the Man says: "It should be easy now to see there have never been people to save anybody but themselves, never in the past, never now, and there will never be any saviours if

each will not save himself.” This prophecy comes to pass at the end of the book when the Man is witness to a worse system that has taken over Kwame Nkrumah’s reign of corruption. He sees the bus driver bribing the policeman, but the method of bribery was subtler, and harder to catch. The policeman did not say anything, but just pointed to his teeth, and the driver understood (Armah, 1968:182). The outright bribery and corruption of the country has been replaced by a similar system, equally corrupt, only that the corruption goes on with more stealth and cover-up now. Notice that the policeman pretends to check the driver’s documents. The corruption has “gone underground” and is covered up with the pretence of honesty. Thus the Man’s prophesy in chapter six that “after their reign is over, there will be no difference ever” (1968:89), comes to pass. The Man is set apart from others by his two redeeming qualities. In the first place, he is sharp and perceptive. This sensitive perception enables him to closely observe men and manners helps him in his judgement of the beautiful and the ugly and the moral choice between good and bad. Secondly, the Man is aware of social realities, particularly the problem of corruption which is not only rampant but seems ineradicable in the given context. Thus the Man has a special vision that allows him to pierce the veil, to see through the appearance to the reality. He therefore uncovers, takes away the covering, to reveal the truth as a prophet.

In the sixth chapter which is pivotal to the novel, we are presented with a symbolic history of the childhood and youth of the Man and the Teacher. In this chapter the narrative view-point moves between the Teacher and the Man. The figures and events in this chapter are not merely aspects of an autobiography, but aspects of a historical process and a general cultural experience. The story of a life and the story of a nation are fused. The memories in chapter six are not merely flashbacks in the story of a life, but they are also the images of the colonized, through oppression to liberation and experience and on to disillusion and decay. The liberation movement seemed to offer a new beginning, but that too was subject to decay. The Man reflects the happier moments of his youth. The reminiscences are the most memorable part of Armah’s novel relating the childhood experiences of stealing the white man’s mangoes at a time prior to independence. While conversing with the Man, the Teacher remembers in a flashback his two old friends who shared his revolutionary fervour - Maanan, the

prostitute, and Kofi Billy, the dock worker who had lost his leg while working. They smoked “wee” together and “swallowed all the keen knowledge of betrayal” (Armah, 1968:65). But even these memories are tainted with violence and terror. The white man’s dog chases him as he steals the mangoes. Kofi Billy hangs himself and Maanan goes mad, as the whole society begins to break away from its roots.

It must be pointed out that Armah is using his intelligent observation of historical events to prophesy. Leavitt (1997:34) says that prophecy depends on the knowledge of the history and culture of the people. Also according to the historical and biographical approaches, novels are affected by extrinsic factors such as the prevailing economic, social and political situations (Daiches, 1956:72). In the text Armah uses a two-fold approach, firstly examining contemporary Ghanaian politics in the post-independence period. Referring to the banister which is a symbol of corruption at the railway station where the man works, and also a structure built during colonialism, the Man says:

What had been going on there and was going on now and would go on and on through all the years ahead was a species of war carried on in the silence of long ages, a struggle in which only the keen, uncanny eyes and ears of lunatic seers could detect the deceiving, easy breathing of the strugglers (Armah, 1968:12).

Here it is noted that prophets are like detectives who pick up clues which others miss and who therefore see better and further and more clearly than others and can predict or warn based on knowledge of the signs, and the Man seems to be doing this. This confirms the long history of exploitation that of centuries of oppression and betrayal of the Ghanaian people by white colonialists. It is important to note that between 1951 and 1966, a process of decolonization took place in what was then the Gold Coast under the leadership of Kwame Nkrumah and his Convention People’s Party (McLaughlin and Awusu, 1994:45). Again the people are oppressed and betrayed by the indigenous leaders that collaborated and replaced the colonialists. The Teacher says this about Africans (the lawyers) who were to lead them:

They came hours late when we had been standing in the sun waiting to hear what they had to say, and they came with nothing but borrowed words they themselves had not finished understanding, and men felt like sleepers awakened only to hear an idiot’s drooling tale....The yessir-men gave them gallons of the killing

“akpeteshie” (beer) and the usual corned beef and gave them things to frighten the white men. When the desperate men were caught, the lawyers did not even care to look their way (Armah, 1968:82).

Also the Teacher notes the collaboration of African leaders-to-be with the colonialists:

And they who would be our leaders, they also had white men for their masters, and they also feared the masters, but after the fear what was at the bottom of their beings was not the hate and anger we knew in our despair. What they felt was love. What they felt for their white masters and our white masters was gratitude and faith. And they had come to us at last, to lead us and to guide us to promised tomorrow (Armah, 1968:81).

However, Armah’s clear disgust for African politicians must be seen in the context of a much larger picture. Ghana’s (then the Gold coast’s) interaction with Europe began in 1471 when the Portuguese first landed in search of gold, and by the sixteenth century, slaves (Jones, 1982:55-57). As the Gold Coast was searched, many tribal chiefs participated in this exploitation by aiding Europeans in their endeavours, selling their people for trinkets of Europe (Armah, 1968:175). It is against this historical backdrop that the text makes its assessment of contemporary Ghanaian politics - the betrayal of indigenous people will always be there. This is a warning. Armah writes: “These were the socialists of Africa, fat, perfumed, soft with the ancestral softness of chiefs who have sold their people and are celestially happy with the fruits of trade” (Armah, 1968:92). Furthermore, the Teacher realised that upon reaching power, the new leadership had already grown old and decayed. The Teacher as a prophet (philosopher) therefore uncovers, takes away the covering, to reveal the truth. This means that a prophetic vision is one that sees through the surface reality and exposes it as a lie or a deception. Following the coup at the end of the novel, the Man too realises that things will be no different, but merely new people, new style, old dance (Armah, 1968:185). Thus the Teacher and the Man read signs of ineradicable corruption. Here, the text as a literary prophecy conveys the message concerning the past, the present and the future, and guides the society to initiate change in order to better its situation.

The Man says Koomson, a railway man, then a docker at the harbour, pulling ropes, blistered hands, toughened, callused hands, a seaman and a big rough man got a big party job in Accra (1968:88-89). Therefore leaders such as Koomson, personally profiting from the misuse of the public purse, are simply the latest in a long line of those who have let down the people of Africa. For instance, when the Man's mother-in-law talks about real money which is needed for the boat project, Koomson responds, "Yes but money is not the difficult thing. After all, the Commercial Bank is ours, and we can do anything" (Armah, 1968:136). Thus the Man predicts when Koomson is escaping persecution:

New men would take into their hands the power to steal the nation's riches and to use it for their satisfaction. That of course is to be expected. New people would use the country's power to get rid of men and women who talked a language that did not flatter them. There would be nothing different in that. That would be a continuation of Ghanaian life.... For those who had come directly against the old power, there would be much happiness. But for the nation itself there would only be a change of embezzlers and a change of the hunters and the hunted....Endless days, same days, stretching into the future with no end anywhere in sight (Armah, 1968:162).

Thus the text's characters such as the Man and the Teacher seem to use these historical observations to predict the continuous corruption.

4.1.1.3 Criticisms

The novel criticizes corrupt politicians who took over power immediately after independence. This is being done by using vulgar, nauseating and scatological language.

In the text, the Teacher discussing the black politicians with the Man says, "How were these black leaders to know that while they were climbing up to shit in their people's faces, their people had seen their arseholes and drawn away in disgusted laughter?" (Armah, 1968:82). Armah is using nauseating phrases and scatological language in *The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born* to demonstrate how Ghana's and Africa's newly won independence smouldered away on the altar of capitalism, avarice and unquenchable corruption. These phrases like "your mother's rotten cunt," "mess of some travellers' vomit," "hand dripping of after-piss," "generous gob of mucus," "rotten", and "rotten menstrual blood" (Armah, 1968), remind every reader of the kind of language used in

the novel - the language of scatology, showing his detestation of moral decadence in society. Armah makes use of the messy environment, phlegm, filth, putrefaction and excreta to depict the intensity of the various levels of corruption (Armah 1968). Armah uses the inelegant language to expose the ills of the society. It is this sickness that Armah seeks to cure with his vulgar language as a therapeutic tool. It is a kind of protest against the vulgar behaviours in the society. As Lazarus (1990) notes, for as long as African cities are swallowed by filth, crime, prostitution, moral decadence and the African politicians' continuous corruption, Armah's prophetic harsh voice will continue to echo in his readers' ears.

Sprinkle (2016) says that there is use of vulgar, nauseating and scatological language in the Bible. For instance, God originally prophesied through Zechariah that women in Israel would be raped by wicked, invading armies. The word God inspired is "shagel", and according to Hebrew linguists, "shagel" is an obscene word that describes a sexual act (Brueggemann, 1997). But whenever God said "shagel" (Deuteronomy, 28:30; Isaiah, 13:16), the Masorites replaced it with "shakev"—"to lie with." This entails that the Bible has some obscene language. Ezekiel talks about huge penises, female genital fluid produced at sexual arousal, and large quantities of semen being "poured out" on Israel - God's wayward whore (Ezekiel, 16:26, 36, 37; 23:20-21) (Sprinkle, 2016). There is also the Whore of Babylon or The Great Prostitute or Babylon the Great, a Christian figure and also place of evil mentioned in the Book of Revelation in the Bible. Her full title is given as "Babylon the Great, the Mother of Prostitutes and Abominations of the Earth" (Davis, 2000). She likely symbolizes Sin and also represents an empire in the real world of the time, with similarities to the Roman or Egyptian empires of the past, including having great military strength and the use of slavery in the construction of the empire. She rides the first beast which is likely death, and symbolizes sin leading to death. Like all empires of the past, it will fall, as prophesied in the Book of Revelation chapter 17 and 18. The whore is associated with the antichrist and the beast of Revelation by connection with an equally evil kingdom. The word "Whore" can also be translated metaphorically as "Idolatress" (Davis, 2000). The whore's apocalyptic downfall is prophesied to take place in the hands of the image of the beast with seven heads and ten horns. However, it must be pointed out that there is much speculation

within Christian eschatology on what the whore and beast symbolize as well as the possible implications for contemporary interpretations (Davis, 2000).

Still on use of obscene language, the apostle Paul was so enraptured by the scandalous grace of God that he came dangerously close to swearing: “I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as ‘skubala’, in order that I may gain Christ” (Philippians, 3:8) (Leithart, 2007). The Greek word “skubala” is more vulgar than crap, but harsh (Leithart, 2007). Either way, most translations dim it down by using words like “rubbish,” which means trash, not excrement, or “dung” which is more accurate but far less offensive. The biblical prophets sometimes use offensive language, but not to produce shock for its own sake. With reference to Leithart (2007), God’s messengers used vulgar images to shock their religious audience out of complacency. As for Armah it is meant to discourage people from indulging themselves in the rot, and it is in accordance with the moral-philosophical approaches whose emphasis is teaching as the function of literature (Guerin et al, 2007:77).

Again, Leithart (2007) notes that focusing on writings tending to incite lust, we must say again that the Bible contains some material that might be construed by some as obscene. For instance, the Song of Solomon is an extended celebration of, among other things, sexual love. Also Ezekiel uses graphic imagery in several chapters of his prophecy, and the same language is used by some other prophets. The authors of the Bible describe sexual crimes, such as rape and adultery without flinching (Genesis, 38; 2 Samuel, 11:1-13; 13:1-19). But the Bible does not dwell on the anatomical details of sexual intercourse. Leviticus 18 says that it is an abomination for a man to lie with another man as with a woman. Generally, that is about as detailed as the biblical language gets. In the Bible, poetry is the literary medium for the expression of licit sexuality. The Song of Songs provides the best model in its use of architectural, banquet, and pastoral imagery to describe the woman’s body and the act of sex (Leithart, 2007). The woman describes her husband as “a cluster of henna blossoms in the vineyard of Engedi” and “like an apple tree among the trees of the forest” in whose shade the wife takes “great delight and sat down, and his fruit was sweet to my taste” (Song of Solomon, 1:14; 2:3). In 7:1-2, he describes the curves of his Bride’s hips as

“jewels, the work of the hands of an artist,” and her navel as “a round goblet which never lacks mixed wine.” Some biblical writers use illicit sexual acts as metaphors for idolatry and faithlessness. Graphic sexual imagery, sometimes combined with rather nauseating, almost scatological language, is used. In denouncing the idolatries of Jerusalem, Ezekiel wrote an extended allegory of a young girl child (Jerusalem), whom the Lord pitied, clothed, adorned with jewels. He displayed her beauty to the surrounding nations. In response however, Jerusalem “trusted in [her] beauty and played the harlot” and “poured out [her] harlotries on every passer-by who might be willing” (Ezekiel, 16:15) (Leithart, 2007). Ezekiel’s language becomes more intense: “You built for yourself a high place at the top of every street, and made your beauty abominable; and you spread your legs to every passer-by to multiply your harlotry” (16:25). Jerusalem “played the harlot” with Egypt, Philistia, Assyria, and Chaldea; the Lord, in response, threatens to “gather all your lovers with whom you took pleasure . . . and expose your nakedness to them that they may see your nakedness” (16:36-37). It is significant that the graphic sexual imagery used by Ezekiel is never used in Scripture to describe loving, marital sex. Rather, it is the language of prophetic denunciation. The effect of the language is to heighten the horror and shame of Israel’s idolatry. The language is graphic, but not pornographic; it is not intended to produce lust, but shame and repentance (Leithart, 2007). In a parallel passage, Ezekiel described the harlotries of the sisters, Oholah (Samaria) and Oholibah (Jerusalem). Samaria was the first to become a prostitute, but Jerusalem followed the same path, and in fact was worse than her sister:

She lusted after the Assyrians, governors and officials, the ones near, magnificently dressed, horsemen riding on horses, all of them desirable young men.... And she saw men portrayed on the wall, images of the Chaldeans portrayed with vermillion, girded with belts on their loins, with flowing turbans on their heads, all of them looking like officers, like the Babylonians in Chaldea, the land of their birth. And when she saw them she lusted after them.... And she uncovered her harlotries and uncovered her nakedness; then I became disgusted with her, as I had become disgusted with her sister. Yet she multiplied her harlotries, remembering the days of her youth, when she played the harlot in the land of Egypt. And she lusted after her paramours, whose flesh is like the flesh of donkeys and whose tissue is like the tissue of horses. Thus

you longed for the lewdness of your youth, when the Egyptians handled your bosom because of the breasts of your youth (23:11-21).

It is important to recall that the sins for which Jerusalem is being judged were not primarily sexual, but have to do with breach of the covenant. Both Ezekiel 18 and 23 are full of explicit and implicit references to the holiness code of Leviticus. But what is immediately in view is idolatry. Ezekiel's point is: this is how your idolatry appears in the eyes of God; this is how ugly you are in your sinfulness. On the other hand, *The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born* has nauseating, scatological and vulgar language intended to cure moral decadence, which religiously and in accordance with the moral-philosophical approaches is preached. The breach of the covenant in the text is the political betrayal by the African leaders who amass wealth through corruption, whilst the majority of the people are wallowing in poverty, and the civil servants, including traffic police officers who take bribes with impunity (Armah, 1968).

Historically, *The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born* is a novel in which Armah expresses his disgust on the level of corruption (fraud, bribery and nepotism) in Ghana during its first republic, as the events of the novel take place between Passion Week in 1965 and February 25, 1966, the day after the overthrow of Kwame Nkrumah, the president (Amuta, 1992). It is rampant amongst the leadership and ordinary people alike. Successive Governments come in with promises which end up as an opportunity for the leaders and their groups to enrich themselves. When there is a coup, the time allocation clerk says, "Now another group of bellies will be bursting with the country's riches!" (Armah, 1968:158). Before the coup, there is a commission headed by a professor from Legon to investigate the corrupt and rid the country of corruption but in the end this is what is said:

The net had been made in a special Ghanaian way that allowed the really big corrupt people to pass through it. A net to catch only the small, dispensable fellows, trying in their anguished blindness to leap and obtain the gleam and the comfort the only way these things could be done. And the big ones floated free, like all the slogan. End bribery and corruption. Build Socialism. Equality. Shit (Armah, 1968:154).

This presages the coup that takes place in which the military regime arrests and persecutes the corrupt politicians. Nevertheless, the new regime is still corrupt as witnessed by the Man at a roadblock when a police officer is bribed. Corruption in Ghana and in all African Countries at large is virtually acceptable as a legal means of enrichments, and it is being caused by bureaucracy, poorly paid workers and modernization.

4.1.1.4 Warnings

After denouncing corruption or rather moral decadence, Armah gives warnings. In Armah's text the warning is that people should desist from corrupt activities, and if not might be in the predicament of Koomson, fleeing the country during the coup fearing persecution, or rather punished like the other corrupt political leaders arrested by the military regime (Armah, 1968). Here it is important to note that God punishes and levels palaces in biblical times but people avenge in modern prophecy. For instance, pride provokes the Lord's punishment, which is meted out by humiliating the women of Zion through the removal of all the symbols of their pride and through their subjection to harsh treatment:

On that day the Lord will take away the finery of the anklets, the headbands, and the crescents; the pendants, the bracelets, and the scarves; the headdresses, the armlets, the sashes, the perfume boxes, and the amulets; the signet rings and the nose rings; the festal robes, the mantles, the cloaks, and the handbags; the garment of gauze, the linen garments, the turbans and the veils. Instead of perfume there will be rottenness; and instead of a girdle, a rope; and instead of well-set hair, baldness; and instead of a rich robe, a girding of sackcloth; instead of beauty, shame. Your men shall fall by the sword and your mighty men in battle. And her gates shall lament and mourn; ravaged she shall sit upon the ground (Isaiah, 3:18-26).

This goes together with the title of the text which may be interpreted as a warning that the good leaders have not yet come or been elected or will not come if people continue indulging themselves in filth. Every time those who were thought to be the beautiful ones indulge themselves in corruption. They earn themselves luxurious things, big salaries, high respect and good houses (Armah, 1968:89), leaving the masses wallowing

in poverty, illiteracy, and insufficient social services. As seen, while in Koomson's house, the Man gives us a description of materials he sees:

All the Man could see was a row of glass-covered shelves and with a multitude of polished dishes and glasses....shelves all covered with small, intricate objects that must have come from foreign lands, though of what use they were the man could not decide. To his own left was one of the new television sets... (Armah, 1968:146).

We also learn that Koomson walks over to the big radio in the corner and turned the receiver on. A voice like thunder shook the air, and Koomson slowly turned down the volume, saying, "There is nothing to beat a German set" (Armah, 1968:147). Koomson and his wife worship materials.

According to Armah (1968::89), the leaders are to blame. Also the text is warning people that as long as they continue to have thirst for material things, which was the case in pre-colonial, colonial, and is still the case in postcolonial Ghana and Africa at large, coupled with neo-colonialism, the beautiful leaders, who are incorrupt are not, and will not be there (Armah, 1968:76). This novel is directed particularly against the post-independence leaders whom Fanon describes as "black skins, white masks" and whom Armah himself treats as "Black Masters, White Shadows." Fanon's theory of neocolonialism has far reaching implications and his perceptive comments help us put the novel in its proper perspective:

The national bourgeoisie of underdeveloped countries is not engaged in production, nor in invention, nor building, nor labour; is it completely canalized into activities of the intermediary type. Its innermost vocation seems to be to keep in the running and to be part of the racket. The psychology of the national bourgeoisie is that of the businessman, not that of a captain of industry (1967:120).

Decay and rot are so blatant in contemporary Ghana and its corruption is so rampant that one is consistently drawn to Fanon's portents. Armah realizes that Fanon's prophecy is true with a devastating effect. Armah also decries the nationalist leaders for their greed and acquisitiveness. He says:

African politicians love flashy scenes and highfalutin (pretentious) words. That is only a partial exploration. More important is the historical fact that in a very radical sense the nationalist leaders of Africa have found themselves sucked into the role of hypocrites, actions involved in a make-believe situation (Armah, 1967:74).

Thus commenting on the search for authentic African values in his seminal article entitled "Phantasy and Repression in *The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born*" (1995), Stewart Crehan contends that "the idea of divided self - the Freudian paradox of a dividable individual - undermines the search for an authentic African identity, a wholesome subjectivity capable of leadership and rooted in 'Afrocentric' values" (1995: 105).

4.1.1.5 Restoration

Though some critics have noted pessimism in *The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born*, there is hope for a better future when people can have a corrupt or moral decadent free society even minimally. On the other hand, there is return to innocence in biblical as against forward to justice in modern prophecy. In the text, the man immerses himself in water to cleanse himself of the rot or corruption of Koomson whom he escorted to flee from death when there is a military coup (Armah, 1968). Thus in the case of the Man, he is still an honest incorrupt person as he has cleansed himself of corruption that he might have smeared himself with when he interacted with Koomson. In addition to this, the Teacher's nakedness is a pure symbol of innocence. Therefore the Africa to which the Teacher is attuned is an idealised Africa, the Africa of self-conscious purity. This brings hope that there can still be honest people like the Man and the Teacher, and this is premised on the moral-philosophical approaches which emphasise moralism and utilitarianism.

The other big theme is cleanliness which is also in *The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born*. The daily life in African society is marked by observance of varied rituals and customs. Performance of certain rituals is concerned with purification of the society through expulsion of evil to ensure communal wellbeing (Wright, 1987:183). Although both carrier and scapegoat are used in African society for exclusion of evil, Derek

Wright offers a useful distinction between these two ritual performers. While the carrier simply transports the evil, usually in the form of an effigy, the scapegoat absorbs evil into his living being (Wright, 1987:189). The carrier customarily removes the year's ills and misfortunes. The scapegoat bears away the sins of the community in a purely expiatory rite. In this case the Man is the carrier while Koomson is the scapegoat as shall be illustrated.

In a status - reversal akin to off-loading his burden of corruption and guilt on the ritual carrier, the Man, the conductor explodes with fury and dismisses the Man as a "bloodyfucking sonofabitch. Article of no commercial value" (Armah, 1968:6). The heaps of insults showered on him – "Uncircumcised baboon ... Moron of a frog" (Armah, 1968:9) - by the driver of a taxi which almost runs the Man over, further heightens the Man's status both as a butt of ridicule and as a ritual carrier. Thus the powerless Man begins his journey of life as a ritual carrier who carries the accumulated moral and historical pollutants of his society. Here the Man (carrier) seems to carry the sins of many people in society just like Jesus Christ. The dumping of others' disappointment at the corrupt system on the Man is also sustained by the result of the boat deal between Koomson and Oyo and her mother: a deal which the Man opposes but is ignored as usual. This the Man confirms:

Even the old woman seemed gradually to have resigned herself to the knowledge that what Koomson had come offering her was not the rainbow that would forever end the darkness of her life and the daughter's life. This realization did not, indeed, end her bitterness towards the man. It deepened it, as if in some ultimate way the old woman had no doubt at all that the man had willed her disappointment. The man, for his part, was content to note again how unwilling the powerless became when there was a call for them to resent the powerful (Armah, 1968:152).

The Man gets so much disgusted over the hypocrisy of Koomson that he rejects even to eat the fish sent to him by Koomson. But when Koomson appropriates the profit and rewards the Man's wife and mother-in-law with the occasional supply of miserable fish, Oyo's mother, who now realizes that Koomson has no intention of sharing the profits from the venture with her and Oyo, fails to confront Koomson. Instead, she heaps insults at the Man as carrier source for the release of her anger and frustrations. In his

essay "Motivation and Motif" (1985), Wright affirms the carrier status of the Man when he reports that, "The man becomes the metaphorical carrier of the guilt-probing disease of integrity which causes the Koomsons to regard him not only as invisible and inaudible - he is 'invisible man of the shadows' (Armah, 1968:37), whom they are afraid to see or hear - but also as untouchable" (Wright, 1985: 121).

The most pervasive figure who symbolizes the society's accumulated moral and political mountains of filth which needs to be expelled from the community is Koomson. Apart from Koomson, the other dirty ones in the text are the bus conductor, Amankwa – the timber merchant, the allocation clerk, the Supervisor of Space Allocations, Zacharia Lagos, Abednego Yamoah, officials at Ghana Lottery, Estella, Oyo and her mother, the sexually immoral, the police and army, the Europeans, African chiefs, and generally all the politicians. Wright has argued that "More interested in his object-status as ritual property, Armah reductively depersonalizes Koomson into the symbolic dirt-mound or wooden figurine in the carrier's model canoe (Wright, 1989: 114): the man leads him across a landscape of 'stumps and holes and mounds' and the politician is even described as 'walking stilly', 'momentarily rigid', and 'like some wooden thing'" (Armah, 1968:170-171). In line with this, it can be argued that Koomson is the fetish effigy. The fugitive Joe Koomson emerges as an embodiment of constipation: a sack of putrid body excretions to be evacuated down the country's latrine hole - a symbolic phenomenon displaying all the fantastic realistic embodiment of the African oral tradition. The latrine hole incident suggests that Koomson has become a ritual and morally polluted matter - a non-living or dead weight which must be "pushed, pulled, held, rammed, gently drawn, steered by its carrier who, after partly denuding the contamination source during the latrine passage, no longer troubles to avoid contagion by keeping 'a fruitless distance between himself and the other'" (Armah, 1968:163) (Wright, 1989:115).

The Man's carrier-induced expulsion of the tainted Koomson from the society and his unloading of him into the ritual dunghill, the sea, to which night-soil men in most towns in colonial Gold Coast dumped their burdens of shit, links the Man to the brotherhood of stigmatized and ostracized latrine carriers. That the sea itself is not pure is confirmed

by Wright's assertion that "the sea itself a pile of pollution at the end of the latrine circuit and the death cycle of the body" (Wright, 1989:122). In Armah's own words "the dark water of the night sea looked thick and viscous, almost solid" (Armah, 1968:176). Significantly, Koomson becomes accumulated shit (money; capital) which is the produce of the ostentatious consumption of Ghana's resources, the end result of the gleam, about to be carried away by the Man, and dumped in the sea. The predicament in which Koomson finds himself is echoed in the biblical theme which states that the high shall be brought low and the low shall be exalted (Matthew 23:12). In the text Koomson who is a high ranking official is brought low by the way he is treated by the new military regime, and even carried to be disposed of by the Man. On the other hand, the Man is exalted as his wife who used to envy the Koomsons appreciates that he has not been like them. Thus according to the moral-philosophical approaches, literature has this function of teaching.

Armah's treatment of the carrier motif is significantly different from that of other writers from West Africa. In the traditional concept of the motif, the ritual expulsion of the year's pollutants ushers in celebration and regeneration. As the Man observes at a roadblock where the driver of the new mini bus on a long journey is forced to bribe a policeman - an observation that suggests that the coup has brought about no new changes and that the gleam is still in control - Armah's exploitation of the carrier motif does not amount to a revolutionary transformation of the foul society. The cleansing of the society by the Man carrying and dumping Koomson into the sea can be compared to the cleansing of the earth by flood during the time of Noah. Noah preached salvation of the people through the ark as the earth would be destroyed. After the deluge the eight people who survived still sinned as noted in the curse of Ham upon seeing the nakedness of Noah, his father. The two cities of Sodom and Gomorrah still emerged with evils or sins such as homosexuality (sodomy), as Genesis 19:5 says that all of the men (perhaps all of the people) of Sodom formed the mob at Lot's house and demanded to "know" the angels. It is said that people's evil waxed so high that it reached the throne of God. Juxtaposed to this is the Man's society which undergoes purification by the expulsion of the rot such as the Koomsons into the sea but still remains corrupt. As noted, though the symbolic removal of the Koomsons and Nkrumahs appears as one of

the things in the present which would prepare the way for the “future goodness”, hope is dashed by the fact that new embezzlers have already replaced the old ones who have just been evacuated. Nevertheless, the fact that the Man chooses to endure the family scorn and not escape, indicates optimism for the future generation of Africa. The Man’s stance against corruption is really firm in the entire book. For instance, he refuses to take a bribe from Amankwa - the timber merchant, when he tells him, “To make a booking, you have to come during working hours” (Armah, 1968:32); Even when his wife tells him that it is clean, the life Estella is getting, the Man responds by saying, “Some of that kind of cleanness has more rottenness in it than the slime at the bottom of a garbage dump” (Armah, 1968:44). The Man exposes the source of corruption and how it comes to be seen by the entire society with the exception of the Teacher and the Man, as an authentic lifestyle. Here it must be pointed out that prophets are like detectives who pick up clues which others miss and who therefore see better and further and more clearly than others. Unlike the Man, Oyo is not endowed with full self-knowledge, and so she is unable to see through the centuries of veils erected by generations of Africa’s rulers to blindfold the masses. In the text the Man implies that the Koomsons obtain their riches by crooked means which is a sin. Also in order to remain steadfast against corruption the Man neither signs the papers for the boat project nor eats fish from Koomson’s boat (Armah, 1968). All this moral uprightness of the Man in accordance with the moral-philosophical approaches which religiously emphasise moralism and utilitarianism, points to a better future for the African continent.

Also the Teacher’s story about the myth of Plato’s cave is intended to give hope in that despite being in eternal darkness (symbolically - poverty), those inside the eternal cave are not shaken or attracted by all the blinding beauty of all the lights and the colours of the world outside (symbolically - riches). They regard the chains which keep them tied in eternal darkness to be reassuring chains (Armah, 1968:80), which signify hope for a promising future which is moral decadent free. It should be noted that the great Greek philosopher Plato (424-347), used this story about men who lived all their life in a cave, chained to pillars, and could see only shadows cast on the cave’s back wall by fire that burned behind them, to illustrate the difference between illusion and reality (Watt, 1997: xiv), and so it has many interpretations. Hence commenting on the cave image,

Wright asserts that, “Those who pursue ‘the gleam’ of materialism are like Plato's cave dwellers, ‘people who for ages had seen nothing outside the darkness of their own shadowy forms and had no way of believing that there could be anything else’” (Wright, 1989: 211). The dark cave represents the corrupt world depicted by the novel and the bringer of light represents the upright people who struggle to transform this morally debilitating society. Like the visionary bringer of light to the cave in permanent darkness, the few lone individuals who fight the totalitarian powers of the gleam of materialism and corruption “are rewarded for their pains with ostracism and solitude rather than respect and acclaim” (Lazarus, 1987:155), just like the Man and the Teacher in *The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born*.

4.1.2 Prophecy in Ngugi's Devil on the Cross

4.1.2.1 Bearing Witness

According to Foad (1994), a prophet bears witness to the challenges of a commoner, especially the deleterious societal conditions, or injustices which cause disparities in human treatment leading to despair. Thus, Ngugi bears witness in the following ways:

4.1.2.1.1 Testimonies

Ngugi's prophetic platform bears witness to the challenges of a commoner before and after independence and the later periods of social, economic and political injustices. He bears witness to corruption, socio-economic exploitation or oppression, theft, neo-colonialism, land speculation / grabbing, sexual immorality, betrayal by leaders and materialism (Ngugi, 1982). At the beginning of the text, the first person narrator is a Gicaandi player. According to Ghilardi (1966:184):

The gicaandi is a kind of Gikuyu universal poem of the highest poetry in which the performer paces freely, passing from one field to another. He touches on all leitmotifs more or less at length. He passes from feasting merriment to the darkest sadness, from the comical to the tragical and from lyrical to gruesome or even apocalyptic expressions. He disdains vulgar themes.

This narrator addresses himself as a Prophet of Justice, and wants to reveal what now lies concealed in darkness (Ngugi, 1982:7-8):

After seven days of fasting, the earth trembles, and lightning scores the sky with its brightness, and he is lifted up, and borne up to the rooftop of the house, and he is shown many things, and he hears a voice, like a great clap of thunder, admonishing him: Who has told you that prophecy is yours alone to keep to yourself? Why are you furnishing yourself with empty excuses? If you do that, you will never be free of tears and pleading cries.

There seems to be various allusions to biblical prophecy in this quotation. For instance, Ezekiel writes: “And I saw and behold a whirlwind came out of the north, and a great cloud, and a fire enfolding it, and brightness was about it and out of the midst thereof, that is, out of the midst of the fire, as it were the resemblance of amber” (1: 4). Also According to some rabbis of the Talmud, fasts were obligatory only when the nation was under oppression (Dembitz, 1898). David also fasted and prayed for seven days that his son by Uriah’s wife, Bathsheba, would be spared (2 Samuel, 12:15-22). Thunder and lightning are spoken of as tokens of God's wrath (2 Samuel, 22:15; Job, 28:26; 37:4; Psalm, 135:7; 144:6; Zechariah, 9:14). They also represent God's glorious and awful majesty (Revelation 4:5), or some judgement of God on the world (20:9). Based on these echoes from the Bible, it can be argued that the Gicaandi player seems to have been inspired to reveal the injustices prevalent in society at this time.

It should be observed that sexual immorality is highly pronounced in the text. On Friday morning Wariinga is dismissed from her job for rejecting the advances of Boss Kihara, her employer, who is the managing director of the firm (Ngugi, 1982:10). Wariinga says that the Modern Love Bar and Lodging has become the main employment bureau for girls and women’s thighs are the tables on which contracts are signed (Ngugi, 1982:19). When Wangari looks for a job in Nairobi, a black man tells her that the only job he could offer her is that of spreading her legs, that women with mature bodies are experts at the job (Ngugi, 1982:42). The robbers and thieves at the feast, use girls as sex objects. Due to this appetite to have many girls and much sex, Nditika even suggests coming up with a transplant factory so that the rich can have two cocks in order to continuously have sex and never get tired (Ngugi, 1982). Some of the biblical echoes to sexual

immorality are:1 Corinthians 6:18, “Flee fornication. Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body.” Also among the commandments at the devil’s feast is that every competitor must reveal the number of women he has - wives and/or mistresses; Kihaahu wa Gatheeca boasts, “I like other people’s wives. One gets such glorious feeling of victory. You know, don’t you, that that’s another kind of stealing? I am particularly good at bourgeois women. They never resist....I have baptized them the ready-to-yield” (Ngugi, 1982:111). Thus the text seems to teach the sexually immoral in accordance with the moral-philosophical approaches whose emphasis is moralism.

Moreover, in the text, we also learn that the robbers and thieves at the feast had armed themselves with young women-sugar girls, who wore very expensive jewellery, like pearl and ruby necklaces around their necks or silver and gold rings on their fingers (Ngugi, 1982:92). As noted in *Devil on the Cross*, it looks as if the women in the cave have dressed for a fashion parade, for a display of valuable stones (Ngugi, 1982:92). Thus all this is brought to light to help people or rather readers to change their attitude towards jewellery, and it is in accordance with the moral-philosophical approaches which emphasise moralism and utilitarianism.

Materialism is borne out in *Devil on the Cross*. For instance, we learn that what Wariinga hated the most was her blackness, so she would disfigure her body with skin-lightening creams like Ambi and Snowfire (Ngugi, 1982:11). We also note that Mwaura is one of those who worship at the shrine of the god of money. The worshipping of materials and even money may be compared to idol worship. In Marxism idol worship is reformulated and theorized as commodity fetishism - the perception of the social relationships involved in production, not as relationships among people, but as economic relationships among the money and commodities exchanged in market trade (Rubin, 1990:5). As observed in the text, Mwaura says there is no universe he would not visit, no river that he would not cross, no mountain that he would not climb, no crime that he would not commit in loyal obedience to the molten god of money (Ngugi 1982:33). The white Master of ceremony says, “Money is the heart that beats to keep the Western world on the move. If you people want to build a great civilization like

ours, then kneel down before the god of money” (Ngugi, 1982:89). This love of money which is borne out in *Devil on the Cross* is echoed in the Bible as 1 Timothy 6:10 states, “For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.” At the feast, the seven delegates wore hats like crowns, which were decorated with seven metal objects like horns, which gleamed so brightly that they blinded the eyes (Ngugi, 1982:91). There were differences in the suits they wore. The one worn by the leader was made of dollars, the Englishman’s of pounds, the German’s of Deutschmarks, the Frenchman’s of francs, the Italian’s of lire, the Scandinavian’s of kroner, and the Japanese delegate’s of yen (Ngugi, 1982:91). All this testifies to worshipping the god of money. Furthermore, one of the commandments at the feast is that every competitor must provide information about the car he drives, the model his wife drives and the model driven by his girlfriends (Ngugi, 1982:99). Also this shows people’s thirst and idolatry for materials.

In the novel, Wariinga describes the Devil, “On his head there were seven horns, seven trumpets for sounding infernal hymns of praise and glory” (Ngugi, 1982:13). The horns allude to the book of Revelation in which a great Dragon, identified as the old Serpent, the Devil, or Satan (12:9), with seven heads, ten horns, and seven crowns on his heads drags a third of the stars of Heaven with his tail, and throws them to the Earth (12:3–4). Paralleled to the seven trumpets for sounding infernal (connected with hell) hymns are the seven trumpets sounded in Chapters 8, 9 and 12 of Revelation which signal destruction. For instance, when the first trumpet is sounded, there is hail and fire, mingled with blood, which are thrown to the earth burning up a third of the trees and green grass (8:6–7); and for the second trumpet, something that resembles a great mountain, burning with fire, falls from the sky and lands in the ocean killing a third of the sea creatures and destroys a third of the ships at sea (8:8–9). Since the Devil in the novel is a metaphor for the capitalists, imperialists and neocolonialists, all this points to the destructive capabilities of the neocolonialists. At the feast the leader of the foreign delegates tells the African businessmen that if they promote the Uhuru of theft and robbery, they will be helped to defend it with all the weapons (Ngugi, 1982:90). In addition to this, at the feast, the leader of the foreign delegation from the “International

Organization of Robbers and Thieves” takes a seat that is higher than others and on his right sit three foreigners and on his left the other three (Ngugi, 1982:91). Wariinga describes their dressing:

On their heads they wore hats like crowns. Each crown was decorated with seven metal objects shaped like horns, which gleamed so brightly that they almost blinded the eyes. All the crowns looked alike, but the leader’s was a little larger than the others. The tips of the horns were twisted into the initial of the country that each delegate came from (Ngugi, 1982:91).

Here, there are as well echoes of the book of Revelation in which a Beast with seven heads, ten horns, and ten crowns on his horns and on his heads names of blasphemy, directs people to make an image of the Beast of the Sea who was wounded yet lives, breathing life into it, and forcing all people to bear “the mark of the Beast,” “666” (13:6). According to some futurists sometime prior to the expected return of Jesus, there will be a period of “Great Tribulation” during which the Antichrist, who will be the greatest false messiah in Christianity, indwelt and controlled by Satan, will attempt to win supporters with false peace and supernatural signs (Wessinger, 2000). He will silence all that defy him by refusing to “receive his mark” on their right hands or forehead. This “mark” will be required to legally partake in the end-time economic system (Wessinger, 2000). In the text the foreign delegates clad in clothes of their respective currencies, urge African businessmen to kneel down before the god of money (Ngugi, 1982). They say the seven disciples they want to choose will have access to their banks that govern everything today – industries and all other types of businesses (Ngugi, 1982). Moreover, they say it is far better to drink the blood of your people and to eat their flesh than to retreat a step (Ngugi, 1982:89). All this entails that the foreign delegates control the world economy, and when they are supported, it simply shows that money and materials are worshiped. According to the Marxist theory, capitalists like these will always exploit workers and peasants which eventually leads to the proletarian revolution.

It has been noted that corruption is testified to in the text. In the novel Gatuiria says to Wariinga, “Nairobi is large, soulless and corrupt....But it is not Nairobi alone that is afflicted in this way. The same is true of all the cities in every country that has recently

slipped the noose of colonialism” (Ngugi, 1982:15). To get a loan of 10,000 shillings, Gitutu bribes a loan clerk who says, “But remember, in this world there is nothing for free. Give to me, and I will give to you: that’s the modern motto” (Ngugi 1982:104). In addition, to recover election costs, Kihaahu notes, “The company that won the tender for building the houses was Italian. But of course, it had first given me a small back-hander of about 2,000,000 shillings. I put the money in my account and knew that the campaign money had been repaid” (Ngugi, 1982:116). He further says that he receives bribes from those who buy houses and even teamed up with foreigners to form a construction company which wins tenders, as he is in government. Again as seen in *Devil on the Cross*, Kihaahu practices dirty politics of pouring out money to those around him; gathering a choir of Nyakinyua women about himself, who sang his praises and invented stories of how he had fought for freedom and had provided people with land and education and other lies like those; employing a youth wing which destroys property of his opponents and beat those who murmured complaints about him; bought opponents and votes (Ngugi, 1982:114). Thus the violence perpetrated by Kihaahu for selfish motives of winning elections, Mwaura’s job of the Devil’s Angel carrying out assassinations on behalf of the private businessmen and Kimmendeeri’s murders in colonial and postcolonial era, seem to be activities of the Antichrist in the text. This is justified by Mammonism which says that the greatest Antichrist is Lucifer, but he has many assistants, both spirit being and mortals (Norman, 1970). All this is shown in the novel since in accordance with the moral-philosophical approaches, literature preaches with emphasis on moralism so that people change.

The new African leaders seem to promote neocolonialism and betray their people. The leader of the foreign delegates implores the local thieves and robbers, “...you should develop the Uhuru of theft, and we shall help you to defend it with all the weapons we have at our disposal” (Ngugi, 1982:90). As the leader of the foreign delegation sat down, the whole cave was thrown into confusion as it resounded with shouts and thunderous applause, “The shoe doesn’t need a sock! It fits the foot exactly! It is made for the foot! The foreigner really knows how to fit shoes!” (Ngugi, 1982:90). It can be seen that Africans are reliant on foreigners. The betrayal of the commoners is shown in

the novel. For example, people like Wariinga's parents, Wangari and Muturi, who fought for freedom are dispossessed of their land and exploited. Gitutu demonstrates, "Wealth is not the work of one's hands but the cunning of one's mind, cunning in a free market system to rob the fruits of freedom" (Ngugi, 1982:105). He further says, "Today I'm about to join hands with some foreigners from Italy, who are planning to purchase an entire country in Meru and Embu to grow rice and sugar" (Ngugi, 1982:107). All this shows that the African bourgeois are collaborating with their former colonial masters to exploit their fellow Africans.

Furthermore, the theme of theft and robbery is highly exploited in the text. And Gitutu testifies:

A career of theft and robbery is the only one for anybody who calls himself an adult. The white man believes that there's no business to beat that of theft and robbery....The white man came into this country holding the Bible in his left hand and a gun in his right. He stole people's fertile lands. He stole the people's cattle and goats under the cover of fines and taxes (Ngugi, 1982:102).

Thus Guerin et al (2007) says that literature has a simple function of teaching, as all these issues are shown so that people can reform. The emphasis is on moralism and utilitarianism, and that literature should be delightful and instructive (Guerin et al, 2007:77). Also it is noted that a great literary work must possess high seriousness, the important thing being moral and philosophical teaching. Such teaching may also be of a religious nature.

There are revelations or testimonies which come through some of the characters such as Wangari and Wariinga, who are dispossessed of land; and Gitutu and his father whose specialties are land grabbing and speculation. Also Ngugi uses Wangari and Muturi who were once freedom fighters to show disenchantment of the betrayal of Africans by the new leadership after independence which concentrates on enriching itself instead of alleviating the suffering of its people. Wangari who was a freedom fighter is dispossessed of her land, leaving her wandering in Nairobi, charged for vagrancy and later detained in her country (Ngugi, 1982). These issues are brought to light so that the people can re-examine themselves and change for good. From the biblical point of

view, the deleterious societal conditions which Isaiah deals much with are the same themes as those of Amos and Hosea: the sins of luxury, fashion, and frivolity in men and women; land grabbing, defiance of Yahweh (Chapters 1, 2, 3 and 4), and Hosea lists the offences of Israel related to Sinai - swearing, lying, murder, stealing, committing adultery, and urging people to avoid such offences. The prophets were against the unbridled economic expansion of great landowners, who added estate to estate until they became the sole property owners in the land (Isaiah, 5:8; Amos, 8:4; 3:15; Micah, 2:2). They criticized in clear terms the greedy attitude of the rich to enlarge their estates by displacing the small holders. What is criticized is “latifundialization”, that is, “the process of land accumulation in the hands of a few wealthy landowners to the deprivation of the peasantry” (Premnath, 1997). In the text, Gitutu has bizarre plans to increase hunger and thirst for land by selling soil in tins, metering or packaging air for sale and denying people air if they rebel (Ngugi, 1982:107). It must be noted that these biblical prophets were bearing witness to some sins which are related to the covenant and at the time of a divided kingdom of Israel and Judah, about 3000 years ago. At that time there was a tribute system (McTernan, 2011). The organization of both the country and the city was determined by the restricted conditions of production - the small-scale and primitive cultivation of the land and the craft type of industry. Exploitation functioned more differently than during the height of capitalism. Because of the eventual growth of commerce (and of human populations), feudal society began to accumulate capital, which, along with the increased debt incurred by the aristocracy, eventually led to the English Revolution of 1640 and the French Revolution of 1789, both of which opened the way for the establishment of a society structured around commodities and profit, that is, capitalism. In such a society, the proletariat is fooled into believing that she/he is free because she/he is paid for her/his labour (Marx and Engels, 1848). In fact, the transformation of labour into an abstract quantity that can be bought and sold on the market leads to the exploitation of the proletariat, benefitting a small percentage of the population in control of capital. This is the kind of society prevalent in Ngugi’s text during the postcolonial period of Africa.

According to Eagleton (1976:2), the responsibility of the writer is to speak out through his art about the evils that prevail or say to commit his art to the cause of the proletariat. This is what Ngugi is doing in accordance with Marxism. Moreover according to Guerin et al (2007:77), literature has a simple function of teaching, and the emphasis is on moralism and utilitarianism. Such teaching may also be of a religious nature. Though this is contrary to Marxism, the two approaches seem to seek the enhancement of justice.

4.1.2.1.2 Music or Songs

According to Albert Rousit (1975:74), musical prophecy is another form of bearing witness though it does not necessarily have a biblical or spiritual connection. Like the kind of graphic and oral art, prophecy in music functions as an abstract mirror for the society from which it comes. There is the oratorio, composed by Gatuiria, to tell the story of Kenya on pages 227-230 in *Devil on the Cross*. It tells the story of Kenya before the coming of British imperialists, the coming of foreigners and the army, and the struggle of Africans against foreign forces during colonization, the establishment of colonial rule and its effects; the enslavement of Africans, and the nationalist struggle for freedom. As can be noted, the oratorio is prophecy as it conveys the message concerning the past, the present and the future. There is also a song which shows the conflict between the exploited and the capitalists which is as follows:

I shall knock-a-knock the Devil
I shall knock-a-knock the Devil
I shall tell him: Leave me alone
I do not belong to the demons (Ngugi, 1982:46).

There are songs which attest to prostitution, harambee of money, cultural imperialism and socio-economic exploitation by the bourgeois. There are also songs which urge people to unite and fight imperialists, and to chase the devils or capitalists. Thus Ngugi's text uses these songs to prophesy by testifying to the challenges of a commoner before and after independence and later years of social, economic and political injustices.

4.1.2.1.3 Stories

Ngugi is using the stories of Kareendi, Ndinguri and the subverted(modified or hybridized) biblical parable of the talents, to show the injustices and iniquities in the society.

The first story is narrated by Wariinga. It is her life story but instead she hides her identity as Kareendi. She is telling it to show the predicament of girls who want to make it in life, but their bosses demand sex in order to give them jobs or maintain the ones they have (Ngugi, 1982:19). They are wooed by the promise of material things. Sometimes these girls are sexually abused, impregnated and then dumped. Wariinga laments to Gatuiria, “Today we can only be called the bearers of the doomed children instead of the bearers of children of heroic stature....That is how the dreams of us sugar girls are destroyed by sugar daddies” (Ngugi, 1982:137).

There is another story which is narrated by Gatuiria about Ndinguri which is from oral tradition. It is a three-in-one story. The first part urges the exploited to overthrow those who exploit them, and this is premised on Ngugi’s Marxist ideology. The second story urges girls to desist from loving foreign men and culture. The first part of the last story teaches that wealth is connected to the Devil (Ngugi, 1982: 62-66). The second part urges people to eliminate evil just like what the people did to Ndinguri when he started drinking their blood after selling his soul to the Devil. There is also a moral lesson in the story of Ndinguri that if one is dazzled by the splendour of property, he will only be dazzled by the splendour of evil spirits (Ngugi, 1982:65), and this is in accordance with the moral-philosophical approaches which emphasise teaching as a function of literature. This is in line with Isaiah’s condemnation of idol worshipping as he says, “When you cry out for help let your collection of idols save you! The wind will carry all of them off; a mere breath will blow them away. But the man who makes me his refuge will inherit and possess my holy mountain” (57:13). Isaiah is talking about handicraft economy in which there are man-made items worshipped by people. On the other hand, Marx borrowed the concept of “fetishism” from *The Cult of Fetish Gods* (1760) by Charles de Brosses, which proposed a materialist theory of the origin of religion (Rubin,

1990). Instead, Marx said that fetishism is "the religion of sensuous (pleasure) appetites", and that the fantasy of the appetites tricks the fetish worshipper into believing that an inanimate object will yield its natural character to gratify the desires of the worshipper. Therefore, the crude appetite of the fetish worshipper smashes the fetish when it ceases to be of service (Marx and Engels, 1948). As can be noted in Marxism, idol worshipping is formulated and theorised as commodity fetishism. Another lesson in relation to the second story is that one should willingly defend the shadow of his nation, for he will never die; but his name shall live forever in the hearts of the people (Ngugi, 1982:65).

The parable of the talents in the Holy Bible is sometimes subverted (modified or hybridized) in the text to show how exploitative the capitalists or imperialists are, especially to the first and second servants. The third servant mainly urges people to see the truth and not work for the exploiters, but instead unite and eliminate the capitalists, and have a just society in the end. As can be noted Ngugi appropriates traditional parables as well as Christian parables; in the text the "good guys" and the "bad guys" use both traditional and Christian teachings to justify or make sense of their surroundings. The "Kingdom of Heaven" (Matthew, 25:14) to which the Gospel of Matthew likens the parable becomes the "Kingdom of Earthly Wiles" (Ngugi, 1982:82). Heaven (or its undeniable converse, Hell) is no longer a metaphysical construct, but the present earthly reality, full of deception and trickery. The ruler "traveling to a far country" is not a metaphorical image of God but a tangible, oppressive part of Kenyan daily life - the white imperialist (Matthew, 25:14). No longer can the parable be interpreted as a call to do good for God, but, rather, as a call to do good for the people. Hence, in *Devil on the Cross*, Ngugi's reworking of the Parable of the Talents retains the biblical narrative's "potential of transformative power" (Lovesey, 1994:162).

While Ngugi may demythologize the biblical text (Parable of Talents), he preserves its potency (power) as a socially influential discourse. It is only through this preservation that critics have been able to conclude that the novel, "writes history infused (instilled) with prophecy, sanctioned by the masses and God" (Lovesey, 1994:159), and the reader is able to contextualize Ngugi's seemingly heretical statement, "The voice of the people

is the voice of God” (Ngugi, 1982:8), within the hybridized discourse of the work. He is calling for a specifically Kenyan Bible, or, more particularly, for a specifically Kenyan mode of religiousness - a spirituality that embraces the unity of the masses and the equality of the races in a “just socialist society” (Ngugi, 1972:36). Ngugi blends aspects of both the colonizer and the colonized’s interpretations of the Christian narrative. He dons the cloak of religiosity in order to subvert the binaries presented by Church ideologies. By the conclusion of the novel no longer do the notions of good and evil, the Devil and God, right and wrong have credibility, rather they have been metamorphosed into a message of justified rebellion and Kenyan socialism. Thus, the power of Christian parables is hitched to the wagon of revolution, presenting religion as a source of power that is not one dimensional, though the Marxists do not believe in Christianity and morality. In a nutshell, the Parable of the Talents works towards the fulfilment of the Communist Manifesto.

All in all there are moral lessons embedded in these stories, in accordance with the moral-philosophical approaches which look at literature’s function of teaching, and emphasis on moralism and utilitarianism (Guerin et al, 2007).

4.1.2.2 Predictive Prophecy

With reference to Simpson (2005), there are three types of predictive prophecies. The first is prophecy in modern times which has come to mean almost exclusively the prediction of future events based on the pre-colonial, colonial and postcolonial history of Kenya. At independence, Wariinga’s parents, Wangari and Muturi who fought for freedom from the imperialists are oppressed by their African leaders who are working together with the former colonial masters in a capitalist society. This is seen as history repeating itself and looking at Marx’s theory, the exploited will always want to overthrow the oppressors so as to end exploitation and private property ownership. Thus this history is used to make predictions. Then there are demonic predictions made by the devil when he puts thoughts and ideas into the minds of people regarding future events, and these predictions may not be always true. The third is true predictive

prophecy from God which always comes to pass. In line with this, the following are prophecies in *Devil on the Cross*:

4.1.2.2.1 Demonic Predictive prophecy.

The devil prophesies to Wariinga whilst she is in a trance at the golf course about the plans Kimeendeeri is suggesting to profiteer at the meeting of private businessmen, Mwaura being a member of the devil's angels – he is devilish and a joker, and the fate of Mwireri for criticizing other businessmen (Ngugi, 1982). The devil's prophecy is later confirmed by Gaturia when he meets Wariinga that Kimeendeeri had just finished his monologue of how he wants to profiteer. The demonic predictions also come to pass as Mwireri is killed by Mwaura who is hired by Kimeendeeri (Ngugi, 1982). This is Satan who predicts for Wariinga and says, "No! No! Get thee behind me, Satan... (Ngugi, 1982:194), when the voice suggests giving her a job in Nakuru. Here it should be realised that it is the devil who reads the signs of the future for he says this to Wariinga about the robbers and thieves in the cave:

So I know everything they have done in the past, everything they are doing today and everything they'll do tomorrow, and the day after tomorrow, and in years to come" (Ngugi, 1982:192-193). The devil adds, "I am an avid reader of the Bible. And there is nothing hidden from me under the sun. I was there at the beginning of the conflict in heaven. God and I are twins. He is the Lord of Heaven. I am the Lord of Hell. The world is our battlefield... (Ngugi, 1982: 192-193).

Also the Devil suggests giving Wariinga a job in Nakuru, Ngorika, which she refuses but it turns out that she indeed has a job in Nakuru for she shoots dead her antagonist Ghitahy and at other capitalist. Moreover, the Devil reveals what is hidden about Wariinga that she has no faith in herself, and she has never known who she is (Ngugi, 1982:191). Hence, Wariinga's final "transgression" in the Christian sense, becomes an act of self-affirmation, retribution, and justice. No longer is Wariinga caught in the paradigms of good and evil, the devil and god, the imperialist and the peasant, but she occupies a new space - a socialist call to justified revolution. Thus the Devil seem to possess prophetic traits for he reads signs of what is to come and reveals what is hidden.

In the text, when Gatuiria tells Wariinga what happened in the cave and she realises that is exactly what the Devil prophesied, "...her heart was thumping, for what had occurred in the cave corresponded almost word for word, action for action, with what had gone on in her dream. Or could it be that it was not a dream but a revelation" (Ngugi, 1982:199). According to Simpson (2005), because the devil and his angels have been around since the fall of man, they have the added advantage of a historical point of view. They can listen on private conversations and plans. They can be in many places around the world because of their numbers and relay that information to individuals who are open to their ways (Simpson, 2005).

4.1.2.2.2 The Communist Manifesto

The Communist Manifesto, as prophecy of things to come is noted in *Devil on the Cross*. Marx and Engels (1848) say that one main idea of the Communist Manifesto is that all of history until now is the story of a series of class struggles, and the last stage of history is when the proletarian revolution will destroy the entire system of class exploitation, including all private property. The communists believe in an economic system in which the state controls the means of production for the people to create a society in which everyone is treated equally (Hobsbawn, 2011). Once these prerogatives are not met, Ngugi urges that there is need for the proletariat's awareness to claim a fairer situation. This is according to the Marxist theory, one of the writer's duties. In the text Muturi and the student leader lead the proletarian revolution. Here it is Muturi who portends that "the cure to exploitation is a strong organisation of the workers and peasants of the land, together with those whose eyes and ears are now open and alert" (Ngugi, 1982:205). Though the law is on the side of the bourgeois, there are deaths on both sides, while Muturi and the student leader are arrested (Ngugi, 1982:214). Although the revolution has not been successful, Wariinga partially achieves the aim of the revolution. It is the oppressed peasants and workers who revolt against the capitalists. On the other hand, biblical prophets prophesied the fall of oppressive regimes and then God accomplished their prophecies. For instance, Isaiah 16 describes a number of kings and tyrants, who were brought down from the place of pride and power by the shaking of God, because Isaiah prophesied against them (Brueggmann,

1978). It can be seen that God punishes and levels palaces in biblical but people avenge in modern prophecy. For example, Isaiah 34:13 on the Lord's wrath upon nations says, "And thorns shall come up in its palaces, Nettles and brambles in its fortresses; It shall be a habitation of jackals, A courtyard of ostriches." As for Isaiah 32:14, "Because the palaces will be forsaken, The bustling city will be deserted. The forts and towers will be lairs forever, A joy of wild donkeys, a pasture of flocks." Also Isaiah 25:12 notes, "He will bring down your high fortified walls and lay them low; he will bring them down to the ground, to the very dust"; and Lamentations 2:2 reads, "Without pity the Lord has swallowed up all the dwellings of Jacob; in his wrath he has torn down the strongholds of Daughter Judah. He has brought her kingdom and its princes down to the ground in dishonour." As for the Marxists, Christianity or religion is used by the bourgeois to justify the exploitation of the proletariat, and so it is the people who act to liberate themselves from exploitation.

With reference to Norman (1970), only dramatic events are seen as able to change the world and the change is anticipated to be brought about, or survived, by a group of the devout and dedicated. In most millenarian movements, the disaster or battle to come will be followed by a new, purified world in which the believers will be rewarded (Norman, 1970). While many millennial groups are pacifistic, millenarian beliefs have been claimed as causes for people to ignore conventional rules of behaviour, which can result in violence. In the modern era, some of the concepts of millennial thinking have found their way into various secular ideas, usually in the form of a belief that a certain historical event will fundamentally change human society (or has already done so) (Linden, 1971). For example, the French Revolution seemed to many to be ushering in the millennial age of reason. Also, the philosophies of Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel (1770–1831) and Karl Marx (1818–1883) carried strong millennial overtones. However, these secular theories generally have little or nothing to do with the original millennial thinking, but according to Wessinger (2000), Marxism is a millenarian movement focusing on the book of Revelation, and since Ngugi is writing from this ideology in *Devil on the Cross*, Muturi and the student leader lead the peasants and workers revolution with the hope of creating a communal society (Ngugi, 1982:204).

It is also important to note that the invitation cards to the devil's feast given to four people travelling on Mwaura's matatu portend something big to happen. Prophets are familiar with the signs, omens, pointers, clues and tell-tale happenings that symbolize or presage an apocalyptic event or a great change in human affairs. In the text, the gicaandi player who narrates the story of Wariinga is the Prophet of Justice (Ngugi, 1982:7), who seems to be familiar with signs. Surely, there is the devil's feast (meeting of private businessmen) in Ilmorog, and even a bigger change as there is a proletarian revolution which though quelled is partially achieved by Wariinga (Ngugi, 1982). It is also important to note that in the field of astrology, solar and lunar eclipses (along with the appearance of comets and to some extent the full moon) have often been considered omens of notable births, deaths, or other significant events throughout history in many societies (Lampsas, 1984). One biblical example is the Magi in the Gospel of Matthew who predicted the birth of Jesus after seeing the Star of Bethlehem.

Guerin et al (2007:51) says that a literary work is a reflection of its author's life and times. In line with the historical and biographical approaches, at Makerere University and University of Leeds in England, Ngugi was exposed to Martinique social theorist Frantz Fanon's *The Wretched of the Earth*, a highly controversial treatise in which the author maintains that political independence for the oppressed people must be won violently before genuine social and economic change may be achieved (Fanon, 1976). Ngugi became influenced by the writings of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, developing an ardent opposition to colonialism, Christianity, and other African influences in Kenya. Thus the Communist Manifesto, as a prophecy of things to come in *Devil on the Cross* is from this background.

4.1.2.3 Criticisms

Ngugi criticizes capitalists and their exploitation or oppression of workers and peasants. This is modern-day prophecy which is a form of cultural criticism aimed at the church or society-at-large. Allen and Williamson (2011: 23) in *Preaching the Old Testament* capture the essence of this:

A prophet is similar to an ombudsperson whose work is to measure how we Ila community lives out its values, and to points [sic] at which the community

embodies its deepest understanding of the divine purposes. Of course, the community needs to have conversation about such matters.

This is a modern form of prophecy which sees the Old Testament prophecy as a model. The theophanies of God and miracles are insignificant; it is the message of social justice, cultural change or ecclesiastical righteousness that really counts. This echoes the best known words from Amos 5:24 now utilised at the memorial for Martin Luther King Junior in Montgomery: “But let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream” (Brueggmann, 1978). This desire for justice is called for by Ngugi’s text. Ngugi’s novel metaphorically describes the capitalists as eaters of man, who thrive on the sweat, blood and brains of others, and who reap where they did not sow. He ridicules their body structures as when he describes Gitutu’s big protruding belly, necklessness, or the lean Kihaahu with eyes which are like two electric bulbs (Ngugi, 1982). All this ridiculing or satirising is aimed at encouraging behavioural change of the capitalists. Historically, starting with Moses, we see that revelations to prophets often come when a new social reality has become necessary, and his message was a radical break with the social reality of Egypt. Though there might be no revelations from God in fictional texts, there are new social realities in the postcolonial period which necessitate prophecy as in Ngugi’s text. This is according to Eagleton (1976) the responsibility of the writer to speak out through his art about the evils that prevail or say to commit his art to the cause of the proletariat, and Ngugi does as well.

4.1.2.4 Warnings

Devil on the Cross is warning people that if they do not destroy capitalists they will be continually exploited or oppressed. This warning alerts the readers to devise strategies to counter imperialists and capitalists who cause injustices in the society. The text also warns readers to be very alert and careful as the imperialists and capitalists may come through the neo-colonialists in collaboration with post-independence leaders. This is when the text tells the proletariat to pay attention after crucifying the Devil; for fear that his disciples can lift him down and therefore allow him to continue building Hell for people (Ngugi, 1982:13; 74-75; 239). According to Anderson (2005:406), Kenya suffered at the hands of the British colonialists, and so Ngugi sees this repeating itself

even after the attainment of independence. In line with this, Ngugi even opposes the colonial Church but upholds certain aspects of the faith, mainly as he states, the “basic doctrine...of love and equality between men” (Ngugi, 1972:31). What he denies is the politicization of the Church and its lack of doctrinal opposition to the “consequent subjugation of the black race by the white race” (Ngugi, 1972:31). Due to this, he warns his audience so that it cannot continually be exploited or oppressed. Thus the prophet considers the historical events of the past in the context of the present, and then provides the critique, the warning and the challenges of his audience about the deleterious societal conditions and the need for human reformation (Foad, 1994).

4.1.2.5 Restoration

There is hope for a better future which can be seen in the author’s dream of setting up a utopian or rather communal society. There is a return to innocence in biblical as against forward with justice in modern prophecy. The Lord God takes personal interest in our eternal salvation, as observed in these biblical allusions: Isaiah 11:6, “The wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf, and the young lion, and fatling together, and a little child shall lead them”; and Isaiah 60:21 states, “Also your people shall all be righteous; They shall inherit the land forever. The branch of My planting, The work of my hands, That I may be glorified.” Ngugi’s vision of a communist society is noted in his text’s exhortation of complete destruction of capitalists and possibly through a bloody revolution. This hope for a good future is found in both the biblical and fictional texts. There is a future described in many of the chapters from the beginning to the end of Isaiah: all animals will live at peace with man and one another and the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord (Isaiah, 11: 6-9). This hope is in the Messiah – Jesus Christ or God, while in Ngugi’s text it is the people who are expected to enact change for good in order to achieve the dream of a utopian or communal society. In the text Muturi says: “Future generations will sing about this day from the rooftops and treetops and mountaintops, from Kenya to Elgon, from Elgon to Kilimanjaro, from Ngong Hills to Nyandarwa. I, Muturi wa Kahonia Maithori, found the students and the workers already forming a procession, urging all

those who live in Njeruca to join them to attack the local thieves and robbers and their foreign friends” (Ngugi, 1982:203-204). Again Muturi speaks with pain and bitterness:

As a worker, I know very well that the forces of law and order are on the side of those who rob the workers of the products of their sweat, of those who steal food and land from the peasants....We must struggle and fight against the culture of fear. And the only cure: a strong organisation of workers and peasants of the land, together with those whose eyes and ears are now open and alert....We who are gathered here belong to one clan: the clan of workers....Today, here, we refuse to go on being the pot that cooks but never tastes the food (Ngugi, 1982:204-208).

In Ngugi’s text it is shown that modern prophecy looks forward to justice unlike return to innocence in biblical prophecy. And Muturi says to Wariinga before giving her the gun: “This gun is an invitation to the workers’ feast to be held sometime in the future” (Ngugi, 1982:211). Here Muturi reads the sign of a future in which the communist revolution is successful as Wariinga partially achieves the objective using the same gun when she shoots dead Gitahi and injured Kihaahu and Gitutu, the capitalists. Also this the text notes about Mwihotori garage where mechanical engineers teamed: “No one in that community of workers lived on the sweat of another....Their ambition was to build a modern, communally owned garage on that very site one day” (Ngugi, 1982:222). With reference to Marx and Engels (1848), one main idea of the Communist Manifesto is that all of history until now is the story of a series of class struggles, and the last stage of history is when the proletarian revolution will destroy the entire system of class exploitation, including all private property. Though, the Marxists do not believe in religion, as it is seen to be a tool used by the capitalists to further their motives, their call for justice is as well called for by biblical prophets.

The fore-going chapter has looked at prophecy in Armah’s *The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born* and Ngugi’s *Devil on the Cross*. It has been noted that Ngugi and Armah bear witness to the challenges of a commoner before and after independence, and later years of social, economic and political injustices. Also musical prophecy has been noted in the texts under this study. Moreover, there are criticisms and warnings in the two texts. As for predictive prophecy, Armah’s text has predictions based on common sense or intelligent observation of events, while in Ngugi’s text there are the Communist

Manifesto and demonic predictions. In both texts there seems to be hope for a good future or rather restitution. It must be noted that allusions or echoes to the Bible have been made where possible. Now we turn to the next chapter, which is chapter five, looking at the significance, similarities and differences of prophecies in the two texts.

CHAPTER FIVE

5.0 THE SIGNIFICANCE, SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES OF PROPHECIES IN THE TWO TEXTS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter will focus on the presentation of the similarities and differences of prophecies in Ngugi's *Devil on the Cross* and Armah's *The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born*. Also the chapter will examine the significance of prophecies in the two texts. The study focused on the prophetic traits of the novels of Ngugi wa Thiong'o's *Devil on the Cross* and Ayi Kwei Armah's *The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born*. Few, if any, scholars of African literature have seriously taken on the task of measuring the strength of the prophecy in Ngugi's and Armah's prose fictions. All along it has only been the Bible or religious, poetic and scientific works which have been considered to be prophetic, yet the prose fictional works under this study have prophetic elements.

5.1.1 The Similarities and Differences of Prophecies in the two novels

5.1.1.1 Bearing Witness

The two authors use people to bear witness. The difference is that in Ngugi's text, there seems to be an inspired Gicaandi player, the Prophet of Justice on the rooftop of the house who is urged to reveal what remains hidden (Ngugi, 1982:8). On the other hand, there seems to be no inspired prophet in Armah's text. Also the two texts testify through music or songs. According to Albert Rousit (1975:74), musical prophecy is another form of attesting though it does not necessarily have a biblical or spiritual connection. Like the kind of graphic and oral art, prophecy in music functions as an abstract mirror for the society from which it comes. In *Devil on the Cross*, there are songs which demonstrate prostitution on page 31, harambee of money on page 39, cultural imperialism on page 58 and socio-economic exploitation by the bourgeois on page 51. In *The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born*, there is a song on pages 51-52, urging people to be patient and honest as their turn to be powerful and rich will come. Thus these songs fulfil the prophetic roles of bearing witness to the challenges of a commoner

before and after independence and later years of social, economic and political injustices. However, it should be noted that there are more songs used for this purpose in Ngugi's text than in Armah's.

There are stories in the two texts showing what is happening in society and teaching. Armah through his narrator the Teacher, uses stories of Old-man child, Manaana, Koffi Billy and the myth of Plato's cave to bear witness to the filth, rot, or rather corruption in society (Armah, 1968). Ngugi is using the stories of Kareendi, Ndinguri and subverted-modified or hybridized biblical parables to show the injustices and iniquities in the society. All these stories are used for preaching to the audience in accordance with the moral-philosophical approaches which take literature's function as that of teaching with emphasis on moralism and utilitarianism (Guerin et al 2007:77).

5.1.1.2 Predictive Prophecy

There is predictive prophecy in Ngugi's and Armah's texts under this study. Armah's predictive prophecy is based on intelligent observation of historical events. He uses the pre-colonial, colonial and postcolonial events or rather history of unending corruption and exploitation, when he predicts in chapter six that "after their reign is over, there will be no difference ever" (Armah, 1968:89). This prophecy comes to pass as after the overthrow of the old regime which was thought to be very corrupt, there is still corruption in the new regime. In *Devil on the Cross*, the Communist Manifesto is prophecy of things to come. This is according to Marx and Engels (1848) who say that one main idea of the Communist Manifesto is that all of history until now is the story of a series of class struggles, and the last stage of history is when the proletarian revolution will destroy the entire system of class exploitation, including all private property. This prediction comes to pass in the text through Muturi and the student leader who lead the peasants and workers revolution against the bourgeois, though not very successful as some of the protestors are arrested, but Wariinga partially fulfills the prophecy (Ngugi, 1982). One notable difference is that Armah's text is a portrait of the historical period of disillusionment of the 1960s about Nkhrumah using sarcasm. On the other hand, though Ngugi's text repeats disillusionment it looks forward to justice as disillusionment is

already there. After detention, Ngugi reconnects with his Gikuyu language, and uses satire.

The other difference is that there are demonic predictions in Ngugi's text while in Armah's there are none. Simpson (2005) says that Satan predicts the future. In *Devil on the Cross*, the devil prophesies to Wariinga about Kimeendeeri's plans to profiteer, who Mwaura is and the fate of Mwireri. As seen in the text, the prophecies come to pass (Ngugi, 1982).

5.1.1.3 Criticisms

Armah's and Ngugi's texts denounce or rather criticize what is perceived to be evil in their societies. Ngugi's novel criticizes the capitalists and their vices while Armah's the corrupt and their vices too. In *The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born*, there is use of nauseating, scatological and vulgar language to depict and criticize corruption - moral decadence, in order to effect behavioural change for the better. On the other hand, Ngugi's text metaphorically describes the capitalists as eaters of man, who thrive on the sweat, blood and brain of others, and who reap where they did not sow. The text ridicules their body structures as when describing Gitutu's big protruding belly, necklessness, or the lean Kihaahu with eyes which are like two electric bulbs (Ngugi, 1982).

5.1.1.4 Warnings

Devil on the Cross is warning readers that if they do not destroy capitalists, they will be continually exploited or oppressed. This warning alerts the readers to devise strategies to counter imperialists and capitalists who cause injustices in the society. The text also warns the reader to be very alert and careful as the imperialists and capitalists may come through the neo-colonialists in collaboration with post-independence leaders. This is when Ngugi invites the proletariat to pay attention after crucifying the devil, for fear that his disciples can lift him down and therefore allow him to continue building Hell for people (Ngugi, 1982:74-75). On the other hand, Armah warns that if people do not desist from corrupt activities, they will be in the predicament of Koomson, fleeing the

country during the coup fearing death, or rather punished like the other corrupt political leaders arrested by the military regime (Armah, 1968). In Isaiah's book we see how the great are brought low. Isaiah 16 describes a number of kings and tyrants, who were brought down from the place of pride and power by the shaking of God. He gave relief from suffering and cruel bondage by destroying the aggressive and oppressive rulers. God was able to stretch forth his hand and accomplish his purpose, because prophets like Isaiah had prophesied against them (Isaiah 12:23). The murder of Naboth by Jezebel represents in broader terms the royal manipulation and violence that destroy law and religious observance. God and the prophets cannot allow the murder of Naboth to go unpunished. Elijah is instructed to prophesy that in the very place where the dogs lapped up Naboth's blood, they will also lap up Ahab's – and indeed, that prophecy comes to pass, not only for Ahab but for Jezebel too (1 Kings 21:28; 22:35). When Elijah stands up to Ahab, he symbolizes the prophetic cry against all of the rich who seized lands of the poor, lands that constituted their family inheritance. On the other hand, a big man like Koomson is reduced to a scared child, and this is when in the words of the Man's wife the Man has been vindicated. Koomson is submitted to a devastating status-reversal when he obscenely displays a cacophony of “thundering through the belly and guts”, “flatulent fear”, “the rich stench of menstrual blood”, and disgusting excremental “smell waves” (Armah, 1968:163), which draws the long overdue self-illuminating remark from the Man's wife, Oyo. The woman who has been an eternal tormentor of her husband says that, “I am glad you never became like him” (Armah, 1968:165) - an admission which serves to pave the way towards a better relationship between the Man and his wife. The man is some kind of a suffering servant mentioned in Isaiah 53:11 which says, “After the suffering of his soul, he will see light of life and be satisfied; by his knowledge my righteous servant will justify many, and he will bear their iniquities.” Thus the man as carrier is first despised by his wife and then finally exalted.

On the other hand, there is no suffering servant in *Devil on the Cross*. The only similarity in the two authors' texts is that there is punishment for not heeding the warnings. God punishes and levels palaces in biblical but people avenge in modern prophecy. Whilst in the Man's house, “Koomson recoil as if he feared that the sound of

a normal voice could only be meant to betray him. The shiny eyes closed for a brief moment, then when they opened again Koomson seemed to have recovered from his fright and he leaned forward and whispered into the Man's face, 'They will kill me'" (Armah, 1968:163). It should be noted that it is the people and not God persecuting the corrupt. In Ngugi's text, the proletariat revolt against the bourgeois, there are deaths on both sides, and though Muturi and other revolutionaries are arrested, Wariinga partially succeeds. Thus in *Devil on the Cross* people are exploited or oppressed and so it is the people who avenge unlike in the Bible where God punishes. As for Armah's text, there are persecutions from which Koomson is fleeing, and arrests, possibly imprisonment of political leaders for not heeding the warning of desisting from corruption. For instance, the other junior staff at the Man's work place adding to news available about the coup says, "... all big Party men were being arrested and placed in something called protective custody..." (Armah, 1968:157).

5.1.1.5 Restoration

It is important to note that there is a return to innocence in biblical unlike forward to justice in modern prophecy. In the two texts there is promise of a good future, but minimal in Armah's. Nevertheless, the fact that the Man chooses to endure the family scorn and not escape, indicates optimism for the future generation of Africa. As observed in *The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born*, the Man does not take bribes from his place of work, take pleasure in the gleam, sign papers for the corrupt boat project, and does not run from home despite being always humiliated and embarrassed by his wife, Oyo and mother-in-law (Armah, 1968). In *Devil on the Cross* hope for a better future is noted in a dream for a utopian or rather communal society in which it is the proletariat in charge after abolishing class exploitation and private property. This is seen in the description of co-operative garage which Wariinga shares with other mechanics, "No one in that community of workers lived on the sweat of another....Their ambition was to build a modern, communally owned garage on that very site one day" (Ngugi, 1982:222). It can be argued that the prophecy in Ngugi's text is more optimistic than in Armah's.

Also the difference is the means by which this restoration is arrived at. In Ngugi's text, vision of a communist society is noted in the exhortation of complete destruction of capitalists and possibly through a bloody revolution, in accordance with the Marxist ideology. Also in same text it is the people who are expected to enact change in order to achieve the dream of a utopian society. On the other hand, Armah operates through the purview of Liberalistic Humanism, and it is the people who he says should make a decision to save themselves from the rot (Armah, 1968:90). However, there is a coup which does not bring change apart from arresting the big Party men of the old regime, as the junior staff at the Man's work place puts it, "New people, new style, old dance" (Armah, 1968:157); the Time Allocation clerk adds in a highly satisfied tone!, "Now another group of bellies will be bursting with the country's riches!" (Armah, 1968:158). At the end of the text, officials of the new regime are seen taking bribes.

Another difference is that restoration in Armah's text is symbolic as seen in the Man who immerses himself in water to cleanse himself of the rot or the corruption of Koomson whom he escorted to flee from persecution when there is a military coup (Armah, 1968). Thus in the case of the Man, he is still an honest incorrupt person as he has cleansed himself of corruption that he might have smeared himself with when he interacted with Koomson. The other big theme is cleanliness of dirt which is also in the biblical prophecies. The carrier (the Man) simply transports the evil, usually in the form of an effigy while the scapegoat (Koomson) absorbs evil into his living being (Wright, 1989). The figure who symbolizes the society's moral and political filth which needs to be expelled from the community is Koomson. Wright has argued that:

More interested in his object-status as ritual property, Armah reductively depersonalizes Koomson into the symbolic dirt-mound or wooden figurine in the carrier's model canoe (Wright, 1989: 114): the man leads him across a landscape of 'stumps and holes and mounds' and the politician is even described as 'walking still', 'momentarily rigid', and 'like some wooden thing' (Armah, 1968:170-171).

It is important to note that Armah's exploitation of the carrier motif does not amount to a complete change of the rotten society as the symbolic removal of the Koomsons and Nkrumahs does not prepare the way for the "future goodness", because the new

embezzlers have already replaced the old ones who have just been expelled from the society. Nevertheless, the fact that the Man chooses to suffer family humiliation and not escape, is optimistic for generations to come. Here a notable difference is that there is a suffering servant in Armah's text not prevalent in Ngugi's. The Man is firm against corruption as he refuses to take a bribe from Amankwa - the timber merchant. When he tells his wife about this incident of not taking a bribe, his wife tells him, "And like an onward Christian Soldier you refused?....On-ward Soooooodier! Maaarching as to Waaaaaaaar With the Cross of Jeeeeesus Gooing on be-foooooore" (Armah, 1968:43). Thus in this context the Man is a soldier of moral uprightness in accordance with the moral-philosophical approaches. Later his wife, Oyo calls him the chichidodo - a bird, and she explains, "The chichidodo hates excrement with all its soul. But the chichidodo only feeds on maggots, and you know the maggots grow best inside the lavatory. This is the chichidodo" (Armah, 1968:45). The implication could be that the Man cannot refuse to be corrupt as he lives in a corrupt society. The woman smiles after saying this, but the Man remains steadfast, bringing hope that there can still be honest people like him. However, the Man can be seen to be passive in his fight against corruption, an act which does not seem to help the society to change. Also the Teacher's story about the myth of Plato's cave is intended to give hope in that despite being in eternal darkness (symbolically - poverty), those inside the eternal cave are not shaken or attracted by all the blinding beauty of all the lights and the colours of the world outside (symbolically - riches). They regard the chains which keep them tied in eternal darkness to be reassuring chains (Armah, 1968:80), which signifies hope for a better future which is moral decadent free. It must be noted that a prophetic vision is one that sees through the surface reality and exposes it as a lie or a deception. Most people take the moving shadows on the wall of the cave as the reality, but the prophet (or philosopher) is able to distinguish between truth and appearance and knows that the shadows are mere tricks or appearances and that outside the cave is blinding sunlight. However, this is a philosophical story which has many interpretations.

5.1.2 The Significance of Prophecies in the two Texts

In the first place the two texts testify to the challenges of a commoner before and after independence and later years of social, economic and political injustices or ills. These conditions that create disparities in human treatment have been there since time immemorial, apart from the hunter-gatherer societies. The importance of bearing witness to these deleterious conditions is to keep on reminding people so that they can re-examine themselves and change for good. Even in the ancient times, prophets bore witness to the same challenges, and this does not mean that there should not be some modern ones. Thus modern literary prophets such as those in the two texts arose in post-colonial capitalist society unlike the ancient one.

These predictions made, that is, in Armah's text based on intelligent observation of historical events and Ngugi's on the Communist Manifesto help the reader to reinvent its future by adjusting to situations in accordance with what is prophesied. In these texts under this study, art moves in the direction of what Booker (1996:405) defines as the ultimate vision of an avant-garde art:

The work of art is thus not only a model of the relationship between man and the world in which he lives: it is also a design or a projection of a world which does not yet exist, a world in the process of being born. The true artist then has this prophetic function: he is pre-eminently the one who helps his contemporaries invent the future.

Therefore literary prophets convey messages concerning the past, the present and the future, roles which Ngugi's and Armah's texts are playing. Moreover, predictive prophecy in *Devil on the Cross* alerts readers to the prevalence of demonic predictive prophecies made by Satan which come to pass when the devil prophesies to Wariinga, reconfirming the presence of prophecies of Satan in both ancient and modern times.

Also issues which have been critiqued by the two texts help in correcting behaviour in the hope of enhancing justice. According to Guerin et al (2007:77), one of the functions of literature as embodied by the moral-philosophical approaches is to preach or teach so as to correct behaviour, as much emphasis is put on moralism and utilitarianism. This is in line with biblical prophecy which is premised on justice or rather fair treatment for

all by endeavouring to fight against social, political and economic ills of society. The best known words from Amos are in 5:24, a text now utilized at the memorial for Martin Luther King Junior in Montgomery: “But let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream.” In prophetic tradition, the word pair, “righteousness and justice,” is a call for transformative investment in the common good that inevitably includes the vulnerable (Brueggmann, 2003). This desire for justice is highly portrayed in the texts under this study. However, it must be noted that injustice has always been there in ancient societies, but in different forms as compared to today. Thus just as there were prophets who criticized societal ills that time, so there are modern ones who do the same today, with the intention of correcting behaviour for good.

The other significance is that, warnings and guidance done in the two texts help the audience to strategise on how best they can better their society and get rid of the ills such as political, social and economic injustices, and see the need for human reformation. For instance, Ngugi’s novel is warning people that if they do not destroy capitalists, they will be continually exploited or oppressed while Armah’s warns that if people do not desist from corrupt activities, they will be persecuted, or rather punished like the other corrupt political leaders arrested by the military regime, or continually have bad governance. Thus the audience is alerted and then given strategies by these two literary prophetic works of how to liberate itself from its plight. As noted, Ngugi being a Marxist is urging the peasants and workers to rebel against the bourgeois, possibly through a bloody revolution. On the other hand, Armah operates through the purview of the Liberalist Humanism (Bodunde and Obafemi, 2003). Armah (1968: 90) is only urging people to desist from corruption-moral decadence, but as a personal choice because each person has to save himself. In *Devil on the Cross* there are demonstrations and shoot outs - bloody revolution in which characters such as Muturi, Wangari and Wariinga are involved together with the other exploited people (Ngugi, 1982). On the other hand, in *The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born*, Armah portrays the Man and the Teacher who have made personal decisions to keep themselves aloof from corruption when the majority of the citizens are deep into it (Armah 1968). All this is in

accordance with a literary prophetic role of giving guidance for the future and present generations to break the cycle of false hope and despair.

Another significance is the media through which prophecy is disseminated. These include storytelling or stories or parables, unique language, history and songs or music. These help in opening debate to explain how certain literary devices and techniques can further the cause the work is trying to portray. The use of devices such as scatological and vulgar language, songs and stories, which sometimes shock and satirise those whose behaviour ought to be corrected, are all aimed at righting things in the society. Thus writers and speakers of today may also use such devices and techniques in the same manner. On the other hand, devices such as songs, stories and history are also used by these prophets to convey messages concerning the past, the present and the future, thus helping the authors' contemporaries to invent the future.

In addition, it is hoped that the investigation of prophecy in the two texts will pave way for investigation of prophecy not only in Armah's and Ngugi's works but those of other fiction African writers. Thus this study is important in that it has opened avenues into the investigation of prophecy in other fictional works. This may also help in filling the gaps which might have been left in the course of this study.

It must be noted that the significance of prophecies in the two texts has helped to clarify that some prose fictional works such as Ngugi's *Devil on the Cross* and Armah's *The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born* have prophetic traits. Also it can be argued that biblical texts are ancient and may not be easily read in contemporary ways like the two texts under this study, which are contemporary to our own time, place, and circumstance. Thus people are alerted to be reading some of these fictional works as prophecy. Also this study has helped us to learn that apart from religious or spiritual, poetic and science fiction prophetic works, there are also biblical literary prophetic works whose work can be paralleled to modern prose fictional prophetic works such as those of Armah's and Ngugi's novels under this study.

Both Ngugi's and Armah's texts promise a good future. However, in Armah's text this restoration is minimal as it is only seen in the Man who chooses to endure the family

scorn and not escape, indicating optimism for the future generation of Africa. The man's immersion in water, carrier role and the myth of Plato's cave are symbolic and philosophical signs of hope. In Ngugi's text, there is hope for a better future which can be seen in the author's dream of setting up a utopian or rather communal society in which it is the proletariat in charge after abolishing class exploitation and private property. The significance of this promise of restoration helps people to change their perceived evil ways, and so breaking the cycle of false hope and despair.

In this chapter it has been noted that there are similarities and differences of prophecies in Ngugi's *Devil on the Cross* and Armah's *The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born*. The noted similarities are that the two texts through their characters' testimonies, music or songs and stories testify to various social, economic and political ills. The differences are that there seems to be an inspired prophet of justice, many songs, traditional and Christian parables in Ngugi's text as compared to Armah's which has only one song, philosophical stories, and does not have an inspired prophet. Both texts have predictive prophecies, though Armah's is based on common sense and Ngugi's on the Communist Manifesto. However, there are demonic predictive prophecies in Ngugi's text which are not in Armah's. *The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born* criticizes corruption with its vices using nauseating, scatological and vulgar language while *Devil on the Cross* criticizes capitalists with their vices using satire and metaphors. In terms of warnings, Armah's text warns people to desist from corruption and if not, they will have bad governance, and they will be persecuted and arrested like the political leaders in the text. On the other hand, Ngugi's text warns people to destroy capitalists in order not to be continually exploited or oppressed. The similarity is that there is punishment for not heeding the warning. Restoration or hope for a good future in Ngugi's text is seen in the dream for the establishment of a utopian or communal society. In Armah's text, hope is in the Man who remains honest and his self-baptism, carrier of evil, the scapegoat (Koomson) or ritual property and the myth of Plato's cave. The significance of the similarities and differences of prophecies in the two texts cannot be over-emphasized in enhancing justice, which has been the case with other prophets since time immemorial. The other importance noted are: alerting people that there is prophecy in the two

fictional works; opening debate on how certain literary devices and techniques can further the work being studied; helping people to invent the future; developing strategies of liberating ourselves from evils; reconfirming the prevalence of demonic predictive prophecy; promising restoration so as to break the cycle of false hope and despair; paving way for investigation of prophecy in other fictional works; and helping in filling the gaps which might have been left in the course of this study. Having looked at this, we now move to the next chapter which focuses on the summary of the findings and conclusion.

CHAPTER SIX

6.0 SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION

6.1 Introduction

The conclusions drawn from the investigation of prophecy in the two texts to a large extent show that there is prophecy in the prose fictional works of Ngugi wa Thiong'o's *Devil on the Cross* and Ayi Kwei Armah's *The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born*. As has been demonstrated, the two authors have established themselves as the "Moseses" of our times, for their writing is intended to liberate people from the social, political and economic injustices or rather ills which cause disparities in human treatment leading to destructive perspectives of self and others. They do this by demonstrating the challenges of a commoner before and after independence and later years of social, economic and political injustices. Apart from this, it has been noted in this report that this modern-day literary prophecy conveys the message concerning the past, the present and the future. Thus through predictions, the texts guide the future and the present generations to break the cycle of false hope and despair. This is as put forth by Booker (1996:405) that an artist helps his contemporaries invent the future. Also this modern-day prophecy is a form of cultural criticism aimed at the church or society-at-large (Allen and Williamson, 2011: 23). Thus its criticisms and warnings are aimed at correcting behaviour and equipping people with strategies needed to avoid disaster. For this reason the writers fulfil an extraordinary role as exhortative writers, trying to persuade people to do something about their plight. Also it must be noted that allusions or echoes to the Bible have been made where possible. The media through which prophecy is disseminated in the two texts have been investigated, and these include history, storytelling or stories or parables, unique language (scatological, vulgar, symbolism and metaphors) and songs or music. What were of interest were traits of prophecy in the two texts, similarities, differences and significance of prophecies in the texts. It is important to note that the historical and biographical, moral-philosophical and Marxist approaches have been used in the presentation of the findings.

6.1.1 Prophecies in *The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born* and *Devil on the Cross*

This study aimed at investigating prophecy in Ngugi's *Devil on the Cross* and Armah's *The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born*. It has been noted that the two novels bear witness to the challenges of a commoner before and after independence, and later years of social, economic and political ills, some of which include corruption, socio-economic exploitation, neo-colonialism, sexual immorality, and materialism. Also musical prophecy has been noted in the texts under this study as there are some songs which testify to challenges (injustices, ills, evils) in society. Moreover, there are criticisms, as Ngugi's novel criticizes capitalists and their vices while Armah's the corrupt and their vices too. In line with this, *Devil on the Cross* warns people to destroy capitalists and if not they will continually be exploited or oppressed (Ngugi, 1982). On the other hand, *The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born* warns the audience to desist from corruption and if not they will be persecuted or arrested like the corrupt political leaders in the text, and there will not be good governance (Armah, 1968). As for predictive prophecy, Armah's text has predictions based on intelligent observation of historical events about the endless spiral of corruption, while in Ngugi's text there are the Communist Manifesto and demonic predictions made by the devil to Wariinga. In both texts there seems to be hope for a good future or rather restitution. In *Devil on the Cross*, this is seen in the author's dream of a utopian or rather communal society. In *The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born*, hope is seen in the Man who chooses to endure the family scorn and not escape, his self baptism after escorting the corrupt Koomson, his carrier role and the myth of Plato's cave (Armah, 1968). It must also be noted that allusions or echoes to the Bible have been made where possible.

6.1.2 The Similarities and Differences of Prophecies in the two texts

There are similarities and differences of prophecies in Armah's *The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born* and Ngugi's *Devil on the Cross*. The noted similarities are that the two authors through their characters' testimonies, music or songs and stories bear witness to various social, economic and political injustices, and deleterious societal conditions. The differences are that there seems to be an inspired prophet of justice, many songs,

traditional and Christian parables in Ngugi's text as compared to Armah's which has only one song, philosophical stories, and does not have an inspired prophet. Both texts have predictive prophecies, though Armah's is based on intelligent observation of historical events and Ngugi's on the Communist Manifesto. However, there is demonic predictive prophecy in Ngugi's text which is not prevalent in Armah's. Armah's novel criticizes corruption with its vices using nauseating, scatological and vulgar language while Ngugi's criticizes capitalists with their vices using satire and metaphors. In terms of warnings, Armah's novel warns people to desist from corruption and if not, they will be persecuted and arrested like the political leaders in the text, and have no good governance. On the other hand, Ngugi's novel warns people to destroy capitalists and if not they will be continually exploited or oppressed. Unlike Armah's text which dwells much on disillusionment, Ngugi's looks forward to justice, and so it is more optimistic than Armah's. The similarity is that there is punishment for not heeding the warning. Restoration or hope for a good future in Ngugi's text is seen in the dream for the establishment of a communal society. In Armah's novel, hope is in the Man who remains honest and immerses himself in water having come in contact with the corrupt Koomson, carrier role of the Man and the myth of Plato's cave. As noted there is a suffering servant in Armah's text not prevalent in Ngugi's.

6.1.3 The Significance of Prophecies in the two texts

It can be noted that the significance of prophecies in the two texts enhance justice, which has been the case with other prophets since time immemorial. The other importance noted are alerting people that there is prophecy in the two prose fictional works; opening debate on how certain literary devices and techniques can further the work being studied; helping people to invent the future; developing strategies of liberating people from evils; reconfirming the prevalence of demonic predictive prophecy; promising restoration so as to break the cycle of false hope and despair; paving way for investigation of prophecy in other fictional works; and helping in filling the gaps which might have been left in the course of this study.

This chapter is a summary of the findings and conclusion. It has been noted that there is prophecy in the two texts under this study which is based on the various definitions of prophecy which include bearing witness, predicting, criticizing, warning and restoration. Thus these prophecies were investigated. Then the similarities, differences and significance of these prophecies were analyzed and examined.

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