

MARGINALISATION AND (UN)BELONGING IN JOHN NKEMNGONG NKENGASONG'S *ACROSS THE MONGOLO*

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ABSTRACT

This paper explores the concept of the Anglophone and its marginal space which affects the principle of (un)belonging in John Nkemngong Nkengasong's *Across the Mongolo*, a novel set in the Kamangola postcolonial territory, using the postcolonial theory. The narrative is structured in a way that necessitates the feeling to belong and not to belong so that the narrative voices explore a union whose "oneness and indivisibility" is hampered by the fact of difference in language and culture. How the different cultural and linguistic constructs negotiate space in Nkengasong's *Across the Mongolo* is the main focus of this paper which defends the position that Nkengasong's narrative is built on colonially constructed oppositional binaries. These binaries are inherent in the territorial, cultural and linguistic spaces in Nkengasong's text. Considering the fact that home is a place where one feels at ease, belongs and is comfortable, the Anglophone Kamangolan who represents the Anglophone Cameroonian in the novel does not have a home in his supposed country. His permanent feeling of exile at home is indicative of a bad socio-cultural and political setup and evidently, there can be no peace in such a context where unity is preached but disunity is practiced.

Keywords: marginalization, unbelonging, otherness, solidarity.

INTRODUCTION

This paper examines how marginalisation leads to feelings of unbelonging in John Nkemngong Nkengasong's *Across the Mongolo*. The postcolonial theory with focus on marginality, otherness and subalternism informs the analysis. The major thrust of the argument is that Anglophones suffer marginalisation because they belong to a subaltern political and cultural group where the people are, according to the dominant Francophone majority, supposed to accept their inferior or "other" status and dare not assert themselves in anyway. The minority status of the Anglophones accounts for their supposed inferiority. In order for them to belong, they are expected to eliminate all traces of their culture which is unacceptable since Kamangola is founded on two cultures: The British and the French. The Anglophones' numerical inferiority leads to their oppression, subjugation, humiliation and marginalisation from the political and cultural centre of Kamangola which is highly Francophonised. Considering the fact that home is a place where one feels at ease, belongs and is comfortable, the Anglophone Kamangolan does not have a home in his supposed country. His permanent feeling of exile at home is indicative of a bad socio-cultural and political setup and evidently, there can be no peace in such a context where unity is preached but disunity is practiced.

Marginalisation deals with putting people in an inferior or peripheral position in such a way that they lack power and thus, cannot influence decisions. For the periphery to exist, there must be the centre and it is for this reason that there is the centre/margin dichotomy.

Marginality, in most cases results from dehumanised oppression of the marginals by those who are at the centre. Gurung and Kollmair (2005) aver that:

marginality is generally used to describe and analyse socio-cultural, political and economic spheres where disadvantaged people struggle to gain access (social and spatial) to resources and full participation in social life...In other words, marginalised people might be socially, economically, politically and legally ignored, excluded and neglected and therefore, vulnerable to livelihood change. (p.10)

Thus, marginality can be looked upon from various dimensions and the marginalised are always the disadvantaged. Sommers, Mehretu and Pigozzi (1999) posit that marginality can further be aggravated by “non-democratic regimes, corrupt officials, dualistic economies, religious fundamentalism, ethnolinguistic tribalism and sectarianism” (p.21). Therefore, marginalisation can result from and be made worse by political, economic, religious and tribalistic abnormalities. For instance, when the rulers do not give the ruled the opportunity to “fully exist” in the system, they can suffer from marginalisation. The centre/margin binarism therefore as applied in postcolonial discourse will be very useful for analysis in this paper

There are various forms of marginality as indicated earlier including the societal and spatial. The societal marginality framework focuses mainly on human dimensions such as religion, culture, demography, social structure, economics and politics in relation to access to resources by individuals and groups. Looking at this, emphasis is on understanding the “underlying causes of exclusion, inequality, social injustice and spatial segregation of people” (Gurung and Kollmair, 2005). Spatial marginality, also referred to as geographical or physical marginality, basically focuses on physical location and distance from centres of development, lying at the edge of, or poorly integrated into the system. Whatever the type of marginalisation, it is evident that marginalised people suffer from discrimination, stigmatization: they are ignored and generally oppressed on the basis of among other things, race, gender, age, culture, religion, education by the “mainstream” culture or people of the centre. The result of marginalization is unbelonging. Belonging has to do with feeling at home, comfortable and happy in a particular situation or with a particular group of people. Thus, unbelonging entails feeling uncomfortable, unhappy and suffering from homelessness, in the context of this paper, with the people which one is expected to live together as one.

The Ngola/Kama Binary: Social and Spatial Dimensions of Marginalisation

The brief history of Cameroon, the socio-political context from which this novel apparently emanates demonstrates that Anglophone Cameroon has experienced severe subordination since the attainment of independence in 1961, by joining French Cameroon. Doh (1993) testifies to this subjugation and marginalisation of Anglophones in Cameroon when he asserts:

The Anglophone Cameroonian, earlier colonised by the white man is once again a victim of ‘colonisation’ but this time, his coloniser is his former partner with whom he served, and were together tormented and exploited by the colonialists. The Anglophone is being given the impression that he is at home but he has to toil very hard to survive.... It is mainly against this black second cousin of colonialism – horizontal colonialism that genuine Cameroon authors...are struggling. (p.78)

Thus, the Anglophone is permanently on exile even in his home. Considering the fact that home is a place where one feels at ease, belongs and is comfortable, the Anglophone Cameroonian does not have a home in Cameroon. Since the unification of the two Cameroons, most Anglophone Cameroonians like Doh (1993) believe that they have been

victims of economic, social, political and cultural injustices from their Francophone dominated government. For instance, most food stuff and cash crops such as banana, cocoa, coffee, rubber and crude petroleum products abound in this part of the country and this implies that it brings in a lot of revenue and enhances the economy but it is quite underdeveloped. Politically, Anglophones have hardly held top power positions and most especially, none of them has ever been president. The number of Anglophone ministers is also insignificant and even when they are in government, they occupy only insignificant positions like minister delegates in charge of special duties, assistant directors just to mention these. Socially, their way of life is looked upon as inferior. Ambanasom (2007) avers that with the freedom of press instituted in the 1990's:

The Anglophones started talking publicly about their being marginalised with regard to economic, political, social and cultural development. The sum total of Anglophone grievances makes up what has now come to be known in Cameroon as the 'Anglophone Problem' summed up in one word: marginalisation. (p.22)

Konings (2011) postulates that the Anglophone Problem's deepest roots can be traced back to 1961 during the formation of the federated state where contrary to the expectations of Anglophones, the union failed to provide for equal partnership of the two parties, the worse being the failure to preserve an Anglophone cultural heritage and identity. So there is "...the total integration of the Anglophone minority into a strongly centralized unitary state" (p.50) consequently creating "an Anglophone consciousness: the feeling of being marginalized, exploited and assimilated by the Francophone – dominated state, and even by the Francophone population as a whole" (p.50). Most Anglophone Cameroon writers, including John Nkemngong Nkengasong therefore present themes that border on the diverse aspects of the Anglophone problem. These writers, therefore, write from a historical background and perceive that the union between the two Cameroons was a total assimilation of Anglophone Cameroonians by their Francophone counterparts. *Across the Mongolo* emerges from this history and cannot be fully appraised in its absence.

The above picture is literary painted in *Across the Mongolo* through the experiences of Anglophones in Kamangola. The numerical superiority of Francophones over their Anglophone counterparts accounts for their marginalisation. They have a minority status and live on the fringes of society as they suffer socio-political and cultural marginalisation. They constitute an ethnic minority. Castles and Miller (2009) state that:

An ethnic minority is [...] is a product of both 'other definition' and of 'self-definition.' *Other definition* means ascription of undesirable characteristics and assignments of inferior social positions by dominant groups. *Self definition* refers to the consciousness of group members of belonging together on the basis of shared cultural and social characteristics. The relative strength of these processes varies. Some minorities are mainly constructed through processes of exclusion (which may be referred to as *racism*) by the majority. Others are mainly constituted on the basis of cultural and historical consciousness (or *ethnic identity*) among other members. The concept of ethnic minority always implies some degree of marginalisation or exclusion, leading to situations of actual or potential conflict. (p.33)

Since the Anglophones are the ethnic minority, they are prone to marginalisation. In intergroup relations, there are usually elements of marginality. The marginalisation of Anglophones fits into Pitts and Wright's (1973) definition where they argue that:

A group may be viewed as marginal (1) when its members do not ordinarily qualify for admission into another group with which, over varying lengths of

time, it is more or less closely associated; (2) when these groups differ significantly in the nature of their cultural and racial heritage and (3) between which there is limited cultural interchange or social interaction. (p.22)

Despite the fact that Anglophones and Francophones were brought together by the cancellation of the federation, Anglophone Cameroonians have hardly been accepted as full-fledged Cameroonians. In 1972, for instance, a unitary system of government was established thus, abolishing the geographical division of East and West Cameroon. The country became known as the United Republic of Cameroon. English and French were adopted as the two official languages. The terms Anglophone and Francophone were now used to identify the two peoples who formed the United Republic of Cameroon. In 1984, the United Republic of Cameroon was simply changed to the Republic of Cameroon, the original name of the former French Independent Cameroon. Konings (2011) asserts that:

[t]here was vehement Anglophone protest when the new president [Paul Biya] changed the country's official name from the 'United Republic of Cameroon' to simply 'Republic of Cameroon' in February 1984. The new name was not only similar to that of independent Francophone Cameroon prior to reunification but also appeared to ignore the fact that the Cameroonian state was composed of two distinct entities. (p.110)

This move was very symbolic in the sense that it stood for the erasure of any trace of Anglophone culture and identity in Cameroon. The changing of the name from the Federal Republic of Cameroon, to the United Republic of Cameroon, and finally, back to the original name of French Cameroon, the Republic of Cameroun testifies to this subordination.

As in *Across the Mongolo*, the relationship between the Anglophones and Francophones is blamed on colonialism which has led to the unequal distribution of the terrain and the population, thus giving room for the greater population to marginalise the other. When Ngwe is crossing the Mongolo for the first time, a co-passenger announces morosely: "The River Mongolo. It is the Great River, the boundary between the English colony of Kama and the French colony of Ngola, the two federated states that gave birth to the Federal Republic of Kamangola" (p.37). History tells us that Africa was colonised by European powers, the English and French inclusive, and the consequences of this colonialism are far-reaching. One of the impacts of colonialism was the division of families, groups, villages and parts of the same entity which has left footprints in the sands of time. This separation, typical of that of Kamangola has led to one group marginalising the other, acting even as colonial masters after the subsequent reunion. Gist and Wright posit that the "concept of marginality as it has generally been used to describe intergroup relations implies some form of hierarchical ordering of groups, and consequently their members, according to differentials of prestige, privilege, or power" (p.22). The linguistic heritage acquired from colonialism has led to this inequality which has translated into the social, cultural and political marginalization in Kamangola.

Colonialism has led Francophone Kamangolans to colonise the Anglophone Kamagolans. Colonialism, the practice where a powerful country directly controls less powerful countries and uses the latter's resources to increase its power and wealth, which was practised by European countries on other nations of the world, is practised now by some groups on others. The Francophone 'colonisers' in *Across the Mongolo*, have the power to determine whatever happens and the 'colonised' Anglophones are powerless. The Anglophones are pushed to the margins and the Francophones occupy the centre. They are considered the 'other'. Tyson (2007) posits that othering "divides the world between "us" the "civilised" and "them"- the "others" – the "savages". The "savage" is usually considered evil as well as inferior" (p.366).

The Francophones behave like the colonisers who see themselves to be at the centre – the metropolis and the Anglophones - the colonised to be at the margins. Doh (1993) calls this “horizontal colonialism.” With the colonisers, race determines their motives as they consider themselves superior, but in the case of Kamangola, the colonial legacies with language as the most outstanding as well as their numerical superiority are the motivating factors. Pitts and Wright (1973) aver that perhaps the most “visible of all cultural possessions are language and other forms of symbolic behavior, but others such as manners, diet, rituals, attire and family behaviour are likewise perceptible and often furnish the yardstick by which the worthiness of individuals and groups is gauged” (p.25). With the powers that the Francophones possess at the centre, they exclude and marginalise the Anglophones in virtually all spheres of life. Political marginalisation is rife as there is unequal distribution of posts of responsibility by the Francophones who are at the centre. An Anglophone minister in *Across the Mongolo* laments this situation thus:

In a cabinet of forty ministers, there is no single Anglophone with a commendable portfolio? Those that tried to question this were killed underground. So, how can we survive this system? How much have we suffered from this business of colonisation? It was first the Germans, then the English, followed by the Awaras, then the French, now the most humiliating kind, our Francophone brothers who are themselves a French colony. In other words, a colony colonising another colony. Which means we have been reduced to real pariahs, to sub-humans, without any real identity because of the excesses of colonisation (p.136)

From this submission, there is every indication that Anglophones are politically marginalised in Kamangola. Their views are not only considered and they are mercilessly eliminated for trying to voice the injustice that is levied on them and the marginalisation in the equitable distribution of resources and opportunities in Kamangola. The suppression of the Anglophone Kamangolans warrants that they keep quiet in the face of such discrimination. It is equally evident that the Anglophone Cameroonians have experienced colonialism at least five times but the one which is most painful, humiliating and degrading is that of the Francophones because they are their own brothers. The Kamangolans in general have been colonised twice meanwhile the Anglophone Kamangolans have been colonised at least thrice meaning that they should be in a precarious situation because they suffer more than the other colonised subjects.

With reference to the Foumban Constitutional Conference wherein it was agreed that the Anglophone Cameroonians were to be equally treated in the union between the two states, Besong (1993) in a Keynote address entitled “Literature in the Season of the Diaspora: Notes to the Anglophone Cameroon Writer,” avers that “[a]fter the lunatic route we took from Foumban, as in Dante’s inferno, the Anglophone Cameroon occupies the centre of hell...our people subjected to the mental and psychological servitude, are the story book victims of a cultural holocaust” (p.16). The description of the Anglophone’s position as that of hell indicates the intensity of the suffering that the Anglophones are subjected to and the extent to which the Foumban Conference was not very considerate on the Anglophones and to which agreements of the Conference have been ignored to the detriment of the Anglophone Cameroonians.

The extent to which the Anglophone is ignored and destroyed is noticed in Besong’s description: “a cultural holocaust”: the “massive” destruction of Anglophone culture and consequently identity. In Cameroon, just the word ‘Anglophone’ is replete with problems and ambiguities. Nkwi (2004) defines an Anglophone as:

an indigene in Cameroon whose first foreign culture is Anglo-Saxon and whose first problem is that of identity within a cultural milieu which is 85 percent Gaullic; the second problem is that of language; and thirdly, equal opportunities with his/her fellow Francophone counterpart. His problem is the fear of both cultural extinction and politico-economic marginalization. (p.188)

In *Across the Mongolo*, the main cultural dimension of marginalisation is language. Linguistic marginalisation arises from Francophones' bias towards English. Anglophones are despised and humiliated just for the fact that they express themselves in English or rather are unable to express themselves in French, the dominant language. Castles and Miller (2009) posit that "dominant groups may see migrant cultures as primordial, static and regressive (p.39). It is probably in this light that English is marginalised in Ngola.

Ngwe in *Across the Mongolo* experiences marginalisation from the time he sets foot on Ngola to pursue university studies in the University of Besaadi. The fear that grips him as he crosses the River Mongolo is symbolic of the unwelcome place he is coming into. His appraisal of the bridge symbolises the difference between the two worlds, the one he is from and the one he is getting into. Ngwe says: "as soon as the vast expanse of the plantations ended, a huge arched steel structure appeared before us. It seemed that it chained two world ['s together" (p.37). Looking at two sides of the River as two worlds is indicative of the iron curtain, a barrier that separates the two entities in various dimensions including culture and language. Gist and Wright posit that "the functions of the barrier may be varied: to maintain social distances between individuals and collectives, to keep individuals and groups spatially apart, to retain separateness of identity, to restrict or prevent the interchange of cultural possessions and perhaps other similar functions" (p.22). There is every indication that he is in a strange if not the wrong place. The idiotic hostility of the gendarmes is about the first thing he witnesses as a result of linguistic expression in English and incapacity in French. The gendarmes consider the Anglophones as sub-humans and brutalise them even without the least respect for age. When an old man is asked in French to come down from the car because the photograph on his national identity card has been moulded off and his face blurred, through no fault of his, and he does not understand, he is pulled out of the car and the gendarmes furiously command:

Assois-toi la bas, vieux babouin! thundered the gendarme, slapping the old man on the face. The old man's buttocks reasoned faster and found their seat on the ground, as if to say that if the head remained stubborn, it would continue to receive the blows but the buttocks had already obeyed the government man. (p.38)

The gendarme is probably younger than the man, but the old man is brutalised and assaulted just because he is an Anglophone. Like the old man, Ngwe has to pay dearly for not being able to understand or express himself in French. His oppressors do not understand English and he does not equally understand French which is the 'standard' language.

Elaborating on the origins of the 'Anglophone Problem' in Cameroon, Nkwi (2004) asserts that in the 1961 federal constitution, "the English language was given an inferior status....Article 59 stated among other things, that '...the revised constitution shall be published in French and English and the French text being authentic'. This was the core of the Anglo-Saxon culture which was given a subordinate position in the constitution" (p.189). Given that Ngwe finds himself where English is considered the substandard language, he becomes confused with the aggressiveness of the gendarmes as they request that he present his tax card and identity card. As the old man attempts to express himself in English, one of the gendarmes claims that he is insulting them and hits him on the head and thunders: "*Assois*

toi!... I tried to complain. The other one fell on me, hitting and cursing and forced me to the ground on my buttocks” (p.40). When he presents his school identity card and national identity card with different name orders, he is insulted: “*Un fraudeur! Un Awarien*” (p.40). The Francophones even associate them with the Awarians, probably Nigerians their former colonial masters, insinuating that they can better identify and feel free with the Awarians who speak the same language with them than with the Francophones who are of a different heritage. The reunification was just for the benefit of the Francophones because the two parts are really incompatible. No doubt, one of the passengers on the bus comments with utmost despair:

[i]t was a tricky thing, that thing called the plebiscite....It could never have been the will of the people. It was the commodity transaction of the colonial masters...oh my God, how we have been tricked again into unification....Who said the porcupine and cutting grass could share the same hole without eating up each other; that the scorpion and the viper could parade on the same floor without exchanging jets of venom; that water and oil could sit in the same calabash hand in hand without separating from each other? (p.42-43)

This excerpt portrays the incompatibility of the relationship between the Anglophones and Francophones of Kamangola. From every indication, the reunification was a business deal in favour of Francophones, and without considering the wellbeing of the Anglophones in the relationship. The Anglophones are into the relationship, not as equals as they ought to be but as a subordinated minority seen in the marginalisation of their language and culture. Their culture is being pushed to the margin so that they can cease to exist as a people.

Furthermore, though the two official languages are to be used, the registration documents in the University are all in French, thus, not giving a fair chance for the Anglophones to study in the University. Such documents include: *attestation de presentation de pièces d'originaux, attestation de domicile, attestation de lieu de naissance, certificat d'authenticité, certificat de date de naissance.*” Added to the fact that the Anglophones are not used to these types of silly documents in Kama, their non-translation makes it more difficult for them to fit into the system. The English language suffers marginalisation and this calls to question the bilingualism of Kamangola. Harrison (2013), drawing from Bakhtin in *The dialogic imagination*, submits that “language, even at the level of individual words, may serve as an arena where such opposing ideologies of identity and exclusion play themselves” (Par 15). By not translating the documents, the Francophones are, in effect, marginalising the Anglophones from the affairs of the university in particular and the nation at large.

Moreover, the Anglophones have to spend weeks on long queues at the ‘prefecture’ to submit their documents for signature where it’s cruel and wicked staff would not want to attend to them. One of the workers, ‘a bad-tempered woman who, from a distance you would think is a gentle lady hisses like a short viper – *‘Ne m’annouille pas! Je ne suis pas la pour les Anglos.’* She is definite about it and nothing would make her to say anything more” (p.57). After spending so much time, one of them would say non-chalantly, *‘Il faut repasser...’* (p.57). One may judge that the lady is generally not a wicked woman but her wickedness is due to the hatred for Anglophones and thus, only directed towards them. When the lady says that she is not there for Anglophones, she implies that she is there to serve Francophones only. Thus, the Anglophones suffer marginalisation because they speak a language that is unacceptable in Ngola and because they are not part of the dominant group.

In addition, the language of instruction at the University of Besaadi is French and Ngwe, like the other Anglophones, finds it difficult to cope in such a system. Pitts and Wright (1973) intimate that:

[m]arginality may be sustained, reduced or increased through organizational or institutional structures. The basic reason is that social interaction commonly occurs within the framework of institutions and organizations. Thus, an organization may provide a setting for intimate interaction between individuals representing subordinate and superordinate groups; or it may, on the contrary erect barriers that are insurmountable. The public school is a case in point. The free public school, according to egalitarian ideology, is an institution affording an interplay of ideas and a source of knowledge for children and youth regardless of the status and culture of their parents. But it may also raise impenetrable barriers to such interaction by excluding students whose racial or cultural characteristics are unacceptable to persons in position of power. (p.30)

The dominant French culture in the University, poses seemingly impenetrable barriers to Ngwe. He spends his time translating notes as he is obliged to follow lectures in French. This situation is made worse by the fact that the Francophone lecturers who know nothing in English stress that answers should be provided in French. Even when Ngwe does not understand anything in class, he fears to ask questions but on one occasion, he says “I gathered courage to ask to be explained a notion in constitutional law that I did not understand. Soon as I started the first words in English, the lecture hall broke into a tremor of booing and jeering ‘Anglo, Anglofou, Anglobête” (p.64). The humiliation does not end at this as the students twist papers and throw at him. He is surprised and confused as he posits:

I stood transfixed, bemused and dumbfounded as though the ritual of disorder had hypnotised me and transformed me into a worthless object. For the rest of the two hour lecture, I thought deeply over the humiliation I faced from my own countrymen. I asked myself where the intellectual dictum and decorum which I had heard of Universities had been kept. I asked myself if I had no right to express myself in one of the two official languages in a bilingual country. I deeply regretted the uproar I had caused. I decided to go into my shell, to avoid speaking English in public places, during lectures or on campus. I did not want to be recognised all the time as a second class citizen.... (p.65)

Ngwe’s frustration and decision not to speak English is understood because he has been humiliated and looked low on in all situations where he has identified himself as an Anglophone. He is forced to believe that he is not at home and in Becky Clarke’s words, Ngwe’s exile leads to “permanent loss and muteness” (1). He has to remain quiet if he wants to avoid problems in the society. The University of Besaadi does not give room for the English language to survive. Being a distinct cultural marker as well as serving to determine one’s identity, its elimination means the elimination of the existence of a people. Discouraging Ngwe, is in a way excluding not only him from the cultural sphere of that society but also marginalising him linguistically.

Even Dr. Amboh, the lone Anglophone lecturer, is expected to teach in French before he can be given a main course despite his “rich academic background in legal matters” (p.64) and Kamangola is a bilingual state. Kay (2004) states that “the marginality of members of the [subordinate group] and their lack of power to challenge these definitions is compounded by their absence from key positions in community associations, their lack of close knit and effective communication”(p.2). As a consequence, Dr. Ambo could, never have been of any influence on the Francophones. However, he prefers to resign than teach in French. He discusses his ordeals at the University of Besaadi with the Anglophone students and makes them understand that the government is doing everything possible to eliminate the

Anglophone culture in Kamangola using the University as one of its weapons. The English language is the most visible tool that they use. Since language is embedded in culture, the Francophones aim at wiping out the Anglophone culture by not giving them room to express themselves in it. One's culture is one's identity and excluding it entails marginalising one's identity.

Ngwe and Dr. Ambo's experiences corroborate what the 'Fac guys' had told Ngwe about the University of Besaadi in particular and Kamangola in general that:

Kamangola is a country with an official bilingual status of English and French in which both the Francophones and Anglophones are supposed to have equal status.... But the Fac guys told us that no one knew about the existence of the English language in that institution or of the Anglophone heritage anywhere in the University of Besaadi which was the capital of Kamangola. (p.25)

Ngwe is, therefore, aware of this situation before he goes to the university but obviously, he probably does not expect that the marginalisation would be as serious as he later witnesses and experiences. If no one knows about English in the University, a place where young minds are trained for the future of the country, there is every reason to believe that there is no place and hope for the English language and consequently, no hope for Anglophones in Kamangola. Power is with the Francophones and they use it to marginalise the Anglophones. Ambanasom (2007) says that the "Francophone government in place has a hidden agenda for the subtle deconstruction of the Anglophone identity in the United Republic of Kamangola, with the university as the experimental nursery ground" (246). It is quite ironical because one would think that the university, which is supposed to be a place that promotes objective thinking and rational judgment should promote and worst still engage in such practices.

Ngwe's excessive torture at the Cinquieme is because he is an Anglophone. He is arrested and accused of being a leader of the strike action. When he struggles to plead (in English) that he is not guilty, the policeman does not consider anything he says again but brutalises him more because he is an Anglophone.

C'est un Anglo même. Lá tu est morte! he grunted and stared at me as if to fish out sin from my soul before my lips ever said a word. He tightened the grip on my neck and pushed me towards the other policeman who blocked the road leading to the Cite Universitaire. 'Un Anglo, Chef!' he told them confidently as though he had captured the commander of the Queen's army.... *Anglofou, esclave, idiot, salaud, Anglo!* The words fell from different voices as they pounded my jawbones.... I wailed aloud but they continued hitting all over my body, saying I had left Kama to cause disorder in the University of Besaadi. (p.108)

Ngwe is being brutalised just because he is an Anglophone. He is the scape goat in an affair he knows nothing about. All the police officers do not bother to investigate into the matter but he is branded a strike leader just because he comes from the minority and 'inferior' group and he has to pay for the sins of his superior Francophone brothers. Anglophones are treated like slaves as the policemen rightly call Ngwe, and the Francophones are their masters. The ruthless brutality from the policemen indicates that they consider Anglophones as sub-humans and as people void of feelings. In a way, they are asking Ngwe as well as the other Anglophones to leave the place or succumb to their ways and relinquish the Anglophone identity before they can find it easy with their masters. But Achebe (1972) questions whether it is right for someone to abandon his or her language and adopt another. If this happens, there is a great betrayal and it leaves "a guilty feeling" (p.17). Ngwe apparently does not want to be guilty.

Furthermore, employment, promotion and appointment are Francophone centred. Shirila's father, for instance, serves the government in Besaadi for several years without promotion. Rather than reward him for his hard work and commitment, "young Frogs came up to be his bosses" (p.173) and in his frustration due to lack of promotion, he resigns to do business. There is, therefore, no room for career development for Anglophones in Kamangola in the system. The relegation of Anglophones to the background brings in frustration and feelings of unbelonging. This relegation ties with Ngugi's (1993) assertion thus:

Within a nation, workers of a given [...] section are put into a more privileged position, for instance being assured of job security, better pay, promotional opportunities, easier access to housing vis-à-vis others of a different skin pigmentation or mode of speech or accent. (p.136)

In the case of Cameroon, it is not the issue of race but colonial heritage. Therefore, one's capacity to succeed or lead a better life is determined by whose colonial legacies the person espouses or from the language he or she speaks as is evident in Kamangola.

The evidence of marginalization as seen in this section impacts on the belonging of Anglophone Kamangolans in *Across the Mongolo*. The various dimensions of marginalization therefore, make them uncomfortable and unwanted in their supposed home. Ngwe as well as Dr Ambo, Shirila's father and other Anglophones fight to belong to no avail. The frustrations that they face all result from this maltreatment and discrimination by their Francophone compatriots due to cultural differences. No doubt, Elizabeth N.M Ayuk-Etang posits that the text is "an indictment against cultural domination which causes mental pain on those Anglophones who find it difficult to cope with Francophone cultural values and those inherited from their colonial masters" (p.279) which is quite valid.

Intra- Anglophone Marginalisation: Towards a Failed Solidarity

Anglophone marginalisation in Kamangola is not blamed only on Francophones because some Anglophones contribute to it. For instance, when Ngwe is arrested, some two Anglophone policemen come to realise that he is an Anglophone and instead of helping to rescue him, they hand him over to the police, telling him that he is a bad boy because Anglophones do not behave as such and they ask the police to continue molesting him: '*Chef, allez y'*'. The assimilated Anglophones behave like the Francophones and treat Anglophones with disdain and do not trust them. A case in point is Mr Kwenti who is the Chief of Service in charge of scholarships at the Ministry of Education. He treats Anglophones like outcasts and helps to marginalise them whereas one would expect that he be of assistance to them. When Ngwe discovers that Mr. Kwenti is an Anglophone, he feels relieved and excited that his scholarship problem is going to be solved but to his greatest dismay he treats them snobbishly and shouts at them:

Kwenti shouted us down and ordered us to leave his office, this time speaking in French....My brother Kwenti disowned me because I speak the language of the pariah and I was going to contaminate him with the vapours of the English language. My brother Kwenti who travelled like me across the Great River disowned me in the middle of the stream. (p.101-102)

Furthermore, Minister Wankili, during a reception party after he has been appointed Minister in Charge of Special Duties at the Presidency, warns that his office is not a gossip house for Anglophones' complaints or a place where he will solve Anglophone problems. He insists that his duty is to serve the president and not discontented political factions. Minister Wankili's attitude ties with Kay's (2014) argument that:

Marginalized groups always face complex choices in defining and enacting their own identities. They may choose, or feel compelled, to assimilate to the norms and values of the dominant group, thus abandoning alternative

identities, or at least judging them by the standards of the dominant group. (p.3)

Acculturated Anglophones as seen above worsen the plight of Anglophones in particular by denigrating them and relegating the English language to the background. The Francophone dominated government has brainwashed them and they are dancing to their tune. Konings (2011), quoting Konnings and Nyamnjoh (2003) states that:

The government has devised various strategies to safeguard the unitary state, including attempts to minimize or even deny the existence of an Anglophone Problem, to create divisions among the Anglophone elite, to remunerate some Anglophone allies with prestigious positions in the state apparatus, previously reserved for Francophones only and to repress all actions designed to change the status of Anglophone Cameroon. (p.50)

The Anglophones suffer from horizontal violence. Fanon (1963) talks about this type of violence when he refers to the oppressed Algerians during their fight for independence. He sees that violence has a psychosocial effect on the Algerians as an oppressed group and his view also applies to oppressed groups of today. He says horizontal violence is as a result of vertical violence as: "The colonised man will manifest this aggressiveness which has been deposited in his bones against his own people. This is the period when the niggers beat each other up...the native reaching for his knife at the slightest hostile or aggressive glance cast on him by another native" (p.23). The aggressive attitude of the victim against his own people is as a result of his powerlessness in the face of his oppressors. Horizontal violence is identified in interpersonal relationships and among peers. In such situations, the oppressed takes the position of the oppressor in oppressing his peers. Thus, in *Across the Mongolo*, instead of working for common good as the Anglophones would expect from Minister Wankili, their own brother, he does just the opposite. Freire (1970), the Brazilian Educator, is of the opinion that horizontal violence is part of the psychological state of people trapped by poverty and powerlessness. Part of the psyche of the marginalized, poor and powerless group is the internalized image of the people causing the oppression and the internalized image settles more in the unconscious mind than in the conscious mind. Elaborating on this in the paper "Self-esteem Building and Horizontal Violence," it is stated that:

On the conscious level, the oppressed views the oppressor as the "complete human being" and he, the oppressed, as the incomplete one. The oppressive aspect of that internalized image is not viewed as oppressive by the oppressed person. The oppressive tendencies coming from the internalized image of the oppressor assert themselves whenever the oppressed has an opportunity to be like the oppressor. (p.18)

Minister Wankili is like the powerless and the poor that is referred to above. His oppression has made him to feel powerless in the face of his Francophone counterparts. In seeking to regain some power and self-worth, he has to lash out against his Anglophone brothers. He has internalized the image of the oppressor and he therefore uses this image to assert himself whenever an opportunity presents itself like the reception party.

Intra-Anglophone marginalisation is even more painful than that by the Francophones because everything being equal, they should show solidarity by protecting one another. But when one begins to act as a traitor, there can hardly be any collective action against the common enemy. By collaborating with the Francophones to suppress their own kin, they portray the extent to which they have been assimilated by the dominant culture so much so that they seem not to recognize the plight of their brothers or share in the pain they are going through. That is why one of the Anglophones, after getting Minister Wankili's submission during the reception party avers:

This is clear evidence that the Francophone government uses our Anglophone brothers to destroy us, to ruin our heritage, to assimilate us, to clearly wipe out Anglophone traditions from the face of this country...How do we ever make our identity felt in this country when those you consider to be the rightful saviours are those that auction a people to fill their wives' pots of soups? (p.135)

The selected few have been bought over at a ridiculous price, to ruin a whole people and they have sold their consciences to the devil. Thus, other Anglophones add sores to the injury already sustained by Anglophones in the Francophone-dominated government, as a result of their assimilation by the Francophones. Dr. Ambo is of the opinion that the Special Duties that Wankili is going to be in charge of is to betray Anglophones. He questions:

What are the special duties apart from acting as a spy against Anglophone patriotism, monitoring the Anglophone quest for self-government, to slander their leaders to his Francophone masters, to destroy the Anglophone heritage....Has he any voice in the Presidency apart from selling out Anglophones, apart from auctioning Anglophones to maintain his post of Special Duties? (p.136-137)

If an Anglophone with the portfolio of Minister can have no effect in ameliorating the conditions of Anglophones in Kamangola, then the Anglophone identity seems to have a very bleak future in the state of Kamangola. This situation is very ironical because people like Wankilli should rather have worked hard for the Anglophone to be heard and help in reviving his identity in Kamangola because he is in a position of influence. It is really sad that he partakes in the marginalisation of his fellow brothers. Ambanasom (2007) sees the Anglophones who contribute to Anglophone marginalization like traitors as most Anglophones "co-opted into the government are there to destroy the Anglo-Saxon culture" (p.246). The Francophones, in fact, are like the colonialists who as Ngugi(1993)puts it are suffering from "cultural subjugation and the imposition of an imperialist cultural tradition" which under colonialism took the form of destroying people's languages, history, dance, education, religions, naming systems and other social institutions that were the basis of their self-conception as a people" (p.60).

In the face of acute marginalization, there is need for the assertion of one's being and identity in the place where one feels he or she truly belongs. Ngwe's marginalisation pushes him to the wall to the extent that he forms the Young Anglophone Movement (YAM) to protest against Anglophone marginalisation in Kamangola. Ngwe does not want the man to die in him for as Soyinka (1972) puts it, "the man dies in all who keep silent in the face of tyranny". He must fight back for as he tells the other Anglophones:

The fifth colonisation we were undergoing was the most humiliating and excruciating kind. A French colony colonising a British colony....We were not going to fold our arms and watch our fate twisted by people who by every standard were dreadfully inferior if merit were to be the guiding principle. (p.143)

The protest march to the Prime Minister's office that is organised is cancelled because Babajoro's security agents go wild hunting for the members of the YAM. The retaliation of the Francophone dominated government and the ruthless way that the suspected Anglophones are tortured only calls even for committed people to abandon their cause. Since networking and collective action is powerful, oppressors are always afraid should people come together to fight for their rights and that is why they always use the machinery that they have put in place, most of the time the armed forces who use arms on unarmed citizens to suppress them. The dissolution of the YAM thus helps in disintegrating the people so that they can be

marginalised with ease. Nkengasong seems to suggest that there is need for solidarity and collective action because unity is strength and with it, marginalization can be overcome.

CONCLUSION

Ngwe, and his fellow Anglophones suffer marginalisation because they belong to a marginalised political and cultural group where the people are, according to the dominant Francophone majority, supposed to accept their inferior or “other” status and dare not assert themselves in anyway. They must eliminate all traces of their culture if they want to belong, which to the Anglophone is unacceptable. Their numerical inferiority of Anglophones leads to oppression, subjugation, humiliation and marginalisation from the political and cultural centre of Kamangola. The Francophone marginalisation is not based on race as the West did during imperialism and colonialism but on cultural difference, a colonial legacy. Though very few Anglophones contribute to marginalizing Anglophones, it is as a result of a complex that has been impressed upon them by their Francophone brothers. Also, in giving favours to a few greedy Anglophones, the Francophones succeed to make other Anglophones marginalize their kin. It is important to note that this is a very good strategy used by the Francophone-dominated government. In order for them to succeed, they need a few people “from the house” to put at loggerheads with their kin. It is often said unity is strength and vice-versa. They must therefore, do all to disunite the Anglophones so as to prey on them well. In spite of the fact that there is intra-Anglophone marginalization, it seems nothing compared to that perpetrated by Francophones.

Looking at the Cameroonian context from which *Across the Mongolo* is emanates, Anglophone Cameroonians have been going through a lot of physical and emotional pain caused by the injustices of the Francophone –dominated state. The reunification of the British and French Cameroon has rather than bring happiness to the people ironically bred a lot of hostility and inconsideration on the Anglophones, making them to feel and think that the choice of joining their brothers of the other side of the Mungo was a huge error. John Nkemngong Nkengasong, therefore, castigates the excesses of the Francophone- dominated government which claims to promote a “one and indivisible” Cameroon but practice the total opposite. The non-acceptance of Anglophone Kamangolans as full-fledged citizens of Kamangola can only lead to disunity and not unity as is often preached. This calls for protest literature which castigates such unfairness as found in some Anglophone literary texts like *Across the Mongolo*. These writers seem to be saying like Alobwed’Epie (1993) puts it that “as it was in the beginning, is now, but never shall be again, in this gyrating wheel of life”(p.58). This of course is evident in the much talked about Anglophone uprising in Cameroon for more than a year now. If unity is preached, it must be practiced in order for all parties to have a sense of belonging. Without its practice, there is bound to be feelings of unbelonging which will lead to such consequences as we find today.

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