



SPUTTERING DEMOCRACY IN SELECTED ANGLOPHONE AFRICAN FICTION: A THEME ACROSS GENERATIONS

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Abstract

While fighting for the independences of their countries, African people used to think that their breaking of the colonial bondage would bring them lasting democracy. But very soon, democracy was trampled underfoot. Many fictitious works account for such a state of affairs. Among them are Abrahams's *A Wreath For Udomo*, Armah's *The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born*, Djoletto's *Money Galore*, and Ogundimu's *A Silly Season*. Internal factors as well as external ones have 'driven' African countries into sputtering democracy. As internal factors we can mention, Corruption, embezzlement, favouritism, and dictatorship through the imposed situations on the peoples including the absence of the freedom of the press, the absence of freedom of association, torture, abductions and arbitrary imprisonments. As far as external factors are concerned, we have regular incursions of Western countries in the African politics and economy too. Africans must be creative and original in order to avoid copying blindly what is being applied in Western countries which reflect more their realities and not always African ones. This paper aims at examining the Africans' failure to cope with the cliché of Western democracy for more than half a century. It also suggests means and ways to promote democracy and economic prosperity. Both the qualitative research method and the postcolonial theories have been adopted.

Keywords: sputtering democracy; corruption; failure; regular interruption; factor

Résumé

Pendant qu'ils luttèrent pour les indépendances de leurs pays, les Africains pensèrent que mettre fin à l'asservissement colonial leur conférerait une démocratie durable. Mais très tôt, elle a été foulée aux pieds. Beaucoup d'œuvres fictives traitent d'un tel état de choses. Parmielles on peut citer *A Wreath for Udomo* d'Abrahams, *The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born* d'Armah, *Money Galore* de Djoletto et *A Silly Season* d'Ogundimu. Les facteurs endogènes et exogènes ont conduit les pays africains dans une démocratie balbutiante. Comme facteurs endogènes, on peut citer la corruption, le détournement, le favoritisme, la dictature par le truchement des situations imposées aux peuples parmi lesquelles l'absence de la liberté de presse, d'association, la torture, les enlèvements et les emprisonnements arbitraires. Quant à ce qui concerne les facteurs exogènes, il y a des incursions régulières des pays occidentaux dans la politique africaine de même que l'économie. Les Africains doivent faire preuves de créativité et d'originalité afin d'éviter de copier aveuglément ce qui s'applique dans les pays occidentaux et qui reflète plus leurs réalités et non pas toujours celles africaines. Cet article vise à examiner l'échec des Africains à s'accommoder des clichés de la démocratie européenne pendant une période de plus d'un demi-siècle. Il suggère aussi les voies et moyens pour promouvoir la démocratie et la prospérité économique. Les théories utilisées sont celle de la recherche qualitative et du post-colonialisme.

Mots-clés : démocratie balbutiante, corruption, échec, interruption régulière, facteur.

Introduction

Until the end of the first half of the nineteenth century, Africa was run by Africans with regulations and laws inspired and established by Africans. In this light, some parts of the continent such as Ashanti in Gold Coast now Ghana and Lagos in I were managed by kings. Other parts of the continent like the Eastern Nigeria were run by other political or administrative organizations like the council of chiefs and elders as shown by the narrator in *Things Fall Apart* by Chinua Achebe (p. 7). Before the establishment of colonization in 1885, Africa's only contact with the Western world was through slave trade which lasted four centuries, from the fifteenth to the nineteenth century. Colonization took place from the end of the nineteenth century to the second half of the twentieth century and lasted seven decades. How did it come to an end?

In Africa, Colonisation came to an end because some Africans wanted it to be so. History books as well as fiction-based works deal with such a matter. This paper draws, as fiction-based study, most examples or illustrations from the following selected fiction works, *A Wreath for Udomo* (1956) by Peter Abrahams (1919), *Money Galore* (1975) by Amu Djoletto (1929), *The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born* (1968) by Ayi Kwei Armah (1939) and *A Silly Season* (2008) by Adetunji Suleiman Ogundimu.

The frequency of military coups in the 1960s and 1970s gave birth to political instability and therefore became a main cause of underdevelopment. Indeed, some years before the independences of African countries, mainly in the last two decades, for most of them, African peoples were allowed to form associations such as trade unions and political parties. Thus, they started participating to democratic elections, the way it was done in the Western countries. Such a process, decolonization, is dealt with in so many books. Some novels deal with it too. One of them is *A Wreath For Udomo* by Peter Abrahams where he describes the fight for independence both in the West and Africa until independence was won. Once independence won, the same democratic process must continue. But very soon the first leaders started to move from the right way by doing what was good for them to win and keep power at any cost. The opposition parties or the parties which were not holding power, rightly, disagreed and Africa was 'drowned' into the sea of permanent instabilities.

The objective of this research paper is to identify and study the causes and consequences of democratic/political instability in order to suggest ways and means to change such a state of affairs/things positively.

Postcolonialism and sociocriticism are the two literary theories used to analyse this paper. Postcolonialism, as Pewissi stated, "deals with the effects of colonization on cultures and societies" (Pewissi, 2017, p.118). Sociocriticism, on

the other hand, takes into account elements such as history, society, and the culture when reading a literary text. Otherwise, it “aims to bring out the relations existing between the structures of literary (or cultural) work and the structures of the society in which this work is deeply rooted” (Cros, 2011, p. 33). As the three focus documents are fiction narratives in which numbers, calculations and quantities are not to be taken into account for the analysis, Therefore, we have adopted the qualitative analysis approach.

This paper is divided into three parts namely the introduction, the discussion of results and the conclusion

1. Discussion of the Results

1.1. Panafrica, a newly independent democratic country in *A Wreath For Udomo*

Democracy has started well in Panafrica. This is shown through the organization and holding of free and fair election won by the Africa Freedom Party, Udomo’s party. Once his government established, Udomo tackles the most important and urgent problems his country is facing. He is aware that it is not an easy task as shown in his own reflection: “running a country can be more difficult than winning it. Ade and some of the others are impatient. They want a republic tomorrow. They think I am too slow. Don’t you, Ade?” (Abrahams, 1977: 201) What are the achievements of Udomo’s government?

1.1.1 Educating Panafricans, a political decision to promote democracy and enhance development

In Udomo’s country, few people have been educated. At the same time, the majority of those who have been to school need training or additional training in order to play their part in the strengthening of what has been gained and then to contribute to the development of the country. Freedom, which has been the motto or the momento of Udomo’s party, cannot be sustained without educated and graduate people. So, human resources are needed for the huge task of working for development and sustainable development. A group of Panafrican people are sent abroad. Most of them, mainly children and teenagers are sent to school in the country to acquire knowledge and then participate in the building of their country through the stability that educated people work for its advent and promotion.

1.1.2 Infrastructures in post-independent Panafrica

Apart from education, Udomo has also worked in other fields that are useful and even very useful for the promotion of democracy and the takeoff and then development of his country, Panafrica.

In terms of infrastructures, the newly elected government in Panafrica has built roads, which, as known, play an important role in transport and indirectly in the development of any country. Transport being the system of carrying goods and people from one place to another, everywhere in the world, people must necessarily leave a place for another no matter the means they use. Nobody has all that he or she needs at home. People need to go to market, office, school, farm, health centres, to name only a few. These movements are made possible because of roads, the most common or most used among other ways Udomo's government has built. Development is a sine qua non condition for political stability.

It has also built health centres (dispensaries, maternity awards and hospitals) that give the people the opportunity to be nursed or cured. Hospitals, like roads, are important tools for the development of a country, a nation. Health, good health plays an important role in the Gross Domestic Product and the Gross National Product of a country. People who are not in good health cannot produce. One characteristic of developed countries is the existence of strong and well-equipped health centres. Even if they cannot be found all through (the country) Panafrica, some are built. All this has been possible because Udomo has encouraged his countrymen to work but also because of his controversial collaboration with the white people who provide his government with technical and financial assistance. The goal behind all this is development for stability and vice versa

There are more white people in Panafrica than before independence. They are in the civil service, in the government, in road works and in trade to name only these. They also build other infrastructures. In a kind of stock taking, Udomo rightly and proudly tells his former allies, but now rivals in his own group, namely Adebhoy and Selina, what they have gained from their cooperation with the white man:

When I first came back I recognized only one of the three: the white man. But the moment I defeated him I saw the others, and they were greater and more dangerous than the white man. Beside these two the white man was easy, almost an ally. Well, I turned him into an ally against poverty. He works for us now, builds for us so that those who come after us will have bread and homes. There are schools and hospitals in the land ... women are making up. Why do you think I spent so much money sending them abroad? I'll tell you. Because I need them as allies to fight our third enemy, the worst enemy we have: the past... There are enough liberated young people now for me to defy all that is ugly and evil in our past. We can defeat it now.
(Abrahams, Ibid: 301 -302)

Udomo clearly works not only for the present but also for the future generations. This is what is abundantly referred to as sustainable development nowadays. Africa needs leaders like him for its development even if, as a leader and then a ruler, he has made some mistakes. He has a dire need of European aids. He confesses that they cannot reach the development and modernity they have been longing and fighting for ever since without European 'capital and technical skill.'" (Peter Abrahams, 1977: 206) Unfortunately, the worst enemy they have, the past,

that is to say tribalism, has won over him. It has won over him because it has prevented him from going forward through the obstacles it has put on his way but also by having him killed eventually.

1.1.3 Udomo's death as the beginning of democratic instability in Africa

The elements mentioned in the quotation which must be taken as achievements or a great progress are not seen as such by some people among whom are Selina and Adebhoy who consider Udomo as a traitor. Consequently, they have planned his death and put an end to his life and therefore to the democratic experience he embodies. A small extract of the description of Udomo's death is as follows:

The man at the door grabbed as he reached the door handle. The man towered above him, knife - hand raised high above his head, body still responding to the urge of the drumbeats, then he brought the knife down and shoved Udomo violently from him. Udomo crashed to the floor Udomo die Udomo die Udomo die.
But Udomo still lived. The man at the door had used only his knife handle. But the victim was ready now. The will to resist was ended. The tribal gods had asserted their superiority. Udomo lay on the floor, paralysed, eyes glazed, mouth open.
So he was dead. Hard to believe that, somehow. He'd always been so vitally alive. Hard to think that he'd often been here in the studio, he and Lois." (Abrahams, 1977: 306-307)

Udomo is dead. His true killers are not those people who lift their knives on him. Paul Mabi says that "the real killers, even if they didn't strike the blows, are our laughing friends Adebhoy and a terrible tribal woman called Selina who controlled the party when I was out there." (Abrahams, *Ibidem*: 308

Udomo is killed without being given the opportunity "to carry the country to a point from where there can be no going back." (Abrahams, *Ibidem*: 255) Udomo's death corresponds to the end of the democratic experience in post-colonial democracy in Africa in the early years of democracy even if in concrete life, the novel was published a year before the independence of the first black African country apart from Liberia and Ethiopia. What are the causes of this failure?

The main causes of Udomo's death which corresponds to the end of democracy in the early years of independence have been mentioned by Udomo himself. He tells Selina:

Listen, Selina, I'll tell you what I'm after. Our country has three enemies, or rather, had three enemies. I've turned one of them into ally now. But let's say there are three... The first is the white man. That surprises you, doesn't it?
But don't smile yet. There's more to come about the white man. As I say our country has three enemies. First there is the white man. Then there is poverty, and then there is past. Those are the three enemies"... our third enemy, the worst enemy we have: the past! (Abrahams, *Ibidem*: 301 - 302)

The past here equates to tribalism embodied by Selina and Adebhoy. It is really the worst of the three enemies of the country. In actual fact, the Panafrica Udomo and the other members of the group have thought of while they have been in Europe is different from the one they have come to see. Tom Lanwood confesses that the Africa he has written about is different from the real Africa.

Udomo's regime is one of the very first ones of the post-independence era. A scrutiny of another or other regime(s) of the post-independence period described in fictitious works is useful for this study.

2. African Politics from the 1960s to the 1980s: *The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born* and *Money Galore*-based study

Most part of *The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born* is devoted to a civilian regime in the first decade of independences in Africa. This regime lasts more than the one described in *A Wreath For Udomo*. The civilian regime described in *Money Galore* almost looks like the same as the one of Kwame Nkrumah described in *The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born*. Each of the two regimes is democratically elected. For each of them the life of only one minister is highlighted. In *The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born*, the only one minister the novel really deals with is Joseph Koomson. Likewise, in *Money Galore*, the author has decided to write about Kafu only.

2.1. The Civilian Rule in *The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born* and *Money Galore*

2.1.1. The Civilian Rule: Specificity in *Money Galore*

After His party has won elections, Kafu is appointed Minister of Internal Welfare. His supporters precisely one of the market women who has funded his campaign expresses her disappointment because she would like him to be assigned "the Ministry of Trade". (Djoleto, 1975: 56) Kafu and his Liberation Party have reached power after winning democratic elections. But unfortunately, they have led the country to failure or bankruptcy. As a consequence, the army has seized power. The circumstances under which the army has seized power are described as follows:

"We are not burglars sir. We have shed no blood. The minister was our friend and..."
Amega pleaded but he was cut short. 'Shut up! You may have shed no blood, but there has been bloodletting all right. Look at that knife, and the cut on the forehead. We are taking over power, but we hate bloodshed. You have been a nuisance. The people will not understand. They will think we killed him!"
"Sergeant, ring for an ambulance. Then go to the front door, ring the bell and bring the wife"

'When Grace saw the dead bodies, she gave a piercing cry and collapsed in the arms of the officer. (Djoleto, *ibidem*: 181-182)

How has the political and social failure reached this level?

Kafu being the only one Minister of his government the author has put emphasis on, we can assume that he bears both the same or almost the same qualities and the defaults of the other members of the government including the head. Certainly, Kafu alone is enough to embody the failure of the civilian politicians. The first cause of the failure of Kafu's government is his own personality because he is a selfish, megalomaniac and corrupt person who does not care for other people.

2.1.2. More illustrations of democratic instability: Kafu and Koomson as Ministers of the Republic

In order to explore properly the work done by Kafu and Koomson as ministers it is worth having a glance at what they have been so far.

2.1.2.1. Kafu and Koomson's lives

Usually, the origin or background influences his political career and/or professional life. When entering the government, Kafu is thirty-two. He is the son of a retired teacher. His father's appellation is Rev. Sampson Abaka Kafu. His mother is Mrs Edusua Kafu. His parents are neither poor nor well-off people. Speaking of them he says: "My father lives in rented rooms after forty years' service to this nasty country. His pension is ten Cedis a month. I have to give him forty each month. I can't save" (Djoleto, *Ibid*: 37-38). He is from a modest family but just as a candidate he starts using his position to enrich himself to the detriment of the people. This is what can be said about his family background. They are a Christian family although Kafu himself is an unfaithful husband. He is married to a very beautiful woman called Grace and they have two children. (Djoleto, *Ibid*, p. 28) He cheats her with at least four women namely Madam Odofo Lamptey, Auntie Salamatu, Mercy Mensah, the lady Ofori Nortey refers to as "that whore" (Djoleto, *Ibid*, p. 180) and Lydia, Rev. Opia Dan Sese's mistress. In the long run, he will make pregnant the first two. He is fond of women. This is a forerunner of the ill-governance he has been responsible for. After Kafu, let's say a word about Koomson, the fictitious minister in Kwame Nkrumah's regime.

Koomson used to be a modest citizen precisely a former "railway man, then a docker at the harbor. Pulling ropes. Blistered hands, toughened, callused hands. A seaman's voice. Big, rough man, a man of the docks well-liked by men of the docks. Doing well, the only way we do well here." (Armah, 1988: 88). Always in the novel, he is referred to with several titles such as "His Excellency Joseph Koomson. Minister Plenipotentiary, member of the Presidential Commission,

Hero of Socialist Labor.” (Armah, *Ibidem*: 56) He is also referred to as the party man. He has won these titles once he has become a minister. This is megalomania which is a cause of their failure. These are not the only things he has won as a member of the government. He has also become rich. Koomson owns several cars: “Three. The latest is a white Mercedes, 220 Super” (Armah, *Ibid*: 110). Oyo’s mother says “that Brother Joe had influence.” (Armah, *Ibidem*: 58) But the man has known Koomson for several years now. He informs his friend Teacher about that “this Koomson was my own classmate. My classmate. Teacher, my classmate.” (Armah, *Ibidem*: 57) Besides, he has schemed to buy a few boats “the smallest ones cost about twelve thousand pounds.” (Armah, *Ibidem*: 136) The plenipotentiary minister says that he can afford pretending that the Commercial Bank is theirs, and they can do anything.” (Armah, *Idem*) Koomson behaves almost the same way Chief Nanga does in *A Man Of The People* as pointed out by Célestin Gbaguidi in his doctoral dissertation: “... people of Chief Nanga’s calibre out of greed, amass illegal mountains of money for themselves whereas people at the grass roots languish in abject poverty. (Gbaguidi, p. 150) This is embezzlement and abuse of power. These are among the causes of the downfall of their regime and therefore an illustration of democratic instability. Where and how do Koomson, the former dockerman, and his family live?

When Oyo and the man enter a taxi to go to Koomson’s, the former proudly tells the driver. : “Go to the Upper Residential Area, driver” and then brings the precision that it is: “On the hills beyond the new Esikafo Aba Estate” (Armah, *Ibid*: 140). Not everybody can afford to live there.

The narrator specifies this: “After all, it was not everybody who had some place to go in the Upper Residential Area. White men, then the old lawyers, and now the bigger Party men and a few civil servants” (Armah, *Ibid*: 141) If you happen to pay visit to somebody in this area, it almost means that you are not a ‘small’ person. The narrator adds that “it was certainly not every fool who could, get up and say he wanted to go to that area. (Armah, *Ibid*: 141)

2.1.2.2. Political Leaders’ Laziness, Megalomania, Greed and Selfishness and Lack of Discipline as a Cause of their Failure

Kafu is a teacher at the secondary school level. He has taught at National Secondary School, Cape Coast in Ghana, and his native country. He owns a Master’s Degree (M.A). When he becomes a minister he boastfully and with contempt tells his Permanent Secretary, Mr Vuga who holds the same degree: “Mine is a second. You probably took yours in Scotland. Mine is London”, which is false. (Djoleto, *Ibid*: 63&75). His school was founded by the Church but after independence the government has taken it over from them. How has he done his job as a teacher before becoming a minister?

Kafu's full identity is "Abraham Kofi Kafu, MA, Dip. Ed., 32, Senior History Master, National Secondary School, Cape Coast." (Djoleto, *Ibid*: 20) He does not do his work properly. He sometimes misses lectures without any permission. Mr Benjy Baisi reproaches him with going to classes drunk and not marking exercises. (Djoleto, *Ibid*: 19). For his first meeting with Nee Otu Lartey about the funding of his campaign, he has not asked permission. The narrator says: "On Friday, Kafu missed the last two periods." (Djoleto, *Ibid*: 28) He confesses this to his Principal Benjy Baisi at hospital: "I'm sorry, Mr Baisi, I couldn't ask permission before I left the school. I thought I could make it over the week-end and return before Monday morning." (Djoleto, *Ibid*: 42) There are two other instances of Kafu missing classes without any permission. A teacher must be a model. A bad teacher cannot be a good political leader. Kafu is an illustrative element of this.

In order to meet his old classmate Nee Otu, Kafu leaves the school without warning the authorities assuming or arguing that "the boys can look after themselves. He further argues: "I can't be everywhere. I'm starting the campaign in Accra in a week or two."⁽⁴⁹⁾ (Djoleto, *Ibid*, p. 22). The narrator gives another instance of Kafu's lacking discipline in the conduct of his career: "So Kafu shuttled between Accra and Cape Coast. [...] He had not resigned yet but missed a lot of classes. Mr Benjy Baisi bore it all without complaint." (Djoleto, *Ibid*: 53-54)

In addition to this, he is lazy and careless about academic regulations, he is a destabilizer too. As a matter of fact, the government writes to the National Secondary School, Cape Coast, asking the school authorities to implement a project of farming by students but Kafu sensitizes his colleagues not to cooperate. He confesses himself:

I've been telling the graduate staff not to help with the projects. The non-graduates are so servile they will probably do so. We shall soon get a letter from the Department neither confirming nor denying that we should do farming in Cape Coast. We should be able to frustrate the whole business. (Djoleto, *Ibid*: 14)

It is clear, Kafu goes against regulations. Whether a person is good or bad, people who know him/her can also know about his/her attitudes. Anson Berko, the bread contractor of their school, says that Kafu is "lazy and reckless. That's all. He can't be a contractor, how much more a politician?" (Djoleto, *Ibid*: 27) Before that, the same Anson Berko has warned Kafu that he wouldn't give him the chance "to ruin the country." (Djoleto, *Ibid*: 27) The running of the country by the government Kafu is a member of has proved that Anson Berko is right.

Kafu proves to be both selfish and boastful. Talking to his principal, he behaves as if his listener were a small boy or a needy or maybe a rival. He tells him:

You know I'm going to stand in the elections and you hate the idea. You hate me, I know you hate me. You don't like the Liberation Party because you can't match the intellectual excellence of the top crop of its members. But I can advise you Baisi. No matter what people say, only the educated can save this country. (Djoleto, *Ibid*: 19)

Kafu talks as if Mr Baisi were not an educated person. He addresses him as if he were his rival. He talks to him as if there were evidence that his principal is jealous of him. It is rather Kafu who is not an educated person. He confuses people and circumstances. Making confusion is one of the important causes of the government's failure. A good teacher is humble, respectful. He or she listens to others. In a word, they are a model or models to follow. He addresses his principal as Baisi instead of Mr.Baisi. While contempting him this way, he is just looking forward to being candidate. How much does Kafu 'weigh' in the field of morality?

2.1.2.3. Kafu's morality: Some of his Misconducts during the Campaign

Kafu's behaviour in society, as a teacher, is questionable. Not only as a teacher but also as a candidate to parliament he has misbehaved several times. This, unfortunately, will continue when he becomes a minister. When looking for money to fund his campaign, Kafu has had to meet some people. When it is time to meet Nee Otu Lartey, Kafu drives his Peugeot car but it is not insured. On his way, he has accident and this brings the police to notice that the car is not insured. He has broken the law. What to do then? He confides in Nee Otu, begging him, like an orphan beggar who has just arrived at a foreign country would do, through his pitiful appearance, to help him avoid being fined but also being jailed. The latter agrees to help him in this way, which he really does. The following dialogue clarifies the situation:

I found your car was not insured for the year. Had you renewed your driving license?
'No, Nee Out, Kafu said, still tearful and morose
'Too bad,' said quietly and thoughtfully. It means more money will have to be put in the slot. The whole process is time-consuming. Anyway, I've got Inspector Yebribia working on this accident. I think we can be pretty sure that the whole affair will soon be filed away in a closed docket. (Djoleto, *Ibid*: 34)

A candidate who willingly misbehaves will surely be a bad leader. By begging Nee Otu to help him put an end to this accident file in which he is wrong, Kafu is asking his friend to corrupt the police and this is done. Once a member of the government, he doesn't respect his country's institutions.

The second carelessness towards his country's laws by Kafu is his approval of the fact that Nee Out wants to start his building before applying for its approval by the suitable authorities. Nee Otu tells him: "we will start the building before the plan is approved by the authorities! Leave them to me!" (Djoleto, *Ibid*: 45) A further moral weakness from Kafu during the campaign is greed.

As a candidate Kafu proves to be a greedy person and a profiteer. Directly or indirectly, he obliges Nee Otu Lartey to rent a big house for him in a VIP area,

Labone, a comfortable house which has a big lounge with wall to wall Carpeting, three bathrooms, four air-conditioned bedrooms, a modern kitchen with a deep-freeze. The rent is four hundred cedis a month. Nee Otu tells him: "we've made a down payment of two thousand four hundred. That gives him "six months."" (Djoleto, *Ibid*: 34) Kafu has not been able to afford such a house by himself not even a small one in the past. Nevertheless he goes far by demanding from other people a house for him. He tells Nee Otu: "My own house, yes. The country owes me one." (Djoleto, *Ibid*: 37)

The third act of immorality from Kafu as a candidate is his lie-telling during the campaign and even after. This is demagoguery. Many people would say it is politics but even in politics there are limits and norms beyond which you cannot be taken seriously. For instance, he tells Rev. Sese: "The country needs intellectuals in parliament. Men like myself who know their books, to reconstruct the country." (Djoleto, *Ibid*: 16) Everybody has noticed how Kafu has destroyed the country instead of building it as he has promised. Lie-telling to the populations is one of the causes of his failure and the end of their governance.

2.1.2.4. Kafu, the gambler, the irresponsible head of family, the suborner and the dictator

Kafu needs so much money because the money he earns goes where it shouldn't. The practice which 'consumes' Kafu's money and consequently renders him moneyless is gambling. During a conversation with Rev. Opia Dan Sese, he reveals the contents of an anonymous letter sent to his wife denouncing his gambling inclinations: "What disturbs me most, Osofo, is this: the letter says Kofi is gambling at the casino Hotel Continental and the Ambassador. He's been borrowing money from people. The letter mentions one Mr. Mills Blankson, one Amega. I forget the others." (Djoleto, *Ibid*: 127)

Another evidence of Kafu's involvement in gambling is the advice his close friend Nee Otu gives him after giving him money. He says: "'I'll give you two hundred,' he counted it there and then and gave it to him, 'but please don't gamble it away.'" (Djoleto, *Ibid*: 132) After thanking his benefactor, Kafu confesses slowly, quietly "Gambling is a business - so easy to get in so hard to get out - well, well! I'm not a gambler, Odofo. I'm not. Whoever says so is a liar! I swear!" (Djoleto, *Ibidem*)

There is evidence that Kafu is a gambler now. More than just a gambler, he is a gambling addict. Such a person cannot lead people, worse still he is a minister of a republic. He has done things which show that he is not a responsible head of family. In this condition, it must be difficult for him to be among the good decision makers of a whole country.

Kafu sleeps away from home forgetting his children and wife behind. Meanwhile he is either at his mistresses' houses or in a hotel. The narrator says: "as it was a Saturday, Kafu was late in coming home; indeed he never came home until nine on Sunday morning. He told Danso to take the car home. That was all." (Djoleto, *Ibid*: 126) Rev. Opia Dan Sese is disappointed and says: "I got worried when I heard in Cape Coast that Abraham was leading a reckless life." (Djoleto, *Ibid*: 127) He has stayed away for three days and is even reluctant to go back home. The narrator displays such a state of things: "By the end of the third day, in the evening, Kafu was about to go home, which he was reluctant to do because he actually had a lot of his clothes in Odofo's house and could stay on--- he had recovered fairly satisfactorily from the impact of the news of Odofo's pregnancy." (Djoleto, *Ibid*: 140) Kafu has reached a higher step than just sleep away from home: he has got pregnant one of his mistresses. He will get pregnant madam Salamatu too.

There is another misconduct from him which is against his success both in family and the leading of public affairs. As a matter of fact, Kafu finds it difficult to provide his wife with money for the running of his own house in spite of his income and the huge amount of money he is usually given by smugglers and friends such as Madam Odofo, Madam Salamatu and Nee Otu Lartey. He confides to Rev. Opia Dan Sese: "I need money myself. I've told you, Osofo. Help from you is always welcome. Very welcome!" (Djoleto, *Ibid*: 143) This is what Kafu himself confesses. His wife Grace brings more precision about this situation:

But Osofo, I'm his wife and I believe that however poisonous this letter may be, not all it says is lies. Can you believe that Kofi finds it difficult in spite of all his big income to provide money for running the house? We are living now from hand to mouth, whatever he gives me, he has taken back. If it hadn't been for the money I get from Vida, which she kindly increased when I told her a little of my story, I would have starved with my children! (Djoleto, *Ibid*: 128)

Definitely, Kafu is unable to have self-control as far as his finance is concerned; he is unable to manage his family of four people. Therefore he can't lead public affairs no matter the level.

Apart from these 'vices', Kafu has corrupted a leading member of the trade union of shit carriers. To prevent them from going on strike, Kafu gives money to one of their representatives. The narrator reveals it here: "After a day or two the strike threat fizzled out. The chief to whom Kafu had given the money banked it with a view to adding more savings to it and buying a low cost house in the future at Dansoman." (Djoleto, *Ibid*: 148) The opposition press confirms this in one of their issues. He reacts to it with Salamatu:

We know for certain that the strike action failed not because the workers lacked the will or had second thoughts in view of the enormous hardship it would have caused, but because of the immoral stratagems of certain individuals who are not above

bribing just causes out of existence and who, above all, do not scruple to dispose of their amorous rivals by laying lethal traps for them. Woe betide a people whose governance is full of immoral irresponsibility such as we have indicated above. We shall overcome!”

“Sala, don’t you think this is slanderous bombast?” Kafu asked. (Djoleto, *Ibid*: 149)

Kafu gets angry and is determined to use all his ‘strength’ and power to ‘punish’ the editor of this newspaper. Proudly, Kafu receives bribes from smugglers and he himself gives bribe too. The country can’t be well managed this way. In addition to that, he has become a stubborn and blind dictator which is incompatible with democracy. He has imprisoned Anson Berko for feeling sake and Mensah Quartey on wrong basis. He threatens everybody and refuses to listen to anybody including his close friends. He declares:

I know that a newspaper can eventually cause the downfall of a government. We must act, now! *The morning Herald* must fold up. Let the editor be arrested and roughed up for seven days. And... let me see... Mr Mensah Quartey must be detained for a week or two and grilled thoroughly for writing anonymous letters to ministers’ wives. (Djoleto, *Ibid*: 154-155)

This is not only dictatorship but also a prohibition of the freedom of the press and speech, which is an anti-democratic practice and the consequences, will follow.

2.1.2.5. Kafu’s morality as a minister: Kafu taking the law into his own hand

Kafu has won the elections. “Of the 21,868 votes cast there, Kafu garnered 18,562.” (Djoleto, *Ibid*: 54) The direct consequence is that “Kafu has been assigned the Ministry of Internal Welfare.” (Djoleto, *Ibid*: 56) How does he contribute to the running of public affairs at this level?

The first measures that Kafu has taken are for his own benefit. He uses his political position to settle account with people and promote his own. The very first thing he does is to dismiss his former Principal, Mr Benjy Baissi whom he forces into retirement whereas he still has five years left, and appoints a retired person, his friend Rev. Opia Dan Sese, to take over from him. He hates the former because he is fair in what he does. At the same time, he promotes, unfairly, a retired friend. (Djoleto, *Ibid*: 68-69) It is a bad omen, proving, in the very beginning that his government is working and will function on the basis of unfair and undemocratic principles. In the same framework, he has had Anson Berko and Mensah Quartey imprisoned. He hates the former because he has refused to fund his campaign and wrongly suspects the latter to have sent a letter to his wife Grace describing his unfaithfulness to her. This suspicion arises from the fact that he is the editorialist of the opposition party, NUP (National Union Party) (Djoleto, *Ibid*: 160) Before having Anson Berko jailed, he has put an end to his contract at National Secondary School. (Djoleto, *Ibid*: 69)

2.1.3. Kafu and Koomson's Greed as Ministers

As a candidate, Kafu proves to be greedy. The same thing is easily noticeable when he becomes a minister too. A minister, in a serious country, must fight against smuggling because it is destructive for the economy. Kafu blames smugglers in public but when they give him money and usable goods he takes them and even praises them, sometimes. Mercy Mensah, one of the lady smugglers gives an Omega watch to him and he takes it. She first asks him whether he would like an Omega watch and his answer is "why not?" (Djoleto, *Ibid*: 116) When giving it to him, she says "take this one. Ask no questions. No thanks. It's between us!" (Djoleto, *Idem*) As far as the money is concerned, Salamatu is their spokesperson this time. The narrator reports:

He then heard Salamatu say, 'Amega, Mercy, I've told Kafu about our offer. It's sixteen thousand cedis altogether. **The three of us are providing twelve thousand as a gift. It's understood that the remaining four thousand will be paid back to Omega within a year.** Actually it's money that's meant for safe keeping because Amega, like any of us, doesn't want to keep all his money with the banks. As soon as there's a coup and there are commissions of this and that all your accounts lose privacy. There's no point keeping four thousand idle when it can help Kofi. So, Kofi, use it but make sure you pay it back. Amega can be tricky when it comes to money! (Djoleto, *Ibid*: 117; our emphasis)

He also privately takes money from Salamatu, Odofo, two smugglers. The omniscient narrator penetrates Odofo's thoughts and discovers that "what she liked most was that Kafu had so far never tried to use false pretences to take money from her as other men had done." (Djoleto, *Ibid*: 90-91)

This quotation contains several levels of irony. First, it proves that Kafu is a person and a political personality who is unable to resist dirty money. Just after blaming and laughing at smugglers he accepts money and a valuable from them. Second, mere citizens too are aware that their minister lacks money and only a little is enough to buy his silence. This is corruption. Third, these smugglers are telling Kafu that their political regime cope with ill-governance in a way that a military coup can take place at any time. The fourth and last level of irony is his incapacity to pay back the part of this money, the four thousand to its owner, Amega Amenu. That is the last straw. As a matter of fact, it is when Amega and Ofori Nortey are ill-treating him at dawn that, in his will to save him from them, Bukari, his watchman, mortally wounds him. (Djoleto, *Ibid*: 181)

Koomson owns several and beautiful cars, millions of pounds because the country's commercial banks belong to them. He owns a house at the Residential Area and a well-furnished house to name only these.

2.1.3.1. Favouritism, Greed, Embezzlement and Corruption as a Cause of Political Instability

Favouritism, greed, embezzlement and corruption are beneficial for a minority to the detriment of the large majority. As such, it yields dissatisfaction which usually leads to political riots. Koomson's room is well furnished showing opulence. The narrator describes it in the following terms:

"... all the man could see was a row of glass-covered shelves and with a multitude of polished dishes and glasses, the sitting room was cut off by a long, high frame, beautifully polished, also with 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 there was one of the new television sets, and then farther on the corner was filled by two large contraptions whose outsides were of highly polished wood. One of them the man recognized as a radio set, though it was amazingly large. The other he found impossible to place. Then there were five deep, soft chairs, all with red cushions, and a carpet on the noiseless floor. There were also the two sofas, on one of which his wife was sitting. (Armah, 1988:146)

The description of the room made above shows that Koomson is a greedy person who lives in opulence. Greed and opulence are among the causes of the overthrowing of the government he is a member of.

How does Koomson succeed in getting these things and also taking care of his people? The pieces of furniture in Koomson's room are not bought by him but are embezzled from the State Furniture Corporation. During a conversation with Oyo, Estella reveals this state of things:

Is that the dining room?' Oyo asked, pointing"
'Yes,' said Estella 'they have come for the furniture'
'They?'
'The State Furniture Corporation. They renew it for us. Joe is like this with the manager"
'I see.' These were questions in Oyo's eyes, questions that probably would have sprung from envy and admiration, but she did not ask them. (Armah, *Ibid*: 148)

Like the commercial bank, the State Furniture Corporation also belongs to Koomson and the other party people. They just come to replace furniture for a Minister who is supposed to be a model by buying them. By so doing, they promote the corporation. The use of the present tense "they renew" implies that it is neither the first nor the last time the renewal is going to take place. This is another form of embezzlement which will lead the whole country to failure, the government in particular. The fact that the State Furniture Corporation replaces Koomson's furniture for him is not the only one form of favouritism he is involved in or enjoyed. He has arranged scholarship in dressmaking specialization in London for Regina, his sister in law, Estella's sister. The extract of the conversation between Oyo, the man and Estella is illustrative of this:

I was a tight friend of your sister Regina, when we were in school', Oyo said.
'She is in London now'
'What is she doing?'

'She has a scholarship. Joe arranged it for her'
'Is she in a University then?' Asked the man
'No Estella said' She's specializing in dressmaking. She says she's going to name her establishment after me when she comes. Estie Models, London Trained. (Armah, *Ibidem*: 148-149)

Estella says that the scholarship Regina has been awarded has been arranged. Moreover, knowing His Excellency, Mr. Koomson's political position as a "Minister Plenipotentiary, Member of the Presidential Commission", one can guess that Regina has not deserved this scholarship. A poor nominee's name has been cancelled and replaced by Regina's. Koomson himself has said that "everything is possible ... It depends on the person." (Armah, *Ibid*: 149) The person it may depend on maybe either the benefactor or the beneficiary. This practice is very current in sub-Saharan Africa. As a matter of fact, a large number of students or civil servants have been victims of such bad practices which have been carried out by dishonest senior executives. By turning the country's commercial bank into theirs or having the State Furniture Corporation renew them their furniture, Ministers and officials do not behave well. What is happening is corruption. But there are bribery and genuine corruption. Here, everybody, almost everybody, is concerned. These practices bring frustration and frustrated people are often uncontrollable.

At the man's house, Estella reveals how deeply politicians are corrupt. She says: "'Don't mind them!' Estella's voice had climbed to its usual pitch. 'Do you know, they themselves, the ones who shout, own things, lots of things!'" (Armah, *Ibid*: 137) Corruption is a well-established system in Nkrumanist Ghana. It is like a school people go to and learn rules and codes. This school has advocates as well as opponents (detractors), fortunately. Even among those who are for the school there are some who are skilful or talented and others awkward. Corruption or bribery is even described in image. Oyo teaches her husband that corruption is represented by the road. Drivers are those who accept bribe. There are two types of drivers. Those who drive fast are people who are involved in bribe taking or embezzlement of huge amount of money. The drivers who drive slowly are those who are dealing in bribery of small amount of money. The people who refuse to drive are the people such as the man and Teacher who refuse and hate bribery and corruption of all sorts. In a traffic, accidents may happen no matter the driver and the way they drive, fast or slowly. The accidents are those who get caught.'" (Armah, *Ibid*: 58-59)

Of course, Koomson is among those who drive fast and never have accidents. When a person accepts bribe, people says "he has learned his lesson". This is what Amankwa says of the Supervisor of Space Allocation when the latter takes bribe from him in order to help him, as quickly as possible, to remove his timber from the bush. (Armah, *Ibid*: 108) The narrator even specifies that Koomson "has learned

to drive.” (Armah, *Ibid*: 96) High political officials are corrupt, so are people in charge of security. As a matter of fact, there are instances where policemen are either demanding or accepting bribe in Armah’s first novel. The narrator describes a scene of bribe taking by the police after they have asked for it:

Once when the man was traveling to Cape Coast three different policemen had stopped the little bus and asked the driver for his quarter license. The driver had not bought it yet, and each of the policemen had said to him, in front of everybody, ‘Even *Kola* gives pleasure in the chewing’. In each case the driver had smiled and given the law twenty five pesewas, and the law satisfied. There was only one way. (Armah, *Ibid*: 95)

In a word, corruption is nearly tolerated. It is so tolerated that corrupt people are promoted. It is the case of the Supervisor of Space Allocation who has been promoted after he has embezzled, as a bursar, students’ allowances. (Armah. *Ibidem*: 109-110) Théophile Houndjo, in his doctoral dissertation, tackles such a practice through the development of section entitled “The celebration of corruption and the promotion of corrupt people” (Théophile Houndjo, p. 186) Corruption is widespread and people see it as an ordinary thing or a common practice. In the man’s work place, it is written on the wall in the toilets room:

MONEY SWEET PASS ALL
...
WHO BORN FOOL
SOCIALISM CHOP MAKE I CHOP
CONTREY BROKE⁽²⁸⁾
(Armah, *Ibidem*: 106)

2.2. Some consequences of mismanagement

2.2.1. Abject poverty

The ill-governance in Koomson’s country has given birth to social injustice and subsequently poverty. The gap in the standard of living between the havings mainly the politicians who have learned their lesson to drive and even to drive fast, and the having not, the grass root populations, is wide, very wide. The poor are too many and experience almost unbearable life. A few examples are Kwesi Anan, Kofi Billy, Sister Maanan and the old woman. The social situation of the Ghana under Nkrumah is such that some Ghanaians could lack just sugar, which is one of the elementary things that people who eat it must have or should not lack the money to buy some. It is the case of the old woman who comes to the man’s at night in order to borrow some, as narrated bellow:

Good evening’, she says. ‘Here I am again. Sugar. Would you be pleased to lend me a little sugar? Just for the children’
“The wife answers, ‘We have just finished our last packet ourselves. (Armah, *Ibidem*: 43)

Unfortunately she can't have the sugar because Oyo herself has very little left as revealed by the narrator in a flash back on page 102. This simply means that the man himself is among the poor people in his country although he is a wage earner. Two or three illustrations of his being poor can be laid down as follows: At home, the man's environment is not totally clean. It is a place which is not qualified for true human beings. The following extract describes his bathroom.

When the man has switched on the light with the bathroom and shut the door, he could not for a time take his eyes off the door where it was rotten at the bottom, and the smell of dead wood filled his nostrils and caressed the cavity of his mouth. He tried to breathe in only small, saving breaths of air, but when the cold water hit his back he sucked in a huge involuntary gulp, and there was no more point in his continuing his efforts to keep the rot out of himself. (Armah, *Ibidem*: 101)

The bathroom is enough to illustrate the poverty the man and his family are experiencing. The second illustration of the state of poverty the man lives in is the fact that his son can walk barefooted. The man's mother-in-law is laughing at him after her grandson has knocked his toe against a stone. She ironises: "My poor husband!" said the old woman, over and over again. 'You have no shoes to wear, so your poor little feet get torn to pieces. Ei, my husband, you have nobody, nobody to buy you shoes, so your little toes will all be destroyed.'" (Armah, *Ibidem*: 123) Here, the mother -in-law is both pointing out the man's incapacity to buy shoes for his only son and is also laughing at him.

The man is also unable to provide his children with a bed to sleep in. The narrator reveals such a state of things here: "Adoley and Ayivi were sleeping in the hall, entangled like some strange kind of Siamese twins in the same chair." (Armah, *Ibidem*: 160) The description made above and most especially the allusion to "Siamese twins" proves that they don't have a separate bed, even a decent one with enough room or space on it. This is an illustration of abject poverty.

Apart from the man's example, Kwesi Anan's poverty is also worth mentioning. He is so poor that he lives in "only a converted lavatory". It is "in a room at the extreme end of a long, low house" in which "he had no place to take the visitor." (Armah, *Ibidem*: 150) The situation in which poverty puts people mainly young people, who have, a premature tired skin" leads, among other things to violence and despair. Nkrumah's regime has made so many hopeless people that they constitute a bomb which has destroyed them in the end.

2.2.2. Violence

Violence as a consequence of social injustice that is noticeable in Ghana under Nkrumah described in *The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born* is due to, among other things, the way their country is ruled. Kofi Billy who has been to Europe and who has fought for the white man has lost all hope and commits suicide. The narrator describes the circumstances of his death: "It was the Sunday that that Kofi Billy's

body was found. He was hanging from a sheet down from the top bar of the finished door of a house not yet finished then.”(Armah, *Ibid*: 75)

2.2.3. Dissatisfaction and Anxiety Within the People and their Consequences

2.2.3.1. The end of Koomson’s regime

At a certain moment, the economic, social and political atmosphere which has prevailed in Ghana under Nkrumah obliges the police and the army to seize power. To prove that they have been fed up with Nkrumah’s regime, they go out to rejoice. When the man asks who has seized power, they answer him “army men and police men.”(Armah, *Ibid*: 157) People demonstrate to show either happiness or simple loyalty to the new regime or both.(Armah, *Ibid*: 158)

As readers, we have noticed how Nkrumah’s regime has failed. Let us see in details how Kafu and his Liberation Party and their men have run their country.

2.2.3.2. The end of Kafu’s regime

The incapacity of Kafu’s government to supply the populations with foodstuffs and mass-retailed products is a forerunner of his regime’s downfall. As a matter of fact, Kafu’s government is unable to provide the people with consumer goods such as oil, even palm oil that is locally produced, sugar, milk, fish and tomatoes. There are no plantains, no meat, no yam, and drugs are scarce.(Djoleto, *Ibid*: 120) On the other side, the price of building materials has doubled and tripled in some cases.”(Djoleto, *Ibid*: 159). Some workers claim salary increase because the cost of life has become expensive. Whereas others like drivers claim better working conditions: “These civil servants are unhappy these days.” (Djoleto, *Ibid*: 162)

During their meeting with Kafu, some drivers address him as if he were a mere useless citizen. He is even denounced to have taken “bribes and stashed them away in Swiss banks, sir.”(Djoleto, *Ibid*: 178) Within the populations, almost everybody fears a military coup. Concretely speaking, when giving sixteen thousand cedis to Kafu, Salamatu says that they fear a military coup might take place. (Djoleto, *Ibid*: 117) In this framework, Rev. Opia Dan Sese warns Kafu not to arrest MensahQuartey. He says: “If you touch him world opinion will lash out at you. The people will be afraid, and out of self-protection some of them will band together and kick you out. The army and police, for example. They do it sharp like an amputation,’ Opia said with a non-committal smile.” (Djoleto, *Ibid*: 132) These two quotations show that the collapse is to be noticed very soon and almost everybody is aware of it. It remains only the last straw that will break the camel’s back.

Kafu himself has heard of a coup and shares the idea with his mistress, Madam Odofo. He asks her: “This coup that is rumoured, Odofo, do you believe in it?”

(Djoleto, *Ibid*: 166) This implies that he too is afraid. Some people like Ofori Nortey are almost sure that a coup will take place. When talking to Kafu, he says: "Kafu, I am prepared to go to jail so long as I get my own back on you. The army will release me anyway. They will overthrow you sooner or later. I can wait for them there. Where is Amega's money, you swine?" (Djoleto, *Ibid*: 180) In a word, Kafu's government's bankruptcy has gone beyond what can be noticed with naked eyes. Before Ofori Nortey, Nee Otu Lartey has warned Kafu, in a prophetic way, against the danger of a strike which can result in a military coup:

'Nee Otu, why this insistence?' Kafu asked with a frown.
'Kofi, just be patient and listen. The impending strike is no joke.'
'I know anything else.'
'It is calculated to paralyse the whole country.'
'I'm aware of that'
'And it will be a prelude to a coup.'" (Djoleto, *Ibid*: 174-175)

This prophecy like a true one comes true. Kafu's government is overthrown by the army. The narrator gives details here:

It was the first dawn after the declaration of the country-wide strike. Kafu was busy in his study at home, compiling a memorandum on it for the consideration of his colleagues ...
Just then footsteps were heard. An army officer carrying a gun shouted, 'Hold it! Move to the wall. Drop that knife! Sergeant, search them!'
'We are not burglars, sir. We have shed no blood. The minister was our friend and... Amega pleaded but was cut short. 'Shut up! You may have shed no blood, but there has been bloodletting all right. Look at that knife, and cut on the forehead. We are taking over power, but we hate bloodshed. You have been a nuisance. The people will not understand. They'll think we killed him!'
'Sergeant, ring for an ambulance. Then go to the front door, ring the bell and bring the wife.'
When Grace saw the dead bodies, she gave a piercing cry and collapsed in the arms of the officer. (Djoleto, *Ibid*: 179&181-182)

The powerful Kafu is dead. Coincidentally, the army has seized power and the novel closes on that event. Before they do it in *Money Galore*, the army and police have seized power in *The Beautiful ones Are Not Yet Born* as mentioned earlier. What does military rule look like?

2.3. The military in command in the Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born and a Silly Season

From *A Wreath for Udomo* to *Money Galore* including *The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born*, the different civilian regimes have failed for different reasons and sometimes specific ones. Politics is not a concern of the army or the police. Nevertheless, we can notice that both *The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born* and *Money Galore* end with military coups.

In *The Beautiful One Are Not Yet Born*, we notice that after the army and the police have seized power, the military regime is established and starts working contrary to what happens in *Money Galore*. Their first actions are negative. Violence

continues and corruption still prevails. The watchman takes one hundred cedis at the gate of the harbour before allowing Koomson to enter in order to escape with a canoe. The narrator says that “the boatman took out another of the notes, and the watchman took them, slowly, with something like a loving awe, so that the notes made a soft cracking noise as they rubbed against his palm. ‘Pass,’ said the watchman.” (Armah, *The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born*: 176) The watchman knows that Koomson is running away to escape justice but nevertheless leaves him go against money.

The police too are corrupt under the newly established military regime. A policeman for example takes bribe from a driver as reported to the readers on page 182.

The policeman who had spoken raised his right hand and in a slow gesture pointed to his teeth. The man had seen this gesture before, several times. Usually, its maker would add the words, Even *Kola* nuts can say “thanks”. This policeman, however, was saying nothing ... With his left hand he extracted the money, rolling it up dexterously into an easy little ball... (Armah, *Ibid*: 182)

Bribery continues prevailing after the military coup. The narrator is explicit: “in the life of the nation itself, maybe nothing really new would happen. New men would take into their hands the power to steal the nation’s riches and to use it for their own satisfaction. That, of course, was to be expected” (Armah, *Ibid*: 162)

A Silly Season deals, from the beginning to the end, with a military regime. How do the civilian and military politicians run the public affairs in Ribalia, the fictitious country described in the novel? Shall we expect from the military and the police the exploits, the democratic conduct the civilians have failed to adopt?

The military regime established after the overthrowing of the Nkruma’s regime in *The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born* has not been able to put an end to corruption as it is just shown. It is almost the same ‘wind’ which continues blowing with even new vices and new ‘social plagues’ when the military junta led by an officer called Yaro takes the command. Some of them are favouritism with its branches of nepotism and cronyism, corruption and tribalism to name only these.

2.3.1. People of the New school: Corruption in Vogue in *A Silly Season*

All through *A Silly Season* bribery is encountered. Some people take bribes and fortunately others refuse it. A few examples of bribery are illustrative. The first leader of the military junta is corrupt. He accepts bribes as mentioned here by the narrator: “When the Military President is eating and smiling. Ask French banks! Or check the president’s accounts in Germany. They will tell you that our president is a multi-billionaire.” (Ogundimu, *A Silly Season*: 95)

Like the Military President, Governors and State Commissioners also take bribe. Kunle Bangbelu says it here: "Many of my colleagues from the other ministries had been murmuring, bugging me for failing to let them share from what they named my ministry's spoils." (Ogundimu, *Idem*: 72)

The Military President, the State Commissioners and even the new citizens indulge in corruption because they are not punished when caught. The narrator informs us: "Even when you get caught for corruption practices, you must still try to bribe your way out. Thus, you struggle to swim out of messy waters, so that you can eventually retain your position and continue in office by hook or by crook." (Ogundimu, *Idem*)

2.3.2. Other forms of ill-governance

Some people like Kayode are hired on the basis of cronyism. The narrator confesses about him: "The sister-in-law of his friend's uncle came to the rescue; he was made a clerk." (Ogundimu, *Ibidem*: 55) The military and civilian politicians have promoted self-enrichment in Ribalia, frustrated the press and promoted impunity. Democracy cannot prosper in these conditions.

2.3.3. People of the old school: objection to bribe taking

There are nevertheless some people who go against the new order, the new school consisting in taking bribe or promoting the practice. Among these people are first of all Mrs Banji of whom it is said that she "will not accept a gift until a job has been completed and certified consistent with the contract terms." (Ogundimu, *Ibidem*: 75) For Kunle Bangbelu "it is better not to accept anything from a contractor, even when the job has been completed." (Ogundimu, *Idem*) He is even stricter than Mrs Banji. The two of them belong "to the old school." (Ogundimu, *Idem*) In this group of honest people are the man and the teacher in *The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born*

Conclusion

The qualitative approach, postcolonial criticism and sociocriticism used have enabled me to reach my goal. Indeed, this work has dealt with the practice of democracy in Africa during a period of half a century. It has pointed out the important different flaws or weaknesses of African democracy during this period to the extent that one can conclude that from the late fifties to the early twenty-first century, African democracy is a sputtering one or a crippled one. This is illustrated by regular or almost permanent political instability through the many coup d'Etats during the above mentioned period. Nkrumah's regime described in *The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born* has been overthrown by the army and the

police (p.157). The government Kafu has belonged to has been 'blown out' by the army of his country as described in *Money Galore* (p.182). In *A Silly Season*, it is the military that are in command even though a few well-educated intellectuals like Kunle Bangbelu are appointed to high levels of decision making such as Ministers and Commissioners. The democratic and economic if not the development Udomo has been conducting in *A Wreath For Udomo* has been interrupted by "atavistic" forces under the banner of two advocates of tribalism namely the tandem Adebhoy-Selina (pp. 306-307). This interruption is similar to or synonymous with a coup d'Etat that has put an end to some noble political and economic ambitions of a young and open-minded and dynamic African politician. The paper has also studied the causes of such trend in order to put an end to something which is known to be bad in order to establish, consolidate and promote good ways of conducting democracy and development process.

The two main causes of the prevalence of sputtering democracy in Africa are ill-governance and its 'fertilizer' that impunity is. Ill-governance is illustrated by evil practices in a democratic system such as tribalism, nepotism, cronyism, embezzlement, corruption, frustration of the freedom of the association and the press, in a word, dictatorship as shown along the development of this paper. All these ill-practices are nursed by impunity. To put an end to impunity and at the same time promote democracy, accountability must be established and implemented impersonally. Théophile Houndjo suggested in his doctoral dissertation: "Fierce fight against corruption includes an important aspect which is the establishment of a policy of accountability ..." (p445). In the same vein he quotes Ngugiwa Thiong'O who, in his fourth novel, has made a plea for accountability: "Your deeds alone will condemn you ... You—No one will ever escape from his own actions" (Idem)

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