

The Paradox of Co-Existence and Reunion in Cameroon: The Study of Bole Botake's *Family Saga*

Meroline Engoro Kaka

Department of English

Ph D Candidate, The University of Yaounde I
Cameroon

¹Received: 19 July 2023; Accepted: 21 October 2023; Published: 02 November 2023

ABSTRACT

This paper sets out to prove that co-existence subdues binary oppositions in Bole Butake's *Family Saga*. The work is undertaken because, in a dynamic marked by the living together of Anglophone and Francophone groups in Cameroon, social relations are constrained by numerous differences. Bole Butake focuses on the postcolonial era in Cameroon where the co-existence of Anglophones and Francophones is plagued by anxieties, tensions, crises and binary sentimentalities. The work is based on the hypothesis that the characters depicted by Bole Butake in *Family Saga* are plagued by crisis and binary sentimentalities which threatens their peaceful co-existence although the playwright suggests that peaceful co-habitation is possible. The Post-Colonial Theory sheds light on the binary polarities between the two distinct linguistic and cultural groups that result in tensions and crises, while New Historicism portrays the link between Butake's creative write-up and the Cameroonian society

Key Terms: *Co-existence; Paradox; Reunion; Butake*

INTRODUCTION

Christopher J. Odhiambo and Naomi Nkealah examine how Bole Butake gets theatre to mediate in the conflict between the French-speaking and the English-speaking counterparts in Cameroon. In their "On the Margins of Orthodox and Applied Theatre: Memory, Expiation and Healing in Bole Butake's *Family Saga*," they focus on the redemptive role of drama by looking at the play as an extended metaphor of the Cameroonian crisis. These critics focus on Butake's style as he uses characters in interactive drama to discuss facts about the Cameroonian community. On his part, Adamu Pangmeshi uses his "The Paradox of nation and nationhood and the process of reconciliation in Bole Butake's *Family Saga*" to opine that the idea of nation and nationhood in the African community is paradoxical and controversial due to the fact that those who will power have become dictators with all forms of exploitation. The above critics bring out very relevant points that support this paper. However, this article examines the crises in the two sections of Cameroon and Butake's suggestions for the possibility of a peaceful co-existence.

Social co-existence is a favorable condition for sustainable human development. It enables all members of society to contribute, according to their competences, to this development and to the creation of wealth. Co-existence is the capacity of a society to ensure the well-being of all its members. In Cameroon, living together increasingly appears to be a response to the emergence of identity claims by public authorities, in a context marked by the Anglophone and Francophone cultural differences. It is therefore necessary to examine co-existence in the face of binary oppositions in the play mentioned.

Co-existence attempts to capture the complexity of human relations from various angles: sociology, anthropology, geopolitics, political science, among other things. Carlos Esse notes, in "Construction of Social Cohesion and Living Together in the Cameroonian Public Space: Differences of Opinion versus the Emergence of a Common Sense in Discourse," that the multiplication of conflicts on the planet and the desire to reach appeasement situations have favored the emergence of concepts such as the social link, social cohesion and living together (09). Taking the measure of social relations, the United Nations proclaimed 2019 as the International Year of Moderation and the 16 May as the International Day of Living Together in Peace. This proclamation is intended as a means of regularly mobilizing the international community's efforts in favor of peace, tolerance, inclusion, understanding and solidarity, and as an opportunity for all to express the deep desire to live and act together, united in difference and diversity, in order to

¹ How to cite the article: Kaka M.E. (November 2023); The Paradox of Co-Existence and Reunion in Cameroon: The Study of Bole Botake's Family Saga; IJASSH, Jul-Dec 2023, Vol 16, 61-68

build a sustainable world based on peace, solidarity and harmony. In contrast to living apart, living together, which Tavana talks about in “Construction of Social Cohesion and Living Together in the Cameroonian Public Space: Differences of Opinion versus the Emergence of a Common Sense in Discourse,”, requires ongoing negotiation that allows us to question ourselves collectively (17).

As Jacqueline Nkoyok points out in *Living Together and the Dynamics of the Social Link in Cameroon: Which Cameroon Do We Want for Our Children?* the socio-historical evolution reveals that co-existence in Cameroonian society changes considerably according to the social crises that animate it. However, by constructing and disseminating the idea of a united, democratic and social republic, the networks of formulation of living together gives every citizen the feeling of belonging to the same nation (525). The author postulates that co-existence appears to be a social construction. Social co-existence requires a mutual and consenting commitment towards a collective consciousness. The write up examines how social co-existence is put to test in Bole Butake’s *Family Saga*.

The problem to be addressed is that Cameroonians have co-existed since the post-colonial epoch. However, writers such as Bole Butake question the practice because it has led to personal and societal disillusionment as seen in *Family Saga*. Characters are persistently in conflict because the practice of co-existence has failed to bring them a sense of belonging and material prosperity as some are defrauding others. Co-existence is actually a virtue, but the corrupted aspect of it inhibits reconciliation. Hence, this paper seeks to answer the following questions: How does Bole Butake capture the crises that have plagued co-existence in Cameroon in his *Family Saga*? What does Bole Butake suggest as a way forward in his *Family Saga*? In a bid to answer these questions, this paper hinges on the assumption that the concept of co-existence, as depicted by Bole Butake in *Family Saga*, brings about conflict because characters do not feel the desired sense of belonging although the playwright suggests that peaceful co-habitation is possible between the dissenting parties if certain conditions are met.

The Post-colonial theory and New Historicism have been used as the analytical tools in this paper. With respect to Post-colonial theory, Aschroft et al. intimate in *The Empire writes Back: Theory and Practice in Post-colonial Literatures* that:

Postcolonial theory involves discussion on experience of various kinds: migration, slavery, suppression, resistance, representation, difference, race, gender, place and responses to the influential master discourses of imperial cultures such as history, philosophy and linguistic.
(1-2)

Postcolonial theory concerns several dimensions. The analyses of works depicting all the societies which were colonized corresponds with this theory given that such analyses set out to deconstruct the discourses which imperialists laid down as parameters and writings of the colonized. As stated in the quote above, Postcolonial theory therefore considers experiences of various kinds such as migration, slavery, suppression, resistance, representation, difference, race, gender, place, and responses to the influential master discourses of imperial cultures such as history, philosophy and linguistics. Obviously, the theory questions unjust power relations like that which Butake presents in *Family Saga*. Kamala and his children have been trying to find out why they can only execute Kamalo’s ideas without participating in the decision making. The postcolonial theory gives room for the power of the colonizer to be contested.

Meanwhile, The New Historicist considers those features in the text which are evident in the author’s life and society, especially the author’s intention. Furthermore, Forrest Robinson is quoted, in *A Handbook of Critical Approaches to Literature*, as maintaining that “Literature is socially produced and socially productive, always existing within a particular socio-economic context and always transforming that context as well, at the same time it re-historicizes the text...” (322). Judging from the foregoing, a literary text is a product of society which contributes to its development and it equally influences the society in which it is written. This theory is appropriate for the analyses of Butake’s *Family Saga* in this paper as it sheds light on the historical and socio-political realities of Cameroon that inspire the playwright, as well as points to the text’s subscription to the militant writings of the second wave of Anglophone Cameroon writers.

From a new historicist perspective, co-existence is concomitant to the Federal Republic of Cameroon after the southern part of British Cameroons federated with the formerly French administered part of Cameroon that had gained independence in 1960. The word "co-existence" is defined by *Dictionnaire Larousse Poche* as “harmonious cohabitation between individuals or between communities” (47). In *Living Together in Multi-Ethnic Neighbourhoods: The Meaning of Public Spaces for Issues of Social Integration*, Peters Karin discusses it as a concept that expresses the peaceful links of good understanding that individuals, peoples or ethnic groups have with others in their living space or territory. Co-existence includes cultural diversity, social inclusion, social and solidarity economy, alternatives, collective entrepreneurship, networking, territorial dynamics, valorization of endogenous potentials

among others. It thus appears as a new form of governance integrating cultural diversity, social mix, living environment, community development and participatory finance.

The concept is also about fostering a sense of belonging for all, promoting cultural diversity, well-being and security for all, fostering social and economic inclusion, developing innovative and sustainable practices that promote both social co-existence and the improvement of the quality of life, cultural diversity, security, culture, the environment, employment, good public governance and, above all, a better management of diversity and equality amongst citizens. The issue of living together is of paramount importance in the daily relations of a country's citizens. Indeed, the mobility of populations creates an environment where cities must deal with new situations that pose challenges of social cohesion, cultural diversity, urban planning, and which are of primary concern to local authorities (26).

Meanwhile "paradox," in the context of this paper, can be referred to as a situation that is made up of two opposite things which seem impossible, but are actually true. In other words, Pierre Larousse defines the word as an argument that apparently derives self-contradictory conclusions by valid deductions from acceptable premises (41).

Larousse defines reunion, on the other part, as an instance of two or more people coming together again after a period of separation. It is an act of becoming a single unit. It sometimes has to do coming together again for pleasure (59). Esse adds, in "Construction of Social Cohesion and Living Together in the Cameroonian Public Space: Differences of Opinion versus the Emergence of a Common Sense in Discourse," that reunion involves the gathering of relatives, friends, or associates at regular intervals or after separation. The critic opines that reunion occurs when people are brought; especially for those who faced diminished opportunities in getting together with their relatives and friends. Esse states that the goal of a reunion is to provide everyone with a safe, stable and permanent sense of home in order to build a healthy and strong community.

THE PARADOXICAL PARADIGM: HISTORY AND LITERARY REPRESENTATION

In Cameroon, the preamble to the Constitution stresses that "the State shall ensure the protection of minorities' and promote "linguistic and cultural diversity" (Constitution of the Republic of Cameroon, 28). It should be noted that the country has made cultural diversity a major political concern since 1996. The need has arisen because the country has over 250 ethnic groups. Beyond what is written in the fundamental law, a new body for the promotion of cultural diversity was created in 2017 called the National Commission for the Promotion of Bilingualism and Multiculturalism. The aim was to practice living together.

The feeling of belonging to a common nation does not seem to sweep away identity, ethnic and social aspirations. Ethnic and cultural rivalries in some parts of the country have already become apparent. These frustrations are the result of the exacerbation and instrumentalization of differences that give rise to conflicts in the Cameroonian social milieu, despite the official discourse on the consolidation of an integrated, united and strong nation. Co-existence is therefore put to the test under these conditions, where it should be noted that the promotion of diversity should not be a matter of public action whose only operator is the state, but should involve individuals in the building of social cohesion and that is the contribution of this paper. This paper thus examines how co-existence can only be possible where there is mutual recognition.

It could be said that the construction of the state in Cameroon ultimately proceeded from a colonial imagination, but was very quickly reworked by the indigenous people who were to replace the colonial authority in the management of public services, not without echoing the colonial model of the manipulation of identities and tribes that make up the Cameroonian society as a whole. Others believe that the divide and rule theory, used by a certain elite through the subjugation of certain communities and community members, makes national unity in Cameroon utopian. Alain Touraine, in *Pourrons-nous vivre ensemble?* believes that in spite of everything the history of Cameroon is not that of brothers and sisters who fight each other, but that of a family that remains united in prosperity (363). So when it comes to the country, the best choice will always be the choice of stability, and the idea of acceptance is predominant: co-existence means that each person in his culture and religion must be accepted by his Cameroonian brother, and that tribalism is a form of social organization based on one's belonging to a tribe which claims an ancestor, a language, a tradition and a tribe. In the above work, Touraine further opines that, as a form of social organization, tribalism is not an ill, but it is the manipulation of ethnicity that is a problem (365).

The difficulty that Cameroon's leaders have in unifying the different constituent segments of Cameroon in a consistent and effective manner is linked to the plurality of cultures and identities. Far from reducing the causes of this crisis to a failure of the government, Chem-Langhëë Bongfen notes in "Social (in) justice as the Breeding-ground of protest writing", that the solution lies in the mutual acceptance of the political unity of the Republic of Cameroon as a state, and in the discussion of the institutional and constitutional compromise formula between federalism and advanced decentralization (Bongfen 11). According to the academician at Club d'élites, there is need for an institutional form which would be a state of the regions. Such should be based on the autonomous model (following the example of

countries such as Italy and Spain) with a national consensus offering certain specific political and cultural competences to the English-speaking regions, while taking into account their historical and cultural originality without breaking the unity of the Republic of Cameroon.

A number of conflicts plague peaceful co-existence in *Family Saga*. Although government has set a whole team of intellectuals at work (as earlier mentioned about the bilingualism team) to design a natural cultural policy and identity, the essence of Cameroonians feeling one is yet to manifest. The binary opposition between Anglophones and Francophones is still hovering and the relationship between the two groups is built on mutual distrust. Butake captures this in *In Family Saga*: Kamala and his children are living a bewildered life. Their home is empty and shattered. This explains why they are dejected and disillusioned. They are living an unfulfilled life. This bewilderment has pushed Ngong to ask a number of questions. He wishes to know the kind of agreement that was signed between his forefathers (34). He further stresses the fact that the agreement they signed is so obviously disregarded and even violated by the other party. This rather helps to fragment Ngong's relationship with his parents. The sense of nationhood is farfetched. Kamala says because they are marginalized, the fight will continue. He encourages his children to stop lamenting because he is still alive. He promises that: "Kamalo cannot get away with this..... fraud and immorality" (55). Peaceful co-existence is inhibited by fraud and immorality. Consequently, there is distrust.

Kamala, Sawa and Ngong are in a state of uncertainty. When they sit in their dejected state, they get to seriously think. Their thoughts hover around the re-imagination of the nation. Kamala, as earlier indicated, thinks that they are being used. The discrimination is not part of the the pact they signed. He underscores the fact that it has been faked. This is where the paradox lies. The guard who is in support of Kamala summarizes the latter's family problems in the following lines:

"We rape your daughter. We seize your goods. We turn you into slaves. To toil for the future of Kamalo (43). Deliberate wickedness is observed here. The opponent rapes Kamala's children, confiscates his goods, ruins their future and feels no remorse for it

Consequently, Kamala and his children do not think that they are part of the play's fictional nation. Kamalo and his papa have wasted the country's resources, thus making the citizens poor. Meanwhile, Ngong thinks that they are responsible for their problems. This is partly because they are doing nothing to regain their liberty and dignity that Kamalo and his papa have taken away from them. What seems to bring antagonism between the brothers in the play is the lack of dialogue. There is no sense of connectivity between the relatives. This fragmented relationship between the two major linguistic groups in Cameroon has pushed several Anglophone writers to write literary works of protest.

Chem- Langhëë Bongfen refers to writers like Butake in "Social (in) justice as the Breeding-ground of protest writing", in *The Kamerun Plebiscites 1959-1961: Perceptions and Strategies*, when he notes that "... the absence of social justice and equal opportunities for all in Cameroon, and more especially for Anglophone Cameroonians, has given birth to protest writing"(154). The lack of social justice breeds serious complaint which serves as productive material for emerging writings. In a confused state of mind, Kamala decides to meet Baakingoom, their supposed father, to find out whether he gave him freedom or bondagehood. Baakingoom does not seem to know the difference between brotherhood and bondagehood. But what is clear is that Kamala and his children have been marginalized. His decision to search for their own papa is out of frustration in the face of their dehumanization. While kamalo is living in an air-conditioned home, eating, drinking, smoking and making merry, he (Kamala) is toiling in the field with his children.

This pushes Kamala to try to find out from Baakingoom the terms of the Contract that they have signed. He interrogates the status quo in these words:

What were the terms of this deed of brotherhood or bondagehood with Kamalo? He tells me that his role is to conceive while mine is to execute. In short am his slave, toiling in the fields from dawn to dusk in these rags while he is having air conditioning at home in three piece suit, eating and drinking and smoking and making merry. (22)

Kamala, as earlier indicated, has a postcolonial mind. He attempts to question why they have been marginalized in a set up where they ought to have the same rights. He questions the unjust power relations between Kamalo and him. It is through his conversation with Baakingoom that Kamala realizes that the latter is not his father, and that he does not share the same father with Kamalo. In a conversation between Kamalo and Sawa, the latter still presents their perennial problem. She tells Kamalo that they live in a very hot area that is full of mosquitoes. Worst of all, they live under a leaking roof (26). Sawa thinks that there is something wrong somewhere. She emphasizes that "the harvest is always very heavy na? I don't know what father does with all the crops we harvest all the time na. Uncle you will make him to build our own house too, na?" (ibid). This excerpt shows that Sawa and her family are living in abject poverty because of mismanagement. This nation is so poorly managed that there is no hope.

Discrimination and injustice have perverted the Society. Sawa thinks that if Kamalo conceives and Kamala only executes, then the rule that governs the nation in the text is an unjust rule. The latter laments in the following words: "Who made it? It is a master and slave rule. That is why you are living in a very beautiful house only eating and drinking ---while we are toiling in the fields for your enjoyment" (30). This is an indication of the division that exists between the citizens of this imaginary nation, a replica of what the Anglophone minority has suffered since they federated with former French Cameroon. In her "Cross-Cultural Connections: The Decay Motif as Counter-Discourse in Bate Besong's *Beasts of No Nation* and Susan-Lori Parks's *The American Play*," Yvonne Iden Ngwa catalogues some of the injustices the Anglophones have been prey to as recorded by Anglophone intellectuals such as Henry Enonchong and Sammy B. Chumbow. She quotes them as noting that the final version of the constitution appeared to deny the equal status of English and French, as it stipulated in its Article 59 that the revised constitution shall be published in French and English, the French text being authentic. Consequently, the country naturally tilted towards French ascendancy as the French language increasingly became the language of the administration, police, army, university, and so on (qtd in *International Journal of Humanitatis Theoreticus* 6) Other measures such as the adoption of the CFA as currency and the French metric system consolidate Francophone ascendancy over their Anglophone counterparts in the union.

Kamalo still insists that his own "Papa" has given him all the right to do what he thinks. For Kamala, this is some kind of provocation. Consequently, Kamala insults Kamalo. This is partly because he cannot think for himself. He does only what his papa tells him. Kamalo goes ahead to tell kamala that he (Kamala) and his children belong to him, and if he does not like it, he should go elsewhere. In the following lines Kamalo declares: "You belong to me. That's what my papa says. If you don't like it here, you can go elsewhere. That's what my papa says" (13). There is no sense of patriotism. This further contradicts Benedict Anderson's idea of a nation, quoted by Clara Ja, that people should live, die and kill in honour of their nation (9). But it falls in line with Homi k. Bhabha's definition that: "a nation is defined as a unifying entity," and yet the various representations of the nation reveal division and disruption at strategic junctures so that the definition is rendered controversial (57). The critic considers a nation as an indivisible body which consists of different fragments.

There are a lot of disagreements and meaningless claims between Kamala and Kamalo. Therefore, there is no sense of communion in their society. This is where part of the paradox lies. This play is a metaphorical representation of the relationship between Anglophones and Francophones. Even though they are living together, Anglophones feel cheated and marginalized. This confirms the view that the nation is constituted of the very conflicting views that it seeks to overcome. Anglophones are always complaining. The two Cameroons are represented by Kamalo and Kamala. Kamala thinks that the terms of the contract signed is not being respected. He further asks for the deed of brotherhood that they signed. This contradicts Kamalo's conviction that what they signed is a deed of bondage hood. This is what pushes Kamala to regret why he signed the deed. This complaint has given rise to much literature by Anglophone writers. It has and continues to serve as raw material for most Anglophone Cameroon literary creations such as: *Education of the Deprived* by Shadrach Ambanasom, *Three Plays. Beast of no Nation* by Bate Besong, and *Across the Mongolo* by John Nkemngong Nkengasong.

PEACEFUL CO-EXISTENCE AND REUNION AS THE PLAYWRIGHT'S VISION

The playwright suggests that colonial intrusion, incarnated by Kamalo's Papa (Baakingoom that stands for France) in the play, is responsible for the tension between the two major linguistic groups in Cameroon. This is clear when Kamalo implies that Kamala should not hold him responsible for his "bondagehood." He asks Kamala to go and ask his own Papa (Britain) what is going wrong. As every other problem whose solution lies in the diagnosis of its cause, a first step towards peaceful co-existence, both in Butake's fictional world and in Cameroon, is being able to identify what went wrong to disrupt peaceful co-existence in both contexts. Kamala and his children blame it on the inadequacy of the terms of the arrangement they made, a parody of the Reunification and the Fouban constitution. They note that:

Without rules and contracts there is total chaos resulting in disagreements and unnecessary squabbles which will result in the wasting of our resources. Can't you see that? What makes you think my father abandoned me? And who is the ingrate between the two of us. This estate belongs to who? (11)

From the quote, it is obvious that there is the need to revisit the rules that govern Kamala and Kamalo's co-existence because the former and his children are victims of the chaos. Victor Epie Ngome uses the metaphor of a bad marriage in his work titled *What God Has Put Asunder* to convey the impossibility of a peaceful co-existence between Anglophones and Francophones in Cameroon if the terms of the union of East and West Cameroon are not revisited.

Even more significant is Christopher J. Odhiambo and Naomi Nkealah's reading of the play. These critics read the play as "a conscious artistic attempt to ameliorate" the tensions and anxieties that threaten peaceful co-existence in Cameroon.

They observe that:

as an artistic intervention, written to mediate in the conflict between the English -speaking Cameroonian and their French-speaking Counterparts. Using the conflict as a dramatic structure, Butake provides his audience(s) with opportunities to engage pragmatically with the problematic issues of reunification, including the deeply felt sense of betrayal and suspicions that threaten the very survival of Cameroon as a singular national entity...By laying bare historical injustices, Butake imaginatively weaves strategies of applied theatre and drama in a text that opens up vistas for engaging with memory as a way of dealing with the contractions of reunification and at the same time providing possibilities for expiation and reconciliation. (par1)

Thus, the allegorical allusion to the Reunification as "contract" by Kamala and his children serves as a means to achieve peaceful co-existence between the Anglophones and the Francophones in Cameroon. Odhiambo and Nkealah contend that Butake uses drama here to purge the dissenting Cameroonian parties of every ill-feeling that makes co-existence nightmarish. To them, the re-enactment of what they term the characters' "invented myth of origin" take these characters down memory lane. As such, they discover that they have a common father and do not have two different papas as they initially thought. The reconciliation that ensues on stage after this discovery can be read as Butake's vision for expiation and healing that will lead to peaceful co-existence between Anglophones and Francophones. The ritualistic dimension with which these re-enactments are endowed gets them to correspond to what Wole Soyinka describes as rites of open confession that aim at bringing about amnesty (27).

Although *Family Saga* depicts serious conflicts between several parties, the first among which is the antagonism between the major characters (Kamala and Kamalo), the playwright crafts these differences and the process of reconciliation into a coherent and cohesive whole. He intimates that differences must be kept aside so that the imaginary community can move forward. This is part of the author's concern. Kamala and his children realize that there is nothing they can do. This is partly because they have no arms and they cannot also resign to fate. The only thing they can do is to dialogue with Kamalo and his father. This is Butake's commitment to solve the problem between Kamalo and Kamala without bloodshed. The writer thus engages to tactfully create a forum in which Kamala and his children present their problems to Kamalo, and they try to solve them. Kamala and his children sit together and harmonize their problems so that they can jointly submit them to Kamalo when he comes.

The view that Butake's play proposes a means of reconciliation to the two major dissenting Cameroonian linguistic groups echoes the contention of Audace Boyingo, Christopher J. Odhiambo and Peter T. Simatei in "Imageries of a Post-Colonial Cameroon Nation in Bole Butake's *Family Saga* and Bate Besong's *Beasts of No Nation*." According to these critics, Bole Butake adopts the poetics of reconciliation in his *Family Saga* in imagining a post-reunification Cameroonian nation to engage with identity politics. The critics contrast his approach to Besong's who opts for an aesthetics of resistance and confrontation (*Nairobi Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences*). While the latter emphasizes the plight and anger of Anglophones as the underprivileged in his play, Butake paves the way for peaceful coexistence in his. For instance, the playwright gets Kamalo to visit his brother, and Kamala and his children are told to prepare songs for the latter's entertainment when he does so. They finally compose their song which goes thus "in one family, in one family, we can change the world" (16). The call for unity expressed by the song is evidence of the characters' desire for peace to reign.

Butake further suggests that education is one of the tools that enhances an individual's or a group's personal development and peaceful coexistence with others. This explains why he gets his character to appreciate their father for what he has given them. He states that:

Knowledge is power! Father, of all the things that you have ever done for us, this is the best. Going out to look for the story of our family has been the best school that we have gone to. Good people, the best inheritance that you can give your children is giving them education, information.
(60)

Kamala further equates knowledge to identity when he remarks that the easiest way to make somebody one's slave is to deny that person knowledge, thereby denying that person an identity. That would mean denying that person the story of his roots, his origin (61). He thus sees education as the means by which identity crisis can be resolved because there can be no peaceful co-existence between people who do not know who they really are. Knowledge is power indeed because it enables one to know one's rights and obligations, and to determine one's status especially in a

context wherein the Francophone hegemonic power is not inclined to grant equal rights and opportunities to all. The pivotal place of knowledge is such that Butake uses the Pirandellian technique to break the fourth wall between the actors and the audience. The characters directly and repeatedly address the audience as "good people" to communicate this truth to them.

The emerging Cameroonian elite developed consciousness with the increasing dismantlement of the federation and the increased gallicisation of the Republic by its first President, Ahmadou Ahidjo. Such consciousness is the result of the possession of "knowledge" that Butaké's characters are talking about. Piet Konings and Francis B. Nyamnjoh list people like Bernard Fonlon as having been part of this Anglophone elite. Fonlon is described as having been the most accomplished Anglophone of both the British and French colonial cultures. And, given his fluency in both English and French and his rich political-administrative career, he was respected by both West and East Cameroonian political leaders (57). He became so influential that he was elected into the Federal National Assembly in 1964 and was appointed by Ahidjo to the post of Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, one of the many prominent positions he held. Fonlon represents one of those Cameroonians that succeeded in coming out of the Anglophone-Francophone binary to some extent. Many other prominent Anglophones have broken free of the Anglophone-Francophone divide since then.

Even more interesting is the fact that intermarriages and migration to Anglophone and Francophone regions by Francophones and Anglophones respectively, and vice-versa, are increasingly acting as means through which Cameroonians of both linguistic groups are breaking free of the Anglophone/Francophone dichotomy. In his "The Refusal to Belong: Limits of the Discourse on Anglophone Nationalism in Cameroon," Emmanuel Anyefru argues that the dichotomy between Anglophones and Francophones has become blurred over the years as a result of shared interests in aspects such as intermarriages, investments, migration and lifestyle (*Journal of Third World Studies* 277). Such shared interests favours peaceful existence despite the linguistic, cultural, political and social differences between Anglophones and Francophones. Also, in an article titled "Anglophone, Francophone, simplement camerounais," the communication unit of the Ministry of Justice in Cameroon examines the increasing difficulty to dissociate Anglophones from Francophones in Cameroon, and the difficulty to even unambiguously determine who is an Anglophone and who is a Francophone (*minjustice.cm*). Such blends are pointers to the fact that Butake's reconciliatory vision is feasible because other factors that foster peaceful coexistence have preceded it.

CONCLUSION

Butake's *Family Saga* portrays the numerous differences that plague characters in his imaginary nation. The reality of co-existing is plagued by anxieties, tensions, crises and binary sentimentalities. Thus, Kamala questions the status quo of his brotherhood with Kamalo because he is tired of being oppressed. The former resorts to fighting for equality which generates conflict and threatens peaceful co-existence. Acting as the spokesman of the people, Kamala denounces the social and economic inequality between the Anglophone and the Francophone people of Cameroon. Bole Butake's suggestions for peaceful co-existence in *Family Saga* includes dialogue, the acquisition of knowledge about one's roots and reconciliation among others. After examining the play against the back drop of the history of Cameroon and literary analyses, this paper's contribution is that peaceful co-existence should not only be a matter of public action whose only operator is the state. Peaceful co-existence should involve individual participation in the building of social cohesion.

WORKS CITED

1. Ambanassom, Shadrach. *Education of the Deprived*. Bamenda, Unique Printers, 2002.
2. Anyefru, Emmanuel. "The Refusal to Belong: Limits of the Discourse on Anglophone Nationalism in Cameroon." *Journal of Third World Studies*, Vol. 28, No. 2, *Aspects of Third World Development in the Early 21st Century*, Fall 2011, pp. 277-306.
3. Ascroft et al. *The Empire writes Back Theory and Practice in Post-colonial Literatures*. New York, Routledge, 1989.
4. Bongfen, Chem-Langhëë. "The Kamerun Plebiscites 1959-1961: Perceptions and Strategies." PhD Thesis, University of British Columbia, 1976.
5. Butake, Bole. *Theatre of the Oppressed*. London, Plutos Press, 1996.
6. – – – *Family Saga*. Yaounde, Edition Cle, 2005.
7. Boyd, Katherine. *Larousse Dictionary of World History*. Edinburgh: W&R Chambers, 1994.
8. Celcom Minjustice. "Anglophone, Francophone, simplement camerounais." 2022. *minjustice.cm*. Accessed 24 May 2023.

9. Constitution du Cameroun. Loi n°96/06 du 18 janvier 1996 portant révision de la Constitution du 02 juin 1972, modifiée et complétée par la loi n°2008/001 du 14 avril 2008, Yaoundé. 1996.
10. Esse, Carlos. "Construction of Social Cohesion and Living Together in the Cameroonian Public Space: Differences of Opinion versus the Emergence of a Common Sense in Discourse". *International Journal of Communications, Network and System Sciences*. Edited by Madjid Taviana. 2021. doi: [10.4236/ijcns.2021.146006](https://doi.org/10.4236/ijcns.2021.146006). Accessed 27 Aug. 2022.
11. Guerin, Wilfried et al. *A Handbook of Critical Approaches to Literature*. New York, Harper and Row, 1966.
12. Karin, Peters. *Living Together in Multi-ethnic Neighbourhoods: The Meaning of Public Spaces for Issues of Social Integration*. Rotterdam, Wageningen Academic Publishers, 2011.
13. Larousse, Pierre. *Dictionnaire Larousse Poche*. Paris, Macmillan, 2018.
14. Mbonyingingo, Audace, Christopher J. Odhiambo and Peter T. Simatei. "Imagineries of a Post-Colonial Cameroon Nation in Bole Butake's Family Saga and Bate Besong's Beasts of Nation." *Nairobi Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences*, Vol. 1, No. 3, 15 May 2017
<https://doi.org/10.58256/njhs.v1i3.776>. Accessed 23 May 2023.
16. Nkoyok, Jacqueline. "Living Together and the Dynamics of the Social Link in Cameroon: Which Cameroon Do We Want for Our Children?." *Collection Politique Africaine en Mutation*, Douala, Edition Cheick Anta Diop, 2019. pp. 522-557.
17. Odhiambo, Christopher J. and Naomi Nkealah. "On the Margins of Orthodox and Applied Theatre: Memory, Expiation and Healing in Bole Butake's *Family Saga*" June 2020. <www.goethe.de/ins/cm> Accessed 27 Aug. 2022.
18. Pangmeshi, Adamu. "The Paradox of Nation and Nationhood and the Process of Reconciliation in Bole Butake's *Family Saga*." July 2019. <www.goethe.de/ins/cm> Accessed 27 Aug. 2022.
19. Soyinka, Wole. *The Burden of Memory, The Muse of Forgiveness*. New York, Oxford University Press, 1999.
20. Touraine, Alain. *Pourrons-nous vivre ensemble?* Paris, Fayard, 2020.