Volume 21 Issue 27
Originally issued as C3



Global Journal of human-social science: C
Sociology & Culture
Volume 21 Issue 3 Version 1.0 Year 2021
Type: Double Blind Peer Reviewed International Research Journal
Publisher: Global Journals
Online ISSN: 2249-460X & Print ISSN: 0975-587X

Bill F. Ndi's *Peace Mongers at War*: Deuniversalizing Francophone Cameroon Pedigrees and Pluriversalizing Southern Cameroons Contagions

By Hassan Mbiydzenyuy Yosimbom
University of Cape Town

Abstract- This paper discusses Francophone Pedigrees and Southern Cameroon Contagions in Bill Ndi's Peace Mongers at War by drawing on Mignolo's conception of the pluriverse. Francophone Pedigrees refer to Francophone-imposed hegemonic benchmarks by which Anglophone Cameroon culture and politics are condescendingly assessed and self-assertingly dismissed. Southern Cameroon Contagions designate readily convivial pluriversal and accommodating Anglophone cultures and politics downgraded by Francophones as pestilences or infestations. The paper contends that Peace Mongers at War attests that in moments such as the ongoing Anglophone crisis, dialogue cannot exist without humility and the naming of the Cameroonian polity cannot continue to be an act of Francophone Pedigrees arrogance. The paper asserts that Francophones start from the premise that naming the Cameroonian world is the task of the Francophone elite and that the presence of Anglophones in history is a sign of deterioration; that they are closed to – and even offended by – the contribution of Anglophones because they are afraid of being displaced.

Keywords: *pedigrees, contagions, pluriverse, hegemony, interconnectedness, power, powerlessness.*

GJHSS-C Classification: *FOR Code: 370199*



Strictly as per the compliance and regulations of:



© 2021. Hassan Mbiydzenyuy Yosimbom. This is a research/review paper, distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial 3.0 Unported License http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/3.0/), permitting all non-commercial use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited.

Bill F. Ndi's *Peace Mongers at War*: Deuniversalizing Francophone Cameroon Pedigrees and Pluriversalizing Southern Cameroons Contagions

Hassan Mbiydzenyuy Yosimbom

Abstract- This paper discusses Francophone Pedigrees and Southern Cameroon Contagions in Bill Ndi's *Peace Mongers at War* by drawing on Mignolo's conception of the pluriverse. Francophone Pedigrees refer to Francophone-imposed hegemonic benchmarks by which Anglophone Cameroon culture and politics are condescendingly assessed and self-assertingly dismissed. Southern Cameroon Contagions designate readily convivial pluriversal and accommodating Anglophone cultures and politics downgraded by Francophones as pestilences or infestations. The paper contends that *Peace Mongers at War* attests that in moments such as the ongoing Anglophone crisis, dialogue cannot exist without humility and the naming of the Cameroonian polity cannot continue to be an act of Francophone Pedigrees arrogance. The paper asserts that Francophones start from the premise that naming the Cameroonian world is the task of the Francophone elite and that the presence of Anglophones in history is a sign of deterioration; that they are closed to – and even offended by – the contribution of Anglophones because they are afraid of being displaced. The paper concludes that the Cameroonian leadership needs to learn that at the point of Francophone-Anglophone encounter no Cameroonian should be considered an utter ignoramus or a perfect sage; all Cameroonians should be seen as people who are attempting, together, to learn more than they already know and build a society more pluriversal than they already have.

Keywords: pedigrees, contagions, pluriverse, hegemony, interconnectedness, power, powerlessness.

I. Introduction: The Birth of Francophone Pedigrees and Southern Cameroons Contagions

Most of the territory known today as the Republic of Cameroon was a German protectorate from 1884. This protectorate was divided into British and French Cameroons in 1916 and confirmed, with some slight modifications, by the Milner-Simon Agreement of 10 July 1919. British Cameroons was one fifth and French Cameroun was four-fifths of the entire territory. They were Class B Mandated Territories of the League of Nations until 1946 when they became United Nations Trust Territories. Britain and France instituted two different administrative styles and systems in British Cameroons and French Cameroun respectively and these have continued to impact the socioeconomic and politico-cultural lives of the two regions long after reunification into a republic. In present day Cameroon, former British-mandated Cameroon is represented by the Northwest and Southwest regions. Cameroonians from these regions are called Anglophones and they use English as their major official language. Former French-mandated Cameroun is represented by the remaining eight regions of the country. Cameroonians from this extraction are called Francophones and they use French as their main language of administration. The relationship between the Francophone majority and the Anglophone minority has been characterized by marginalisation in human resource development and deployment in the Anglophone region, mistreatment of the English language, flooding of Anglophone Cameroon with Francophone administrators, "Francophonization" of the English educational subsystem and the common-law system and the gradual erosion of Anglophone identity.[1]

Cameroon's checkered journey from a Federal State to the Republic of Cameroon created Francophone Pedigrees (FP hereafter) and Southern Cameroon Contagions (SCC hereafter). The former refers to Francophone-imposed hegemonic benchmarks by which Anglophone Cameroon culture and politics are condescendingly assessed and self-assertingly dismissed. The latter designates readily convivial pluriversal and accommodating Anglophone cultures and politics downgraded by Francophones as infestations or pestilences. The FP-masterminded change from a Federation to a Republic sacrificed the Anglophone peoples' sovereignty and since then, the foundations of Anglophoneness have continued to be eroded by the centralizing processes of nationalization without being synchronously reinforced by decentralizing tendencies wherein Cameroonians should have been shrinking "we" to likeminded others and enlarging "they" to everyone else thereby opening full accommodation to the realities of interdependence. A Francophone-Anglophone subgroupism has arisen out of those deep affinities that people have developed toward what Rosenau calls "close-at-hand associations, organizations, and subcultures with which they have

Author: Postdoctoral Fellow Centre for African Studies (CAS), University of Cape Town, South Africa. e-mail: yoshassmbiy@yahoo.com

[1] See "Memorandum presented to the Head of State, His Excellency President Paul Biya, by the Bishops of the Ecclesiastical Province of Bamenda on the current situation of unrest in the Northwest and Southwest regions of Cameroon, December 22, 2016" for a detailed delineation of the Francophone-Anglophone asymmetry.

© 2021 Global Journals

been historically, professionally, economically, socially, or politically linked and to which they attach their highest priorities" (2004, 33). That subgroupism values the Francophone or Anglophone in-group over the Francophone or Anglophone out-group, sometimes treating the two as adversaries and sometimes positing them as susceptible to extensive cooperation. Subgroupism has been sustained by Anglophone disappointment with – and alienation from – the performances of the Cameroonian system in which the Anglophone subgroup is located. Its intensities are the product of long-standing historical roots that span generations and get reinforced by an accumulated lore surrounding past events in which the Anglophone subgroup have continued to survive trying circumstances. Anglophone subgroupism has been begetting subgroupisms as new splits are occurring. This has culminated most recently in the restorationists, federalists, and unitarists divides that have been at the heart of the ongoing Cameroon Anglophone Crisis that started in 2016.

Throughout Cameroon or "The Cameroons" (TC hereafter), Anglophone minorities and Francophone majorities have been clashing over such ideological issues as bilingualism, federalism and regional autonomy, and political representation. An increasing chorus of voices from civil society, victims of diverse forms of discrimination, educationists, a huge range of social movements, sympathizers from some foreign governments, and individual authors such as Bill Ndi are insisting that the roots of many of the contemporary problems of TC, especially the conflict between FP and SSC, can be traced to the history, nature, and function of TC's current political cultures and institutions. Bill Ndi has affirmed this in several collections of poetry such as *Toil and Delivery* (2006), *Mishaps and Other Poems* (2008), *K'cracy: Trees in the Storm and Other Poems* (2008), *Waves of Anger* (2010), *Bleeding Red: Cameroon in Black and White* (2010), *Epigrams* (2012), *Vestiges* (2013), *Worth their Weight in Thorns* (2014), *One Eternal Sleep* (2015), *Pride Aside & Other Poems* (2016), *Barbed Forest* (2017), and *Peace Mongers at War* (2018). In all these collections, the absence of a much-needed Francophone Cameroon-Anglophone Cameroon multi-level dialogue and its disintegrating effects on peacebuilding and state-building are central to Ndi's thinking. The Cameroonian solidarity that Ndi's poetic vision envisages is not that of a national uniformity but that of a unity in diversity. His personae often insist that Cameroonians must learn to appreciate and tolerate pluralities, multiplicities, cultural differences, unity in diversity, and not uniformity and hegemony because every Cameroonian culture has something distinctive to offer for the solidarity and welfare of Cameroon.

In his 2018 collection, *Peace Mongers at War* (*PMAW* hereafter), Ndi depicts Cameroon as an oxymoron; the epicenter of all types of wars, an upside down, inside out country, a society where the innocents are in jail and the guilty are free with such Aesopian twists promoting hardened criminals to higher offices while petit thieves languish in jails. In the poems, the violation of human rights is an inherent and necessary part of the process of implementing a coercive and unjust political and economic structure on the Cameroonian world. In *PMAW* more than in any of the collections, Ndi depicts a Francophonecentric control hierarchy where the higher Francophone culture (pedigrees) has a significant degree of authority over the lower Anglophone culture (contagions). That hierarchy is characterized by downward causation, harnessing of the energy of the lower Anglophone culture, and the constraining of the degrees of freedom of microparts. The Anglophones are not allowed to exert any important control over the Francophones, leaving Francophones more or less, fully autonomous from the Anglophones, but the Francophones have the power to determine the Anglophones from above; they have a relation of authoritative supersession with the Anglophones (Kontopoulos 1993, 55). The relationship between Francophones and Anglophones swings between complete inclusion and supersession and partial inclusion and tangledness within structures of signification, domination, and legitimation. Francophone power has become a non-denumerable, unaccountable network of powers inscribed in all the different institutional settings and social spaces.

This paper argues that Ndi's *PMAW* attests to the fact that the Francophone Cameroon matrix of power is built and operates on a series of interconnected heterogenous historico-structural hierarchies, bounded by the "/" that divides and unites FP centres and cultures and SCC peripheries and cultures that are the consequences of Francophonecentric one-dimensional thinking. FP and SCC are entanglements or, to use U.S. Third World Feminist concept, intersectionalities (Crenshaw 1989; Fregoso 2003) of multiple and heterogeneous national hierarchies ("heterarchies") of cultural, social, political, epistemic, economic, linguistic, and regional forms of Francophone domination and exploitation. In Ndi's *PMAW*, the FP-SCC hierarchy is built on: a national division of labor of core and periphery where capital organizes labor at the periphery around coerced and authoritarian forms; a national or regional hierarchy that privileges Francophones and the Francophone half of the country over the Anglophones'. This epistemic hierarchy privileges Francophone knowledges and cosmologies over the Anglophones'. In addition, it is a linguistic hierarchy that privileges the French language over the English language with a constituent pedagogical hierarchy where the Francophone forms of pedagogy are considered superior over Anglophone forms. The Francophone controls the national media production and information technology while the

© 2021 Global Journals

Anglophone has very limited means to make their points of view enter the national media dialogue. The spatial hierarchy privileges the presumed Francophone urban over the supposed Anglophone rural. (Grosfoguel 2011, 9, 11). The complex multiplicity of power hierarchies at the national scale in the present Cameroonian world is not just a social or an economic system, but a Francophone civilization upon the Cameroonian.

Furthermore, anti-systemic decolonial struggles against the power hierarchies of TC are at the same time a civilization struggle for a new Cameroonian humanism and a new Cameroonian civilization. In a way, *PMAW* asserts that Cameroonians need to be hostile to easy relativisms and holisms built out of summing and subsuming parts because passionate detachment requires more than just acknowledged and self-critical partiality. Cameroonians are also bound to seek perspectives from those points of view that promise potent knowledge for constructing TC worlds less organized by axes of domination. Ndi acknowledges that the positionings of the subjugated SCC are not exempt from critical reexamination, decoding, deconstruction, and interpretation. The standpoints of SCC are not "innocent" positions. On the contrary, they are preferred because in principle they are least likely to allow denial of the critical or interpretive core of other Cameroonian knowledges. They are knowledgeable of Francophone modes of denial through repression, forgetting and disappearing – ways of being nowhere while claiming to see comprehensively. The SCC standpoints promise more adequate, sustained, objective, transforming accounts of the TC. The above consideration leads to the conclusion that because upholders of FP insist on the nationalization of Francophone ontologies and epistemologies and the denationalization of the Anglophone system, they are guilty of fundamentalizing the French "universe." Conversely, defenders of SCC (cf. Ndi's *PMAW*) advocate the contemporaneous nationalization of Francophone and Anglophone systems and are therefore veritable agents of the construction of the much-needed Cameroonian pluriverse.

Thus, the three points that the paper anchors on are first, that a Cameroonian pluriversal standpoint requires an SCC broader canon of thought than simply the FP. The next is that a truly Cameroonian national pluriversal stance cannot be based on an abstract Francophone universal that raises itself as universal national design, instead of being the result of a critical dialogue between Francophone and Anglophone critical political projects towards a Cameroonian pluriverse as opposed to a Cameroonian universe. Finally, de-Francophonizing pedigrees and de-Anglophonizing contagions would require that Cameroonians take seriously what Grosfoguel calls "the epistemic perspective/cosmologies/insights of critical thinkers from the [Anglophone community] thinking from and with subalternized spaces and bodies" (2011, 4). It is also worth noting that in the FP-SCC hierarchy, there is a difference between "epistemic location" and "social location." *PMAW* illustrates the fact that from an ontologico-epistemic angle, even though one is socially located in the oppressed SCC side of Cameroonian power relations, she/he does not automatically have to submit to thinking from a subaltern epistemic location (6).

Overwhelmingly, the success of the FP national system has consisted in making some subjects that are socially located in the oppressed SCC side of the national divide, to think ontologico-epistemically like the ones on the dominant FP positions. SCC ontologico-epistemic vantage points are knowledges and experiences coming from SCC that produce critical perspectives of Francophone hegemonic knowledge and experiences in the power relations involved. This is, in no way, a claim to an SCC populism where knowledge and experiences produced from SCC are automatically building blocks of the Cameroonian pluriverse. The claim, here made, is that all knowledges and experiences are ontologico-epistemically located in the dominant FP or the subaltern SCC side of the Cameroonian power relations and that this is related to the FP-SCC politics of hierarchies. Thus, "the disembodied and unlocated neutrality and objectivity" of the FP politics of Cameroonian leadership is a Francophone myth (Grosfoguel 6).

The above hypothesis will borrow critical perspectives from Mignolo's distinction between the universe and the pluriverse i.e., the difference between universality and pluriversality (2018, x-xiii). To Mignolo, the pluriverse consists in seeing beyond claims to superiority and sensing the world as pluriversally constituted. Pluriversality names the principles and assumptions upon which pluriverses of being and meaning are constructed. Mignolo argues that "[p]luriversality as a universal project is aimed not at changing the world but at changing the beliefs and the understanding of the world, which would lead to changing our (all) praxis of living in the world" (x). It consists of renouncing "the conviction that the world must be conceived as a unified totality in order for it to make sense, and viewing the world as an interconnected diversity instead, sets us free to inhabit the pluriverse rather than the universe" (x). Consequently, Cameroonian pluriversality as a national project would mean that the universal or the national cannot have one single Francophone owner. The universal or national can only be pluriversal, which also corresponds with this paper's vision of a Cameroonian world in which many worlds coexist. Francophone universalism has the right to coexist in the Cameroonian pluriverse of meaning, but it needs to be stripped of its pretended universality, i.e., Francophone cosmology. Such would be one of many Cameroonian cosmologies,

© 2021 Global Journals

no longer the one that subsumes and regulates all the others (x).

Thus conceived, Mignolo contends that "pluriversality is not cultural relativism, but the entanglement of several cosmologies connected today in a power differential" (x). A Cameroonian pluriverse would not be a world of independent units but a world entangled through and by the Francophone matrix of power. Pluriversality and the pluriverse of meaning would be connected to Humberto Maturana's idea of the multiverse, a world of truth in parentheses, while the universe is a world built on truth without parentheses – unqualified, unconditional (2004, 42). Whereas "universality is always imperial, and war driven, pluri-and multiverses are convivial, dialogical, or plurilogical, pluri- and multiverses exist independently of the state and corporations" (xii). Thus, pluriversity in the sphere of the de-Francophonizing pedigrees and de-Anglophonizing contagions project emerges out of Ndi's poetic vision which cautions that Cameroonians enter the domain of constituted ontologies wherein all being is constituted through observers. Were Cameroonians to follow that path, they would become aware that they can in no way claim to be in possession of the truth, but that there are numerous possible realities, and should they follow that path, they would not demand the subjection of fellow Cameroonians, but would listen to them, seek cooperation, and communication (Maturana 42).

II. Overcoming Imperial Leadership, Rebuilding Pluricentric Interconnectedness

This section demonstrates that Ndi's poetic vision asserts that to overcome the imperial dichotomy between FP and SCC, Cameroonians need to confront alienation from their own individual power and reclaim it from those who have taken it from them on the pretext of representative democracy. They also need to rebuild the socio-economic and politico-cultural spaces from which they have been alienated. This process would foster an emancipatory politics that retraces the path to interconnectedness, conviviality, incompleteness, and pluriversality from which they have been disconnected for a long time. Such emancipatory politics needs to be combined with a constant striving towards a transformative social justice thereby fostering respect for multiple cultures and knowledge forms coupled with an insistence on the infiniteness of the diversity of the Cameroonian world. Succinctly put, TC is a multiplicity of worlds, ontologies, or reals that are far from being exhausted by the Francophonecentric experience or reducible to its terms (Escobar 2016). For Ndi's pluriverse proposal, there are multiple reals, yet it is not intended to "correct" the view on a single real on the grounds of being a truer account of "reality." Ndi's pluriverse is "a tool to first, make alternatives to the one world plausible to one-worlders, and second, provide resonance to those other worlds that interrupt the one-world story" (Blaser *et al* 2014, 22).

Paulo Freire argues that, "[h]uman existence cannot be silent, nor can it be nourished by false words, but only by true words, with which men and women transform the world" (88). To him, "[t]o exist is to name the world, to change it. Once named, the world in its turn reappears to the namers as a problem and requires of them a new naming. Human beings are not built in silence, but in word, in work, in action-reflection" (88). In line with Freire's postulation, Ndi sets the stage for his delineation of FP-SCC asymmetry through "Peace Warring War," a poetic piece that records a conversation in which a poet and an audience univocally name the world of peace they are longing for:

> *Poet: What do we want?*
> *Audience: We want Peace!*
> *Poet: What do we want?*
> *Audience: We want Peace!*
> *Poet: Where do we differ?*
> *Audience: They want war!* (20)

If one recalls that "Peace Warring War" was published in 2018, one could contend that the poem is a call for an end to the Southern Cameroons (SC hereafter) crisis and a return to lasting peace. Conflict and war rage across much of SC as a culture of entitlements has replaced one of responsibilities. The militarization of SC and the very real possibility of a genocide continue. A governance that maintains a nonpareil Francophone ancestry and celebrates Francophilia while bemoaning and promoting a worthless Anglophone lineage *cum* Anglophobia fuels this insecurity. Cameroonian politics and everyday life continue to drift apart as "emancipatory politics" disappears and is replaced by "lifestyle politics" (Giddens 1991). In line with these worrisome times, the poet and the audience in the above poetic conversation challenge silence and name peace as an act of empowerment. It is important to remember that renaming and renarrating (especially SC history) are an essential component of Ndi's poetic vision. By renaming peace, Ndi achieves what hooks calls "back talk," "a courageous act – an act of risk and daring" (hooks 1989, 22). In the world of the southern black community of the USA, "back talk" and "talking back" "meant speaking as an equal to an authority figure. It meant daring to disagree and sometimes it just meant having an opinion" (22). By naming what they want, Ndi's poet-persona and the poet-persona's audience, a microcosm of the macrocosmic Anglophone community, dare to speak; to speak back to the Francophone authority. Within FP-SCC circles, silence is often seen as the Francophoncentric right speech of Anglophoneness – the sign of SCC submission to FP authority. This emphasis on the Anglophone's silence may be an

© 2021 Global Journals

accurate remembering of what has taken place in TC since independence.

Certainly, for Anglophones, their struggle has not only been to emerge from silence into speech, but to change the nature and direction of their speech, to make a speech that compels Francophone listeners, one that is heard. Anglophone speech, the right or imposed speech of Anglophoneness, has often been the soliloquy, the talking into thin air, the talking to Francophone ears that do not hear them – the talk that is simply not listened to (hooks 23). Unlike the Francophone whose speech is to be heard, who is to be listened to, whose words are to be remembered, the voices of the masses of Anglophones – demanding to be heard, asking for equality, negotiating their Anglo-Saxon identity, etc., – have been tuned out, have become a kind of background music, audible but not acknowledged as significant speech. Dialogue – the sharing of speech and recognition – has been denied the Anglophone. For Ndi, like for most Anglophones, "true speaking is not solely an expression of creative power; it is an act of resistance, a political gesture that challenges politics of domination that would render [Anglophones] nameless and voiceless" (27). Speaking the truth is a courageous act, it represents a threat to those who wield oppressive power and "that which is threatening must necessarily be wiped out, annihilated, silenced" (27). Through the dialogue in "Peace Warring War," Ndi asserts that the movement from silence into speech is for the oppressed, the exploited, and those who stand and struggle side by side. This is a gesture of defiance that heals, that makes new Anglophone life and growth possible. The poem records that act of speech, of "talking back," that is no mere gesture of empty words but the expression of an Anglophone Cameroon movement from object to subject – the liberated voice. That is why in another poem, "Seeds of Peace," Ndi concludes that "True liberty knows and loves Peace/Not brutalities that them please" (24)!

Furthermore, Ndi's use of the conversational style to distinguish between war and peace, monologue and dialogue, and silence and speech, is also a subtle way of asserting that FP foster monologue, silence, and war whereas SCC foster speech, dialogue, and peace. Through the poem, Ndi also affirms that while to say the true word – which is praxis – is to transform the Cameroonian world into a pluriverse, saying that word is not the privilege of a few persons, but the right of everyone. Consequently, no Cameroonian can say a true word alone – nor can she/he say it for another, in a prescriptive act which robs other Cameroonians of their words. The poem upholds that FP-SCC dialogue should be an encounter between men, mediated by the world, to name the world. Hence, FP-SCC dialogue cannot occur between FP who want to name the world and SCC who do not wish this naming – between FP that deny SCC the right to speak their word and SCC whose right to speak has been denied them. To Ndi, therefore, Anglophones who have been denied their primordial right to speak their word must first reclaim this right and prevent the continuation of this dehumanizing aggression. The question-and-answer conversation between the poet and the audience and the unanimous demand for peace fall in line with the argument that Cameroonians cannot solve the crisis that have been plaguing the SC if they are unwilling to talk to each other. Indeed, openness to dialogue and to cooperation is required of all people of good will, and of individuals and groups with specific responsibilities in the areas of politico-economics and social life, at both the national and international levels. If it is in speaking their word, "we want peace", that the poet and the audience (Cameroonians), by naming the Cameroonian world, transform it, then Ndi's argument is that dialogue imposes itself as the way by which Cameroonians can achieve significance as human beings.

Dialogue is thus an existential necessity, an encounter in which the united reflection and action of the FP-SCC dialoguers are addressed to the Cameroonian world which needs to be transformed and humanized. Ndi argues that such a dialogue cannot be reduced to the act of one group "depositing" ideas in another, nor can it become a simple exchange of ideas to be "consumed" by the discussants. The collegiality between the poet and the audience is Ndi's manner of affirming that for the Anglophone crisis to be resolved, dialogue must not be a hostile, polemical argument between those who are committed neither to the naming of the Cameroonian world, nor to the search for truth, but rather to the imposition of their own fundamentalizing truth. Because dialogue is supposed to be an encounter among Cameroonians who name the Cameroonian world, it must not be a situation where some name on behalf of others. It should be an act of creation; it must cease to serve as a crafty instrument for the domination of SCC by FP. That act of creation would result in a Cameroonian pluriverse which would be a rainbow of cosmologies, knowledges, and vital worlds (Mignolo 2018). In that pluriverse, Francophoneness and Anglophoneness would not be envisaged as distinct cultures or polities, each with its independent logic, but as multiple ways of being and knowing that have co-evolved in Cameroonian relations of power and difference.

In "The Fall of Bakassi," Ndi captures the irresponsibility of the patrons of FP by subtly arguing that when Nigeria claimed the Bakassi peninsula as part of her territory, France abandoned Cameroon at a time when she needed her most: "When Bakassi fell, France claiming Cameroon/Nothing did say that would his business maroon/A lesson our morons refuse to learn from/And would ties project to heights top in form/As the French his glass of wine savour/Poor cam marooned ions bleed in labour" (18). Ndi's argument is also that by

© 2021 Global Journals

abandoning the peninsula for several years at the mercy of the Nigerian government, the FP government of Cameroon was being politically irresponsible toward the peninsula's Anglophone community. When in June 2006 in Greentree, Cameroon and Nigeria signed a historic agreement under the auspices of Kofi Annan setting the modalities and time frame for the implementation of the 2002 ruling of the International Court of Justice transferring the Bakassi peninsula from Nigeria to Cameroon, President Biya achieved commendable success in international politics. That landmark event was a testimony to the determination and resolve of both countries to respect the rule of international law and address their border dispute in a way that secured lasting peace and good neighborly relations. Given France's abandonment of Cameroon at such a critical moment, Ndi calls on TC to cut ties of dependency with France: "Relations between states: interdependence/Yet the dependents joy with independence/Cameroon, Cameroon, forty-eight years running/Cameroon, Cameroon, forty-eight years crawling;/Sit up and stagger/For you're no toddler" (18).

Ndi's argument that Cameroonians should commission and decommission their relations with France demonstrates an awareness that in a bit to construct a pluriverse, Cameroonians must constantly remember that even though many words are walked in the world, many worlds are made, and many worlds make them, there are words and worlds that are lies and injustices (Blaser and de la Cadena 2018, 1). There are also words and worlds that are truthful and true but in the world of the powerful like France or Francophone Cameroon, there is room only for the big and their helpers. In the pluriverse world Ndi advocates, every Cameroonian would fit because it would be a world in which many worlds fit. Ndi, again, points out that the Cameroon government has not been able to extend the peace overtures of the Greentree accord to its Anglophone population over the years because by having adopted FP as its *modus operandi*, it has become a French slave thereby enslaving Anglophones: "As they've known all these years/They have spent shedding tears/You refused to wipe not being brave/For all you are is France's knave" (18)! Here, Ndi is saying that the Francophone matrix of power is an offshoot of France's neocolonial matrix of power.

In "Anthem for Essigang", a vitriolic distortion of TC's national anthem, the poet depicts the country as one that FP have turned into a Parisian sandwich cookie: "O, macaroon covered with poor chicks' feathers/Go sit down and pride yourself in thievery/Like the slums your disgraceful flag shall fly/With your havoc to your name ever true" (35). Ndi's gastronomical image of Cameroon as a sandwich is telling of the politics of the belly that France and Francophone Cameroon have been practicing on citizens of *La République du Cameroun* and those of SC extraction respectively. Cameroon has been France's sandwich from the colonial period to the present in the same manner that Anglophone Cameroon has been Francophone Cameroon's sandwich since independence. Further more, the speaker's assertion that a clan of bandits have turned his/her father's "house that once all tongue could tell [into] a house of thieves [and] the rest of the world can see the emblem of the tears of [his/her] people" is another instance of talking back (35). Ndi's back talk is not inherently a form of disrespect; it functions as a mode of self-assertion, a way of being agential, a way in which the marginalized Southern Cameroonians strive to make themselves known, recognized, and valued. In Ndi's poetic vision, back talk is a mode of SC coming to voice, a way of taking a stand, a species of fearless speech concretized in the promise: "With death and sadness in our store/Thine be disgrace, thine be great shame" (35). Hence, for Ndi, voice is a powerful vehicle in terms of which Southern Cameroonians name who and what they are.

Also, to Ndi, the inability to question, interrogate, problem-pose, articulate the layers of imaginative wondering and wandering that can kill the spirit of hope. As Freire reminds us, human existence, especially marginalized existence, cannot be silent. To exist is to stand out, to pose one's existence as an object of critical reflection and that is why Ndi's personae speak in and through multiple Cameroonian voices. They speak with the sort of polyvocality or multivocality that maximizes access to the variegated downtrodden of both SC and *La République du Cameroun* extractions. In "Our Leaders & Our Drums," Ndi tells us that the leaders "came with veils on their faces" and the people "greeted and drummed their praises" only to discover later that "the stench of their faeces" had infected the nation's health (31). The implication here is that the practice of naming and claiming is not just about allowing marginalized voices that have been historically relegated to the margins to be heard. Thus, the persona further tells us that to cling to power, the leaders crush the crowd "With their swords chiming a tune/To bash [their] hopes out of tune/Hopes whose strength in non-visibility lies" (31).

While Ndi's poetry speaks to the pain and suffering of all groups, his poetry is fundamentally inspired by his love of and for SC and her people. He speaks in a voice and writes in a poetry that is unabashedly Anglophone. Even though his message is for all people, he is concerned with the existential welfare of SC; it is a unique, rooted, and defiant concern. He encourages Anglophones to find the courage to resist the totalizing forces of FP marginalization: "With the lies they had veiled with promises to bring in/And unleash their hounds to bite within/Which they do but our hopes are the last words/To usher them out and bury their swords" (31). The persona's confidence that the leaders will be

© 2021 Global Journals

ushered out and their swords buried once more reminds us that naming in the Freirean sense is the active process of breaking through forms of imposed silence; naming reality is a mode of problem-posing, a way of calling attention to the Anglophone Cameroon social world and its appearance of fixity. Infused with the kind of hope that one finds in "Our Leaders & Our Drums," naming becomes a form of demasking, unveiling modes of FP's bad faith and ideological obfuscation. Ndi's naming, then, is both about renaming the self and renaming reality; "renaming the self and renaming reality are coconstitutive, hermeneutics of transformation that presupposes and valorizes the unity between" SCC and construction of the Cameroonian pluriverse (Davidson and Yancy 2009, 4).

In "His Victory," Ndi decries the phenomenon of contentious elections by taking a dig at presidential elections in TC akin to the October 2018 simulacrum of elections: "After promises so untrue and surreal/Smiling for being propelled to the helm to steal/From the miserable poor/The malapert having his way tricked to the helm/When the west his deeds greets those of a strongman/On them we trample as those of a hangman" (32). Having come to power through dubious means, Ndi, in "Really Odd," tells us that the bizarre activities of the leader have culminated in a series of odd murders while avoiding the real murder he was elected to commit, i.e., murdering corruption. Ndi writes: "Murderer, murderer kill your corruption/Sad sights on our streets with slain liberty/Murderer, murderer why not kill all wars/Murderer, murderer your acts kill true needs/For even madmen chastise your deeds" (23). In the former quotation, Ndi's contention that the malapert's ascension to power was greeted by the West as the deeds of a strongman demonstrates his awareness that questions of right and justice apply only to relations among equals in power. The double standards of the West, the haven of FP, affirm that for others, the strong do what they can and the weak suffer what they must. Bill Clinton said, at a private function in Los Angeles in October 2002, that as the top dog in the world, the USA faced a fundamental choice. It could either make every effort to stay as a top dog or it could use its unchallengeable dominance to create a world in which it was comfortable living when no longer as a top dog (qtd. Evans, May 8, 2013). The Western world under US leadership seems to have ignored Clinton's second laudable proposal to the detriment of societies like TC. One would have thought that as the top dog of the world, the West would have created a framework of complementary, mutually reinforcing institutions through interlocking structures, each with complementary roles and strengths that condemn and dethrone leaders who come to power through dubious means. But unfortunately, the West, by pressing such leaders encourages a form of liberal hegemony; an ambitious strategy in which the West aims to turn as many countries as possible into pseudo-liberal democracies like themselves while also promoting an open international economy and building international institutions that seek to spread its own values far and wide in the form of FP. The dubious ascension to power by the "hangman" leader continues to paint a rather grim picture of Cameroonian politics. The Cameroonian electoral system is thus portrayed as a brutal arena where undependable politicians look for opportunities to take advantage of the populace. Daily life has become essentially a struggle for power, where each politician strives not only to be the most powerful actor in the system, but also to ensure that no other politician achieves that lofty position.

This explains why, in "Really Odd", the leader has become an indiscriminate murderer who instead of killing wars and corruption, has slain liberty, and killed true needs. Ndi paints an appalling picture of the situation by telling us that even madmen chastise the leader's deeds. Just like in "Really Odd," Ndi in "Gimmicks King Commander" paints the image of a chief commander who "gerrymandered his way to the boxes leaving the masses with losses" (44). The commander is oblivious to the fact that the masses are neither blind to his gimmicks nor to his rendering the nation sick year in year out (44). Even though the commander thinks that his people are fools in a crowd, the speaker says that they "are a crowd conscious of being fooled/And out of the mess will have ourselves pulled/Even with all his riggings and gun-totting/Hoping we'll yield and yield; that's not our thinking" (44)! In the same vein, in "Master or Monster," the persona also laments that "When we brought him in, we hailed, "Master, Master!"/Now wanting him out, we cry, "Monster, Monster" (72)! The "slain liberty" in "Really Odd," the "riggings and gun-totting" in "Gimmicks King Commander," and the cry "monster, monster!" in "Master or Monster" remind one of Maurice Kamto's apprehension for controversially claiming to have been cheated out of the presidency in the 2018 elections.

Kamto's arrestment, like that of several Anglophones, is an FP universalism that is congruent with a total neglect of Ndi's call for a Cameroonian pluriversalism built on a true FP-SCC conversation – which is not to be confused with the idle chatter or the violent babble of competing voices of especially the Anglophone Cameroon elite and their politics of the six Cs: confrontation, collaboration, compromise, collusion, complicity, and co-optation. It is "an extended and open dialogue which presupposes a background of intersubjective agreements and a tacit sense of relevance. There may be different emphases and stresses by participants in the conversation, and in [that] living conversation there [will always be that] unpredictability and novelty" that reveal cracks and crevices in FP that have been hegemonically taken to be solid and secure (Bernstein 1983, 1). In both poems, Ndi

© 2021 Global Journals

indicates three foundations for the commencement of the construction of that pluriverse. These include the leader's usage of his position to stop the misery of the poor plebes in "His Victory" and the killing of corruption and receiving an ovation and the killing of all wars and having thanks from all Cameroonians in "Really Odd."

For that pluriversal construction work to commence, the leadership must start by establishing proper institutions with a set of rules that would stipulate the ways in which Francophones and Anglophones would cooperate and compete. Such rules would prescribe or proscribe acceptable or unacceptable forms of state behaviour. These rules would be negotiated by Francophones and Anglophones, and according to Ndi's poetic vision, they would entail the mutual acceptance of higher norms, which would be standards of behaviour defined in terms of rights and obligations. These rules would be typically formalized in national agreements and Cameroonians would be obliged to obey the rules they created. From that perspective, engaging with Ndi's pluriversal vision, tarrying in conversation, would be to move within the critical space of recognizing that Cameroonians are all fallible and yet it would be to avoid succumbing to a state of epistemological nihilism; it would also imply a commitment to Cameroonian epistemic practices without assuming that such practices are grounded upon either FP or SCC epistemological foundations that are indubitable and apodictic (Yancy 2017, xi). Recognition of every Cameroonian's fallibility would not mean that anything would go; and, being committed would not mean that Cameroonians must be dogmatic and unyielding. Rather, pluriversal conversations would demand that Cameroonians be willing to subject FP and SCC "assumptions and beliefs to open and often fragile dialogue, to engage those voices and perspectives that know otherwise than the *arrogant we*, to be epistemologically un-sutured/fissured as a condition for at least initially hearing the other and being prepared to examine and even revise one's views accordingly" (Yancy xi-xii).

This section thus asseverates Ndi's *PMAW* to be an SCC scream; a refusal to accept FP, a refusal to accept the unacceptable. A refusal to accept the inevitability of increasing inequality, misery, exploitation, and violence in SC. The poems demonstrate a refusal to accept the truth of the untrue, a refusal to accept closure (Holloway 2003, 11). Ndi's scream – also an Anglophone scream – is a refusal to wallow in being victims of oppression. It is a refusal to readily accept the role of Cassandra adopted by some collaborative, compromising, collusive, complicitous, and co-opting Anglophone Cameroon elite who predict the downfall of the Anglophone world and accept there is nothing to be done about it. The Anglophone scream is a scream to break windows, a refusal to be contained, an overflowing, a going beyond the pale, beyond the bounds of an impolite Cameroonian society (Holloway 11).

As demonstrated through the discussion of "Peace Warring War," "The Fall of Bakassi," "Anthem for Essigang," "Our Leaders & Our Drums," "His Victory," "Really Odd," "Gimmicks King Commander," and "Master or Monster," that SCC scream is two-dimensional: the scream of rage that arises from the present experience of the ongoing Anglophone crisis carries within itself a hope, a projection of possible otherness. The scream is ecstatic, in the literal sense of standing out ahead of itself towards an open future; Anglophones who have been screaming since October 2016 exist ecstatically. They stand out beyond themselves; they exist in two dimensions. Their scream implies "a tension between that which exists and that which might conceivably exist, between the indicative (that which is) and the subjunctive (that which might be)" (Holloway 12). They live in an unjust society, but they wish it were not so: the two parts of the sentence are inseparable and exist in constant tension with each other. Their scream does not require to be justified by the fulfilment of what might be. It is simply the recognition of the dual dimension of reality. The second part of the sentence (they wish it were not so) is no less real than the first. It is the tension between the two parts of the sentence that gives meaning to their scream (12). If the second part of the sentence (the subjunctive wish) is seen as being less real than the first, then their scream too is disqualified (12).

Some Anglophones may not even know what a true world of their scream would look like, but they all have a vague idea. It would be a world of justice, a world in which Cameroonians could relate to each other as people and not as objects, a world in which people would shape their own lives. The poems discussed above even suggest, rightly so, that Anglophones do not need to have a picture of what a true Cameroonian world would be like to feel that there is something radically wrong with the FPcentric world in which they live. Feeling that the world is wrong does not necessarily mean that they have a picture of a utopia to replace it with. This does not necessarily mean a romantic, some-day-my-prince-will-come idea that, although things are wrong now, one day they shall come to a true world, a promised land, a happy ending. They need no promise of a happy ending to justify their rejection of a world they know to be wrong. Their starting point is this rejection of a world that they know to be wrong, negation of a world that is negative. This is what they must cling to (Holloway 5).

Excavating the Ruins of Francophone Pedigrees' Power without Responsibility, Scavenging for the Marbles Southern Cameroon Contagions' Responsibility without Power

The central political dilemma that has confronted TC for more than fifty years now has been

© 2021 Global Journals

whether and how the principles and practices of Cameroonian liberal democracy, especially power and responsibility, can be extended and guaranteed to the people of the SC extraction. This question centres around two concepts: freedom and equality. Both were effectively denied to Anglophone Cameroonians within the 1984 constitutional amendment that changed the country's name from the United Republic of Cameroon to the Republic of Cameroon with Law No 84-1 of 4th February 1984 being incontrovertible evidence that the original intentions of the Francophones were to absorb SC and not to treat her as an equal. Thus, *PMAW* bears witness to more than 50 years of two major types of Cameroonian leaders. There have been Francophone plenipotentiaries who possess political power but deliberately shun leadership responsibility and accountability thereby ruining the nation in what could be termed power without responsibility. There have also been Anglophones who generally take up positions without portfolios and, therefore, they have leadership responsibility but lack the political power with which to accomplish that responsibility i.e., they have responsibility without power. In both cases, there has been a tradition characterized by an uncharismatic and unaccommodating political style marked by a subordinating repugnant presence and a lack of the ability to articulate deeply held grievances and hopes among their people. The power without responsibility and responsibility without power dialectic readily recalls what goes on in other postcolonial societies like TC.

In *PMAW*, Ndi's chef d'oeuvre for the delineation of the ruins caused by FP is "Litany of Lamentations," a 58-line single stanza poem through which the poet records a litany of 58 socio-economic and politico-cultural Cameroonian wreckages. In the poem, Ndi parodies the Book of Lamentations in the Old Testament of *The Holy Bible*; five poems that lament the destruction of Jerusalem in 586 BC; describing how city and country, palace and Temple, king and people, suffered under the terrible catastrophe. Ndi's poem captures a parallelism between the people of Judah and the people of TC. Like the Biblical lamentations, Ndi's poem displays the tension between the presumptuous completeness of FP and the convivial incompleteness of SCC in both its form and its content. The utter decimation of the Cameroonian society is reflected in the complete and indiscriminate destruction of the people of TC and their institutions, and in the incomplete and fragmented state of TC as a society. Thematically, Ndi first describes TC as a society without ethics and values. It is a polity cast as a vicious cycle, a spiral of violence, a psychological torture chamber, a nation run by thieves specialized in the crushing of youths' dreams, a wall made of gangsters, a nation constructed with their bricks of arrogance, a community with people who are haughtily bawdy, morally uncouth, devilishly cunning, satanically sly, a country bedeviled with the smell of "shit" and the stench of rottenness (81).

He then identifies the legalization of the politics of the belly that looks like political mishmash, political indigestion, misery in squalor, abjection in a quagmire, legalization of corruption, bastardization of impunities, condoning crime without punishment, consolidation of their heinousness, a throne and crown in decay, and their timeless putridity (81). Ndi also contends that Cameroon has been for so long in the hands of a gerrymandering king, a king noted for: sowing seeds of discord and dancing and rhyming with division. He is also a king who is clannishly sheepish, gangsterly arrogant, sloppily clumsy, a thousand headed hydra, monstrously ugly, a basking shark, and a symbol of the flames of passionate and unpardonable hellish hate (81). This king has established a culture of stagnation where his cronies cannot change because they have made their minds impervious, they will not look back and change because they are trapped in their quicksand of misery, poverty, and privation (82).

Ndi equally indicates that the king and his cohorts have sanctioned socio-economic deprivation. They are not a gang of petty thieves pushed by hunger, but highwaymen robbing for greed, not just a lazy stupid bunch at the helm but a lousy crazy bunch steering the ship aground (82). Lastly, Ndi affirms that Cameroon's is a leadership of unconscionabilities: not just a demagogue thinking he is a pedagogue, but a coward with demagogic delirium, not just fake politicians and statesmen but convoluted to the marrow bone, not just their disorderly debauchery but chaotic apocalypse now, not just driving the nation into her grave, but making of every life living hell, not just through blind and questionable greed but through reckless and unthinkable felony, not just by burning and burning with fire but burning and burning to ash all hopes (82). Ndi ends the poem by promising that "When the gangster in chief has to this listen/I would the world ask him what he has learnt as a lesson" (82).

The above thematic summary indicates that "Litany of Lamentations" is a communal lament that Ndi uses as a way of maintaining community cohesion during crisis. The litany of 58 laments are not merely the speaker's personal expressions of emotion, but socio-economically and politico-culturally sanctioned, controlled ways of expressing grief. Functionally, the 58 laments are meant to contribute to Cameroonian social cohesion in the face of a leadership catastrophe. Second, it is Ndi's way of elevating the voices of Cameroonian survivors before the Cameroonian world and before the international community. Third, the laments provide some sense of completion of the tragedy of failed FP leadership and therefore points at SCC ways for individuals and communities, especially the Anglophone community, to move forward beyond

© 2021 Global Journals

tragedies such as the Reunification tragedy. The speaker repeatedly uses "Not just…" for the commencement of the first line and "I would say…" or "But I would say…" for the beginning of the second line of each pair of lamentations: "Not just a demagogue thinking he's a pedagogue/I would say a coward with demagogic delirium" (82). The second lines of each pair of lamentations repeats and intensifies the thought of the first line in different words (synonymous parallelism) or develops further the thought of the first line (synthetic parallelism) or negates the thought of the first line (antithetic parallelism). Through a division of "Litany of Lamentations" into a six-point thematic focus: the absence of ethics and values, the legalization of the politics of the belly, political gerrymandering, cultural stagnation, socio-economic deprivation, and unconscionable leadership, Ndi asserts that the poem is much more than a cheerless essentialist critique of the inequities of Cameroonian life. It is more than a cloudburst of SCC grief, a river of SCC tears, or a sea of SCC sobs conditioned by FP.

The poem captures the pervasive FP of Cameroonian society and the anti-Anglophonism of the Francophone community. It is difficult for critical space and insurgent activity and by extension, Anglophone power and responsibility, to be expanded. That expansion "will only occur more readily when Anglophone intellectuals take a more candid look at themselves, the historical and social forces that shape them, and the limited though significant resources of the community from whence they come" (West 1987, 52). A critical "self-inventory" that scrutinizes the social positions, class locations, and cultural socializations of Anglophone political elite is imperative; and Ndi affirms that such scrutiny should be motivated by neither self-pity nor self-satisfaction. Rather, that self-inventory should embody a sense of critique and resistance applicable to the Anglophone community, Francophone society, and the Cameroonian civilization. Given that the Anglophone politician has been a bastardized form of the Francophone, the future of Anglophone power and responsibility lies neither in a deferential disposition toward the Francophone parent nor in a nostalgic search for the Anglophone one. Rather it resides in a critical negation, wise preservation, and insurgent transformation of an Anglophone lineage which protects the Anglophone and projects a better Cameroonian world (Doh 2008). And indeed, Ndi's persona initiates that journey towards SCC self-scrutiny and FP accountability by promising that "When the gangster in chief has to this listen/I would the world ask him what he has learnt as a lesson" (Ndi 82).

Judging from the cavalierism with which the Francophonized and Francophonizing Anglophone elite and the government of TC have treated the Anglophone crisis, it is obvious that "the gangster in chief" would say that he has not learnt anything because TC of Ndi's poetic depiction is not TC he knows. But "Whose Cameroon?" and "Whose knowledge?" In Ndi's poetry the Cameroonian leadership's "knowledge" about TC is subtly framed "within the context of the epistemology of ignorance, whereby the leaders are blinded by a certain historically structured and structuring [Francophone] opacity" (Yancy 2005, 1). It is "'a particular pattern of localized and global cognitive dysfunctions, producing the ironic outcome that [Francophones] will in general be unable to understand the world they themselves have made'" (1). The Cameroonian leadership's refusal of Ndi's depiction only further confirms the Anglophone's conviction that critics and pundits have failed to explore and interrogate the subtext of power without responsibility that led to the escalation of the Anglophone crisis. His exploration of themes such as agnotology and epistemological fragmentation, sadistic brutality, sexual violence, xenophobic paranoia, the reduction of fellow Anglophone beings to brute beasts, plays itself out against a silent, though familiar, backdrop of a long history of *La République du Cameroun's* assimilationist drama of stigmatizing and brutalizing the marked Anglophone "Other" (2). Thus, when Ndi identifies "Not just the flames of passionate hate/I would say unpardonable hellish hate" (82), he is asserting that TC that he or Anglophones know is a Cameroon that paints the world in Manichean divide(s): us/them, civilized/barbaric, peacekeepers/warmongers. The divide that is most important to the task at hand, and within the body of Ndi's poetry, is that between FP and SCC.

In "String Puller," Ndi laments that because of their selfish economic interests, the French have continued to nurture and sustain this Manichean divide in TC by ensuring the continuity of a leadership of brigands: "The French… are good/To get us, they hoard… our petrol/And pay patrol/To put on our thrones brigands/Well trained in their bands/To play just the music they love to hear" (65). The involvement of the French in the politics of Cameroonian petrol indicates that this divide is by no means uncomplicated, always fixed, and neatly delineated. Indeed, it has at moments like the ongoing Anglophone crisis, proven to be extremely murky, coalescing at significant points of shared interest, political struggle, and so on (Yancy 4). The French involvement reminds us that one of the major areas of Anglophone discontent has been the FP's mismanagement of West Cameroon's patrimony. Apart from the neglect of infrastructure in the SC and the mismanagement and ruin of the once buoyant companies like Cameroon Bank, West Cameroon Marketing Board, Wum Area Development Authority (WADA), Upper Nun Valley Development Authority (UNVDA) in Ndop, West Cameroon Cooperative Movement, etc., oil revenues from SONARA found in SC are alleged to be used by those in power to feed the "bellies" of their allies such as France, and to stimulate

© 2021 Global Journals

the economy in other non-Anglophone regions. In addition, there is also great anxiety in SC that its major agro-industrial enterprises, especially the Cameroon Development Corporation (CDC) and Plantations Pamol du Cameroun Ltd (Pamol), have been sold or their headquarters have been moved to *La République du Cameroun*.

The mismanagement of the West Cameroon patrimony argument does not claim to lose sight of the fact even within each hemisphere of the FP-SCC divide, there are elite-induced tensions, contradictions, fundamental differences, rivalries, schisms, and further complex divisions and splits as has been demonstrated by historic events such as the Foumban Conference of 17th-21st July 1961, the appointment of Honorable Solomon Tandeng Muna to replace Honorable Augustine Ngom Jua in 1968, the Referendum of 20th May 1972, the constitutional amendment that changed the country's name from the United Republic of Cameroon to the Republic of Cameroon in 1984, and most recently, the restorationists, federalists, and unitarists divides within Anglophones. However, the utter self-centeredness of the French is heightened by the fact that Ndi had earlier told us, through "The Fall of Bakassi", that when Nigeria claimed the oil rich Bakassi Peninsula, France did nothing to help Cameroon regain that territory. This is Ndi's way of reminding us that capitalist exploitation and cartels and monopolies are the enemies of underdeveloped countries because they thrive on the dependency syndrome. Ndi's pluriversal argument, therefore, is that if the regime were completely oriented towards the wellbeing of its citizens, it would not allow France to "hoard' Cameroon's petrol, and thus make impossible that caricature of a Cameroonian society where all economic and political power is held in the hands of a few "brigands" who have been put there to use FP to safeguard French interest.

Also, the presence of French petrol barons in Cameroon reminds one of a few verses from one of Pablo Neruda's early poems called "Standard Oil Company." In the poem, Neruda tells us that the obese Standard Oil "emperors from New York/are suave smiling assassins/who buy petty tyrants and dictators/They buy countries, people, seas, police, county councils/Standard Oil awakens them/clothes them in uniforms, designates/which brother is the enemy" (qtd. Roy, 12 March 2012). The parallelism between the French who put brigands on Cameroonian thrones to play just the music the French love to hear and the Americans who buy petty tyrants and dictators, countries, and county councils demonstrates both Ndi's and Neruda's awareness that the predatoriness of Empire power and bimetallism is the same everywhere, especially when petroleum is concerned. The parallelism also asserts that just as there are FP in Cameroon, there are American Pedigrees in other countries suffering from US neocolonialism. By indicating that Cameroon "brigands" exchange Cameroon petrol for power, Ndi is saying that more than 50 years after independence, the truly vanquished who look upon the Cameroon government as *mai-baap* – the parent and provider have been disappointed and disillusioned. The somewhat more radical, like the persona in Ndi's poem and most of the Southern Cameroonians have identified it as *chor* – the thief and snatcher-away of all things. But, unfortunately, the Anglophone elite, like the elite anywhere in the postcolonial world, find it hard to separate itself from the state. It sees, thinks, and speaks like the state. The diversion of Cameroonian resources over time is maintained not only by the power of France, but also through the power of elite in TC. These elite maintain a dependent relationship because their own private interests coincide with the interests of France. Most of these elite were typically trained in France and share similar values and culture with the elite in France. Both Ndi and Neruda are, therefore, saying that in a very real sense, a dependency relationship is a voluntary selfish relationship.

Until quite recently, it was sometimes difficult for some Cameroonians to see themselves as victims of the conquests of Empire and consequently victims of FP. But now, local struggles have begun to see their role with increasing clarity. However grand it might sound, the fact is, they are confronting Empire in their own, very different ways. This explains why Ndi ends "String Puller" by reminding us that: "When the French had invited us/All we left behind was curse/Now with knowledge they feed our killers/That's why they can't save us from these killers/That's why they are… ubiquity/Outright excuse from responsibility" (65). The speaker's declaration that the French feed their killers reminds one of France's ominous silence throughout the now-more-than three years of the Anglophone Cameroon crisis. The fact that a French invitation was answered with a curse demonstrates that the urge for hegemony and preponderance by the French patrons and FP are being matched with greater intensity by the longing for dignity and justice by others. Ndi's argument is that there are several avenues of protest available to people who wish to resist Empire.

By resisting, he does not mean only to express dissent, but to effectively force change. France's hoarding of TC's petrol, her putting of brigands on Cameroonian thrones, and her refusal to free SCC from their FP killers demonstrate that Empire has a range of calling cards. It uses different weapons to break open different resistance. For poor people like Cameroonians, Empire does not always appear in the form of cruise missiles and tanks, as Neruda insinuates it has in Iraq or Afghanistan or Vietnam. To Roy just like to Ndi, it appears "in their lives in very local avatars – losing their jobs, being sent unpayable electricity bills, having their water supply cut, being evicted from their homes and uprooted from their land" (12 March 2012). All this is

© 2021 Global Journals

overseen by the repressive machinery of the Cameroonian state, the police, the army, and the judiciary. As Ndi points out, their "ubiquity" ensures a process of relentless impoverishment and the entrenchment and exacerbation of already existing inequalities. Several of the struggles against these inequalities have been radical, even revolutionary when they began, but, Ndi's persona's SCC steadfastness in the face of French neocolonialism is a reminder that Cameroonians must watch against a situation where the brutality of the repression they face pushes them into conservative, even retrogressive spaces in which they start using the same violent strategies and the same language of cultural nationalism being used by the FP state they seek to "deFrancophonize" or "deFrenchify".

In "Burning Hate," Ndi bemoans the Cameroonian leader's transformation from a "head of state" to "hate of state." Like in "Litany of Lamentations" and "String Puller," "Burning Hate" is about failed leadership: "Hate of state dressed in ostrich feathers/ Fooling us he's better than burglars/In his pride unwilling to see any triumph/Good reason all should stand and chant/Until he slops down from his lying seat/Shedding off those ostrich feathers" (90). In the above cited lines, the leadership of burglars whose pride prevents them from permitting anyone to triumph anywhere near or around the village trough coupled with their blatant refusal to heed the plight of the people is a true reflection of what has been going on in TC. By acknowledging that the people were deceived by the "hate of state's" ostrich feathers, Ndi is saying that it is never easy to live with a sense of one's fallibility and genuine openness to what is other and different from us; especially when that genuine openness is taken for granted. Even though the people's openness and fallibility were exploited by the leader, Ndi's persona does not see this as a reason for despair or cynicism. On the contrary, because of the fragility of political openness in the face of the leadership's incommensurability, there is a need for passionate commitment to the task of achieving concrete freedom. The symbol of a personalized "village trough" (90) whether viewed as a container from which animals feed or a period of little economic activity, reminds one that Anglophones have been complaining that in human resource deployment, there is a gaping inequality in the distribution of posts of responsibility between Anglophones and Francophones. For instance, of the 36 Ministers who defended the budgets for the Ministries in November 2016 shortly after the commencement of the Anglophone crisis, only one was Anglophone. In addition, their cry has been that there seem to be key ministries that have been reserved for Francophone Ministers only and Anglophones do not even qualify to be Secretaries of State under them. These include, but are not limited to, Defense, Finance, Territorial Administration, and Economy. This perhaps explains why the persona in "Their Gift" affirms that "In… darkness we grope/While they laugh at our hope/Attempting to fly without wings/For they've impressed on us new kings" (100). And the one in "Coming of Vultures" concurs that "Realising we won't succumb to being their spoil/They did work out a way, a way to recoil/Leaving us assassins to make sure we toil/Toil we do toil day and night on our own soil" (96).

Pluriversalism has become a basic fact of modern Cameroonian life, and the "hate of state's" abandonment of his people is an indication that pluralism can take a great variety of benign and malignant forms. *PMAW* asserts that the key issue would be how Cameroonians and their leaders respond to pluralism. They can seek to deny it or to eliminate it. But Cameroonians can also, like the speaker in "Burning Hate," seek to engage critically with what is really different, what strikes them as incommensurable and attempt honestly to further the task of critically understanding what is other than them without denying or distorting its "otherness." Unfortunately, by metaphorically killing streams and their banks, the regime has constantly passionately refused to seek to bring about the material conditions that are the necessary condition for forthright critical pluralistic engagement (Bernstein, 2016:2). Ndi's pluriversal contention in "Burning Hate" is that pluralism is important for society and politics. The type of pluralism Ndi defends is "engaged fallibilistic pluralism" that is not confused with "bad relativism" (Bernstein 2016, 3). Engaged Cameroonian pluralism would always involve critique, where there is both understanding and critical evaluation. Engaged pluralism rejects the very idea of a single FP Cameroonian universal, a "God's-eye point of view." There are (and ought to be) a competing variety of philosophical perspectives. Regardless of the depth with which one holds one's most basic FP or SCC convictions, Cameroonian pluralists ought to have the obligation and responsibility to be open to learning from radically different perspectives. At the practical level – in politics and society – engaged pluralism should involve much more than passive tolerance of what is strange and different. It should demand a serious attempt to achieve mutual understanding. Engaged fallibilistic Cameroonian pluralists should reject the quest for certainty because as fallibilists, they believe that inquiry is essentially a communal self-corrective process (Bernstein 3) based on what Aturo Escobar calls "civilizational transition(s)," the complex movement from the dominance of a single FP model of life "to the peaceful, though tense, co-existence of a multiplicity of models, a pluriverse" (2019, 121).

III. Conclusion

This paper has demonstrated that Ndi's *PMAW* attests that the history of FP is fundamentally linked to

© 2021 Global Journals

the history of SCC, primarily as FP are expressed in the form of fear, sadism, hatred, brutality, terror, denial, solipsism, policing, politics, and the production and projection of FP fantasies. From the perspective of FP, SCC are criminality themselves. They are the monstrous; they are that which is to be feared and yet desired, sought out in forbidden FP political, economic, social, and cultural adventures and fantasies; they are constructed as a source of FP despair and anguish, an anomaly of nature, the essence of vulgarity and immorality. The SCC are deemed the quintessential objects of the FP's universalist or fundamentalist gaze, the strange, exotic, and fascinating object of fundamentalism. To paraphrase Yancy, the SCC are constructed as antithetical within a binary logic that points to the FP's own signifying [and material] forces to call attention to themselves as normative (Yancy 2017, xxx). Indeed, "FPness" is deemed the transcendental norm, the good, the innocent, and the pure, while "SCCness" is the diametrical opposite. This is the twisted fate of SCC vis-à-vis FP forms of disciplinary control, processes of FP hegemonistic embodied habituation, and epistemic FP world-making. The paper has also demonstrated that barbarism threatens when men cease to talk together according to reasonable laws of argument and that argument ceases to be civil when it is dominated by passion and prejudice; when its vocabulary becomes solipsist, premised on the theory that my FP or SCC insight is mine alone and cannot be shared. That is, "when [national] dialogue gives way to a series of [FP] monologues; when the parties to the conversation cease to listen to one another, or hear only what they want to hear, or see the other's argument only through the screen of their own categories; conversation becomes merely quarrelsome or querulous [and] civility dies with the death of dialogue" (Murray 1960, 14).

Horace Kallen criticized the idea of America as a society that obliterates cultural differences by arguing that an American "melting pot," just like the present Cameroonian "Republic," suggests that all elements are put into the pot and to become a single homogenous mass. Drawing on a figure of speech that William James had used in his lectures on pluralism, Kallen, like Ndi, recommends the "form of a Federal republic; its substance a democracy of nationalities, cooperating voluntarily and autonomously in the enterprise of self-realization through the perfection of men according to their kind" (Kallen 1915, 92). Using a musical metaphor, Kallen concludes his article with an extended analogy of the USA to a symphony orchestra where just like every type of instrument has its specific timbre and tonality and its appropriate theme and melody in the whole symphony, each ethnic group is a natural instrument, its spirit and culture are its theme and melody, and the harmony, dissonances, and discords of them all make a symphony of civilization whose playing is the writing with nothing so fixed and inevitable about its progressions (Kallen 92). This paper affirms that Kallen's orchestra society would be a wonderfully befitting adoption for a Cameroonian polity mired in unrest. However, Ndi's *PMAW* takes a step further to caution that the Kellenian model would only be appropriate upon the condition that Cameroonians really get a symphony and not a lot of different FP and SCC instruments playing simultaneously but out of tune.

But where does this leave Cameroonians today in confronting their historical situation? This paper concurs with Habermas' declaration that our situation is one in which "*both revolutionary self-confidence and theoretical self-certainty are gone*" (Habermas 1982, 222). But, like Habermas, Ndi stresses the danger of the type of "totalizing" critique that seduces Cameroonians into thinking that the forces of FP and SCC at work in TC of today are so powerful and devious that there is no possibility of achieving a communal life based on undistorted communication, dialogue, communal judgment, and rational persuasion. What Cameroonians desperately need today is to learn to think and act more like the fox than the hedgehog – "to seize upon those experiences and struggles in which there are still the glimmerings of solidarity and the promise of dialogical communities in which there can be genuine mutual participation and where reciprocal wooing and persuasion can prevail" (Bernstein 1983, 228). For what is characteristic of TC's present situation of the ongoing Anglophone crisis is not just the playing out of powerful FP forces that are always beyond our control, or the spread of FP disciplinary techniques that always elude our grasp, "but a paradoxical situation where [FP] power creates [SCC] counter-power (resistance) and reveals the vulnerability of [FP] power, where the very forces that undermine and inhibit communal life also create new, and frequently unpredictable, forms of solidarity" (Bernstein 228).

Ndi's *PMAW* helps Cameroonians to think about their situation, their history, and their prospects. Ndi is constantly directing Cameroonians to a critical appropriation of the traditions that have shaped TC, but he is motivated by the practical-moral intention of searching for ways in which Cameroonians can here and now "foster a 'reawakening consciousness of solidarity of a humanity that slowly begins to know itself as humanity, for this means knowing that it has to solve the problems of life [in TC]'" (Bernstein 228). Preoccupied with trying to comprehend the darkness of Cameroonian times, Ndi seeks to reclaim the "lost treasure" of the revolutionary spirit of public freedom, to remind Cameroonians of the spontaneity and the miraculous quality of action in times of crisis. Without suggesting or supplying any FP-like blue-prints for action, he directs Cameroonians toward the tasks in which they seek to overcome systematically distorted communication and to develop the types of communities in which they can reason and discuss

© 2021 Global Journals

together. And although he is sensitive to the plurality of forms of life and life histories rooted in the different Cameroonian traditions, he is always reminding us that the ideal of unconstrained communication is a pluriversal ideal that embraces all Cameroonians. In "Peace Warring War," "The Fall of Bakassi," "Anthem for Essigang," "Our Leaders & Our Drums," "His Victory," "Really Odd," "Gimmicks King Commander," "Master or Monster," "Burning Hate," "Litany of Lamentations," "String Puller," "Burning Hate," "Their Gift," and "Coming of Vultures" Ndi stresses that Cameroonian democratic politics needs to become an encounter among people with differing interests, perspectives, and opinions – an encounter in which Cameroonians reconsider and mutually revise opinions and interests, both individual and communal through governing by obeying. That democracy needs to continuously happen in a context of conflict, imperfect knowledge, and uncertainty, but where community action is necessary. The resolutions achieved need to always be temporary, subject to reconsideration, and rarely unanimous because what matters is not unanimity but discourse. Ultimately, *PMAW* is a treatise on the fact that "[t]he substantive common interest is only discovered or created in democratic political struggle, and it remains contested as much as shared. Far from being inimical to democracy, conflict – handled in democratic ways, with openness and persuasion – is what makes democracy work" (Pitkin and Schumer 1982, 47).

Works Cited

1. Bernstein, Richard. *Beyond Objectivism and Relativism: Science, Hermeneutics, and Praxis*, Pennsylvania: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1983.
2. Bernstein, Richard. *Pragmatic Encounters*, London: Routledge, 2016.
3. Blaser, Mario *et al*. "Introduction: The Anthropocene and the One-World." Draft in progress for the *Pluriversal Studies Reader*, 2014.
4. _____. and Marisol de la Cadena. "Introduction: Pluriverse Proposals for a World of Many Worlds." In *A World of Many Worlds*, edited by Mario Blaser and Marisol de la Cadena, London: Duke UP, 2018, pp.1-22.
5. Crenshaw, Kimberle. "Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory, and Antiracist Politics." *University of Chicago Legal Forum*, 1989(1) 1989, pp. 139-67.
6. Davidson, Maria del Guadalupe and George Yancy. "Introduction." In *Critical Perspectives on bell hooks*, edited by Maria del Guadalupe Davidson and George Yancy, London: Routledge, 2009, pp. 1-13.
7. Doh, Emmanuel. *Africa's Political Wastelands: The Bastardization of Cameroon*, Bamenda: Langaa, 2008.
8. Escobar, Aturo. "Thinking-feeling with the Earth: Territorial Struggles and the Ontological Dimension of the Epistemologies of the South," *Revista de Antropología Iberoamericana*, 11(1), 2016, pp. 11-32.
9. _____. "Civilizational Transtion(s)." In *Pluriverse: A Post-Development Dictionary*, edited by Ashish Kothari, Ariel Salleh, Aturo Escobar, Federico Demaria, and Alberto Acosta. New Delhi: Tulika Books, 2019, pp. 121-23.
10. Evans, Gareth. "Ending Deadly Conflict: A Naïve Dream?" Humanitas Visiting Professorship in Statecraft and Diplomacy Lecture, University of Cambridge, 8 May 2013.
11. Fregoso, Rosa Linda. *MeXicana Encounters: The Making of Social Identities in the Borderlands*, London: University of California Press, 2003.
12. Freire, Paulo. *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, *30th Anniversary Edition*, Translated by Myra Bergman Ramos, Introduction by Donaldo Macedo, London: Continuum, 2000.
13. Giddens, Anthony. *Modernity and Self-Identity: Self and Society in the Late Modern Age*, Cambridge: Stanford UP, 1991.
14. Grosfoguel, Ramón. "Decolonizing Post-Colonial Studies and Paradigms of Political-Economy: Transmodernity, Decolonial Thinking, and Global Coloniality." *Transmodernity*, 1(1), 2011, pp. 1-38.
15. Habermas, Jürgen. "A Reply to my Critics." In *Habermas: Critical Debates*, edited by John B. Thompson and David Held, London: Macmillan, 1982, pp. 219-83.
16. Holloway, John. *Change the World without Taking Power*, London: Pluto Press, 2003.
17. hooks, bell. *Talking Back: Thinking Feminist, Thinking Black,* Boston: South End Press, 1989.
18. Kontopoulos, Kyriakos. *The Logics of Social Structures*, Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1993.
19. Maturana, Humberto and Bernhard Poerksen. *From Being to Doing: The Origins of the Biology of Cognition: A Conversation between Humberto R. Maturana and Bernhard Poerksen*, trans. Wolfram Karl Koeck and Alison Rosemary Koeck, Heidelberg: Carl-Auer International, 2004.
20. Mignolo, Walter. "Foreword: On Pluriversality and Multipolarity." In *Constructing the Pluriverse: The Geopolitics of Knowledge*, edited by Bernd Reiter, London: Duke UP, 2018, pp. ix-xvi.
21. Murray, John. *We Hold These Truths: Catholic Reflections on the American Proposition,* Kansas City: Sheed and Ward, 1960.

© 2021 Global Journals

22. Ndi, Bill. *Peace Mongers at War*, Bamenda: Langaa, 2018.
23. Pitkin, H. F. and S. M. Schumer. "On Participation," *Democracy*, 2(4), 1982, pp. 43-54.
24. Rosenau, James. "Emergent Spaces, New Places, and Old Faces: Proliferating Identities in a Globalizing World." In *Worlds on the Move: Globalization, Migration, and Cultural Security*, edited by Jonathan Friedman and Shalini Randeria, London: I.B.Tauris, 2004, pp. 23-62.
25. Roy, Arundhati. "Capitalism: A Ghost Story," 4th Anuradha Ghandy Memorial Trust Lecture, 19 March 2012.
26. West, Cornel. "The Dilemma of the Black Intellectual," *Critical Quarterly* 29 (4) 1987, pp. 39-52.
27. Yancy, George. "Introduction." In *White on White/Black on Black*, edited by George Yancy, Oxford: Rowman & Littlefield, 2005, pp. 1-16.
28. _____. *Black Bodies, White Gazes: The Continuing Significance of Race in America*, Oxford: Rowman & Littlefield, 2017.

© 2021 Global Journals