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African Existentialism in Armah's *The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born*

The famous Ghanaian writer Ayi Kwei Armah's debut novel *The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born* (1968) is one of the most reviewed and commented African literary works. Many critics, especially those from western perspectives, regarded this novel as an excellent follower of western Existentialism exemplified by J.P. Sartre and A. Camus. As for many African critics, influenced by western critical comments, and/or upset by the dirty and stinky scenes with strong scatological images throughout this novel, they labeled Armah as a detached westernized writer and reproached him for representing post – colonial Ghana and Africa in an unrecognizable and inappropriate way. Different from the above two kinds of reactions toward this novel, I argue that Armah created a kind of African Existentialism which is essentially different from western Existentialism in terms of the origin, causes and nature of absurdness, and the methods of confronting absurdness. Such differences are not the consequences of imitation with low quality, but a combination of political insight and artistic creation based on African cultures.