

A Postcolonial Reading of Death in Ayi Kwei Armah's *KMT*

Souleymane DIARRASSOUBA

Institut National Polytechnique Félix Houphouët - Boigny / Yamoussoukro

diarrassoubas@yahoo.fr

Résumé : Le présent article étudie la mort en tant que refus du droit de reconnaissance à la différence des valeurs authentiques tant traditionnelles, culturelles qu'identitaires. Appréhendée comme une idéologie insidieuse et une volonté intentionnelle des forces impérialistes ou comme une attitude passive de la part des populations colonisées en ce qui concerne leur incapacité à déceler les objectifs d'exploitation contenus dans les visées religieuses et dans le contenu des programmes éducatifs des prédateurs arabes et des envahisseurs occidentaux, la notion de mort exprime la volonté du colon de soumettre la conscience du Noir. Cependant, cette situation ne devrait perdurer. Car, bien au contraire, selon Armah, cette attitude traduite en acte devrait être la voie indiquée pour le colonisé averti de se réapproprier son identité culturelle, historique et sociale sapée par les forces conquérantes.

Mots-clefs : mort, postcolonial, identité, culture, action, mimétisme, aliénation.

Abstract: This article analyses death understood as the denial of otherness through its tradition, cultural and identity genuineness. Apprehended either as a hidden ideology and intentional will from the imperialists or the insensitive stance of the colonized populations in not deciphering the religious and educational exploitative purposes of Arab predators and westernizers in Africa, death participates in the subjugation of the Black mind. However, death should not be an everlasting one. Rather, for Armah it should be the appropriate counterpoising attitude to the denied cultural, historical and social identities by foreign invaders. Far from being an inevitability Africans should be apprised, it should rather be the necessary tool for reasserting their intrinsic self.

Keywords: death, postcolonial, identity, culture, action, mimicry, alienation.

Introduction

Let us work to the forgotten paths into the remembered way. Let us mix the long memories of a people destroyed with new narratives of our own making, as we move into space of our own choosing, as we dream in images woven from our people's best desires. (A. K. Armah, 2002, p.12)

Issues related to identity denial in general and identity formation in particular are foregrounded in post-independence African literature. At the forefront of this concern in the African English-speaking countries are novelists such as Achebe, Armah, Ngugi and Soyinka - as second-generation authors accounting for the disillusionment that followed the accession of Africans to independence after their political leaders took over from colonizers. Most of their writings consist in the criticism of the neocolonial ideologies' impact on the African cultural body. That is especially true for Ayi Kwei Armah's novels which vehemently fight the continuance and the survival of Arab and Western imperialisms through their pernicious instruments: the occidental schooling, Islam and Christianity on this continent. These topics are abundantly dealt with in *KMT: In the House of Life, an Epistemic Novel (KMT)* which can be summarized as the display of the colonial consciousness or discourse depiction at work in the distortion of African realities in order to debase the Black race as a whole.

In this novel, Armah stands against this apocryphal conception of imperial and western discourses on African cultures, values and traditions in fighting such clichés and stereotypes using the peculiar artistic device of death, not only in its denotative meaning as the expression of a will to achieve the extinction of African societies, but also in its connotative dimension through Raymond Williams's theory of "intentional change" that expresses a kind of willed or wanted future ([http://academia.edu/3248771/Future Conditionality as the Visionary Imperative in Armah's Two Thousand Seasons](http://academia.edu/3248771/Future_Conditionality_as_the_Visionary_Imperative_in_Armah's_Two_Thousand_Seasons)).

While reading *KMT*, one may be stricken to witness the demise of Armah's two heroes and his aesthetic use of the idea of death. Thanks to the literary paradigm of an aestheticized death representation in his literature, this Black novelist's authentic characters and ordinary ones are all slapped by death in specific ways. We shall use an approach based on decoding tools that are prompted by such postcolonial theories as the colonial codes deconstruction as J. M. Moura (1999, p. 127) puts it and that stress, on the one hand, "the way in which literature by the colonizing culture distorts the experience and realities, and inscribes the inferiority of the colonized people and literature by colonized peoples which attempts to articulate their identity and reclaim their past in the face of that past's inevitable otherness" (www.brocku.ca/English/courses/4f70/postcol.html), on the other hand, our analysis will focus firstly on death as the colonizer's veiled intention to subdue autochthon populations in Africa and secondly on the exploration of death as an appropriate means for with setting alienation.

I- From a Westernized Will of Annihilation Otherness: Crushing African Self

As a general remark, death in *KMT* signifies a number of things. It is used as a metaphor - according to T. Hawkes (1980, p.1), it is a linguistic process by which aspects of one object are transferred to another one, so that we allude to the second as if we are dealing with the first one) - for regretting Africa's destruction as a whole because of Western imperialism. As such, it deals with the African educational body introduced by colonization. In fact, the prevailing school structure on this continent is an instrument for killing Black otherness and awareness.

As a main character in this novel, Biko is killed in some way, first by being excluded from the Whitecastle School, and secondly by committing suicide because of his consciousness of the colonial school system veiled objectives intended to underyoke the colonized people's minds and for trying to resist it. This system not only discourages individual expression but also serves the falsification of African history by favouring racism and stereotypes of any kind.

Moral and psychological death is imposed on learners like Biko, Lindela and their other schoolmates. They are conditioned by being deprived of all freedom of thinking and acting. Biko's frequent hardships with his different White teachers are meaningful. Just from the beginning, an incident occurs with the first – year Biology teacher who asked them to draw a fish from their textbook. As Lindela recalls it:

Biko's fish was beautifully drawn. He had colored it, not crudely but with delicate skill (...) More strikingly, while the fish we had all used as our model was a rigid carcass, Biko's fish was a leaping specimen flying free of a hook tackle just visible in the corner of the drawing, and this fish had a smiling mouth, as if to tell the owner of the hook he would not be biting the shiny bait this time (A. K. Armah, 2002, p. 41).

Noticing Biko's personal initiative to transform a dead fish into a living one, the embarrassed master warns him that it was useless overdoing this kind of things because he will make

mistakes if he insists on disobeying instructions (A. K. Armah, 2002, p.41). In fact, the instructions the Biology teacher is referring to are the lack of malleability of his mind: the risk that the school system fails to manipulate him. Through such a guideline behaviour, Biko does not accept being denied this basic desire and that maybe why he adds a hook in his picture for insisting on it.

A further point is that another intent of the European school program in the colonies is to destroy indigenous cultural values by promoting White supremacist ideas in a non-empirical manner. As such, Biko's two other incidents with two other teachers during his third year is worth noticing. The second incident happens with Miss Priscilla Snowden, his teacher of Literature who does not hesitate during the introductory lesson with her students to use hyperbolic and power-enhancing words while dealing with the only Shakespeare's works that she schedules because of "The power of his imagination. The accuracy of his understanding of human nature. His unerring ear for human speech. The delicate beauty of his diction. The potency of his imagery. The uncanny power of his mind. His peerless coverage of all human experience" (A. K. Armah, 2002, p.43).

Thus, this English writer is depicted with a valorising lexical field: he is to be considered as a "Great. Important. Most. Superior (...) Sublime. Matchless. Transcendent [writer]" (A. K. Armah, 2002, p. 43). But against all odds, in spite of this intellectual brain-washing, when Biko is asked by his Literature teacher to recapitulate the factors that make Shakespeare the greatest writer the world had ever seen, his answer is meaningful: "I don't know, Miss Snowden (...) I'm not sure how I can know what makes Shakespeare great before reading what he wrote" (A. K. Armah, 2002, p.43). Her reaction asking him to get out of her classroom emphasizes the risk to show mind boldness or being doubtful in such a context.

It is also as a brain-worker that Mr. Joel Bloom, the Greek teacher arrives in the tropics after the death of the previous instructor. At this level, one may wonder if this demise refers to a real physical one. Does it not hint at his inactivity or lack of efficiency in corrupting the dominated learners' spirits for the spread of the duplicity of the colonial discourse? This argument also seems to be a valuable one, if reference is made to the initial advertisement from the Whitecastle School for its new teaching position who should preferably be young, energetic, enthusiastic and innovative; maybe because the regretted schoolmaster seemed not to be as zealous as the system expected him to be in order to defend the supremacy of the West. (A. K. Armah, 2002, p. 44).

But against this ply, Biko withstands through a series of mishappenings), this so-called eurocentrist humanitarian mission undertaken in Africa by western representatives such as Mr. Bloom whose deeds have nothing to do with what his name can suggest; for blooming denotes something positive since it can be apprehended as a state of beauty or an opening to higher perfection, analogous to that of bugs into blossoms. His behaviour in this institution seem to echo Lord Macaulay's Address to the British Parliament as stated on 2nd February 1835 for the collapse or end of the African life:

I have travelled across the length and breadth of Africa and I have not seen one person who is a beggar, who is a thief, such wealth I have seen in this country, such high moral values, people of such caliber, that I do not think we would ever conquer this country, unless we break the very backbone of his nation, which is her spiritual and cultural heritage and therefore, I propose that we replace her old and ancient education system, her culture, for if the Africans think that all that is foreign and English is good and greater than their own, they will lose their self-esteem, their native culture and they will become what we want them, a truly dominated nation. (http://historium.com/Asian_lord_-_macaulay-s-address-british-parliament-2-February-1835-a.html)

In front of Bloom's attempts to contradict Africa's real history, Biko brings steady arguments and proofs from books he read from the Whitecastle School library. First, he stands against Mr. Bloom's biased views about the sublimity of the Greek ideas because some intellectuals such as Aristotle and Herodotus respectively allege that women had fewer teeth than men and that black men had black sperm (A. K. Armah, 2002, p. 48-49). Secondly, reacting against this Eurocentric abstraction of this land's past when the Greek teacher explains that Africans, and more precisely Black ones, had no part whatsoever in the development of human thoughts in the manner of a "beloved raconteur telling a family joke to a gathering of household servants." (A. K. Armah, 2002, p. 49), Biko brandishes one of Aristotle's statements in a book entitled *Physiognomy* from The Cadbury Shelley Memorial Collection that Egyptians were not only Black but were philosophers and teachers of philosophers (A. K. Armah, 2002, p. 50). Mr. Bloom who did not want to bear his demystifying behaviour anymore, asked the Principal to dismiss him. Biko Lema was therefore rusticated for insubordination because the colonial educational machinery does not want its recipient to be intelligent or clever at all. Thus, Biko's boldness, his "fatal walk into destruction" (A. K. Armah, 2002, p.16) becomes in Lindela's words, the source of his undoing. He is excluded from school because of his way of re-considering the relationships between recipients and donors: he is seen by the system as someone who threatens to "upset this fixed donor-recipient hierarchy that made a such perfect fit with the realities of life in the colonial society (...) [He] was a boy stepping out of the assigned role of passive recipient of information prepared elsewhere, by others". (A. K. Armah, 2002, p. 39). He is eliminated because of his will to "head into a learning space where teachers and recipients would not confront as donors and recipients, but work side by side as active seekers with a shared goal: a more intelligent way of living." Consequently, the western school set up is seen by the novelist as "the Abattoir of Minds" since "African learners are being trained in the colonial school complex for occupying specific places, subordinate stations in the hierarchy. This requirement makes the habit of subordination for it prepares the would-be colonial subjects to occupy the places set aside for them in the established structure" (A. K. Armah, 2002, p.54). By behaving so, this school boy questions the denial of objectivity by Westerners in manipulating or silencing Africans.

In a similar vein, his classmates can also be considered as dead people because of their submissiveness. Biko's inquisitiveness, that is, his tendency to ask and learn about things by asking questions, investigating, exploring or re-ordering things is not followed by the other schoolmates or other Africans. Their behaviour as uninvolved actors which is akin to a kind of cowardice may justify why Biko committed suicide. In his mind, it is preferable to die if one is abandoned or not supported than accepting this sheer injustice. However, it is worth mentioning that his best companion, Lindela, mourns by the same token his loss in acknowledging her share of responsibility in the final ruin of her best friend (A. K. Armah, 2002, p. 42).

If death is caused by external imperial forces, one can witness in *KMT* that it is also due to the internal enemies of African doctrines who are influenced by this alien civilization. As a result of a negative hybridity, this "process of domination through disavowal" in H. Bhabha's words (1994, p.159), African local traditions are distorted. Differently put, in ancient Africa, values such as equality, lack of subaltern status existed. But now, materialism and individualism introduced first by the invasion of Arab predators and secondly by western civilization pervade the African lifestyle. This continent tradition is transformed for personal survival or systemic interests. This adulteration is experienced among griots, the repositories of the genuine African history and its guiding principles. As a repercussion of this cultural collision, they split into two groups: the followers of the original life who keep their societal integrity and those who devalue their knowledge because they submit to royalists by thus

promoting a new social hierarchy. So, in their training, curious trainees are fought and reduced to silence during public audiences: they are relegated to a category of culture keepers called mute traditionalists. The other corrupted griots, for materialistic reasons, falsified recent periods of the African history that are only taken into account and narrated because nowadays, “the knowledge of most traditionalists goes back a few centuries, then stops dead” (A. K. Armah, 2002, p.163). This death refers to the blackout of the thousands of years of the African “deep tradition” purposely forgotten in favour of the “shallow” one covering exclusively the recent centuries which coincide with the period of Africa’s contact with the Arab nomads and European conquests and the subsequent migrations of the Black people. These noteworthy facts are stressed on by the griot Djeli Hor as a witness when he points out that it is: “where our own tradition was cut off... and a foreign tradition substituted for it” (A. K. Armah, 2002, p.171). That is how and why foreign religions and sad realities were imposed on native people with the help of inner collaborators such as royalty and a category of oral knowledge keepers. These latter actors in the fulfilment of their destructive tasks deaden a part of the traditions by introducing the idea of secrecy thanks to the notion of griots’ oath creeds which is in fact a sort of death; for that segregation not only excludes women and a set of people under the fallacious pretext of being not initiated in this art, but prevents them from awareness: facts that were not prevailing in traditional Africa. Furthermore, the intrusive Arab and European religions names that bury local names (A. K. Armah, 2002, p. 172) participate in the intensity of this alienation.

So, unfortunately, these special traditionalists for their own salvation halted Africa’s true history “as in a sentence of death “in agreeing with the conquistadors to consider this African past “as times now dead” for they “were told that if they insisted on telling [African] story the same way, they would have to accept the same fate as that suffered by our old rulers: death”. (A. K. Armah, 2002, p. 188). Moreover, as active participants like their white counterparts in the colonial era, some traditionalists attracted by western ideological vision of power in its secular form in which hierarchy must prevail threaten anyone wanting to upset this order. In such conditions, it is not surprising that “live young minds growing under dead old brains” (A. K. Armah, 2002, p. 106) undergo the same fate of destruction.

Both Biko at the Whitecastle School and Hor in the traditionalist griots’ school at the age of fourteen, because of these dead-like brains having static mentalities and visions and reluctant to any positive change, are banished from their respective academies before being violently killed. Like Biko, the court griots trainers at Niani who do not bear Hor’s curiosity send him to Yarw, the village of mute traditionalists. At adult age, Hor sees the griots’ oath of secrecy as a “state of continued death” (A. K. Armah, 2002, p. 171) and decides during an academic meeting organized by two university teachers, Lindela and Jengo, at Yarw to break the oath in not keeping selfishly his lore because, for him, it is meaningless to retain truth hidden to anybody. Contrary to this esoteric conception, knowingness is like the blood which flows throughout a living body, everywhere, bringing life and removing the seed of death. So, to him, the “unwanted truth-telling is [also a kind of] death” (Armah, 2002, p. 184). Unfortunately, his refusal of intellectual death brings him physical demise for Mamadou Kouyate and his fellow regressive band of traditionalists put an end to his life (A. K. Armah, 2002, p. 202).

These two characters’ fatal fate is one of the inherited violence and egoism consequences resulting from the Black community’s contact with the western world: western education or schools with regard to their biased content and objectives are an instrument for taming or killing otherness. Therefore, Biko and Hor’s deaths here may also be viewed in a whydunit conception - “a mystery having as its primary interest the motivation rather than the identity of the criminal” (www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/whydunit) - because their murders are due to a whole system functioning.

By recalling ancestral Egyptology, the African past, Armah wants to recall the necessity of a conscious connection with the past so as to remind what has fallen into oblivion in order to avoid the killing of the African self by the imperialist forces.

In a nutshell, death in *KMT* is used as a metaphor for dealing with the frailty of the colonized African being. As such, it refers to a set of psychological, intellectual and ideological subjugation strategies set up by the White colonizer. But this literary device when envisioned in a dialectical way is also synonymous with a revival and re-appropriation of the African intrinsic cultural body.

II- For a genuine cultural vindication: a standing Blackness

Death can represent a number of things. As an action, death embodies cultural immobility and insensitiveness or the unchanging state of African cultures in front of the foreign world: it is the symbol of non- African values resistance or rejection. In *KMT*, this notion becomes a stance for neutralizing the occidental civilization in fighting and counterpoising its discourse and imported values.

Authors like M. Bal recognize the narrative power of death in events construction in literature (M. Bal, 1999, p. 5). Underscoring Bal's remark, O. Hakola (2014, p. vii) observes that as a narrative event, death can both affect characters and lead the plot in some direction. As for T. C. Foster, violent events such as characters' demises in literature act symbolically for there is something happening beyond the surface (<http://gradesaver.com/how-to-read-literature-like-a-professor/study-guide/summary-chapters-10-12-and-interlude>), that is, the death of a character is meant to go beyond its literary description. Contrary to some novels where the death of a culprit is punishment, the death of major character is full of meaning. In *KMT*, Biko and Hor's passing away are indicators of a community, people or race's experience which are suggestive of an imperative: the new. According to H. Bhabha (1994, p. 7), the new is the "the beyond space" that should re- possess, renew the past in order to interrupt the present. Seemingly, appropriating this theory, the beyond space that Ayi Kwei Armah accesses is that in which agency- the ability to act or perform an action (B. Ashcroft et al., 2012, p. 6) - conferred in the present can lead to a change in the future as the past is revisited.

That is why Hor's insurgent reactions in front of the Islamic religion are to be regarded as a kind of denying this alien practice. He refuses to assume as a grown-up his spiritual inheritance by mimicry since he was born Muslim by birth. As the master of his own destiny, he refuses to apply dogmatically this belief's customs and principles coming from afar. He negates just from his first Tabaski feast to kill a sheep as this religion requires it. He does not recognize Ibrahim as the ancestor of any African (A. K. Armah, 2002, p. 165), nor does he see the real need to go to Mecca because of its holiness. His wife Astw also shares his viewpoint when putting forward that "Nothing in our [African] tradition says there is a holy land elsewhere, different from where we live. I like the idea that the land everywhere is holy" (A. K. Armah, 2002, p. 168). This belief seems to be a nonsense because it is not pragmatic for traditions are a characteristic feature of any specific community.

Lindela who is also a real witness of the ideological conditioning of the western school apparatus is no more indulged in Christianity in saying that she is "an African" (Armah, 2002, p. 166). Through such a statement, she prefers claiming and being proud of her blackness, cultural identity noticeable through her "Africanness" or Black self. Differently put, she prefers continuing experiencing this feeling that people "with a shared history and ancestry hold in common" (B. Ashcroft, 2001, p. 4).

A further argument is that death is employed for an artistic purpose so as to identify the root of Africans' social and cultural alienation. It is thanks to slumbers - also a type of

death -that Lindela hears Biko's voice in a meaningful context, especially after the emotional crisis she undergoes during her fifth nightmare because of his suicide:

At the point in the nightmare (...), a gatekeeper appeared. He was a bearded European. A familiar figure. Jesus? Darwin? Marx? The person he reminded me of most insistently was the teacher who had triggered the expulsion of my friend, stiffened the refusal to take him back at the Whitecastle School (...)

The bearded (...) seemed to be offering help. "Take this, he said. "With it you can enter the gate".

(...) I entered. Behind the wall I saw a network of wide avenues radiating into the far distance, lined with statues of bronze and monuments of stainless steel. There were huge busts with plates bearing names that had become familiar to me from my first week at Whitecastle School: Aristotle, Herodotus, Plato, Socrates.

I heard a laugh that surprised me into happiness. This was the voice of my friend. But I saw no one. Still, the voice did not go away.

"Come," the voice said "this way."

I followed the sound. "See you will have to come past the dead.

Then can come to the living."

Beyond the statues and monuments of bronze and stainless steel we reached a garden of fruit trees and flower bushes set into an opening in a great forest through which flowed a clear river that in one place dropped down a cascade, in a second place down a broad and playful waterfall." Let me show you the living," my friend's voice said. "This is where they live. (Armah, 2002, p. 58-59)

Like a palimpsest of the quest of Orpheus to bring Eurydice back to life, the reader can notice that her departed soul mate shows Lindela the ideological causes of Africa's development impediments: it is the erroneous exploitation of White philosophers' ideas such as Aristotle, Herodotus, Plato and Socrates. So, for dominated people, the fact of knowing and mastering the real objectives of the European religion and school through its content will allow them to understand, then master and finally neutralize it. It is only at this condition that the exploited people can reach their lost dignity and become emancipated. But, keeping the old habits or accepting being imposed thoughts on like in the Christian religion the prevailing order will not make things change. As can be noted in Lindela's same dream:

The words made me think he was handing me a key, but the thing he gave me was a wafer. It was not round. A complex structure, like lace, it comprised a cross set into a six-pointed star. The gatekeeper pressed the wafer into my mouth, as at a Roman mass. I looked past him, half expecting to see an altar boy come to hold a silver plate under my chin. There was no one. I felt an urge to bite the wafer. A wave of fear rose to my throat, and I heard the words of a catechist: "Be extremely careful not to bite this wafer. If you do, you bite Christ again, and he will bleed into your mouth. Nothing you do will stop the bleeding.

In spite of fear I found the urge irresistible, and I bit the wafer. Immediately I felt the blood of the crucified Christ fill my throat and nostrils, hot, sticky, its stench suffocating me. Drowning, I cried out. (...) and I stopped breathing. (Armah, 2002, p. 57)

The dense and constant allusion to Christological imagery is not fortuitous. Lindela suffocates as can be remarked because of the strong intrusion of the Christian heritage in autochthon cultures. Contrarily to the fact that religious beliefs in old Africa are personal and private affairs deriving from a free conscious choice, this acceptance of Jesus-Christ's faith does not stem from a deliberate volition for it was violently imported in Africa like the gatekeeper does it in "pressing the six- pointed wafer" in her mouth. In such conditions, the

difficult consumption – as seen thanks to the consecrated bread's shape - of Jesus's body (the wafer) and spirit (blood) intended to save any Black sinner are ironically the very ones who asphyxiate his self. To put it in another way, alien customs, habits, values and beliefs' aping endangers the original African life. It is worth reminding at this level of our analysis that it is after Lindela's suffocation, in her nightmarish dream, that the bearded European gatekeeper came back and wiped out her mouth of the blood for stopping its flow. He made her swallow some wine and as herself relates:

[The] moment I swallowed it, it shriveled me to a size smaller the gate. "See," the gatekeeper said, "now you can enter."

I entered. (...) The garden was still beautiful, the spray from the waterfall still fragrant in the morning air (...) But without the closeness of his [Biko] voice I felt lost, and in a panic I rushed trembling back toward the gate. I ran past the statues of Socrates and Aristotle, past the monuments of stainless steel and bronze and stone, till I was certain I was back at the gate through which my shrunken self had come. Only there were no gate, just the white wall, its barren brilliance seemingly endless. The warmth of the garden was now a memory. In front of me the air drifting back off the wall was cold. I was dead tired, but I could not stop myself speeding along the wall, desperate to see an opening" (Armah, 2002, p. 58-59).

The above passage underscores the risk and danger of accepting the tricky sides of western education and culture conveyed by the inebriating consequences of wine for any perspicuous mind. Only a warned one like that of Biko can circumvent this trap of falsehood embodied in Western ideologists' findings like those of Aristotle and Socrates. For having drunk the wine, Lindela shrunken and entered the wall tiny opening, that is, for failing to be the owner of her mind she was caught in the trap of whiteness; and that may explain her uneasiness when Biko vanished in her night terror because him as a guide is tantamount to safety.

In other words, the hidden alienation mission entrusted to European religious and learning institutions respectively like Christianity and the Whitecastle School is to imprison the African selves and alienate their identities. Even if the word castle – in the qualifying: Whitecastle - suggests an idea of wealth in knowledge procurement, one must not take for granted this alleged target for the white colour similar to the wall's one in the dream is to paint Black people jail-like conditions and equally symbolizes the sterile relationships with the West as for their emancipation.

Finally, as an ideological tool, death as the latest threat must not hinder Black people to re- possess the part of their life that has fallen in oblivion: re-mastering this past at any cost even at the expense of one's life should be their main concern. That is probably why Biko refuses to apologize when the Principle asked him to "go and write the apology" (Armah, 2002: 53) to Mr. Bloom in arguing that he cannot do so for his remarks are right. As for Djeli Hor, after telling the truth about some aspects of griots' life, he decides voluntarily to meet the alienated traditionalists for facing his physical death. Knowing the risks, he is running, he purposefully chooses his final resting place before: he decides not to be buried in none of the Muslim and Christian cemeteries in Yarw but in a grave that himself builds at home for showing his fellow Africans that they must identify the western and Arab cultures as the source of their misfortune and remain faithful to what can identify their true self. So, Biko and Djeli Hor's suicides are to be apprehended as the agentive foci that must sparkle the light of will in the Africans who are denied their true history and culture. Death takes here a new interpretation for, as Lindela underlines it, the violence Biko Lema uses against himself as the result of a treatment, he doesn't truly deserve can be the necessary impetus that can impel real



changes. These fatalities seem to be the *sine qua non* sacrifices or conditions for paving the way to the re-appropriation of African living ways. Moreover, the departures of two symbolic major characters such as Biko and Hor have got a full and effective stake because demises resulting from oppression or persecution have also the advantage to be viewed as a path to freedom and happiness on the way of Black people's emancipation in, above all, fighting their silenced continental realities.

Conclusion

Through this paper, one notices the ubiquity of death in the world depicted in *KMT*. As such, it fits into a specific scheme for dealing with the influence of non-African civilizations on Africa. It conveys the estrangement of Black people because of the Arab-European imperialism. This notion accounts for the willpower of overseas forces to subjugate the Black conquered populations. Death expresses the tricky ideological and psychological means hidden in the educational machinery as well as in some revealed religions such as Islam and Christendom imported on the African continent for selfish, exploitative and capitalistic interests.

But, in front of an annihilating death, Armah seems to oppose another creative one obeying a systemic plan for future actions as a solution for resisting African authenticity destruction in the short run, and neutralizing conspicuous neocolonialism in the long run.

The theme of death as dealt with by Armah in this novel is a call for an awakening (Teodorescu, 2015, p.1), a kind of slap in the face of the colonized African peoples for the defence of their identities what will allow them to be an intrinsic part of humanity with what they really are and specifically have.

References

ARMAH Ayi Kwei, 2002, *KMT: In the House of Life, an Epistemic Novel*, PER ANKH, Popenguine.

ASHCROFT Bill, GRIFFITHS Gareth and TIFFIN Helen, 2007, *Postcolonial Studies: The Key Concepts*, New York, Routledge (Second Edition).

ASHCROFT Bill, 2001, *Postcolonial Transformation*, London, Routledge.

BAL Mieke, 1999, *Narratology: Introduction to the theory of Narrative*, New York, Buffalo & London University of Toronto Press (Second Edition).

BHABHA Homi, 1994, *The Location of Culture*, New York, Routledge.

HAKOLA Outi and KIVISTÖ Sari, 2014, *Death in Literature*, Cambridge, Cambridge Scholars Publishing.

HAWKES Terence, 1980, *Metaphor: The Critical Idiom*, New York, Methuen and Co.

MOURA Jean-Marc, 1999, *Littérature francophone et théorie postcoloniale*, Paris, PUF.

TEODORESCU Adriana, 2015, *Death Representations in Literature: Forms and Theories*, Cambridge, Cambridge Scholars Publishing.



http://www.academia.edu/3248771/Future_Conditionality_as_the_Visionary_Imperative_in_Armah_s_Two_Thousand_Seasons accessed on 28th, June 2015.

<http://www.brocku.ca/English/courses/4f70/postcol.html> quoted by Kouakou Koffi Jules, Baobab, Numéro 12, Premier semestre 2013.

<http://www.gradesaver.com/how-to-read-literature-like-a-professor/study-guide/summary-chapters-10-12-and-interlude> accessed on June 26th, 2017 at 6.05 pm.

http://www.historium.com/Asian_lord_macaulay_s_address_british_parliament_2_February_1835-a.html at 11 AM.

<http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/whydunit> accessed on May 22nd, 2017 at 5. 08 PM.