Francis B. Nyamnjoh’s *The Disillusioned African*: Rigidizing Cosmopolitan Borders, Binarizing Cosmopolitan Opportunities

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**ABSTRACT**

This paper draws on Francis B. Nyamnjoh’s *The Disillusioned African* to argue that thinking beyond cosmopolitan borders should be an essential dimension of a cosmopolitan imagination and cosmopolitan politesse that defines the relationship between African leaders and the African masses and Africa, the West, and the rest. Nyamnjoh’s novel affirms that the maintenance of fluid cosmopolitan borders would facilitate cultural encounters and engender cosmopolitan opportunities, which would blur the us/them dichotomies that define and confine relationships between African leadership and Africans and between Africa and the West or the rest. Analyzing the novel from this perspective affirms Nyamnjoh’s belief in nimble-footedness and flexibility in belonging. It is a perspective that foregrounds the author’s informative concepts of incompleteness and conviviality and thus the importance of reciprocal acknowledgment of the Other in her/his otherness among Africans, and between Africans and the West or the rest. The paper argues that this can indeed become the most potent feature and future of a common global cosmopolitan identity.

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1. Introduction: situating cosmopolitanism within Francis B. Nyamnjoh’s oeuvre

The verve for cosmopolitanism as a concept that has the potential to be socially and politically transformative has become a recurrent theme in postcolonial societies like Cameroon. To Delanty, cosmopolitanism demands that we extend our moral and political horizons, embrace openness, and bonds of inclusivity and abhor closure and human exceptionalism (2). Cosmopolitanism helps us negotiate/navigate shifts in societal social imaginaries and respond politically to global challenges. It concerns ways of imagining the world, mobility, or transnational movements, the expansion of democracy and the extension of political space (3). Cosmopolitanism is a socio-cultural condition, a philosophy/worldview, a political project for building transnational institutions, a political project for recognizing multiple identities, an attitudinal/dispositional orientation and a mode of practice or competence (Vertovec and Cohen). In postcolonial societies, cosmopolitanism endorses multiple-layered identity lifestyles, political projects, transnational ethico-political practices and a global condition of connectivity (Rovisco and Nowicka 2). Cosmopolitanism empowers cosmopolites to question exclusionary and categorical dichotomies and to map/explain hybridization, globalization, and intensified global mobility and connectedness. Thus, rather than asking, for instance, “what is Cameroon cosmopolitanism?” and “who are Cameroon cosmopolitans?” we gain more by probing how forms of lived Cameroon cosmopolitanisms are experienced by different groups and individuals in the micro-scale of everyday life interactions in concrete times and places. In this light, issues of human agency and power relations in Cameroon are currently at the heart of a more forceful national call – especially from Anglophone Cameroon writers like Francis B. Nyamnjoh writing from a postcolonial standpoint – for cosmopolitan approaches to be sensitive to the plurality of modes and histories that enable cosmopolitan Cameroon identities, memories, and discourses in both Francophone and Anglophone historical contexts. Such calls envision considerations of cosmopolitanism as a moral politics that is articulated in ordinary Cameroon ways of thinking and in the acting of those Cameroon agents that are active at the grassroots level in a range of transnational informal networks.

The uses and abuses of cosmopolitanism is a major motif in Francis B. Nyamnjoh’s scholarly works (Africa’s Media, Democracy and the Politics of Belonging (2005), Insiders and Outsiders (2006), “C’est l’homme qui fait l’homme” (2015); #Rhodes Must Fall (2016), and Drinking from the Cosmic Gourd (2017)) and fictional oeuvre (Mind Searching (1991), The Disillusioned African (1995), A Nose for Money (2003), Souls Forgotten (2008), The Travail of Dieudonné (2008), Married but Available (2009), Intimate Strangers (2010), and Homeless Waters (2011)). The Disillusioned African (TDA) is arguably the zenith of Nyamnjoh’s thematization of cosmopolitan issues because its elements of the epistolary method foster or impede cosmopolitan moves. These include his use of the letter as a bridge to and/or a barrier of conviviality and a nurturer of relationships of confiance/non-confiance; the letter writer/reader as an encoder/decoder of interconnections of communicative privacy/intimacy; the letter as an abridger of the gaps between the communitarian I/you, here/there and now/then; the epistle as a marker of openabilities of interdependent dialogs of closure vs. overture and discontinuation vs. continuation; and the letter as an affirmer of interrelationships of unit/unity, continuity/discontinuity and coherence/fragmentation.
Furthermore, the letters between Keba and Moungo are steeped in a hyper-friendliness that adumbrates multiple layers of meaning and consequently the multiple-layeredness of cosmopolitan relationships and identities.

*TDA* is set in Cameroon and the Queendom (England). It tells the story of three Cameroonian: Charles Keba (an African Philosophy student at Cromwell College), Flanglotus Moungo (Keba’s friend in Cameroon) and Monique, Moungo’s wife. Nched on a series of letter-exchanges between Keba and Moungo, the plot centers on Keba’s attempts to assert the misconceptions/over-expectations that Keba, Moungo and other Africans, have held about the Queendom and the white race. Keba argues that unlike Cameroon/Africa, the Queendom is a very beautiful and organized place, but that contrary to naive expectations from Africans, Queendomians are very pretentious, hypocritical and individualistic. He identifies elements of imperial localism such as slavery, colonialism, the West’s milking of Africa, the imprisonment of Nelson Mandela, the granting of cosmetic independence to African nations, the tragic fate of the peasants in Africa, the Queendom’s commodification/commercialization of African nudity and footballers, Keba’s use of the late Zairean’s, *Citoyen* Kulu’s diamond money for gambling and the Queendom’s disregard for the same religion they brought to Africa. Keba’s decision to study African Philosophy in a European university is paralleled with that of African leaders whose education in Euro-North American universities is out of sync with the needs of their communities. The plot further unearths the white man’s biases toward Africans through Nigel Barley’s *The Innocent Anthropologist*’s presumptuousness about the Dowayos of Northern Cameroon; Dr Vancroft’s memoirs that fail to make the distinction between the Grassfield region of Cameroon, Cameroon, Africa, and the Third World; and a hypocritically racist speech delivered to missionaries leaving for Belgian Congo in 1920 by Benquin, the Belgian Minister of Colonies. The narrator uses the wind of change in Eastern Europe, the Tiananmen Square massacres, the release of Nelson Mandela and the murder of Nicolae and Elena Ceausescu of Romania to surmise that the days of African tyrants are numbered. When Cromwell College goes bankrupt, Keba on his journey back to the University of Kinshasa, Zaire, flies with a dissident who has been in exile in Belgium for 25 years and when they arrive Zaire, Mobutu unleashes his soldiers on them. Keba is wounded and his arm is later amputated at the Laquintinie Hospital in Douala. Back in Cameroon, Keba gets involved in the Yondo Black (Douala Ten) affair and when Yondo Black and other dissentents are sentenced by the Military Tribunal in Yaoundé, Keba moves to Bamenda where he participates in Ni John Fru Ndi’s heretical launching of the Social Democratic Front (SDF) party on May 26 1990. During the epic launch, six people are killed and Keba loses his other arm. Keba later moves back to Douala and after the disappointments and hypocrisy of the March 1 1992 legislative elections, he leaves for the Menchum Division in the North West Province where he plans to live and work with the resettled but forgotten victims of the 1986 Lake Nyos Disaster in Cameroon.

This paper argues that in *TDA* Cameroonian, African and Western leaders rigidize Cameroonian/African cosmopolitan borders (CB) and binarize her cosmopolitan opportunities (CO) (into the West/Africa, African leaders/African masses, Cameroonian leaders/Cameroonian masses, etc.,) thereby stifling cosmopolitan politesse; that mannerly exchange whereby any Cameroonian/African is everywhere afforded the space to live according to the fulfillment of his/her capacities. It also contends that the stifling of
opportunities feature acknowledgment or elements that characterized their or (borders and global politico-cultural transitory overlapping where), Rumford's litan as socio-economic, and ships connective lity a fetishized politico-cultural- politesse's deprive Cameroonians/Africans of local, national and global opportunities to utilize the connective potential of borders for their own ends; that instead of nurturing convivial, overlapping and interdependent loyalties, a bizarre clash of individual, local, national and global loyalties is being fostered with divide and rule tactics that are strongly reminiscent of the resilient colonialism.

I conclude that in order to foster national, international, and global unity, the leaderships of Cameroon, Africa, and the West need to accept that belonging is selective, transitory and a permanent work in progress; that community bespeaks and is bespoke, and borders are a networked and networking resource for the nurturing of a sustainable socio-economic, political and cultural Cameroonian, African, and global future. They also need to adopt/adopt a vision of Cameroon, African, and global CO as a “fractal cultural configuration” that unremittingly configure as they are (re)configured (Appadurai 46); a series of overlapping polythetic cultures that are weakly patterned and structured as dynamic and open-ended processes rather than stable systems that are characterized by disjunctures, flows and uncertainty (47). Analyzing Nyamnjoh’s TDA from a rigidizing/rigidized CB and binarizing/binarized CO perspective affirms Nyamnjoh’s belief that the leaderships of Cameroon, Africa and the West need to learn that differences can be communicated or camouflaged, contradictions institutionalized or de-institutionalized and gnawing global tensions stabilized or aggravated; that the acknowledgment of Cameroonian, African, and Western differences – the reciprocal acknowledgment of the Other in her/his otherness – can also become the most potent feature and future of a common Cameroonian, African, Western and global cosmopolitan identity. To flesh out this hypothetical contention, the paper borrows critical perspectives from Chris Rumford’s (2012) and Eduardo Mendieta (2012).

2. Rumfordian cosmopolitan borders and mendietarian cosmopolitan opportunities

Rumford identifies five elements of modern borders: vernacularization (borders are everywhere), multiperspectivalization (borders mean different things to different people), un/fixity (borders are not always at the border), connectivity (borders are conduits speeding up transit or blocking passage) and processes (a shift from borders to bordering) (246–47). These elements indicate that we now talk about processes of bordering rather than fixed territorial
borders and have engendered the cosmopolitanization of borders in three ways. Bordering activities are increasingly being conducted above/below state level and borders promote cosmopolitan experiences. Also, borders are becoming connective tissues that allow borderlanders to “jump” scales through practices and “mental maps.” Lastly, “seeing from the border” is no longer reduced to the idea that it is possible to view a border from both sides; people now look from the border. The cosmopolitanization of borders means that the hierarchies of belonging are no longer being set in stone, membership is becoming elective rather than ascribed, and those loyalties traditionally considered as primary now vie for attention with what were previously relatively unimportant communities associated with lifestyle choices and personal preferences (251). Rumford contends that the relationship between borders and cosmopolitanism is important because it allows for the possibility of CO. CO emerge when choice cannot be reduced to an either/or, or, an us/them dichotomy. CB facilitate cultural encounters which blur the distinction between us and them. Cosmopolitanization also leads to the pluralization of socio-economic, politico-cultural, legal and technological borders.

Both pluralization and cosmopolitanization of borders point to a multiplicity of possible cultural encounters and a variety of resulting CO that increase the range of opportunities for the common man. CB foster CO in three ways: as ethical stances, political agendas, and philosophical methodologies. As the synergetic synthesis of these three elements, then, CO facilitate ways of seeking an orientation, and trying to find a proper place in the world with others, and for others. CO are about world making, worlding, practices that challenge cartographies of exclusion based on teleologies, theologies, and ontologies that support exceptionalisms and invidious hierarchies. We can therefore think of CO as practices of “mapping cartographies of co-habitation, rather than of binding through boundary making and mapping topologies of exception” (Mendieta 276). CO constantly remind us that a person, a life form and a cultural configuration matters to us and we have an uncircumventable moral relationship to them it, but we also can see ourselves as people who are challenged to know them and to see how, in knowing them, they transform our view of the world (Mendieta 182). CO are based on epistemic and moral/ethical principles. As an epistemic attitude they challenge the monopoly of one worldview and advocate epistemic humility and fallibilism. As an ethical/moral principle or guiding norm, they command the mutual respect of all and then solicit moral regard for those who are our others. CO implies a dual relationship that urges that we remain cognitively open to the other and that we be morally accountable for and to the other. Finally, CO are about co-existence and co-habitation and to act and to know the world from a CO’s standpoint “is to ask oneself about the conditions and duties of co-existing and cohabitating” (182). Reading TDA through the CB-CO lens demonstrates how hegemonic cosmopolitanism promotes beliefs and values congenial to its dominance; naturalize and universalize such beliefs to render them self-evident and apparently inevitable; denigrate ideas which might challenge it; exclude rival forms of thought by some unspoken but systematic logic; and obscure social reality in ways convenient to itself (Eagleton 5–6).
3. Taking advantage of others’ generosity/tolerance: the West’s denial of parasitic and/or generative interconnections, interrelationships, and interdependences with Africa

This section draws on Blaut’s argument that “that colonialism lies at the heart of world-historical transformations [such] as the rise of capitalism and Europe [and that the] economic, social and political effects of colonial accumulation, principally in America, produced a major transformation of European society” (2–3) to argue that because the West is incomplete without Africa and vice versa, it is necessary for both to open their CB and CO to each other. In TDA, the West’s rigidization of her CB with Africa disregards the fact that the West is a historical construct to which Africa has opened her CB and contributed to its CO. That is, the West has failed to acknowledge Africa’s continual contribution to the socio-economic and politico-cultural processes that led to her often-hallowed development, industrialization and modernization. With a focus on the West’s enslavement and colonization of Africa; her granting of cosmetic independence to African nations; the West’s production/circulation of knowledge about Africa that is less horizontal, vertical, prescriptive and dogmatic (Nyangjoh, 2019 4); and the West’s milking of Africa as examples of the West’s inferiorization and demonization of Africa in order to declare her unworthy of cosmopolitan fraternity, the section affirms that the West has been hegemonically using itself as an apotheosized image of imperial localism. That Trumped up image conjures her as an unquestionable canon that African societies may resemble, must differ from, are close to or must be far away from or are persistently catching up with. The section concludes that however much authors from Karl Marx (1867, 1975) and Max Weber (1951, 1958, 1967, 1981) to Robert Brenner (1976, 1977, 1982, 1986) and Eric Jones (1981) may argue that the West’s (capitalist) development was “due to characteristics that were specifically inherent in, or processes that were limited to Europe” (Blaut, 1992 53), Nyangjoh’s TDA asserts that there was no and has never been any European miracle: “Africa, Asia, and Europe shared equally in the rise of capitalism prior to 1492 and after 1492 Europe took the lead” because of the immense wealth obtained through colonialism’s hegemonic cosmopolitanism in America and elsewhere. That is, the West has advanced “not because Europeans were brighter or bolder or better than non-Europeans, or more modern, or more progressive, or more rational” (53) but because Europe opportunistically turned colonial and post-colonial encounters of interconnections, interrelationships and interdependencies with Africa and America into CB and CO zero-sum games that privileged Europe’s conversion over Africa’s conversation and insisted on unquestionable loyalties and zombielike servitude that ensured that the perennial Western winner continues to take it all.

At the beginning of TDA, Keba sets the scene for the formation and performance of rigid CBs by arguing that when Jesus Christ realized that far too many people in his time were taking advantage of the generosity and tolerance of others, he climbed to the top of Mount Calvary and proclaimed: “Behold, you shall do unto others as you would have them do unto you” (2). Keba regrets that Christ is not present today to see how much of a deaf ear the world has lent to his philosophy. He quotes Julius Caesar whom he says forged an identity for himself as one who came, saw and conquered, someone who “had no patience with the world that failed to distinguish between the weak and the powerful, the cowardly and the valiant or between others and Caesar” (3). He also cites
Machiavelli’s prescriptions that the princes and politicians of the world should not pretend to be respectful of the weak and the forsaken; European colonialism’s conviction that Africans are fools, inferiors and monkeys (4); the ignominious treatment of Emperor Haile Selassie when the Ethiopians dared to remind Europe of African rights by humiliating the Italians at Adowa (7); the pathetic case of the Koreans who despite a 500-year history of self-government saw their country sliced into two by the Japanese who after a brief 36 years of colonization claimed the Koreans were incapable of self-government (7); and the West’s wanton exploitation of Africa’s economic resources symbolically captured through an article entitled “Africa Forever,” which depicts Africa as a cow being milked by a black leader, under the strict supervision of a white businessman (9). The above examples, especially the colonization of Africans, the forcing of Haile Selassie to abandon his throne and the milking of Africa metaphorically identify the West as the Caesar and Prince of the modern world. They also epitomize the West’s parasitic interconnections, interrelationships and interdependencies with others and therefore question her claims to auto-development, auto-industrialization, auto-urbanization, auto-secularization and auto-modernization. Keba’s subtle argument is that by using force to achieve their colonial aims, the West rigidized the CB of the colonial encounter and made that encounter a one-way flow of resources from bondsman (Africa) to master (the West) thus killing Africa’s CO that could have arisen thereof. Interestingly, the West has rigidized her CB with Africa and prevented Africa from enjoying CO but has ensured that the gates (if there have ever been any!) of Africa’s CB with the West remain wide open so that the West can continue to tap CO from Africa.

Even though Africans did have CO in the form of Western education, even that education was binarized vis-à-vis the education meant for Westerners because Keba tells us that in most cases, Africans either received the wrong education or the education cost them their values and traditions and that explains why, today, the West is still milking Africa. Thus, as a CO, Western education has not been “particularly relevant to an understanding of shifts in the social imaginaries of [African] societies and the emergence of ethical and political responses to global challenges” (Delanty 2); it has not been able to equip Africans “with a grammar that is capable of questioning exclusionary and categorical dichotomies”; and it has also failed in its “attempt to map and explain ‘new’ cultural phenomena – such as cultural hybridization, economic globalization and conditions of intensified mobility and connectedness – in a global world” (Rovisco and Nowicka 2).

Nyamnjoh’s identification of a malleable decolonial metaphor such as the milking of Africa reminds one that decolonial events such as the #RhodesMustFall and related student protests erupted and unfolded in South Africa in 2015 because the students were determined to put history, especially Rhodes’ history of suffering, trauma and victimization to rest so that in the end, the real issue is not that the Rhodes statue was destroyed but rather that it should not have been there in the first place. It also reminds us that because Westernized/Rhodesized universities are “local instantiations of a dominant academic model based on a Eurocentric epistemic canon that attributes truth only to the Western way of knowledge production; disregards other epistemic traditions [and] tries to portray colonialism as a normal form of social relations between human beings rather than a system of exploitation and oppression” (Mbembe 32), numerous thinkers from/of the Global South – Bhamba et al 2018; Grosfoguel et al. 2016; Mbembe 2016; Mignolo and Walsh 2018; Nyamnjoh 2019; Reiter 2018; and Santos
2014, 2018 – have been ceaselessly asking for a decolonization of the African university, curriculum and pedagogy as a way forward from #WhatMustFall to #WhatMustRise (Nyamnjoh i). TDA, therefore, prophetically initiates a derigidizing/debinarizing Nyamnjohian #RigidWesternCosmopolitanBordersMustFall movement.

In the world of TDA, Nyamnjoh depicts so many shards of resilient colonialism. Prominent among them are the categorization of Africans into Anglophones, Francophones, Lusophones, and Hispanophones and the fact that Africans like Keba still travel to the West to study strictly African phenomena-centered subjects like African Philosophy. The former shard represents Nyamnjoh’s subtle scathing condemnation of Francophone-Anglophone CB conflicts that have been raging in Cameroon since October 2016 in the form of what has been dubbed the Anglophone Crisis. The latter brings to mind Jesutofunmi Odugbemi’s, Orapeleng Rammala’s and Wangũi wa Kamonji’s “Searching for Africa in African Studies: An Open Letter to the Teachers of Africa at UCL,” an open letter written by students in the African Studies Masters (2017–2018) at UCL to their Department challenging the structure, content, and the ahistorical and apolitical manner in which Africa was taught at UCL. As a confirmation of the West’s unrepentant desire to continue rigidizing CB the authors of the letter were dismissed for having dared to speak the truth to the West’s cognitive empire by asking for a debinarization of the CO of African Studies. To paraphrase Odugbemi, Rammala, and wa Kamonji, the irony was certainly lost on the lecturers of UCL that their students were calling for the centering Africa in an African Studies program, yet, the lecturers did not think it needed to be done. Like the argument of Odugbemi’s, Rammala’s and wa Kamonji’s letter, Keba’s realization that it is appropriate to come back and study African Philosophy at the University of Kinshasa ties in with Nyamnjoh’s argument that the attempt to let #WhatMustRise rise and soar would not be successful unless African scholars make “African universities uncompromisingly inclusive institutions through embracing African traditions of knowing and knowledge production [by] looking beyond the academy in its current configuration for inspiration” (1).

Granted that the University of Kinshasa like most universities in postcolonial Africa may “have significantly Africanized their personnel” without adequately “Africanizing their curricula, pedagogical structures, and epistemologies, despite declarations of intent and attempts at decolonization of university education through promotion of perspectives grounded in African realities and experiences” (1–2), Keba’s return could still turn out to be a movement from a Westernized/Rhodesized university to its doppelgänger. Thus, for Keba’s return to be CB/CO productive, the University of Kinshasa needs to begin to foster a kind of convivial scholarship “that dwells less on zero-sum games of absolute winners and losers, encourages a disposition of incompleteness and humility through the reality of the ubiquity of debt and indebtedness, and finds strength in themes of interconnections, interdependences, compositeness, and incompleteness of being” (1) that African cosmologies and cosmogonies are wont to exude. Its fostering of convivial scholarship would turn prospective students such as Keba into frontier learners, promoters of fluid CB, who “contest taken-for-granted and often institutionalised and bounded ideas and practices of being, becoming, belonging, places and spaces”; prize conversations over conversions; and seek to understand what the West and Africa have in common (CO) (Nyamnjoh 6), rather than emphasize their differences (rigid CB). The creation of frontier learners as well frontier pedagogues would place the
University of Kinshasa on the path “toward a committed, polyphonic university, a university in the process of becoming a pluriversity and a subversity” (Santos 277). In line with this section’s argument, a committed university would mean “a university that, far from being neutral, is engaged in social struggles against capitalism, colonialism, and patriarchy” (277).

A polyphonic university would mean “a university that exercises its commitment in a pluralistic way, not just in terms of substantive contents but also in institutional and organizational terms”; it would be “a university whose committed voice is not only composed of many voices but, above all, is composed of voices that are expressed in both conventional and nonconventional ways, both in diploma-oriented and non-diploma-oriented learning processes”; it would also be “a university that vindicates its institutional specificity by operating both inside and outside the institutions that have characterized it so far” (277). Indeed, the ideas of frontier students and pedagogues, committed and polyphonic universities are so relevant because a cursory glance at the annals contemporary global history reveals arguably convincing evidence that global architects of rigid CB and anti-CO such as Osama Bin Laden (1957–2011) and Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi (1971–2019) obtained the wrong education from King Abdulaziz University, Saudi Arabia and the Islamic University of Baghdad, Iraq, respectively; education that gave both a fascinating capacity to dramatize the distinctiveness of the Orient, emboldened both with the chutzpah to try to impose the universalist pretensions and propensities of that Orient globally and deceived them of the virtues of taking advantage of the generosity and tolerance of the global community. That is, Bin Laden’s and al-Baghdadi’s Al-Qaedaized universities were likely militant universities that in both political contexts had been asked to be fanatical militants “in the sense of providing uncritical, political loyalty to [the Al-Qaeda] political force [that had presented] itself as colonial defending the [Orient’s] interest and that [had] the power to demand partisanship on the part of [those universities]” (277) and so they could not teach them that the Orient and the Occident complement each other.

The West’s rigidization of CB and consequent totalization of the exteriority of binarized CO is also captured as a form of epistemological warfare based on inferiorize, define and confine strategies. In TDA, the rigidization of CB is further justified through three documents that reveal the white man’s biases toward Africans: Barley’s The Innocent Anthropologist in which the author relies on the limited/limiting experiences of the Dowayos of Northern Cameroons to conclude that “Africa is home to the most astonishing physiques” and “unromantic and brutish” sexual encounters (110); Dr Vancroft’s fieldwork memoirs in which Vancroft fails to distinguish between the Grassfield Region of Cameroon, Cameroon, Africa, and the Third World (111); and the Belgian Minister of Colonies, Belquin’s 1920 speech (“The Duties of Missionaries in Our Colony”) commissioning missionaries leaving for Belgian Congo to “consider all blacks as little children whom [they] must continue to deceive and manipulate even long after independence” (119). The apparently hidden agenda of the above three scholars’ obfuscation/distortion of facts smacks of Adolf Hitler’s Mein Kampf and its illusions of the “Jewish peril” and President Trump’s description of Haiti and African nations as “shithole countries” during a meeting with a bipartisan group of senators at the White House on January 11 2018. Barley’s, Vancroft’s and Benquin’s degrading/exclusionary constructions of Africa also remind one of Marx, Weber, Brenner and Jones thesis about the
European miracle. The three Westerners paint an ignominious image of Africa in order to justify the West’s closure of her CB to Africa. The ideas affirm Rumford’s postulations about the *vernacularization*, *multiperspectivalization* and *un/fixity* of borders because they paint mental borders from/at which Africa is seen as something socioeconomically and politico-culturally torn, disfigured and dismembered. To these three Westerners, CO are not based on epistemic and moral/ethical principles; they are not epistemic attitudes that challenge the monopoly of one worldview and advocate epistemic humility and fallibilism; they do not command the mutual respect of all and the solicitous moral regard for those who are our others and, so, any attempt to write the world from Africa’s CB and CO or to write Africa into the world’s CB and CO would be useless.

Barley’s, Vancroft’s and Benquin’s generalizations are hegemonic cosmopolitanism and imperial localism at their best. What these generalizations point to is the fact that the extent of the fluidity/rigidity of CB and the availability/unavailability of debinarized CO depend very much on who produces what/which knowledge, from where, from whose perspective, about whom/what and for whom. This is because, to a large extent, knowledge about Africa produced in the West, has stayed triumphantly universalistic and uncompromisingly biased about African cultures and predicaments because it lacks the cosmopolitan memory, cosmopolitan solidarity, cosmopolitan connections and cosmopolitan culture that could enable it to see Africa as an equal. Such knowledge is hardly ever (re)domesticated through epistemological renegotiation informed by the peculiarities of African experiences, languages, cosmologies, and weltanschauungs because its prime aim is to deliberately inferiorize Africa and reduce her CO in the global community. For Africa to maximize the potential of her fluid CB, knowledge about Africa needs to be produced under the aegis of an epistemological inclusivity that draws inspiration “from the personal stories and creative imagination of popular Africa,” ignored under colonialism and still being ignored under neo-colonialism “for being too savage and primitive to share a table with European colonial enlightenment” (Nyamnjoh, 2019 3). In other words, Africa needs to be weary of academics and scholars “whose intellectual clocks are set to the rhythm of transatlantic scholarly cannons, practices, and standards of value in knowledge production and consumption” (3).

By letting Barley declare that “[e]very tribe [has] someone to despise” (110) and thus unwittingly acknowledging, from the point of view of relative advantage and superiority, that every race, every nation, and perhaps, every anthropologist has someone to despise, Nyamnjoh subtly proposes a double CB and CO disarmament, both horizontal and vertical. Horizontally, African and the West must de-absolutize their respective CB. They must relativize them by recognizing that they do represent for each of them their anchoring point. They are neither the symbolic reference point of their debinarization of CO dialog nor a point of subsumption from the viewpoint of an alterity assuming African and Western worlds as organizations characterized by anti-fluid CB plurality and anti-CO diversity. Vertically, CB and CO disarmament would consist in liberating CB and CO from the exclusive grip of a single culture of cosmopolitanism or of the sum of cultures of cosmopolitanism by going through them. In this regard, Nyamnjoh’s disarmament requires a common horizon and a new vision symbolized in TDA by Keba’s willful descent from the standpoint of an “advantaged” elite to that of a “disadvantaged” leader of the masses or Fanon’s “amputated” humanity within the restricted categories of epidermalization (Nyamnjoh 112). This new vision would be a continuous dialogic
journey of both divergence/redivergence and discovery/rediscovery. The dialogic character of Nyamnjoh’s proposed journey to disarmament would imply a conception of knowledge as (de/re)construction. TDA affirms that a dialogic (de/re)construction of knowledge about/on Africa which would also be a (de/re)construction of African CB and CO, would concern “the investigation” of what Freire terms the “people’s thematic universe” – the complex of their “generative themes” (97) – that is to say, the themes that are existentially relevant for the context in which the African peoples live. Before setting out on this journey of disarmament, the West would need to unconditionally dismount her high horse of superiority because as Paulo Freire rightly puts it, “Dialogue is the encounter between men, mediated by the world, in order to name the world. Hence, dialogue cannot occur between those who want to name the world and those who do not wish this naming – between those who deny other men the right to speak their word and those whose right to speak has been denied them” (87).

That is, true African and Western derigidization and debinarization of CB and CO dialogs would not exist unless the dialoguers “engage in critical thinking – thinking which discerns an indivisible solidarity between the world and the people and admits of no dichotomy between them – thinking which perceives reality as process, as transformation, rather than as a static entity – thinking which does not separate itself from action, but constantly immerses itself in temporality without fear of the risks involved” (92). Such critical thinking that acknowledges mutual incompleteness and conjunct interdependence would contrast with the naive thinking of hegemonic cosmopolitanism, “which sees ‘historical time as a weight, a stratification of the acquisitions and experiences of the past,’ from which the present should emerge normalized and ‘well-behaved’” (92). For the naive CB/CO thinker, the important thing would be accommodation to our normalized CB/CO “today”; for the critic, the important thing would be a continuing transformation of our global CB/CO reality on behalf of a continuing humanization of global citizens. Above all, for the critic, the inevitable thing would not be the construction of a Trump-styled border wall, the promulgation of a Buhari-fashioned border closure, the staging of xenophobic attacks à la South Africa, or even the negotiation of a British-mannered exit; it would be a convivial CB/CO that cautions cosmopolitans, “their borders, and gatekeepers to open up and embrace the crossroads culture of presence in simultaneous multiplicity and concomitant epistemologies of interconnections”; and asserts that “there are no final [CB/CO] answers, only permanent questions and ever exciting new angles of questioning” (Nyamnjoh, 2019 26).

4. Dominant and dormant Cameroonian/African epistemologies and ontologies: Cameroon’s/Africa’s megalomaniac leadership and the extravagant illusion and/or crisis of completeness

This section draws on the consequences of Africa’s pyramid of three distinct classes, the wrong education that African leaders receive in Western universities, Keba’s use of his sponsor’s, Citoyen Kulu’s, hard-earned diamond money for gambling, Mobutu’s unleashing of his soldiers on the Zairean dissident and Keba, the Cameroon government’s attempts at suppressing Yondo Black and the launching of the SDF party and her abandonment of the victims of the Lake Nyos Disaster to contend that just as the Western leaders have rigidized global CB against Africa, African leaders have rigidized
and in some cases closed the local CB between leadership and the African masses thereby making Westernized elite ontologies and epistemologies dominant and rendering the ontologies and epistemologies of the masses dormant. That is, Africa has continued to be a victim of a resilient colonial and colonizing education symbolized by the postcolonial African elite, especially those who studied in the West and like their masters, have learnt to move only in one direction, toward themselves. The section asserts that TDA attests that “[t]he outcome [of such rigidity of local CB] is often a devaluation of African creativity, agency and value systems, and an internalized sense of inadequacy. Education has become a compulsion for Africans to ‘lighten their darkness’ both physically and metaphorically in the interest of and for the gratification of colonizing and hegemonic others” (Nyamnjoh 129). The section further argues that the African elite have been condemned to eternal mimicry because they have been asking the wrong questions, uncritically accepting that the only CB and CO worth using and the very idea of productive CB and CO belong to Europe, thus inadvertently surrendering Africa’s socio-economic and politico-cultural CB and CO to the whims and caprices of the West. The Westernized African elites’ pretended searches for “authenticity” and “autonomy” are disguised cries of capitulation to Western canons, cries that are oblivious of the fact that true reciprocal CB/CO interconnections demand that “Europe itself be dismembered and its mythical figure discarded, stripped of its universalism and provincialized” (Zeleza 2). The section concludes that acts of insurgence/resurgence such as the launching of the SDF and the Yondo Black affair are part of the arduous task of rescuing both African CB and CO and global CB and CO “from the burdens and blindfolds of Eurocentric historiography” (7). This project began by the nationalist politicians (such as Ni John Fru Ndi and Yondo Black) needs to continue, even as we would be compelled to discard some of their outdated questions and answers as we keep getting enriched by new methods and theories keep emerging. The challenge would be to recenter, derigidize, and debinarize African CB and CO, respectively, by deepening and globalizing them in their temporal and spatial scope, taking the place of African cosmopolitan values in human cosmopolitanism seriously. Africa’s cosmopolitan politesse has always been central to global cosmopolitanism, “and will remain so, to its peoples and to humanity as a whole, whose cradle this ancient continent is, and where much of its history on this remarkable planet resides” (7).

In TDA, Keba tells us that Africa is a pyramid of three distinct classes. There are the toiling peasants who live in the rural areas, have no opportunity to steal either from others or the state and are only called upon to entertain their urban Lords/Masters either during National Day Celebrations, Revolution Anniversaries or at the visit of a foreign head of state (20–21). Also, there are the civil servants and literate or semi-literate urban dwellers who can steal from others, but who find it difficult to steal directly from the state because they are constantly under surveillance. This group is midway between the abject poverty and hardship of the village and the filthy riches and sumptuous plenty of the self-elected few (21–2). Finally, there are the African leaders who rule without legitimacy, have the exclusive opportunity to steal from the state; the self-elected watch dogs of the National Cake whose motto is get rich or perish: national political figures, their provincial and regional representatives, top civil servants and pseudo-intellectuals who forge panegyric poems and compose praise songs with the hope of being appointed directors of public institutions (23). Keba, Moungo and Monique assert that the third group
represents oppressive CB/CO culture, the kitschiest vulgarization of imperialist culture refracted by the leaders’ oligarchical culture and passed on for consumption by magazines, schools and national day celebrations. Keba recalls that these African leaders are people who in primary school were taught to sing “London’s Burning” and study readers written to suit the needs of English pupils. The Francophones among them paid religious attention to Tintin. They were treated to a school exit examination set in Cambridge and Paris by examiners who knew absolutely nothing about Cameroon. In secondary school, they were told that history, geography, and literature are exclusively Western, and they learned to recite the rise and fall of the English Pitts, Walpoles, Disraelis, Gladstones, Palmerstones, Chamberlains, and Pretenders. They crammed everything ever written by Frederick the Great of Prussia, Catherine the Great of Russia, Joseph II and Maria Theresa; Prince Metternich of Austria; Louis the Sun King; Napoleon, the warring soldier of France; Bismarck, the Iron Chancellor of Germany; Churchill, the witty Premier of war-time Britain; etc. Geographically, they knew about ship building in (Tyne, Tees and Clyde) and the agrarian and industrial revolutions in England; more about the Rhine-Ruhr industrial complex in Germany and more French vineyards than their own villages (98).

This entire process of cultural alienation is profoundly ideological inasmuch as it expresses supposedly universal knowledge or ideas and hides the domination that oppressed countries and classes suffer. Through alienation of the masses from their real culture, ideology propagates imperialist enterprises and produces a market for its products. As Nyamnjoh correctly agrees with p’Bitek, “It was an education to cultivate a ‘bitter tongue’ – ‘fierce like the arrow of a scorpion,’ ‘deadly like the spear of the buffalo-hornet,’ ‘ferocious like the poison of a barren woman,’ and ‘corrosive like the juice of the gourd’ (p’Bitek12–14) – vis-à-vis one’s past, one’s traditions, one’s people, one’s relations” (Nyamnjoh 132). This kind of education laid a foundation for postcolonial African CB/CO kleptocracy and tyranny through an epistemic excision of African societies, economies, and polities in the canons of the disciplines; particularized, peripheralized and pathologized African phenomena; birthed the pauperizing distortions and deformities of development policies that are being perpetrated nowadays by the institutional/ideological gendarmes of global capitalism such as the World Bank; and originated “the dehumanizing representations in the invented and fictionalized Africas of the western imaginary from scholarly and literary texts to the popular media” (Zeleza 3). TDA ascertains that the landscape of contemporary Africa’s CB and CO exchanges with the West in all its dimensions – political, economic, social, cultural, and ecological – is constantly being etched by the historical imprints and legacies of that education.

Seen through the rigidized CB and binarized CO argument of this paper, the toiling masses encounter the most rigid local/global CB and therefore have the least local/global CO; the civil servants and literate or semiliterate urban dwellers encounter less rigid local/global CB and have relatively more access to local/global CO because of their Western education; and the African leaders take instructions from their Western counterparts on how to rigidize local/global CB and local/global CO for the African leaders’ benefits but most importantly, for the benefit of the West. In recent times, the numerous Forums on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCACs) (Beijing October 10–12, 2000; Addis Ababa December 15–16, 2003; Beijing November 3–5, 2006; Sharm el-Sheikh November 8–9, 2009; Beijing July 19–20, 2012; Johannesburg December 4–5, 2015; and
Beijing early September 2018) and the recent Russia-Africa Summit, October 23–24, 2019, Sochi (with claims of an adoption of a declaration that sets goals and objectives for Russian-African cooperation in the political, economic, scientific, technical, cultural, security and humanitarian fields) constitute some of those occasions when African political light weights rush abroad to get instructions from the Western political heavy weights on how to deprive the African masses of their CO. In TDA, the African leaders’ ability to use those instructions properly is captured through their relationship with women. It is a relationship that is understood without being rigidly defined – much like the concept of “cultural area” whose contours are blurred, but whose effects are clear. The women-African leaders’ relationship is perspective and implies a specific tradition in the sense of a living transmission that takes various forms of marginalization. That relationship is patriarchal because it is built on power relations in which the African women’s (wives/mistresses of African leaders and the female masses) interests are subordinated to those of the African leaders. These power relations take on many forms, from the sexual division of labor and the social organization of procreation to the internalized norms of femininity by which the leaders live.

In Cameroon/Africa of TDA, power rests on social meaning given to biological sexual difference because African leaders preach African Socialism, yet find nothing wrong with European consumerism, purchasing a £40,000 bedroom in London for a voluptuous concubine. Again, they stop every other woman from bearing the same designer name with their wives (24). These leaders equally purchase superfluous pairs of shoes, rings of ruby, diamond and sapphire for their wives and mistresses and encourage them to be impulsive squandermaniacs, globetrotting in search of economy-crippling body creams and make-up (26). These acts of squandernaria benefit Western economies because the expensive commodities are bought from Western supermarkets and malls. In the same manner, Thompson’s and Thompson’s decision to deceive Keba’s to use Citoyen Kulu’s hard-earned diamond money for gambling benefits the West because the gambling game, “One-Arm-Bandits,” like most of the European football gambling companies such as “Betway,” “Sportingbet,” “Playa Bet,” “Paris Foot,” etc., that are invading Africa belong to the West. Perhaps the most recent revelation of how African leaders waste the African masses’ CO has been the Swiss authorities auctioning on September 28 2019, of a fleet of super cars seized from the son of Equatorial Guinea’s dictator Teodoro Obiang Mbasogo as part of a 2016 investigation into charges of misuse of public funds and money laundering: “the 26 cars sold by British auctioneer Bonhams at a golf club outside Geneva included seven Ferraris, five Bentleys, three Lamborghiniis, a Maserati, a McLaren and a Bugatti Veyron, according to The Times.”

Furthermore, the CO alienating/exteriorizing pyramidal structure reminds one that Bourdieu’s concepts of economic capital, social capital and cultural capital are crucial to cosmopolitan relations. Social capital is “the aggregate of the actual or potential resources linked to possession of a durable network of institutionalised relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition”; and “membership in a group which provides members with the backing of the collectively-owned capital” (51). Cultural capital comprises three main subtypes: “institutionalised” cultural capital is formal education; “embodied” cultural capital are internalized cultural norms, and “objectified” cultural capital are objects with cultural value. Economic capital comprises objects that can be directly converted into money or “institutionalized in the form of property rights” (47). Bourdieu’s three
types of capital chart the dimensions in which social status and hierarchy can be described in Africa; with the peasants continuously being deprived of economic, social and cultural capital through a rigidization of CB and a binarization of CO by the civil servants and African leaders. The pyramid establishes a praxis of domination that confirms Euro-North America as the center and Africa as the periphery. Within this praxis, the peasants/Africans are forced by the Ngomna (literally the government) of Cameroon/Euro-North America to participate in the a system that alienates them. They are compelled to perform actions contrary to their nature and historical essence and when they attempt to liberate themselves, the domination is transformed into repression, “the being that in practice reduces the other to non-being” (Dussel 54–56). This happens when Keba lands at the Kinshasa airport. His landing coincides with the return of an exiled opposition leader from Belgium. Like his Cameroonian/African counterpart(s), Mobutu unleashes his dogs of war, and the airport is invaded with bullets, grenades, and tear gas (147) and Keba is seriously wounded in one arm that would eventually be amputated at the Laquintinie Hospital upon Keba’s return to Cameroon.

Later, when the Yondo Black (Douala Ten) political crisis happens, Keba tries to accomplish the CB/CO liberation ambitions he nurtured during his sojourn in England. Unfortunately, Yondo Black and his fellow “subversives” are tried and sentenced by a Military Tribunal in Yaoundé. This is followed by the launching of the Social Democratic Front (SDF) party against the wishes of a government that is determined to frustrate genuine CB/CO change (148). Yondo Black, his friends, the SDF and its militants are considered by Ngomna as the other who has a history/culture of cosmopolitan exteriority, and so cannot be respected. The social, economic, and cultural capital centers of Bourdieu’s postulation have refused to let the other be other. Government-backed institutions like the Military Tribunal in Yaoundé have continued to incorporate the Yondo Black and SDF other into a strange/foreign CB/CO totality “to totalize exteriority, to systematize alterity [and] alienation” (Dussel 53). The alienation of SDF militants such as Keba, forces them “to lose their Being by incorporating them as a moment, an aspect, an instrument of another’s [CB/CO] Being [thereby displacing them] from their own [CB/CO] center and [making them] to revolve around the center of a [CB/CO] totality alien to them” (Dussel 53). The launching of the SDF is an attempt to create a CB/CO centerless center and Black’s, Keba’s and the SDF’s attempts to bring genuine CB/CO change confirm that “liberation of the oppressed is put into effect by the oppressed, but through the mediation of the critical mentality of the teacher, the leader, the organic intellectual” (Dussel 93). Yondo Black and Keba are prototypical organic intellectuals because they do not live in an ivory tower – they live and work “in and with the people, as an ‘organ’ in the body politic – with and within the people” (93).

In line with Dussel’s argument that “the cultural revolution by liberation must start and must be put into effect by the people and from within its popular culture” (93), the SDF adopted the slogan “Power to the People,” which could be interpreted as “CB/CO power to the people.” The slogan’s surrender of CB and CO power to the people establishes the SDF as part of a popular culture, the nucleus of resistance to oppressors of Cameroonian/African CO. This is not a suggestion that the SDF and other forms of popular culture come to life spontaneously. The Cameroonian people alone cannot
liberate themselves; the critical mentality of organic intellectuals (such as Keba, Moungo, and Monique) and of critical communities or political parties (such as the SDF), are “indispensable so that a people … discern the worst that it has in itself (introjected imperialist culture) and the best that it has from antiquity (cultural exteriority)” (Dussel 94). Both the organic intellectual and the critical community must be aware of the atrocities of the “culture of the center” that always looks to dominate in the present order. In the world of TDA, the imperialist culture (imperialist CB/CO) is the refined culture of Euro-North American, African, and Cameroonian elites. Echoing Fanon (1967), Dussel asserts that these African elites, alienated minorities in their own nations, are scorned by the creators of the culture of the center thereby making them outcasts of history. They ignore their national culture, despise their skin color and pretend to be white, speak English or French with Oxbridgean and Parisian accents respectively. They dress, eat, and live as if they were in the center (Dussel 912).

To Moungo, these African leaders suffer from “a delusion of superiority and a bizarre nose for red herrings” (26). They are childishly elated to “have houses in Europe or America where they can afford to live better than the middle-class white that stubbornly claims to be superior to them” (26). During every Bank Holiday, African presidents’ and ministers’ wives jostle with middle class housewives in giant supermarkets in Oxford Street where they have their hair retouched. These leaders buy designers’ rights for dresses in order to stop other women from dressing like their wives/mistresses who boast of a thousand pairs of shoes, rings of ruby, diamond and sapphire. African leaders know nothing about their countries’ CB and CO problems, but they know American, English, French, and Western histories. They excel in Elizabethan Literature, uphold Victorian values, recite Shakespeare, chuckle at Chaucer’s tongue-in-cheek humor, praise Dickens’ plume, criticize Racine’s sentimentalism, and agree with Corneille’s fanatical commitment to “La Patrie” (27). The colonial schools taught them to make passing or footnote reference to their people or ethnicity. In cosmopolitan terms, the African leaders/elites know what they do not need and need what they do not know. At the same time, economically, they encourage the production of what they do not consume and consume what they do not produce and therefore can neither foster fluid CB nor ensure the maximization of CO.

5. Conclusion: beyond a future of hope in fear and hate

Reading TDA as a supporter of subaltern cosmopolitanism, one of the images that keep coming to mind is a “between-hope-and-fear” one like that painted by Santos (2018: 293–294). In Africa, especially in Cameroon, fear and hope seem to be the only real emotions. There is uncertainty in how Africans experience the possibilities arising from the multiple-layered contradictory and contradicting relationships between fear and hope. Fear and hope are not evenly distributed among all African social groups. There are African social groups such as the abandoned victims of the Lake Nyos Disaster in Cameroon for whom fear outweighs hope to such an extent that “the world happens to them without their being able to make the world happen for them.” The African masses live in expectancy, but with no expectations; they are alive today, but death is eminent and imminent; they feed their children, but starvation seems inevitable. The African masses experience a downward uncertainty, because the world happens to them in ways that
depend little on them and more on their unscrupulous leaders. Sometimes their fear is so much such that hope is completely lost, and their downward uncertainty turns into its opposite, the certainty of fate. There are also social groups, such as those of African leaders, for whom hope outweighs fear to such an extent that the world is offered to them as a field of possibilities for them to manage at will. Those groups experience an upward uncertainty, an uncertainty concerning options mostly leading to outcomes that are desired. Sometimes their hope is so extreme that they lose all sense of fear and their upward uncertainty turns into its opposite, a certainty of the mission to appropriate the world. African social groups have been living between these two extremes. Their lives have been marked by more/less fear, more/less hope, and they have been going through periods dominated by downward uncertainties and periods dominated by upward uncertainties.

TDA attests that Africans are entering deeper and deeper into the mire of an abnormal time, “a period when the interdependence of fear and hope seems to collapse as a result of the growing polarization between the world of hopeless fear and the world of fearless hope [and an ever-growing] percentage of [Africa’s] population is faced with imminent risks for which there is no insurance or, if there is, it is financially unaffordable.” This is the African world of the experience of hopeless fear. In contrast, smaller social groups (the megalomaniac elite and politicians) are accumulating “outrageous amounts of wealth together with such disproportionate, nondemocratic, economic, social, and political power as to allow them to insure themselves against virtually any possible risk.” This is the small African world of the experience of fearless hope. In subaltern cosmopolitan terms, Santos’ image suggests that the African/Cameroonian world does not lack CB and CO alternatives; it lacks an alternative thinking of CB and CO alternatives that could recover CB and CO hope in our time – not fearless CB and CO hope; rather, CB and CO hope resilient enough not to be overcome by hopeless fear (Santos 295). Without the kind of radical cognitive democracy represented in TDA by the SDF and the Yondo Black Affair, “the avatars of conformity and scapegoating will go on building small gated communities for the fearless hope of the few, and large wretched ghettos for the hopeless fear of the many” (295). Nyamnjoh draws on Keba’s and Black’s chutzpah to assert that the avatars “can be fought against and undone only if more and more people come to realize that the hopeless fear of the powerless majorities stems from the fearless hope of the powerful minorities” (295). Rewarding as the Santosian image may seem to our analysis of TDA, it is limiting because it seems to concede to an ineluctable waning of a global cosmopolitan politesse that endorses narrow-minded nationalisms (such as President Trump’s border wall and zero-tolerance policy and Britain’s Brexit) that cultivate a future of hope through hate.

It would be foolhardy to claim that TDA provides a complete blueprint that exhausts the thematic universe of Cameroonian/African CB/CO. This is because the scope of the novel does not and cannot comprehensively delineate the numerous types of cosmopolitanisms and the sometimes complex, jagged-edged and razor-wired borders between cosmopolitanism and international relations, globalization and glocalization to name just these. However, in TDA, Nyamnjoh’s cosmopolitan politesse transcends a future of hope through hate nationally and internationally. Nationally, he uses Flanglotus Mounigo’s name to symbolically collapse the differences between Francophone and Anglophone Cameroonians because “Flanglotus” is a cosmopolitan neologism from Francophone and
Anglophone. Furthermore, the fact that as an Anglophone, Flanglotus, in choosing the name “Moungo” (the famous river that divides Francophone and Anglophone Cameroon) opts for the French spelling, “Moungo” instead of the English version, “Mongo,” indicates his willingness to identify himself as a composite Cameroonian whose identity chrominance and/or luminance is a permanent work in progress. Internationally, Charles Keba’s ability to stride and straddle different lands: Cameroon to London, London to Kinshasa and Kinshasa back to Cameroon, captures a socio-economic, politico-cultural, educational and linguistic cosmopolitan politesse, a nimble-footedness that reminds us of Nyamnjoh’s other stellar cosmopolitan creations such as Dieudonné, the Warzoner (Chadian) hyperpolyglot whose quintessential survival and adaptability blueprints in The Travail of Dieudonné, represent a paradigmatic rainbow of cosmopolitan politesse. Even in his non-fictional works, Nyamnjoh asserts that a future of hope beyond fear and hate belongs to those whose lives, like those of the nimble-footed Fulanis of Africa, “are structured around and dictated by a permanent quest for greener pastures and [a] reproduction of their way of life as crossers, contesters, and bridgers of borders and geographies of subsistence and sociality” (111). Perhaps, TDA’s major lesson is that we can recreate our cosmopolitan politesse world by acting courageously. Cosmopolitan courage and hope are intertwined; cosmopolitan courage is an act of hope and cosmopolitan hope is borne of courage. Cosmopolitan acts of courage create cosmopolitan hope. Thus, the cosmopolites of beyond-a-future-of-hope-in-fear-and-hate in TDA, stress the pursuit of coequality and commonalities that encourage the cultivation of frontier realities, frontier beings and frontier politesse.

Notes

1. https://medium.com/@jodugb/searching-for-africa-in-african-studies-an-open-letter-to-teachers-of-africa-atucl-29a3a9d20eee.
2. Carlie Porterfield. “Auction of Super Cars Seized from Son of Equatorial Guinea’s Dictator Nets $27 Million” https://www.forbes.com/sites/carlieporterfield/2019/09/30/auction-of-super-cars-seized-from-son-of-equatorial-guineas-dictator-nets-27-million/#4163e1e879f7.

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