Dear Bernth Lindfors,

Thank you for your letter of April 17 re: DLB entry on Armah.

I don't have much to add to the two photos sent earlier (Heinemann have the original plates for those). Hans Zell and I wrote to Armah several times offering to pay for a more recent photograph but, as expected, received no reply. I don't think there is much point in your trying: you are sure to get the same response. Best use the existing photos, dated though they are.

As you can see from the enclosed copies, the orange book covers of the African Writers Series don't photocopy very well. Zell had the same problem designing the cover for my book (copy enclosed) and, as you can see, went for the two book covers that came out best. I suggest you do the same. Heinemann might be able to provide better quality cover prints taken from the originals.

Sorry I can't be more helpful. One thing more: could you alter my academic affiliation on the essay to "Northern Territory University, Darwin", please? The University College no longer exists.

The Zell book was put back from March to May but should soon be out. The CP volume is scheduled for summer of next year but in the light of the Three Continents backlog that may not mean very much!

Get back in touch if there is anything else you need. When the volume appears please let me know - also how I can get a copy.

Sincerely,

Derek Wright
Ayi Kwei Armah

the healers
FRAGMENTS
AYI KWEI ARMAH
... in the first rank of recent novels anywhere...
said The New York Times

Ayi Kwei Armah

The BEAUTYFUL ONES ARE NOT YET BORN
27th December 1986

Dear Professor Lindfors,

If it causes no serious inconvenience, could you possibly hang on to my entry on Ayi Kwei Armah (for the D.L.B.) until the end of January before submitting the final version to the publishers? The reason is that I have updated the bibliography at the beginning of the entry to include further essays and stories published by Armah during the last couple of years and have revised the last page of the entry in the light of these recent pieces. I am at present doing a last-minute check to make sure that no further items have appeared in 1986; I don't think there are any, but if you happen to know of any yourself, I would be grateful for the information. Acquiring information from a new University and a Library which is as yet low on bibliographical resources, and in a place as remote as Darwin, is no easy task.

If the above suggestion is acceptable to you, I'll send you the two revised pages before the end of January.

Best wishes for 1987.

Sincerely,

Derek Wright
Dear Professor Lindfors,

Thank you for your invitation of March 31st. I should be pleased to write the entry on Armah for your proposed Dictionary of Literary Biography. Please forward the formal guidelines and model essays you mention.

Jobless as I am (and likely to stay in this country), the meagre financial reward is no major incentive, but at least there is no time problem. I start work on a booklet on Armah for a Canadian Press shortly and will do the two things in tandem. Hopefully, I won't need the extension.

Incidentally, do you know of any American Publishers (or European ones) who might be interested in a full-scale book on this author? I've tried all the British ones - Longman, Hutchinson, Collings, C.U.P., Evans, Macmillan, Currey - without success, and a few American ones - Twayne said 'No', Three Continents advised to come back in 1987, and the rest didn't reply. I haven't contacted any American University Presses. Are there any likely bets?

I hope to hear from you presently.

Sincerely,

Derek Wright

Derek Wright
Prof. B. Lindfors
Dept of English
University of Texas
Austin

Dear Professor Lindfors,

Thank you for your 20th October letter, which I picked up on my arrival in Australia last week. By now you should have received the entry on Armah which I mailed to you from England in mid-November. Could you please briefly acknowledge safe receipt of the MS?

Sincerely,

Derek Wright

9th December 1986
Ayi Kwei Armah

Derek Wright
University College, Darwin

BIRTH: Takoradi, Ghana, October 1939.


PERIODICAL PUBLICATIONS:


Ayi Kwei Armah

Derek Wright
University College, Darwin

BIRTH: Takoradi, Ghana, October 1939.


PERIODICAL PUBLICATIONS:


widely hailed by African critics as evolving what promises to be a
major new style for African literature. Significantly, they have not
given birth to further published novels by Armah himself. Although
it is rumored that he has produced two more novels since The Healers,
he has, for whatever reasons, not seen fit to publish them and has,
in fact, published only three short pieces since 1978: a political
essay assessing the relevance of Marxism to African revolution(1984);
a reply to Per Wüstberg, president of PEN International and, in his
view of African history and literature, a latterday and diehard
practitioner of "Larsony"(1984); and the short story "Halfway to
Nirvana"(1984), a poignant satire on the lives of United Nations
conferees who wine and dine on Africa's catastrophic drought and
hunger.

Whether the forced conclusions of the histories, confidently
envisaging victorious struggle and ultimate reunification, have left
nothing to be said or the author has run himself into some kind of
formal cul-de-sac can only be a matter of speculation until the
appearance of some more major fiction. At present, one can only
guess in what direction this fascinating and most secretive of
writers will go next. Twenty years on from The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born, he remains something of an enigma.
Ayikwei Armah

Derek Wright
University College, Darwin

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writers will go next. Twenty years on from *The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born*, he remains something of an enigma.
Dear Professor Lindfors,

Although I have received no reply to my letter of mid-December, I assume that the revisions which I suggested to my DLB entry on Armah are acceptable. Please find enclosed revised opening page and pages 70 and 70(a). I include photocopies in case the publishers need copies. The enclosed photo of Armah is probably the best (available H.E.B.).

My apologies for the time taken but work is rather difficult when all your research materials are in transit between Britain & Australia.

I would appreciate some info. on the publication of the DLB Volume.

Sincerely,

Derek Wright
Dear Professor Lindfors,

I enclose one copy of the DLB Entry on Armah and, as requested, have sent another copy to Bruccoli Clark Inc. Please acknowledge safe receipt and let me know of any changes you require.

I have not been able to ascertain Armah's exact d.o.b. (i.e. the day) as none of my information sources answered my inquiries. Please insert it if you happen to know it.

I return to Australia in one week. Please use the above Darwin address for all further correspondence. I would be grateful if you could also give me a likely date of publication for the Volume on African & Caribbean Literature and let me know how I may obtain a copy.

Sincerely,

Derek Wright

Copy to Bruccoli Clark Inc.

P.S. Either of the attached photos of Armah could be used: they are available from Heinemann Educational Books Ltd.
NOTE TO THE EDITORS

For references given in the margin, the following code and editions of Armah's novels have been used:

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major new style for African literature. Significantly, they have not
given birth to further published works by Armah himself. Although
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speculation until the silence ends. One can only guess in what
direction this fascinating and most secretive of writers will go next.

Nearly twenty years on from The Beautyful Ones Are Not Yet Born, he
remains something of an enigma.
REFERENCES

Robert Fraser, The Novels of Ayi Kwei Armah: A Study in Polemical Fiction (London: Heinemann,1980);
Gerald Moore, Twelve African Writers(London: Hutchinson,1980);
Hole Soyinka, Myth, Literature and the African World(Cambridge: Cambridge University Press,1976);