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RESEARCH ARTICLE

THE DIALECTIC OF THE INTELLECTUAL AND THE “GUN” IN POSTCOLONIAL AFRICA: THE CASE STUDY IN CHINUA ACHEBE’S A MAN OF THE PEOPLE AND ANTHILLS OF THE SAVANNAH.

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ABSTRACT

After independences, governments of most African countries had been confided to the post-colonial intellectuals. Those latter, due to their cupidity misled their respective countries and set the continent in a realm of violence with the advent of repeated military coups. Throughout a postcolonial and sociocritical insights, this work intends to demonstrate how the African intellectuals shifted from the power to get acquainted to the realm of “Guns” after a conceptual approach in Chinua Achebe’s *A Man of the People* and *Anthills of the Savannah*.

INTRODUCTION

The *Cambridge Dictionary of English* (1995) defines an intellectual as a highly educated person whose interest are studying and other activities that involves careful thinking and mental effort (1995:739). Paul Aron developed in *Le Dictionnaire du Littéraire* (2002) that the intellectuals are first of all these writers and professors who, endowed with a celebrity, put it at the service of a political cause that seems correct to them (Aron, 2002: 382-383). In *Class Struggle* (1970), Kwame Nkrumah classified them into three groups. The first ones are those who support the new privileged indigenous class (the bureaucratic, political and business bourgeoisie) who are opened allies of the imperialism and neocolonialism; the second category is those who advocate a “non-capitalist road” of economic development...; the last group is those who emerged after independences which consist of the revolutionary intellectuals who provide the impetus and leadership of the worker-peasants struggling for all-out socialism (Nkrumah,1970:38-39). As such, the African people trusted in this pattern of intellectuals and confided itself to them because they stand to be the equipped people to guide the continent towards its ideals.

Nicholas M. Creary supported in *African Intellectuals and Decolonization* (2012) that “... *Intellectuals (African and Africanists alike) have significant roles to play in decolonizing (...) Africa*” (Nicholas, 2012:5). Unfortunately, the black continent sank into a realm of armed conflicts with repetitive coups leading to the emergence of military governments. “*Africa now... Yes, there is disappointment, pain, sorrow. But I say to myself when was it the last 500 years that Africa has not been in a great pain and sorrow and disappointment? The answer is very rarely*” declared Achebe in an interview with Gayle Felman of *Publisher Weekly* on July 3rd 2000. In fact, the failure of the post-colonial African intellectual set the continent into a real mess, with a mixture of civil and military governments which triggered the advent of “Gun” everywhere in Africa. In both a Sociocritical and Postcolonial insights this work intends to sort out how African intellectuals shifted from the power to the realm of “Guns” after a conceptual approach.

CONCEPTUAL APPROACH

The “Gun”

Etymologically, as stated in the *Cambridge Dictionary of English*, a Gun, is a weapon from which bullets or shells are fired.

Nevertheless, the use of the gun gives it different interpretations and symbols according to the situation and the society. In sport, gun is a device which makes a very loud sudden noise as signal to start a race (Cambridge, 1995:632). Jonathan M. Metz in *What Guns Mean: The symbolic Lives of Firearms* (2019), determined some symbols of the in the United States. He stated that gun is first of all a mean of protection in the U.S. That in the pro-gun communities, guns convey a familiarity and custom and suggest to neighbors notion of cultural heritage; and carrying gun represents "a key party of their identity ... and a mean of defense of self-family and property" (Jonathan, 2019:3). Tim Stapleton in his Review Essay titled *Gun in African History: The Examples of Central Africa and Nigeria* (2018), analyzed works of Giacomo Macola, *The Gun in Central Africa: A History of Technology and politics* (2016); and that of Saheed Aderinto, *Guns and society in Colonial Nigeria: Firearms, Culture and Public Order* (2018). He concluded that for the Agoni people from eastern Zambia, guns represent a threat to masculinity and social advancement which are related to demonstrating prowess in hand-to-hand combat with edged weapons. And that the Agoni sense of honor was reinvented as a desire to join the colonial military where their symbol of manhood changed from the spear to the gun.

For Tim Stapleton, guns have played an important and deadly role in African history. Furthermore, relevant themes including the Gun-slave Cycle of the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade, the superiority of the Europeans firearms power produced by new weapons such as Maxim Gun during the "Scramble for Africa", and the proliferation of small arms such as the ubiquitous AK-47 assault rifle in parts of post-colonial Africa derived from this Gun fame. Analyzing works of Aderinto and Macola he deduced that using Guns as a "window" into the history of colonial Nigeria, Aderinto set the difference between a gun society and a gun culture. For him, a gun society is one that cannot do without firearms in its daily social, political and religious life; and a gun culture exists within a society in which guns are used for army purpose. For Macola, a gun society is one in which firearms are put to momentous productive, military and/or other symbolic uses over a sustained period and by a politically or numerically significant portion of the population.

From what is developed above, it could be deduced that Nigeria was both a gun society and a gun culture because in *Class Struggle* (1970) by Nkrumah it is read that this country perpetrated two coup d'états in 1966 (Nkrumah, 1970:49-50). Nigerian society of that period is what is depicted in *A Man of the People* and *The Anthills of the Savannah*. In fact, at the end of the first one there is a coup d'état. In addition, the republic of Kangan in the second one is living under a military regime after a coup d'état. At the end of the same novel soldiers were rejoicing because there had been another coup. Apart from the military coups the people also used guns in *A Man of the People*. Indeed, Maxell Kulamo is killed by the civilian politician Chief Koko with a gun; and Kulamo's girlfriend, Eunice replied with a gun.

Normally, the gun belongs to the army and the police. It is a tool for their work. They are the one to manipulate it throughout the society when necessary. They use it to defend the country and they are trained for that. Therefore, a military or police jobs cannot go without the gun. Nkrumah testifies it

when he wrote that "The army and police are more disciplined, mobile and technically equipped. Most important, are armed, and provide therefore a ready striking force. ..." (Nkrumah, 1970:43). In fact, their equipment is made of all kinds of guns and constitute a real strength for the country. The army then defends the country against inner and external enemies. Sometimes, the worldwide power of a country is perceived through the strength of its army. Because of this provided protection, governments spend lot of money in the management of their armies.

Immense sums of money have been spent for the upkeep of the Africa's armies. The Congolese army, for example received one sixth of the State's revenue during the first four and a half years after independence; that is it received some 25 billion out of 150 billion Congolese francs. In provision of revenue budget for 1967-68 in francophone Africa eight out of fifteen states had provided the army with between 15 and 25 percent of their resources. Mali, Guinea, Chad and Cameroun prepared to devote one-quarter of their budget for military (Nkrumah, 1970:44).

Because the army holds the gun, its payment does not consider the level of study of the soldiers and policemen. Except some officers who shared experienced educational schools with the elite, the rank and file of the army and police are from the peasantry. A large number are illiterate. They have been taught to obey orders without questions. In *The Anthills of the Savannah*, their petty level of education is perceived through their pidgin English and their behavior. The one who took Ikem papers and the one who killed Chris would behave contrary-wise if they were of high education.

An Intellectual: An intellectual is a highly educated person whose interest are studying and other activities that involves careful thinking and mental effort (Cambridge, 1995:739). In *Le dictionnaire du littéraire* (2002), Paul Aron supported that the adjective "intellectual" has been attested for a very long time and the noun had been established after the Dreyfus situation. The idea had been in the air since the 1880s. But it was "*Le Manifeste des Intellectuels*" published by the newspaper *L'aurore* on January 14, 1898, which was its real birthday: there had been a petition in favor of the resuming of the Dreyfus trial, whose signatories were writers, journalists, academics and scientists. Among them there were Emile Zola, Marcel Proust, Léon Blum, Gustave Lanson, Gabriel Monod etc. which suggests that the notion of intellectual could originally be applied to people of notoriety (2002:382)

Therefore, intellectuals were first of all those writers and professors who, endowed with some celebrity, put it at the service of a political cause which seemed correct to them.... As Sartre says, intellectuals are "the technicians of practical knowledge" ... who intend to intervene in the political debate by putting their competence and their notoriety at the service of issues they believe to be normal (Paul, 2002:382-383). In *Memento de la Littérature Africaine et Antillaise* (1995), Lilian Kesteloot made a clear-cut study of the role played by the African intellectuals in the emancipative life of their continent. Indeed, once independences obtained, writers were joyfully devoted to this success relating the recent heroic past through themes such as: The condemnation of the colonial period by authors such as Chinua Achebe (*Things Fall Apart*),...

Power and Independence through *The Tragedy of Christopher the King* of Aimé Césaire; Senghor with *Chaka* which treated the comeback to the tradition; Amos Tutuola (*The Palm Wine Drinkard*)...

In their respective literary works, they put in scenes intellectuals in attempt to solve a problem. That is the reason why their literary productions above were permeated by intellectuals as main characters. In *A Man of the People* (1966) and *Anthills of the Savannah* (1987), Achebe put in scene some intellectuals struggling for the welfare of Nigeria particularly and Africa in general. In *A Man of the People* Chief Nanga M.A. is the country's Minister of culture in the reigning P.O.P political party. He is Odili's antagonist and competitor throughout the novel. Before venturing into politics, Chief Nanga was a schoolteacher from Anata. When he visited his former school, he recognized Odili who, was also a teacher, as one of his old students and invited him to stay at his home in the capital. In the same novel there is Maxwell Kulamo who was Odili's friend from the University. His works alongside with his fiancée, Eunice, as a lawyer in Bori. Max was the leader of the new political party called the C.P.C (Common People Convention). He was profoundly inspired by Karl Marx and aimed to fight for a new political era that champions the Common man. Odili speaks of Max very fondly as he is inspired by his political commitment and intellect. After Chief Nanga seduced Elsie, Odili reached out Max in order to join the C.P.C and contest the incumbent faction.

In *The Anthills of the Savannah* there is Beatrice Okot who is a senior assistant in the ministry of finance and the only person in the service, male or female with a first-class honor in English. She is from Queen Mary College University of London. She is a strong and outspoken feminist. Sam never failed once in anything. He had gone to Medical School which had been his first ambition. But he instead under the spell of the English headmaster who fought the Italians in Abyssinia in 1941 and had a sword from an Ethiopian prince to prove. So, he enrolled in the first school Cadet Corps and had been to Standhurst. From school to Standhurst he had been the first African Second Lieutenant in the Army; ADC to the General Governor ; Royal Equerry during the queen's visit; Officer commanding at Independence. He rises on power and becomes His Excellency when after a successful coup removed the previous dictator. He was good friend with Christopher Oriko and Ikem Osodi during their schooling and he rewards them with position in his cabinet. As far as Ikem Osodi is concerned, he studied at London University. He had completed his study two or three years earlier and was just knocking about London doing odd job for Third World Journals, before his friends at home persuaded him to return and join them in nation-building. He is the newspaper editor of the government-run *National Gazette*, a position he often uses to criticize the President. Chris Oriko was the Commissioner for Information and one of the first advisor to his Excellency. Professor Okong was also a member of the President's cabinet and his Excellency's scolding of him at the beginning of the novel foreshadows Sam's power-hungry behavior. Eventually there is Emmanuel who was a student at Kangan University. He was fond of Ikem and Chris because of their political ideology and was the heads the students' movements.

The African people entrusted and confided themselves to those intellectuals since they had the White men knowledge and know their countries; in addition, they also were the ones who led most of the emancipative movements to the independences. Obviously, the African intellectuals stand to be the appropriate people to govern the post-colonial countries. In so far as, Nandi Azikwe for example who was graduated from American universities the N.C.N.C (National Council of Nigerian Citizens) and later became the President of Nigeria. Julius Nyerere also was an ancient student from Edinburgh University. He created the TANU (Tanganyika Nation Union) and became president of Tanzania. Kwame Nkrumah studied thesis of Marxists such as Lénine and Karl and that of Nationalists such as Marcus Garvey, created the C.P.P(Convention People Party) and was President of Ghana. Jomo Kenyatta worked with the Anthropologist Bronislav Malinviski in London. He created the K.A.U (Kenyan African Union) and was appointed President of Kenya ([http:// www. Universalis.fr](http://www.Universalis.fr)). African intellectuals are the one to send the continent to an ideal because they are equipped to the task. They had the suitable knowledge which constitutes the weapon which could subdue any situation. The novel or books that they wrote to denounce injustice is their arm which gives them strength to attack any problem in the post-colonial countries. Ikem Osodi was very respected in Kangan thanks to his writings. As a writer in the *National Gazette* everybody feared his pen. The Senior officer of Kangan receiving Ikem in his office acknowledged the strength of the pen and declared to him: "*The pen is mightier than the sword. With one sentence of your sharp pen, you can demolish anybody. ... I respect your pen* (1987: 131). The policeman who detains a gun as tool of service recognizes that the "pen" of the intellectual is a dangerous mean which can obtain everything. The power of the intellectual resides then in the arguments developed in his writings. The illiterate representative of the taxi-drivers' Union of Kangan testified this in those words:

So I go talk about the one every taxi-driver know well well. Before before , the place where we get Central taxi Park for slaughterhouse road de smell pass nyarsh. Na there every cattle them want kill come pass him last shit since time dem born my grandfather. Na him this oga take him pen write, write, write sotay City Council wey de sleep come wake up and bring bulldozer and throwaway every rubbish and clean the place well well. So that if you park your taxi there no fit get bellyache like before, or cover your nose with cloth. Even the place so clean now that if the akara wey you de chop fall down for road you fit pick am up and throw for mouth. Na this oga we sidon quiet so na him do am. Na him make I follow my friend come salute am (Achebe,1987:137).

Even if in a pidgin English, it can be deciphered that the taxi driver is grateful to Ikem who through his writings helped them to clean a dirty place at their workplace. Thanks to this strength of the intellectuals, most of the post-colonial governments had been confided to them. Therefore, the challenge awaiting the postcolonial African intellectuals was to send African countries to effective independences. It is this challenge that Nicholas M. Creary assumes as he wrote in the introduction of his work titled *African Intellectuals and Decolonization* as follows:

The challenge for African and non-African scholars alike is to establish the substantial and valid fact of African

humanity, in all its diversity and to enable representation of Africa beyond its historical role as the foil to Western humanity. ...We take up this challenge in this volume as mandate within intellectual work, to continue to strive for the decolonization of the Academy and its production of knowledge of Africa. Indeed, in the spirit of Fanon, Ngugi wa Thiong'o, Amilcar Cabral, Lewis Gordon and other revolutionary thinkers... (Nicholas, 2012:2)

In a postcolonial stance Nicholas wants the African intellectuals to bear the challenge of the real decolonization of the continent. He then brandishes his work as a proof of his participation in the fulfilment of the given challenge. In fact, postcolonial African intellectuals are aware of the fact that current African countries are living in a kind of protonations after "the flag" independences. The Protonation (from the Greek protos: rudimentary, primitive) as Jean Ziegler developed in *Le pouvoir africain* (1971), is nowadays the more spread form of society in Africa. It is not a completed Nation. It is not a step of a national construction either. It is a pure creation of imperialism. The Protonation is the result of a particular circumstances of the imperialism: it had been settled by the first imperialism with the contribution of the secondaries at a moment when after the World War II, the planetary dominating system of the capital was redeploying, rebalancing, reorienting its strategy. The protonation appoints a government formally independent. It holds nationalist speeches, but entirely dominated by the rationality and the strategy of the multinational financial capital; the Protonation attends powerlessly to the plundering of its human, agricultural and mineral resources. The existence of protonations of satellized States by the multinational capital, hide the extreme misery of the populations (Ziegler, 1971:16).

THE SHIFT

The Misleading of the African Intellectuals: When African peoples were struggling against the White men's oppression, they hoped for a new era more peaceful and prosperous than the one they are currently undergoing. In fact, the post-colonial African people were expecting to retrieve first of all peace and the lost African socialism, even more, the precolonial atmosphere as Théophile Kouï explains in *L'Afrique à l'épreuve de l'histoire* (2012):

In the grammar of the independent African society, the precolonial past has taken a mythical dimension; endowed with all virtues, crowned with the legendary wisdom of the mythical Africa, the precolonial past had erected itself ... as a lost golden age, nostalgic object of perpetual quest. That is to say that the independence, favorable moment of rupture with a system of servitude and oppression, intend to retrieve the memory of the ancestral wisdom through the restoration of the human and social values of the precolonial societies that in their civilizatory fury, conquerors had destroyed (Toui, 2012:11). **(Translation mine).**

It is therefore unfortunate to notice that once independences gained this expectance had not been fulfilled because the intellectuals that constituted the new elite into whom the post-colonial African people confided itself governed in reverse angle. Marie Pauline Eboh developed in *Philosophy, Women Responsible Leadership* (2003) that governance can be defined as the process that is employed to achieve the noble end of the

State. It then consists of two essential elements of the State, namely the structure of the State and the procedure of the legislative, judicial and those of executive and administrative bodies at all the tiers of the government. Governance also means the manner in which power is exercised by governments in the management and distribution of a country's social and economic resources. And the nature or manner of this distribution makes a governance good or bad. Thus, when resources are distributed to promote inequality or achieve personal, or group ambitions the essence of governance which coincides with the essence of politics and essence of the state is defeated. Therefore, resources must be distributed responsibly, equitably and fairly for the realization of the essence of the state. Unfortunately, the African intellectuals that took the power after the departure of the White people implemented the principles of good governance against its ethic. Good governance as developed above has become a myth in Africa as it is implemented at the reverse sense. *A Man of the People* begins by the presentation of Chief the Honourable M.A. Nanga MP as follows:

No one can deny that Chief the Honourable M.A. Nanga MP was the most approachable politician in the country. Whether you asked in the country or in his home village Anata, they would tell you that was a man of the people. I have to admit this from the outset or else the story I'm going to tell will make no sense (Achebe, 1966:1).

As described, Chief the Honourable M.A. Nanga MP was politically unbeatable in that circumscription. He was the only one who was elected and reelected. Nanga himself did not accept to be opposed in that area; that is the reason why the candidature of ODILI Samalu against him provoked riots and set the region in a realm of violence. Even though he was convinced of his victory against Odili he tried to corrupt him with money and a scholarship to withdraw his candidature because as a chief he did not want an opponent. Politically Africa leaders did not understand or pretend not to understand democracy and good governance. After independences they want to rule as in precolonial Africa where the authorities were in power till their death. The title "Chief" owned by Nanga MP is the clear translation of that state of mind. He then considered himself as a "Chief" and not an elected representative of the people who could be replaced by another one.

In addition to this political shortcoming of the African leaders, the case of ODILI Samalu deserves to be developed. In fact, he left Chief Nanga's house because this latter had had sex with his nurse-girlfriend. He therefore joined his schoolmate Maxwell KULAMO to create a political party to oppose Chief Nanga in their region first. Secondly, he decided to court Nanga's second young wife in their village. He succeeded to challenge the Minister at both levels, and this caused demonstrations and violence in their tribute and even the death of his close friend KULAMO. As developed above, good governance and the ethic of democracy which is the welfare of the population is not their aim. Actually, a candidate should set up a program to convince the people for his election. The case of ODILI demonstrates that most African leaders do not involve in politics for an ideology but rather for some petty and useless causes. Moreover, they consider the power as a spoil to share among comrades and parents as perceived through Odili's invitation by Chief Nanga: "*I want you to*

come to the capital and take up a strategic post in the civil service. We shouldn't leave everything to the highland tribes. My secretary is from there; our people must press for their share of the national cake." (Achebe, 1966:12)

In fact, the misleading of the post-colonial intellectuals set the African people in a disillusionment. And this disillusionment is at the core of the misfortunes undergone by the continent these days. It had shaken Africa at a height that in some parts of the continent authors try their best to sensitize their people about it. The Kenyan Ngugi wa Thiong'o satirized it in *The Devil on the Cross* (1980) with the I.O.T.R (International Organization of Thieves and Robbers); the Ghanaian Ayi Kwei Armah dealt with it throughout the character of Koomson opposed by that of the Man in *The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born* (1969) Indeed, instead of implementing the principles of democracy and good governance to please the people, they "had scrambled for the one shelter our rulers left, and had taken it over and barricaded themselves in ..." (Armah, 1969:37). They live in a kind of luxury fueled by corruption and embezzlement. African intellectuals missed their point and set their people in despair. In Nigeria, as Rémy Boutet developed in *L'Effroyable guerre du Biafra* (1992), the plundering of the economy and illegal enrichment had become so commonplace that some intellectuals advocated a military regime in the country (Rémy, 1992:46-47). As a writer, Achebe predicted a Coup d'Etat in *A Man of the People*. Not so long after this prediction in a novel, the first Coup took place in Nigeria the 15th of January 1966 followed by that of the 29th July of the same year. As jotted down by Nkrumah in *Class Struggle* (1970) African continent registered twenty-five Coups from 1963 to 1970 (Nkrumah, 1970: 49-50). From that period on, military coups and civil wars spread all over the continent till these days, putting the intellectuals themselves in a realm of guns.

The Postcolonial Intellectual in the Realm of "Guns".

Normally, the strength of the argument owned by the intellectual and transmitted through pens and speeches and that of the army represented by the gun should not confront. Otherwise, the second one should protect the first one. It is unfortunate and even absurd to notice this mess in post-colonial Africa. Christopher Okogbo, the Nigerian teacher and poet (boydellandbrewer.com), and Amilcar Cabral, the Bissau-Guinean engineer in agronomy (www.peresblancs.org) should be paid a tribute to have got acquainted with the gun to defend their respective nations. As for many other African intellectuals, their acquaintance with the gun ranges from tough collaboration to their victimization. As stated above, the misleading of the post-colonial African intellectuals set their continent in a tense situation. Every democratic item is performed in a realm of violence and the intervention of the gun. The political campaign in Anata concerning the opposition of Chief Nanga and Odili Samalu had been very tough. The atmosphere of violence installed by Nanga compelled Odili to arm his staff with a gun. As an intellectual he was against the use of firearm but he had to cope with it as he explains:

... I agreed to our carrying the minimum of weapon strictly for defense. We had five matchets, a few empty boot. Later we were compelled to add two double-barelled guns.

I only agreed to this most reluctantly after many acts of violence were staged against us.... (Achebe, 1966:112).

A Man of the People ended with a Coup d'Etat with Chief Nanga fleeing to escape this riot and advent of guns created by his own government. The setting of *The Anthills of the Savannah* is unfolded between two Coups d'Etats. The republic of Kangan is rule by a military regime after a successful coup. The head of the state was a soldier and some intellectuals in his staff. The country was ruled militarily with the SRC (State Research Council) accomplishing the President's secret missions and persecutions. The predicament of the intellectuals started when the President refused to receive Abazon complaining people and Ikem Osodi did it because they were his parents. This latter is arrested and killed by the SRC. Christopher Oriko is persecuted and was obliged to live as a fugitive. He was compelled to disguise himself to cross the corridors till in the northern part of the country. As far as Beatrice is concerned, she did not appreciate an invitation of the President to some White foreigners. She was the girlfriend of Christopher, and she also underwent all the upheavals of her friend's persecution.

Her house had been rummaged by the SRC in search of her beloved. African intellectuals are the cause of the tense situation installed in post-colonial Africa. Therefore, they should be the one to find solution to what they have created. Otherwise, they will end up in being victim of the atmosphere of guns. They are most of the time killed during the political riots. In *A Man of the People*, Maxwell Kulamo, a young lawyer is shot by Chief KOKO, his challenger. Moreover, Ikem Osodi, the editor of the national newspaper is caught handcuffed and killed by the SRC in *The Anthills of the Savannah*. In an altercation with a soldier at the corridor of Abazon, Christopher Oriko opposed his chest to the gun of a soldier rejoicing after a coup d'Etat. He is shot blank and fell dreadfully down.

Confronting the strength of the arguments to that of the force, Chris forget that the intellectual and the gun are not for the same sphere. Even if Beatrice compared his courage to that of Shaka, he would not resurrect. African intellectuals should get aware that the situation they have created is not in their advantage nor that of the whole society. Post-colonial African society does not deserve this after many years of struggle for independences. They should show they intellectualism implementing what they have learnt at school. They should be the one to set the post-colonial society on the right way and send the independent Africa to its ideal.

IN THE POSTCOLONY FOR AN AFROTOPIA

The challenge for Africa to erect itself among the developed continents stands for the intellectuals that ruled it after the departure of the colonizers. Some of these latter justify their cupidity and bad governance with the recent colonization and its aftermaths. Slavery, colonization and neo colonization for sure had been wrong experiences for Africa. Nevertheless, this situation cannot prevent the continent to go ahead. Africa, first, is not the sole continent which had been colonized in the world; next it has at its disposal all the raw material for its development. Here is the fundamental reason why Achille differentiates himself from the postcolonial thinkers as follows:

I am not a postcolonial thinker. There is a difference to my mind between a critique of "Postcolony" and a critique of "Postcolonial". The question running through my book is this: What is today? And what are we today? What are the lines of fragility and precariousness, the fissures in contemporary African life? And possibly, how could what is, be no more; or could give birth to something radically else? And so, if you like, in *On the Postcolony* I am trying to suggest that a common thread between colonialism and what comes after colonialism is the precariousness of life (2006:119).

As Achille Mbembe explains, the postcolony is concerned with memory but only insofar the latter is a question, first of all of responsibility towards oneself and towards an inheritance. He therefore rejects all posture of victimization and urges African new generation to look forwards. Reshaping Africa belongs to the intellectuals. The unbuilt Africa in this globalization is theirs. It is this new Africa of the coming days that the Senegalese Felwine calls the "Afrotopos" in his work titled *Afrotopia* (2017). For him, the future is the place that does not exist yet which is configured mentally. For the societies it must be the subject of prospective thought. Afrotopos is the atopolis of Africa: this place not inhabited by Africa that is coming. It is to invest with thoughts and imagination. The future is the one we can fully act in conceiving and giving it body. There is no historical fatality to which societies would be subject provided they conceive their future, have a vision and act in the present time to transform their reality.

The Afrotopos is this space of the possible which is not yet realized that nothing insurmountable does not prevent the arrival. There is a continuity between the real and the possible. It is to find where it is hidden, to think and to work on the condition of its realization by raising obstacles. The limits are always mental. The first breakthrough is to consider that the world has more possibilities that could enable us to set the reality (Sarr, 2016:135-136). Actually, Africa has no one to catch up with. It must no longer run on the path indicated by the others but walk briskly on the path it has chosen. Its status as the eldest of the humanity requires from this black continent to step out of the competition of this infantile age where nations eye up and down to see who has accumulated the most wealth. It must escape this savage and irresponsible race that endangers the social and natural conditions of life. Africa must participate in the building of humanity by erecting a civilization more conscious, more concerned with the balance between the different orders, the common welfare and dignity. Africa should realize this act of faith into this active utopia. It must be the Africa that will take humanity to another step (Sarr, 2016: Covert).

CONCLUSION

Once independences obtained, postcolonial African elite missed its point governing at the reverse angle.

This disappointment, therefore, set the Black continent in the realm of guns. And the African predicament stems from this cohabitation of the intellectual with the gun. For the African predicament to come to an end, the leaders of the continent should play the role which is theirs in so far as this continent can reach its ideals if the intellectuals implement the effective items of democracy. This utopia is possible because Africa contains all the intellectual and natural resources capable to fuel this ascension towards an envied continent.

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