

Globalisation and Cameroonian worldview: The case of Azanwi Nchami's *Foot prints of destiny* and Kenjo Jumbam's *The whiteman of God*

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Abstract

Contact between the various peoples in the world, especially between the global North and South, was accentuated through the civilising mission-slavery, colonisation, imperialism and other ever-evolving forms of oppressor–oppressed relationships. With cultural contact as a constant in our evolving world, globalisation aims to referee relations between these interacting cultures on a global scale. This article examines the ways in which globalisation has affected the Cameroonian worldview by discussing excerpts from Kenjo Jumbam's *The whiteman of God* (1980) and Azanwi Nchami's *Foot prints of destiny* (1985). We build our discourse around Aseh's concept of the 'Kamerun Idea', exploring the tenets of worldview, ontology, values, logic and identity. We answer the question: Could there be any equitable exchanges between the global North and South in the global supermarket of influences? It is the contention of this article that globalisation has become a pressing present reality, especially as culture shock leads to osmotic relationships of exchange between the global North and South. This article reveals that whenever cultures meet, influence is traded and worldviews are affected.

Keywords: worldview, globalisation, Kamerun Idea, global North, global South

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1. Introduction

Aseh argues that²

Europeans assumed, as Columbus did on the other side of the Atlantic in the 15th Century, that the land of Africa was *terra nullius* without any political form and without a government hence belonging to nobody, especially since Europeans did not regard Africans as human beings. They classified Africans as beings qualified to be enslaved.

Being centred on the intersection between literature and history, this article contends that post-colonial African literature in general and Cameroonian literature in particular has been greatly informed by cultural contact with the West. Aseh also posits that³ the public sphere in what became Cameroon during the latter half of the 20th century – emerging as a kleptomaniac state erected on a foreign founding philosophy with its founding history and therefore traceable to a foreign historical source – is dominated by a multiplicity of intersecting and conflicting mechanisms of public mediation. Considering how all of these mechanisms are woven into the fibre of African society, Thomas has expressed the view that ‘partially overlapping themes’ have been presented.⁴ These themes include the impact of the First World War, ‘connections between colonial rule and missionary activity, [and] linkages between religion and economic development,’⁵ including

the role of traditional authorities (precepts and practices of chiefs and secret societies) in legitimizing religious change, the preaching of Christianity in the vernaculars, nationalism and autonomy, and conversion, Christian adherence, and native agency.⁶

This attests to the fact that influences have been traded to various extents and varying degrees and they have affected the African and Cameroonian worldview and identity. Ngeh and Usman note that ‘the concept of power in African Literature accounts for the tension, contradiction and confusion that have resulted in identity crisis, alienation and social exclusion’.⁷

² Nfamewih Aseh ‘Ideologies, governance and the public sphere in Cameroon’ (2011) XXXVI(1) *Africa Development* 169–220.

³ Aseh (n 2).

⁴ GA Thomas. ‘Why do we need the white man’s god? African contributions and responses to the formation of a Christian movements in Cameroon, 1914–1968’ 2017 *Pro Quest*.

⁵ Thomas (n 4).

⁶ Thomas (n 4).

⁷ TA Ngeh & S Usman ‘Power dialectics and the crisis of identity in Anglophone Cameroonian poetry: The poetic vision of Gahlia Gwangwa’a and Bate Besong’ 2014 *Journal of Social Science Studies*.

The 'bug breaking and taming', as Hooks labels the treatment of the Africans aboard the slave ships,⁸ rendered them marketable as docile slaves for labour production in the West (that is, Europe and America).⁹ Then, with the rise of the anti-slavery movements, came new Western logics that served as banners for the continuing exploitation of the Africans, from where there was the near-total ideological arrest, as Aseh puts it, of Africans by the West.¹⁰ Here again, the intention was to manipulate the Africans into subservience to the imperial or colonial order under various ideologies: initially neo-colonialism and now globalisation. Bjornson also notes that 'when the benevolent rhetoric of the colonialist myth and the harsh reality of colonialist self-interest became apparent, victims of this disparity were Africans'.¹¹ In this article, we therefore juxtapose the individualistic standards of the West against the collectivist nature of African and Cameroonian standards, as reflections of identity both of the West and of the Africans, and how globalisation has taken its toll on the worldview of African and Cameroonian identity.

The contention of this article, therefore, is: Could there be any equitable exchanges between the global North and South in the global supermarket of influences? The painful encounter of Africans with the West – the struggles, the hustles and the tussles, the being regarded as the stereotyped and lesser beings and the reification of the African from the Western 'civilizing mission',¹² and the birth of a hybrid culture that touched the African lifestyles and worldview – is reinforced by the never-letting-go presence of the West. Just as the birth of national languages is drawn from standards, this article also contends that the African reality is ever morphing and its worldview ever adjusting, readjusting and adapting. Yet core values and certain existential ideologies are retained in the mix with the influences that blend in this era of globalisation.

2. Theoretical framework

Globalisation has affected the worldview of Africans in general and Cameroonians in particular. It is on this premise that we discuss excerpts from Kenjo Jumbam's *The whiteman of God*,¹³ and Azanwi Nchami's *Foot prints of destiny*.¹⁴ We have built our discourse around

⁸ B Hooks *Ain't i a woman: Black women and feminism* (Routledge 2015).

⁹ Hooks (n 8) 35.

¹⁰ Aseh (n 2).

¹¹ R Bjornson *The African quest for freedom and identity: Cameroonian writing and the national experience* (Indiana University Press 1991).

¹² B Ashcroft, G Griffiths & H Tiffin (eds) *The post-colonial studies reader* (Routledge 1995).

¹³ Kenjo Jumbam *The whiteman of God* (Heinemann 1980).

¹⁴ Azanwi Nchami *Foot prints of destiny* (Alfresco 1985).

Aseh's concept of the 'Kamerum Idea' by exploring the tenets of worldview, ontology, values, logic and identity while developing our discourse by cross-referencing various academic works.¹⁵

The Cameroonian worldview is subsumed within the African worldview when placing them in relation to the West. Aseh pointed out clearly the Western agenda for Africa, arguing: 'therefore, the original Cameroon idea itself, that founding philosophy on which Cameroon was erected by the Germans and consolidated by the French and the British during the Cold War'.¹⁶ To Aseh, this idea

is part of the overall 'idea' in which Europeans saw Africa as a vast land of economic potential which they set out to explore and exploit to the fullest by using local labour that could be reproduced indefinitely on the spot.¹⁷

From this, we explore the shifts in the African and Cameroonian worldview both from shifts in the logics of the Western ideologies of exploitation and oppression maintained in communications and within expressions of culture.

Our contention is that globalisation has become a pressing present reality, especially because the culture shock that leads to osmotic exchanges between the global North and South is tenable. This is because whenever cultures meet, influence is traded and worldviews are affected, as is the case in the two texts under study. In Rifai (nd), Singer is said to be 'convinced that if the revolution in communication has created a global audience,¹⁸ then we might need to justify our behavior to the whole world'. With these words, Singer evokes the need for accountability that ought to come with globalisation. Achille Mbembe, for his part, notices that

debates about how life on earth can be reproduced and sustained depending on how it ends and is forced upon us by the epoch itself is characterized by the impending ecological catastrophe and by technological escalation.¹⁹

By this, Mbembe not only refers to globalisation as the business of a select few or of global corporates, but also views the masses as an experimentation ground for global corporations and their whims that affect the African worldview in their show of individualism.

¹⁵ Aseh (n 2).

¹⁶ Aseh (n 2) 187.

¹⁷ Aseh (n 2) 188.

¹⁸ I Rifai 'Various dimensions of globalization and their implications for the leadership and management of education' (2013) 7(2) *Jurnal Lingua Cultura* 89.

¹⁹ Rifai (n 18); A Mbembe *Bodies as borders* (WISER, 2019) 5–18, available at <http://europeansouth.postcolonialitalia.it>

3. Effects of globalisation: Western individualism versus African collectivism

In the bid to situate the African worldview as being grounded in collectivism as opposed to Western individualism, Grills holds that the 'African view is a view that indicates an African orientation to the understanding of life meaning, the world, and relationships with self and others'.²⁰ On the one hand there is *The whiteman of God*,²¹ in which we see the Bansa people of Cameroon coming together before planting for their seeds to be blessed by the Fai. They come together to harvest only on a day and at a time decreed by the Fai. They also come together for cultural celebrations, for birth, marriage celebrations and death, and for cleansing ceremonies. Jumbam also tips in on the African worldview, showing how certain behaviours are reinforced, corrected or kept in check within the communalistic African environment. For instance, during the harvest of kola nut pods, the children pay themselves by 'stealing' some for themselves. They perform all of these functions under the supervision of the Fai, so much so that at the end of the harvest season the Fai calls everybody to bring everything that they had been keeping. For those who had taken too much, a little is deducted to add up to those who had too little, whereas those who had not hidden anything were given some pods and were encouraged to be more thoughtful of themselves next time or nobody will give them anything.²² In his narration, Jumbam does a comparative act to various ends: using Tansa, who is only a child, as a protagonist, Jumbam shows how the African worldview approaches certain matters. In the case of the kola nut harvest, the owner of the farm is conscious of the fact that the children ought to pay themselves. However, Jumbam places his child protagonist, Tansa, at the centre of his act to explain the confusion that globalisation breeds. This is seen even when Yaya complains that other children have stolen enough kola nuts to sell and then to buy clothes, but her own child had not taken as much as a nut to eat himself.²³ But Tansa, whose parents have adopted the Christian faith, says:

The Whiteman of God emphasizes that we should never hide kola nuts during harvest. That if the owner wanted to give us some, he would do so ... the church says do not steal, if you work and the person pleases, he will pay you.²⁴

²⁰ T Grills 'Apparent mental causation: Sources of the experience of Will' (2007) 54 *American Psychologist* 480–492.

²¹ Jumbam (n 13).

²² Jumbam (n 13) 77–79.

²³ Jumbam (n 13) 79.

²⁴ Jumbam (n 13) 79.

However, Yaya, whose ideological handle is presented as an embodiment of organic Africanism, judges this influence of the 'new worship' (globalisation) on her grandson when she says 'even babies were wiser than Tansa'²⁵ and, therefore, in Jumbam's contention, globalisation makes the African soul numb.

The doctrine that comes with globalisation and religion is individualistic, exploitative and oppressive in its ways, as Jumbam reveals in furthering his contention when he states: 'he says he is going to his house to eat, but ... he has left his eyes to see which people will go lazy.'²⁶ Comparing the African worldview of African collectivism and Western oppressive individualism, Jumbam gives an instance of Big Father who encapsulates Western philosophies and who makes his church members work from morning till night without rest, food and water, yet he leaves the scene during the hot hours of the afternoon to go and freshen up and relax while the people (Christians who Jumbam places in line with the analogy of slavery in his work) continue to work for the church under the scorching sun in the hope of not going to face hell fire at the peril of their physical well-being and no material reward and no 'thank you'. As he says:

They worked until their backs ached and their hands got blisters. They worked without break until the sun had gone down in the west and shadows were becoming long. Then Big Father came back and took his eyes and his hat and waved at them to go away.²⁷

Jumbam again goes on to reveal the decisive nature of the Western worldview – 'this new worship, do you see what it is doing?'²⁸ – to the extent that it demands that, for a younger wife to be baptised, her husband has to send away his other wives. Even children from the same womb fight with each other because they worship in rival churches, therefore giving credit to African worldview.

This collectivism of the African people is seen in most of the interactions in Jumbam's text. The narrator traces the way families move from a central nucleus or the big compound to populating the village and the community. In the author's words:

We moved from there to our present location. The Fai and his wives were gradually being left alone, but he was still respected as the head of all families. The children spent most of the day in the big compound while Papa and the other men spent their evenings with the Fai.²⁹

²⁵ Jumbam (n 13) 78.

²⁶ Jumbam (n 13) 92

²⁷ Jumbam (n 13) 93.

²⁸ Jumbam (n 13) 53–54.

²⁹ Jumbam (n 13).

In this manner, the African worldview draws on the notion of common origins and belongings that makes everyone responsible for the other. What affects one affects all and must be solved collectively. This is the unfortunate situation in which Dinni and Biy Wirba have found themselves when they commit incest: 'Yes, this is a blot on the whole family. The shit that has stuck on our clothes is from our own anus and so the blame is ours.'³⁰ Jumbam makes a comparison of the two worldviews as he compares the action of Big Fadda (the West or global North) and how estranged it is from those of the African essence. To show the extent of the wickedness of the Whiteman, as opposed to the indigenes, it is remarked: 'Did anybody the world over ever hear of a man beating and kicking a woman near her time for the simple reason that she coughed?'³¹ Lucas concludes, 'the Whiteman is wicked.'³²

Jumbam proceeds to highlight the tools of intimidation used by the West to check the actions of the religious African souls and Yaya does not fail to point out that 'you don't punish a man twice for one crime',³³ because, in the African worldview, once atonement is done, the remission of sin is absolute. As stated by the self-effacing voice of the author, in his concluding remark about the Dinni/Bih Wirba affair, the punishment is just too much for them, so much so that Bih Wirba 'received a good word from not a soul, always sharp words and abuses. Even her juniors in age spoke unkind things to her Dinni was not treated any kinder. He was nicknamed, "he-goat".'³⁴ However, after the cleansing sacrifices were made and the ill cast away, the author reveals the atmosphere that prevails:

the change of the attitude of the people of Mborn towards Bih Wirba and Dinni was dramatic. Bih Wirba becomes the idol of the people again. Dinni once more becomes Dinni the smart, strong, brave, and the pride of Mborn. How fast the past was gone. Gone completely as if nothing had happened.³⁵

Contrary to African worldview and collective approach to life, living and growing, globalisation with its corporate interest and individualistic gains separates the African from the collective nucleus for easier oppression and exploitation. Jumbam notices that an effective means to an end, one that successfully disarms well-armed African men, is religious oppression and the promise of a never-ending fire that burns people in hell. He therefore makes vivid this picture as follows: 'and all

³⁰ Jumbam (n 13) 30.

³¹ Jumbam (n 13) 67.

³² Jumbam (n 13) 61.

³³ Jumbam (n 13) 54.

³⁴ Jumbam (n 13) 72–73.

³⁵ Jumbam (n 13) 76.

this took place in front of the foolish brother. And he will not go to his wife's defence for fear of going to hell.³⁶ By this osmotic exposure of the African to the Western worldview, the imbalance of the influence of globalization is felt most by Africans. Their disarmament then gives them leeway for further oppression, the advent of global corporations, media intimidation and misrepresented cultural expressions, and misplaced identity markers.

In contrast, there is Nchami's *Foot prints of destiny*, which is about the edifice of colonial Africa that begins to crack as the black experience of colonialism becomes intimately personal. Here, Martin-Paul Samba's adopted German aristocratic home during his years as a student does not consider him as suitable material for a son-in-law. Then there are also Prince Douala Manga Bell and Dr Bele, who attend school with Samba in Germany, where this contact is completed, and also Princess Zara, the youthful Amazon warrior who is rescued from a slave ship on the shores of Kamerun. Supported by the Douala Princes, Samba champions the cause of the exploited in the central drama pitting Kamerunian nationalism against German colonialism. In her novel, Nchami provides a narrative that showcases the effects of globalisation and the exploitation of Blacks, particularly through the lens of colonialism, where Kamerunian nationalism is set against German colonialism just before the First World War.

The discussion of the effects of globalisation on the African worldview proceeds under three main thematic clusters in which we view Western individualism versus African collectivism. The point of departure is centred on individualism and the self as seen from the decision and practice of slavery as an expression of the Western worldview, while the second discussion is centred on globalisation as the historical logic of Western identity. In the third premise, we examine the 'Kamerun Idea' as the ontology for Western exploitation and its effects on the worldview of Africans in general and Cameroonians in particular.

4. Individualism and self-slavery as expression of Western worldview

Nchami's novel, which is set between 1884 and 1916, was written in 1985.³⁷ This historical period saw the apex of inhumane treatment by Western bourgeoisie colonisers of their African subjects and the colonised during the 'Scramble for Africa'³⁸ through slavery, racism,

³⁶ Jumbam (n 13) 67.

³⁷ Nchami (n 14).

³⁸ CN Teke 'Literary historicity: Textualising Kamerun's resistance to German colonialism in Azanwi Nchami's *Foot prints of destiny*' (2014) 3(1) *An International Journal of Post-Colonial Studies*.

imperialism, etc – all expressed with different codes in other forms and new forms of colonialism, such as neocolonialism, capitalism and globalisation. These various movements coax betterment but the core intentions of exploitation were well kept and untouched in the actions that stray from the official communications and slogans. These have affected the worldview of various groups of Africa and Cameroon in one way or the other, as seen from the texts under study.

From the experiences in the era of the Western incursions and the slave trade, Zara, one of the main characters in *Foot prints of destiny*, recounts:

The black men worked while the whites strode up and down barking out orders, brandishing evil-looking whips, and soldiers patrolled rifles slung over their shoulders There were also the Arabs the yellow ones who helped the white man hand in hand to humiliate our kind We now understood them we knew they would return ... they had taken our men and women ... they would come back for the ivory and gold the copper and the diamond.³⁹

The activities in this excerpt from Zara has kept on reproducing itself in various forms through all the abovementioned logics and ideological banners of oppression and exploitation, since the imperial incursion into Africa under the guise of a ‘civilising mission’ on the savagery of Africa. Aseh corroborates this by stating that

they [the West] classified Africans as beings qualified to be enslaved. This followed hundreds of years of murderous trans-oceanic slavery and slave trade which produced the wealth of the industrialized nations of the West which is today being ‘given’ to Africans as loans.⁴⁰

Transitioning into today and the ways in which it has affected the African and Cameroonian worldview from the communication that accompanies the interpretation of these acts of Western savagery, some ignorant Africans and Cameroonians would tend to evaluate the whole situation of oppression and exploitation differently when their worldview is lured into thinking of these loans from the West as acts of Western benevolence towards the suffering masses of Africa – extended as aids to the bourgeoisie in the Western neocolonial governments in African nations. Aseh continues by stating, ‘yet the bourgeois economists still make African people believe, unscientifically, that foreign capital is indispensable for African development’⁴¹ as a way of keeping a follow-up tread in the relationships of exploitation. By way of example, Malham, quoting Triandis, observed that

³⁹ Nchami (n 14).

⁴⁰ Aseh (n 2) 188.

⁴¹ Aseh (n 2) 188.

[worldviews are the means by which] the human individual is endlessly simplifying, organizing, and generalizing his [sic] own view of his environment [by imposing] his own constructions and meanings [which may be] characteristic of culture and that, 'worldview can be considered a component of culture'.⁴²

The Western worldview of the whites, as described by Nchami, is the culture of slavery incursion and oppression of Africa.⁴³ Both the Muslims and the Christians had the same commonality of being, characterised by great barbarism from those who sought to 'civilise'. In the same manner, Jumbam speaks about this civilising mission cum globalisation through the voice of Yaya. While the people who had been influenced by the new religion tried to justify the actions of the Whiteman, Yaya breaks loose rhetorically: 'Whiteman may be like that, maybe it is not his custom to say goodbye to people when they are leaving'⁴⁴ Yaya breaks in on this rhetoric:

Do you think he came here because he likes you or this place? ... He did not go there because he loves the people – he went to do a duty. He is working for the prize You just happen to be the farm his God wants him to work on.⁴⁵

The intentions and meanings of the global North are always coded in language and communication. Therefore Yaya's coded language drives home a point that is clear at least to the African mind. RH Lyons, quoted by Booker, noted:

though they disagree among themselves about which European 'races' were inferior to others, western racial commentators generally agreed that blacks were inferior to whites in moral fiber, cultural attainment and mental ability; the African was to many eyes the child in the family of man in embryo⁴⁶

and their relationship at its best was comparing along two lines, children versus adults, the relationship of father and child.

Nchami paints a manifestation of this deeply rooted hatred and racism that leads to a shift in the worldview of the recipient from individualism back to African collectivism.⁴⁷ She frames this instance in Martin-Paul Samba's awakening to the consciousness of his blackness from the perspectives of the whites, as stated by Lyon, when his white benefactor, Morgan, would rather lock up his daughter in a mental

⁴² PB Malham *Investigating the structure and functions of worldview assumption* (Core 2017) 5.

⁴³ Nchami (n 14).

⁴⁴ Jumbam (n 13).

⁴⁵ Jumbam (n 13).

⁴⁶ MK Booker *The African novel in English: An introduction* (Heinemann 1998).

⁴⁷ Nchami (n 11).

asylum and let her take her life than give his blessing for her marriage to the 'nigger', Martin-Paul Samba, whom he (Morgan) ironically called son. Sonia Von Morgan had, prior to this, tried to warn Samba that 'there is a (racist and imperialist) side of my father you have not seen'.⁴⁸ While Samba expresses his regrets at being a puppet all these years resulting from the culture shock that led to a shift in his worldview when he says: 'I have made myself a tool in the hands of the white man, I want to change that he (Whiteman) called me son but when the love was put to test it failed to stand up'.⁴⁹ Samba's mom, Auntie Ekodi, presses on the reality of racism when she says: 'Because you're a black man They are white people they cannot love us'.⁵⁰

Nchami shows another angle of cultural contact that affects people's worldview. Bateson, quoted by Malham, argues that 'world-view assumptions are commonly ordered into factors or dimensions on which there is individual variation within (national or other meaningful large-scale) groups'.⁵¹ The advent of slavery also had an impact on the worldview of families such as the Bele and the Manga Bell, who gained from the profits derived from slavery. Worth noting is that these are royal families who ought to walk more in the ubuntu philosophy of African collectivism. However, greed and self-interest plunged them into the grossness of Western individualism. This is seen when Nchami points out one of the reasons why Felix's choice of bride was rejected and she says:

To most of the members of the Bell family, who had amassed their enormous wealth as middlemen in the now abolished slave trade, the fact that Zara had been rescued from a slave ship relegated her to a position of unspeakable inferiority.⁵²

According to this, these families' worldview also separates the Self from the inferior Other, as was inculcated by greed and individualism from long-term culture contact with the oppressors. Movements framing intentions and ideologies behind the logic of language have been handed down from one thematic cluster of the oppressor–oppressed relationships to the next, and right into globalisation.

5. Globalisation, a historical logic of Western identity

With regard to globalisation, which is a historical logic of Western identity, Ali et al contend that it 'is the interaction between economies,

⁴⁸ Nchami (n 14).

⁴⁹ Nchami (n 14).

⁵⁰ Nchami (n 14).

⁵¹ Nchami (n 14).

⁵² Nchami (n 14).

technologies and politics. It creates an environment that reduces state regulation of the market promoting a more dominant role for large multinational corporations'.⁵³ When Davis, as quoted by Mbembe, uses the term 'planetary entanglement' driven by corporate elites increasingly detached from their countries of origin and who store most of their capital in tax heavens, he argues that 'these elites can no longer be "forced to account" through traditional means such as elections or protests'.⁵⁴ Here, Davis is referring to the level of individualism which has grown hand in hand with capitalism and globalisation and which keeps spreading its tentacles into various layers of society through individuals who choose the movement of huge amounts of capital over the collective good of the masses in their nations. Rifai considers that 'globalization comes with various dimensions and brings huge effects to countries across the world'.⁵⁵ In this light, he means that countries are left with no choice but to adapt to 'the changes that suddenly hit them economically, politically and culturally'⁵⁶ and that the 'economic dimension is the supreme form of globalization ... not all countries, however, gain the benefits of the economic globalization'.⁵⁷ Accordingly, Rifai insists that there are indeed some marks left of what is called the global borderless phenomenon that affects all regions of the world in a variety of sectors. To identify its marks, globalisation can then be more closely examined by breaking down these dimensions.

The above positions cause us to view globalisation clearly as another ideological face of Western exploitation that flows from the particular logic of all-inclusive free trade that bends neocolonial government regulations to the benefit of large Western multinationals championed by individuals who seek to preserve their interests by dissociating themselves from their communities and countries of origin against all odds – and becoming so rich at the expense and to the detriment of the collective communities to which they belong. This again is yet another way in which globalisation has affected and continues to affect the African and Cameroonian worldview: by making our men of influence greedy, individualistic and self-seeking, only too ready to do anything to preserve their interests and, by so doing, selling out their people for nothing, yoked as they have become by Western influence.

Franz Fanon does not fail to point out that the greed of settlers and the embargoes of colonialism have subjected the national bourgeoisie of underdeveloped countries to the role of the intermediary type.

⁵³ M Ali et al 'Globalization: Its effects' (2007) 6(1) *International Business & Economics Research Journal* 89.

⁵⁴ Mbembe (n 19).

⁵⁵ Rifai (n 18).

⁵⁶ Rifai (n 18) 91.

⁵⁷ Rifai (n 18).

In similar vein, Aseh, for his part, questions why relating with the West has to be based on, or not far from, such terms of exploitation. He notes:

by dominating the public sphere with idiomatic expressions that claim to make life rather than being supportive of reality which at the same time sought to destroy the foundation of all indigenous political philosophies yet with no intention to establish a universal ideal, 'labour' will be liberated and the Western industrial economies will lose their global dominance.⁵⁸

By this, Aseh means that the West will project a tempting image of an unrealistic achievement in a bid to lure the indigenes, or at least some of them, out of their safe haven so they can be without substance from collectivism to render them easy for exploitation – essentially, divide and rule.

Jumbam approaches this from the point of view of religion.⁵⁹ This aspect of dominating indigenous philosophy is revealed in various instances in *The whiteman of God*, where Christianity tries to kill culture by making the people feel guilty through threats of hell fire and the devil once they practise their culture. Jumbam's narrator tells us that Big Fadda rants as soon as he perceives the villagers' interest in their culture:

The devil has built his home here in Nkar and you, every one of you, are his pillar. He sits comfortably in your heart holding a calabash of wine on one hand and a woman on the other. Sex, sex, sex and drink; drink and sex is all you hear in the confession ... yesterday was Easter eve ... and you all swept away to the palace soon afterwards to drink and dance pagan dance. You are Christians! You honour jujus more.⁶⁰

Further into the text, however, Jumbam shows us the hypocrisy of the Whiteman of God, as even he, Big Fadda, who preaches against 'sex, sex, sex' is a paedophile, sleeping with young Lucy, as revealed in the confrontation between the Baptist and the Catholic children: 'your Whiteman of God does show that your religion is corrupt. Your Catholic Whiteman of God sleeps with Lucy. You ask Feliy and Andreas, they know.'⁶¹

This phenomenon is also seen at work in Nchami's *Foot prints of destiny*, as Paul Samba (father) turned into a German activist, preaches 'African advancement through European patronage'. The text shows that this evangelical work came as a result of all the benefits he

⁵⁸ Aseh (n 2) 192.

⁵⁹ Jumbam (n 13).

⁶⁰ Jumbam (n 13).

⁶¹ Jumbam (n 13).

had accrued from his dealings with the German emissary, Kurt Von Morgan, when it is said:

Once the white man had set him up, starting with a small market stall full of cotton fabrics from Europe, Samba doubled and redoubled his capital Upon Morgan's suggestion he graduated from retailing to whole selling, thanks to the connection he was able to make through his German friend. Paul Samba built a sumptuous residence in his homestead in Ebolowa, became the most influential personality of his native village, gaining even more power than the traditional chief. He was instrumental in establishing German rule among his people the Bulu when Kamerun became a German protectorate in 1884.⁶²

Paul Samba, before his demise, had handed down the puppeteering notions to his son, Martin-Paul Samba, who, too, was recruited by the imperialist for similar ends. Nchami observes:

Upon arrival in Kamerun, the young lieutenant had promptly been made a captain in the German overseas army, his special mission being the pacification of recalcitrant tribes who still opposed German rule in Kamerun ... a tool in German hands ... Samba first set out against his own people the Bulus He was merciless, the German golden-haired boy and a devil in the eyes of his countrymen.⁶³

Through such unveilings, Nchami's work confirms that culture contact and osmotic exposure to Western values influence the African and Cameroonian worldview by first instilling individualism in the place of collectivism from where greed grows and from the ego that is highlighted as being a tool to be exploited by the oppressor.

6. Idea of the ontology of exploitation

Aseh, from whose paper we have based our discussion on the Kamerun idea, had noted that in July 1472 the Portuguese became the first Europeans to visit Africa's Atlantic coast in general and the Wouri estuary in particular. There they were welcomed by the Douala people with local dishes of shellfish caught from the Wouri River. After that, the Portuguese named the Wouri River the Rio dos Cameroes, meaning the river of abundant shellfish. This in effect announced the existence of a profitable natural resource in that river in the same way as other European interlopers also announced the Gold Coast or the Ivory Coast. As a sequel, the Germans, who arrived in 1884, took up the Portuguese term of Cameroes to coin the German appellation Kamerun as a way of designating that vast territory made up of a constellation of existing nations which they carved up and reserved as their 'protectorate'.

⁶² Jumbam (n 13).

⁶³ Nchami (n 14).

This 'protectorate' was reserved for their exploration and exploitation – and for the exportation of the proceeds from that territory back to Germany to benefit its ailing industrial economy at that time. This was the source of the Kamerun idea, which was then transformed into a neo-colonial superstructure after the Second World War by the French for the same purpose as the original German idea.

Aseh's position on the Kamerun idea is a stretch from the Western civilising mission-colonisation concept in which slavery was born and where imperialism and capitalism were engendered, morphing into neo-colonialism in the epochs of African 'independence' and now globalisation. It should be noted that every time the global North engages in an encounter with the global South, it is on the basis of exploitation for gain. Here the base versus the superstructure operates as economic globalisation and the contestation operates from the Western identity logic of capitalism that justifies Western greed and the inhumane treatment of Other by Self rooted in individualism. These perspectives are exposed in Nchami's work. *Foot prints of destiny* reveals how deeply rooted this greed, individualism and self-interest are in the logic of Western philosophical ideologies and worldviews. One of Nchami's main protagonists, Rudolph Douala Manga Bell, talking to Martin-Paul Samba, states that none of the three powers involved would agree to share Kamerun's wealth with the others. Each power-struck nation was bent only on establishing her supremacy in whatever African territory attracted her interest.⁶⁴

In this, Nchami is telling us clearly that it doesn't matter if they are British, French or Germans, their mindset is individualistic and self-centred and, for this reason, the only thing they bring is the yoke of bondage that reaps Africa of her wealth and of the collectivism that makes Africans humane in preserving their interests. Nchami's narrator aptly analyses the situation when he points out: 'it was Rudolph's contention that, even if they could evict the Germans, they would only be exchanging them for either a French or a British yoke'.⁶⁵ This position is confirmed by Aseh when he says: 'the Kamerun Idea which was transformed into a neo-colonial superstructure after World War II by the French [was] for the same purpose as the original German idea itself.'⁶⁶

Bjornson, picking up on the ousting of the Germans from Kamerun with the war, continues the story of the Kamerun Idea – into the French yoke predicted by Rudolph Douala Manga Bell in the Nchami

⁶⁴ Nchami (n 14).

⁶⁵ Nchami (n 14).

⁶⁶ Aseh (n 2).

work. Bjornson points out that⁶⁷ with the French came direct rule in the eastern parts of Cameroon and in 1924 came the '*indigénat*' – here, Africans were regarded as 'subjects'. Each 'subject' was to donate ten days of unremunerated work to the state each year. We see an aspect of this exploitation as well that which came with Christianity when Jumbam shows us that Christianity affects the worldview of the Africans and the Cameroonians. It does so by making the people abandon their customs and traditions, giving authority instead to a priest, who could beat and oppress them at will and force them into unpaid labour. As the narrator explains:

He (Big Fadda) slapped and kicked Afor's father ... Big Fadda gave him punishment to do ... as a new church was to be built in Tamushon. Christians took turns in digging stones from the quarry close to the proposed site Big Fadda was angry with the people of Mensai and scolded that the people were lazy. The people were wet with sweat and not a soul spoke as Big Fadda paced up and down occasionally growling.⁶⁸

This punishment and the Christian *indigénat* were not limited to the adults either. Jumbam tells us that even Christian children paid for their errors with forced labour:

A fight followed in which the Roman Catholics were well beaten. When we got back and Big Fadda heard of it he punished us by making us carry stones for the church for one week.⁶⁹

But, like the catechist, Pa Mathieu, who supervised this forced labour imposed on believers, Bjornson emphasises that a relatively small cadre of literate individuals, elites or petty bourgeoisie, were treated as 'citizens' as they were exempted from forced labour and the *indigénat*. However, the brutality of *indigénat* expropriation, ever-growing exploitation of the base of have-nots and its elitist exemption from forced labour, led to a sense of common destiny and common identity among the proletarians. With this exploitation being articulated from various angles, Africans in general, and Cameroonians in particular, developed a worldview that pushed them back together in collectivism and ubuntu, developing the intelligence for a revolution based on this collective consciousness. In contrast, we see in *Foot prints of destiny* the same scenario of collective spirit of mutual responsibility from the action of the Bali as a testament to this African worldview of collectivism:

⁶⁷ R Bjornson *The African quest for freedom and identity: Cameroonian writing and the national experience* (Indiana University Press 1991).

⁶⁸ Jumbam (n 13).

⁶⁹ Jumbam (n 13).

The Bali man, Bernard Musi, worked for the German governor; he comes late in the night to alert Rudolph that his life was in danger. A sense of devotion to the uprising and common belonging are reflected in his words when he explains 'I (Musi) never let my employers know that I can understand their tongue, that way they always talked freely in my presence Your life (Rudolph) is in danger and you are my brother.'⁷⁰

Similarly, this spirit of collective responsibility and ubuntu can also be seen with Zara after the incursion and destruction of her village by the whites and yellows. She and her Kazis came up with a plan of rescue in an attack or a revolt because of the black men who were taken for forced labour by the whites. In her words, she explains to Nguni:

The Plan was that we would train the men to fight and then join together with them to construct a new village – have children and build another society to replace that which was now lost forever⁷¹

Aseh argues that the emergence of a fractured and contested public sphere which selectively 'favoured' certain social categories for the success of the project of domination was just a dream, a fleeting illusion since the Kamerun idea was to satisfy colonial interests and colonial interests only. This is especially true of the concept of social responsibility (that is, salvation, modernisation, civilisation, development, etc), which constituted the founding philosophy on which the neo-colonial state now stands. This argument only buttresses the point that the war of Western individualism waged on African collectivism has had an effect on the worldview of Africans and Cameroonians and, more importantly, on that of some select elitist groups among them. These elitist groups continue to serve as a bridge to the continuous service of Western interests, with henchmen and women facilitating the penetration of the global North into every sphere of the global South. And it is through this bridge that they continue to source, exploit and transfer all they please for the upkeep of Western economies, politics and technology to the detriment of the exploited masses of the global South who stand as onlookers to the unveiling of events – this as influence is traded in the global supermarket. Related to this, the aspect of the brain drain to the global North and intellectual colonialism more generally is highlighted by Nchami. The point made is how some of Africa's most promising individuals, such as Martin-Paul Samba, Prince Douala Manga Bell and Dr Bele, are sent to study abroad (eg to Germany) but are presented as shining examples of the pursuit of education and opportunity.

⁷⁰ Nchami (n 14).

⁷¹ Nchami (n 14).

7. Conclusion

The West imposed itself on Africa and its eco-sphere grossly, fragmenting African personalities, alienating them from their environment and constituent resources, and influencing the African lifescape. In the process, they created ideological conflicts that sought to compartmentalise society and which relied on individualism, promoting an unhealthy capitalistic bourgeoisie in times of change. As has been discussed and revealed in this article, amid all these influences that arose from cultural contact and globalisation, Jumbam and Nchami show that the core values of the African and Cameroonian societies have remained intact to certain a degree, although their worldviews have been affected in one way or the other. Whereas Nchami's work criticises the tendency of the Cameroonian state to remember or neglect the contributions of its historical heroes selectively and emphasises the importance of acknowledging these figures to gain a complete understanding of the nation's identity, Jumbam, for his part, criticises the impact of colonialism, particularly the imposition of Christianity on African traditions and belief in Cameroon. But, as Mbembe has argued, we are, more than ever before at any other time in history, not only in close proximity to one another but also exposed to one another. This close proximity and exposure, though, is experienced less and less as opportunity and possibility and increasingly as heightened risk. The article reveals that in the Western worldview those who wield power cannot be forced to account or themselves by conventional means. The roles that neo-colonial leaders take are a hybrid of colonial authority and capitalism, facilitated by easy policies through the exploitation by global corporations that enrich the West and impoverish the Africans. Therefore, globalisation is seen as a mutation of the colonial power that has had impacts on the Cameroonian worldview for which there cannot be equitable exchanges between the global North and South in the global supermarket of influences.

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