

Review Article

The Language of Negritude in “The Suns of Independence” by Ahmadou Kourouma

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Abstract: “The Suns of Independence” by Ahmadou Kourouma is considered as one of the prominent novels in African postcolonial literature. Adopting the style of a traditional storyteller, Kourouma creates a new method of expression mixing French language with his native tongue Malinke. For him, this innovative form of writing served as a powerful weapon to mobilize his people for the liberation from colonialism. With this intention, Kourouma aimed to find a means to free his people from the linguistic hegemony of the colonial language. While showing the equality and mutual linguistic dignity of both tongues, Kourouma had become a great defender of African civilization. Our aim, in this paper, is to investigate how Kourouma applied new language style to convey the Malinke experience literally. From Kourouma’s perspective, distorting the French language is an ultimate way to express his ideas and feelings and claim his identity as an African with African civilization.

Keywords: Ahmadou Kourouma, Malinke, stylistics, linguistics hegemony, re-appropriation, negritude, post-colonialism, “The Suns of Independence”, Black identity, Africa.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The work by Kourouma (1995) *The Suns of Independence* has been an undisputable masterpiece of African postcolonial literature in terms of stylistics and themes. While experimenting his stylistics, Kourouma creates a new approach of expression, writing in French language mixed with Malinke, his mother tongue. Thus, he audaciously developed an innovative, efficient and realistic technique to convey his message to the wide audience. It is not a coincidence but a deliberate action that Kourouma opted for this unusual style.

In fact, while struggling to remain faithful to his culture, the author has put his effort concurrently to liberate himself from the shackles of the colonial language which had handicapped him to transmit the thought of Malinke society with precision and clarity. As a result, Kourouma spontaneously creates a controversy in the French “Establishment” and also among various African authors, who immediately judged Kourouma for misrepresenting or changing the French language.

When reading Kourouma’s work, the readers would consciously realize that the negritude is one of the main themes of his work. This literary and avant-gardist phenomenon originates from a movement that stemmed from the consequences of both colonization and post-colonization in Africa (Arnold, 1990). Kourouma, like the majority of his contemporary African writers, concretely participates in this movement through creating *The Suns of Independence* by denouncing the ill-effects of colonization and post-colonization, but in particular by prioritizing the African culture through the Malinke experience.

As the novel unfolds in the later part, the readers would understand and realize that the author’s intention was hardly misrepresenting the French language, but rather he determined to enrich it with a new style with realities which could not be faithfully transmitted or directly translated into French. Therefore, Kourouma, while showing his strong attachment to his mother tongue and culture, is offering himself to be a great defender of African cultural legacy. Eventually, he adopts the style of a traditional storyteller to express

not only his message, but notably the vital themes of negritude particularly the restoration of black people's identity, the denunciation of cultural alienation, the consequences of post-colonization in Africa and finally the exploitation and enslavement of oppressed African masses' consciousness.

The objective of this research is to analyze the stylistics of the language used by Kourouma in his work to convey the Malinke experience literally. On the other hand, the theme of negritude which appears in the form of denouncing African independences defects along with their consequences in terms of misfortune focusing on cultural alienation and the exploitation of African masses as direct consequences of post-colonization would also be the focus of analysis and examination in this research.

2. The Style of Ahmadou Kourouma

According to general perception, Kourouma's style is a surprising and disconcerting combination. These elements coexist. This is due to his adoption of crafting his mother tongue Malinke into French to express African culture. Therefore, his creation has initiated the commencement of a new writing era and simultaneously promulgated the black writer's liberty and creativity that was confined in the fetters of the French language. This subversion was generated from the awakening of consciousness among Africans about the critical role of language as a form of cultural manifestation and from the linguistic liberation in the context of colonial linguistic hegemony which had exerted long-term impacts on the translation and promulgation of Africa and African historical truth. However, Kourouma and his compatriot African writers were aware that the oral tradition of African language had been dominantly prevailing in African society. Thus, it is reasonable, effective and practical to convey African popular imagination, history, family ancestry and tradition through a new form of language. During the colonial period, the history of Africa was mostly falsified and even deprived of any existence by the bulk of colonial government with absolute dominance and power. Eventually, for Pan-Africanist writers such as Kourouma, Cheikh Anta Diop, Léopold Sedar Senghor, Léon Gontran Damas and Aimé Césaire, to name a few, it was necessary for them to find an efficient and pragmatic means to restore the historical truth of Africa through the colonial language while distorting it. Besides, another reason for Kourouma to create *The Suns of Independence* with a new form of writing is to demonstrate to his audience that it was difficult for an African writer to express himself in a foreign language when he translated Malinke into French. Kourouma defends his language rights and solemnly believes that some African expressions or realities can only be expressed in their own local languages but not through the colonizer's.

For this reason, the translation of the term "Nyamokode" to "Bastard from bastardy!" can be explained by the necessity of faithfully expressing the reality of the post-colonial independence and consequences in Fama's life. Moreover, Kourouma was not solely adopted this form of writing African novels, another great writer Achebe also asserts in his essay entitled *The African Writer and the English Language* with the similar idea:

"I feel that the English language will be able to carry the weight of my African experience. But it will have to be a new English, still in full communion with its ancestral home but altered to suit its new African surroundings" (1975, p. 62).

By analyzing this interpretation of Kourouma or Achebe's writings, these creative writers were experimenting the re-appropriation of the language and personalize the language to adapt the reality in a new context. This phenomenon is applicable. In another words, the African writers determined to reinvent it so that it can conform to the new environment. With this purpose, the reinvention process is henceforth used as an instrument to make oneself known, recognized, better restore the historical truth and particularly reestablish the Black People's image and their eminent dignity globally. These African authors adopt "This new French, this new English" to create their work and show the readers about African popular imagination, history, family ancestry, and tradition and more importantly to stage the African experience in literature and in culture.

This leads to an important question. Why is it necessary to translate the African language faithfully into colonial language? Concerning this question, Gyasi in his essay entitled *The African Writer as Translator* may enlighten us with his description:

"If we understand African literature as an instrument of cultural production, then we must see translation as a crucial dimension of this literature, especially the part that finds expression in European languages" (2003, p. 144).

For Gyasi, literature being the instrument of cultural production couldn't be altered or misrepresented and certainly it should not be a simple conclusion such as the adaptation of the colonizer's language. According to Gyasi, a faithful translation of African culture and thoughts is an important stage, which is even essential for the survival and good mastery of its literature. The intertextual translations should not be different. Regarding this concept, Lopes, in his novel *The Laughing Cry* declares:

"I wanted to find the tone used by the people when they talk about their daily life in today's Africa, the aim is giving readers a culture ..." (1982, p. 22).

From Lopes' perception, the primal purpose of translation is not misrepresenting the French language, but rather presenting to readers a cultural meaning recognizing what constitutes "others" essence, accepting their daily life and their culture.

On the other hand, T. Zezeze Kalonji in his analysis of *The Laughing Cry*, clearly indicates that Henri Lopes' intention of using the word "Litassa" is a crucial demonstration of the reason to introduce words or expressions with cultural connotations in different African works. Kalonji analyzed the significance of the expression 'Boka litassa doukoumê', his comments stated that:

"What we can translate into French by: "receive ancestors' power". That is to say: the power of ancestors who commanded the Djabotama. In reality, the word litassa is more loaded in terms of meaning than the French word, power. It is at the same time the commandment power, intelligence to dominate others and both the physical and extraterrestrial strength" (1982, p. 49).

Therefore, Kalonji in the above excerpt, provides readers an opportunity to understand the attributes going with the word "litassa" and also introduce them the African culture simultaneously.

"He who received the litassa directly communicates with ancestors. He will be able to read in all the consciousness as in borehole water. No woman will resist to him. He will be able to walk on water and fly over mountains. He will be snakebite-resistant. Bullets will turn off course when getting near of his chest..." (1982, p. 47).

Both Kalondji and Lopes' perception or vision reinforces the significant character of some words which cannot be translated into the colonial language. If African authors submitted to such an exercise, this word or expression would lose all its original meaning and would thus be detrimental to the entire culture. Hence, in order not to be in contradiction with their own culture, Kourouma and his fellow writers commit themselves to stay faithful to the word or expression gist to preserve their culture to such an extent that they distort or misrepresent the colonial language. Kourouma explained it in his interview with Moncef Badday:

"I adapt the language to the African narrative rhythm [...]. This book is addressing Africans. I conceived it in Malinke and wrote it in French with a dose of liberty I consider natural with the classical language [...]. What did I do? I simply freed my temperament by distorting a classical language that is too rigid so that my thought can take any direction. I therefore translated Malinke

into French, breaking French to find back and restore the African rhythm" (1970, p. 38).

With the reinvention of Kourouma, Kwaku, Lopes and Kalonji's novels, it is clear that these authors didn't find it necessary to translate the African realities in any language because the latter could not in any way entirely recreate the African rhythm to represent African culture. It would then be more interesting to keep these words and expressions as such avoiding the alteration of the conveyed realities, Kwaku revealed the insight with the following expressions:

"To convey new African realities through the development of an authentic African discourse" (2003, p. 24).

Furthermore, through the careful examination of Kourouma's text in *The Suns of Independence*, almost all African oral traditional cultures, including Malinke culture, which he had described, had a certain dexterity and it was worthy to demonstrate and narrate to readers from a griot's description, i.e., from a cultural guardian's perspective. For instance, in the opening of his novel, focusing on the character Ibrahima Kone's death, Kourouma uncovers the real conception of death in Malinke society to readers. He constructs his narration by borrowing a different form of translation taken directly from Malinke vocabularies to express a reality of the local Malinke culture as shown in the following quotation:

"One week had passed since Ibrahima Kone, of the Malinke race, had met his end in the capital city, or to put it in Malinke: he'd been defeated by a mere cold...As with every Malinke, once life had fled his remains, his shade rose, spat, dressed and set out on the long journey to its distant native land, there to impart the sad news. On lonely paths far out in the bush, two Malinke peddlers met the shade and recognised it. It was walking fast and did not greet them. They knew straight away what had happened: 'Ibrahima has finished,' they said to themselves" (1981, p. 3).

From the above quotation, it is certain that the term "finished" meant he died which is a literal translation from Malinke vocabulary "abanta or abana". The literal translation of the Malinke word "abanta" in French would be "he is finished, or his life has ended". However, in formal language, this simply means "he died" and the story ends. But actually, it is a different case for Malinke society. It shows a different subtlety of death perception. For Malinke people and also many African people and societies, the dead do not disappear like dust but they continue to live. Thus, the readers would visualize the image of a dead man "rose, spat, dressed and set out on the long journey" (1981, p.3).

Kourouma reveals to the readers an important aspect of the Malinke culture. The Malinke people believe that when a Malinke dies in a foreign country, he gets up and goes back home. Actually, this old traditional wisdom is not only recognized by Malinke community, but it is prevailing in the bulk of African ethnic groups. Moreover, Birago Diop, a Senegalese writer talks about this phenomenon in his famous poem entitled *Those Who Are Dead Are Never Gone* in particularly very touching terms:

“Those who are dead are never gone: they are crouching in the darkness that lights up and in the darkness that deepens, the dead are not underground” (1960, p. 173).

Furthermore, for instance in Senegal, in Wolof, Fulani, Bambara, Manjack, Joola, Bainounck communities, they believe genuinely that the dead would endure a long journey heading back home or to their villages to be buried there. And even at some nights, they would return home to eat their preferred meals. This is also noticeable in Kourouma’s work where he describes the long travel made by Ibrahima Kone to go back to his hometown, and reunite with his ancestors and then “to bring joy to a mother through reincarnation as a Malinke infant” (1981, p.4)

Therefore, as readers engage in the novels, they instantly involve in an experience that could be considered as a participation in a form of restoration of African culture. While explaining the procedures in detail or presenting the meaning of obsequies in the Malinke community, the author provides readers a cultural education. He fulfills his missionary duty by informing and teaching readers the Malinke culture or even beyond African culture. Besides, more cultural lessons can also be found through proverbs, myths, songs, rituals and tales in Kourouma’s work.

In the aspect of African culture such as proverbs, Kourouma projects more undiscovered traditional African cultural wisdom. His novel is written under the vision and portrayal of the African world in general and Malinke community in particular. Readers could explore many proverbs found in *The Suns of Independence*, for instance: “If you pretend, out of discretion, not to notice a shameless man’s fart, he’ll just assume that you’ve no sense of smell” (1981, p.6) , the proverb advises us to react accordingly to an injustice because otherwise we would be mistreated or underestimated ; “...however toothless the hyena, its mouth will never make a path for the goat to stroll through” (1981, p.9), it tells us that never despise or bully someone who looks vulnerable and weak because s/he might appeared otherwise ; “...rushing through things at a gallop, we risk burying someone alive, a hasty tongue can ensnare us in troubles we cannot escape by flight” (1981, p.12), it suggests us to think

carefully before we leap; “a single foot cannot tread out a path; and a single finger cannot lift the smallest pebbles” (1981, p.121), the proverb educates us the importance of unity and cooperation.

This implement of proverbs is in the framework of culture legacy translation, but it is an ultimate way of expressing it so as to convey Malinke folk wisdom. The supportive comments could be found in Irele’s essay *Narrative, History, and the African Imagination*:

“...The major forms of the African oral tradition are employed in modern African writing to project structures of the collective mind that serve as explicative narratives of the world. Henri Lopes and Ahmadou are the grand masters in the transportation and re-creation of this verbal art form into the creative translation of Francophone African literature” (1993, p. 134).

Hence, the language of proverbs defines a collective ownership of culture, through Abiola Irele’s description, there is an accessible channel to understand the reasons driving Kourouma to re-appropriate French to attain his literal intention. As a writer with a sense of cultural duty, his primal concern is translating or more accurately restoring faithfully his people’s collective thought through his novel. His conspicuous way of breaking, altering, and slating French language provokes criticisms, such accusations from Gassama which are found in Madeleine Borgomano’s book *Ahmadou Kourouma: The “Warrior” Griot* where he declares in the following terms:

“The language of Ahmadou Kourouma, at the first reading of the novel, I was shocked by incorrectness, pomposity due to the narrative deliberate scatological character. The incoherence of images...” (1998, p. 38).

It is an expected reaction for a devoted follower of the French language like Gassama who would be shocked by these unusual translations which was considered verging on barbarism as in Kourouma’s novel with the expressions including “...sit your arse down and shut your mouth! (1981, p.8); “...illiterate as a donkey’s tail” (1981, p.14); “A bastard, a real one, a shameless forest brat whose mother surely never knew a scrap of loincloth nor the married state, dared to stand there on his own two testicles and say ...” (1981, p. 69); “...he was rude enough to sniff like a ram at his mother buttocks, and as arrogant as the penis of a circumcised donkey” (1981, p. 112); “...now open your rabbit ears and shut your hyena’s-arse mouths” (1981, p.116); “Bastard colonial era, bastard Independence” (1981, p.129)”. These coarse languages or rather vulgar expressions are necessary to reflect the absurd and preposterous reality faced by Malinke people and to criticize the unreasonable and unpleasant situations

during that particular time and also to interpret the hidden emotional state of mind of Malinke and African community in general.

But eventually, Gassama would understand that Kourouma's purpose is not being faithful to the French language but rather scrupulously respecting the transmission of Malinke culture which he and other African authors are the transporting guardians through their novels. However, Gassama's concerns deserve a particular attention. As a matter of fact, the use of typical African realities, such as characters' name, the geographical names or the reinvented languages found previously in Kourouma's novel, could possibly be an obstacle for the full comprehension of the novel.

But Kourouma answered them in these terms: "The Suns of Independence were thought in Malinke and translated into French" (1995, p. 38).

In Madeleine Borgomano's (1998) work, Ahmadou Kourouma: *Le Guerrier Griot* perfectly summarizes the style of *The Suns of Independence* where Kourouma himself repeatedly stressed that his work is an "adaptation", since there were numerous narrations showing Fama's thoughts and monologues in Malinke. This is Kourouma's approach to embrace the reasoning of Malinke thoughts while grasping people's daily experience.

To conclude, by translating Fama's thoughts and words in *The Suns of Independence*, Kourouma's intention and notion to educate and preserve Malinke culture deserved serious respect and attention, particularly the writer's contribution, his faithfulness towards the translation in Malinke terms and experience.

3. The Theme of Negritude

When opting to defend African culture and wisdom in his novel, while denouncing at the same time the ill effects of post-colonization, *The Suns of Independence* deals with the theme of Negritude in its entire dimension. But before tackling the topic concerning the analysis of Kourouma's text which exhibits the key characters related to Negritude, it should be a foremost procedure to discover the Negritude according to its precursors in order to bring much clarity and dynamism to this work.

Defined by different writers in different times, Negritude is a literary and ideological movement that was initiated and led by French-speaking black intellectuals, writers and politicians in Africa. Its founding fathers came from three different French colonies in particular Africa, the Caribbean, and West-Indies. Leopold Sédar Senghor from Senegal, Aimé Césaire from the West-Indies, and Léon Gontran Damas from Guyana, they came across each other in Paris

where they were active and living during the period of 1930's. Even though they developed different opinions and considerations about the vision and experience they had of Negritude due to their own historical experience, the movement can be regarded as a counter reaction to colonization and neo-colonization.

Negritude is also the symbol and representation of the denunciation of inhumanity of European colonialism, the rejection of the colonial domination and the acceptance of being Black People. It is "the assertion of black people's identity by their acceptance of being black and proud of it" (Césaire, 1939) but particularly in terms of their history, traditions, ancestral beliefs and languages which convey all the values of orality. The Negritude was recognized due to its particular style and realism. The African writers and cultural defenders of Negritude adopt the colonizer's language for their literary productions introducing in several aspects about African realities in order to restore their tribal and countries historical truth and improve their cultural status.

Similarly, like any other movement attempting to raise the awareness in a community or society, the Negritude has no exception when facing caustic criticisms from outsiders who superficially considered it as a racist movement. But this conception of the Negritude was prevailing among Africans. However, some influential writers, such as Ezekiel Mphahlele (1963), Wole Soyinka (1999), and Jean Paul Sartre (1948), etc., compared it to a utopian and sectarian dream of French-speaking writers. The comments and opinions of English writers and Sartre sometimes can be understandable to a certain extent because their perceptions were adopted and defended by the supporters who were sometimes ambiguous and superficial.

Our research most certainly has no interest to pursue further about this issue and the related controversy since this research does not intend to defend any comments, but rather the priority is to analyze Kourouma's work to demonstrate how he produces his novel to present the theme of Negritude. Therefore, our study will mainly focus on two vital aspects of the novel which supposed to be of paramount importance: Firstly, it is the assertion of black people's identity through their acceptance of being black and proud of it, particularly regarding their history, traditions, ancestral beliefs and language status improvement where all the values of orality are considered. Secondly, it is the denunciation of independences as the consequences and ill effects of post-colonization in the novel.

4. The Assertion of Malinke and the Black Peoples' Identity

The assertion of Malinke and black identity is presented in *The Suns of Independence*. So, from the

analysis of Kourouma's work, it is obvious to notice that Fama is always claiming for his belonging to the Malinke race.

“Fama Dumbuya! A true Dumbuya, of a Dumbuya father and Dumbuya mother, the last legitimate descendant of the Dumbuya princes of Horodugu, whose totem was the panther” (1981, p. 4).

From the above excerpt, the character, Fama, relentlessly claims his identity to his ethnic group and his status in the Malinke society. As the story develops, Fama exhibits a position defined by the Negritude and there is no doubt that Fama had to recognize his assertion of black identity.

But Fama is not simply content and satisfied to his identity, he attacks anyone like Bamba, the so-called griot or the praise-singer who completely ignores the history of Malinke people and who dares pronouncing it in front of the entire community, the words in contradiction with its authentic history and culture in these terms:

“The prince of Horodugu, the last legitimate Dumbuya, has condescended to join us ...a bit late. People looked up with sarcastic smiles. Let's face it: a prince who practically a beggar is a grotesque figure under any sun.... That he is late, does not matter: the customary rights of noble families have been respected; the Dumbuya have not been forgotten. The princes of Horodugu have been put with the Keita. Fama asked the praise-singer to repeat what he had just said. The man hesitated” (1981, p. 6).

This part of the text revealed that the numerous independences previously have modified and changed the social structures of Malinke community where Fama is mistreated as a beggar-like prince, a poor prince among other commoners. Fama who is aware of his downfall social position in the Malinke social stratification decides to confront Bamba, the so-called griot or praise-singer, as Fama grumbles “Hell and damnation! Nyamokode!” (1981, p. 5).

In Fama's perspective, it is insulting for his Malinke ethnic group and he is outraged by the griot's assertion that completely ignores that in the Malinke society:

“...symbolic, everything was symbolic in these ceremonies, and people should be content with that; it was a shame, a great shame for custom and religion that some old men in this city had to live off what was handed out at funeral rites...” (1981, p.6).

But by asserting his identity, Fama becomes the symbol of a black man who claims for his belonging to an identity which was denied and questioned for

centuries by colonial Europeans who despised the African people, as Fanon reports in his work, “Black Skin, White Masks”:

“In the black man's case, there is no culture, no civilization, nothing of this “long past of history” (1986, p. 27)

Furthermore, this denial of black people's identity, which is also mentioned in Diop's book “Black Nations and Culture”, reminds readers that these assertions are a label formed by the stereotypes of Europeans that stigmatizes black people as inferior people for centuries.

“Negro is synonymous to primitive being, inferior, having a pre-logic mentality. And as human beings are always concerned about justifying their behavior, people even went further; the concern for legitimating colonization and slave trade – in other words, the Negro's social condition in modern world – will engender a particular literature descriptive of Negroes supposed inferior characters. Thus, many European generations will progressively have their minds filled with false ideas. The western opinion will focus on and instinctively admit as a revealed truth that Negro = Inferior Humanity” (1958, p. 44).

The text above had disclosed the reasons why Kourouma and his contemporaries and the younger writers had attempted wholeheartedly to restore the historical truth in their works. Kourouma achieved it well by introducing and scattering Malinke's customs and traditions throughout his novel. The examples worth mention here are the introduction of death conception in Malinke's society, the sacrifices made by Salimata to conceive a child, the cultural ceremonies in the village, female circumcision, the significance of motherhood in the African social environment, and also the journey returning to the village. These cultural examples symbolize the reality of rural Africa with the respect of traditions and customs contrary to urban culture where people are more and more alienated.

Moreover, Malinke's culture is also projected through Fama's symbolical trip to Togobala, and the description of Balla the fetish-priest showing the visible and the invisible world. By weighing which Malinke's cultural realities ought to be introduced in his novel, Kourouma is estimating and considering black people's image by giving the readers a full display of the Malinke cultural panorama. For Kourouma and all the defenders of Negritude, the affirmation for being black and assertion of their identity and culture mainly depend on self-acknowledgement and self-acceptance, and particularly on the re-appropriation of their languages in order to maintain their humanity.

5. The Denunciation of Postcolonial Culture

The *Suns of Independence* is also the symbol of the denunciation of a postcolonial African culture. The independences in African countries had simultaneously produced a hybrid continent with hybrid men who have “black complexion and white masks” (Frantz, 1952). However, Fama noticed and realized the negative changes brought by independences in his life which he stressed them in these blunt terms:

“It was an immense disgrace and shame, as great as that of the old panther caught fighting with hyenas over carrion, for Fama to be chasing after funerals in this way.” (1981, p. 5).

But the character Fama is the representation of the people marginalized by independences which have completely changed Africa and Africans’ lives. With the analysis of Kourouma’s novel, it is obvious that the Malinke social structure is completely disrupted. First, the creation of cities symbolizes the rise of postcolonial power, the alienation within the society, the loss of traditional values, the rise of living conditions. Independences and cities also indicate the establishment of new order where realities hardly bare any resemblance to those of the past which Kourouma declares in his novel:

“The cursed sun of Independence filled half the sky, scorching the universe so as to justify the unhealthy late afternoon storms.” (1981, p. 5).

After independence, Fama’s entire world changes, it has turned into a hideous and evil monster. Thus, the description of the city formed the image about the lack of free flow in this universe that looked like a cramped jail. And Fama carries on his description in these terms to show a decaying world due to independences.

“And the people in the street! The bastards lounging about in the middle of the pavement as if it were their old man’s backyard. You had to shove, threaten and curse your way past. All this in the midst of an ear-splitting din: horns hooting, motors racing, tyres flapping, passers-by and drivers shouting” (1981, p. 5).

Kourouma and Fama have difficulty to accept this change. They fail in getting accustomed to it. In addition, they are struggling to understand the political evolution of the country where they are living. Fama’s first political experience began at the border separating the country and the village. When he wanted to go back to his village at the end of his imprisonment, he was informed about the political situation prevailing between his country and the neighboring country. But Fama, as Borgomano (1998) says, did not understand this notion of state, from his comprehension the state,

modern nations, are the consequences of bastardy issued from independences.

There is an important remark regarding this matter, Kourouma’s criticism against post-colonialism engendered from “independences bastardies”. In reality, these regimes are violent and dominating where it practices one-party system and the president are the sole and unique decision-makers of an entire population’s destiny. The people are often struck by extreme poverty, pandemics, wars, slaughter, injustice, inhumanity and liberties violations. These situations are described in the novel, under the pretext of democracy, the people like Fama and his friend were sent to jail without any trial. The practices are prevailing in the bulk of so-called African democracies where the political reality is completely different. These regimes, according to Kourouma, are represented by the president of state who believes to be superior to his people that put him on the throne. The president often controls and retracts public freedom and the people like Fama suffer from the consequences of daily brutality such as the being jobless, poverty, and imprisonment. Even the village where Fama returned to was not spared. It is the representation of an upset world to paraphrase Madeleine Borgomano or simply “Things Fall Apart” by Achebe (1958). Fama discovered the one-party system and young militiamen controlled and governed the village, they committed violence and forced people to pay high taxes until they finally impoverished the villagers.

Therefore, Kourouma denounces independences as being a “bastardy” which he considered as a source of demagoguery, nepotism, social violence. He unveils the ugliness of colonialism and post-colonialism. Like the defenders of Negritude, he denounces African politicians and their European counterparts as being responsible for causing the hardships among Africans that they have been confronting until now. He also denounces those leaders who were not capable of handling the real problems of Africa and Africans. Thereupon, Africa is plunging into a devastating and permanent situation of conflicts and chronic underdevelopment. His interpretation of negritude stressed on restoring justice, equality and fraternity in Africa particularly between Africa and the rest of the world.

6. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, Ahmadou Kourouma’s novel has been interesting and multidimensional in terms of its content and themes because it discussed all aspects of the sensitive issues in Africa. The *Suns of Independence* is monumental with its innovative construction and unique style. It is a mixture of French and Malinke linguistic style to manifest and preserve Malinke’s culture. Despite of the attack from harsh criticisms, he opted for re-appropriation of the French

language in order to remain faithful to Malinke culture. Kourouma declares in an interview published in *La Libre Belgique*:

“As a youth, I read a lot Louis-Ferdinand Céline, because I realized we had the same problem. He had to express children’s language into a popular one. As for me, I must give back in French the Malinke language: an oral language, in griots’ tradition. But in Africa, we used French inherited from colonizers to communicate between us. The French language will not disappear, so we have to adapt it to our tradition, culture, and enrich it with words that can help us express our feelings. We also have to make it become pagans’ language, when it is already Catholics’ one” (2003).

In Kourouma’s opinion, distorting the French language is a practical means that can help him to express his true feelings particularly to restore the truth about his culture and assert his identity of a black man with African Civilization. By denouncing independences resulting from post-colonialism, Kourouma exhibits the consequences of this “bastard from independences bastardy” and warns the world that it was not all sunshine and roses after embracing the independences. Far from having the expected improvement, the persisted colonial mentality and the evil regimes of hybrid states and hybrid leaders have consequently imprisoned the people with brutality and violence.

Nowadays, one of the consequences of these independences is that African countries have become less developed in almost all domains. Nepotism, demagoguery, murders and social injustice are common and guilty rulers are never punished but worst of all they are still in power. Kourouma like Senghor, Aimé Césaire, Léon Gontran Damas and many other African intellectuals had been desperately anticipating a change and they hoped the dawn of the awakening of the black continent would come true in the future.

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