

The Madness of Power and Political Assassination in Jean Paul Sartre's *the Reprieve*, Alioum Fantouré's *Tropica Circle*, André Malraux's *Man's Hope* and Ahmadou Kourouma's *Allah is not Obligated*

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ABSTRACT

This work aims at analyzing the mechanisms that are involved in political assassination in Northern countries during the period between the two world wars, after the independence and the beginning of the years of national sovereign national conferences. A question remains, that of knowing the motivations behind these political assassinations in the sphere of the State, the impacts, the end between the power and the people. To analyze this work, the fundamental preoccupation is assassination, power and politics, which constitute the theoretical and methodological approach of the study of our corpus. It consists of two French works of the 20th century and two African post-colonial novels. The analysis reveals that the two spaces are connected to power and do not accept any opposition. Moreover, assassination and power go together, through the critic of the texts of this study. The aesthetics of these authors is, indeed, relevant and arouses the consideration of linguistic and rhetorical analysis. Thus, Jean-Paul Sartre's *The Reprieve* and André Malraux's *Man's Hope* remain in the wake of post-modernism. However, Alioum Fantouré's *Tropical Circle* and Ahmadou Kourouma's *Allah is not Obligated* present Africa in perpetual disenchantment, for dictatorship is legitimated by former masters and the militants from the ruling party. We base our reasoning on the notion of the world division by Lucien Golmann to show that wars and political assassinations are social facts used in literature as reflexion materials.

KEYWORDS: *Madness, assassination, power, political, society*

INTRODUCTION

Political power in independant Africa is marked by a particular stamp throughout the world. This period is the one in which humanity has gone through social turbulence specifically related to crises caused by the two World Wars. This alarming situation serves as material for reflection on these phenomena that have negatively impacted the human life condition. For power and assassination are things that follow one another because of the lack of rationalism in the execution of public decisions. The world is increasingly scarred by the totalitarian rhetoric of world leaders and this usually ends up in humanitarian crises. Madness, power, and political assassination thus explain man's desire to dominate

the world and to reduce his fellow human beings to vulnerability. It is in this sense that Alioum Fantouré declared: "The lieutenants of the Messie koi spent their time reflecting us the advantages that the chief would give us if we were devoted for his sake." (Fantouré 1972: 83). The living conditions of the inhabitants of that country have become difficult. So the question that arises is whether the madness of power and political assassination are in the interest of society, given that these are always accompanied by violence. A look at the selected works shows that it is a collective infernal cycle. Sartre's *The Reprieve* (1945) shows that the French Republic is mobilizing

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against the evil imposed by German Nazism in order to conquer the world.

André Malraux evokes as much as Sartre, but in a legendary form, in *Man's Hope* (1937) the civil war violence in Spanish (1937-1939). It is a writing that evokes the human butchery between the Republicans and Francoists. Malraux's narrative is more autobiographical than literary fiction, and the engineer Magnin is the one who embodies Malraux's shadow more than the Italian Marcelino and his *Compatriot Scali*.

In his *Allah is not obliged*, known for the cruelty of outlaws who have divided Liberia and Sierra Leone and Kourouma, Ahmadou Kourouma said, "No Taylor no peace is beginning to be a reality in this year 1993." (Kourouma, 2000: 69). The problem is that madness and authoritarian power have a close relationship because they have a common goal, which is therefore the conservatism of the supreme magistracy. Our approach is an analysis of collective misfortune in the twentieth century, in which discourse abolishes man through implicit or explicit negations. The study is based on four corpora of analysis consisting of two French novels of the twentieth century and two novels of the African independence cycle, even if the novel *Allah is not obliged* remains a testimony to the years of sovereign national conference. Following Lucien Goldmann, it will be a question of articulating social places and texts from France and Africa. These texts, with their diverse origins, respond to the heterogeneous approach of the world view or of the collective consciousness capable of making an ideology show through.

1. Madness of power and political assassination

Africa's post-independence period was one in which people saw many assassinations related to the quest for power or the totalitarian preservation of it. Through texts from French and African novels, we will review the reasons for this political tragedy.

Jean Paul Sartre's *The Reprieve* is a historical work of the twentieth century that bears witness to the cycle of events that date back to the Spanish civil war and the two World Wars. This evil forced the French to commit themselves to saving the homeland from foreign threat. Let's take the example of the following characters: Milan, Horace Wilson, Anna... who were all convinced that the only favorable way to get rid of this national evil is a collective mobilization. On both sides, the people were in utter desolation. This is why Sartre asserts, "In Laon, in a small dark room, a hateful and scandalized little girl refused the war with all her might, blindly and obstinately" (Sartre, 1945: 31). This allegory of war symbolizes the human

condition in general and communism in particular that reigned in French society. *The Reprieve* has an aspect related to absurdity because the Nazism that annexed France continues to apologize for Hitler's policies. This is illustrated through the character Odette, who lost her father in 1940 but whose suffering does not concern those around her, to the great displeasure of human nature: "When her father was killed in 1918, she was told it was very good, we have to be courageous, she had very quickly learned to wear her mourning veils with sadness" (Sartre, 1945: 34). The aforementioned statement really demonstrates that there is a devaluation of collective consciousness. It also shows that the world is losing its cardinal values caused by social injustice. This is also the opinion of the character Daladier, "I have already declared: the French government has made commitments to Czechoslovakia. If the Prague government continues its rejection of German proposals, (...) the French government will be obliged to fulfil its commitments" (Sartre, 1945:323). Sartre expresses here the difficulty that humanity experienced in the twentieth century. This period is marked by cold tensions, ready to degenerate into confrontation at any moment.

It is in this same line of conduct that the members of workers' club, made up mostly of idealists animated by progressive ideas, contest the legitimacy of the power of Baré Kule, known as the Koic Messiah. Among these characters, we can mention Doctor Maleké, Mellé Houré, Salimatou. These protagonists are seen as hostile opponents of the government. The colonizers, at the time of their departure, entrusted the management of power to Baré Koulé, but his arrival on the throne led the country into a political myth. Thus, Ossitot Midiohouan, in his book entitled *L'utopie Négative, d'Alioum Fantouré* (1984) wrote: "*The Tropical Circle* (...), more than a novel, is a fictional journal on the political and social situation in present-day Guinea (Midiohouan, 1984: 84). Following the opinion of this critic, we can state bluntly that *The Tropical Circle* is situated in the context of the independence of Guinea Conakry which is a federation of the African Democratic Rally. All these measures developed have a considerable effect on the governed in the sense that the supporters of independence make decisions based on injustice. The literary analyst Lilyan Kesteloot also said, "The southern *Marigots* refer to Sékou Touré's Guinea before" (Kesteloot, 1984). If the author of *The Negro-African Anthology* spoke in this way, it justifies the opinion that the hero of Fantouré's work appears with certain traits of Sékou Touré, and the events of his novel are also similar to the contemporary history of Guinea which was therefore

a section of the African Democratic Rally. Indeed, if the characters portrayed and the geographical setting remain imaginary, they are not devoid of verisimilitude (Midiohouan, 1984). In addition, *The Tropical Circle* is a committed novel written with a neutral style and the author makes a speech that conveys the dismay of the people. According to him, all those whose opinion was contrary to the power in place should disappear under the skies of the southern Marigots: "The national kois of the central committee, gathered at Port Océane under the chairmanship of the venerable Messiah koi, voted to humanity the death of called Halouma and his thirty accomplices (Fantouré, 1972: 284). This reflects the image of the real Africa that is going through an unprecedented crisis, but if we look at the events that have followed one another in the work, we will say that it is more of a journalistic report because of the realism that emerges before the reader's eyes. The religious leaders, namely the Archbishop of the Cathedral of Saint Tolerance of the Southern Marigots, Jean Jacques Na and the Imam of Port Océane all admired the humanism and pity in favor of the population: "In the name of the lenient and merciful God, I put my trust in the Lord of men, King of men. (Fantouré, 1972: 311). The homily of this religious leader remains a topical African event in that religious people often intervene in the crises that countries are going through in order to propose a roadmap. What everyone has hoped for about the future of this independence is happiness ; Unfortunately, we can see that it is rather a cycle of suffering :I who was expecting a change, a miracle with the coming of independence, had discovered an abyss of uncertainty as distressing as the thought of suddenly entering the grave" (Fantouré, 1972: 159). When Dr. Maleké was arrested by the ruling party militias, even his national identity card was not taken into account. He was asked for the card of the Social Party of Hope of Baré Koulé. In view of this suffering, it is easier to understand the vocative, significant and illustrative title of the work. *The Tropical Circle* refers to the middle of the day when the sun is at its zenith and during which excessive heat thus designates the situation that this State is going through. This is the description that was done by Fallow Mbow (2011) in *Paratext et target of the roman enunciation in african literature* . The expression "The Tropical Circle" also refers to the idea of heat, the moment when the sun is at its zenith." (Fallow, 2011:56). This novel is therefore a cry of disenchantment. The president was finally released by the military such as Colonel Fof, General Baba Sanessi, and Lieutenant Beau Temps etc., who revolted against him. Colonel Fof declared, "Mr Baré

Koulé, in the sake of his right to life, the population of the Southern Marigots dismisses you from your title of head of State" (Fantouré, 1972: 309). It can be seen here that the position of the soldiers is to defend the population against the bloody regime of this ruler.

Through Man's Hope (1937), the golden rule of this talented author was to show the rift between the Republicans and the Spanish Francoists. Behind this bloody political war between the two sides lies the image of an apocalyptic world with the arrival of foreign mercenaries. They were incorporated into this murderous conflict alongside the authorities in Madrid against the fascist forces that controlled the Barcelona area under the aegis of General Godet. They fought fiercely and relentlessly to defend their ideology of communist revolution. Furthermore; characters like Captain Hernandez, Aranda, Ramos, to cite a few, are the republican militants who maintain close relations with the power in Madrid as well as the mercenaries from elsewhere whose sole objective was to neutralize any Francoist force: "We have not come here for any revolutionary adventure without a socialist or communist party committed to defending Spain, we will fight in the most effective conditions possible. Long live the freedom of the Spanish people" (Malraux, 1937: 336). Through the idea evoked by the writer, we understand that it is a question of political radicalism. This idea is represented by the character Vallodo, a bourgeois who wants the renaissance of Spain and admires brotherhood in order to build a prosperous country. In *Le Dictionnaire de la littérature Française* (1984), Jean-Pierre Beaumarchais describes this work in these terms: "Bleding fiction, history, aesthetics and autobiographical, reviewing the echo of the convulsions of the century. The Spanish Civil War, the two world wars, the resistance (...) enliven by a fabulous imagination of great lyrical power. (Beaumarchais et al 1984:1477). Communism or Malrucian socialism is taking shape under the image of international solidarity mend the republicans. This is the case of the Mexican mercenary Enrique and the Russian Karlitch who have all mobilized to save humanity. For them, the aim of the struggle was to favour the return of social order, the re-establishment of humanism and the formation of a national army at the service of the entire nation of Spain. Enrique, for example, was a commissar of the 5th Regiment who had fought in five civil wars before joining this conflict. Both the author and his characters worked sake of reason. The case of the character Attingnies is a perfect illustration; son of a fascist, he refuses to obey his father's policies in order to serve justice and bring humanity and live in a world based on ethics: "Friendship is not being with your friends when they

are right. It's about being with them even when they're wrong. (Malraux, 1937: 189). Indeed, this work gives man the courage to live a new reality, because the title *Man's Hope* means optimism and even renaissance of Spain.

In *Allah Is Not Obligated*, the blacks were fed up with that injustice of *the Cargos*. This is why Samuel Doe of the Krahn ethnic group and his ally Thomas Quionkpa of Gyo tribe revolted against the injustice of these mulattoes and succeeded in overthrowing the regime. The Krahn and Gyo ethnic groups are allies because they share the same political aspiration against *the Cargos*. Isn't there such an alliance currently in Africa? If we refer to the case of Sierra Leone, this west african country was a former British colony. When it gained independence on April 27, 1961, the settlers still held the administration, they marginalized the blacks. The first president of this country, Milton Margai, was a scholar, with a bachelor's degree in laws, married to a white woman, he showed his total rupture in the black race. When he lost his life, his brother Albert Margai succeeded him as head of the country with the intention of imposing the hegemony of their ethnic group over other communities with increasing corruption. Through a coup d'Etat, Juxton Smith came to power and tried to put the country back on the path of progress; unfortunately he was knocked down by Siakas Stevens.

This novel is structured in six parts and each of them evokes the tragedy and anguish of fratricidal conflict. Kouroum's sociological vision is felt through the names of African leaders such as Gaddafi, Sani Abacha, Blaise Campaoré. These African personalities have contributed to the murderous political impunity of their countries. From Gaddafi to Campaorée, via Houphouët-Boigny of the Ivory Coast, these heads of State gave their support to Charles Taylor in order to conquer power in Monrovia. The author shows that in Africa, those close to power benefit from its immunity. This is the case in Liberia where Samuel came to power with the help of his ally Thomas Quionkpa and elevated the latter's twin sister to the rank of general in the Liberian National Army.

2. Political Power and Writers' Commitments

René Descartes in *Metaphysical Meditation* (1641) justified that literature expresses our daily lives. The text contains the directory of any significant event. Not only does literature strive to denounce the vices of our societies, but it also commits itself to the defense of justice. Like him, Goldmann's literature has a social dimension because it is the mirror of society. The ideology of this critic is similar to that of

Jean Paul Sartre, for whom the writers are in a situation. *The Reprieve* illustrates the framework of commitment that Sartre demonstrated during his lifetime. Sartre began his narrative with this message: " Friday, September 23, sixteen thirty in Berlin, fifteen thirty in London. (Sartre, 1945:5). It is possible to notice that Stalinist communism is admired by this author. The meeting between Mr. Hannequin and Mrs. Calvé consisted of mobilizing the French to win the battle. And the author specified in these terms, "the demands of the Germans are inadmissible (...) if we abandon the Czechs, tomorrow Hitler will ask us for Alsace" (Sartre, 1945, 239). Whether in France, Czechoslovakia or England, everyone agrees to fight for human reason in order to impose social tranquility in the world. For the Austrian literary analyst Lucien Goldmann, literature is a translation of the world's vision, and it cannot be a faithful copy of reality but a representation of all ideals, aspirations and conceptions.

The echo of the commitment of these twentieth-century writers is also felt in their literary productions. The ideology embodied by Prince Johnson in *Allah is not Obligated* is the most common nowadays where we see that the alliance between politicians does not last long. The officer, Charles Taylor made a radical split with the Liberian National Patriotic Movement. It was his elements who attacked Monrovia and assassinated dictatorial President Samuel Doe. For Christiane Ndiaye, Kourouma's *Allah is not Obligated* is written in answer to the request of the Djibouti students. As he was not familiar with the political history of this country in the horn of Africa, he preferred to focus on the case of the civil war in West Africa to send an educational message. The thesis developed by researcher Christine Ndiaye confirms the writer's political commitment to the struggle of his time. Their struggle is beyond Pan-Africanism, it is a humanism.

In Malraux's discursive description, we notice that Hitler's war against France and other European countries made Odette an orphan. Horace Wilson wept because of the misfortunes that had traumatized the French Republic. The term "reprieve" in this context refers to humanity deprived of all its freedom. Malraux's *Man's Hope* evokes a tragic event in Spain in the twentieth century. Mercenaries who came from all over the world to defend the cause of the Republicans sacrificed themselves. Marcelino was killed at the front in the sake communist revolution. This Italian paid with his life on Spanish soil because he protested against fascism ; while the victim, like other foreign mercenaries, such as Colonel Magnin, Mercery, and Manuel, collaborated with the

International Communist Brigade. There's also Scali who became a volunteer aviator while he's a historian. This commitment is in line with Georges Lukas' *Theory of the novel*, which shares the conception of the conformism of literature to society. According to him, a literary work is not born ex nihilo. Because it is involved in the socio-historical context. In the same postulate, Ahmadou Kourouma in *Waiting for the Wild Beasts to Vote* describes the tyranny of the blood power of Emperor Bossouma at the head of the Republic of the Two Rivers. The latter seized the plantation of the detained former ministers. As in all Africa at that time, Emperor Bossouma had his own prisoners, whose guilt records hardly appear in the country's courts. "It was understandable that the emperor trembled with anger at the sight of the communist plotters who, jealous of his success, of his liberal exploitations, sabotaged his work" (Kourouma, 1998:223) When we listen to Kouroumi's opinion, the dictatorship imposed by Bossouma in the land of the two rivers appears to be a struggle against neo-colonialism. Secondly, *Allah is not Obligated* had an influence beyond the French-speaking world. William René in an article entitled *The Dirty Little War of Liberia* (2002)4/No 88 in *Politique Africaine* demonstrated the intentions of Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy (LURD). This rebellion group has vigorously refused to recognize Charles Taylor as president. This rebellion shook the power of this warlord for several years. In February 2000, a coalition of various groups under the umbrella of ULIMO (United Movement for Democracy in Liberia) was fighting Taylor's faction. By 1999, the rebellion had become a single organization. It controlled the north-western territories of the country. Thus, in July 2001, they launched 25km offensives from Monrovia, the capital. This rebellion was present in the country for some time, but it had no political program other than the overthrow of Charles Taylor. However, we can clearly say that the pressure exerted by the latter pushed Charles Taylor to resign from the presidency of the republic. On August 11, 2003, Taylor handed over power to his vice Moses Blach, who became the 22nd president of post-conflict Liberia. The former head of State took a flight in an official plane of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. The President of Mozambique, Joachim Christiane, and the President of Ghana, John Kuofor, were also in the plane to accompany him into exile in Abuja, Nigeria. Sierra Leonean writer Ishamael Beah said the rebels burned down villages and attacked the population unexpectedly. They killed civilians regardless of their social background.

Allah is not Obligated tells the story of the civil war in West Africa. This novel perfectly illustrates Lucien Goldmann's approach by reiterating that it is not possible to talk about literature outside of society. After World War II in 1945, the human mind was much more inclined towards peace. Men of letters, journalists, and artists were worried about human destiny. The stereotype of Alioum Fantouré converges in this historical reality. Jean Claude Azoumaye, through his book *Creation and Creativity in Francophone Literature, Volume 2* (2000) defended this approach in this term: "Known historical events usually provide the material for literary creation. Thus, in African literature, Aimé Césaire has brought to a high degree of theatrical representation, (...) and that of Lumumba in *A Season in the Congo*" (Azoumaye, 2000: 4) The analyses of this Central african critic are in line with Lilyan Kesteloot as well as that of Mongo Béti.

3. The politician and his quest for permanent hegemony

In Jean Paul Sartre's *The Reprieve*, the German warlord started war on Europe in September 1939. This is related to its policy of domination and to make the German race the first race, and this declared war is proof of an apocalyptic or even Machiavellian vision. France, like other Western countries, is not spared. This is how french citizens advocated national mobilization in order to save human values. The German lord's policy was decried all over the world. The alliance between the countries was born in this geopolitical and strategic context. The efforts made by both sides are situated in this aspect of resistance. Moreover, we find the same philosophical thought of Sartre in *Huis Clos*. Sartre's characters are imprisoned for their political activism and others are executed for their opinion. Garcin the revolutionary was executed for treason while Hoederer, the hero of *Dirty Hands* (1948), was killed for the political lie. In Africa, the literature of that time testifies to the image of the new society. The years following independence were marked by a marked social change. In *Man's Hope*, Marcelino and the journalist Scali came from Italy to bring their determination to the government and yet their country supported Franco's rebellion against the Republican government. It is the same case of Manuel and Magnin who come from France while their country kept neutrality during this 4-year war. Whether Magnin or Marcelino, they chose the legitimacy in defending the central power as guarantee of constitutional order. The policy advocated by the latter is normal and responsible. It is therefore not acceptable to support a rebellion against a power legitimately elected by the people. Malraux's ideal is also part of the logic of the struggle against

political obscurantism, which aims to seize power through anti-constitutional means. For example, the character Scali is one of the masterminds who believes that the politics of the browns is a blunder. Charles Taylor, Foday Sankoh, Prince Johnson are all characters who illustrate the ardour of power. Gaddafi and Idriss Deby Itno died in difficult circumstances and their assassinations still remain a mystery to common citizens. One or the other has ruled his country for more than three decades with opaque leadership contrary to human nature.

4. Africa and its destiny in the face of neo-colonialism.

The neo-colonialism refers to the new form of the West domination system over its former colonies despite the winds of independence in the 1960s. Obviously, this so-called liberation created more problems for Africa because the settler devised a strategy to maintain his presence in the formerly occupied territories. Faced with this situation, the blacks have not been able to adopt a posture that allows them to truly distinguish himself from the old masters. African leaders must find an agreement model with the north countries to ensure the development of their continent. Sometimes we are tempted to believe that neo-colonialism is worse than colonization. Jean Claude Azoumaye and others in their book *Batouala de René Maran monument* (2021) analysed the preface to René Maran's work by revealing western imperialism in French Equatorial Africa. While *Allah is not Obligated* marks the beginning of this commitment or this awareness of an Africa that is standing up to reconquer the dignity of the blacks and make the voice of Africa heard throughout the world. The divisions created on both sides continue to fuel the exploitation of Africa. Wars and dynastic successions are sometimes the prerogative of the motherland. Diversity becomes a source of identity withdrawal. The multitude of communities is becoming dangerous for Africa, thus preventing its social flourishing. In Liberia, the conspiracy that brought Samuel Doe to power is not only linked to the pride of *the Cargos*, but also to the identity factor. All these considerations are time bombs for the black continent, because each social group pulls back the curtain on its side and undermines the assimilation of patriotism. In Sierra Leone especially, in less than a decade, the country has experienced more than six coups d'Etat. After the death of Milton Margai the father of independence, his successor Big Albert was succeeded by his brother who inherited his ideas. Colonel Juxton Smith's putch in 1967 was aimed at putting an end to the dynastic succession, but his power lasted less than a year, as in 1968 Siaka Stevens of the Timba ethnic group

overthrew him and created the single party. A mess was set in by people of his ethnic group and this creates social frustration. The arrival of General Saïdou Joseph Monoh did not solve much and he was then chased away by Captain Valentine Strasser and the situation remained the same. Today, one of the reasons for the overthrow of democratically elected regimes stems from ethnic factors.

The authoritarianism of African leaders can also be explained by neo-colonialism. Indeed, the nations that came from the north to colonize Africa, during their departure, placed Africa under their tutelage through bilateral conventions by designating new masters as they pleased. They have accepted this policy of the outstretched hands of the West, believing that this is the framework for cooperation and real brotherhood. They themselves have become slaves in their own territories because they have hands tied behind. They take the place of the West's servants following the example of Baré Koulé and Alioum Fantouré considered the "backwaiters" of the south as a place where the opposition is anarchically killed. General Samuel Doe engaged in a witch hunt of his opponents. For him and for Charles Taylor, power is at the end of the barrel. As a result, Africa is engaged in a vicious cycle of bad governance. Fantouré's *Tropical Circle* remains a cry against neocolonialism and tyrannic power. These African novels correspond to the writings of André Malraux in their epic character of human decay and violence. The *Tropical Circle*, and *Allah is not Obligated* present a universe of rigidity and turbulence. Francism is the image of african cardinal values decay.

Conclusion

The madness of power logically breeds political assassinations. The advent of democracy in Africa has not been enough to calm the ardour of politicians in the face of the immoderate taste for power. Those who are on power would like to die there. Those who aspire to it engage in rebellions that destroy social harmony. Through french and african works of the twentieth century, a socio-critical analysis has been built upon Lucien Goldman's postulate, according which literature remains a reflection of society. Since war and assassinations are by far social facts, novelists have logically seized on them in order to be able to unfold through fiction the effects of what can be called today the new gangrene of african politics. Since the World Wars, Europe has been experiencing its madness of power in its own way. Africa, despite its independence, continues to be subject to external influences, sometimes leading to dramatic assassinations linked to the conquest of power. Sartre, Malraux, Fantouré and Kourouma all decried, each

through a particular plot, the horrors of world wars, civil wars and putsch. These tragedies constitute nowadays an appeal for political conscience, especially in countries African. Just as there has been a question of solidarity around the common will to defeat Hitler in his time, Africa must defend its independence and its integrity in the face of distant evils that lead to unconstitutional changes of power.

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