CONCEPTUALIZING POWER AND EMPOWERMENT IN ANGLOPHONE CAMEROON DRAMA: A STUDY OF SELECTED PLAYS OF BOLE BUTAKE.

By

MBU, DORA NYUYKIGHAN

(MA/ARTS/49369/2005-06)

A THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE POST-GRADUATE SCHOOL, AHMADU BELLO UNIVERSITY ZARIA, IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD OF A DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS (M.A) IN LITERATURE.

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH AND LITERARY STUDIES,

FACULTY OF ARTS, AHMADU BELLO UNIVERSITY, ZARIA.

JULY, 2012

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this thesis has been written by me and that it is the product of my own research work. It has not been presented in any previous application for the award of a higher degree. All quotations, indentations and all sources of information are duly acknowledged by way of referencing.

_____ _____

Mbu Dora N. Date

CERTIFICATION

This thesis entitled "Conceptualizing Power and Empowerment in Anglophone Cameroon Drama: A Study of Selected Plays of Bole Butake" by Mbu Dora Nyuykighan meets the regulations governing the award of a Master of Arts Degree in Literature from Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria and is approved for its contribution to knowledge and literary presentation.

_____ _____
Professor Tanimu Abubakar Date
Chairman, Supervisory Committee

_____ _____
Dr (Mrs) O.O. Omokore Date
Member, Supervisory Committee

_____ _____
Dr. A.S. Liman Date
Head of Department

_____ _____
Professor Joshua Adebayo Date
Dean, Postgraduate School

DEDICATION

To

My beloved Mother, Mbu Getrude Lambiv

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

A work of this magnitude cannot be achieved without aid. Several people helped in different ways and at various levels to the realization of this project. I give all the praise, honour and glory to Almighty God for the life, abundant grace and good health he showered upon me through out this project. May His name be praised forever.

I am especially obliged to my Supervisors, Professor Tanimu Abubakar and Dr. (Mrs) O.O. Omokore for their patience, scholarly guidance and untiring efforts towards the realization of this project. Prof, your concern about finesse in expression and presentation were of immense help. Without making it appear an easy task, you always made me know I was up to it. I say Thank You once more. Of equally immense help to the realization of this Thesis are all my lecturers throughout the course work particularly Prof. Adeoti whose critical guidance was also very useful.

What would I have done without my loving and wonderful family? Many thanks go to my precious parents Mr & Mrs Mbu Peter Foka and my children Nina-Michelle and Pierre-Desiré for their financial and moral support. May the Almighty God bless and reward them abundantly. The invaluable support and spiritual guidance I had from Rev. Fr. Michael Kagarko and Rev. Dr. Dickson Dyaji cannot be underestimated. May the God Lord prosper you and replenish your pockets a hundredfold.

I appreciate the efforts of Dr. Babajo, for the materials, information and help given to me in the course of this work. I also appreciate the moral and academic advice received from my good friends Mallam Bappa and Mallam Rabiu. May Allah's blessings be upon you and your families.

I equally realize the role played by my dear country men and women in the persons of Mrs Anita Mfuh, Dine Gideon and his family, Kiyea Celinus, and a host of others whose names have not been mentioned not forgetting my dear friend, Margaret Kaje who has always been there for me in sunshine and in rainfall. May God grant you your heart's desires. Precie, you are fondly remembered for all your encouraging words and prayers especially when the path seemed so thorny and too long to endure. The Lord is your Strength.

ABSTRACT

The study aims at conceptualizing power and empowerment in Anglophone Cameroonian drama based on the analysis of selected plays of Bole Butake which include: *Lake God, The Survivors* and *And Palm-wine Will Flow*. The study examines the role of drama and the dramatist in highlighting the predicament of the marginalised Anglophones in Cameroon as a result of power abuse and it also portrays culture as a means of resistance to the forces of oppression and domination. The study also borders on the historical, cultural and political issues of the Cameroon nation and Anglophones in particular owing to the fact that Butake is a committed writer whose driving force has been to see Africa (in general) and Cameroon (in particular) liberated, not only from the grip of colonialism but also from the neo-colonial situation Africa and Cameroon found themselves in after attaining political independence. This study uses post colonial theory to analyse the selected plays of Butake under study. The data collected for this research is mainly library base. This study is broken down into five chapters. Chapter one entails a general introduction and background of the study, Statement of the Problem, Aim and Objectives, Justification, Scope and Delimitation, Methodology, Theoretical framework and Literature Review. Chapter two examines Culture Conflict in *Lake God*, while chapter three examines the "Gun" as a symbol of power in *The Survivors*. Chapter four illustrates the nature of power politics in *And Palm-wine Will Flow* and chapter five is the conclusion which entails summary of findings and suggestions for further research.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Cover Page…… i

Declaration …… ii

Certification …….. iii

Approval …… iv

Dedication ……. v

Acknowledgments ……. vi

Abstract ……. vii

Table of Content ……. viii

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.0 Background ……. 1

1.1 The Anglophone as Historical Context ..……. 9

1.2 Statement of the Problem …… 14

1.3 Aim and Objectives …… 15

1.4 Justification…… 16

1.5 Scope and Delimitation …….. 16

1.6 Methodology……... 17

1.7 Theoretical Framework…….. 17

1.9 Literature Review……. 26

CHAPTER TWO:

The Relationship between Culture and Politics in *Lake God*…….. 40

CHAPTER THREE:

The "Gun" as a Symbol of Power in *The Survivors*…….. 65

CHAPTER FOUR:

An Evaluation of Power Politics in *And Palm-Wine Will Flow*…….. 89

CHAPTER FIVE:

Conclusion…… 113

BIBLIOGRAPHY …….. 118

CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND

The concept of power is very complex and open to diverse definitions. Power can either be public or private, and he who wields power has the ability to impose his will on those without power. In an authoritarian political context, the word of a person in power is law and failure to do his will, may lead to terrible consequences like loss of freedom and even life. Personal beauty and charm can be powerful but these human attributes become the source of power when they enable a person to lead, influence or control other persons. There is political power which includes the type of authority leaders of nations have as well as military power which comes from the barrel of the gun, thus, symbolizing brutality and autocracy. It is these dimensions of power and its manifestations that the study examines in Butake's selected plays.

Foucault (1980:98) offers an engaging insight into the study of power as it relates to discourse and the expression of human thought. Foucault sees power as dispersed throughout social relations, which produces possible forms of behaviour as well as restricting behaviours. He opines that,

> *Power must be analysed as something which circulates, or rather as something which only function in the form of a chain. It is never localized here or there, never in anybody's hands, never appropriated as a commodity or piece of wealth. Power is employed and exercised through a net-like organization…. Individuals are not only its inert or consenting target; they are always also the elements of its articulation.*

Butake in this wise argues that although individuals are always in the position of simultaneously undergoing and exercising power, power must not therefore be seen as a single individual dominating others or as one group or class dominating others. Gaventa (2006:23) sees 'power over' as "the type of power that involves an either/or relationship of domination/subordination which is ultimately based on socially sanctioned threats of violence and intimidation that require constant vigilance to maintain, and it invites active and passive resistance". In this light those resisting the dominant group or individual must use acts of violence and intimidation which come in through opposition to certain demands of those in power.

The World Book Encyclopaedia notes that, power relationships occur in all societies and organized groups and there are both private and public power systems. In the public system, governments control the police and the military, the chief agents of force. This monopoly of force makes control of the state an important source of power. Apart from the government's control over the police and the military, this same Encyclopedia outlines a general overview of power as:

> *The ability of persons or groups to impose their will on others. Persons with power can enforce their decisions by applying, or threatening to apply penalties against those who disobey their orders or demands. Power is present in almost all human relationships. Teachers have power over students, employers over employees, parents over children, bullies over weaklings and military strong nations over weak nations ... human resources that give power include; intelligence, knowledge, skill, prestige, social position, bravery, and personal charm or beauty. Such qualities become a source of power when they enable a person to lead, influence or control other persons (p. 652).*

These are some of the various dimensions of power that Butake portrays and examines in the selected plays under study. In *Lake God*, the Christian Monarch exercises his powers over his subjects by refusing to lead the people as tradition demands in a yearly sacrifice. In *The Survivors* there is monopoly of force as the government controls the chief agents of power (police and military) thereby making the state an important source of power. In *And Palm-Wine Will Flow*, there is the shift of power from the individual to the people who decide on the affairs of their society in the market place. Butake here is advocating for democracy, and "power to the people".

The idea of power is at the root of the term empowerment. Rowlands (1995:104) states that, Empowerment is not only about opening up access to decision making, but also must include processes that lead people to perceive themselves as able and entitled to occupy that decision-making space.

Oxaal and Baden (1997:1), outlined three different aspects of empowerment thus: *Power to*: This power relates to having decision-making authority, power to solve problems and can be creative and enabling; *Power with:* This power involves people organising with a common purpose or common understanding to achieve collective goals; *Power within:* This power refers to self confidence, self awareness and assertiveness. It relates to how individuals recognize through analyzing their experiences; how power operates in their lives, and gain the confidence to act, to influence and change this.

Okwori (1994:24) sees empowerment as "a redress of powerlessness and disempowerment. This situation of powerlessness includes: poverty in economic terms,

in knowledge and information possession; community alternation through lack of sharing and caring; lack of the basic necessities of life such as good shelter, food and water. It also includes: dependence on foreign or external socio-economic and cultural forces; lack of influence in policies and decisions that affect people's lives". These conditions divest a people of the positive and constructive force to change their lives for the better.

Butake in the selected plays portrays empowerment as a "means of developing the capacity to relate information and knowledge to the understanding and analysis of society, thereby, gaining more awareness". His drama portrays people taking control and gaining understanding of socio-economic and political forces under which they exist, and how to change the conditions and forces that disempower them. It also re-invigorates and energises people to take actions and initiatives that will bring about equitable life systems.

Anglophone Cameroon drama refers to plays written by Cameroonian playwrights of English language expression. This drama is an engagement in and a response to past and contemporary Cameroonian historical, social, economic and political realities. This drama depicts the truncated state of these realities, the underlying class struggles, social formations and political institutions. The drama also indicates that no condition is permanent, and that the absence of organized leadership in any society springs from specific human flaws which could be corrected or changed by that society's progressive and social forces engaged in the battle for individual and communal self-actualization.

Many African writers, literary critics and scholars are of the opinion that art should always serve and defend the popular will against exploitation and oppression. In this regard, Emenyonu (1989:vi) posits that, the African writer is supposed to lead in the struggle against oppression, neo-colonialism, abuse of power, exploitation of the common man and the negation of fundamental rights in the society. He declares that: "The African writer has to use the facts of history to dramatise for the people the realities of their common existence, as well as dramatise for them their predicaments, so that they can make correct and appropriate choices in the future". Emenyonu identifies with Achebe on the role of the writer as he says: "it is the writer's task to help his people regain all these by showing them in human terms, what happened to them… and what they lost" (Kilam 1977:8). In almost a similar vein, Ngugi (1978:124) asserts:

> *I believe that African intellectuals must align themselves with the struggle of the African masses for a meaningful national ideal. For, we must strive for a form of social organization that will free the manacled spirit and energy of our people so we can build a new country and sing a new song. Perhaps in a small way, the African writer can help in articulating the feelings behind this struggle.*

Besong in Lyonga et al (1993:18) opines that "The Anglophone Cameroonian writer must depict the conditions of his people, expressing their spontaneous feelings of betrayal, protest and anger". Even though Besong asserts that the power of the writer is not strong enough to change the political and social institutions like the politicians, he believes that arts can become a fighting tool in which the writer can create literary works that are artistically profound and politically correct; works of indictment and works that show how his world is and could be. Ngugi shares this same view in *Barrel*

of a Pen, his book on "Resistance and Repression in Neo-Colonial Kenya" in which he presents the relationship between literature, culture and politics. The pen to him emits "bullets" just like the barrel of a gun. In other words, literature or culture can be used to fight for the liberation of an oppressed people.

Butake's commitment to political freedom is, therefore, a role he is constantly called upon to play in his society. Sartre (1988:229) maintains that the duty of the writer is to "take sides with the oppressed against the oppressor in the interest of freedom, and to denounce violations of formal and personal liberties or materialist oppression or both".

Culture, according to Rivkin and Ryan (1998:67) is "both a means of domination, of assuring the rule of one class or group over another and a means of resistance to such domination, and a way of articulating oppositional points of view to those in such dominance". This assertion suits the purpose of this study especially with regards to its view of culture as "a means of dominance". Butake's concern on cultural issues as they affect his people portrays, in some of the plays under study, that, an engagement with such cultural issues is necessary in order to reveal some political truths in the traditional society.

In the words of Amilcar Cabral (1980:43), "culture is simultaneously the fruit of the people's history and a determinant of history, by its positive or negative influence, which it exerts on the evolution of relationships between man within a society as well as among different societies". Butake's selected plays under study focus on these broad issues of culture and political power. In *Lake God* for instance, there is an interplay of

western religion with traditional religion to the detriment of the cultural values of the people. While in *And Palm-Wine Will Flow*, he depicts issues relating to the post-independence era that has to do with corrupt leadership through a mythic presentation of his characters. Butake's choice of culture and its presentation in the form of drama, is to show that cultural emancipation is an important tool in any political agenda to bring about structural or societal transformation. Drama as a tool for empowerment strives at national liberation on an ideological platform, awakening a people's consciousness of their worth, both individually and collectively.

After re-unification between Southern and Eastern Cameroon in 1972, the Anglophones who constitute the Southern part of Cameroon still find themselves caught up as an alienated and embattled lot under the umbrella of "National Unity and Integration", which exits and functions largely only at the periphery. This accounts for Butake's writing conveying with a remarkable force, the moods of the Anglophone Cameroonians caught in the assimilation nightmare of their existence.

The major concerns of Butake's drama are mass mobilization, an awakening to the realities of social inequities and social emancipation. Be it the emancipation of one class from the other, one region from the other, or one gender from the other. This preoccupation reflects an urgency to highlight the socio-political realities of the society, most often protesting against social injustices and sometimes attempting proposals as to how these could be corrected. Therefore for a playwright such as Butake to be effective in the society, for him to be the people's teacher, and to produce works that are socially relevant, he has to portray and interpret the historical, sociological, political, economic

and cultural issues of his time. Generally, Anglophone Cameroon drama is one which aims at raising the level of consciousness of its audiences, mobilizing them into action, awakening them on the political realities, on their conditions; educating them and most of all entertaining them.

Butake's key message in the selected works is that where reason or rationality gives way to intrigues fuelled by greed, and inordinate ambition, self-destruction usually follows mostly after some painful recognition through the acquisition of knowledge. This is as a result of the tragedy of power politics when men try to make just causes unjust, and unjust causes just; when men in power, or those seeking power, fail to accept their limitations, and so plunge themselves and their society into annihilation.

Bole Butake hails from Nkor, Noni Sub-Division of the North-West Province of Cameroon. He was born in 1947. His educational career started from a local primary school in his village Nkor where he moved to Sacred Heart College, Mankon and CCast Bambili. For his university education, he studied in the then University of Yaounde and later went to the University of Leeds in England. While back in the country in 1976, Butake founded a magazine of creative writing titled *The Mould*, for English-speaking Cameroonians. Before it ceased publication in 1981, it featured Butake's poems and short stories. *The Rape of Michelle* his first play was published in 1984, followed by *Lake God* in 1986, *The Survivors* in 1989 and *And Palm-wine Will Flow* in 1990. The selected plays under study and others by Bole Butake portray theatre as an informal tool of awakening and conscientizing his people (especially the grass-root folk) on such

diverse societal issues such as women empowerment, land-use and management, environmental protection, democracy and human rights, good citizenship, socio-economic upliftment and good governance.

A closer look at the historical background of the study area will go a long way to highlight the major political events in Cameroon, x-raying the question of marginalization of the Anglophone Cameroonians.

1.2 THE ANGLOPHONE CAMEROON AS HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Literature, especially political literature, evolves from a people's political history. In this regard, a closer look at the history of Cameroon and that of the Anglophones in particular will enhance an understanding of some issues raised by the playwright, especially those that relate to the socio-cultural, political and economic aspects of contemporary Cameroon

The concept of "Anglophone Cameroonian Drama" as used in this study refers to the drama written by Cameroonian playwrights of English language expression. The term "Anglophone Cameroon" refers to the former Southern Cameroons under Britain, whose language of expression was/is English, while the term "Francophone Cameroon" denotes the former East Cameroon or la République du Cameroun, under France whose language of expression was/is French.

Essentially, what is today referred to as the "Republic of Cameroon" according to Ambe (2007:3), was made up of two former federated states: The State of West Cameroon and la Republique du Cameroun, following a United Nations' organized

Plebiscite in February 1961. Before that unification, Cameroon was confirmed a German colonial territory at the Berlin conference of 1884 and remained so till the defeat of the Germans by the Allied Forces in the First World War.

The League of Nations divided "Kamerun" into two separate mandates and handed it over to France and Britain. The French were given the Eastern part, which they called "Cameroun" while the British got the Western part, which they called "British Cameroons". Britain further split the British Cameroons into Northern Cameroons administered as an integral part of the adjoining British colony of Northern Nigeria, and Southern Cameroons administered from Lagos as part of the eastern province of the British colony of Nigeria.

French Cameroun acquired independence from France in January 1960 with the name "La Republique du Cameroun" under the leadership of Ahmadou Ahidjo. In British Cameroons, instead of just granting independence to the territory, the United Nations in alliance with the United Kingdom, the administering authority, proposed two options to the peoples of the Southern and Northern Cameroons in the February 11, 1961 Plebiscite which according to Ngoh, (1996:40) is as follows:

1) Do you wish to achieve independence by joining the already independent Federal Republic of Nigeria? Or,
2) Do you wish to achieve independence by joining the already independent Republic of Cameroun?

In the plebiscite, Southern and Northern Cameroons voted to achieve independence by joining la Republique du Cameroun. 20th May 1972, witnessed a change in the

country's name from the Federal Republic of Cameroon to the United Republic of Cameroon with a new constitution. In 1982, Ahmadou Ahidjo resigned and handed over power to his Prime Minister, Paul Biya.

In the year 1990, following the popular demand for democratic changes, Cameroon's almost thirty years of one-party autocratic rule was brought to an end with the launching in Bamenda, of a new political party, the Social Democratic Front (SDF) by Ni John Fru Ndi on 26th May, 1990. The party had its slogan "Power to the People" boldly inscribed in its constitution. The launching of this political party led to the death of six (6) pro-democracy activists.

The introduction of multi- party politics in Cameroon in 1990 was to be followed in 1991 by consistent demonstrations, marches, fires and calls for a Sovereign National Conference all over the country. In a move to redress the economy, the 1990s saw civil servants' salaries undergo two major cuts which were accompanied by an increase in taxes too. State and Public Utility Corporations were simultaneously being recklessly mismanaged, privatized or liquidated, while some hundreds of civil servants were summarily retrenched. These economic measures brought untold economic hardship to the majority of the Cameroonian citizens.

Rotcod (1993:40) describes Cameroon's political leadership in the 1990s as "locusts which have devastated" the economic and political vegetation and reduced it to a "hellish Sahara". He writes that the leaders of Cameroon Republic,

> *Have embezzled with impunity, mismanaged with stubborn arrogance and reckless ignorance and bled the commonwealth dry, with systematic disregard for the expressed wishes of the*

> *drowning, disillusioned bulk of Cameroonians. They have excelled in repression, coercion, intimidation and blackmail…. They have opted for disinformation, monologues and propaganda, to the detriment of information, debate and truth… No other regime has been so full of rhetorics about rigour and moralization, responsibility and accountability, efficiency and democracy, liberalization and national integration, etc. And yet, no other regime has been so wide off the mark in these matters".*

The political history of Anglophones in Cameroon in determining their evolution and growth as a people and community has, according to Ambe (2007:7), "been riddled and beclouded by intrigues, fraud, manipulations, betrayals, double standards and dictatorship". It is a history of political domination and subjugation, colonialism and neo-colonialism and the search for identity and determination.

Foncha (1990:155), the architect of Cameroon's unification in 1961, laments the disastrous reality of Anglophone predicament in the Cameroon nation thus:

> *The Anglophone Cameroonians whom I brought into the Union have been ridiculed and referred to "les Biafres" (Biafras), "les enemies dans la maison" (enemies in the house), "les traitres" (traitors) etc. and the constitutional provisions which protected this Anglophone minority have been suppressed, their voices drowned, while the rule of the gun replaced dialogue which the Anglophones cherish very much…. The National Media has been used by the government through people who never voted for Unification to misinform the citizens … and deliberate lies have been told over the Mass Media, all in an attempt to isolate the Anglophone Cameroonians who voted for Unification and subject them to hatred and more discrimination and harassment from other Cameroonians.*

Anglophones find themselves in a "limping democracy" as Besong (1993:16), one of the Anglophone Cameroonian dramatists succinctly articulates this worrying state when he writes that:

> *We are subjected to perpetual, mental and psychological servitude ... the storybook victims of a cultural holocaust people caught in the terrifying coils of a world beyond our comprehension… the product of an age of profound discontent ... profoundly affected by cataclysmic changes and traumas… hollow men without speech, fighting against titanic odds.*

To this effect, the literary orientation of the Anglophone Cameroon writer/dramatist sprouts from his close study and consideration of the past and present socio-political, historical and economic landscape of his country. This type of landscape, according to Ambe (2007:9), is one which "essentially depicts scars of colonial, neo-colonial and political domination, economic exploitation, political manipulations, social disruptions and extreme political barbarism". It is against such a backdrop that Butake launches his crusade with the intent of reinterpreting the narrowing images of his people. In that process he has offered a realistic picture of the state of their conditions.

Since the time of independence on the African continent, the problems that have continuously been confronting many African nations in general and Cameroon in particular include; imperialist domination, poverty, economic stagnation, class inequality, exploitation and perverted leadership. These problems need to be addressed in the hope of eradicating them and/or suggesting a much more suitable platform that could positively propel the people forward. It is in this light that Butake uses his artistic integrity in the selected texts to ascertain the extent to which some of these problems could be redressed.

1.3 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Power and empowerment in the Anglophone Cameroonian context has been an issue of intense examination by most Anglophone playwrights like Bate Besong, Ndumbe Eyoh, Victor Ngoh, Babila Mutia and Bole Butake. This is because their works deal with the marginalization of the Anglophones. In this context, the selected plays of Bole Butake are investigated, among other things, to affirm the relationship between literature and politics in the Cameroonian context. The problem therefore is, to what extent can the artistic integrity of the selected texts articulate progressive change in human conditions. The research also attempts an answer to the following questions: Who are the marginalized? and what role does drama play in raising awareness as well as bringing about positive change in the society? In this regard, the primary texts studied address the questions of powerlessness, identity, self-determinism. Based on the above premises, the study is anchored on the propositions that:

1. Power and empowerment which is one of the major thematic preoccupations of the playwright, occupy an important critical space in the composition and discourse of Anglophone Cameroon drama.
2. There is a relationship between literature and socio-economic and political arenas of Anglophone drama.
3. Bole Butake has used drama as a tool to depict political as well as social misconduct/misdeeds of his people.

1.4 AIM AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The concepts of healthy art, political commitment and revolutionary literature are of utmost importance in this study. This is because since the time of independence in the 1960s, the problems of imperialist domination, poverty, class inequality, stagnation, exploitation and bad leadership have continued to affect the people negatively. These problems need to be addressed in the hope of eradicating them and/or suggesting a much more suitable platform that could propel people and history forward. The plays under study illustrate these atrocities in relation to the phenomena of domination, corruption and exploitation. The main aim of the study is to examine the concept of power and empowerment in the selected texts and the efforts of the playwright to propagate the idea of change to the marginalized Anglophones in Cameroon. The objectives of this study are therefore to illustrate that:

1. Drama is an appropriate medium used by Butake to empower the marginalized in the society to rise up and fight against their oppressors.
2. Symbolism is an important aesthetic element in Butake's drama used to illustrate the autocratic and oppressive nature of power.
3. Culture is a means of resistance and an expression of oppositional points of view to those in dominance.

1.5 JUSTIFICATION OF THE STUDY

The study shows that the selected plays under study vividly capture the socio-economic and political situations in Cameroon. The reason for the research is to present

Butake a playwright in the Anglophone literary field as little or less attention has been paid over the years to the contending issue of power and powerlessness by other Anglophone playwrights in Cameroon. Anglophone Cameroon Drama also plays an important role within the context of formulating aesthetics that suggests or leads to a positive change in the human condition.

However, the postulations of Butake show a comprehensive view of bad leadership in the contemporary Cameroonian society. Therefore, an analysis of some of his plays reveals the contradictions within the society as it affects the marginalized Anglophones in the Cameroonian society.

1.6 SCOPE AND DELIMITATION

The study examines the nature of power and empowerment in Anglophone Cameroonian drama with particular attention paid to the selected plays of Bole Butake, a renowned radical Anglophone playwright. The study is concerned with both the literature of the selected texts and performance especially those plays written within the period from 1980-1990.

The study is limited to the three selected plays entitled, *The Survivors, And Palm Wine Will Flow* and *Lake God.* This is because power is central to the themes of these plays. Though Butake has published several works, it is in these three selected plays that the issues of power and its misuse from the Cameroonian context are addressed.

1.7 METHODOLOGY

In order to give the study a contextual base, Butake's selected plays, *Lake God, The Survivors and And Palm-wine Will Flow* constitute primary data which form the basis of the analysis to be obtained through content analysis. In line with this, the method of data collection is library based. Primary data was also collected through an interview session with the playwright. The essence of this is to ascertain reasons for certain decisions taken especially those that regard contentious issues treated in the selected plays.

Secondary data in the form of existing literature such as books, magazines, journals, articles, newspapers and unpublished works are consulted. The internet as a fast generator of information in this age of information technology was also consulted for relevant materials for the study.

1.8 POSTCOLONIAL THEORY AS ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK

The study employs postcolonial literary theory in the analysis of the primary texts. The context covered, that is, Anglophone Cameroon, has undergone various forms of colonialism; from 1884-1914, it was an integral part of German Kamerun. When Germany lost Cameroon in the First World War, the League of Nations split Cameroon into two giving the Western part of the country to Britain and the Eastern part to France. The two Cameroons, Francophone and Anglophone in the colonial era, were United Nations' mandated territories under France and Britain respectively. With political independence in 1960, the United Nations allowed Francophone Cameroon to

acquire her independence, but decided to interfere with Anglophone Cameroon's future. Anglophone Cameroon was given two options: to achieve independence as an integral part of either Nigeria or of Francophone Cameroon (La Republique du Cameroun). There was no third option – that of self determination as a sovereign nation, hence the Southern Cameroons reunification with La Rebublique du Cameroun while the Northern Cameroons joined Nigeria.

Postcolonial discourse is a multidisciplinary theory that is utilized in many fields such as Archaeology, Sociology and Anthropology and also Political Science. Postcolonial discourse has been studied long before it came to acquire the present correlation. The most prominent scholar who is often identified with the origin of postcolonial theory is Edward Said. He published *Orientalism* in 1978 which marked the beginning of postcolonial studies. In this book, Said suggests that all discourse, particularly discourse about other cultures, is inherently ideological. Therefore, regardless of the subject, any historical discourse must be situated within a particular framework whose overall structure is necessarily ideological. Said situates his argument in the realm of Orientalism, particularly the academic study and political and literary discourse surrounding Arabs, Islam and the Middle East that originated primarily in England and France and later the United States. What Said attempts to show is that this discourse actually creates (rather than examines or describes) a palpable dichotomy between East and West. This became politically useful, Said suggests, when countries such as France or England attempted to colonize and conquer Eastern countries such as Egypt, India, Algeria and others.

The discourse surrounding these countries is coded, Said says, by a superiority that is not necessarily reflected in the realities of the concerned countries. When people in the West attempt to study the East, they typically do so within this already coded discourse. Therefore, Said says, the study of some place called the "Orient" and of some people known as "Arabs" fails to take into account, the reality of the area as having some semblance with the West (i.e., part of the Earth). Other countries and other people are not seen as the same within Oriental discourse, however, and therefore, a study of these "others" must inherently be one of studying an inferior culture when Oriental discourse is used to describe them. Said calls into question the underlying assumptions that form the foundation of Orientalist thinking. A rejection of Orientalism entails a rejection of biological generalizations, cultural constructions, and racial and religious prejudices. It is a rejection of greed as a primary motivating factor in intellectual pursuit. It is an erasure of the line between 'the West' and 'the Other'. Said argues for the use of "narrative" rather than "vision" in interpreting the geographical landscape known as the Orient, meaning that a historian and a scholar would turn not to a panoramic view of half of the globe, but rather to a focused and complex type of history that allows space for the dynamic variety of human experience. Rejection of Orientalist thinking does not entail a denial of the differences between 'the West' and 'the Orient,' but rather an evaluation of such differences in a more critical and objective fashion.

Bhabha, (1986: 156) another postcolonial theorist coined the term “hybridity” to refer to culture mélange or blend or exchange. Examining the effect of colonialism on both the colonizers and the colonized, Bhabha is of the opinion that the former who

claim to have a superior culture in the end get affected or 'infected' by the culture of those they came to civilize. On the other hand, the elite that emerged from the colonized world, who have been trained in Western higher Institutions of learning claim to still have and be inspired by their indigenous cultures. These, according to the tenets of hybridity, are false claims because they are all cultural 'half casts'; hybrids. For example, Ngugi started writing his novels and plays in English but later on, preferred writing in Gikuyu, his native tongue.

Among others things, Ngugi (1986) for example, qualifies the use of Western language(s) in African literature as a cultural bomb which annihilates the people's belief in their names, in their languages, in their environment, in their heritage of struggle, in their unity, in their capacities and ultimately in themselves**.** It makes them see their past as one wasteland of non-achievement and it makes them want to distance themselves from that wasteland. It makes them want to identify with that which is furthest removed from themselves; for instance, with other peoples' languages rather than their own. It makes them identify with that which is decadent and reactionary, all those forces which would stop their own springs of life. It even plants serious doubts about the moral rightness of struggle. Possibilities of triumph or victory are seen as remote, ridiculous dreams. The intended results are despair, despondency and a collective death-wish. Ngugi's conclusion is that people have to speak the united language of struggle contained in each of their languages. They must discover their various tongues to sing the song: 'A people united can never be defeated'.

However, this is not the view of some African novelists like Chinua Achebe. Achebe in '*Morning Yet on Creation Day'* (1975: 57) is of the opinion that English (Western languages in general) is a blessing to Africa because it is a unifying factor to greater entities (new nations) that emerged as result of colonization to replace hitherto small ones (tribes). To Achebe, the Nigerian Nation exists because of the English language and this unifying factor should serve as a tool in the struggle towards nationhood. He states:

> *Yet the fact remains that Nigeria was created by the British for their own ends. Let us give the devil his due: colonialism in Africa disrupted many things, but it did create many big political units where there were small scattered ones before. Nigeria had hundreds of autonomous communities ranging in size from the vast Fulani empire founded by Usman dan Fodio in the North to tiny village entities in the east. Today it is one country.*

Mongo Beti shares the same opinion with Achebe. In Kom (2002:20-27), Beti examines multiple facets of French colonial administration in Africa. He says the French colonialists imposed the French language on Africans in neglect of other school subjects because their intension was to prepare their 'subaltern agents'. He believes that the mastery of Western languages by subaltern writers has not served the 'metropole' the desired purpose for which it was desired – rendering Africans as mere houseboys, servants and messengers. Writers have used their acquisition of these languages as a liberation tool against their self-proclaimed masters.

Still on language, Aimé Césaire in '*Discours sur le colonialisme'* (1955:66) elaborated on the necessity of not only mastering but being able to modify Western language to suit subaltern interests. He was a French educated poet who even though writing in French, detested sounding French. He says

> *French literature has influenced me. But I want to emphasize very strongly – while using it as a point of departure the elements that French literature gave me – at the same time I have always strived to create a new language, one capable of communicating the African heritage. In other words, for me, French was a tool that I wanted to use in developing a new means of expression. I wanted to create Antillean French, a black French that, while still being French, had a black character.*

In *Toward the Decolonisation of African Literature* (1983:98)**,** Chinweizu, Onwuchekwa, and Ihechukwu castigate African writers and critics who take Western writers as their reference or model and use Western critical praxis to judge African literature. They cite examples of Wole Soyinka, J.P. Clark and Christopher Okigbo as examples of some African writers whose works take after European models. To Chinweizu Onwuchekwa, and Ihechukwu, African literature should play a role: that of liberation or emancipation of the masses, and this cannot be achieved without communicating with the majority who are the masses. Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffen in *The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Criticism in Postcolonial Literature* (1989:8) considers African literature as a reply to stories told of the colonized world by the colonisers. On the language question, the authors celebrate the way the formerly colonised world has been able to subvert the language of the colonisers and use it to counter their superiority. This agrees with Achebe and Césaire's opinions that though, writing in Western languages, the African writers should be able to 'twist' or model these languages to suitably paint the local milieu and pass their desired messages. This subversion of the colonial standard is referred to as 'abrogation' which is a rejection of imperial culture, its aesthetic, and its illusory standard of normative or 'correct' usage.

Post colonial discourse is also a name for the category of literary activity, which sprang up from a new, and vibrant energy within what used to be called common-wealth literary studies (Selmon 1994:14). It acknowledges "literatures in English" rather than "English literature". Thus postcolonial discourse refers to the unprecedented growth of new writings originating from former colonized world, together with the critical and theoretical writing content upon the imaginative works (Webster, 1996).

Post colonial literatures have been classified variously by different postcolonial critics. Barry (1995:195) categorises them into three subdivisions. First is the 'Adopt' phase in which the writer's ambition is to adopt the form of writing as it stands inherited from the west. The assumption is that, postcolonial literatures have universal validity thereby accepting the authority of European models and with the ambition of writing works that will be masterpieces of entirely this tradition. The 'Adapt' phase which is the second phase, aims to adapt the European native form to African subject matter, thus assuming partial rights of intervention in the genre. In the third phase which is the 'Adept' phase, there is a declaration of cultural independence whereby African writers remake the form to their own specification without reference to European norms.

In terms of language, Butake makes a deliberate infusion of a style, which reflects the characteristic social patterns and belief system of the Cameroonian traditional and political experience. He uses a polyglot setting of English, Pidgin and home languages and the dialogue in the various plays, encapsulate these different varieties. What one finds in the plays is a fascinating mix of the typical educated Standard English, a Pidgin English variety and a certain cachet of English molded in

native figurative language; an attempt to incorporate the Cameroonian thought patterns and modes of address in the drama. The descriptions and expressions used by the playwright illustrate an attempt at re-appropriating the English language for the benefit of his people.

This research employs a decolonizing and reactive approach to analyse the selected texts. This involves a reading of the plays to highlight the effects of cultural conflict and asserts the African view against European stereotypes of Africa as well as identifying a shift in the African political structures. Kofa (2003:42) identifies two perspectives of postcolonialism which support this stance.

Firstly, another view held by postcolonialists is that the West, i.e. the imperial world should not monopolise power to define the world. They insist that the "Centre" can be shifted through imagination and that this shifting can recreate history (Smith, 1999). The shifting involves the bureaucratic, cultural, linguistic and psychological diversity of colonial power. Presently, most former colonies cannot be said to have seen the end of colonialism. They are still essentially economically, culturally and politically dependent on their colonial countries. In fact, the institutions and legacy of colonialism have remained even when the colonialists have formerly left. Post colonial discourse takes into cognizance the peculiar historical realities of former colonies both in terms of independence, ranging from the eighteenth and nineteenth century to the late twentieth century, and the manner of colonial experience they went through. Former colonies were not all oppressed in the same way or to the same extent. Thus, their fight for independence was also varied. Significantly, the discourse seeks to "decolonize our

minds, to recover, to claim a space, in which to develop a sense of authentic humanity" (Smith 1999.23). It is a form of researching back, a form of writing back or of talking back. It involves a knowingness of the coloniser and a recovery of ourselves; an analyzing of colonialism and a struggle for self determination.

Secondly and finally, another definition of postcolonial discourse holds that it is fundamentally concerned with the problematic of difference. In this sense, postcolonial discourse shares a lot of ground and motivation with the political process of decolonization. Like decolonization, it seeks to identify, valorize and empower what colonialist discourse labeled as the barbarous, the primitive and the provincial. The opinions above characterize the works of such great scholars as Soyinka, Achebe and Butake among others.

From the foregoing, it is explicit that postcolonial discourse concerns itself with the world, as it exists during and after the period of European imperial domination and the effect of this on contemporary literatures. The discourse recognizes the distractive regional characteristics of the literatures of the postcolonial world. But beyond this, post colonial literature emerged in its present form from the experience of colonization and asserted itself by foregrounding the tension between the colonized and the imperial power, and by emphasizing their difference from the assumptions of the imperial centre. As stated earlier, the context in which Anglophone Cameroon finds itself is in many ways a victim of different forms of colonialism. It is therefore the deconstructionist, decolonizing attribute of Postcolonial discourse and its bid to establish a unique status of African literature that this research adopts post colonialism as its theoretical

framework in the study of power and empowerment in Butake's *Lake God*, *The Survivors,* and *And Palm-Wine Will Flow*.

1.9 LITERATURE REVIEW

After independence, and up to the early 1980s, the only outlets for critical commentaries on Anglophone Cameroon literature available to Cameroonians were on the pages of local newspapers; *Cameroon Tribune*, *Cameroon Outlook* and *Abbia*. A good number of essays and views contained in these newspapers and journals, though emotional and journalistic, did contribute in some way to criticism and literary creativity among Anglophone Cameroonians. This study examines the reasons for the paucity in literacy creativity in Anglophone Cameroon literature with particular focus on Anglophone drama, and a few articles on Butake and the selected plays under study.

Sam-Kubam in *ABBIA* (1978:205) on "the paucity of literary creativity in Anglophone Cameroon" says, Anglophone Cameroon falls among those countries in Africa where creative writing of English expression is at its lowest. Fonlon, in Arnold (1981:50), blames the paucity of literary creativity on the educational system in Anglophone Cameroon under the British, which emphasized work instead of leisure, skills instead of culture and language instead of literature…". To him, all these colonial prejudices contributed to the low rate of literary productivity in Anglophone Cameroon.

Lyonga and Butake (1982:157) examine the reasons for the low rate of literary creativity in Anglophone Cameroon among which are the absence of publishing houses/opportunities and patronage, the non-lucrative nature of writing itself and the

proliferation of the 'Onitsha Market Pamphlets' in the Cameroonian market. This is because this pamphlet was the only paper at the time available to Anglophones and written in Nigerian Pidgin English full of interesting stories about people and events in neighbouring Nigeria. About dramatic writing, they opine that, the bulk of what was written before the 1980s was weak in terms of structure and light hearted in mode and content except for Maimo's *The Mask* (1980) that raises a number of searching political and social questions.

Samira (2007: 5) in "Revisiting the Paucity of Cameroon Anglophone Writing" says, the alienation that the Anglophones have felt in Cameroon could be blamed to an extent for literary paucity in the region. She goes on to say that poverty on a general scale does not provide a healthy climate conducive for the growth of literary creativity. Secondly, Samira sees politics as practised in Cameroon as an adverse force against literary creativity. Her position tallies with that of Tangwa in Lyonga *et al* (1993:166-171) in which she opines that,

> *The ossification of the literary creativity might just be the thinner end of the wedge, for the greater problems lie in the Cameroonian socio- political adversity. Creativity cannot flourish and thrive in Cameroon as it is. Politics has despoiled creativity more than anything else. In a situation where people were inspired to express their suffrage in protest literature, it seemed as if there was a general release of a malignant virus of groupthink. In the wake of our political expression, there opened a gateway to literary expression. There was such a thriving outburst of literary creativity. But where are they now?*

Butake disagrees with Samira's opinion in this regard because to him, repression is the right climate for literary creativity to thrive. It is when people are marginalized

that there is the tendency for them to want their voices to be heard. The Anglophones in Cameroon have suffered alienation in hands of their francophone brothers, thus the reason why Butake and a host of other Anglophone writers engage in protest literature.

Another great source of difficulty for the Cameroonian writer is the readership. Literary apathy is real. But that is also because works are hardly promoted and talked about in the press or the Media. Samira criticizes ***Cameroon Tribune*** (a government newspaper) as biased because it either says nothing about published works critical of the Government, or tries to downplay the literary worth of 'anti-government' books and articles. She qualifies its editorial as 'an egregious act of naked sycophancy, with the editor squelching his way into the hall of shame with unnecessary blathering about the President?'

The domain of dramatic composition in the independent and post independent Cameroonian state up to the 1980s has been very minimal and has received very little attention in terms of research and criticism. Most of the critical responses to Cameroon literature in general and Anglophone Cameroon literature (and drama) before the 1980s were based on French speaking dramatists like Guillaume Oyono-Mbia, Rene Philombe and Were Were Liking. Although there was no mention of drama in Anglophone Cameroon before this time, some Anglophone dramatists had gone ahead to publish plays in English. For example, Sankie Maimo's *I am Vindicate*d (1959) and *Sov Mbang the Soothsayer* (1968), Kum Buo Sammy, *For self, For Tribe, and For Country (1973),* Mbella Sonne Dipoko, *Overseas* (1972), and Victor Musinga, *The Tragedy of Mr. No*

Balance (1976). This shows that by 1976, there was a vibrant drama in Anglophone Cameroon with Musinga and his theatre troupe touring some parts of the country.

By the 1990s, the state of dramatic writings and the theatre arts had reached an unprecedented level in Cameroon given the fact that the Cameroonian society was also undergoing rapid politico-social and economic transformations. Texts of popular Anglophone Cameroon dramatists like Butake's *Lake God* (1986), *The Survivors* (1989), *And Palm-Wine Will Flow* (1990), Hansel N. Eyoh's *The Inheritance* (1993), Babila Mutia's *Before this time Yesterday* (1995), Victor E. Ngome's *What God Has Put Asunder* (1992) and Bate Besong's *The Most Cruel Death of the Talkative Zombie* (1986), *Beats of No Nation* (1990) and *Requiem for the Last Kaiser* (1991) were at the fore front of dramatic art in Anglophone Cameroon. In the 1990s, Anglophone literature, particularly drama and theatre had attained great momentum, thereby becoming volatile and popular. This drama/theatre became a fighting weapon in the hands of dramatists as they attempted to redefine the systematic alienation of the populace from the system of governance. Though the above mentioned works are generally a fictive exposé in the debate about power politics in the evolution of the Cameroon nation, each in its own way is a critical intervention on that political evolution.

Besong (1998:7) supports the above assertion as he says, "modern Anglophone Cameroon drama and theatre also function as a political tool which is used to dramatise the bluffs and systematic exploitation of the Cameroonian people by a decadent and inflexible oligarchy". The dramatists through dramatic performance on stage, aim at

inspiring the marginalised social groups to rise above their limitations by challenging the conditions of their oppression. Besong's *Requiem* (1991) is a fictionalized drama of the incidents of the evolution and politics of post-independence Cameroon. The work takes the whole of Cameroon's colonial and post independence history and examines its leadership, depicting it as an exploitative and dysfunctional alliance between agents of neo-colonialism and an absolutely unrepresentative gerontocratic class, whose modus operandi is to loot and grab. But the overriding dramatic premise on which the drama is anchored is to inspire peripheral social groups to overcome their limitation by challenging and defeating the monologic politics of the totalitarian power that envelops them.

Butake's *Vampires* (1996) presents a deliberate progression towards greater optimism and the revolutionary. Ambe (2007:157), states that, "*Vampires* is a nightmarish world where corruption is endemic, oppression and massacres harrowing, and leadership absolutely myopic". The play depicts the worst form of megalomania and power drunkenness and the eventual uprooting of the gerontocratic class.

The first extensive and critical discourse published in the form of a book on Cameroon writing in English in general and Anglophone Cameroon drama and the theatre arts in particular, is contained in *Anglophone Cameroon Writing*, a 1993 publication by Lyonga, Butake and Breitinger. These authors explore critical discourse on Anglophone writing and treat issues related to language, ideology and vision of writers in a nation that is "seeking to widen the perspective of the concept of national identity and national literature, to overcome tribalistic narrow-mindedness and

ethnocentricity". Besong (1993:18) re-echoes the above assertion by calling on the Anglophone Cameroon writers to write works that are artistically profound and politically correct; works which depict the conditions of the Anglophone Cameroonians expressing his anger and, above all, works that give hope to the people. He opines that "literature must be inspired by an historical myth-informed consciousness. It must embody in bold relief the specific historical features of the entire Cameroonian reality".

The above postulations are the overriding concerns not only in Besong's drama, but also in the dramaturgy of Butake, Ngome, Mutia and Eyoh. Most of their plays are an artistic recasting and reproduction of the historical conditioning of the life of the Cameroonian masses, and a synthesis of their dehumanization. Butake (1994:101-102) describes the operative political foundation in most African countries, such as in his own country and the role of the dramatist within such a context. He emphasizes on a move towards conscientising and educating not only the marginalized majority, but also the minority urban political and bureaucratic elite who have confiscated the power and wealth of the majority. He states that:

> *It is an established fact that in most African countries, as soon as people manoeuvre themselves into political and administrative offices, their previous promises of service to the people are relegated to the background, and their major concern becomes how to perpetrate themselves in office and amass wealth for themselves… furthermore, total control of the affairs of the citizens is achieved by confiscating the media, especially radio and television and placing injunctions through any private initiative in the area of communication and information. In the Cameroonian situation, things have been further compounded by the manipulation of ethnic and linguistic divergences for the maintenance of a stranglehold on the entire country by a handful of absolutely myopic and ruthless self-seekers…. It is within the context of this landscape that I launched myself in the desperate attempt to re-educate*

> *or conscientise the urbano-politico-bureaucratic bourgeoisie through the writing and directing of plays.*

Tangwa (1999:165) revisits the above pronouncements by Butake in his assessment of Butake's dramatic art. In this article he observes that "Anglophone Cameroon drama is basically the drama of people who see themselves as having been politically deceived, and short-changed, marginalized, oppressed, persecuted, enslaved, exploited and brutalized". In line with the political social truths of the 1990s especially the issue of the marginalization of the Anglophones, corruption, exploitation and torture of the bulk of Cameroonians, Gobata (1993:5) describes Cameroon's leadership in the 1990s as "locusts which have devastated the economic and political vegetation and reduced it to a hellish Sahara". He writes that the leaders of the Cameroon republic:

> *Have embezzled with impunity, mismanaged with stubborn arrogance and reckless ignorance and bled the commonwealth dry, with systematic disregard for the expressed wishes of the drowning, disillusioned bulk of Cameroonians. They have excelled in repression, coercion, intimidation and blackmail…. No regime has been so full of rhetorics about rigour and moralization, responsibility and accountability, efficiency and democracy, liberalization and national integration, etc. And yet, no other regime has been so wide off the mark in these matters.*

Gobata's uncompromising criticism of political leadership in Cameroon in the 1990s presents the issues at the centre of Butake's and Besong's dramaturgy. The clarion call of "Power to the People" in the actual physical Cameroonian world in the 1990s has a corresponding parallel in the fictive creation of Butake's *And Plam-Wine Will Flow* and Besong's *Requiem for the Last Kaiser*, with the marginalized characters in the plays' universe challenging their oppressors and calling on them to institute "People Power". In Butake's *And Palm Wine Will Flow*, Ewawa's political leadership is

dictatorship that has completely abolished civil liberties and continues a rape of collective wealth.

Lyonga (1993:176) gives Butake praise in his presentation of *Palm Wine*. She sees the play as that which strikes a pre-emptive blow at monolithism in favour of democratic principles. Butake achieves this through his exploration and utilization of dramatic techniques of mythification, contrast, satire and irony. In contrast to the hedonism, drunkenness and sycophancy at the Fon's palace, Shey Ngong is made to be emblematic of vision, resistance and democracy. "The game must be shared. Let everyone have his fair share"(p.91). In such an ironic depiction of the future society, Butake envisages a deconstruction of the old/autocratic leadership and the reconstruction of a society where everyone takes part in the decision-making.

Lambo in his article "Corruption and Irresponsible Leadership: A study of Bole Butake's *The Survivors*" (1990:10) examines the ways in which corruption and irresponsible leadership are manifested in the work and the inevitable end of those who perpetuate this state of affairs. This is manifested in the character of Officer, who represents the government's agent on official duty to take care of the survivors but he embezzles the relief aid meant for these victims by increasing the number of the survivors from five to thousands, thus stuffing his decaying stomach and his bulging pockets on the calamity of the people.

Lyonga (1990:18) focuses strongly on greed and corruption. In the land of Ewawa, the red feather is a symbol of the highest honour accorded to citizens of great valour. But the Fon misuses this honour by decorating the least citizen who adulates

him. According to Lyonga, in the playwright's dramatic twist, Butake uses alcoholism as a genesis for the violation of the primal value of palm-wine. She emphasizes on the fact that palm-wine "engenders social and political wrongs of corruption, injustice and totalitarianism." Shey Ngong in *And Palm-Wine Will Flow* says "When there is too much in the belly, the head becomes an empty shell" (98). In another instance he laments that, "palm-wine is the curse that is ruining this land (100), while one of the Fon's messengers reports to Shey Ngong about he drunken situation in the palace thus, "The Fon and notables of the land were all drunk in various degrees" (105). Butake uses drunkenness and alcoholism as a dramatic technique to denounce excessive craving for power and the absence of democratic leadership.

In a short commentary on *And Palm-Wine Will Flow*, Eyoh (1990:24) opines that, Butake is "undoubtedly doing for his native Noni what Soyinka has done for the Yurobas by inscribing their traditions within the universal civilization". He praises the playwright's fine craftsmanship and remarks that, the play is a perfect example of effective theatre that communicates through several aesthetics – dialogue, mime, music, dance, mask and ritual. Eyoh believes that the many metaphors in the play are perfectly blended to communicate in several ways at one and the same time.

Butake's selected plays under study throw more light on the use and misuse of power, its manifestations and its consequences on the society as a whole. Butake's major preoccupation in the selected plays has been the exposure of socio-political vices and the liberation of the oppressed Anglophones from the scourges of an authoritarian regime as well as an overthrow of the decadent system that controls them. Butake

through drama, scoffs at those who occupy various posts of responsibility and use their power to oppress and exploit the voiceless.

WORKS CITED

Abel, Joseph (2009). "Power Relations and the Imperative of Political Morality" in Achebe's *A Man of the People* and *Anthills of the Savannah*. Seminar Paper Presentation, Dept of English, ABU: Zaria.

Achebe, Chinua (1975): *Morning Yet on Creation day.* New York: Anchor Press/Dubbleday.

Akorede, Yetunde (1993): *Theatre and Politics in Nigeria*, Jide Malomo and Saint Gbilekaa (eds), Ibadan: Caltop Publications Ltd.

Ambe, N. Hilarious (2007): *Change Aesthetics in Anglophone Cameroon Drama & Theatre*, Pia Thielman & Eckhard Breitinger, eds. Bayreuth.

Ashcroft et al (1989): *The Empire Writes Back*: *Theory and Practice in Postcolonial Literature*. London: Routledge.

Besong, Bate (1993): "Literature in the Season of the Diaspora. Notes to the Anglophone Cameroonian Writer" in Lyonga, Brietinger and Butake (eds) *Anglophone Cameroon Writing,* (BASS 30, WEKA No. 1), Bayreuth.

Bhabha, Homi K. ed. (1990): *Nation and Narration*.- London: Routledge.

Blewett Lori (2005): Lecture Notes on Foucault and Power, The Evergreen State College: February 26, 2005

Butake, Bole (1986): *Lake God*, Yaounde: Bet & Co (Pub) Ltd.

---------- (1989): *The Survivors*, Yaounde: Sopecam.

---------- (1990): *And Palm-Wine Will Flow*, Yaounde: Sopecam.

---------- (2006): "Home or Exile: The African Writer's Dilemma" scncforum@yahoo.groups.com

Césaire, Aimé (1972): *Discourse on Colonialism*. New York: Monthly Review Press.

Chinweizu, et al (1983): *Toward The Decolonization Of African Literature.* Vol. 1. African Fiction and Poetry and Their Critics. Washington: Howard University Press.

Davies, Caroles & Graves Adams (1986): *Studies of Women in African Literature*, Trenton: African World Press Inc.

Doho, Gilbert (2006): *People Theatre and Grassroots Empowerment in Cameroon*, Eritrea: Africa World Press Inc.

Durning, Alan (1993): "Supporting Indigenous People", *State of the World*: A World Watch Institute Report on Progress Toward a Sustainable Society (ed), Linda Starke. New York: WW Norton and Company.

Emenyonu, Ernest ed. (1989): *Literature and National Consciousness*, Calabar: University of Calabar Press.

Ezekiel, Mphahlele (1962): *The African Image*, London: Faber and Faber.

---------- (1967): *Voices in the Whirlwind and Other Essays*, London: Macmillan.

Fanon, Frantz (1963): *The Wretched of the Earth,* Penguin: London.

Fokum, Kebila (2003): "Facts and Figures About Anglophone Marginalization*"*. *The Messenger*, Weekly Newspaper.

Foncha, N. John (1990): "Resignation from the CPDM". *The Case for the Southern Cameroons* in Mukong W. Albert, ed. Washington D.C.: CAMFECO.

Foucault, Michel (1980): *Power and Knowledge: Selected Interviews & Other Writings 1972-1977*. (ed) Colin Gordon, New York: Pantheon Books.

…… (1982) "The Subject and Power", in *Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics,* ed. Hubert L. Dreyfus & Paul Rabinov, 2nd ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Gobata, Rotcod (1993): *The Past Tense of Shit*, (Book One): *Contribution of an Uncompromising Critic to the Democratic Process in Cameroon*. Limbe: Nooremac Press.

Jacobson, Jodi (1993): "Closing the Gender Gap in Development", *State of the World*, (ed) Linda Starke, New York: WW Norton and company.

Kom, Ambroise. Ed. (2002): *Mongo Beti Parle,* Beyreuth: African Studies 67

Lyonga, Nalova and Bole, Butake (1982): "Cameroon Literature in English: An Appraisal", *ABBIA*.

Lyonga, Butake Bole, and Breitinger, Eckhard (eds) (1993): *Anglophone Cameroon Writing*. (WEKA No. 1), Bayreuth: BASS.

Mbuy, Humphrey. "The Moral Responsibility of the Writer in a Pluralist Society: The Case of the Anglophone Cameroon Writer" in Lyonga, Brietinger and Butake (eds) *Anglophone Cameroon Writing, (BASS 30,* WEKA No. 1), BASS, 1993.

Mukong, W. Albert ed. (1990): *The Case For The Southern Cameroons*. Washington D.C.: CAMFECO.

Musa, Tansa (1999): "The Royal President", *Africa Today*.

Ngoh, J. Victor (1996): History of Cameroon Since 1800, Limbe: Pressbook Limbe.

Ngugi wa Thiong'o (1986): *Decolonising the Mind: The Politics of Language in African Literature,* London: James Currey.

---------- (1978): *Homecoming. Essays on African and Caribbean Literature, Culture and Politics*. London: Heinemann.

---------- (1997): *Writers in Politics*, Rev. Oxford: James Currey.

---------- (1986): *Barrel of a Pen*, London: New Beacon.

Ngwang, Emmanuel (1991): "Female Empowerment and Political Change in Cameroon: A Study of Bole Butake's *Lake God, The Survivors and And Palm Wine Will Flow"*, A Paper presented at the Mississippi Valley State University USA.

Obiechina, Emmanuel (1988): "The Writer and his Commitment in Contemporary Nigerian Society", *Okike,* An African Journal of New Writing.

…….. (1992) "Parables of Power and Powerlessness: Exploration in Anglophone African Fiction Today" in Issue: *A Journal of Opinion*, Vol. 20, N0. 2 (Summer, African Studies Association).

Oxaal, Zoe and Sally Baden (1997): "Gender and Empowerment: Definitions, Approaches and Implications for Policy", *Bridge Development – Gender*, Report No. 40. October.

Paul, Brians (1998): 'Postcolonial Literature: Problems with the Term'. http://www.wsu.edu/~brians/anglophone/postcolonial.html

Richard, Cottam (1977): *Foreign Policy Motivation: A General Theory and Case Study*, Pittsburgh: Pittsburgh University Press.

Said, Edward (1979): *Orientalism*. New York: Vintage Books.

Satre, Jean-Paul (1988): *What is Literature? And Other Essays*. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard Univ. Press.

Takougang, Joseph and Milton Krieger eds. (1988): *The African State and Society in the 1990s: Cameroon's Political Crossroads*. Boulder, Colorado: West view Press.

CHAPTER TWO

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CULTURE AND POLITICS IN *LAKE GOD*

The question of power politics is a very complicated one that embodies a lot of political goals and ambitions. Those who wield power either use it positively or negatively but in most cases, majority of those who are at the realm of affairs exercise their powers to the detriment of the downtrodden in the society. This therefore sets in conflict as those who are underprivileged struggle to meet up with those in positions of power because what they experience is torture, oppression, class inequality, stagnation etc. This chapter therefore examines the relationship between culture and power politics in Butake's *Lake God* as it affects the lives of the people of the lake community.

Lake God is set in an imaginary village Ewawa with the Fon as the leader of his subjects. Fon Joseph, the traditional ruler, but Christian monarch of the lake community is ably supported and guided by the Reverend Catholic Priest, Father Leo. Fon Joseph will not follow the ways and customs of his people against the wishes of his people. The Fon's refusal to lead his people in a yearly sacrifice to the lake god and consummate his love and kinship by sharing the royal bed with the Queen, creates imminent fear in the people. The people believe that, if this is done, there will be a good harvest and more children, without which, there will be famine and no continuity in the royal lineage.

This fear is further exacerbated by the presence of the cattle which continues to destroy the crops of the villagers. When confronted with this situation by the women, the Fon rejects their pleas and dismisses the women's suggestion that the graziers be expelled from the community. Because the men are silent and have been stripped of their powers to act, the women decide react by starving their men from food and sex. The women and the rest of the community eventually learnt that the real owner of most of the cattle which destroys their crops is their Fon. Thus, the reason he insists on the cattle and its graziers not leaving the village. Rather, the Fon prefers to exploit Dewa his cattle grazier by collecting a huge sum of money from him under the pretext that he will compensate the women whose crops have been destroyed; a thing he never did.

In the second movement of the play, "Fragments", Shey Bo-Nyo, priest of the lake god, warns the Fon of the impending doom if sacrifices are not made to the gods. Consequent upon this, "Kwifon", the male secret cult, which has been disbanded for six years, is reactivated. While, "Fibuen" the female secret cult, whose ululations had not been heard in the land for the past eight years, resurrects and, administers the oath of sealed lips with broomsticks cooked in the most potent medicines and herbs from the sacred grove of Nyombom.

In "Dead End", the women's solidarity in their revolt propels the men into action as they all gather at the sacred grove of Nyombom, together with Shey of the gods, and the Kwifon to do something in order to avert the impending doom, instead of going to their Christian monarch who might refuse to receive them. Although, Shey Tanto brings

members of the Kwifon together, who forcefully seized the Fon to lead in the sacrifices to the lake god, the whole act is defeated as the lake god strikes even before the entourage reaches the site of the sacrifice, killing the whole community but for five survivors: Woman, Man, Girl, Boy, and Shey Bo-Nyo.

Culture and politics are inter-related; therefore, they are crucial issues that need to be examined closely as they concern some works of Bole Butake. Culture could be regarded as the sum total of a people's collective art, science and all other social institutions, including their systems of beliefs, rituals and values. These are the set values that involve a people's history, progress and struggles. These are the values which Butake seeks to redefine in *Lake God*. Culture is portrayed by Butake as an instrument of cooperation and good governance and in the words of Ngugi, in *Homecoming (1982)*, "it is the culture which a man inherits that gives man his human worth and dignity". These were the virtues that the colonisers attempted to destroy under the pretence that the Africans never had a culture nor organised political institutions. In their tyranny, the colonisers systematically dismantled the political and economic institutions on which the African had built a way of life.

According to Cabral (1980:43), "culture is simultaneously the fruit of the people's history and a determinant of history, by its positive or negative influence, which it exerts on the evolution of relationships between man within a society as well as among different societies". Colonialism, however, denied Africa the right to cultural development and self expression and set up a state of siege that it justified with theories

about cultural assimilation. In Oyono's *The Old Man and the Medal*, colonialism perpetuates cultural imperialism by setting up "Whiteness" and its values as a superior quality that deserves emulation. In order to redirect the path of society, Butake has to engage in some political as well as cultural reawakening of the society. This is done because, political and economic liberation are essential conditions for cultural liberation, for the true release of a people's creative spirit and imagination. It is when people are involved in the active work of destroying an inhibitive social structure and building a new one that they begin to see themselves as viable entities. Butake's *Lake God* in this light, serves a role as both an instrument of cultural and political reintegration of the individual in a communal social order with the objective of emphasising the good values of African civilisation.

The presentation of the Fon at the opening scene is quite conflicting. He is the traditional ruler and spiritual head of the lake community but his attire shows his bias for western civilization at the expense of traditional culture. Contrary to his tradition, the Fon who is an auxiliary of the colonial administration is dressed in a "short-sleeved Khaki shirt, with epaulettes and a pair of plain black trousers. Epaulettes are Western (colonial) symbols which have robbed this African community of their indigenous dressing, especially for the Fon who is supposed to be the custodian of culture. This accoutrement reflects his obsession with Western culture at the expense of traditional culture but at the same time, contrasts with his bare footedness. Perhaps this is deliberate on the part of the colonial administrators who have to leave some gap for

there to be a remarkable difference from them. He cannot be given full symbols of civilisation for that would wipe the boundaries of difference – the other.

The playwright depicts the Fon's palace through stage directions thus:

> *Action opens in the reception courtyard where all business is done – receiving visitors and holding village councils. His throne is on a dais up centre stage. His two guards, tough-looking thugs, place themselves on either side of the throne while the rest of the characters are placed either to the left or right of downstage as occasion demands (P.5).*

This description of the Fon's palace breeds power and autocracy. In a real traditional setting, the Fon is regarded as the most powerful man of the clan and so must not sit on the same platform with his Chiefs and subjects. Everyone is obliged to pay respect to their leader and no one dares speaks to the Fon directly. This is often done through the help of one of the messengers who listens to the Fon in private and then informs the public of what their traditional ruler wants from them. Decisions are often taken in the presence of the Fon by the council of Chiefs but in Butake's *Lake God*, Fon Joseph single-handedly takes decisions to the detriment of the people because he sees himself as an educated Christian monarch and cannot indulge himself in heathen acts of sacrifice offerings.

Dramatic action in *Lake God* is propelled by the conflicts of two opposing camps. On the one hand, is Fon Joseph the traditional ruler and educated Christian monarch of the lake community who refuses to follow the ways and customs of his people. He is ably guided and supported by Rev. Fr. Leo the Catholic Priest. On the other hand, are the traditionalists, headed by Shey Bo-Nyo and Shey Tanto plus the rest

of the subjects in the village who are bent on following the tradition and customs of their land, and therefore want their ruler to do same. It is this central conflict in the play that leads to the tragedy at the end because of the monarch's refusal to lead his people (as their traditional spiritual leader) in a yearly sacrifice to the lake god and consummate his love and kinship by sharing the royal bed with the queen. The Fon echoes this:

> Fon: *Enough! I have told you, I am a Christian king. The church of Christ forbids the taking of a second woman. And I forbid the offering of sacrifices to heathen gods.*

The people of the lake community believe that when this is done, there will be more children and a good harvest without which there will be disaster since there will be no food to feed their children. The Chorus re-echoes this thus;

> **Chorus**: *The Fon will lead the people in sacrifice to the Lake God and consummate our love and kinship by sharing the royal bed with the Queen. And we shall have more children and a good harvest (P. 17).*

The traditional society of the lake community has been violently affected by a foreign imperialist civilisation. The conversion of Fon Joseph to Christianity conflicts with the traditional demands that he takes on a second wife and share the royal bed with her to ensure continuity since his first wife Angela can not bear children. In the lake community, marriage goes beyond just husband and wife. Rather, it entails the whole society thus, the Fon's refusal to take a second wife and consummate his kinship by sharing the royal bed with the queen shows the incompatibility between the two

cultures. Catholicism and polygamy – aspects of culture (one foreign and the other local) cannot tolerate each other.

This conflict leads the entire lake community to see Fr Leo as the instigator of disruption since he is the one controlling their Fon through his mission of evangelisation and civilisation. As long as Fon Joseph continues to adhere to the Christian religion, the balance of the lake community will be seriously shaken. The only option for peace and tranquillity to return to the lake community is for the Fon to renounce his new life and revert to the so-called "heathen life" – to polygamy and sacrificial offering. This shows the incompatibility of Christianity with certain aspects of African culture such as polygamy and offering of sacrifices. Thus, Butake's choice of culture is to show that cultural emancipation is an important tool in any political agenda to bring about structural or societal transformation.

Education one of the imperialist tools used against the Africans led to the destruction of the African cultural values. The educated African and especially the leaders used this educational opportunity to the detriment of their people. Rodney (1981:263) discusses the role of colonial education in producing Africans to serve the colonial system and believe in its values. He points out that:

> *Education is crucial in any type of society for the preservation of the lives of its members and the maintenance of the social structure… the most crucial aspect of pre-colonial African education was its relevance to Africans in sharp contrast with that which was later introduced (that is under colonialism)…. The main purpose of colonial school system was to train Africans to participate in the domination and exploitation of the continent as a whole …. Colonial education was education for*

> *subordination, exploitation, the creation of mental confusion and the development of underdevelopment.*

In *Lake God*, the Fon is a victim of western education who thinks that Western values are superior to his traditional African values and customs. In one of his utterances, he tells Father Leo, *"We will never catch-up with Europe ... Thank God you came. Praise be to Jesus who sent out his disciples to convert the heathen (p.10).* This is an indication of the fact that the Fon's Christian education and upbringing, plus the domineering influence of Father Leo, places him at an opposing position to the deeply rooted traditional rituals which link the community's very existence and survival to certain rituals in the lake community. In Ewawa community, it is the offering of sacrifices at certain moments to the god of the lake, who in turn assures the continuity of their society. Failure to do this, it is believed by the community, will lead to disaster.

In a similar vein, Maduakor (1987: 274) explains the African worldview that believes in constant communication with the gods.

> *The cosmos, in the African imagination, is a looming reality, still threatening in its intensity. In this environment, man maintains a close contact with nature, but his life is a life of fear: fear of ferocious beasts, fear of anger of the gods, fear of an unwitting infraction of the laws of nature, the taboos, and the social mores that bind society. The goal of life is that harmony can only be generated through constant communication with the gods.*

Shey Bo-Nyo and his people believe that, their community can only prosper when there is a constant communion with the gods. To Shey Bo-Nyo, priest of the lake god, his god is a god of terror, and he must warn the Fon of the impending doom if sacrifices are not made to the gods. He informs his people and their Fon that the lake

has been boiling for four days, indicative of the anger of the gods, demanding for an urgent offer of sacrifices to placate the gods and avert an imminent disaster.

To the Catholic Prelate, *"God has blessed this village with an educated Christian Fon who is held in high esteem by the government of this country" (p.10)*, yet the he fails to reason that the same Fon has a duty to serve his people as tradition demands. Western education has thus deprived Fon Joseph, the Christian and African intellectual of the necessary forces for directing the life and development of his society. It has taught Fon Joseph everything that is irrelevant to his African life thus the reason he shuns the customs and traditions of his people.

The Fon's religiosity is portrayed in his rhetoric and statements which show him as a devout Christian with very strong Christian leanings. He will not lead the rest of the villagers to any sacrifices to the lake god, and will not take a second wife because he feels that such acts are heathen or satanic. He will not accept any acts of reverence or worship to him by his people (as their custom demands), insisting that such honour is given to God, and God alone. He reiterates this by quoting one of the Ten Commandments in the Bible that says "Thou shalt have and honour none other than the Lord God who is almighty" (p.12). He even chides the prostrating and ululating women thus:

> *How many times must I tell you this is a Christian Kingdom? How often must I drive it into your heads that the heathen era of idol worship is history? How many times must I decree that the age of savagery and jungle law is over and done with in this land? (p.14).*

Religion or the church is one of the vectors for propagating the imperialist motive because Europeans knew that the Africans had a culture and already knew about God/gods prior to their arrival. Their guise of either civilization or evangelization was only a mirage to justify their acts of exploitation and economic expansion. That is why King Leopold II of Belgium in 1833 urged Priests to be ruthless and preach colonialism rather then God because Africans already had a high sense of morals and worshipped God (or gods). He spoke as follows:

> ***Reverends, Father, and Dear Compatriots****: Your principal objective in our mission in the Congo is never to teach the niggers to know God. Thus they know already. They speak and submit to a Mungu, one Nzambi, one Nzakomba, and what else I don't know. They know that to kill, to sleep with someone else's wife, to lie and to insult is bad…. For these things, you have to keep watch on disinteresting our savages from the richness that is plenty in their ground…. Your knowledge of the gospel will allow you to find texts ordering, and encouraging your followers to love poverty. Like happier are the poor because they will inherit the heaven and it's very difficult for the rich to enter the kingdom of God. You have to detach from them and make them disrespect everything which gives them courage to affront us. I make reference to their mystic system and their war fetish- warfare protection – which they pretend not to want to abandon, and you must do everything in your power to make it disappear….*

The above address by King Leopold II of Belgium echoes a similar situation prevalent in *Lake God*. Fr. Leo in one of his doctrine classes for women addresses them and condemns the acts of the women's secret cult as satanic and evil. The Catholic prelate knows that the people have their gods and they fall back to them in times of need and for protection. He has heard of the activities of the women and men's secret cult in the lake community in maintaining peace, harmony and progress in the village. In order to keep a firm grip over the people and strip them off their hidden powers, he

uses his available means (religion) to detach the women from their mystic system and war fetish which he is afraid they will use against him and his mission of conversion and domination will not be accomplished thus rendering him powerless:

> ***Fr. Leo:*** *Dear sisters and daughters in Christ, there is a group of five rebellious women in this village who are leading the rest of you astray. They are pulling you away from the steep and narrow road that leads to everlasting life and taking you along the big motor road that leads directly to hell, where Satan reigns supreme, and where you will burn in everlasting fire…. You all were in the Fibuen (women's secret cult), participating in Satan's play and eating of his food and taking oaths (p.32).*

Hell fire is used by Fr. Leo to instill the docility in the minds of the people of the lake community so that he can control them without any fear of rebellion. In the lips of the pagans as well as the converts, it is fear of the unknown that makes them think of the Christian episteme. It is just a question of 'what if this hell fire is true?' The Fon and his mentor Fr. Leo use their powers and position in the church to maintain a firm grip over the people instead of converting them from paganism to Christianity.

In *Homecoming* (1982), Ngugi says that to gain "acceptability and perpetuation, the colonialists enlist the services of Christianity and Christian oriented education…. to capture the soul and the mind…". In Achebe's *Arrow of God*, Christians renounce their traditional worship of *Ulu* (their god), thus advancing the cause of colonialism. In Oyono's *Houseboy*, Toundi forsakes his biological father in favour of Reverend Father Gilbert, the head of the church and in Butake's *Lake God*, Fon Joseph renounces the traditions of his people because of his Christian upbringing and the firm grip that Fr.

Leo has over him and his subjects. Fr. Leo uses Christianity to consolidate his control over Fon Joseph and the indigenous people thereby maintaining the security of the oppressor. Fon Joseph because of his position in the society as traditional leader is supposed to join hands with his notables to pacify the gods but he arrogantly dismisses the members of the seven pillars of the Kwifon who have come to warn him that "the lake god is angry and must be pacified through sacrifices" (p.43). Rather, he tells them:

> *I do not worship idols. I worship none other than God Almighty… The Lord Jesus has already saved the land. I will ask Father Leo to offer a special mass of thanksgiving for all the things God has showered on us…. I do not participate in heathen sacrifice; and I do not allow idol worship in a Christian land…. That is my answer. But let me warn you people: if you try anything, I will send for the police (p.44).*

As the African who has been brainwashed and uprooted from his tradition by a foreign culture, Fon Joseph strikes interesting parallels with Ngugi's (1986:10) description of African leaders at the time of independence:

> *The effect of the colonial presence was to create an elite who took on the tongue and adopted the style of the conquerors. They harkened to the voice of the missionary's God, cried hallelujah, and raised their eyes to Heaven. They derided the old gods and they too recoiled with a studied (or genuine) honour from the primitive rites of their people…. they despised anything that smelt of the primitive past. It is this group mostly whom Achebe must have had in mind when he cried: "If I were god, I would regard as very worst our acceptance – for whatever reason – of racial inferiority.*

Rodney (1981: 244) examines the colonial relations of production and the economic and political challenges that produced Africa's stagnation and continue to beleaguer Africa today. Rodney, who describes colonialism as a *one-armed bandit*, claims that colonialism, more than anything else, underdeveloped Africa. He believes

that colonialism paved the way for neo-colonialism in Africa by creating Africa's economic dependency on the international capitalist system. The alternatives colonialism provided for these are schools, stores, roads, hospitals, pipe-borne water, and the church. Many African literary works record the brand of exploitation that Rodney (1981) talks about. Meka, in Oyono's *The Old Man and the Medal* (1956:9) and other peasants grow cocoa for export to France and Meka gives his land to the church and now "lived in a small wretched hut in the village which has given its name to the mission and lay at the foot of the cemetery". The reward is a special seat in church and a worthless medal. Likewise in *Lake God*, the Fon's inordinate quest for materialism, lie in the hands of his mentor Fr. Leo, who lectures on the nature of the capitalist market and its benefits to the congregation of the lake community. He says:

> *Have you stopped to count the blessings, which the Lord has showered on you of this village? Have you stooped to ask yourselves how we have been able to perform these wonders? But let me tell you now, that when I receive a little money from my country, I give it to your Fon who invests it in the purchase of cattle. That is how we have been able to move mountains. If the cattle leave, we will not be able to continue to give you the services which you now have. A school for your children, a health centre for the young and old, sparkling pipe-borne water and a big motor road (p.32).*

Fr. Leo cares less about the impending famine on the lake community despite the women's cry over the destruction of their crops by the cattle which belong to the Fon. The Fon fears that if the cattle should leave the village, his chances of becoming a member of parliament will be lost and government might even revoke his first class chieftaincy. On the other hand, the provision of these basic necessities is not the reason why the Fon and Fr. Leo want to continue with this lucrative business. To them, the

purchase of cattle will boost the development of the village and they will maintain a firm grip over the people. The people of the lake community are therefore exploited both physically and psychologically. They have to forgo their farmlands as grazing land for the Fon's cattle despite the imminent famine. Butake here presents Fon Joseph as one of those political leaders in modern terms who wear varying guises to achieve their selfish ends at the expense of the larger community. If such leaders should scrutinise politics over the ages, they will realise that politics can promote societal and cultural development. Butake condemns the selfish intentions of leaders by advocating that their masks of hypocrisy be removed to enable them see reason and help develop the society.

Despite this religiosity, the Fon again demonstrates another side of him, his materialistic tendencies. This is first shown in "Fragments" when the angry women bring Dewa the cattle grazier to him with hands and legs bound. At this instance, the women realised that most of the cattle that destroy their crops belong to the Fon and the Fon further exploits the fear-stricken cattleman by asking him to pay the sum of 20,000frs for the damaged crops and still collecting from him two female cows that will soon get pregnant and yield him more harvest. The following dialogue better illustrates this:

Fon: *You go pay da chop wey you cow don choppam.*

Dewa: *Nobi na nyun, Mbe! Na you nyun don choppam corn*

Fon: *Shurrup you mup, bloody fool! (to guards) If he opens his mouth again…*

Dewa: *If na so Mbe don talkam*

Fon: *I have asked Dewa to pay you people compensation of two thousand francs each. (to Dewa) No bi you gettam twenty tosand for dere?*

Dewa: *Yes Mbe. Me gettam. Allah de! Me tink sey me go sellam leke five cow befo me pay da chop. Allah de!*

Fon: *You go muf two cow fo you nyun puttam fo me nyun. Woman cow wey get leke three year so dat small tam dem get belle. You don hear fine, fine?*

Dewa: *Me don hear, Mbe. Kai, wusai Allah don go?*

Fon: *Give me de money. I go lef back pay dem. (Dewa hands over the money). You fit go now. Pass fo dis sai. (to the guards) You go with him as far as the stream. (to other guards) And you, make sure no one gets in here, you understand?*

Kinchin*: Even Father Leo?*

Fon: *Except Father Leo, idiot! (16)*

The dramatic dialogue above illustrates how the Fon victimises and exploits Dewa the cattleman and the women. Dewa is obliged to pay for the crops destroyed by the Fon's cattle. Again the Fon takes the money meant as compensation for the women's crops from Dewa with the pretext that he will later give it to the women but he never does so. Dewa laments his helplessness in the face of the Fon's dubious and exploitative tactics by crying to Allah thus "wusai Allah don go? (Where is Allah to help me?). The Fon does not demonstrate any democratic sense of judgement in this case, rather, he presents himself as an autocratic ruler whose word is final and must be respected. Power is in the hands of a single person (the Fon) and whatever decisions taken by the authority cannot be challenged nor reverted.

Fon Joseph's inability to establish a cordial relationship with his community, his greed at the expense of the community's regeneration and progress are all indicators of autocratic rule that lacks democratic principles. The later rise in his body temperature, and his vision of his late father in his dreams, indicates premonitions of the impending doom and the tragedy that befalls a ruler who refuses to identify with his people.

> **Fon:** *I am still having those terrible dreams. Last night, for instance, I dreamt that I was with Father Leo in a dungeon. He kept telling me not to worry. Then, suddenly, he was no longer there. I was all alone; in that dark dungeon. I was so frightened I started shouting and groping about in the terrible darkness. A little while later, I saw a tiny light flickering in the distance. As I stumbled towards the light, I soon saw the shadow of the late Fon, my father. Then the light disappeared and I woke with a start (p.45).*

His reaction to his illness brings in the theme of hybridity. His traditional superstitious character which has been dormant for some time becomes dominant in this situation as he calls upon God and his ancestors for help despite Fr. Leo's promise to send the Rev. Sister with malaria drugs (camoquin). The prelate thinks that his friend is suffering from malaria whereas the Fon is already at loggerheads with the rules and regulations of his traditional society as well as his Christianity.

The Fon's Christianity which the likes of Fr. Leo pride themselves in, gives way to his real self. His African past is an acquired tradition that cannot easily be supplanted by a late comer – his conversion. Christianity to most converts is like a past time and there is not such devotedness as the Priest would expect. That is why Fon Joseph is forced out of the palace by the women and men secret cults to the lake to perform the

sacrifice as tradition demands though they are all swept away by the hands of death as the angry god of the lake takes up his revenge.

Shey Bo-Nyo, Shey Tanto, the Kwifon and the Fibuen all stand out as the revolutionary forces which attempt to wipe away the imperialist influence on their customs and traditions. The conflict in the play as earlier said, evolves as the different groups represented by Shey Bo-Nyo, Shey Tanto, the Kwifon, and the Fibuen attempt to bring their ruler to the traditional truths of their land and save it from the grips of the unfriendly alliance between Father Leo and Fon Joseph. According to Shey Bo-Nyo, *'it is an abomination for the Fon to surround himself with thugs and sons of whores and people who will kill us and destroy the land' (9).* There is the continuous battle of a people to make their own voices heard and an attempt to make their choices and decisions even in the face of their ruler's uncompromising stubbornness. This is in line with Oxaal and Baden's (1997) definition of empowerment; that is, having decision-making authority, power to solve problems, and people organising with a common purpose to achieve collective goals.

The people in the lake community try to battle against the offenders of their communal practices and spirituality. It is at the remote grove where the disbanded "Kwifon" which used to meet at crisis moments to seek solutions to the problems confronting the people, meet again after six years of silence, since they could no longer gain access to their sanctuary in the palace. The resurrected Kwifon under the leadership of Tanto confronts the Fon at the palace and orders him to go ahead with the

sacrifices. The Fon thinks that he can still get the influence from his mentor Fr. Leo, but at this point he is told that, the sacrificial offering is solely his business and they need no interference. Munjei warns the Fon thus; *We don't want Fr. Leo in this business. What matters now is for you to lead the people in sacrifice to the lake god (p.44)*.

The Fon refuses to adhere to the advice of Munjei and thinks that he can use his supreme powers with the aid of his mentor to call the police but the reverse is the case because at this juncture, the police cannot withstand the decisions of the Kwifon. Tanto assures the Fon that he will never know peace unless he performs his duties as the traditional ruler of the people. He says;

> **Tanto:** *You will never have peace, Because you have denied your people peace, Your ancestors will never allow you respite. Because you have ruined the land. You are destroying the people. But Kwifon is alive yet. The land might still be saved, and the people too. Hiiii Wong!, Hiiii Bo-Nyo ! Hiiiii Kwifon!(p.44).*

All the necessary measures taken by the Kwifon to bring their leader to sanity and make him offer sacrifices to the lake god still didn't yield any fruits until he is forcefully seized by the seven pillars of the Kwifon and taken to the lake. But their action comes too late as the gods of the lake take vengeance on the land thereby killing every living being except for the five survivors.

The "Fibuen", women's secret cult whose ululations had not been heard in the land for the past eight years, also meets and administers the oath of sealed lips with broomsticks cooked in the most potent medicines and herbs prepared in the sacred grove of Shey Bo-Nyo. These women cannot bear to see their children die of hunger

because of the presence of the Fon's cattle and his refusal to take a second wife and lead the people in a yearly sacrifice as tradition demands. It is the duty of the man to ensure that the home is safe but since the men have been stripped off their powers by the Fon and his mentor, the women take it upon themselves to ensure that they do something to avert the impending famine and ensure the continuity of the royal lineage. As such they decide to take an oath of sealed lips and to starve their men of food and sex.

> **Ma Kusham:** *These are things of the land. Things of our gods and our ancestors which the white man has fooled us to abandon. Things of the white man have brought suffering to the land. (she dips her hand into the pot and takes out boom-sticks of equal length which she proceeds to distribute to the women). These broom-sticks have been cooked in the most potent medicines and herbs in the land…. There is no Queen in the palace and the Fon has refused to lead the people in sacrifice to the god of fertility. Now listen, Hold the stick in your right hand between the thumb and fore-finger like this. Cross your lips vertically with the stick like this. Break it in the middle and throw both ends behind you while repeating the following: if my mouth discloses what my ears have heard in this gathering, may my tongue swell and fill my mouth with dumbness (p. 25).*

These drastic measures taken by the women made the men to rise up from their slumber since they can no more bear the starvation from food and sex from their wives. All these, are attempts by the different revolutionary groups to oust their stubborn leader and to restore peace and sanity unto the land.

It is at the sacred grove that, Shey Tanto and the seven pillars of the Kwifon meet to re-examine the crises in their community. This shows that the priest of the lake god (Shey Bo-Nyo) and the remote sacred grove near the lake are of great significance

and symbolism in the maintenance of culture and tradition. They stand out as mechanisms by which the community's safety and progress could be restored. The emergency decisions and prayers to the gods and ancestors, (to give them peace of mind and show them the right path) are all taken at the remote sacred grove of Shey Bo-Nyo. Stage directions illustrate this scenario thus:

> *Early morning, the sacred grove by the lake. The seven most important members of the kwiifon, known as the seven pillars, are present. They are dressed in the formal garbs of kwifon .... Their heads are adorned by colourful hand-woven cotton caps, or by the nkeng, shrub of the gods. Each of them has in his right hand the staff of office, a tall bamboo pole painted black and white. There is also a masked figure who is carrying a calabash of palm-wine decorated with nkeng and a cock. The mood is serious and sombre (p.39).*

In "Passage", the significant role of Shey Bo-Nyo and the sacred grove could be gleaned from the dialogue between Man, Boy and Woman:

> **Man:** *Do you know Shey Bo-Nyo?*
>
> **Boy:** *Of course I know him. Everybody knows the mad Shey who lives in the bush. Whoever listened to a mad man? ... A man leaves his wives and children and is living alone in the bush, running after boys with a spear, because they are hunting rats and you say he isn't mad?*
>
> **Woman:** *Son, Shey Bo-Nyo never abandoned his family. He only went to the grove from time to time to make sacrifices to the lake god.*
>
> **Man:** *And Shey Bo-Nyo was never mad; He is not mad ... Shey Bo-Nyo spoke of the terrible things to come as consequences of our deeds. We all laughed at him and called him mad. The Fon made alliance with strangers called Shey Bo-Nyo mad, ... turned a deaf ear to Kwifon, supreme and most feared authority in the land. And now this! (pgs. 52-53).*

From the dialogue above, both the priest of the lake god (Shey Bo-Nyo) and the remote sacred grove near the lake stand out not only as metaphors for unity, vision and communal regeneration, but also as mechanisms by which the community's safety and progress, myths such as "Kwifon" and "Fibuen" are transformed into the regulatory and restorative forces.

For Shey Bo-Nyo and the respecters of tradition, the community can only prosper when there is constant communion with the gods. The god of the lake that Shey serves is the "god of terror", and he therefore warns the Fon of the impending doom if sacrifices are not made to the gods. *"If the Fon does not offer the sacrifice to the lake god as his fathers before him always did, we can get ready for the worst"(22).* The doom that befalls the villagers of the lake community, illustrates an over-influential role of the supernatural forces, which control the lives of the people in the society. This calamity which befalls the people could be largely blamed on the headstrong nature of the ruler, who succumbs to the over-domineering influence of Father Leo's Western Christianity.

In "Passage", Shey Bo-Nyo describes his god as "unfeeling and vengeful", demanding allegiance and sacrifice, failing which they unleash death. This explains the pitiable predicament of humans caught in a spider's web. This is perhaps why the society is called upon to pay a price for the crimes of the offenders.

> *What survivors? Not one that I know of. Last night, I did battle with the gods… when the messenger of death finally emerged from the depths of the dark waters…. He knocked me out of his way. When I*

> *recovered, it was already morning. I was greeted by the eternal silence of death. In my homestead, I forced the doors open; but everyone was dead: five wives and all my children dead. My god is an unfeeling and vengeful god (p.56).*

The only five survivors in the lake community Boy, Girl, Woman, Man and Shey Bo-Nyo can be seen as representing the fertilising seeds, optimism and struggle which Osofisan (1991:67-68) talks about in one of his essays. In this piece, he suggests that in literature, the useful song should not be that which celebrates laments, but that which rallies cries and mobilizes the people to a greater dedication. According to Osofisan,

> *The fallen are no longer wasted victims, but the fertilising seeds of our future prosperity… so that we must beat back the growing tides of despair, and restore our people to optimism and to struggle…. History should be reflected as an arena for perpetual struggle and impermanent victories …".*

At the end of the play, the five survivors are seen leaving the lake community to seek shelter and help from a neighbouring village Ewawa. One can say that in their new society, guiding tools, checks and balances would hopefully be set in place to avert similar occurrences because they are already aware of the causes of the catastrophe that befell the entire lake community from which they happened to be the only survivors.

Butake's presentation of culture through a mythic representation of characters in *Lake God*, is an attempt at fighting against the negative foreign influences which shuns democratic rule, while at the same time depicting and promoting positive aspects of the African culture. As analysed in this chapter, Butake lampoons Fr. Leo's efforts at converting Fon Joseph and the villagers. *Lake God* depicts how difficult it is to change

a culture that has been imbibed for generations. Even though some of the villagers embrace Fr. Leo's religion, in postcolonial parlance, it is a means to destruct it. As the French saying goes, *"Il faut l'embracer pour l'etoufe*r" (it is necessary to embrace it so as to smother it). This is exactly what the Fibuen who are steeped in superstition does.

In Butake's *Lake God*, culture is dependent on politics and vice versa. In this way, Butake makes through his cultural representation, valid socio-political positions which gives his works a peculiar sensibility with which dramatic aesthetics explores the predicament of his nation and continent and by implication the globe at large. Butake's portrayal of culture in this study shows that, culture is a way of making directional statements for political development which implies development in all facets of life. His presentation of culture is an attempt to bring political sanity in a traumatic situation.

A people's cultural perception depends on their awareness of the significance of such culture to their total well-being and this incorporates both the political and economic factors of development. In view of the foregoing analysis, colonial domination, whether political or cultural influenced a lot of African cultural-political life which Butake seeks to correct in *Lake God*. Literature and culture view society through modes and drama is a tool for liberating the individual from those shackles that have bound man for centuries. In this way, literature is made to serve a nationalistic function that paves the way for a meaningful political development and cultural reintegration after the devastation of such political and cultural institutions by colonial imperialists.

Lake God therefore, illustrates that the failures of leadership in the lake community which lead to the disastrous end are not necessarily mysterious, inexplicable and fated. Rather it suggests that leadership failures have clear socio-political and economic foundations which can change the lives of a people in any society either positively or negatively. The play also shows the continuous battle of a people in making their own voices heard and attempting to make their choices, even in the face of their ruler's uncompromising stubbornness.

WORKS CITED

Ambe, N. Hilarious (2007). *Change Aesthetics in Anglophone Cameroon Drama & Theatre*, Pia Thielman & Eckhard Breitinger, eds. Bayreuth.

Bole, Butake (1986). *Lake God*, Yaounde: BET & Co. (Pub.) Ltd.

Cabral, Amilcar (1980). *Unity and Struggle*, London: Heinemann.

Maduakor, Obi (1987) in Wole Soyinka: *An Introduction to his Writings*. New York: Garland.

Ngugi Wa Thiongo, (1982). *Homecoming*, Essays on African and Caribbean Literature, Culture and Politics. London: Heinemann.

---------- ,(1986). *Writing Against Neocolonialism*, Vita Books.

Osofisan, Femi (1991). "And After the Wasted Breed. Responses to History and to Wole Soyinka's Dramaturgy". *On Stage, Proceedings of the Fifth International Janheinz Jahn Symposium on Theatre in Africa*, Gottingen:

Oyono, Ferdinand (1956). *The Old Man and the Medal* (Trans. John Reed), London: Heinemann Educational Books Ltd.

Oxaal, Zoe and Sally Baden (1997): "Gender and Empowerment: Definitions, Approaches and Implications for Policy", *Bridge Development – Gender*, Report No. 40. October

Rodney, Walter (1981). *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa*, Washington, DC: Howard University Press.

"The Purpose of European Christianity in Africa". (August 15, 2011). http://www.edofolks.com/htm/pub139.htm

CHAPTER THREE

THE DEPICTION OF THE "GUN" AS A SYMBOL OF POWER IN *THE SURVIVORS*

Many dramatic techniques abound in the interpretation of dramatic works. Some of these are metaphor, irony, satire, myths, symbols, contrast, mime, etc. The above mentioned techniques and a host of others are used by Butake to create new meanings and interpretations in his dramatic texts. This chapter x-rays Butake's use of symbolism in *The Survivors* to portray the use and misuse of power by autocratic leaders and power representatives in his society.

The Survivors is a sequel to *Lake God*. When *Lake God* comes to an end, the five characters/survivors – Boy, Girl, Man, Woman and Shey Bo-Nyo leave the devastated lake community to seek help and shelter in the neighbouring village Ewawa. These are the characters that now resurface in *The Survivors'* setting as Tata, Bolame, Ngujoh, Mboysi and Old One respectively on their way to Ewawa. In an attempt to find sustenance after a devastating natural disaster, the five survivors approach a relief camp manned by a corrupt military Officer to oversee the peaceful and equitable distribution of the relief materials to the unfortunate victims of the disaster. Unfortunately, they are stopped and confined to a tent in a clearing in the forest by a terrifying Voice (later Officers), which will not let them continue their journey because, his own personal survival depends on these five survivors of a catastrophe remaining where he has held them. These characters are trapped and can neither go forward nor retreat. Old One says: "There is no going forward and there is no turning back" (p.60). They cannot even

utter a single word as the same Voice orders them to be silent and fires a gunshot in the air to instill fear in them. “Stop!”, “Silence!” and a gunshot – “Kpo!” (pgs 62-63)

The terrifying voice and gunshot which halts them from moving neither forward nor retreating is later identified by Ngujoh as the voice of the military Officer in their former community who often arrests people for not paying their taxes to the government. Ngujoh observes that the voice is that of Officer, who catches men every market day, “because of tax; the people who carry guns, the people who wear khaki clothes and catch men” (p. 60). Officer represents those in authority and is ready to execute their orders at all cost even to the detriment of the people.

The tactics of Voice in this opening scene is to terrorize and cow the already traumatized characters into a position of total submission. Voice usurps space and speech and imposes its “regles du jeu” (rules of the game), thus there is no room for talking or negotiations thereby ensuring total control over its victims. A typical strategy of a dictator who in order to completely dominate a people and seize their speech, uses intimidating and terrorizing strategies.

Officer is a corrupt exploiter and symbol of graft and decomposition. He confiscates the food items and other relief supplies meant for the survivors. He even condemns some minor ones such as “mbonga” (smoked fish), and onions as worthless because they will not fetch him much money if sold. Officer curses the donors of such worthless items and decides that their names would not be read over the radio. This leads to conflict between Officer and the Chief of Manawahoneybee village, King Bell

Drummer Bell, who writes a protest letter to the radio station manager, to the effect that his name was left out of the list of contributors of his village.

Officer's continued underestimation of his victims and his uncontrollable sexuality results in his own undoing. All these blind him from any reflexes about the realities of human abilities. He blindly surrenders his weapon to the woman without thinking of the likely effects of the act. With the gun in Mboysi's hands, she immediately seizes space and speech as Officer had done earlier on at the beginning of the play. She orders him to keep crawling and confess the truth. She subjugates Officer and eventually liberates the survivors from the clutching grips of Officer as she shoots him dead with a song of victory in her mouth.

Woman: *The elephant has fallen!*
The elephant has fallen!
The lion is no more!
Woman is great! (p.84)

In some cultures, certain signs are enshrined in the people's minds as symbols (representatives) of some qualities. In Europe for example, "Rose" is a symbol of beauty; "Fire" for physical passion; "Water" (think of baptism) is the symbol of life giving power; "Lily" for purity; "Lamb" for meekness; "Black" is associated with evil or sorrow; "Yellow" with jealousy or cowardice etc. In Africa on the other hand, some animals have various symbols. "An Owl" stands for evil and witchcraft in many communities; "Kingfisher" for knowledge; "Tortoise" for wisdom/cleverness; "Elephant" for power, and "fresh palm fronds" for death, danger or what is sacred.

Symbols can sometimes mean different things at different times and locations. This is evident in the definition of the term by Abrams (1981:175). "In discussing literature, the term 'symbol' is applied only to a word or phrase that signifies an event which in turn signifies something or has a range of references…" A symbol is not tied to a single interpretation and can mean different things in different plays or poems. For instance, "Lily" which conventionally stands for purity, is read by Miller and Currie (1970:66) as the emblem of death in Keats' poem "La Belle Dame Sans Merci".

There are conventional and private symbols. Conventional symbols according to Maduka and Eyoh (2000:48) "are those that have been embedded in the collective memory of a people over a period of time; such that whenever they are used in poetry, they elicit predetermined reactions in the readers". Private symbols are those invented by the playwright and found only in his works. For example, in *Lake God*, Butake effectively deploys the "bugle", and "throne" as symbols of traditional power and in *The Survivors* he uses "the gun" to mean political power and oppression, while in *And Palm-Wine Will Flow*, he presents "palm-wine" as a symbol of drunkenness and corrupt leadership.

According to Miller and Currie (1997),

(i) Symbols may be precise but they may also remain vague and inexact, triggering off imagination, suggesting significance rather than making clear cut references.
(ii) Most symbolic words are also in themselves part of the imagery of the play and can be looked at for the part they play as images, apart from their contribution to the lexical meaning.
(iii) There is a clear connection between symbol and allegory.

An understanding of the symbols employed in *The Survivors*, will aid our understanding of the meanings and ideas of power expressed by the playwright.

The gun is not just an instrument of death that symbolizes power, oppression/suppression, autocratic governance and terrorism. Its symbolic significance in *The Survivors*, also includes Officer who constantly carries the gun and wears the Officer's uniform. The Officer's impudent authority which he exercises over the survivors is symbolic of autocratic power in the play. Butake therefore, utilizes all these associated symbols of power to portray the bureaucratic and autocratic power that Officer represents in the play.

Butake in this play portrays power at two levels. There is repressive power which comes out from the barrel of the gun represented by Officer and is symbolic of the imperial world and its monopoly of power whereas the progressive/revolutionary power is symbolised by Old One and Mboysi. Old One's courageous attitude towards Officer constitute an aspect of positive power while another extremely vital polarity of power Butake uses in the play to spit against the negative manifestation of power is the feminine power that Mboysi embodies. Mboysi's literacy and "great charms" become stronger weapons than guns in the fight for survival. She gives in to Officer's sexual demands though she does not demonstrate any sense of political astuteness and hunger for power. She gradually makes her way into the comfort zone of Officer which liberates them at the end. The dramatic conflict generated here by a clash between the two forces of power, Officer and Mboysi (the gun and feminine charms) also helps in

bringing out the various themes in the play such as oppression, torture, corruption, greed and the fight for freedom.

According to Gaventa (1982: vii), *"Power works to develop and maintain the quiescence of the powerless .... Together, patterns of power and powerlessness can keep issues from arising, grievances from being voiced, and interests from being recognised"*. For Butake, he who has acquired power will endeavour to consolidate it and extend it, to multiply the arenas which defend his position and to withdraw himself from the control of the masses.

Terry Eagleton (1976:17) exposes his views that no literary work can be conceived in an ideological vacuum; and that all arts emanate from an ideological conception of the world. Thus, Butake's portrayal of power in this play revolves around the clash of two ideologies. On the one hand is an oppressive force made up of the Officer and his gun and all those in power whom he represents and on the other hand, are the oppressed and exploited masses represented by the survivors who are victims of a natural disaster.

The Officer who represents the government in this play seems to have a firm grip on the survivors and Eyoh (2002:27) opines that "this type of government has given rise to a rather cavalier method of governance where the wishes of the masses are simply ignored by the arrivistes in power, who prefer courting the military against the people". In *The Survivors*, Butake exposes the exploitation of the poor by the rich in a dictatorial military regime. The "gun" and Officer reveal the brutal nature of bureaucratic power and autocratic power wielded by man. Consequently, the behaviour

of the five survivors is conditioned by an Officer armed with a gun as he prevents the survivors from going to Ewawa land or back to the village where they have just survived a calamity. The sudden appearance of Officer with his gun is surprising as he halts the survivors and practically takes them hostage:

Voice: *Don't move! Don't move! Halt! (characters transfixed)*
***Old one**:* *There is no going forward. And there is no turning back.*
***Ngujoh**:* *Terrifying voices. Old One, did you see anything? Anyone?*
***Tata**:* *I saw nothing. But that terrifying voice is the voice of Officer.*
***Ngujoh**:* *The people who carry guns. The people who wear khaki clothes and catch men.*

From the above dialogue, it is evident that the gun is a symbol of power, authority and considerable influence. The survivors are being harassed on a daily basis by a manned Officer just like during the ante-independence days, where the people were harassed and subjugated by the security forces of the successive military dictators who are puppets of the former colonial powers. Those associated with the gun (Officer and soldiers) dictate the pace of events and appear to possess absolute power in the play. The survivors, who are not armed, are brutally suppressed by the gun. It is with the gun that Officer threatens and frightens the survivors into submission. He also uses the gun to protect the interest of the autocrats he represents and exercises arrogant authority over the survivors through his orders as Mboysi says:

Officer: *... you know an Officer's job is to execute orders. No sentiments. They order, we execute…. (p.32)*

The survivors are compelled to stay on one spot with little or nothing to eat. They depend on the Officer for their survival. This is an indication that most former colonies have not seen the end of colonialism for they are still economically, socially

and politically dependent on their colonial countries. The survivors can neither go ahead to Ewawa nor return to their ghost village the lake community, where everyone else has been killed by the bomb explosion. This inescapable situation of the survivors is evidently the first demonstration of how the power of the gun and its user operate. Butake sees this kind of power as arbitrary, authoritative and imprisoning.

Officer is portrayed as a caricature of an ever-bloated and greedy man in uniform. His greedy and selfish attitude towards the relief supplies and the impudent authority he exercises over the survivors reflects the character of those in the military. The system Officer represents and for which he uses his gun is basically selfish. This is seen in his own selfish actions when he tells Mboysi:

> **Officer:** *No one cares if they survive. Without you, I don't care about their survival. My survival is more important. (p.73)*

Officer's primary concern is his own survival and that of the system he represents and not that of the survivors whom he is there to protect. This egocentric nature is the hallmark of the kind of undemocratic power Officer exercises over the poor survivors. As stated earlier, independence did not come with the "paradise" that was expected. African leaders who took over from the colonialists were merely puppets, interested in self-enrichment and subtle promotion of the interests of the former colonial powers.

Officer's indifference to the survivors' needs is further seen in the kind of assistance they receive. In spite of the fact that huge quantities of relief supplies are received from some sympathizers and the international community, Officer keeps these

goods for his own use thus exposing the exploitative tendencies of those in power. Mboysi declares this to the other survivors;

> *Each time he calls me to his house, I see piles upon piles of cargo and cartons and sacks and all sorts of things. And it would seem that all of that cargo is destined for us, the survivors (p.77).*

Instead of using these items for the survivors, Officer reserves them for his private use and that is why the survivors complain of hunger and thirst despite the immensity of the relief supplies sent to them. They are brutally confined to a clearing and made to wait indefinitely for assistance which never comes. This is in line with what Okwori (1992:51) says about the egocentric nature of those in power.

> *The minority group and marginalized people live at a subsistence level in ignorance and superstition. Their economic, social, political and cultural resources are misappropriated and used to benefit the dominant hegemonic group. This process does not only dis-empower the people but also keep them in a state of powerlessness. That is a state of inadequacy and incapability to take action which can fundamentally change their lives.*

Officer could be said to be an embodiment of an autocratic/corrupt African regime with its total control of human thought. This is evident in Officer's ability to do as he wishes with the survivors and the relief supplies he receives. Butake likens him to those corrupt political leaders in his society, who divert the goods and money meant for the good of the common man into their private use. The Officer's tent for example, is said to be "lavishly set" and he is seen "eating large chunks of meat and washing them down copiously with red wine". He also eats greedily while the survivors live on cold and tasteless food as Ngujoh says,

> *Cold food that has no taste. Food that is cold on the tongue and never makes your belly warm and heavy .... Cold fish removed from a ngongong that makes your intestines wriggle like earthworms (p.74*).

There is a sharp contrast here between the Officer's sumptuous meal and the cold type of food he gives to the survivors (sardine). This is indicative of economic exploitation and selfishness to the detriment of the people.

Officer's corrupt actions reflect the way funds are mismanaged and converted into private coffers in most African countries today by corrupt leaders. In an article on "Economic Exploitation in Nigeria" a Nigerian economist Olatunde (1990) complains that resources were being transferred to individuals at the expense of the private sector. According to him,

> *In Nigeria and less developed areas generally, resources ostensibly being transferred – allocated for the public sector eventually end up in private hands once again. Even where it is not a direct case of misappropriation of funds or stealing or of some other more discreet variant of theft, funds alleged to be transferred in the public interest simply are not at the disposal of the public, not even at the disposal of the public's representatives, whoever they may be. What is actually transpiring is a replication of the classic conjurer's trick. The public official or decision maker is seen stepping into a box labelled public sector, only to emerge to the spectators' amazement from a second box, labelled private sector.*

This shows economic mismanagement, misappropriation of public funds and disempowerment in most African countries in general and Cameroon in particular. Butake in this play uses history to buttress his point. According to Ambe (2007:70), following the emission of a toxic gas from the Lake Nyos in the North West Province in Cameroon in August 1986, which killed over two thousand (2,000) people, national and international relief aid and humanitarian supplies poured into the country for the

purposes of relocating and supporting the victims/survivors of the gas disaster. But these supplies never actually got to the victims of the catastrophe because of military and bureaucratic looting of these supplies. It is therefore evident that the forte and motivation of the playwright is drawn from the predicament of the survivors of the gas disaster on the one hand, and the oppressive and exploitative machinery (represented by Officer) on the other hand.

In *The Survivors*, only one tent "hastily and crudely built of grass" (p.74) is provided for the five survivors of the catastrophe from Ewawa village despite the large amount of relief aid sent to the camp in the form of mbonga, blankets, milk, sardine, leather shoes etc. But Officer enriches himself by selling some of these items and confiscating some for his personal use at the expense of these survivors.

Officer's reckless and lecherous attitude towards the survivors is also evidenced in the last part of his rather lengthy speech where he says;

> **Officer:** *… there is also the other fellow, he calls himself a man. Hm … that woman does things to me. I don't know what a woman like that was doing in the bush, just wasting in the hut of some native who didn't even know the value of a woman. Hm … good woman … good woman! (pensively). This is curious, isn't it? Man and woman, boy and girl. The only odd one out there is old one. It seems to me the clan can still survive. (Suddenly realising the implication of his statement). But if I just as much as suspect him… if I only dream … if I only fancy even … I will (taking aim with the revolver) blow off his head (p.78).*

From the above soliloquy, almost all about Officer's character is revealed. He is hostile, unfriendly, lecherous and quite harmful to the survivors. These character traits of his have a direct bearing on the bureaucratic system he represents; a system that kills

automatically upon mere suspicion. The alarming weakness of certain military men and public servants for women is suggested in Officer's preparedness to blow off Ngujoh's head with his revolver if he just as much as suspects, dreams or fancies that the young man has anything to do with Mboysi.

In Officer then, Butake gives the reader the image of an administrator to whom personal dignity and objective reasoning are secondary to the satisfaction of his sexual appetite. With officer's arrogant authority, the survivors cannot take the initiative to go anywhere, lest they be brutalised and shot by Officer. It can therefore be affirmed that Officer and the gun in *The Survivors* stand for man-made and unjust autocratic power. It is a kind of power that transforms popular democratic power into arbitrary and subjective societal control symbolised by the gun. In effect, the power Officer exercises with the use of his gun is misused, for he uses the gun to suppress and oppress the survivors thus representing the kind of absolute power in an undemocratic system of government.

Though Officer uses his position, the gun and the system he represents to dis-empower the survivors, little does he know that he is instilling a kind of courage or power in the survivors to also rise up and overthrow him thus stripping him naked of the power he initially demonstrated. Paulo Friere in Gaventa (1982:213) while describing the situation of the masses in the Appalachian Valley opines that:

> *The emergence of action amongst the non-elite is also a moment in the developing consciousness of the power-elite…. Just as there is a moment of surprise among the masses when they begin to see what they did not see before, there is a corresponding surprise*

> *among the elite in power when they find themselves unmasked by the masses.*

This is surprisingly what Officer and the system he represents experience. Rather than keeping quiet all the times, the survivors gradually look for a means to dis-empower their oppressors. They are already aware of some of the weaknesses of this oppressive system and are ready to challenge them in order to liberate themselves from the clutches of those power mongers. Officer's actions in themselves have rather empowered the survivors as Mboysi and Old One are bent on seeing to their release.

The struggle for social existence and the right to determinism of the confined survivors of the toxic gas disaster in *The Survivors* is led by Mboysi and Old One. According to Okwori (2002:161), "empowerment involves developing power with and within the people. This power emanates from an awareness, the knowledge of one's capacities, resources, limitations and challenges. Once a people gain or regain power, they are able to resist and destroy the conditions that dis-empower them". This is what Mboysi and Old One are out to achieve; freedom.

Mboysi's sensitivity and consciousness is gradually pricked as she awakens from her passive and hitherto unquestioning acceptance of the politics of Officer to an awareness of his unsavoury and double standards. Old one's courageous attitude towards Officer's commands and Mboysi's innate commanding powers, constitute aspects of power that are not from the barrel of the gun but from within highly motivated individuals. Old One is a custodian of the tradition, a source of inspiration and wisdom and he represents continuity of the clan. The essence of the kind of innate

power Old One commands is seen when he compares the destructive power of the gun in the present day to the more rational use of wisdom in the days gone by.

> ***Old One**: Those were the days indeed! Man to man. Word against word. Fist for fist… those were the days!*
> ***Ngujoh**: Today, power is no longer intelligence. Power means stop! Silence! Kpo!*
> ***Old One**: If he hears you, we are in big trouble. (p.62)*

From the above dialogue, Old One embodies the wisdom and cultural wealth on which the identity of the survivors' tribe is based. Old One is expected to pass on his knowledge to the younger generation. Ngujoh is aware that the rest of the younger survivors are very conscious of Old One's indispensable assistance to them. They understand that Old One is their source of inspiration and success in the general societal reconstruction. His counseling is needed when it comes to leadership and survival thus, he symbolises inspirational power which in itself is a kind of power which will have to rescue the survivors from the abyss of complete collapse. The very survival and identity of the tribe obviously depends on how deeply rooted its culture is in the lives of the people. It is probably in this light that Njonjoh (1986:1) says:

> *The significance of African traditional social norms rely heavily in a cyclical structure reflected in the journey image, involving a departure, an arrival, and a return to the roots. Survival and harmony entail an imperative return to the roots for fusion with outside values. For a traditional community which holds the dead, the living and the unborn in one integral entity, outside success must be closely tied or interwoven with the home experience. Failure to acknowledge this leads to disastrous consequences*.

It is therefore not surprising that Old One compares the past with the present. To Old One there should always be a balance between outside values and our roots. It

could be noticed for example that in a defiant spirit, Old One refuses to taste of the cold dry canned food provided for them by Officer. Here he is asserting or defending his right to choose even in the face of death. To him, "It is the only way by which I can make it known to Officer that I have a choice. Even if that choice is death. It is better for me to die than to live a mendicant". (p.82)

By refusing to eat, Old One is in fact, giving the younger survivors an important lesson in stoicism. As far as Old One is concerned, courage, achievement and self-denial are some of the qualities which empower man wisely. That is why Old One says that "wisdom is self-mortification and not self-gratification". Old One represents a philanthropically endowed power which is democratic and benevolent.

Mboysi, the lone female survivor and character, embodies another extremely vital polarity of power that Butake uses in *The Survivors* to spit against the misuse of power by Officer. She embodies the feminine power which undermines that of Officer and extends to her innate commanding powers and feminine charm and beauty which she uses to liberate the survivors from the firm grip of the system that controls them. Mboysi's inborn power is seen when Bolame and Tata refer to her as "mother".

> ***Bolame:*** *Mother I am dying of hunger and thirst. I want water.*
> ***Tata:*** *Me too mother. There is hunger in my belly and thirst in my throat. I can die of hunger and thirst (p. 65).*

The fact that Bolame and Tata call Mboysi "mother" does not mean that she is necessarily their biological mother. The title "mother" is in itself a marker of some kind of power or authority Mboysi has over the children. The fact that a woman gives birth to children implies that she is a source of life. Mboysi seems to represent a force that

comes from the people. The children, Ngujoh and Old One need no prompting to confer the name "mother" on Mboysi. It comes to their lips spontaneously because they see true feminine leadership in her. From a political standpoint, Mboysi's power comes from a conscious democratic process. Hers is a just and positive power unlike that of Officer which is dictatorial and completely void of the people's mandate.

Mboysi's rebellious composition and her imbued sense of the right to choices and self-determinism are hinted at following her reaction to Officer's usurping orders Don't move! Don't move! Halt! at the beginning of the play. Officer's orders define the extent of Mboysi and her lot's confinement. Yet Mboysi questions and asserts "We may not even speak? I will speak. God gave me a voice to speak. I will use it to speak! (p.61). Her sense of determinism and self-assertiveness are further pricked by Old One and Njujoh as they say:

> ***Ngujoh**: And he does not want us to leave because the cargo will stop coming.*
> ***Mboysi**: Is that so? So he is growing rich on our misfortune? How could he have fooled me so? How could I trip so? I am going back there to give him a piece of my mind. Tell him what I think about him.*
> ***Old One**: Not so fast, woman!*
> ***Ngujoh**: Woman, keep your calm.*
> ***Mboysi**: Keep what calm? What a Cheek! He is using us for his greedy purposes. Using me for his selfish, animal desires. I will tell him a piece of my mind (p.79).*

Through the combined efforts of Ngujoh and Old One, the subdued inner capabilities in Mboysi are recharged, and she leaves to confront her oppressor with a renewed purpose and determination. "I will show Officer that in spite of his gun and

loud menaces, he is only a man, mortal"(p.79), she charged. Old One and Ngujoh happily comment about the inflamed, re-awakened Mboysi in the following terms:

> ***Old One**: Ngujoh, did you see the light in her eyes?*
> ***Ngujoh**: Old One, I saw a wild fire in her eyes. If she carries out that threat… I am afraid….*
> ***Old One**: My children, did you see the light in your mother's eyes? I want you to hold your heads high, like her (p.79).*

Ngujoh and Old One's dialogue makes clear references to the moment and process of the victimized character's rediscovery of self and growth. In this case, it is the moment of Mboysi's recognition and the process of her empowerment. This re-discovery of her innate potentials and the nature of Officer's politics, gradually paves the way for their victory and liberation at the end of the play.

Mboysi also exercises feminine charm over the survivors and Officer. Ngujoh and Old One believe that through Mboysi's influence, Officer can allow them to go to Ewawa. Old One advises Mboysi to go and speak to the Officer since she is literate.

> **Old One:** *Go and speak to him in the white man's language. He will listen to you. You should show him that we are people too. A woman will soften the hardest heart.*

Ngujoh also persuades Mboysi to meet Officer to negotiate their release as he prophetically suggests that "with her by his side, Officer will even forget his gun, the charm of that woman will unnerve any man" (p.65). With this, Mboysi picks up courage and walks up to Officer and later succeeds in bringing food and water to the children and therefore life to the survivors. With this Old One therefore concludes that "this woman has power over Officer, with her help, Officer will allow us to go to Ewawa" (p.70). Officer himself echoes Old One's conviction, telling Mboysi that the

people's survival depends on her. "They can wait. Their survival depends on you … No one cares if they survive. With you, I don't care about their survival …" (p.73).

However, when the survivors finally come to know that Officer and the people he represents are making a fortune out of their misfortune, Mboyis who had been sexually abused by Officer, decides to take her revenge on him. Through her beauty, charm and sexuality she entices Officer and cajoles him into giving her his gun. It is this same gun which she uses at the end to kill Officer. In the grip of Mboysi's dominating sexual power, Officer is transformed into a helpless individual. Officer himself confesses and succumbs to the power Mboysi has over him as he says: "Woman has power over Officer. My heart is soft because of you, woman" (p. 83).

Mboysi's self assertiveness and empowerment, enables her to outmanoever her oppressor into surrendering his gun to her. She uses her pretext of ignorance about guns to take the gun away from Officer. Now with her literacy, feminine charm and the gun in her hand, Mboysi exercises total control over Officer and all the men. Her empowered position is expressive in her discourse as she points the gun at Officer to extort his confession of corruption, sexual harassment and public theft.

***Mboysi**: So you will kill me, will you? Then I must make sure I kill you first.*
***Officer:** No! Please don't kill me! I didn't mean to say …*
***Mboysi**: You would kill me. Would you? You crawling, thieving maggot. Growing rich on the misfortunes of others …*
***Officer:** And all the things I have been giving you. This is the reward for my generosity?*
***Mboysi**: Your generosity, indeed Officer! Tell me more, how much have you carried away for yourself and those who order you from above …How much have you looted and hidden away …. This is the moment of truth, the moment of your death and the moment*

of our liberation…. Keep crawling, you rotten maggot! Even if I die after killing you, I will be satisfied that I had my revenge. Now, this is the moment of truth …. Man, Man! Come and see what a woman can do. All of you come along and celebrate the victory of woman over Officer. Come along, all of you and celebrate your liberation" (p.84).

The moment of truth indeed is when Mboysi fires two shots at Officer, which leaves him dead. Mboysi seizes space and speech in much the same terms as Officer had done at the beginning of the play. Her orders to him "Keep crawling Officer", are reminiscent of Officer's "Don't move, Don't move, Halt! commands at the beginning of the play.

Mboysi eventually subjugates and shoots Officer even though she is in turn shot by another Officer who comes to relieve the fallen Officer. Her rebellion does not last long because her actions seem to be those of a single person trying to oust the larger social forces. For a successful revolution to take place in any oppressive system like the one in the world of *The Survivors*, Butake seems to suggest that there must be critical analysis, strategizing and sharpened dialogue among social forces and classes. Her killing of Officer is tantamount to a symbolic blow for justice and liberation. Her act is a model for all the Ewawas and the Cameroonians at large who have been cornered by powerlessness, passivity and poverty to wake up and fight for their dignity and liberation.

Mboysi's attitude toward Officer reveals the cunning nature of women. A woman is generally the oppressed in the society but once she has the least opportunity, she uses it to exercise her powers. Although Mboysi's killing of the Officer is a

negative act, the intention behind it is positive. It is quite evident that the nature of power at this point in the play has changed from Officer to Mboysi, from an autocratic regime to the people. In symbolic terms, the power Officer exercises is meant to "catchman" (the survivors), whereas the power woman (Mboysi) represents is meant to "break Officer and free man". This kind of power that Mboysi wields, sets out to defeat dictatorship and to restore democracy and freedom.

Although Mboysi pays with her life to redeem the people, her soul sings the song of freedom:

> *The elephant has fallen!*
> *The elephant has fallen!*
> *The lion is no more!*
> *Woman is great! (p.84)*

Freedom has never been given on a platter of gold, it has always been fought for. In *The Survivors,* Butake sounds a very prophetic note by telling the Ewawa people and by extension Cameroonians in general that the present times are the best for a change. Women who have the "power of power" should be given a chance to exercise this power to bring sanity to the nation. One can say that there is a moral choice here, either to allow things the way they have been, or to stand up against tyranny by sacrificing our lives to change the course of history. In the play, the men are aware of the fact that the nation is in dire need of a change of leadership but they have been incapacitated by the all-powerful Officer. The struggle for liberation can only be sustained and ultimately attained through a concerted stand against tyranny that threatens to undercut the

people's cultural roots and traditions. This rebelliousness is not born out of malice but out of genuine concern for the violation of their traditional customs.

Mboysi is a symbol of salvation for she represents the true powers of the clan before the general catastrophe. From her actions one can claim that her now exterminated clan was never a clan of cowards. Immediately Mboysi comes to the realisation that she has reduced herself to a free woman to save her people, she decides to take the challenge and faces Officer. According to her, *"I will show Officer that in spite of his gun and loud menaces, he is only a man, a mortal" (p.70).*

Her female character in *The Survivors* lives out the principle that a noble cause is worth fighting for. Ngugi in his novel *Devil On The Cross* addresses the dilemma of the Kenyans in a way that echoes the Cameroonian situation, especially as both artists (Ngugi and Butake) share a common sense of history.

> *Our lives are a battlefield on which is fought a continuous war between the forces that are pledged to confirm our humanity and those determined to dismantle it; those whose aim is to open our eyes, to make us see the light and look to tomorrow, asking ourselves about the future of our children, and those who wish to lull us into closing our eyes, encouraging us to care only for our stomachs today, without thinking about the tomorrow of our country (p.53).*

These two contending forces are obvious in *The Survivors*. There is Officer who feeds maggot-like on the misfortunes of the five survivors thus caring only for his stomach while Mboysi in the opposite camp thinks about their survival and the welfare of the common man. She stands up against the tyrants that is, Officer and those whom he represents because they are "pledged to confirm our humanity". Mboysi is poised to

regain the atmosphere of peace and sanity that used to exist before and to free the people from the system that disempowers them.

Butake's projection of the woman liberator parallels that of Ngugi in Kenya as both of them attempt to uplift the females from their traditional domain of household chores and sex objects to a higher plane of political activism and change. Mboysi does not just operate as a woman imbued with cultural and spiritual powers or as a woman who only uses her innate powers when the men are confused and powerless; rather, she constitutes a force with powers enough to effect profound and lasting socio-political changes in the set up of an entire community and by extension a nation.

The power Officer manifests contrasts with the more humane and feminine charms which Mboysi embodies. This however emphasises the fact that the role played by Mboysi heightens the conflict in the play since feminine power undermines the autocratic power represented by Officer. It is evident that Officer's power is ephemeral and from its first appearance in a sound "Don't move! Don't move! Halt! John Lambo (1991:3) describes Officer as "An armed Officer hidden somewhere in military style, orders them to stop where they are and threatens to fire if they try to move". One is almost made to believe that this power is supreme for initially it sounds so strong and commanding only for it to be crushed shortly after by the feminine charms of Mboysi. From Ngujoh's words, he commends the innate powers of Mboysi thus:

> *You are our saviour, woman. The Old One here was right. Go and speak to him in the white man's language, he said. Show him that we are people too. You see, you have saved us from thirst and hunger. Officer catch man… Woman break Officer… Woman freeman! Old One, see how she shines in those new clothes (p.66).*

Butake believes that women can do anything, thus revealing the truth subsumed in the saying that "what a man can do, a woman can do even better", and also that women can succeed where men have failed. Butake in this play satirises autocratic African countries with particular attention to his country Cameroon. According to him, power in any society is usually two-fold. It can either be the oppressive type that Officer represents, or the positive democratic type that Mboysi and Old One stand for. The type of power Officer exercises is dictatorial in nature and undemocratic unlike that which Mboysi embodies which is real and imperishable because it does not come from the barrel of the gun.

Butake's play *The Survivors*, testifies his commitment to the cause of the marginalized and exploited Anglophones in Cameroon particularly those in the North West Province whom he identifies with. He seems to intimate that change is possible and the oppressive/exploitative forces could after-all be defeated. Ngugi wa Thiong'o and Micere Mugo (1976: Preface) assert that, "good theatre is that which is on the side of the people, that which without masking mistakes and weaknesses, gives people courage and urges them to higher resolves in their struggle for liberation". Eyoh (2002: 27-28) reiterates the fact in the above statement as he opines that, "theatre is giving power to the people" as the prevailing power relations are being challenged by the changing times and attitudes of the people.

WORKS CITED

Butake, Bole (1986). *The Survivors*, Yaounde: SOPECAM, 1986

Eagleton, Terry (1976). *Marxism and Literary Criticism*, London: Methuen & Co Ltd.

Gaventa, John (1982). *Power and Powerlessness: Quiescence and Rebellion in an Appalachian Valley.* Chicago: University of Illinois Press.

Ghondo, Jean-Pierre (1990). "Bole Butake's *The Survivors*: A Dense and Indicting Reflection of Social Being in Africa" in *Cameroon Trib*une, No. 1016, Yaounde: SOPECAM.

Lambo, John (1991). "Corruption and Irresponsible Leadership: A Study of Bole Butake's *The Survivors",* Yaounde.

Ndumbe, Eyoh (2002). Theatre for Development: A Digest of Experiences, Ewu, Jumai (ed), OPA.

Ngugi wa Thiongo (1982). *Devil on the Cross*, London: Heinemann Educational Books Ltd.

Ngugi wa Thiongo and Micere, Mugo (1976). *The Trials of Dedan Kimathi,* Ibadan: Heinemann Educational Books Ltd.

Njinjoh, A.D (1986). *Personal and Socio-Political Relations in the Works of Three Cameroonian Novelists.* Ph.D Thesis, University of Kent: Canterbury.

Okwori, Jenkeri. *NAWE,* Journal of the Nigerian Popular Theatre Alliance (NPTA), Vol. 1, No. 1, June, 1992

…… (1994). "Empowerment for Sustainable Development: The Popular Theatre Strategy", A PhD thesis submitted to the Department of English and Literary Studies, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria.

Olatunde, Ajaie "Economic Exploitation in Nigeria", *Newswatch*, Vol. 8, No. 12, May, 2005.

CHAPTER FOUR

AN EVALUATION OF POWER POLITICS IN *AND PALM-WINE WILL FLOW*

And Palm-Wine Will Flow is set in Ewawa village, and the actions take place in a grove considered to be a sanctum by votaries of the gods of the land. The play examines how the secular power of the Fon is overcome by the spiritual power of Shey Ngong through the sacred shrine of "Nyombom". The shrine is portrayed as the predominant metaphor of power in the play and the spiritual power of the shrine is enhanced by the triple nature of power it embodies symbolized by the Earth-Goddess, Kibaranko and the Chief Priest. The masks, ancestors and gods are all complementary elements of power within the overall network of the shrine. The spiritual power which Shey Ngong embodies stands out in contrast to the secular authoritative power of the Fon.

In the play, human beings are instruments and victims of the power of the gods. The dramatic conflict in the play is manifested when these two powers clash, represented by Shey Ngong and the Fon respectively. The former represents the power of moderation, goodness and divine purpose while the latter represents vice, arbitrariness, authoritativeness, drunkenness and all other forms of human weakness. The secular power the Fon embodies is symbolized by the red feather, which he confers on the citizens who align themselves to his personal whims and caprices. This chapter shall therefore, examines some of the socio-political events of Anglophone Cameroon in the 1990's that parallel the situation of the Ewawa people in the play. It shall also

examine power politics in *And Palm-wine Will Flow* the rebellious forces that spearheads the checks and balances of the Ewawa Fondom.

The play begins with Shey Ngong expressing his worries about the state of Ewawa leadership in the following terms: *"The Fon has lost vision. The noblemen and elders of this land now listen only to the inner voice of greed and fear of a man who has surrounded himself with listeners and watchdogs to do his biddings (p.89)"*. Ewawa's political leadership is dictatorship that has completely abolished civil liberties, and continues a rape of collective wealth. The Wise Council which is supposed to act as a regulatory force and check the excesses of the monarch, has been abolished and replaced by the monarch's friends and family of hand-clappers. The pursuit of material benefits and merriment by the ruling class is indicated in the opening scene where everyone except Shey Ngong is heading to the Fon's palace where Kibanya, one of the Fon's notables is receiving the "red feather" from the sacred hands of the Fon himself. Consequently, there is feasting and merriment, and thereafter, "palm wine will flow as usual…" (p.88).

The "red feather" is one of the highest titles in the Ewawa Fondom which used to be allotted to people who must have rendered a formidable service to the land. But Shey Ngong reveals that Kibanya does not receive the red feather out of any formidable achievement in the interest of the community, as it should have been or as it was in the past, but he receives it as compensation for his allegiance to and worship of all decisions by the monarch.

In Ewawa Fondom, there is no room for any dissenting voices. Everyone must pay allegiance to, and worship the monarch. Those who go contrary to this are punished in one way or the other. Shey Ngong's farmlands and palm bushes are seized and reverted to Kibanya's wives and the Fon respectively. This is because Shey Ngong refuses to pay allegiance to a man "who respects only palm-wine and food" (p. 97). Nsangong, one of Shey Ngong's closest friends is severely beaten by the Fon's watchdogs for speaking ill of the Fon. While Gwei, one of the Fon's messengers and spies reveals other forms of torture and summary executions of opponents and/or dissenting voices against the Fon. These people are taken to the bad bush and executed by the Fon's notables.

Shey Ngong, the Chief priest of Nyombom and the progressive forces (Kwengong, Tapper and the women of Ewawa) cannot bear to see the Fon destroy the customs of the people. As such, they join hands to fight against the retrogressive forces that have maintained a stranglehold on the political and economic progress of the society. Tapper and Kwengong enter the masks of "Kibaranko" and "Earth Goddess" respectively and are transformed by means of induction by Shey Ngong into the terrifying agents of retributive justice. Transformed into Kibaranko, Tapper heads for the Fon's palace where he breaks all the pots and calabashes of palm-wine, splits the Fon's throne into two and burns down the palace. While Kwengong as Earth Goddess casts the final spell that kills the monarch by making him drink of the savory juice of the women prepared in the most potent of Nyombom.

With the death of the Fon, Kwengong declares that henceforth the people will be ruled by the council of elders led by Shey Ngong and the day he takes the wrong decision, that same day, the people shall meet in the market place and put another at the head of the council of elders. This decision by the women is built around the ideology of "people power". That is, the deconstruction of monolithism and a reinstitution of a democratic society. Some of the socio-political activities of the 1990's in Anglophone Cameroon parallel some of the events in the play.

The 1990s, but particularly the early 1990s were years of great mutations and political instability in Cameroon. Cameroon's almost thirty years of one-party autocratic rule was brought to an end on 26th May, 1990 with the monumental launching in Bamenda of a new political party, the Social Democratic Front (SDF) with its slogan "Power to the People". The launching of this opposition party led to the death of six pro-democracy activists.

The introduction of plural party politics in Cameroon in 1990 and a call for the institution of "people power", was to be followed in 1991 by consistent demonstrations, marches and calls for a "Sovereign National Conference" all over the country. The ruling party, Cameroon's People Democratic Movement (CPDM) simply dismissed this call with a wave of the hand as "Sans Objet" (meaning not important). The opposition forces, in order to weaken the ruling regime and oblige it to call for a Sovereign National Conference, adopted an economic strategy called "Operation Ghost Town"; a strategy which demands on the population to stay indoors on weekdays and refuse to pay taxes to the government.

In 1992, there was a presidential election in the country, which opposition forces, and some diplomatic officials, and even some highly placed government officials agreed were heavily flawed. The results of this election were partially accepted in the country as the Supreme Court declared Paul Biya of the ruling party winner of the presidential poll. This led to the imposition of a State of Emergency in the North West Province from where the greatest cry of foul play was coming. The State of Emergency was followed by a highhanded repression of dissenting voices and a horrible abuse of human rights and human liberties. Innocent people were incessantly arrested, detained and/or killed by the forces of the ruling party. Some journalists were arrested and detained like Fon Echekie, Eric Nchinde, while Frederick Ebong Alobwede and a host of others went on exile to neighbouring Nigeria and other parts of the world for either speaking/writing against the government.

President Paul Biya in 1993 announced an eventual convening of an enlarged forum, which he said would address all issues of national interest. This declaration was referred to by the President and the Cameroonian people as the "Grand/Large Debat". In view of the President's announcement of a Grand Debat, an overwhelming majority of the English-speaking Cameroonians mobilized themselves under the umbrella of an All Anglophone Conference to collectively re-examine and agree on issues to table during the Grand Debat. This mobilization resulted in The Buea Declaration of 1993 which stated the problem of the Anglophones as follows:

> *Within these thirty-two years, our Union Accord has been violated. We have been disenfranchised, marginalized and treated with suspicion. Our interests have been disregarded. Our participation in*

> *national life has been limited to non-essential functions. Our natural resources have been mercilessly exploited without any benefit accruing to our territory or to it people…(2).*

The above declaration in 1993, called on the ruling government to address the question of the continuous marginalization of Anglophones in Cameroon.

The 1990s in Cameroon witnessed economic crisis in which Civil Servants salaries underwent two major cuts between 20% and 40% in the first and approximately up to 50% in the second. These cuts were accompanied by an increase in taxes too. State and public utility corporations were simultaneously being recklessly mismanaged, privatized or liquidated, while some few hundreds of civil servants mostly Anglophones were summarily retrenched. These economic measures brought untold economic hardship to the citizens. According to Tansa Musa (1996:24),

> *In the past three years, about 30% of the population of the country lives below the poverty line…. Unemployment is reeling under the burden of a staggering debt estimated at some $7.000million…. Cameroon's infrastructure is in a pitiful state of despair. Oil money finds its way into foreign private bank accounts.*

These social events of the 1990s are at the centre of the dramaturgy of Butake's *And Palm-wine Will Flow*. The clarion call of "Power to the People" in the actual physical Cameroonian world in the 1990s has a corresponding parallel in the fictive creation, with the marginalized characters in the play's universe challenging their oppressors and calling on them to institute "people power". This play does not only reflect these realities, but also suggest ways of forging ahead a new society, with values that give fullness to human life.

The leadership in Ewawa is steeped in dictatorship, corruption and drunkenness. This leadership is made up of a gerontocratic class that survives on corruption and dictatorship. The monarch is referred to in bestial metaphors as: "the pig who knows only the hunger of its own stomach"(p.91), "respecter of palm-wine and food" (p.97), "surrounded by bootlickers and suckers of blood" (p.109), "the crocodile that swallows its own eggs" (p.110), and "the supreme epitome of the abominations of drunkenness and gluttony" (P.110). Ewawa leadership is presented as that very exploitative and corrupt ruling class which is only interested in material benefits and merriment.

To illustrate how corrupt the monarch and his cabinet are, Fon Chila Kintasi confers the "red feather" (one of the highest titles in Ewawa Fondom) to people like Kibanya, not out of any formidable achievement in the interest of the community but as compensation for paying allegiance to his whims and caprices. Shey Ngong regrets this situation thus:

> *Empty shells like Kibanya, who would never have had access to the Fon's palace, are being decorated with the Red Feather by the Fon himself.... Today, with a few goats and fowls, even the lowliest of the low are beginning to file into the royal presence. How do you have a land in which everyone is a title-holder?(p.97).*

Shey Ngong regrets that the old values of his community have been emasculated by greed and "manless man like Kibanya" (p.97) would now be able to "stand in the market place and beat his chest and speak in a loud voice"(p.89).

Kibanya, Nformi Nyam, Nformi Elame, Gwei and their monarch have abolished the structures and consensus for the collective decision-making in Ewawa Fondom. This new class of leadership thinks only in terms of their stomachs. Consequently,

Kibanya pays allegiance to the culture of greed – that culture of selfish political sell – outs whose existence is based on the promotion of ethnicism. Ethnicism as practiced in the Fon's palace comes with all its other attributes of mediocrity and repression. For example, the demolition of the Wise Council, is part of the overall design by the monarch at stifling dialogue thus encouraging monolithism in Ewawa.

Shey Ngong spits on the "red feather" and its distributor as he refuses the Fon's invitation to be part of the decoration of Kibanya with the "red feather". To Shey, he is "no dog that will hunt for the pleasure of another" (p.91). He believes that "the game must be shared and everyone must have a fair share". But the Fon knows no one other than his family and those that come to him with gifts in return for the red feather. Shey regrets that the present wise council under the monarch that is made up of hand-clappers has nothing good to offer the people because they cannot challenge the Fon. He captures this worrying state thus:

Shey Ngong: *Does the wise council ever discuss with the Fon? When the Fon pronounces that this farmland now belongs to himself or one of his family, does the wise council open its mouth in disapproval? I spit on a body that only gives approval and acclaims every decision taken by one man (p.91*).

The Fon's dictatorial regime is envisaged in his reaction to Shey Ngong's refusal to honour his invitation at the coronation ceremony of Kibanya. The monarch cannot bear to be insulted by Shey of the gods and so he demonstrates his dictatorial powers by pronouncing seizure on Shey's farmlands. He immediately hands them over to Kibanya's wives. Nsangong, Shey's closest friend informs him of this terrifying state

"*Shey, Shey! Your wives farmlands have been seized and given to Kibanya's wives. A messenger is on the way to deliver the Fon's pronouncement" (p.92).*

In Ewawa Fondom, room is no longer given to any dissenting voices. Everyone in the community must pay allegiance to the Fon without which the defaulters are tortured and summarily executed in the Ekpang bad bush. Nsangong is severely beaten by the Fon's watchdogs for speaking ill of the Fon. The whipping of Nsangong tells of the nature of Ewawa state terrorism. Tashi's description of the severe beatings of Nsangong is pitiable.

> **Tashi**: *The things that are happening in this land are pregnant…. Imagine a respectable man like Nsangong, tied with ropes to a kolanut tree as is he were a cow and whipped by worthless thieves. Yes they whipped him thoroughly until he began to bleed in several places. Then some people in the crowd intervened and carried him away to his compound. He could not even walk (p.99).*

The whipping of Nsangong is nothing compared to the other forms of torture and summary executions of other opponents or dissenting voices against the Fon. Gwei, one of the Fon's messengers and spies, who visits Shey to mock at him on the seizure of his palm bushes and the reverting of his wives farmlands to the wives of Kibanya, reveals to Shey Ngong the other forms of state of espionage and terrorism in Ewawa. The following dialogue illustrates this horrified state of affairs in the land;

Shey Ngong: *How can the whole land be afraid of one man? How do people disappear in the land? Where do you keep them?*
Gwei: *They are taken to Ekpang, Shey.*
Shey Ngong: *The bad bush?*
Gwei: *Yes the bad bush.*
Shey Ngong: *And killed? You kill people in the bad bush on behalf of the Fon? … for what crimes?*

Gwei: *Very often, it is the notables who order. Especially Mformi Nyam and Mformi Elame…. For talking ill of the Fon or his notables (pgs 102-103).*

Gwei is one of the fawning, stoogeing personalities, parading the corridors of power in Ewawa. He is an apt persona of those privileged slaves in contemporary politics, who trade their consciences and people for material aggrandizement. His revelation of "how people disappear in this land" is a biting indictment of the horrible nature of Ewawa state espionage and terrorism.

Gwei's fate is worse and very pathetic. This is because his wife does not even have a piece of land to farm despite his allegiance to the Fon. Worst still, his father disappeared when he went to complain to the Fon about the seizure of his wives. Instead of taking up arms to avenge the murder of his father and the seizure of his palm bush, Gwei decides to take the easy way out – ally with the dictator thus getting a chance to "lick the oil dripping from the Fon's fingers as he eats chicken" (p.104).

The "Palace" and the "Fon" symbolize the highest order in Ewawa society. The palace is where the Fon reigns supreme, for he is metaphorically referred to as "the lion of Ewawa". The palace is supposed to be a place where all the councilors/notables gather to make decisions concerning the life and growth of the people in the community but in this case, the Fon spends most of his time in the palace with his councilors in merry-making.

Butake kicks against the culture of drunkenness, the quest for ephemeral values and the pointless eulogizing of the village's first servant- the Fon. Literarily, the Fon is dazed because of too much drinking but metaphorically, the playwright uses alcoholism

to show the extent to which power intoxicates. The more one thirst for power the more it corrupts just like Fonlon (1966:16) says, "Power is a heady wine and so sweet, in fact that few have been known to lay it down willingly." The Fon as revealed by one of the characters (Gwei) is more inclined to the abuse than the use of power, to inordinateness than to moderation.

Lyonga (1990:4) notes that in *And Palm-Wine Will Flow*, alcoholism echoes the book of Genesis but violates its benediction.

> *The single prayer on the lips of the people of Ewawa is not that there should be light but that there should be wine. Obviously palm-wine generates not enlightenment but endemic darkness and muddle-headedness, thus standing as the symbol of venality; it engenders other social and political wrongs such as corruption, injustice and totalitarianism. When there is too much in the belly, the head becomes an empty shell…*

What one finds in the Fon's palace is but a riotous, muddle-headed atmosphere. It is no doubt however that the power the Fon exercises breeds all sorts of social and political malaise. Gobata (1993: 96-97) says "It is the excessive drinking and consumption of alcohol which has turned both the leaders of Cameroon into sheer madness, and numbness, and ruined a most beautiful people and country, and subverted her future well being".

Drama enhances the spirit of collective resistance and heroism thus, Butake's dramatic action, setting and character delineation in *And Palm-Wine Will Flow* come together to promote the vision of progressive art. In this light, the sacred grove of Nyombom, and the roles of the characters of Nyombom's Chief Priest, Shey-Ngong, Earth Goddess and Kibaranko are crucial signposts for critical consideration.

Contrary to the merry-making and indiscriminate consumption of alcohol that characterizes the Fon's palace, is the sacred grove of Nyombom, the abode of the gods and ancestors of Ewawa. The sacred grove symbolizes the spiritual power that sharply contrasts with the secular power of the Fon and its inherent abuses. While the Fon's palace has been transformed into a meeting place for greedy hand-clappers, the sacred grove of Nyombom represents strength, wisdom, love and vision. The power that the sacred grove symbolizes is a source of moral strength and peace. Shey Ngong contextualizes this by invoking the guardian sprit and direction of Nyombom to help the cause of the community.

> *Oh! Nyombom!*
> *Creator and guardian of the land,*
> *And you our illustrious forebears,*
> *Grant me strength and wisdom,*
> *To weather the surging storm.*
> *... Nyombom and you, ancestors,*
> *Grant me strength and wisdom.*
> *Grant me patience and love (p.89*).

The sacred grove of Nyombom wields a strong and revolutionary force because this is where all action in the play takes place. This sacred grove is a fantastical setting where the dead are not dead, and the natural and supernatural are accepted as part of the truth of communal existence. The significance/importance of the grove is first captured at the opening scene where Shey Ngong declares in answer to the voice off stage that questions where he is heading to when all roads lead to the palace. Shey Ngong replies: "I am going to the grove for some peace …. I am going to the grove. My obligation is to the gods of the land. My duty is to the gods" (p.88).

It is at the sacred grove of Nyombom that Nsangong and Shey Ngong first examine the extent of the massive corruption and repression in Ewawa Fondom. Here Nsangong warns his friend that the forces against him are overwhelming and one of the Fon's men comes to the grove also to tell Shey Ngong about the seizure of his wives' farmlands, the horrible nature of the society's spy and the incessant killings that take place in Ewawa community.

The Earth Goddess announces again in the sacred grove that the only hope for a better future in Ewawa society depends on the removal of the Fon from the helm of power. This finally takes place when the implacable Kibaranko seized the throne of the Fon, "swung it round and round and let it crash on the ground, splitting into two" (p.114) and finally burns down the palace and returns to the grove with the Fon's bugle (the symbol of enslavement of the Ewawa people). The progressive forces that build up around Shey-Ngong succeed in forcefully removing the Fon from power through the blessings and directions of the guardian spirit of Nyombom whose abode is at the sacred grove.

Backed by Nyombom, the spiritual guide of Ewawa Fondom, Shey Ngong is the marginal moral authority that first sticks out his head in resistance to the profligacy, corruption and dictatorship in Ewawa. Shey therefore instigates the other rebellious characters (Kwengong, Tapper and the Women of Ewawa), who gather around him to uproot the dictatorial/repressive regime in power that is responsible for their misery.

From the beginning of the play, Shey Ngong makes a clear statement of detachment about the stupidity of participating in the frivolities and merry-making at the Fon's palace, by dismissing the open invitation offered him by Voice-off-stage.

Voice: (off) *Shey Ngong, are you not coming to the palace? Where are you going to when all roads are leading to the palace?*
Shey Ngong*: Is there anything important, apart from the merry making? I am going to the grove for some peace.*
Voice*: But Shey do you not know that Kibanya is receiving the red feather today from the sacred hands of the Fon himself? ..... And palm wine will flow as usual. Come with me to the palace Shey. The Fon will not take your absence kindly.*
Shey Ngong*: I am going to the grove. My obligation is to the gods of the land. My duty is to the gods. Not to the Fon and palm-wine (p.88).*

In place of such merriment, the visionary Shey prefers to go to the sacred grove for some quiet and peace, since his obligation is to the gods and ancestors of Ewawa, and not to palm-wine and food. Amidst the threats of retaliatory punishment likely to come from Fon Chila Kintasi, Shey Ngong is steadfast and forthright in condemning the myopic monarch who, with his notables and supporters, have lost direction and touch with the ground truths and now only listen to the inner voice of greed and palm-wine.

As "the iroko tree" to which "the gorilla can do nothing" and "the fowl that can never be called to a wrestling match with the cockroach", Shey Ngong tells the Fon that, *"I am no dog that will hunt for the pleasure of another. The game must be shared. Let every one have his fair share (p.91)".* He shuns the piecemeal distribution of the "Red Feather" and the allotment of other people's farmlands and palm bushes to the

Fon's friends and associates as the lowest level of bad governance because in the past, the recipients of the "Red Feather" were great performers and achievers.

When the "lion of Ewawa" (Chila Kintasi) finally pounces on Shey Ngong and announces through his messenger Gwei: "the farmlands of your revered wives now belong to Kibanya's wives" (p.93), this triggers the rebellion that finally ousts the Fon from power. Shey Ngong challenges this decision by threatening: "Let Kibanya and his wives step unto my farmlands if they have the guts" (p.97). With the new development of events, Shey Ngong unleashes the terrifying Kibaranko to uproot the bloodsuckers in the palace. Shey Ngong's enchantment and invocations as he releases the Kibaranko illustrates this:

Shey Ngong: *(Indicating spot next to sacred pot) Stand here!*
Kwo'o! Kwo'o! Kwo'o!
The Lion announces his presence with roaring!
(Tapper begins to rumble)
The dog does not eat because he is hungry!
The leopard prowls among the goats
And they scatter into the dark night!
(Scoops liquid from sacred pot and makes rumbling Tapper to drink after which he becomes more agitated ending in frenzy and howling).
The lion spreads terror among the cattle and sheep!
(Tapper enters Kibaranko masks)
When the elephant flaps his ears and sounds his trumpet
The forest is in disarray for he has gone berserk!
(Howling, Kibaranko exits in terrifying frenzy).

Shey Ngong also mobilses the women through Kwengong, his wife, to do something quickly in order to avert the drought before nightfall. *"Go quickly. The women must do something to avert the drought pronounced by earth Goddess. Go, before darkness falls all over the land (p.105)".* The demolition of the Ewawa

dictatorship is however achieved through the collaborative work of the women who meet at the twin streams to take very drastic action against the desecrator of the gods and ancestors.

Kwengong: *When I got to the twin-streams, there was a large gathering of women, mostly the elderly ones. They were all naked, stark naked. It seemed that they had been performing some rites. Upon my arrival, they raised a great shout and one of them placed a pot full of some potion on my head. Go to the Fon! Go to the palace! They shouted. And make him drink! Then I knew what I was carrying (p. 109).*

Through Kwengong, Butake demonstrates the necessity for group work and cohesive decision taking especially where collective resistance is necessary. She makes her pronouncements in ironic overtones when she orders the Fon out of his hiding place and compels him to drink the concoction of the women.

Kwengong: *Chila Kintasi! Chila Kintasi!*
Come out and receive the wares
The women over whom you wield great power
have sent you!
Come out, I say, and receive the goods
Sent by those you dishonour so!
... Here are the wares the women commanded deliverance to their Fon!
Here are the fruits they urged me feed the crocodile that swallows its own eggs!
Receive them, Oh Fon, and rejoice!
May they make you call another feast before the sun goes to sleep! (Pgs.109-110).

Armed with the spirit of Earth Goddess, Kwengong casts the final death spell on the now completely hypnotized monarch:

Die and deliver the land from the
Abomination of drunkenness and gluttony!...
Die! Chila Kintasi, die!
And save the land from merry-making!

Die Fon! So that we may think!
The people need your death to think!
Die! Die! Die! (p.110).

The nude rebellious women led by Kwengong team up in defiance of their husbands to oust the tyrannical, tribalistic and corrupt Fon from his palace in favour of a more democratic form of government whose head will henceforth be decided by the people. Kwengong/Earth Goddess and the women's secret cult actually take praise for liberating Ewawa from the grip of Chila Kintasi. They become the conscience of their society and as such, representatives of Ewawa common sanction.

The characters (Tapper and Kwengong) through spirit possession play a vital role in the play. They are transformed into Kibaranko and Earth-Goddess respectively by Shey Ngong as they are induced and made to drink of the concoction from the sacred pot of the gods. This transition gives them supernatural powers and it is at this level that they are able to accomplish their mission by destroying the authoritative/repressive forces that misguide them.

Tapper and Kwengong function on a dual consciousness – the human and supernatural planes. On the human plane, Tapper is the humble and loyal palm-wine tapper, whose "clothes have never been whole" (p.98); the one who supplies palm wine for Shey Ngong's libations to the gods and ancestors of Ewawa. He demonstrates a realistic picture of his human self when he expresses genuine fears about the possibility of being beaten in the same manner as Nsangong.

Tapper: *The disease that attacked the cow cannot spare the goat. I do not want to suffer like Nsangong. We have all heard of people being beaten up and*

made to disappear by his watchdogs. Today it happened before the very eyes of the people (p.101).

At the spiritual/supernatural plane, Tapper possesses supernatural powers that enable him to act in an uncontrollable manner. He enters the mask of Kibaranko and is transformed by means of induction by Shey Ngong into the terrifying agent of retributive justice. He declares as he enters the mask of Kibaranko:

> ***Tapper:*** *The palace must be burnt down. No more Fons in this land of Ewawa. No more grabbing of people's farmlands and palm-bushes! No more piecemeal distribution of the red feather! No more*!

Now in the spirit of Kibaranko, Tapper exits in a terrifying frenzy and heads straight to the Fon's palace where he breaks all the pots and calabashes of palm wine, seizes the Fon's throne and splits it into two, and finally burns down the whole palace. All these actions are accomplished through the supernatural powers he gains in the form of Kibaranko.

It is also by means of spirit possession that Kwengong (who on the human plane is one of Shey Ngong's wives), is induced at the twin-streams into the spirit of Earth-Goddess. She finally completes the work left uncompleted by Kibarnko (the killing of the Fon) by casting a death spell on the hypnotized monarch that eventually led to his death. "Die Fon! So that we may think! The people need your death to think! Die! Die! Die! (p.110)".

Tapper and Kwengong, who are transformed into Kibaranko and Earth-Goddess respectively, and imbued with the spirit of Nyombom, the supreme deity, creator and guardian of Ewawa, function on behalf of the deity. After burning down the palace,

Tapper in his human self says; “when the spirit of Kibaranko takes you, it is hard to remember anything” (p.112). Also, when Kwengong, on the instructions of Earth-Goddess goes to the palace to compel Chila Kintasi to drink form the pot, the savoury juice of those whom he wields power, her commands show the words of the deity-spirit she incarnates. Kwengong tells her husband Shey that, in the process of carrying out the supreme instructions of Earth-Goddess, she could not even recognize her own voice, and when she spoke her voice was wraped.

Kwengong: *I went. I got to the palace just as Kibaranko was departing. I walked straight into the inner court. Of course, the whole place was deserted. Not a single body around. When I opened my mouth to speak, I could not recognize my own voice (p.109)*

This illustrates that the inspired pronouncements and decisions of the supernatural and guardian forces could be effectively transposed to humans whose actions they control. Dapo (1981:207) contends that, at the moment when the trance is achieved,

> *The possessed loses complete consciousness of even his/her very essence, and is transformed into the essence of the god himself. And during the trance, characterized by ritual sacrifice, incantations, music, song and dance, the possessed is capable of the prophet’s sight, communicating with man as a first person representative of the deity.*

The Kwengong-Earth Goddess and Tapper-Kibaranko consciousness reflect a complex liaison between trance, magic and spirit possession in dramatic literature. This relationship illustrates that, the gods and ancestors are eternally alive and punish and regulate the actions of the living.

According to Lyonga (1997:177) Kwengong/Earth Goddess and the women’s secret cult, represent the common endorsement of the people and their collective

resistance to leviathan political repression. The role played by the women secret cult through Kwengong/Earth Goddess in the demolition of the monocracy in Ewawa, later reappeared in the actual physical Cameroonian setting in the early 1990s with the "Takenmbeng" (a female secret cult in the North West Region, Cameroon made up of old women which admits only post-menopause women. When these women begin their traditional rites/rituals and actions, which they do in silence and nakedness with only a piece of cloth around their sex organs, and broomsticks in their mouths, the males keep their distance. Anyone who attempts to spy at their nakedness or despise their rituals should expect an incurable illness).

Again, the popular demonstrations in the streets of Cameroon in the 1990s, calling for the convening to a Sovereign National Conference where national issues were to be openly addressed also parallels the "market-place" concept in *And palm-wine Will Flow*. In the play, the market-place is a democratic assembly where the affairs of Ewawa are openly debated. The playwright creates the ideology of 'People Power' in Ewawa Fondom where "the affairs of the land shall be decided by all the people in the market place". Kwengong declares that:

> *The people will rule through the council of elders led by Shey here. The day he takes the wrong decision, that same day, the people shall meet in the market place and put another at the head of the council of elders (p.113).*

This decision brings about the demolition of the old order and the re-inscription of the aspirations of the formerly marginalized groups. The marginalized people of

Ewawa represented by Shey Ngong, Tapper and Kwengong, in their collective struggle succeed in ousting the dictatorship in Ewawa. According to Fanon (1965:126),

> *When a people have fought for their national liberation, they will allow no one to set themselves up as liberators; They show themselves to be jealous of the results of their actions, and take good care not to place their future, their destiny or fate of their country in the hands of a living god.*

Shey Ngong, Tapper/kibaranko, the women's secret cult, and Kwengong/Earth Goddess are the jealous guardians of this new political order in Ewawa community.

Lyonga (1993:176) asserts that the play "strikes a pre-emptive blow at monolithism in favour of democratic principles". This is because by the time that plural party politics and democracy were re-introduced in Cameroon in 1990, after thirty years of monolithic dictatorship, *And Palm-wine Will Flow* had been published and performed in Cameroon theatre halls which many spectators viewed as the antithesis to monolithic rule. She had also strongly pointed out that Butake foreshadowed Cameroonian socio-political reality and "stayed one step ahead of reality".

> *And Palm-wine Will Flow's impact became clearer in 1991 with the demise of one-party rule in Cameroon. Against this background, some parallels ought to be evoked… One cannot ignore the play's foreshadowing of ghost town fires in the Fon's palace which is burnt down, as well as his supporters who are equally consumed by the fire. The berserk kibaranko, a masked agent of retributive justice, is the strongest symbolization of unprecedented anger and rancour that would spill over the streets a year later, shaking Cameroon's political foundations…. (Lyonga, "National Democrats", 1993: 178).*

With the death of the Fon, a final transition of power is reached. The Fon's death is necessary for the birth of a new era where more energy will be devoted to rightful

thinking and less energy to more frivolous aspects of life. Kwengong/Earth Goddess and the women's secret cult take praises for liberating the people form the iron grip of Fon Chila Kintasi.

Power now reverts to the people as a decision is reached that a leader will be democratically elected by the people in the market square to head the Council of Elders. This group of people represents the democratic voice of the people. In the slogan of the Social Democratic Front (SDF) opposition party in Cameroon, power now reverts to the people (Power to the People). The abolition of the Fondom and the institution of an elective Council of Elders, headed by Shey Ngong clearly reveal the playwright's hatred for authoritative regimes. Butake in this aspect promotes his art based on the dramatic context of oppression and struggle with a vision which is tilted towards "People Power".

According to Lukacs (1950:19), "the practical road to a solution for the writer lies in an ardent love of his people, a deep hatred for the people's enemies and the people's own errors". Characters like Shey Ngong, Tapper, and Kwengong and the women's secret cult are modes by which the Ewawa community ensures collective action, regeneration and self-determination.

Unlike in *The Survivors* where the dictatorial power of the gun represented by Officer is destroyed and transferred to the people, there is rather, a check and balance system in *And Palm-wine Will Flow* whereby the authoritative power of the Fon is annihilated and transferred to the people. A balance is therefore created between the

new-found power of the people and the spiritual power of Shey Ngong, the chief priest of Nyombom.

The vision one is left with at the end of the play is that of hope, that Ewawa will once again be ruled by a council of elders that will represent the wishes of the people. The fact that the chief priest will head such a council, shows that the spiritual power of the shrine reigns supreme over the secular power of the Fon, thus the reason why the Fon dies and the whole system of dictatorship is completely paralyzed by the spiritual power of the grove which no mortal dares to challenge, not even the chief priest of Nyombom.

The sacred gong (a symbol of the people's liberation) triumphs over the bugle (a symbol of the people's enslavement). Consequently, the spiritual power of the grove surmounts the secular power of the Fon. This shows that, the struggle for liberation can only be sustained and ultimately attained through a concerted stand against tyranny that threatens to undercut the cultural roots and traditions of a people.

And Palm-wine Will Flow therefore, deals with the conscientious development of the spirit of collective resistance against the marginalization and exploitation of the people by a highly repressive ruling class. The play depicts the processes in these marginalized people's attempt at defining their national destiny and it also advocates 'People Power'. The people of Ewawa and by extension Cameroonians need a change of governance and administration since Cameroonian leaders for a long time according to Ngwang (1990:8) "have been plagued with palm-wine and the hand-clapping legislature that fed fat on the wealth of the nation like maggots". He therefore suggests

that the country needs people like the Kwengongs who have the ‘Power of power’ to exercise this power in order to bring sanity to the nation.

WORKS CITED

Adelugba, Dapo (1981). "Trance and Theatre: The Nigerian Experience". *Drama and Theatre in Nigeria: A Critical Source Book*. Yemi Ogunbiyi, ed. Lagos: Nigerian Magazine Publications.

Ambe, N. Hilarious (2007). *Change Aesthetics in Anglophone Cameroon Drama & Theatre*, Pia Thielman & Eckhard Breitinger, eds. Bayreuth.

Butake, Bole (1989) *The Survivors*, Yaounde: Sopecam.

---------- (1990). *And Palm-Wine Will Flow*, Yaounde: Sopecam.

Fonlon, Bernard. *L'Effort Camerounaise*, Douala: June, 1990.

Fanon, Frantz (1960). *The Wretched of the Earth,* Penguin: London.

Gobata, Rotcod. *I Spit on their Graves (Book Two of the Past Tense of Shit). Testimony Relevant to the Democratisation Struggle in Cameroon*, Bellingham, WA: Kola Tree Press, 1996.

Lyonga, Butake Bole, and Breitinger, Eckhard, eds (1993). *Anglophone Cameroon Writing*. (BASS 30, WEKA No. 1), Bayreuth: BASS.

Lyonga, Nalova (1993). "Natural Democrats: Women and The Leadership Crisis in Cameroon Literature", *Anglophone Cameroon Writing*. (BASS 30, WEKA No. 1), Nalova, Lyonga, Bole Butak and Eckhard Breitinger eds. Bayreuth: BASS.

Lukacs, George (1950). *Studies in European Realism*, London: Hillway Publishing Co.

Ngwang, Emmanuel (1991). "Female Empowerment and Political Change in Cameroon: A Study of Bole Butake's *Lake God, The Survivors and And Palm Wine Will Flow"*, A Paper presented at the Mississippi Valley State University USA.

Ngwana, S. Albert (2001). *The Struggle for Political Pluralism and Democracy in Cameroon*, Douala: African Development Corporation Ltd.

CHAPTER FIVE
CONCLUSION

Anglophone drama in Cameroon is mostly protest in nature and deals with the injustices and deprivations of a people whose culture, history and politics have been so badly abused. The selected plays under study – *Lake God, The Survivors* and *And Palm-wine Will Flow*, focuses on an interpretation of the nature of politics and leadership in Cameroon's decolonisation with emphasis on the nature of power struggle in postcolonial Cameroon.

The discussions and analyses of the selected plays in this study set out to examine the concept of power and empowerment in Anglophone Cameroon drama. The study laid much emphasis on how the politics of domination and the concept of changing attitudes on society from stasis to growth are construed in the dramatic integrity of Bole Butake. In going about this, the researcher approached the selected texts under study from a subjective interpretative perspective by considering the linguistic markings and symbols on the texts through character, structure, as well as the texts' relationship with historical actualities.

In *Lake God*, Fon Joseph's blind refusal amidst the supplication of his people to lead them as their traditional spiritual representative in a yearly sacrifice to the lake god and consummate his love and kinship by sharing the royal bed with the Queen, so that there would be communal growth, only results in death and desolation for the whole community. Dramatic action in the play details the individual and collective engagement of the lake community to avert disaster and pour scorn on Fon Joseph and

other neo-colonial infringements like Father Leo. The play also examines the significance of the traditional Noni culture such as the Kwifon and Fibuen which the playwright uses in dealing with the problems of culture conflict. To Butake, culture is a means of resistance and an expression of oppositional points of view to those in dominance.

In *The Survivors*, there is the portrayal of man caught up and entangled in a spider's web. The five survivors from the lake catastrophe are trapped in a clearing in the forest on their way to Ewawa by the authoritative voice of an Officer dressed in military attire with a gun in his hands; a symbol of enslavement and oppression. There is no going forward or backward for these survivors and Officer uses the relief materials provided for these victims of a toxic gas disaster for his own benefit. Mboysi, the lone heroine outsmarts the brutish Officer who has been responsible for their collective exploitation and subjugation even though her victory is short-lived. With the death of Officer, she gives a celebrative but momentary dance/cry of victory: The elephant has fallen! The lion is no more! Woman is great!" (p.84).

Officer's warning to Mboysi's solitary attempt before his own nemesis, "If you kill me, your liberation will not last. There are eyes watching and ears listening" (p.84), only shows the extent of the state of terrorism and repression in Ewawa community. Butake seems to suggest that, for a successful revolution to take place in any oppressive system like the one in *The Survivors* there must be critical analysis, strategizing and sharpened dialogue among social forces and classes. Mboysi's singular act is a model

for all the Ewawas who have been cornered by powerlessness, passivity and poverty to wake up and fight for their dignity and liberation.

Drunkenness, dictatorship and oppression define the nature of political leadership in *And Palm-wine Will Flow*. Ewawa leadership is made up of a gerontocratic ruling class that survives on corruption and dictatorship. Ewawa's political dictatorship has completely abolished civil liberties and continues a rape of collective wealth. In this society, the wise Council which is supposed to act as a regulatory force and check the excesses of the Fon, has been abolished and replaced with the Fon's friends.

In Butake's *And Palm-wine Will Flow*, power politics in post independence Cameroon is presented as dysfunctional and myopic as a result of its dependence on, and the influence of agents and forces of neo-colonialism and imperialism. There is a lively representation of progressive individuals that challenge the absence of good leadership and subvert class tyranny in favour of socialist collectivity.

Shey Ngong, Tapper and Kwengong who stand out as the rebellious forces to challenge the dictatorial regime, are the awakeners and champions of their much-abused people. They unite into a collective resistance to challenge the forces at the root of their subjugation and transform their society. Their organized determinism, evident in their bold and uncompromising challenge of the allegorical drunkenness in the Ewawa palace, is injected into the spirit of collective resistance that results in the uprooting of their dictator.

From the foregoing analysis, the texts of Anglophone Cameroon drama which focus on the nature and structure of power/leadership could also change the actual physical realities as well as paint a realistic picture of how society is and how it could be. Butake in the selected plays paints a total picture of a society undergoing rapid changes and also conveys the collective resistance of the oppressed to the politics of their oppressors. Though his drama does not only reflect a long history of sufferings, it also articulates the perspective that progressive change and growth in society could be reflected in artistic works. The selected plays under study advocate for change in the society and the advancement of mankind towards justice, equality and development.

The focus of Anglophone Cameroon drama is on group cohesion, and the advancement of human condition. Since Anglophone Cameroon drama is an imaginative response to the contradictions in a people's confrontation with historical and neo-colonial actualities, Butake seeks to offer a realistic picture of man trapped in these contradictions and his attempts to break the chains of his entanglement. Though Butake in *Lake God* constructs humans in a mythic and supernatural cosmos, *The Survivors* and *And Palm-wine Will Flow* depicts human beings in a strictly realistic world as they strive to overcome the oppressive forces and redefine the essence of their existence.

It is in Butake's *And Palm-wine Will Flow* that Anglophone dramatic art in Cameroon attempts to reshape history and celebrate the possibility of using art to make suggestions about the advancement of human condition. Man is portrayed as not just an object of a fixed and unknown environment incapable of affecting it but as a protean

construct, imbued with potentials and capable of overcoming the barriers on his way to self-affirmation. All these are attempts by the playwright to portray a realistic picture of man and his society.

Elements of traditional African theatre such as mime, parody, songs and dance and the resources of traditional African culture such as spirit possession, masks, invocation, mythic consciousness etc are all interwoven in the aesthetics of Butake's dramaturgy. The techniques employed in Butake's drama are meant to reflect the possibilities of changing consciousness. The selected plays under study have also examine the nature of power politics in the society and the attempts by the marginalized to challenge and destroy the forces of oppression and an institution of democratic principles and power to the people.

The study found out that the concept of power and empowerment in Anglophone Cameroon drama is a major issue of concern that calls for a critical review as it concerns the political, economic and social realities of Cameroonians at large and Anglophones in particular. The researcher therefore suggests that further studies should be carried out on "female empowerment" in the selected texts under study since the women seem to play a vital role in the path to freedom from tyranny, oppression and dictatorship in the selected plays analysed above.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Primary Texts

Butake, Bole (1986). *Lake God,* Yaounde: Bet & Co (Pub) Ltd.

…… (1989). *The Survivors*, Yaounde: Sopecam.

…… (1990). *And Palm-wine Will Flow*, Yaounde: Sopecam.

Secondary Sources

Abel, Joseph (2009). "Power Relations and the Imperative of Political Morality" in Achebe's *A Man of the People* and *Anthills of the Savannah*. Seminar Paper Presentation, Dept of English, ABU: Zaria.

Achebe, Chinua (1975): *Morning Yet on Creation day.* New York: Anchor Press/Dubbleday.

Abram, M.H. (1981). *A Glossary of Literary Terms*, New York: Holt Reinhart and Winston.

Adelugba, Dapo (1981). "Trance and Theatre: The Nigerian Experience". *Drama and Theatre in Nigeria: A Critical Source Book*. Yemi Ogunbiyi ed. Lagos: Nigerian Magazine Publications.

Akorede, Yetunde (1993): *Theatre and Politics in Nigeria*, Jide Malomo and Saint Gbileka (eds), Ibadan: Caltop Publications Ltd.

Ambe, N. Hilarious (2007): *Change Aesthetics in Anglophone Cameroon Drama & Theatre*, Pia Thielman & Eckhard Breitinger, eds. Bayreuth.

Ashcroft Bill, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin (1989): *The Empire Writes Back*: *Theory and Practice in Postcolonial Literature*. London: Routledge.

Babajo, A. Kofa (2003). "PostColonial and the Novels of Abubakar Gimba". A PhD Thesis Submitted to the Department of English and Literary Studies, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria.

Besong, Bate (1993): "Literature in the Season of the Diaspora. Notes to the Anglophone Cameroonian Writer" in Lyonga, Brietinger and Butake (eds) *Anglophone Cameroon Writing,* (BASS 30, WEKA No. 1), Bayreuth.

…… (1988). *Just Above Cameroon*, Limbe: Nooremac Press.

…… (1991). *Requiem for the Last Kaiser*, Calabar: Centaur Publishers.

Bhabha, Homi K. ed. (1990): *Nation and Narration*.- London: Routledge.

Blewett Lori (2005): Lecture Notes on Foucault and Power, The Evergreen State College: February 26, 2005

…… (1994). "The Dramatist at Work: My Theatre Work is aimed at the Urbano-Politico-Bureaucratic Elite in Cameroon". *Theatre and Performance in Africa*, Eckhard Breitinger ed. Bayreuth: Bass.

…… (1996). "Writer as Visionary", *Epasa Moto*: *Critical Perspectives on Cameroon Writing.*

Cabral, Amilcar (1980). *Unity and Struggle*, London: Heinemann.

……. (1974). *National Liberation and Culture*, London: Heinemann.

Césaire, Aimé (1972): *Discourse on Colonialism*. New York: Monthly Review Press.

Chinweizu, Onwuchekwa Jemie and Ihechukwu Madubuke (1983): *Toward The Decolonization Of African Literature.* Vol. 1. African Fiction and Poetry and Their Critics. Washington: Howard University Press.

Davies, Caroles & Graves Adams (1986): *Ngambika*: *Studies of Women in African Literature*, Trenton: African World Press Inc.

Doho, Gilbert (2006): *People Theatre and Grassroots Empowerment in Cameroon*, Eritrea: Africa World Press Inc.

Durning, Alan (1993): "Supporting Indigenous People", *State of the World*: A World Watch Institute Report on Progress Toward a Sustainable Society (ed), Linda Starke. New York: WW Norton and Company.

Eagleton, Terry (1976). *Marxism and Literary Criticism*, London: Methuen & Co Ltd.

Emenyonu, Ernest ed. (1989): *Literature and National Consciousness*, Calabar: University of Calabar Press.

Ezekiel, Mphahlele (1962): *The African Image*, London: Faber and Faber.

---------- (1967): *Voices in the Whirlwind and Other Essays*, London: Macmillan.

Fanon, Frantz (1963): *The Wretched of the Earth,* Penguin: London.

Fokum, Kebila (2003): "Facts and Figures About Anglophone Marginalization*"*. *The Messenger*, Weekly Newspaper.

Fonlon, Bernard. *L'Effort Camerounaise*, Douala: June, 1990.

Foncha, N. John (1990): "Resignation from the CPDM". *The Case for the Southern Cameroons* in Mukong W. Albert, ed. Washington D.C.: CAMFECO.

Foucault, Michel (1980): *Power and Knowledge: Selected Interviews & Other Writings 1972-1977*. (ed) Colin Gordon, New York: Pantheon Books.

…… (1982) "The Subject and Power", in *Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics,* ed. Hubert L. Dreyfus & Paul Rabinov, 2nd ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Gaventa, John (1980). *Power and Powerlessness: Quiescence and Rebellion in an Appalachian Valley*, Chicago: University of Illinois Press.

…….... (2006). "Finding the Spaces for Change: A Power Analysis": IDS Bulletin. Vol. 37, No. 6, November, (Institute of Development Studies).

Ghondo, Jean-Pierre (1990). "Bole Butake's *The Survivors*: A Dense and Indicting Reflection of Social Being in Africa" in *Cameroon Trib*une, No. 1016, Yaounde: SOPECAM.

Gobata, Rotcod (1993): *The Past Tense of Shit*, (Book One): *Contribution of an Uncompromising Critic to the Democratic Process in Cameroon*. Limbe: Nooremac Press.

Gobata, Rotcod. (1996). *I Spit on their Graves (Book Two of the Past Tense of Shit). Testimony Relevant to the Democratisation Struggle in Cameroon*, Bellingham, WA: Kola Tree Press.

Jacobson, Jodi (1993): "Closing the Gender Gap in Development", *State of the World*, (ed) Linda Starke, New York: WW Norton and company.

Killam, Douglas (1977). *The Writings of Chinua Achebe*, London: Heinemann.

Kom, Ambroise. Ed. (2002): *Mongo Beti Parle,* Beyreuth: African Studies 67

Lambo, John (1991). "Corruption and Irresponsible Leadership: A Study of Bole Butake's *The Survivors",* Yaounde.

Lukacs, George (1950). *Studies in European Realism*, London: Hillway Publishing Co.

Lyonga, Nalova and Bole, Butake (1982): "Cameroon Literature in English: An Appraisal", *ABBIA*.

Lyonga, Butake Bole, and Breitinger, Eckhard (eds) (1993): *Anglophone Cameroon Writing*. (WEKA No. 1), Bayreuth: BASS.

Lyonga, Nalova (1993). "Natural Democrats: Women and The Leadership Crisis in Cameroon Literature", *Anglophone Cameroon Writing*. (BASS 30, WEKA No. 1), Nalova, Lyonga, Bole Butak and Eckhard Breitinger eds. Bayreuth: BASS.

Maduakor, Obi (1987) in Wole Soyinka: *An Introduction to his Writings*. New York: Garland.

Maimo, Sankie (1968) *Sov Mbang the Soothsayer*, Yaounde: Editions CLE.

Mbuy, Humphrey. "The Moral Responsibility of the Writer in a Pluralist Society: The Case of the Anglophone Cameroon Writer" in Lyonga, Brietinger and Butake (eds) *Anglophone Cameroon Writing, (BASS 30,* WEKA No. 1), BASS, 1993. Mukong, W. Albert ed. (1990): *The Case For The Southern Cameroons*. Washington D.C.: CAMFECO.

Musa, Tansa (1999): "The Royal President", *Africa Today*.

Ndumbe, Eyoh (2002). "Theatre for Development: A Digest of Experiences", Ewu, Jumai (ed), OPA

Ngoh, J. Victor (1996): History of Cameroon Since 1800, Limbe: Pressbook Limbe.

Ngugi wa Thiong'o (1986): *Decolonising the Mind: The Politics of Language in African Literature,* London: James Currey.

Ngugi wa Thiong'o (1982): *Homecoming. Essays on African and Caribbean Literature, Culture and Politics*. London: Heinemann.

…… (1997): *Writers in Politics*, Rev. Oxford: James Currey.

…… (1986): *Barrel of a Pen*, London: New Beacon.

…… (1986). *Writing Against Neocolonialism*, Vita Books.

…… (1982).*Devil on the Cross*, London: Heinemann Educational Books Ltd.

Ngugi wa Thiong'o and Micere, Mugo (1976). *The Trials of Dedan Kimathi,* Ibadan: Heinemann Educational Books Ltd.

Ngwana, Albert (2001). *The Struggle for Political Pluralism and Democracy in Cameroon*, Douala: African Development Corporation Ltd.

Ngwang, Emmanuel (1991): "Female Empowerment and Political Change in Cameroon: A Study of Bole Butake's *Lake God, The Survivors and And Palm Wine Will Flow"*, A Paper presented at the Mississippi Valley State University USA.

Njinjoh, Albert (1986). *Personal and Socio-Political Relations in the Works of Three Cameroonian Novelists.* Ph.D Thesis, University of Kent: Canterbury.

Obiechina, Emmanuel (1988): "The Writer and his Commitment in Contemporary Nigerian Society", *Okike,* An African Journal of New Writing.

…….. (1992) "Parables of Power and Powerlessness: Exploration in Anglophone African Fiction Today" in Issue: *A Journal of Opinion*, Vol. 20, N0. 2 (Summer, African Studies Association).

Okwori, Jenkeri (1994). "Empowerment for Sustainable Development: The Popular Theatre Strategy", A PhD Thesis submitted to the Department of English and Literary Studies, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria.

Olatunde, Ajaie "Economic Exploitation in Nigeria", *Newswatch*, Vol. 8, No. 12, May, 2005.

Osofisan, Femi (1991). "And After the Wasted Breed. Responses to History and to Wole Soyinka's Dramaturgy". *On Stage, Proceedings of the Fifth International Janheinz Jahn Symposium on Theatre in Africa*, Gottingen.

Oxaal, Zoe and Sally Baden (1997): "Gender and Empowerment: Definitions, Approaches and Implications for Policy", *Bridge Development – Gender*, Report No. 40. October.

Oyono, Ferdinand (1956). *The Old Man and the Medal* (Trans. John Reed), London: Heinemann Educational Books Ltd.

Richard, Cottam (1977): *Foreign Policy Motivation: A General Theory and Case Study*, Pittsburgh: Pittsburgh University Press.

Rodney, Walter (1981). *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa,* Washington, DC: Howard University Press.

Said, Edward (1979): *Orientalism*. New York: Vintage Books.

Sam-kubam, Patrick (1978). "The Paucity of Literary Creativity in English Speaking Cameroon", *ABBIA*.

Satre, Jean-Paul (1988): *What is Literature? And Other Essays*. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard Univ. Press.

Takougang, Joseph and Milton Krieger eds. (1988): *The African State and Society in the 1990s: Cameroon's Political Crossroads*. Boulder, Colorado: West view Press.

Tangwa, Godfrey (1998). "Democracy and Development in Africa: Putting the Horse before the Cart". *Road Companion to Democracy and Meritocracy*, Bellington, WA: Kola Tress Press.

World Book Encyclopaedia (1991). Vol. 15, Chicago: World Book Inc.

Internet Sources

Ashcroft Bill, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin (2010). "*The Empire Writes Back*: *Theory and Practice in Postcolonial Literature"*. http://www.Scholars,nus,edu.sg/post/poldiscourse.aschroft3/html.

Besong, Bate (2011). 'Who's Afraid of Anglophone Theatre?' in *West Africa*, http://www.batebesong.com

Butake, Bole (2006). "Home or Exile: The African Writer's Dilemma" scncforum@yahoo.groups.com

Foucault, Michel (2011). Power and Knowledge, http://www.csun.edu/~hfspc002/foucault.home.html

F.K. Omoregie (2009). "Rodney, Cabral and Ngugi as Guides to African Postcolonial Literature", http://www.usp.nus.sg/post/africa/omoregie11.html.

Paul, Brians (2007). 'Postcolonial Literature: Problems with the Term'. http://www.wsu.edu/~brians/anglophone/postcolonial.html.

Samira, Edi (2011). 'Revisiting the Paucity of Anglophone Cameroon Writing' http://www.greatimhotep.com/samiras_salvo

Samir, Dayal (2010). "Postcolonialism's Possibilities: Subcontinental Diasporic Intervention" University of Minnesota Press Stable URL: http://www.jstor.org/stable/1354389

Wikipedia (2010). "Power Concepts", http://www.wikipedia.com/html.

Council on Foreign Relations: A Nonpartisan Resource for Information and Development. http://www.cfr.org/publication/12578.

"The Purpose of European Christianity in Africa" (2011). http://www.edofolks.com/htm/pub139.htm