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THE ANGLOPHONE PROBLEM IN FRANCIS NYAMNJOH'S ETHNOGRAPHIC FICTION: NEGOTIATING NATIONALISM, BELONGING AND FLEXIBLE CAMEROONIAN CITIZENSHIP

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Plagiarism Declaration

I, LEON BOMELA LOOMBE, hereby declare that the work on which this thesis is based is my original work both in concept and execution. Neither the whole work nor any part of it has been, is being, or is to be submitted for another degree in this or any other university for obtaining any qualification. I authorise the University of Cape Town to reproduce for the purpose of research either the whole or any portion of the contents in any manner whatsoever.

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Dedication

To Marianne Baonga Akwala, my lovely wife,

To Christian Boley, Leon Loombe, twins Bryan Balombo and Ryan Bomela my sons,

To Princess Bomela my daughter.

Dedication

In memory of

Papa Thomas Loombe Koy our lovely dad

Professor Harry Garuba who supervised the early stage of this doctoral journey.

Tribute to Professor Harry Garuba

I am overwhelmed by sadness!

My first encounter with Professor Harry Garuba was through his best friend, brother and colleague, Professor B. Francis Nyamnjoh in January 2018 at UCT, Cape Town. Working on Nyamnjoh's ethnographic fiction, Professor Garuba was the right academic to supervise my PhD. The first conversation with this poet, scholar and teacher built in me the belief that theories of modernity and multiple modernities, nationalism and citizenship can transform this unjust and unequal world characterised by social and political unrests.

Professor Garuba taught me literary techniques to analyse novels and kept me relevant in embracing latest the literary ideologies, including African nationalism, a field which informs my PhD. As a teacher, Professor Garuba was the very essence of duty, professionalism and wisdom. As a caring mentor, he was the essence of kindness and compassion. We students will always remember his sense of humor and admire his approach while explaining with such clarity and attention to detail using an academically balanced literary style.

Dear Professor, your early loss has left me devastated in that we started working hard on my research project which you readily accepted to supervise, but you could not attend the proposal presentation that we agreed to make in April 2020!

My respect to the departed soul:

It is the secret of the world
that all things subsist and do not die,
but only retire a little from sight
and afterwards return again.
– R W. Emerson

Professor Garuba will be remembered through my dissertation, his poems, books, essays, lectures and any other academic productions.

My deepest condolences to his family (Mama Zazi, Ruona and Zukina), colleagues, academics, friends, students and the whole UCT community.

Leon Bomela

Cape Town, March 2020.

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Abstract

The Anglophone Problem in Cameroon encapsulates deeply entrenched linguistic, cultural, and political tensions stemming from the historical marginalisation of Anglophones by the Francophone-dominated government. Despite official denials, Anglophone grievances are rooted in the government's failure to honour the 1961 Constitution, which established a federal structure recognising the equal status of Anglophone and Francophone regions (Konings & Nyamnjoh, 2003). The enforced unification of political parties into a single entity in 1966 (Ambanasom, 2013) and the abolition of federalism in 1972 contravened these constitutional principles, entrenching Francophone dominance. This marginalisation was further intensified in 1984 when a referendum rebranded the nation as "La République du Cameroun," effectively erasing Anglophone identity as an equal partner in the union (Manjoh, 2028). Francis Beng Nyamnjoh is as an Anglophone Cameroonian writer and ethnographer. His ethnographic fiction portrays the shared struggles of individuals within a fragmented society, emphasising the dynamic and dialectical nature of their relationships. This study examines how Nyamnjoh addresses the complexities of belonging in this context, focusing on his eight novels: *Mind Searching* (1991), *The Disillusioned African* (1995), *A Nose for Money* (2006), *Souls Forgotten* (2008), *The Travail of Dieudonné* (2008), *Married but Available* (2009), *Intimate Strangers* (2010), and *Homeless Waters* (2011) through the lens of ethnographic fiction. It explores his depiction of the Anglophone issue, investigating themes of nationalism, belonging, and citizenship in Cameroon. By critically analysing the imaginary Mimboland setting of these novels as an allegory of Cameroon, and the allegorical citizenship of Mimbolanders, the study delves into the intricate process of identity formation and the socio-political challenges arising from Cameroon's postcolonial history, where Anglophone Cameroonians endeavour to secure their place within the broader national framework. Through this literary analysis, I argue that Anglophones must navigate a delicate balance of cultural loyalty, political alignment, and the pursuit of a more inclusive national citizenship. Nyamnjoh's fiction, in this context, reflects on contested concepts of belonging, national identity, and the fluid nature of citizenship within Cameroon's divided linguistic landscape. Ultimately, this dissertation sheds light on the ongoing quest for recognition and self-determination amidst the complex and evolving socio-political realities of Cameroon.

Keywords: Anglophone problem, ethnographic fiction, spatiality, linguacultural identity, minoritisation, autochthony, Cameroon ethnicity.

List of Acronyms

AIDS	Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
ANM	*A Nose for Money*
ASAUK	African Studies Association of the UK
DO	District Officer
FCFA	Central African CFA Franc
FOVILAD	Foundation for the Forgotten Victims of the Lake Abehema Disaster
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
HW	*Homeless Waters*
IS	*Intimate Strangers*
MBA	*Married but Available*
MBC	Mimboland Brewery Corporation
MS	*Mind Searching*
Mim$	Mimboland Dollars
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
PhD.	Doctor of Philosophy
SF	*Souls Forgotten*
TDA	*The Disillusioned African*
TTD	*The Travail of Dieudonné*
UCT	University of Cape Town
UM	University of Mimbo
USA	United States of America
VC	Vice-Chancellor
VM	Vice-Minister

Table of Contents

Chapter One

General Introduction

> The Anglophone Problem manifests through frequent complaints by Anglophones about the lack of equal opportunity in political appointments, non-participation of Anglophones in any position of real power and influence in the country's affairs and the over-centralisation of powers in Yaoundé, dominated by Francophones and the meagre share of the development resources (Konings & Nyamnjoh, 2003: 5).

The quotation by Konings and Nyamnjoh (2003) underscores key aspects of what is commonly referred to as the "Anglophone Problem" in Cameroon. It reflects the grievances of Anglophone Cameroonians concerning political marginalisation, economic inequalities, and the over-centralisation of governance in Yaoundé, predominantly dominated by Francophones. To engage effectively with this quotation, it is essential to examine the historical, political, and socio-economic contexts of the issue.

These grievances are a significant part of the ongoing debate surrounding the treatment of Anglophones in a country that officially recognises both English and French as official languages. Dissatisfied with their treatment, Anglophones call for greater autonomy and decentralisation, demands that the Francophone-led government energetically suppresses, leading to armed conflicts in the North-West and South-West regions of Cameroon.

The Anglophone Problem is rooted in Cameroon's colonial legacy. Under the 1919 Treaty of the League of Nations, France and Britain were mandated to administer the country until independence (Mufor, 2011). This arrangement resulted in the division of Cameroon into two territories, which later became Trust Territories. The European languages and cultures (French and English) significantly influenced local cultures and national identity. The partitioning of Cameroon created distinct cultural differences, with each territory shaped by the culture of its respective colonial ruler (Konings & Nyamnjoh, 2003). Konings and Nyamnjoh note that these cultural differences posed challenges during reunification (2003, 22).

These difficulties are evident in two primary ways. First, there is a sense of marginalisation, as Britain controlled a much smaller portion of the territory compared to France, leaving Anglophone Cameroonians a minority in comparison to their Francophone counterparts. Second, Anglophones and Francophones perceive each other as "distinct communities, defined by linguistic differences

and inherited colonial traditions of education, law, public administration, and worldview" (Konings & Nyamnjoh, 24).

Several factors contribute to the Anglophone Problem, including perceived marginalisation in political power, economic disparities, inadequate educational and judicial systems, and issues of linguistic and cultural identity. Anglophones frequently criticise the French-dominated government, accusing it of neglecting the Anglophone regions and failing to invest equitably, which hinders development. There is widespread dissatisfaction with the imposition of Francophone educational and legal systems in Anglophone regions, as well as the erosion of English cultural heritage.

Despite these cultural differences, Cameroonians demonstrated a willingness to reunify. Anglophone Cameroonians voted in favour of reunification with Francophones during the 1961 referendum organised by the United Nations. However, the form of state resulting from reunification exacerbated tensions, particularly through the adoption of a unitary state. While Anglophones had sought a federal state premised on equal partnership, the Francophone majority imposed a highly centralised system, which eventually integrated minorities into a strictly unitary framework. This has fostered frustrations stemming from the Francophone majority's dominance over Anglophones, leading to nationalist movements and struggles for autonomy or separation. These movements reflect the neglect of regional development in Anglophone areas, as highlighted by Mufor (2011):

> [...]the strong emotions that drove the English-speaking Cameroonian nationalists resulted from a sense of affront and discrimination about the retardation of the territory. As such, home rule meant freeing the territory from the contiguous 'Francophone Institutions' and demanding greater responsibility over local affairs (2).

These dissatisfactions arose from the absence of adequate safeguards within the constitution to ensure the rights of Anglophones as a distinct minority, as well as the failure to preserve Anglophone cultural identity and heritage. When the Anglophone elite embarked on a political struggle for liberation in the early 1990s, they mobilised the Anglophone population to resist this marginalised position. The primary objective was to demand self-determination and autonomy. The movements of the early 1990s called for the reassertion of independence for the Anglophone regions due to an alleged lack of political goodwill, institutional discrimination, and good faith on the part of Francophones.

Furthermore, Mufor and John Nchami (Konings & Nyamnjoh, 2003) observe that Anglophone Cameroonians feel "very much like outsiders in their own country" (108). A political consequence of this sentiment is the emergence of the Federal Republic of Ambazonia (a term coined by Fon Gorji Dinka in 1984), which Anglophone separatists use to identify the newly proclaimed geopolitical entity of Anglophones. Ambazonia comprises the north-western and south-western regions, formerly British trust territory, which separatists unilaterally declared an independent state.

The claim for Ambazonian independence traces back to 1961, following the union with "La République du Cameroun" (French-speaking Cameroon). Anglophones became frustrated by a French-dominated government that marginalised and oppressed them, leading to socio-political dissatisfaction and calls for autonomy. In 2016, protests by Anglophone lawyers and teachers escalated tensions due to the dominance of the French language across all sectors and the suppression of English language and culture, culminating in the declaration of independence in 2017. Consequently, violent armed conflicts erupted between the Cameroonian government and Anglophone separatists. While the Cameroonian government and the United Nations continue to reject Ambazonia's claim to independence, separatists persist in their demands, and efforts at dialogue have so far failed to secure a peace agreement.

In literature, John Nkengasong's *Across the Mongolo* (2004) portrays a similar division, using Mongolo as a fictional river that separates Kamangola. Kamangola serves as an allegory for Cameroon, with its two regions: Kama (representing the Anglophone region) and Ngola (representing the Francophone region). A similar fictional cartography can be found in Nyamnjoh's Mimboland. Both works symbolically reflect division and union. Anglophone Cameroonian author and ethnographer Francis Nyamnjoh also addresses Anglophone frustrations in his ethnographic novels.

Geographically, Cameroon borders Nigeria (a former British colony) to the north-west and Chad (a former French colony) to the north-east. In Nyamnjoh's ethnographic fiction, the cartographic representation of Mimboland mirrors this geography, reflecting the linguistic division of Cameroon into Anglophone and Francophone regions. Interpreting Mimboland as an allegorical representation of Cameroon highlights the country's bilingual nature. This study examines how Nyamnjoh's ethnographic fiction engages with the Anglophone problem.

1. 1. The Anglophone Problem: a Tale of 'two Nations'

Ashuntantang Joyce's *Landscaping Postcoloniality: The Dissemination of Cameroon Anglophone Literature* (2009) traces the trajectory of nationalism in Anglophone Cameroonian literature, dividing it into two phases. Covering the period from 1959 to 1984, the first phase begins slightly before the end of colonialism and extends to the rise of Paul Biya as Cameroon's second president. This era intersects with what is termed old nationalism, as Cameroonian writers concentrated on independence movements, decolonisation projects, and representation (Ambanasom Shadrach, 2009). The second phase is characterised as new nationalism, with writers focusing more on marginalised communities deprived of full citizenship rights (Manjoh, 2018: 103–104). Nationalism during this phase is represented in literary works through the lens of the Anglophone Problem. Prominent Anglophone writers of this later period include Francis Nyamnjoh, Bate Besong, Nkemngong Nkengasong, and Bole Butake, among others. Ashuntantang Joyce (2016) describes this phase as "a period for imaginative response to socio-political malaise and victimhood" (109).

The Anglophone Problem in Cameroonian literature began with calls for recognition of a distinct literary tradition separate from the French-dominated one. Anglophone writers also advocated for the preservation of Anglophone cultural heritage. As Ambanasom (2013) notes, "these writers portray struggles of a marginalised community, the complexities of identity, and the enduring legacies of colonialism and postcolonial governance" (21–24). Through their works, they explore the distinctiveness of their linguacultural identity within a bilingual Cameroon. Key themes include colonialism and postcolonial identity, cultural displacement and linguistic struggles, as well as resistance and the fight for autonomy (Awasom, 2020: 264–2921).

The literary portrayal of the Anglophone Problem takes diverse forms, including poetry, drama, and novels. These works address themes such as disillusionment, political unrest, discrimination, marginalisation, and the repression of dissent. Literary critics and scholars refer to the Anglophone Problem in various terms. Lyonga, for instance, describes it as "the aesthetics of victimisation," while Fru Doh terms it "horizontal colonialism" (Ashuntantang, 2016). Creative writers exploring this issue in their works include Bole Butake, Bate Besong, Victor Epie Ngome, Makuchi Juliana, and Francis Nyamnjoh.

The notions of Cameroonian Anglophone citizenship and belonging are central to Nyamnjoh's exploration of national identity and his trajectory as a diasporic writer. Today, the causes of the

Anglophone Problem stem from socio-political and linguistic tensions between Francophones and Anglophones. These tensions have been examined from numerous perspectives, in both fictional and non-fictional writings. As an issue, the Anglophone Problem raises questions about national identity, citizenship, and belonging in Cameroon. Emerging after reunification with Francophone Cameroon, the Anglophone Problem arises from the challenges of nation-building and the broader nation-state project. Manjoh (2018: 2) identifies this as a failure to ensure the rights of Anglophones as a distinct minority. Konings and Nyamnjoh (2003) define the Anglophone Problem as "a growing marginalisation of the Anglophone minority in the nation-state project controlled by the Francophone political elite, endangering its cultural heritage and identity" (2). Foncha (qtd. in Mufor, 2011) articulates this perceived marginalisation as follows:

> […]for 31 years, the Anglophones have been marginalised, suppressed, oppressed, cheated, brutalised and treated like underdogs, like plantation workers; all this in a bid to woo them into integrating their minds, souls and also to obliterate all the English in which we grew up (4).

Francophones, however, deny the existence of the Anglophone Problem (Konings & Nyamnjoh, 153). Anyefru Emmanuel (2011) similarly asserts that Francophones believe there is no Anglophone Problem in Cameroon. He further contends that the coexistence of Anglophones and Francophones in Cameroon has not resulted in any significant sociolinguistic conflicts (298–301).

Nyamnjoh provides a basis for examining the Anglophone Problem from two perspectives. Firstly, the country comprises numerous ethnic and linguistic groups with diverse ancestral histories. This perspective aligns with the assertion by Nigerian philosopher William Idowu (Anyefru, 2011) that "every African nation is a multicultural, multinational and multilingual state" (277). Secondly, there is the pressing issue of colonial legacy, manifested in linguo-cultural differences resulting from two distinct former colonial rulers. These two aspects raise the critical question of national identity and belonging. The Anglophone Problem is a pressing issue that, if not addressed effectively, will continue to undermine Cameroon's efforts to foster harmonious coexistence and national unity. Evidence of this can be seen in the ongoing conflict, which has led to the establishment of the Republic of Ambazonia by Anglophone separatists, despite its independence not yet being officially recognised. This relates to literary studies because Nyamnjoh's oeuvre provides a rich and nuanced lens through which to examine the Anglophone Problem in Cameroon, especially in terms of its implications for national unity, cultural identity, and postcolonial power dynamics.

Ultimately, the ongoing, complex Anglophone Problem in Cameroon, initially rooted in colonial legacy, stems from the struggle to gain recognition for a distinct Anglophone linguacultural identity within a predominantly Francophone nation. Anglophone intellectuals, scholars, and writers grapple with issues of marginalisation, cultural preservation, and autonomy. Marginalisation in key sectors is compounded by the nation's failure to adequately address the rights of Anglophones, leading to heightened tensions and the emergence of the separatist movement, the Republic of Ambazonia. Despite some Francophones denying the existence of the issue, the Anglophone Problem remains a central and unresolved challenge in Cameroon's national discourse, posing a significant threat to the country's unity and future.

Cameroon is officially bilingual, with French spoken by about 70–80% of the population, mainly in eight regions formerly under French rule, and English by 20–30%, mostly in two regions (Chem-Langhëë 141–158). Despite being a minority, English speakers maintain a distinct Anglophone identity central to recent sociopolitical tensions. However, the Anglophone Problem is largely absent from Francophone Cameroon literature, due to political, linguistic, historical, and cultural factors. Francophone writers generally support a national narrative of unity, which Chem-Langhëë describes as portraying Cameroon as harmonious and indivisible. Literary scholar Julian Langellier notes that Francophone literature has traditionally prioritised national unity over regional differences, with state-affiliated authors discouraged from addressing "divisive" issues like Anglophone marginalisation.

Cameroon, often called "Africa in miniature" for its linguistic diversity, is home to over 250 indigenous languages (Manjoh 2018; Ambanasom 2013). While these languages are central to local identity and daily life, they remain marginalised in formal spheres dominated by French and English, due to limited institutional support and socio-economic pressures favouring colonial languages. Mostly oral and rarely standardised, indigenous tongues have limited presence in official documents and written literature. In Nyamnjoh's portrayal of Mimboland's linguistic landscape, indigenous languages are underrepresented as his focus centres on the colonial and postcolonial language politics of English, French, and Pidgin, highlighting their roles in identity, power, and resistance, and overshadowing the rich but less politically prominent indigenous languages.

1. 2. The Case For Ethnographic Fiction: Corpus and Rationale

Francis B. Nyamnjoh is both an ethnographer and a creative writer, whose literary work he personally classifies as ethnographic fiction, a term he elaborated upon during an interview I conducted with him on 4 March 2023 at the University of Cape Town. This concept of ethnographic fiction forms the conceptual foundation of my literary analysis of his oeuvre. Nyamnjoh's ethnographic fiction establishes a link between his extensive ethnographic research and creative writing. By fictionalising his research findings, I argue that Nyamnjoh's work can be classified as ethnographic fiction. Nyamnjoh builds his ethnographic fiction from encounters, interviews, observations, and conversations with others to document the realities of various communities. This method of depiction is referred to as the "re-activation of the internalised socialisation" as Nyamnjoh asserts:

> I don't write to entertain. I write to share my perspectives and my risk as a student of society. I believe that I have a certain curiosity about the context in which I live, the people I encounter in my life, the unfoldings of the world, and I document them meticulously either in writing or in various forms of record keeping in the world, in my embodiment of what I've lived or seen.[1]

The above quotation suggests that Nyamnjoh, in crafting his ethnographic fiction, enjoys freedom. As a fiction writer, he combines various experiences which may not necessarily belong to the same individual or character to construct a coherent narrative. Drawing on accumulated experiences, he does not create anything per se, because his materials are initially ethnographic and fundamentally factual, which he then transforms into fiction. Despite the factual nature of ethnographic data leaves little room for more creativity, the literary imaginary adds a new dimension to ethnographic accounts, making this creative body an equally important site of the study. Furthermore, Nyamnjoh draws on both historical and contemporary experiences, using a specific setting to highlight the interdependence of urban and rural life, while exposing power dynamics and dominant ideologies challenged by various forms of resistance.

Through this approach, Nyamnjoh explores the Anglophone Problem in much of his work. For example, he creates the fictional nation-state of Mimboland and employs heteroglossia to advocate for harmonious coexistence between Anglophone and Francophone Cameroonians. Furthermore, Nyamnjoh's fiction is characterised by two key elements: satire of the nation-state project through Mimboland (a metaphor for Cameroon) and its associated issues, moral decadence, corruption,

[1] From an interview conducted with Nyamnjoh on 04 March 2023 at the University of Cape Town.

bribery, and other societal ills and its ethnographic fiction (Manjoh, 2018; Ambanasom, 2003: 160). His novels, informed by lived experiences and anthropological research, offer a unique imaginative perspective that addresses the complexities of the Anglophone Problem. These defining features distinguish Nyamnjoh from other Anglophone Cameroonian authors.

Nyamnjoh's fiction is firmly grounded in ethnographic insight as he explains, "My novels are the most boring one can ever read if you are reading for entertainment – I write to share my perspectives and my risks as a student of society." His writing is not intended for entertainment, but rather for exploring and understanding societal experiences. Nyamnjoh's curiosity lies in the social structures and contexts in which he lives, as well as in his interactions with others. To him, writing ethnographic fiction is a way of documenting the realities of communities, a process that involves revisiting and reactivating internalised experiences and socialisation. From this perspective, I argue that the anthropologist "creates fiction out of reality." Concerning the relationship between ethnography and fiction, Nyamnjoh suggests that authentic social facts are often intertwined with a significant element of imagination.

> You live your social reality in a predictable standardised, routinised manner when you are deeply buried in the heart of the context that you take for granted? When you encounter a situation, then it triggers your faculties you begin imagining possible solutions or possible ways of dealing with it. It pushes you to go to the frontiers of your taken for granted daily existence.[2]

When immersed in the familiar context of daily life, one tends to experience it in a predictable, standardised, and routine manner, often without questioning it. However, when confronted with a new or challenging situation, one's faculties are activated, prompting the imagination to explore potential solutions or alternative approaches to address the issue. Such moments push one beyond the boundaries of habitual existence. Even in a world shaped by routine social facts, there is always the potential to generate new ideas or envision possibilities that transcend what already exists. In this sense, as Nyamnjoh asserts, the creative writer flourishes through invention.

The concept of ethnographic fiction has been defined by scholars and critics such as Matt Jacobson and Søren C. Larsen. According to Matt Jacobson, ethnographic fiction explores the intersection of geographical ethnography and creative writing, aiming to evoke cultural experiences and a sense of place through literary techniques. Søren C. Larsen, a cultural geographer, similarly

[2] From the same interview.

examines the politics of place, sense of place, and Indigenous philosophies and activism (Jacobson & Larsen, 2014: 179–193).

The ethnographic fiction approach seeks to authentically depict the nuanced realities of specific communities, particularly marginalised or deprived groups. Its characteristics include cultural exploration, blending fact and fiction, immersion and observation (often incorporating autobiographical elements), representation of marginalised or undocumented cultures, and reflection on the process of observation. Most narratives are set within specific socio-cultural contexts to examine how individuals relate to their environments. This approach combines rigorous ethnographic research with creative freedom, enabling authors to craft characters that may reflect real personalities based on extensive fieldwork and immersion within the cultures they depict. The ultimate goal is often to amplify the voices of neglected communities, exploring stereotypes, cultural misunderstandings, and biases.

Lancione Michele (2017) asserts that fiction and ethnography have always intertwined, driven by a shared desire to understand and explain the world. Reviewing the works of Jacobson and Larsen, Inckle (2010) similarly argues that ethnography and fiction are not mutually exclusive categories. Advocating for ethnographic fiction, Nyamnjoh (2013: 653–680) agrees with Wolfe Patrick and Chimamanda Adichie that "African fiction offers alternative and complementary ethnographies of Africans' everyday realities and experiences. These complexities are often inadequately captured by the 'ethnographic present' in traditional studies." Based on these definitions, ethnographic fiction can be described as a mode of writing that uses literary techniques to evoke cultural experiences and craft conventional ethnographic materials, interviews, participant observation, field notes, or photographs, into compelling stories. This genre derives from comprehensive fieldwork and cultural insights.

Nyamnjoh's ethnographic fiction establishes a link between his extensive ethnographic research and creative writing. By fictionalising his research findings, I argue that Nyamnjoh's work can be classified as ethnographic fiction.

The corpus of this study focuses on Nyamnjoh's creative works, which encompass eight novels: *Mind Searching* (1991), *The Disillusioned African* (1995), *A Nose for Money* (2006), *Souls Forgotten* (2008), *The Travail of Dieudonné* (2008), *Married but Available* (2009), *Intimate Strangers* (2010), and *Homeless Waters* (2011). This selection is substantive and representative of

Nyamnjoh's oeuvre, enabling comprehensive literary interpretations of the Anglophone Problem while preserving the integrity of each novel's thematic essence.

Few of Nyamnjoh's novels explicitly situate their narratives in Cameroon, as seen in *Mind Searching* (2007). Most are set in Mimboland, a satirical depiction of Cameroon (Manjoh, 2018). In Mimboland, protagonists often embark on journeys that reshape their identities, fostering maturity and flexibility in citizenship. For example, Emmanuel Kwanga in *Souls Forgotten* (2008) leaves his native village of Abehema for Nyamandem, Mimboland's capital city, to pursue education. Lily Loveless in *Married but Available* (2009), a Muzungulander student, travels to Mimboland for her doctoral research on the intersections of sex, money, power, and occultism. Immaculate in *Intimate Strangers* (2010) is a Mimbolander living in Botswana, seeking better opportunities. *The Disillusioned African* (1995) also explores Mimboland's paradoxes, as protagonist Charles grapples with the nation's ongoing neo-colonial challenges.

To this day, it remains rare, except in the case of a few towering figures in African literature for dissertations to undertake a comprehensive study of a single author and their body of work. In this regard, my thesis represents an important step towards the recognition of African authors as serious literary figures with rich and complex oeuvres. It is, to the best of my knowledge, the first sustained and comprehensive analysis of Francis B. Nyamnjoh's eight novels, and as such, it makes a significant contribution to both Cameroonian and African literary studies.

1. 3. "Insider-Outsider" Belonging: The Dynamics of Flexible Citizenship

This research is an analysis of the positionality attributed to the Anglophone Cameroon community as portrayed in Francis Nyamnjoh's ethnographic fiction. Moreover, examining his fiction through the lens of the Anglophone Problem underscores the need to explore his critique of the power of minority discourse to challenge dominant majority narratives. Accordingly, this study aligns with Valluvan's argument (2017: 232–239) that nationalism furnishes modernity with a vital framework for imagining community, the one that evokes a shared sense of belonging which transcends immediate personal ties and routine social encounters. Valluvan Sivamohan's argument that nationalism provides modernity with the fundamental lens through which it constructs community offers an insightful critique of how nationalism functions as a framework for defining belonging in the contemporary world. His view highlights that nationalism extends the sense of community beyond immediate, face-to-face interactions, encompassing a larger, often

abstract group of people. This shared space of belonging, he suggests, helps define who is considered part of the nation, even though these individuals may not engage directly with one another on a daily basis.

In the context of modernity, nationalism provides a means for individuals to feel connected to others across vast distances, creating a sense of solidarity with people they may never meet. This is significant because, in pre-modern societies, the community was typically grounded in localised, direct interactions. Nationalism, however, shifts this understanding by fostering an imagined community that transcends immediate, tangible relationships. As a result, it plays a crucial role in shaping individuals' identities and their perceptions of who belongs to a particular national group.

Sivamohan's argument also touches on how nationalism may be instrumental in constructing a sense of unity and purpose within the nation-state, while also potentially excluding those who do not fit the national identity. The notion of belonging, therefore, becomes both inclusive and exclusive, depending on how nationalism defines the boundaries of the nation. Overall, Sivamohan's perspective invites us to reflect on how modern forms of belonging are mediated through abstract, large-scale frameworks like nationalism, which influence both personal identities and collective consciousness. Through a reading of Nyamnjoh's fiction, I propose a reflection on the collective identity of a marginalised linguacultural community and a framework through which to understand the societies in which these narratives are situated.

Citizenship and belonging, as integral parts of collective identity, are closely tied to the question of nationalism. The nation, as an "imagined community" (Anderson, 2006), fosters a sense of unity among individuals who perceive themselves as part of the same collective, even without personal acquaintance. Meanwhile, Ernest Gellner regards nationalism as a matter of belonging to a specific citizenship. This conception frames nationalism as predicated on the alignment of nation and state (Meadwell, 2015: 271), thereby linking citizenship and belonging. In light of this, it is essential to note that the Anglophone Problem is not merely a territorial conflict defined by national borders. Instead, it is a socio-political issue rooted in a colonial legacy that transcends linguacultural divisions. As previously mentioned, it concerns the recognition of distinctiveness and autonomy within the nation-state framework.

My engagement with Nyamnjoh's work seeks to interrogate this sense of belonging in the Cameroonian context by situating the Anglophone minority as "outsiders-within." In the context of the Anglophone Problem, it is especially important to highlight that Chapter Five of this study

will complicate the concept of the "outsider-within" by bringing it into dialogue with that of the "marginalised insider[3]", as both engage with complex social positions, particularly within systems of power, identity, and belonging. Thus, belonging will be analysed not through the notion of the nation as an imagined community but in terms of national territoriality (Yuval-Davis, 2010). This approach shifts the focus from symbolic constructions of nationhood to the material and spatial dimensions of belonging, emphasising how borders, state practices, and territorial claims shape inclusion, exclusion, and national identity.

Reading Nyamnjoh's fiction through the perspective of nationalism highlights the adaptability of citizenship and belonging. While fixed notions of belonging are tied to geographic boundaries, critically examining these concepts reveals the diverse ways in which they are experienced. Belonging, as Anthias (2018: 137–159) observes, is shaped by socio-cultural, psychological, and political factors, making it a multidimensional and dynamic concept. To comprehend belonging, it is necessary to consider these factors and view it as evolving. Problematizing belonging entails challenging traditional territorial boundaries to understand it as contextual and dynamic. When viewed in this light, all exclusionary and hierarchical forms of belonging must be deconstructed, acknowledging the presence of multiple identities. This approach fosters a flexible belonging that empowers individuals with agency and choice. At this level, individuals actively negotiate their belonging, choosing communities that align with their aspirations and comfort.

Flexibility implies the formation of multiple layered identities shaped by social interactions or mobility. My reading of the texts examines how citizenship becomes adaptable within a fragmented society. In Cameroon, a nation divided by the Anglophone Problem, flexible citizenship has led to competing nationalisms, with communities safeguarding their socio-cultural interests while promoting their language. Although the Anglophone Problem intensifies social fragmentation, flexible citizenship fosters inclusion, acceptance of diverse linguacultural identities, and mobility across regions. It also encourages the acceptance of membership, wherein individuals actively negotiate their belonging rather than passively receive it.

In this study, I contextualise the concept of "flexible citizenship." This theoretical framing is particularly relevant to the Anglophone problem in Cameroon, where citizenship is not only a legal status but a contested site of identity, belonging, and political struggle. In Ong's model (2006), flexible citizenship necessitates new approaches to understand how individuals navigate

[3] The concept of the "marginalised insider" helps reframe the Anglophone Problem as not just a matter of external domination, but also of internal inequality.

the world. Hazama and Kiyoshi (2019) and Hunter (2016) link it to mobility, a global phenomenon. Cottrell Studemeyer Catherine, drawing on Marston Greg and Mitchell's perspective (Cottrell, 2015), describes citizenship as a dynamic, non-linear, social, political, and cultural project that requires civic inclusion in a transnational context (566–567). Within this framework, I align flexible citizenship with the idea of citizenship formation, where mobility is inherent (Nyamnjoh, 2019: 401). Although flexible citizenship is often associated with transnational identities and globalisation (Hazama & Kiyoshi, 2019), I adapt it to meet the specific cultural needs of a marginalised community. As the concepts of flexible citizenship and belonging are connected, they raise questions about who is an "outsider" and who is an "insider." I will therefore explore how autochthony, ethnicity, and, to some extent, indigeneity intersect with the notion of belonging.

1. 4. Excavating Flexible Citizenship

Nyamnjoh's writing often highlights the experiences of individuals who live between multiple worlds, negotiating their identity in contexts characterised by shifting political, social, and economic landscapes. The concept of flexible citizenship suggests that citizenship, identity, and belonging are not rigid or unchanging, but can evolve and adjust in response to individual choices, social contexts, and political circumstances. My research focuses on Nyamnjoh's portrayal of cultural identity and belonging, in which characters grapple with issues of cultural identity, often feeling torn between their traditional cultures and the pressures of modernity. Flexible citizenship, in this context, involves negotiating these identities and finding spaces of belonging that transcend national borders. I also examine a critical view of nationalism: Nyamnjoh's writing sometimes critiques the rigidity of nationalist ideologies and their failure to account for the lived realities of many people. By exploring flexible citizenship, Nyamnjoh challenges the state's control over identity and calls for a more inclusive understanding of belonging that embraces the complexities of human experience.

The Anglophone Problem is central to my analysis of Nyamnjoh's ethnographic fiction, which highlights tensions between the two Cameroonian communities and complicates individuals' identities as they navigate issues of acceptance, exclusion, and discrimination. Through his work, Nyamnjoh critiques the rigid boundaries of national identity and advocates for a more flexible, inclusive, and renegotiated sense of belonging. In my investigation of the impact of the

Anglophone Problem on identity and belonging, the primary research question guiding this study is as follows: how does Nyamnjoh negotiate nationalism, belonging, and flexible citizenship through the Anglophone Problem?

To delve deeply into this question, my analysis of the corpus is guided by four critical sub-questions. Firstly, how does Nyamnjoh's ethnographic fiction engage with and depict physical, ideological, and socially constructed 'real and imagined' spaces in relation to the Anglophone and Francophone communities? Secondly, how does Nyamnjoh negotiate linguistic flexibility through code-mixing, code-switching, and the use of pidgin English to challenge stereotypical notions of "otherness" and foster a renegotiated sense of collective "we-ness" belonging? Thirdly, how does Nyamnjoh employ minority discourse to explore and depict the Anglophone Problem, and how does this contribute to the negotiation of flexible citizenship in Cameroon? Finally, if 'flexible citizenship' is understood as a negotiated form of belonging, how do concepts of autochthony and ethnicity shape differentiated forms of belonging within the context of Anglophone and Francophone communities?

By examining the ways in which Nyamnjoh's characters relate to one another, I further explore the essentialist dimension of the relationship between Anglophone and Francophone Cameroonians, referred to as Mimbolanders and how they relate to their geographies and the divides. From this perspective, I investigate how critical concepts of insiders and outsiders are integral to understanding identity and belonging. These concepts also provide insights into how Anglophone and Francophone Cameroonians navigate the complexities of a nation fragmented by the Anglophone Problem.

1. **5. Literature Review**

Francis Beng Nyamnjoh is a distinguished Cameroonian scholar, novelist, and public intellectual whose work seamlessly traverses the terrains of anthropological inquiry and literary imagination. Holding a PhD in Social Anthropology from the University of Leicester in the United Kingdom, he has written extensively on issues such as media, democracy, migration, xenophobia, and the politics of knowledge production within African contexts. Currently, he serves as Professor of Social Anthropology at the University of Cape Town (UCT), South Africa, where he formerly occupied the esteemed South African Research Chair in Mobility and the Humanities.

His academic and creative accomplishments have garnered wide recognition. Among his accolades are the African Hero Award (2013) from the African Students Union at Ohio University in the United States, the Eko Prize for African Literature (2014), and the ASAUK Fage and Oliver Prize (2018) for the most outstanding monograph, awarded for *#RhodesMustFall: Nibbling at Resilient Colonialism in South Africa* (2016). Most recently, he was elected a Fellow of the British Academy, a distinction that honours his exceptional contributions to the humanities, particularly in anthropology, African studies, and literature.

Nyamnjoh is the author of ten novels and a prolific array of scholarly works. He is acclaimed for employing fiction as a vehicle through which to explore and illuminate the intricacies of African social realities. His earlier novels include *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). Two more recent novels, *Echoes of Grace* and *Digital Uprising: The Flower of Freedom in Mimboland*, both published in 2024 fall outside the purview of this thesis, as they were released at a later stage in the research process.

The majority of critical studies and seminal works on Nyamnjoh's eight novels utilise postcolonial theory, with a particular emphasis on the subaltern and marginality (Manjoh, 2018: 43; Ekpebisong, 2018: 12–13). Priscillia M. Manjoh, a Cameroonian scholar specialising in Anglophone literature and culture, published *Representations and Renegotiations of the Nation in Anglophone Cameroonian Literature* (2018). This book examines the novels of three Anglophone Cameroonian writers: Francis Nyamnjoh, Alobwed'Epie, and Nkengasong John. Manjoh explores how nation-building principles have been shaped by both colonial and postcolonial leadership.

In a chapter analysing Nyamnjoh's *A Nose for Money* (2006) and *Mind Searching* (1991), Manjoh argues that corrupt leadership during the reunification of Anglophone and Francophone Cameroon in 1961 undermined the nation-building project, resulting in both political and cultural marginalisation. This reunification is widely regarded as a failure, leading to the cultural assimilation and domination of Anglophones by Francophones (Konings & Nyamnjoh, 2003: 467). According to Manjoh, rather than fostering an exemplary nation-state, identities were manipulated to create essential differences between groups for political gain, a phenomenon also noted by Konings and Nyamnjoh (2003):

> There is a widespread feeling in this region that reunification with Francophone Cameroon in 1961 has led to a growing marginalization of the Anglophone minority endangering its cultural heritage and identity. (2)

Manjoh analyses Nyamnjoh's two works in dialogue with Nkengasong and Alobwed'Epie to suggest that a widely recognised political rhetoric, namely that certain groups of people are entitled to specific geographic regions and should benefit from their resources has been accompanied by policies of exclusion (Manjoh, 2018). In chapter four, Manjoh explores the marginalisation of Anglophones in Nyamnjoh's *A Nose for Money* and Nkengasong's *Across the Mongolo*, with reference to Alobwed'Epie's *The Death Certificate*. She attributes this marginalisation to cultural and social differences, as these novels depict characters who are socially disadvantaged and excluded, thereby highlighting their subaltern position (224–225).

Similarly, Nicheng Forbang Gilda, the Cameroonian literary critic, contends that the colonially constructed antagonisms embedded in the geo-linguistic sphere of Nkengasong's *Across the Mongolo* call for separation (Forbang, 2018: 1–15). However, an analysis of the Cameroonian nation-state reveals that while linguistic and cultural differences are prominent, they are not inherently divisive. Their Francophone counterparts, as noted by the African peace scientist John W. Forje (Nfah-Abbenyi, 2016: 14), advocate for unity under the premise that "Cameroon is one and indivisible." Likewise, the Anglophone nationalist Anyefru Emmanuel, in *Paradoxes of Internationalisation of the Anglophone Problem in Cameroon* (2011), underscores the limitations of the discourse surrounding the separation of Cameroon, asserting that Anglophones and Francophones share more commonalities than they might care to admit:

> Anglophone nationalist leaders have failed to realize that since the reunification of the Cameroons, so much more has taken place between the communities in terms of intermarriage, investment, migration and lifestyle issues that the dichotomy between the two has become blurred. (1)

Focusing on the nation-building project, Ndi and Ankuma edited *The Repressed Expressed: Novel Perspectives on African and Black Diasporic Literature* (2017). This expansive compilation of critical essays employs literary analysis to interrogate scholarship on views and beliefs concerning the challenges of fostering community within a nation lacking the beneficial qualities of transparency. In chapter one, the literary scholar Hassan Yosimbom theorises transmodernity as a philosophy of liberation in Nyamnjoh's *The Disillusioned African* (1–21). From a geopolitical

perspective, Yosimbom contends that transmodernity offers Africans political insights to transcend cultural differences, as he affirms:

> *The Disillusioned African* attests that transmodernity gives Cameroonians/Africans the necessary political and epistemological position to transcend all (post) essentialist contradictions and treatments of race, gender, tradition, culture, economy, etc., and to create [a(n) Cameroonian/African] politics without inherent domination and superiority of one over another. (3)

Yosimbom concludes that the transmodern project cannot be achieved through cultural superiority or negation, but through plurality and diversity. Therefore, Nyamnjoh's modern liberation is not only about preserving Cameroonian ways of life or co-existing in mutual indifference; it requires a shared horizon and a new vision (19). In chapter four of the same edited collection, Fishkin Benjamin (71–90) analyses Nyamnjoh's *Souls Forgotten*. He positions democracy and education in close proximity and observes that whenever education falters or collapses, it affects society – as he asserts: "whenever education anywhere stumbles, society everywhere falls to the ground" (82).

Fishkin's analysis of *Souls Forgotten* indicates that education and democracy are intertwined, rising and falling together. This means that Fishkin's analysis of *Souls Forgotten* suggests that education and democracy are closely linked, with the strength of one reflecting and influencing the other. Fishkin ultimately concludes that in the nation-building project, the failure of democracy, driven by the gap between theory and reality, causes a nation's collective psychosis (87). Similarly, this confirms George Fominyen's notion of "profess democracy but implement autocracy" in his analysis of Nyamnjoh's *Married but Available* (Fominyen, 2020). Finally, the last chapter of the collection deals with the reunification of the Cameroons into one nation (La République du Cameroun). Ndi (2017) analyses Nyamnjoh's *A Nose for Money*. As a historian of ideas, he argues that Nyamnjoh depicts the "prison", Mimboland (Cameroon or any African nation), in which nationals are trapped in dire conditions (201). As Ndi elaborates:

> Nyamnjoh depicts an unsettling clime, in which repression, oppression, and corruption are the order of the day. He paints a sordid tableau of the land of Mimbo, though not devoid of humor, with the sole goal of redressing the ills brought about by corrupt political, judicial, social, cultural, commercial, and economic practices. (202)

These conditions compel Nyamnjoh to subvert language in rebellion against the crushing weight of oppression and to denounce the denial of basic freedom imposed on his people. In contrast, Ambanasom's *The Cameroonian Novel of English Expression: An Introduction* (2009) adopts Marxist theory to analyse the social class divide between politicians and peasants in Nyamnjoh's *Mind Searching*, *The Disillusioned African*, and *A Nose for Money* (168–176). He concludes that Nyamnjoh explores counter-ideology to subvert the prevailing hegemonies, seeking possible alternative dispensations and a meaningful social deconstruction of Cameroon. He further observes that characters in these novels are subjected to alienation. Similarly, Yosimbom's "Mapping Heterotopias of Apocryphal History in Francis B. Nyamnjoh's *The Travail of Dieudonné*" (2018) and Prah Efua's "The Social Life of "Maidens" in Nyamnjoh's *Intimate Strangers*" (2010) respectively explore class struggle. While Yosimbom's analysis of *The Travail of Dieudonné* as a satirical representation of Cameroon argues that Dieudonné (the protagonist) symbolises the struggle between the rich residents of Beverly Hills and the poor of Swine Quarter, Prah's review of *Intimate Strangers* emphasises the struggle between the wealthy "madams" (employers) and the poor "maids" (employees). This parallel speaks meaningfully about Nyamnjoh and class struggle. This struggle is further symbolised by Keba in *The Disillusioned African* through his deliberate shift from the position of an advantaged elite to that of a disadvantaged leader of the common folk in the rural district. Keba retires to Menchum Rural Division, where he revolutionises the peasants with his ideas, including teaching them how to make economic and political capital out of their sweat and toil (242–245). While reviews of key papers and books on Nyamnjoh's novels illustrate the critical frameworks of postcolonial theory, as seen in Manjoh (2018), Ekpebisong (2018), and Ndi (2017), other scholarly papers illustrate the critical frameworks of Marxist theory, as shown in Ambanasom (2009), Yosimbom Hassan (2018), and Prah Efua (2010), there remains no book-length study of his novels.

This study, therefore, explores the entire literary corpus of Nyamnjoh in a full-length analysis, focusing on the author's critique of hierarchical citizenship and belonging as a constituent part of the Anglophone Problem. It follows the model of studies in African literature based on a single-authored approach. James Ogude (2000), in his thematic study of Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o's fiction on national identity, problematises history and fiction in postcolonial literature. Similarly, Simon Gikandi (2000) studied Ngugi's entire corpus, focusing on his engagement with nationalism, empire, and postcoloniality, providing fresh insight into Ngũgĩ's life and the historical and cultural context surrounding his work. Innes Lyn's *Chinua Achebe and the Creation of a Democratic Novel* (2006) is a single-authored study about identity negotiation between Igbo traditional values and

Western culture. Frazer Robert's *The Novels of Ayi Kwei Armah: A Study in Polemical Fiction* (1980) is a monograph on the corpus of Armah's five novels about nationalism.

My original contribution in this study lies in the exploration of the entire literary corpus of Nyamnjoh, which comprises eight novels, with a focus on his critique of hierarchical citizenship and belonging, framed as a core aspect of the Anglophone Problem. My approach offers a comprehensive and full-length analysis of Nyamnjoh's works, distinguishing it from previous studies that have explored only one or two of his novels, as well as from single-authored bodies of work by other African writers such as Ngũgĩ, Achebe, and Armah. By examining Nyamnjoh's writings in this way, my study seeks to shed light on his unique engagement with issues of citizenship, identity, and belonging, particularly in the context of postcolonial Africa. Ultimately, my dissertation offers fresh insights into the analysis of ethnographic fiction in literature, specifically Nyamnjoh's critique of postcolonial structures of power, national identity, and the complexities of belonging in African societies. Finally, my thesis makes a significant contribution to African literature, enhancing the understanding of the Anglophone Problem. It underscores the role of literature in advocating for justice, equity, and inclusivity.

1. 6. Theorising the Anglophone Problem

The frustrations of the Anglophone community reflect a broader struggle for recognition, autonomy, and equitable development within a state where power has historically been concentrated in the hands of the Francophone majority. The ongoing conflict illustrates the challenges of nation-building in post-colonial Africa, where unresolved regional, linguistic, and ethnic divisions continue to shape the political landscape.

In my analysis of Nyamnjoh's ethnographic fiction, I will theorise the Anglophone Problem in three dimensions. The first dimension is the colonial legacy versus national identity. From a post-colonial theory perspective, the Anglophone Problem can be seen as a manifestation of the larger issues surrounding national identity in Cameroon. The division between Anglophone and Francophone regions highlights the unresolved tensions of colonial legacies, where colonial borders disregarded ethnic and cultural boundaries. The second dimension is structural inequality and marginalisation. Marxist or post-structuralist frameworks may highlight the structural inequality faced by Anglophones within a Francophone-dominated political system. The economic and political power structures in Cameroon benefit a Francophone elite, while

Anglophones experience systemic exclusion. Finally, the third dimension is linguistic and power dynamics. The relationship between language and power is central to understanding the Anglophone Problem. Language is not merely a means of communication but a tool of cultural hegemony, with French positioned as the dominant language of power in Cameroon.

This study draws on theories of nationalism, particularly citizenship within African modernity. In the context of my research, I focus on rethinking Africa in new terms. The concept of nationalism is explored through constructivism and ideology, which raises the question of otherness: how the individuals invent their own identity and how this identity is constructed by others. The invention, in the context of my work, pertains to how the individual's unequal relationship is perceived and claimed through the Anglophone Problem. From the invention of Mimboland, I draw on Mudimbe (1994), who argues that various discourses shape how people invent themselves and define their cultural identities and sense of belonging. Mudimbe's work inspires my intervention on the relationship between the self and the other, particularly how hegemony imagines and constructs "otherness". I then examine the Eurocentric conception of otherness as "primitive" to argue that neocolonialism imagines and constructs citizenship and belonging in a manner similar to colonialism and Eurocentrism. For instance, in Cameroon, the Anglophone Problem defines "otherness" in terms of "Anglo" or "Frog."[4]

From my conceptual framework, I focus on Anderson's *Imagined Communities* (2006) to gain necessary insights into the concept of nationalism. Drawing on this theory, I concur with Anderson, who first rejects the assumption that nations are a natural or inevitable social unit, describing the nation instead as a cultural construct, more specifically as an 'imagined community'. Anderson argues that nations are emotional and cultural phenomena, not concrete realities. He defines a nation as "an imagined political community and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign." Like any group larger than a small village, a nation is "imagined" because most citizens will never meet one another face-to-face, yet they perceive themselves as part of a "political community" akin to a family, with shared origins, mutual interests, and "a deep, horizontal comradeship" (Anderson, 2006: 21–49). While Anderson's theory provides the framework for the literary analysis of nationalism in this study, Gellner's *Nation and Nationalism* (1983), (Meadwell, 2015) offers another perspective on this concept. Gellner's theory of nationalism asserts that ethnic boundaries within a given state should not cut across political ones

[4] "Anglo" and "Frog" refer to English and French speaking Cameroonians respectively, symbolising mutual exclusion and the tensions over language, identity, and political representation.

or separate the powerholders from the rest. He concludes that political and national unity should be congruent and seen as the general imposition of a high culture on society. According to Gellner, culture and social organisations are universal and perennial (Meadwell, 2015: 270–280).

To appropriately explore the concept of African modernity, which intersects with nationalism, I focus on the writings of Simon Gikandi. Gikandi's theory of African modernity is presented in a collection edited by Desai Gaurav Gajanan and Masquelier Adeline Marie, entitled *Critical Terms for the Study of Africa* (2018), as well as in his "Postcolonial Theory and the Spectre of Nationalism" (2006). Modernity is considered essential because it provides a significant framework for thinking about the transformation of African societies. Drawing on the significance of African modernity, Gikandi argues that:

> Modernity seems to make most sense when it is used as a general description for peoples' aspirations for an improvement in their lives rather than the emergence of new systems of rationality or forms of knowledge (Desai et al., 2018: 231).

From this context, modernity is relevant if it contributes to improving the lives of marginalised groups concerned with issues of citizenship and belonging. Unlike the Eurocentric version, African modernity, from this perspective, is reimagined as part of a broader conversation about a set of needs and desires that are both real and imagined; inscribed within another order of things that belongs to the "here" (Africa) and "now" (Desai et al., 2018: 228–244). Furthermore, Gikandi (2006) observes that today, the structures of nationalism and nation-states differ more than in the past. From this point of view, nationalism can be categorised into two movements: "old nationalism" and "new nationalism". In Africa, the "old nationalism" of the early 1960s focused on national and political independence and was inclusive. New nationalism, however, is shaped decisively by the consequences of globalisation and by the growing divide between the poor and the rich, based on exclusionary politics (Simpson, 2008: 112).

New nationalism brings about socio-political contestations such as exclusion and belonging, raising questions about who is a national or a foreigner, and who belongs or does not. To engage more deeply with nationalism in my literary analysis, and given that the Anglophone Problem is framed around the theory of citizenship and belonging, I will draw on Ong's theory of "flexible citizenship" and Geschiere's theory of "belonging" in relation to how Nyamnjoh's fiction portrays them. These theories provide valuable insight into the factors that inhibit equality in Cameroon as an imagined community, including the extent to which some groups are treated as outsiders-

within. Many debates have characterised the study of citizenship, both in Africa and globally. Hazama and Kiyoshi (2019: 14) assert that citizenship is used in various ways as an analytical concept, category, status, identity, and practice. Within these usages, citizenship is often a relational concept that expresses a mode of belonging to some form of political community. Expanding the concept of citizenship, Kabeer (Hazama and Kiyoshi, 2019: 2) distinguishes between "vertical citizenship" and "horizontal citizenship" as concepts that relate to the relationship between the state and the citizen, as well as to the relationship among citizens.

In light of this, Mahmood Mamdani's political and historical conceptualisations of identity play a key role in understanding citizenship. Furthermore, belonging, according to Geschiere, is defined as a feeling of being at home and safe; it evokes emotions of safety and inclusion. His book *Citizen and Subject*, first published in 1996, provides insight into the theory of citizenship with a skillful analysis of post-independence Africa, which tended to replicate many of the racially and ethnically prejudiced structures that were part of colonial rule (Desai et al., 2018). Similarly, Geschiere (2009) and Hunter (2016), who theorise on citizenship, bring the question of belonging to the forefront. Mamdani's work has opened up scholarship within the framework of citizenship in African studies (Desai et al., 2018). Similarly, Hunter Emma's *Citizenship, Belonging, and Political Community in Africa: Dialogues Between Past and Present* (2016) interrogates the various meanings of citizenship and argues that understanding citizenship as a key concept of modernity demands a revised reading of the past and opens new perspectives in the nation-state project. In line with the scope of this study, and in reference to the Anglophone Problem, I will base my literary analysis on Nyamnjoh's formulation as inspired by Ong's "flexible citizenship:"

> Nationalism in African fiction creates a greater need to reconceptualize citizenship by new paths that open socio-political and cultural space for the excluded individuals and collectivities. Such inclusion is best guaranteed by "flexible citizenship", unbounded by race, culture and language. (Nyamnjoh, 2019: 3)

Ong's *Flexible Citizenship* (2016) is based on sociocultural globalisation. She argues that particular constellations shape specific problems and resolutions to questions of contemporary living, further disarticulating and deterritorialising aspects of citizenship as stated in her introductory paragraph, in which she problematises cultural globalisation through the following questions:

> Few recent phenomena have proved as emblematic of our era, and as little understood, as globalization. Are nation-states being transformed by

> globalization into a single globalised economy? Do global cultural forces herald a post-national millennium? (1)

Ong links ethnographic research with structural analysis to explore the aforementioned questions, which are connected to flexible citizenship. The focus here should be on the relationship between the cultural logics of human action and the economic and political processes, with particular attention to the impact of social forces on women, children, and family life. As can be understood, Ong's concept of flexibility relates to modernity, where new connections between citizenship elements and mobile forms suggest that we must move beyond viewing citizenship as a protected status within a nation-state, and as a condition that contrasts with statelessness. Both new nationalism and "flexible citizenship" share a common factor: globalisation.

Ong's theory of Flexible Citizenship provides a critical framework for understanding the intersections between globalisation, migration, identity, and power. Literature, as a medium of representation, not only reflects these complexities but also gives voice to the lived experiences of individuals navigating multiple citizenships and identities in an increasingly interconnected world. Through the lens of fiction, we can better understand the emotional and cultural implications of these transnational dynamics. The relationship between Aihwa Ong's concept of Flexible Citizenship (2016) and literature can be explored through the lens of identity, mobility, and citizenship, which describes how individuals navigate the social and political systems of multiple countries to maximise their social opportunities. This mobility and flexibility are increasingly relevant in contemporary globalised contexts, where identity and belonging are no longer fixed but are negotiated across borders. In exploring flexible citizenship, literature often portrays characters who move across borders, either physically or metaphorically, embodying the transnationalism that Ong describes. The exploration of multiple national identities, cultural affiliations, and hybrid selves can be seen in novels, short stories, or poetry that highlight mobility and the fluidity of identity.

While Hunter (2016) argues that flexible citizenship challenges the prevailing assumption that the nation-state is the sole institution granting citizenship, Hazama and Kiyoshi (2019) recognise that it validates both collectivities and individuals, promoting the belonging of nationals and non-nationals at all levels. This promotion is noted to be both local and global. From these scholars' perspectives, I assert that flexible citizenship emphasises the individual and collective freedom to negotiate membership and belonging flexibly. Likewise, Nyamnjoh states that "citizens are not

citizens by abstraction, but citizens through binding relationships and social actions" (Desai et al., 2018: 57).

In relation to the Anglophone Problem as depicted in Nyamnjoh's ethnographic fiction, I argue that reconceptualising citizenship should remain an inclusive project in socio-political rhetoric and practices. Such reconceptualisation begins with exploring the exclusionary bases of citizenship, which fuel conflicts over belonging and socio-political representation. Reading Nyamnjoh's fiction from a citizenship perspective provides a clear understanding of the complexities and issues inherent in nationalism. This theory is relevant to the literary analysis of Nyamnjoh's fiction, as exclusionary politics portrayed in Anglophone Cameroon literature, especially in Nyamnjoh's novels demonstrates that the denial of citizenship rights to minority Anglophones is the root cause of socio-political conflicts (Ashuntantang, 2009; Manjoh, 2018). The theory of belonging, according to Temitope (2019: 32), helps individuals develop a self-conception and self-perception as members of a group sharing nationality, language, cultural background, or religion. This sense of belonging enables individuals to distinguish themselves from others, particularly those who are perceived as outsiders. In this context, I will draw on Geschiere's *The Perils of Belonging: Autochthony, Citizenship, and Exclusion in Africa and Europe* (2009) to provide further insight into the concept of belonging. Geschiere traces the origins of the concept of autochthony back to the classical period and explores it in two contrasting contexts: Cameroon and the Netherlands. In Cameroon, the question of "who belongs where?" arises in political struggles between different tribes, especially with regard to languages, while in the Netherlands, autochthony is invoked in debates over the integration of immigrants. Therefore, Geschiere and Mamdani both address political and historical identities.

Geschiere's book is central to this study, particularly chapter five. It has been reviewed by several scholars and critics, and for the scope and relevance of this study, I will focus on the reviews by Daniel Jordan Smith and Gyanendra Pandey, who also influenced Temitope (2019). Their reviews contribute to the ongoing discussion in my study. While Smith praises Geschiere's insightful analysis, which offers a model for investigating global issues, Pandey appreciates its focus on "belonging," which is claimed from multiple and shifting grounds (Temitope, 2019: 27–28). Pandey also cautions against exclusivist claims often associated with "belonging." Geschiere's framework is pertinent to the literary analysis of nationalism, as it does not consider autochthony and ethnicity as the primary defining criteria for belonging. Instead, belonging refers to a human emotional need to affiliate with and be accepted by a group, irrespective of nationality. Geschiere argues that "the global conjuncture of belonging brought a return of highly localised

preoccupations, as the flip side of intensifying processes of globalisation" (223). This suggests that, in a context characterised by accelerated and flexible mobility, limiting citizenship and belonging to fixed legal indicators is problematic.

Although belonging is also marked by mobility, Geschiere's comparison between Cameroon and the Netherlands highlights the differentiation between African and Eurocentric notions of belonging. In *Readings in Modernity in Africa* (2008), Geschiere, Birgit, and Pels argue that understanding the specific nuances of belonging in Africa might benefit from considering traits commonly seen as specific to African social structures. One such trait is the emphasis on "wealth in people" as opposed to, though in constant interaction with, "wealth in things." From a similar perspective, in one of his novels, Nyamnjoh (2008) writes, "a child is one person's only in the womb, although no child can occupy more than one womb; from the birth the child belongs to the entire community" (8). Likewise, Gikandi (Desai at al., 2018: 236–239) asserts that African modernity cannot be driven by a desire to separate individuals from communities. Finally, understanding the sense of belonging that citizens feel, display, invest in, and at times ambiguate, is crucial in the study of nationalism, as Nyamnjoh (2019) recommends:

> How simple or complex, bounded or flexible – indeed, how convivial or not – we are in our articulation of what constitutes citizenship in Africa is informed by whom we are ready to include in our shopping basket. (34)

All things considered; the theory of belonging in this study allows me to read how being an "outsider-within" affects citizenship and nationalism. Furthermore, belonging in this study answers questions about "how people can see each other as fellow human beings in spite of socio-cultural differences and ingrained feelings of suspicion and fear" (Nyamnjoh, 2019). In line with the Anglophone Problem, the framework of belonging importantly allows one to understand the challenging inclusion of others, in addition, to understand that the diversified ethno-regional groups within one state fuels socio-political malaise. Analysing the concept of belonging in Nyamnjoh's fiction sheds light on the question of inclusion and exclusion, which subsequently leads to a clear understanding of the dimensions of the Anglophone Problem.

1. 7. Adopting the Sociocritical Approach: Thematic Analysis and Chapter Outline

When applying the sociocritical approach to thematic analysis, the aim is to identify how the central themes of the work relate to social issues. In the context of this study, the sociocritical approach focuses on identity. Thus, my literary analysis explores themes of personal identity or alienation through the lens of social forces that shape both individual and collective identities.

This may involve considering how societal expectations of social class influence characters' sense of self and their place in the world. As a cultural representation, sociocriticism entails examining how different cultures, traditions, and social practices are represented in literature. This includes an analysis of how the text either perpetuates or subverts cultural stereotypes and how it reflects or critiques dominant cultural narratives. From the perspective of the Anglophone Problem, this approach examines how power, authority, and class dynamics are represented in Nyamnjoh's ethnographic fiction in order to analyse how different social groups are portrayed and how these representations either reinforce or challenge the status quo.

Sociocriticism in literature is a theoretical framework that focuses on the relationship between literature and society, specifically how social structures, languages, and cultural experiences influence literary production. From this perspective, it can be asserted that literature is deeply intertwined with society. Sociocriticism aligns with my study as it illuminates the interpretation of Nyamnjoh's ethnographic fiction through the socio-political realities of his native Cameroon, particularly the dynamics between Anglophones and Francophones. It investigates how his works portray characters' lives while highlighting issues such as inequality, class struggle, and the way identity shapes individual behaviour and experiences within communities. Sociocriticism in this study draws on three key theorists: Mikhail Bakhtin, Louis Althusser, and Karl Marx. Bakhtin's theory on the role of the marginalised in literature enables an examination of how Anglophones negotiate a flexible identity, while Althusser's work challenges dominant ideologies. Marxist theory plays a foundational role in the study of class struggle (Brissette, Pascal et al., 2017: 31–47).

According to social theorist and literary critic Marc Angenot (2004), the text contributes to the production of a social imaginary and offers figures of identity and belonging to social groups (200–225). Angenot further asserts that literature must be considered as a supplement to social discourse, contributing to its trouble-making or critical character. Duchet (Brissette et al., 2017) defines sociocriticism as a reading method of interdisciplinarity where sociology and psychology converge with literature (32). As a methodological approach, sociocriticism is well-suited to the reading of Nyamnjoh's novels in relation to the structure of the society in which they are deeply rooted. Reading Nyamnjoh's ethnographic fiction through sociocriticism allows for a clearer understanding of the dynamics associated with the inclusion-exclusion question in Cameroon, particularly the social dynamics between the majority Francophones and the minority Anglophones. As noted by literary theorist Edmond Cros (2011: 31–48), the encounter of ideologies such as nationalism with antagonistic tensions between social classes is central to

sociocriticism as a reading method. Therefore, sociocriticism is pertinent to the reading of the Anglophone Problem as depicted by Nyamnjoh. Viewing Nyamnjoh's fiction through a sociocritical lens provides a clearer understanding of his critique of hierarchical citizenship and belonging in Cameroon.

As a complementary approach to sociocriticism, I employ thematic analysis. Arguing that thematic analysis offers an accessible and theoretically flexible approach to analysing texts, Braun and Clarke (2006) further outline its nature, positioning it in relation to other analytic methods that seek themes or patterns, and in relation to different epistemological and ontological positions. Cuddon (2014) adds that thematic analysis in literature is a valuable tool for exploring the deeper meanings of a text, uncovering both universal and culturally specific messages, and offering insight into the author's exploration of complex human issues. It refers to the process of identifying, analysing, and interpreting themes or central ideas that emerge from a literary work.

Apart from the introduction structured as Chapter One and the conclusion as Chapter Six, this dissertation is divided into four analytical chapters. The second, titled *Negotiating Space: Mimboland as an Allegoric Cartography of the Anglophone Problem*, is based on Nyamnjoh's *The Travail of Dieudonné* and *A Nose for Money*. It explores how Nyamnjoh portrays physical, ideological, and socially constructed spaces, particularly the "real and imagined" divisions between Anglophone and Francophone communities. The third, *Negotiating a Linguistic Identity in Married But Available and Mind Searching*, examines how Nyamnjoh uses linguistic techniques like code-mixing, code-switching, and pidgin English to challenge stereotypical portrayals of 'otherness' and promote a sense of collective belonging. The fourth analytical chapter investigates how Nyamnjoh engages with the Anglophone Problem through minority discourse, contributing to the negotiation of flexible citizenship in Cameroon. It is titled *Souls Forgotten and The Disillusioned African: A Critical Evaluation of the Anglophone Problem*. Finally, the fifth chapter, titled *Outsider-within: Constructing a Differentiated Belonging in Intimate Strangers and Homeless Waters*, explores how concepts of autochthony and ethnicity shape different forms of belonging within these communities, particularly in relation to the idea of 'flexible citizenship' as a negotiated form of belonging.

Chapter Two

Negotiating Space: Mimboland as an Allegoric Cartography of the Anglophone Problem in *The Travail Of Dieudonne* and *A Nose For Money*

2. 1. Introduction

How does Nyamnjoh's Mimboland intersect with the concept of space and the Anglophone Problem in Cameroon? This first analytical chapter explores how Nyamnjoh's Mimboland engages deeply with the Anglophone Problem in Cameroon and creatively explores the concepts of space and place as both a political and symbolic terrain in *The Travail Of Dieudonne* (TTD) and *A Nose For Money* (ANM). The chapter further examines how Nyamnjoh's ethnographic fiction engages with historical events in order to critique neo-colonial legacies, linguistic divides, and the performative nature of governance in Cameroon. Finally it examines how this intentional mirroring brings attention to the complex dynamics of marginalization and resistance, making the fictional setting a compelling lens for real-world issues. My substantive intervention in this chapter is to offer a nuanced reading of Nyamnjoh's *The Travail Of Dieudonne* and *A Nose For Money* through the lens of the Anglophone Problem, to highlight the power of fiction in engaging with complex socio-political issues and to provide insights into the ways in which space is used in literature to articulate identity and belonging.

Nyamnjoh's Mimboland exemplifies the themes central to "Spaces and Mobilities in African Literatures and Cultures": it dramatizes how space and mobility intersect with identity, history, and power. Through allegorical and ethnographic techniques, Nyamnjoh's oeuvre offers a powerful commentary on how Africans negotiate their place, both literally and symbolically within postcolonial spaces marked by historical trauma and ongoing marginalization. From the above, I argue that Mimboland is a microcosmic exploration of the macro-level dynamics that "spaces and mobilities in African Literatures and Cultures" aims to theorize: the politics of space, the meaning of movement, and the literary articulation of identity within and across African geographies.

To analyze how Nyamnjoh negotiates space, this chapter draws on two conceptual frameworks. Mimboland operates as an allegorical cartography, echoing Robert Tally's *Geocriticism* (2017) and Edward Soja's idea of "third space." These frameworks shed light on how Mimboland, as a

fictional landscape mirrors lived Cameroonian spaces, enabling readers to navigate real socio-political tensions through literary imagination.

Tally emphasises the dynamic relationship between literature and space, proposing that narratives both shape and are shaped by the physical and imagined geographies they depict. In the context of Nyamnjoh's Mimboland, geocriticism offers a compelling interdisciplinary approach, merging ethnographic insight with literary analysis to examine how spatial representations encode power, identity, and ideology. Tally's view of literature as a form of cartography is particularly apt for analyzing Mimboland, where space becomes a site of contestation and meaning. By applying this framework, the paper reveals how Nyamnjoh's fictional geography mirrors the sociopolitical complexities of the Anglophone Problem in Cameroon, and how space in Nyamnjoh's novels functions as both a product and a critique of historical and cultural forces.

Edward Soja's concept of "Third Space", introduced in In his book *Thirdspace: Journeys to Los Angeles and Other Real-and-Imagined Places* (1996), offers a transformative framework that transcends traditional binaries like physical vs. mental or real vs. imagined. It merges "First Space" (material/physical space) and "Second Space" (conceptual/imagined space) into a hybrid "Third Space," a dynamic realm where spatial practices, identities, and power relations are negotiated. Accordingly, far from being fixed or neutral, space in this model is shaped by social histories, struggles, and marginal voices, making Third Space a powerful tool for analysing alternative narratives and resistance in postcolonial, cultural, and urban contexts.

2. 2. Theorising Space and Place: Real versus Imagined Places

The concepts of space and place are fundamental to the literary interpretation of fiction. These two terms are often used interchangeably, yet they carry distinct meanings when analysing real and imagined locations. Theorising space and place seeks to understand the connection between the two and how they interact with human experience. Both concepts inform each other and are essential for the literary interpretation of ethnographic fiction, as this subgenre focuses on geography and environmental perceptions amongst other things. The blending of real and imagined spaces in Nyamnjoh's ethnographic fiction demonstrates his creative capacity and highlights how our understanding of place is never fixed but is continually shaped by cultural identity and belonging.

Space in African literature has gained prominence in postcolonial fiction, as it relates to the geographical locations of both the colonies and the colonial powers. Spatiality thus, provides a platform for reflections on issues such as mobility, dislocation, border crossings, home, exile, and migration. Furthermore, spatiality has sparked debates among scholars, with some viewing postcolonial spaces as fictional constructs, while others focus on the lived spaces of postcolonial experiences. From a postcolonial perspective, Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o's *Petals of Blood* (1977) exemplifies ethnographic fiction by depicting postcolonial Kenya as a contested space, where the struggles of ordinary people reveal power concentrated in the hands of a privileged few. Ngũgĩ's juxtaposition of the imagined space of Ilmorog, the village on the periphery, with the real space of Nairobi, the centre of decision-making, illustrates the fictionalisation of ethnographic information.

Olufunwa (2005: 49-69) argues that space shapes citizens' attitudes towards encounters with other cultures, as seen in Ngũgĩ's *Petals of Blood* and *A Grain of Wheat* (1967). Olufunwa notes that the characters in these novels are compelled to define their positions based on feelings of belonging when interacting with other cultural identities. Similarly, Olufunwa's analysis of space and time in Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* (1958) concludes that human existence is shaped by specific events occurring at particular locations and times. Achebe, influenced by both tradition and missionary education, uses space to reflect on the cultural conflict between tradition and modernity, embodying what Edward Said terms an "act of geographical violence" (Olufunwa, 2005: 54). As the title suggests, *Things Fall Apart* represents space where imagined geographies are fragmented by the encounter with the colonial power.

Imagined geographies depict spatiality, which in African fiction is both metaphorical and dynamic. When mobility is not involved, it is a metonymic spatiality, as in Ngũgĩ's *The River Between* (1965), which emphasises the spiritual connection between the protagonist and space (his native land). The river Honia flows between two opposing ridges, which metaphorically represent the dual identity of the African in the postcolonial era: one being the "purely" black self and the other the [acquired] "white" self. The African, caught in this dilemma, is symbolised by the river, which strives to keep the ridges united, representing the flexible and hybrid identity of the [new] African. Ngũgĩ uses space as a metaphor, where the imagined topography of a village separated by a river illustrates Waiyaki's psychological conflicts.

Spatiality becomes cosmic when it involves mobility, suggesting that space is dynamic and linked to change. Movement within or between spaces can signal shifts in identity, cultural assimilation,

or personal transformation. The concept of spatiality in literature extends beyond mere setting to include the relationships between characters, events, and the spaces they occupy, influencing how space shapes identity, power, and experience. The protagonist embarks on a journey from one space to another with a pre-defined objective.

For example, in Amos Tutuola's *The Palm-Wine Drinkard* (1952), the protagonist embarks on a journey to find what he lacks to become whole, and returns fully matured with the woman whose love he has won. After the death of his palm-wine tapster, he travels to the town of the dead to bring his tapster back to life. Though he faces many obstacles, he achieves his goal when the tapster gives him magical powers instead of returning with him. Tutuola's novel portrays space as a universe for the man, where he never fully attains everything he needs, but also loses some of what he already has. This echoes Nyamnjoh's (2017) concept of the "universe of incompleteness." This concept refers to the idea that human beings, cultures, identities, and knowledge systems are inherently unfinished, fluid, and constantly evolving rather rigid. Tutuola's novel shows how encounters reshape identity, with the protagonist's journey symbolising a determined quest to reclaim a lost self despite repeated setbacks.

In *The Travail of Dieudonné* and *A Nose for Money*, characters navigate complex relationships with both physical and social environments. As they traverse different spaces, both social and geographical, mobility becomes existential, highlighting how space is central to their struggles for identity and survival. In these works, I argue that spatiality is intricately tied to individual and collective identity. The relationship between space and human experience is deeply intertwined with both individual and collective identity. The spaces we inhabit, traverse, and modify are not neutral backdrops but active agents in shaping our identities, self-perceptions, and modes of interaction with others. This complex connection can be explored at multiple levels: space shapes individual identity through daily experience and emotional connection, while also informing collective cultural, social, and political identities. How people engage with space ultimately contributes to identity formation.

Prospère, in *A Nose for Money*, is connected to a larger community of the privileged few (top civil servants, ministers, and successful businessmen). When he lives in Petit Paris, mobility transforms a static space into something expansive, involving physical movement. Spatiality, in this sense, becomes more dynamic and interconnected, extending far beyond the individual experience. Similarly, Dieudonné's journey from Warzone to Mimboland in *The Travail of Dieudonné*, his struggles for identity and power, are not confined to physical space alone but extend to broader

cosmic realms that influence his experiences and realities. Both protagonists in Nyamnjoh's *The Travail of Dieudonné* and *A Nose for Money* engage in mobilities with distinct missions to accomplish, aligning with cosmic spatiality.

To sum up, Nyamnjoh and the writers discussed view space as a product of social forces, which Lefebvre argues should be seen as a site of hegemonic power and ideological contestation (Lancione, 2017: X). Space is a shared domain that encodes cultural identities. In this analysis, the social forces depicted in Nyamnjoh's Mimboland, following Lefebvre's framework, represent a hierarchical space within Mimboland that is being contested. Nyamnjoh's Mimboland serves as an allegorical representation of the geographies of Cameroon, specifically the Anglophone and Francophone regions. These imagined geographies are the focal point of this chapter and form the dynamics of spatialities in *The Travail of Dieudonné* and *A Nose for Money*, portrayed as hierarchies.

Literary mapping has recently emerged as a critical topic in literary and cultural studies. In fiction, for example, all stories unfold within a setting located in a particular place, region, landscape, or relevant geography, which imbues the narrative with meaning. Similarly, literary maps are often imagined to provide readers with a guide to the story world. In some cases, writers fictionalise real spaces, as seen in Nyamnjoh's *Mind Searching*, where Cameroon is portrayed in realistic terms. Additionally, in their studies, Krishnan (2018) and Tally (2017) assert that imaginary maps complement themes in novels. While Cuddon (2014) sees space as a geographical location, Low (2017) views it as an abstract construct, originating from a material source but socially produced. Low develops her theory on the concepts of space and place, where place is tied to personal emotions and a sense of belonging, and space is complemented by time, characters, and ideology to form the fictional universe. Writers who map both real and imagined spaces in their worlds invite readers to engage with and interpret these spaces. This interaction forms a double process: the creation of imagined geographies and the understanding of literary geographies. In this way, the critical reader becomes an active interpreter, uncovering new and sometimes previously unseen mappings.

There are several approaches to studying place in literature, such as examining it in relation to discourses and power, exploring it as a dynamic process linked to mobility and events, or considering it as emotional, imagined, remembered, or experienced. This chapter explores the fictional universe in relation to real versus imagined spaces. In this study of place, I adopt Robert Tally's geocriticism as a method of literary analysis for exploring the significance of Nyamnjoh's

Mimboland as a geographic space. Cuddon (2014) contends that Tally's geocriticism forms part of the broader "spatial turn" in the humanities, which emphasises the significance of space alongside time. It challenges the traditional emphasis on the temporality, drawing attention to the ways in which spatial relationships shape and are shaped by literature. Grounded in interdisciplinary approaches intersecting with geography, critical theory, and literary studies, geocriticism aims to explore how space, place, and geography influence narratives, characters, and the construction of meaning within texts.

According to Tally, the geocritical approach enables the study of fiction by questioning the relationship between a space's nature and its actual condition, allowing for a study of possible worlds. This approach is relevant to the analysis of space and place in *The Travail of Dieudonné* and *A Nose for Money*, as it involves not only the study of space and place as depicted in Nyamnjoh's ethnographic fiction but also the impact of the literary representations of Mimboland as a specific space. Tally's *Routledge Handbook of Literature and Space* (2017) maps the key areas of literary spatiality, providing an overview while pointing towards exciting new directions for study. From a similar perspective, drawing on the works of Aristotle, Heidegger, and more recent philosophers of place, Tim Cresswell (2017) introduces the concept of "topopoetics". Cresswell's aim is not to revisit the familiar notion of 'sense-of-place' in poetry but to explore how poems themselves create space and place through their presence on the page, through the interplay of full space and blank space, stasis and flux, and inside and outside.

While affirming that space refers to the real and physical world, we also recognise that African fiction operates within imagined geographies. Edward Said (Tally, 2017) defines imagined geography as representations of people's perceptions of space, informed by emotions, relationships, culture, and language. As a social construct, imagined geographies occur not only at the national level but also within regional, domestic, and local spaces. Nyamnjoh's imagined geographies manifest in Mimboland at both the national level and, more significantly, at the regional level, where the socio-linguistic divide between Anglophones and Francophones is evident. It is essential to note that Said's "imagined" geographies do not imply falsehoods but rather represent "perceived" mappings. In literature, the "worlds" depicted in fiction are based on the real world, and the evoked perceptions are rooted in lived experiences, as Mucignat asserts.

> never fully aligned with the real world, stories grow out of the mismatch between reality and representation. Those areas of the fictional space that are not located on actual maps, but still form a fully structured imagined geography. (Tally, 2017)

From this perspective, studying imagined geographies in fiction remains crucial to interpreting the meaning of space and place. Further exploration of Nyamnjoh's imagined spaces offers deeper insight into the connection between the real and the imagined, which Tally terms "multiple forms of geographical imaginations". Nyamnjoh's imagined geographies consist of hybrid zones where fiction intersects with reality, Francophones engage with Anglophones, the privileged few rely on the deprived, and vice versa.

While the theoretical framework in this chapter is largely based on the theories of Henri Lefebvre and Edward Soja, as outlined above, the analysis of *The Travail of Dieudonné* and *A Nose for Money* is inspired by the theories of Setha Low, as presented in her book *Spatializing Culture: The Ethnography of Space and Place* (2016). This book reviews current and recent research on the issue of space and place in the humanities, particularly in literary anthropology, geography, psychology, sociology, linguistics, history, and urban studies. It demonstrates the value of ethnographic theory and methods in understanding space and place and explores how ethnographically-based spatial analyses can provide insights into prejudices, inequalities, and social exclusion in literature. Low's theories are relevant to the literary analysis of the Anglophone Problem because the socio-political and linguacultural divisions have fostered numerous prejudices, social inequalities, domination, and exclusion among Anglophone minorities in Cameroon (Konings & Nyamnjoh, 2003; Manjoh, 2018). Engaging with Low's theory facilitates a clearer understanding of the profound relationship between space, place, and cultural identity. Finally, Low's theory further encourages a critical perspective that addresses societal challenges such as inequality and exclusion. Therefore, my focus is on how place and space influence identity and how inclusion and belonging are negotiated in Nyamnjoh's novels.

2. 3. Mimboland as an Allegorical Representation

Allegory in literature enables writers to communicate complex ideas, moral lessons, or social critiques through symbolic representations. In an allegorical work, characters, events, and settings often stand for abstract concepts or real-world issues. This literary device adds depth and multiple layers of meaning to the narrative, encouraging readers to engage with the text at a more reflective and interpretive level (Cuddon, 2014). Allegory serves to impart moral lessons or illustrate ethical dilemmas. Characters and situations symbolise virtues and vices, often with a clear right or wrong path to follow. It also serves to critique society, politics, or historical events. Through symbolic

representation, authors can comment on issues such as corruption, inequality, or injustice without directly confronting sensitive subjects. Finally, allegory enriches the use of symbols and images within a narrative, allowing the author to layer meanings into the story.

Mimboland functions as a metaphorical space where geographical fluidity mirrors the fluidity of African identity and social structures. From this perspective, I observe that Nyamnjoh's choice of Mimboland as the setting for his ethnographic novels is both meaningful and strategic. Mimboland allows him to explore socio-political themes without being constrained by the specificities of real-world geography. By selecting Mimboland, Nyamnjoh enjoys the freedom to relocate institutions and cultural elements from various geographical regions, north, central, or west into this imagined nation. This flexibility enables him to focus on the interactions between different socio-cultural and linguistic groups, the movement of people, and the dynamics of power and identity, without being tied to the limitations of real-world borders.

In the fictional universe, the portrayal of space and place provides insight into the connection between real and imaginary geographies, as space is broad and abstract, with no substantial literary meaning. Place, however, refers to the attraction characters feel toward a specific location, associated with a sense of belonging. Nyamnjoh's Mimboland is a space because it represents a physical and geographical location. Regarding his choice of Mimboland as a central setting in his novels, Nyamnjoh states:

> The best is the freedom I felt writing about Cameroon was the creation of my own country without the structures or the caprice of real countries we know. So, you could have Cameroon as a country subjected to the caprice of politics and politicians for this and that and I could have my Mimboland, where I have President Longstay for example in my Mimboland.[5]

During the interview cited above, Nyamnjoh adds that he really likes Mimboland because it belongs to him. He could freely import those restaurants, bars and churches located in the north through some magical process of geographies moving and locate them in the central province. He could not do that same thing in another country that is located in real terms in a geography of its own and move things around in this way. This geographic flexibility also shows that Nyamnjoh has personally visited these regions during his ethnographic research. Nyamnjoh's work involves firsthand exploration and engagement with the regions he studies. His personal visits to these areas

[5] From the interview I conducted with him on 4 March 2023 at the University of Cape Town.

enrich his ethnographic research by providing him with direct, immersive experiences, enhancing the authenticity and depth of his observations. This type of engagement also allows him to interact with local communities, gaining insights that might not be possible through secondary sources alone. He further affirms that the capacity to move things around is not a monopoly of the writer as a writer of fiction. Every writer indulges in a certain creative manoeuvring and manipulation, not because they want to tell a lie, but because but because they have wanted to fit a particular logic of the narrative within the canons of community and the practice that they are part of.

Mimboland derives from "Mimbo". In Cameroonian Pidgin English, Mimbo refers to an alcoholic drink of any type (Yosimbom, 2021: 1). Mimboland, therefore, means the land of alcohol[6] and represents Nyamnjoh's native Cameroon, as Manjoh (2018) affirms:

> Although he uses fictitious names of places, these places resemble and fit in very well with places in the Republic of Cameroon. The activities in Sawang reveal it to be a fictitious name for Douala, the commercial capital of Cameroon. (122)

Nyamnjoh's fiction reflects Cameroon through his ethnographic fieldwork, evident in how the setting and plot capture the everyday experiences of both Anglophone and Francophone Cameroonians. Allegorically representing Cameroon with the ultimate purpose of portraying the Anglophone Problem, Mimboland geographically shares borders with two countries (ANM, 7, 72), namely Warzone (a French-speaking nation) and the Republic of Kuti (an English-speaking nation). This geolinguistic cartography is fictional but represents the real Cameroon (Yosimbom, 2021). My scope in this chapter rather focuses on the literary analysis of *The Travail of Dieudonné* and *A Nose for Money* than an anthropological aspect.

In her literary analysis, Manjoh equally argues that Nyamnjoh's *A Nose for Money* interrogates a sense of who actually belongs to a reunified Mimboland, implicitly Cameroon (2018: 5). In literary terms, Manjoh's analysis positions Mimboland as a symbolic geography reflecting Cameroon's sociopolitical and cultural divisions. By portraying two regions inhabited by Anglophones and Francophones, the fictional setting mirrors real tensions and power dynamics, using spatial metaphor to illuminate the challenges to national unity posed by historical and linguistic fractures. The fictional cartographic representation of Mimboland is seen in the novel *A Nose for Money* where Nyamnjoh implicitly names West and East Mimboland:

[6] A symbolic setting where alcohol represents more than just a beverage. It signifies social bonds, cultural practices, and modes of communication within the community.

> [Prospère] chose not to remind himself that he had bought nothing to drink after eating, preferring to stop for a drink of water at Roungom, the river that had marked the boundary between the Western and Eastern Mimboland in colonial times, and that continued to impose attitude, language and behaviour codes drawn from the cultural repertoires of the English and the French as the respective former colonial masters. (32)

From a historical and cultural perspective, the River Roungom symbolises the artificial boundaries imposed by colonial powers, dividing Mimboland into Western and Eastern regions. These boundaries are not merely geographical but are deeply embedded in the cultural, linguistic, and social identities of the people. This reflects Nyamnjoh's critique of the enduring impact of colonialism, as evidenced in the dichotomy between English and French cultural repertoires. These influences shape how individuals perceive themselves and others, perpetuating divisions rooted in colonial history. As a metaphor, a river represents life, movement, and change. In this context, the River Roungom serves as a metaphor for both continuity and division. While it sustains life and provides a vital source of water, it also separates communities and reinforces cultural distinctions.

Moreover, Nyamnjoh's imagined geographies comprise hybrid zones where fiction meets with reality, Francophones connect with Anglophones, the privileged few depend on the deprived, and vice versa. It is furthermore observed that Nyamnjoh's concept of imagined geographies explores the complex and fluid spaces where various identities, cultures, and realities intersect. In these hybrid zones, elements of fiction and reality are intertwined, challenging the boundaries between what is perceived as real and imagined. In *A Nose for Money* for instance, the linguistic divide between Francophones and Anglophones as illustrated through Prospère is blurred. Prospère's ability to communicate across language boundaries, along with his interactions and movements between Francophone and Anglophone spaces, challenges rigid divisions. Interestingly, the two linguistic communities find common ground or experience overlapping influences that shape their interactions and the sense of belonging. There is flexibility because the distinction between privileged and deprived individuals is also not fixed but mutually dependent. The privileged few rely on the labour, resources, and resilience of the marginalised, while the deprived ones are, in many ways, shaped and constrained by the systems that privilege others.

When the Francophone seller rebukes Prospère: *"Comment vous faites le marché comme un anglophone?" (why are you doing business like an Anglophone?).* It reflects cultural stereotypes tied to Cameroon's linguistic groups, highlighting how certain business practices are seen as typical of Anglophone community, suggesting a differentiated belonging. The contact between

Anglophones and Francophones also causes flexibility in citizenship. When the seller refers to Prospère as an English-speaking Mimbolander, it is shown that his citizenship is different. The derogatory reference to "Anglo" suggests that those from the part of Mimboland which was colonised by Britain should belong to Nigeria and should not have united with "*La Republique*" (ANM, 10).

In the discussion, the seller refers to Prospère as being mean. Anglophone Mimbolanders are identified as being tightfisted. This stereotype is associated with differentiated belonging and is used to identify an Anglophone person who is mean. The narrative reveals that this is one of the offensive stereotypes Anglophones grapple with on a daily basis as the following quote illustrates:

> English-speaking Mimbolanders were reputedly tightfisted. "I give you a cloth this good for so cheap and you argue? What manner of man are you… 'Anglo'? *Comme ça tu n'achètes jamais rien pour la femme. Tu es chiche."*[7] (ANM, 10)

This quotation can be interpreted in two dimensions: it shows the division between the two communities and the difference in place despite the fact that Mimboland is constitutionally one and 'indivisible'. Perception and conception of Mimboland as a place makes it linguistically divided, which subsequently results in socio-political conflicts (the Anglophone Problem). Mimboland as meaning-making has therefore developed a complex pattern of conscious and unconscious ideas, beliefs, preferences, memories, ideas, feelings, values, goals and behavioural tendencies that differentiate Anglophones from Francophones. In addition, this quotation shows that the intermingling of English and French highlights the possibility of coexistence and mutual influence, suggesting that the Anglophone Problem, while real, does not erase the deep interconnections between the two linguistic groups.

The divide between Western and Eastern Mimboland is not just geopolitical but also linguacultural. Similar to the real Cameroon, River Roungom serves as the boundary between the two regions. Flowing from west to east, this river marks a linguistic and cultural separation, with French spoken in Eastern Mimboland and English in Western Mimboland. As the narrator observes during the encounter of Prospère with Jean-Claude and Jean-Marie in the novel:

> The fact that their French wasn't corrupted by an English accent meant that they couldn't be West Mimbolanders. Prospère could tell an anglophone from a francophone just by the French they spoke. (ANM, 33)

[7] So you will never buy anything for your wife. You're stingy.

From the same context, the divide between Western and Eastern Mimboland being similar to the real Cameroon, River Roungom has also been depicted in Nkengasong's *Across the Mongolo*. Mongolo represents the river that divides Kamangola, a fictional nation with two regions: Kama which belongs to English-speakers, and Ngola belonging to French-speakers (2004):

> 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. (37)

Nkengasong narrates the tragedy of Ngwe who becomes a victim of stereotypes, perpetual humiliations, frustrations and discriminations. He is treated as an outsider in a deeply hierarchised society based on cultural and linguistic discriminations. Such a hierarchy of citizenship subsequently confers the status of "subaltern" to Anglophone citizens while Francophones remain the "centre". Before his trip to Ngola, Ngwe is first of all considered as a Nweh native but is conferred a flexible identity due to his Anglophone origin. This viewpoint confirms that the power structure within a society plays a key role on the individual's identity.

The representation of real versus imaginary spaces functions allegorically to explore the dynamics between two Cameroonian linguistic communities, Anglophones and Francophones alongside the political and cultural tensions between them. The River Mungo[8], a real geographical entity, is transformed into an imaginary space that symbolises the shared resources, division, and potential for reconciliation. River Mungo serves as a real, tangible space for activities like drinking, washing, and farming, marks it as an essential lifeline for both groups. Despite this shared usage, the river also becomes a site of division, because it "polarises" the two communities culturally and politically. The geographical space of the river, therefore, is not just a physical location but is also imbued with symbolic meanings related to identity, access to resources, and historical tensions.

Furthermore, Mimboland's geographies segregate and categorise residents, which proves that space is one of the elements which establishes social hierarchies. Those on the margins live in Swine Quarter (compared to a "bleeding ghetto" (TTD, 81) in *The Travail of Dieudonné*) as opposed to the privileged few who reside in "Beverly Hills", the residential paradise:

> All through the bus ride to the Toubaabys, he had commented within himself how filthy rich Beverly Hills and its occupants were. He noticed tall, exuberant electric-fenced villas glittering with wealth and protected with iron gates…Every comfort in Beverly Hills seemed exaggerated in its superabundance, just like misery, the lot of most of the rest, was overly

[8] Is a real river, physically shared by two linguistic communities in Cameroon.

present in the bleeding ghetto Dieumerci was coming from. (TTD, 19 – 20)

Unlike Dieudonné who resides in Swine Quarter, Monsieur and Madame Toubaaby, his masters reside in Beverly Hills, an exclusive neighborhood of Nyamandem[9]. This place is rumored to have all the stolen wealth of the country that failed to be exported. When space is hierarchised, citizenship will also be differentiated.

Looking at Mimboland from a unifying dimension, meanings assigned to Mimboland are attached not only to their physical attributes, but also essentially to culture and most importantly to power dynamics. Owning properties in some of the geographies within Mimboland adds some power. As mentioned before, those Mimbolanders who own properties in Beverly Hills (TTD, 20) and in Petit Paris (ANM, 137, 141) are socially more powerful than those who live in the ghetto. Such meanings can be personal, attached to the person's inner self, and influence their identity and the sense of belonging.

The river's imaginary representation is what Nyamnjoh taps into for his allegorical vision. River Roungom symbolises the potential for a shared community that transcends linguistic divisions. Although the river connects these two communities in a real sense, in the imaginary sense, it can be seen as a space for cross-cultural unity and reconciliation where dialogue and resolution of the "Anglophone Problem" might successfully emerge. The allegory suggests that while language divides, the shared space of the river offers a metaphorical opportunity for mutual understanding and cooperation. This vision of the river reflects hope for a political dialogue between Anglophones and Francophones, offering an imaginative pathway toward bridging their differences.

There is a connection between real and imaginary in *A Nose for Money*. Using the real river as an allegorical device, Nyamnjoh blurs the boundaries between the real and the imaginary. The river becomes more than a simple geographical feature; it is reimagined as a space where real-world conflicts might be addressed through imagination and dialogue. The real geographical river is the setting for tangible daily practices, but its imaginary qualities embody the potential for a new kind of understanding between the communities. Thus, from the analysis of the text, I argue that real-world spaces can carry imaginary or symbolic significance, transforming everyday elements into powerful metaphors for social and political change.

[9] Capital city of Mimboland, representing the real Yaoundé

The portrayal of Mimboland also surfaces an unequal development between the Anglophone and Francophone regions in Cameroon. The Francophone cities are reportedly more developed in terms of infrastructure and industries than the Anglophone cities. This unequal infrastructure development creates the perception that Anglophones are outsiders-within. These oppositions further show how the deprived downtrodden of Mimboland cope with their condition of despair and helplessness. It also reveals at the same time the indestructible quality of such Mimbolanders as Dieudonné who keep hope alive against all odds and cope with resilience (TTD, 53 – 55). The meaning attached to space in *A Nose for Money* equally reveals that both political and economic attributes have an impact on identity and reproduces flexible citizenship. To illustrate, Prospère who starts as a truck driver, living in the ghetto of Sawang, having unprotected sex with local prostitutes and later becomes a fully-fledged member of the club of the privileged few. This social mobility is due to his connections with ministers and the elite of Nyamandem (ANM, 140).

Moreover, in Mimboland, place embodies the connection between neighbourhood and a sense of belonging. Impoverished individuals tend to associate only with others who share their socioeconomic status, while affluent people interact exclusively within their own circles, such as private clubs. Each distinct community group maintains a strong attachment to its specific area. In such a context, place becomes a matter of connection and belonging. Through his novels, for example, Nyamnjoh illustrates how people's perceptions of their socio-physical environment profoundly shape their sense of community and their attachment to place. This is exactly what Dieudonné suggests in *The Travail of Dieudonné*:

> […]I would say we sit at the Grand Canari Bar a couple of streets up the road, at *Le-carrefour-de-la-joie*, where most people go to feel good. If of course, you have a little money to loosen my tongue. (TTD, 40)

Dieudonné and other residents of the ghetto are drawn to the Grand Canari Bar because it is more affordable for them. Drinking at Grand Canari does not pose a financial burden. On Sunday mornings, this bar tends to be noticeably less crowded compared to others in the neighbourhood. In this context, Nyamnjoh highlights a sense of belonging as part of the meaning of space. The bar serves multiple purposes: for some, it is a refuge where the less fortunate can escape their troubles through beer; for others, it is a haven of enjoyment, offering something for everyone. In essence, the Grand Canari Bar provides a space where the underprivileged find a shared sense of belonging, rooted in the socio-political realities of their lives.

The above highlights how, in relation to the Anglophone Problem, space and belonging in Nyamnjoh's *Mimboland* are shaped by not only language but also entrenched social and political

inequalities mirroring Anglophone marginalisation. The Grand Canari Bar represents a space of belonging for the urban poor, echoing how Anglophone identity emerges through exclusion and shared struggle. The spatial divide between rich and poor reflects broader national divisions, with Anglophone regions historically sidelined. Nyamnjoh uses place as more than setting. It becomes a means of exposing how national tensions are lived, and how marginalised communities negotiate belonging and resist dominant narratives of unity.

Mimboland is a region characterised by exclusion and disconnection. The politics of belonging, particularly within residential areas, systematically marginalise certain groups of Mimbolanders. Access to resources intended for the elite is reserved for a privileged few, with these privileges being determined by specific locations or territories. The dominance of Francophones over Anglophones, as described by Nyamnjoh, exemplifies this exclusion. As previously noted, Western Mimboland, predominantly inhabited by Anglophones, is less developed in terms of industry and infrastructure compared to the Francophone-dominated Eastern Mimboland. This disparity reinforces the marginalisation of Anglophones and perpetuates a hierarchy of belonging. The stereotype "Anglo," of which Prospère was a victim while in Sawang, underscores how minority Anglophones are treated as outsiders in Cameroon. His perceived stinginess is, in reality, a reflection of his inability to afford a simple piece of cloth for his wife, rather than a genuine character flaw. (ANM, 10). Nyamnjoh responds to this politics of exclusion in his ethnographic fiction through the use of heteroglossia. This stylistic expression is an advocacy for a pluralistic society in which all members must be given a chance for active and full participation.

Nyamnjoh sets Mimboland in contrast to Muzunguland, using the term "Muzungulander" with deliberate cultural and ironic weight. "Muzungu," commonly used across many African countries to refer to white people or foreigners, can carry connotations ranging from neutrality to satire. By appending "-lander," Nyamnjoh emphasises the character's outsider status, both culturally and geographically. The term "Muzungulander" carries an ironic undertone, reflecting Nyamnjoh's critique of power dynamics. It signals otherness and underscores behaviours, such exploitation and inequality. Moreover, "Muzungulander" functions as a satirical lens, inviting readers to view the character as a symbol of dominance, privilege, and disconnection. It critiques both external influence and internal complicity, exposing tensions between local customs and Western ideals. Ultimately, in *Married But Available*, the term encapsulates key themes of identity, social aspiration, and the ambivalence of modernity in a globalised world.

2. 4. The Nation and its Citizens: Satirical Toponymy and Anthroponymy

Toponymy is the study of the names of geographical places and the systems of designation used to identify geographical entities (Cuddon, 2014). To some extent, toponymy is considered a sub-branch of onomastics that examines names referring to geographic locations. Toponymy in fiction is particularly significant as it provides a map of the imagined world, offering readers the ability to envision and construct a possible place. It also bridges the gap between imagined and real places, fostering a deeper understanding of the self. Through these effects, the reader creates a possible place and endeavours to situate themselves within it. When toponymy is interpreted as a discourse, each place name can be analysed through literary and linguistic categories, with reference to its geographical context. In Nyamnjoh's narratives, the meanings of place names do not necessarily correspond to the actual locations they denote. Instead, these meanings are shaped by their use within a specific language and context, rather than their physical referents. Such meanings are determined by their usage and are therefore influenced by the themes and context in which they appear.

Satirical toponymy and anthroponymy are tools employed by Nyamnjoh to deliver criticism through humour, irony, and exaggeration. By manipulating the meanings and associations of names, he draws attention to flaws in individuals, systems, and societies, making these devices central to the development of satire in literature. Through these exaggerated names, readers gain insights into the deeper themes of the work, often prompting them to question societal norms and structures. Both toponymy and anthroponymy in satire serve multiple purposes. Names frequently carry ironic or contradictory meanings that underscore flaws in characters or societies. Through these naming choices, Nyamnjoh conveys a character's personality, exposes social issues, and injects humour, adding a comedic element to works that still convey profound messages.

When Nyamnjoh transforms his native Cameroon into the fictional Mimboland, scholars interpret this naming strategy from various perspectives. According to Fishkin (2014), "Mimbo" is derived from "bimbo," a term which, with the removal of one consonant, is often used as a complimentary yet controversial description of a physically attractive woman. It is a patronising and sexist term. However, the inclusion of "M" introduces a male counterpart, representing a man who lacks a sense of responsibility (58). From Fishkin's analysis, I deduce that Mimboland symbolically represents a nation-state governed by male leaders devoid of obligation and accountability. The name Mimboland evokes the image of a country where leaders turn a blind eye to danger, resulting

in chaos and disorder for the population, with no one seeming to care. The following description provides socio-political characteristics of the fictional Mimboland in *A Nose for Money*:

> The civil service in Mimboland was like a piece of bone that belonged to no dog in particular, but which every dog was free to play around with as it liked, then abandon for others to pick up. Some compared it to the meat of an elephant, tough to cook and even tougher to eat; needing gentle and gradual chewing, to avoid damage to the teeth. (ANM, 65)

From the above quote, I concur with Fishkin who compares Mimboland to "the fruit orchard of a dead king who has left behind no legitimate heir." Consequently, passers-by can harvest as much as they wish because it has become public property. Mimboland thus resembles a pasture where goats and other animals can eat away from where they are tethered, as Nyamnjoh (2006) mentions: "in casual and leisurely fashion, and with no moral obligation".

Mimboland is depicted as a nation inhabited by Mimbolanders. In *A Nose for Money*, he portrays Mimboland as a corrupt nation-state in which only the privileged few can prosper because they are connected to the centre of power. For this reason, Tazanu (2015) describes Mimboland as follows:

> […]the socio-economic and political world of Mimboland...reveals a festive world of deceit, opportunism, infidelity, insecurity, ignorance and a perfectly organised statecraft based on theft, and insider-insider trading. In this situation, corruption is neither controlled nor controllable. (190)

In *The Travail of Dieudonné*, Mimboland is named by oppositionality, a naming technique which Nyamnjoh takes from his ethnographic research on the urban and the rural, the local and the global, which is based on the socio-cultural geographies of the two worlds. At this level, he compares an African nation to its former colonial master. From this comparison, I note that Mimboland differs culturally and geographically from Muzunguland.[10] Muzunguland fictionally represents a nation-state located in Europe whose nationals are referred to as Muzungulanders:

> Maybe, as Madame Toubaaby has said earlier, Muzungulander culture expected the Muzungulander to behave differently. Maybe in Muzunguland, it would be impolite and suspicious not to glue your eyes on the person you are speaking to. 'What a strange place Muzunguland must be!' (TTD, 139)

[10] From Muzungu – in Kiswahili, 'Mzungu' means white person and can be equivalent to Lekgoa (in Southern region of Africa). Muzunguland is the country of the whites which represents any European country (France is here mostly referred to).

This passage invites a moment of cultural reflection to subtly critique the norms and expectations imposed by different societies. For example, Madame Toubaaby suggests that the "Muzungulanders" have their own distinct cultural expectations, particularly concerning social interaction, such as maintaining eye contact during conversation. In many African cultures, direct, sustained eye contact may be regarded as rude or disrespectful, especially towards elders or authority figures. In contrast, Western cultures often associate eye contact with attentiveness and honesty. The suggestion that Muzunguland might be a "strange place" underscores the alienation experienced by those unfamiliar with these norms and draws attention to the arbitrary nature of cultural conventions. Furthermore, Nyamnjoh's use of the ironic statement, "what a strange place Muzunguland must be!" highlights the absurdity of universalising cultural behaviours and creates space for reflection on the subjectivity of cultural values.

From the cultural opposition, Mimboland bears the meaning of community life coupled with generosity and mutual support. From the conversation between Dieumerci and Madame Toubaaby in *The Travail of Dieudonné*, it is clear that people in Mimboland do not expect to be paid back instantly for services rendered. This cultural attitude rather maintains enduring relations among Mimbolanders. This is totally opposed to Muzunguland's mercantilist opportunism expressed in such affirmations as "one good turn deserves another", which Mimbolanders detest (TTD, 140). Equally, it is important to note that the above naming oppositionality is not only represented between two nations; but it is also observable even within Mimboland itself. For instance, in *A Nose for Money*, Mimboland is featured with two geographies which are socially and culturally opposed: Sawang and Nyamandem. Sawang is the neglected city of deprived and poor people, whereas Nyamandem is the centre of power, the capital city of Mimboland.

Manjoh (2018: 163) views Sawang as a place of misery, the city of the ordinary and poor people which allegorically represents Douala. Douala is the economic capital of Cameroon. In *A Nose for Money*, the area Old-Belle, for instance, is described as a ghetto, a concentration of poverty, hope and despair located in Sawang. This place is the main headquarters of prostitution, where a large number of men and women can be found who publicly denounce prostitution but who in private are far less dismissive (ANM, 21 – 22). There is a political connotation in the social opposition between Sawang and Nyamandem, as observed in description of these geographies:

> In Nyamandem, the capital city, the citizens have jobs and do not have to roam the streets. This is the seat of power and authority…since Sawang is not the decision-making city, the citizens are denied their rights to a means of sustenance." (271)

Furthermore, we can even notice these social and cultural oppositions within Nyamandem, between Swine Quarter and Beverly Hills, as equally portrayed in *The Travail of Dieudonné*. Swine Quarter is the place for poor people where the general level of hygiene is "below zero" and where Dieudonné resides:

> Then he branched off from the main street into the bleeding ghetto and started to pick his way through muddy meanders of footpaths and shacks whose mud walls were delicately sustained by ant-infested wood. The general level of hygiene in this part of Nyamandem was below zero and Dieumerci's appetite fled because of the nasty sights he saw. (TTD, 149)

Beverly Hills however is where the "*nouveaux riches*" have taken refuge from the contagion of the "*nouveaux pauvres*". The opposition in name translates to socio-economic opposition. The privileged few live in Beverly Hills, whereas the deprived masses, including Dieudonné himself, reside in Swine Quarter. Geographies in this context determine flexible identity and a differentiated belonging. The following description by the narrator in *The Travail of Dieudonné* is illustrative:

> Beverly Hills is the exclusive exuberance of Nyamandem where it is rumored that the stolen wealth that failed to make its way out of Mimboland was buried in extravagant luxuries where passers-by are never tired of feeding their eyes with sights of wonderful white houses that look like wedding cakes. (TTD, 3)

All things considered, in addition to the significant characteristics, toponymy is used with some connotations that particularly affect certain terms. Those terms can be recognised only by users who have the reference code. The analysis of Nyamnjoh's fictional toponymy reveals that geographical names used in Nyamnjoh's novels denote facts that have been subjected to ethnographic research. They are either anagrams of, or allude to, real place names, or they sound like known names. Nyamandem for example in *A Nose for Money*, known as the capital city of Mimboland (85-89) allegorically represents Yaoundé, Cameroon's capital city.

Equally, Yosimbom (2021: 10) establishes the link between Nyamandem and Yaoundé as the centres for decision-making, the epicentres of corruption where opportunism has dominated the behaviours of leaders as narrated in *A Nose for Money*:

> Ministers were notorious for their elastic mouths and insatiable appetites….What an urban jungle Nyamandem was, Prospère thought. All the civil servants he had met were like starving vultures, ready to pounce

> even on the living. It was a city of extreme greed, where there was an aversion in everyone to the smell of money in others. (ANM, 132)

Yosimbom's conclusion from the analysis of Nyamandem is that it is a domain of a power-drunk elite, characterised by political corruption, kleptomania, and sexual excess. He refers to these characteristics as "tyrannical normative hedonism" (1–2). Finally, in my analysis of *The Travail of Dieudonné* and *A Nose for Money*, I have concluded that Nyamnjoh creates and employs place names for specific purposes. He does so, whether to represent the linguacultural differences between the two communities or to allegorically depict the social ills that characterise those Mimbolanders whose behaviours resemble those of real Cameroonian leaders. This observation suggests that any place name encountered in Nyamnjoh's ethnographic fiction is strategically chosen for a clear reason. I therefore assert that place names in the narratives carry meanings which construct themes. Mimboland is, and can be, interpreted from various perspectives.

In fiction, characters serve to build the plot and advance the story. Close reading of *The Travail of Dieudonné* and *A Nose for Money* reveals that the author's naming of characters is also strategic. He assigns names only to those characters who contribute to plot advancement. Those who do not really advance the story are and remain nameless. Nyamnjoh's imagined geography can not only be understood through toponymy, but also through anthroponymy. This section examines the nature and meaning of characters' names in *Travail of Dieudonné* and *A Nose for Money* with a view to understanding the author's thematic engagement of the Anglophone Problem. The name is the most identifying element of characters in a creative work. This section draws on the framework of literary onomastics to examine Nyamnjoh's naming strategy in his creative writings. In this section my intervention consists of examining the rationale or purpose of choice and the thematic messages behind the characters' names.

Personal names allow fictional characters to come into existence in the author's imagined world. Their existence interestingly impacts the story through their personalities, relationship with others, their actions and even fates. Nyamnjoh creates characters with names which meaningfully fulfil specific roles in the story. These names suitably represent the role of characters and their individual characteristics. As an illustration, the name Prospère in *A Nose for Money* comes from the French verb "*prospérer*"[11] which means "*se développer*"[12] in French. This name is indicative of the status of being prosperous. The name Prospère is given to the ambitious protagonist who dreams of becoming rich one day. We see that this name further suggests a kind of social mobility in which

[11] To prosper
[12] To develop

the person starts as a poor truck driver for Mimboland Brewery Company but ends up becoming one of the most successful businessmen in Nyamandem. Prospère's changing fortunes come his way when two fraudsters, Jean-Marie and Jean-Claude, die in a traffic accident, having left behind suitcases of genuine money with which he relocates to Nyamandem to make it by "hook or by crook" (ANM, 139). Prospère is a name which moves the story forward. Changing from one geography to the other geographies (from Sawang to Nyamandem), he reinvents himself. He becomes one of the country's duplicitous businessmen when he receives the support of the ruling elite and corrupt government functionaries. Prospère interestingly becomes prosperous thanks to corruption, which brings him closer to the centre of power as he easily wins lucrative contracts from the government.

In this passage, the use of French names for characters in Nyamnjoh's work highlights several significant social and cultural dynamics. From an anthropological perspective, names are far more than mere identifiers; they carry significant social, historical, and linguistic connotations. In *A Nose for Money*, Nyamnjoh illustrates how the cultural meanings embedded in personal names reflect the enduring legacies of colonialism, linguistic hybridity, and the negotiation of identity in postcolonial Cameroon. The analysis of characters' names reveals that names such as Prospère and Monique are distinctly French in their orthography, signalling the residual presence of French colonial influence. In contrast, names like Rose and Charlotte, although of French origin, possess transcultural resonance, existing across various linguistic and cultural contexts which complicates their identification as exclusively French. Crucially, Anglophone Cameroonian women do not regard these names as inherently French, suggesting a process of cultural reappropriation and localisation.

The names underscore the linguistic hierarchy embedded within the fictional setting of Mimboland, a satirical reflection of contemporary Cameroon with French occupying a position of dominance. This linguistic preference gestures towards broader socio-cultural power dynamics, wherein proficiency in French is frequently linked to elevated social standing, higher levels of education, and privileged access to institutional authority. Conversely, speakers of English or indigenous languages are often relegated to the socio-political periphery. Moreover, Nyamnjoh's decision to assign French names to key characters foregrounds a critique of linguistic hegemony, employing naming as a subtle yet incisive commentary on the real-world complexities of Cameroon's colonial and postcolonial identities. These names function not merely as personal identifiers but as anthropological markers that situate characters within a symbolic social

geography, the one shaped by the enduring legacies of colonial rule and the continued dominance of French as a language of power.

This section offers a close reading of two works, *A Nose for Money* (ANM) and *The Travail of Dieudonné* (TTD), with a focus on the use of names and their thematic significance. The analysis points out the theme of greed and lust for money in *A Nose for Money*. The names of two characters, Monsieur Gaston Abanda and Monsieur Etienne Habahaba, are identified as markers of their Francophone identity and their greed. The names seem to reflect their characters' obsession with wealth, aligning them with the stereotype of wealthy and corrupt politicians in Cameroon. By assigning these characters French names, the author provides social comments on the historical and social dominance of the Francophone elite in post-colonial Cameroon. The choice of French names suggests an association with a system of political and economic corruption where money is prioritised above all else. The text also suggests consequence of greed. The characters' downfall, being conned by fraudsters and ending up in prison, serves as a cautionary tale about the dangers of unchecked greed. Their desire to multiply money through fraudulent means highlights their lack of ethical or moral boundaries.

Another theme is identity and oppositionality in *The Travail of Dieudonné*. The protagonist's name, Dieudonné which means "God's gift" in French, but the character's situation stands in stark contrast to the expected privileges that such a name would imply. Normally, one might associate a person named God's gift with wealth or success, but Dieudonné is poor and suffering. This contradiction highlights the disparity between the symbolism of the name and his actual life. The name becomes an ironic commentary on the way societal expectations and religious or spiritual meanings are often disconnected from the harsh realities of life.

Dieudonné's name symbolises baptism and new identity. There is a perception of change as a forced transformation. Despite his Muslim background, his new Christian name, imposed by his employer, marks a shift in his identity. This baptism and new name are conditions for employment, emphasising the role of religious identity in shaping his opportunities. However, Dieudonné's reflection on the arbitrariness of names, "what is in his name?" points to the larger theme of identity construction, where names are not just labels but vehicles of meaning and power that shape how individuals are perceived and treated in society.

Multilingualism is used as a Symbol of flexible citizenship. The name Dieudonné is also used to underscore his multilingualism, his ability to speak French, English, Pidgin, and Arabic. This linguistic flexibility reflects his status as someone who navigates multiple cultural and political

spaces, embodying a form of flexible citizenship. The idea of multilingualism here extends beyond mere language proficiency; it represents Dieudonné's adaptability and ability to belong to multiple spheres, yet remain an outsider within. His hybrid identity reveals the complexities of belonging in a globalised world, where individuals are constantly shifting between identities, but never fully integrated into any one space.

Reading these texts closely, we see how naming functions not only as a character identifier but also as a narrative device that reveals underlying social and political themes. The characters in *A Nose for Money* embody greed and corruption, while Dieudonné's name reflects a tension between spiritual meaning and material reality. Both texts use naming to explore complex issues of identity, corruption, and the tensions between outward appearances and inner realities. This juxtaposition of names with character behaviour and life circumstances underscores the central themes of moral conflict, societal expectations, and the struggle for personal dignity in the face of systemic oppression.

From the same perspective, the name "Dieumerci[13] Aphrika" is also a French name. It is a way of thanking God. First of all, he is thankful to God who allowed his meeting with Dieudonné. Dieudonné constitutes a great and live library of resources that gives hope in filling the gaps in his research with organic information because Dieudonné tells him stories about the history and life of Warzone people. Second, Dieumerci is a way of thanking God for the wisdom received from Monsieur Toubaaby who is his thesis supervisor at the University of Asieyam. This shows that despite of sharing the same origin with Dieudonné, he does not have to be as silly as him, but rather take nothing for granted (Ankumah, 2014: 160). He has to follow his supervisor's advice "to create something new through constant and critical interrogation of received wisdom" (TTD, 24). This name also suggests a flexible citizenship and a differentiated belonging. Dieumerci and Dieudonné not only share the same origin (Warzone) but also the same master (Monsieur Toubaaby). These characters represent poverty and Monsieur and Madame Toubaaby represent wealth. This is the social opposition that Nyamnjoh portrays with names which actually mean the contrary. With regard to the political opposition, Nyamnjoh contrasts Dieudonné and Dieumerci with Chopngomna and President Longstay. The name Chopngomna, in Cameroonian Pidgin English, means Someone who embezzles public funds. This character is an embezzler with a "bleeding wallet to mean an inexhaustible source of money" (TTD, 73). The name "President

[13] Thank God

Longstay"[14] is associated with power (Fishkin & Ankumah, 2014). He is the head of state of Mimboland who has been in power for years and is not ready to leave.

Yosimbom's (2021) observation that the name Chopngomna is linked to pleasure-seeking resonates strongly with the concept of "the politics of the belly". In this context, Chopngomna becomes more than a character; he personifies a political culture driven by greed, consumption, and self-interest, where governance is reduced to the pursuit of pleasure, wealth, and influence. Nyamnjoh uses characters like Chopngomna to expose how such attitudes pervade both political and social life, blurring the lines between public responsibility and personal indulgence.

As a government functionary, he steals money from the state treasury. He uses this money to generously offer drinks to all the people gathered at Grand Canari Bar as he energetically resists Dieumerci's offer:

> And then pulls out a wad of crumpled banknotes from his pocket, waves them toward Dieumerci and tells Dieumerci "This round of drinks, and the next and the next and the next for everyone here present – all on me." (TTD, 37)

Looking at the meaning of the name "Chopngomna", this character is here identified with the tradition of the civil service in Mimboland where "a goat is meant to eat where it is tethered" (ANM, 160). While Vakunta notes that the symbolism and significance attached to Chopngomna reveal his personality, Ankumah (2014) adds that some of his sobriquets provide further information about his character, exposing his love of sex and excessive alcohol consumption. In drinking places, Chopngomna is called "Bonbon alcoolisé",[15] a nickname that emphasises his love of alcohol. From the above, it is clear that Chopngomna is known as a corrupt civil servant who consumes government money from the state treasury.

In essence, Nyamnjoh uses anthroponymy as a way to intensify the symbolic and narrative impact of his characters. By carefully choosing names that highlight a character's traits or reflect their social actions, he creates a deeper resonance that enhances the reader's understanding of character dynamics, societal norms, and cultural commentary. Nyamnjoh's use of anthroponymy as a stylistic device serves several important purposes in his work, particularly in terms of exploring how names can reflect or symbolise deeper aspects of character, identity, and societal roles. There is a symbolic representation of activity in that names reflect either directly or indirectly their

[14] Stay in power forever.
[15] Candy with alcohol.

actions, roles, or social functions. A name may embody the character's role in society, their personal qualities, or even their destiny. This technique allows the author to explore how personal identities are often shaped by external expectations and societal norms.

In addition, there is indication of aberration. Indicating aberrations, Nyamnjoh's characters carry name with connotations that reveal something about their flaws, moral missteps, or deviation from the ideal way of living. These names function as a form of commentary on the characters' actions or their social positioning, often making the name an implicit critique of the character's behaviour or societal role. Finally, names not only identify characters but also characterisation. Names in Nyamnjoh's ethnographic fiction do more than just identifying characters. They serve as an additional layer of meaning, enhancing the thematic elements of the narrative. By giving characters names that resonate with particular qualities, behaviours, or ironies, he enriches the storytelling and provides a shortcut to understanding complex social dynamics.

In many African cultures, names carry deep cultural, spiritual, or familial significance. Nyamnjoh likely uses anthroponymy to tap into this cultural layer, exploring how names reflect historical, cultural, and ethnic identities. Names can indicate ethnic divisions, social hierarchies, or reflect on the character's connection to a wider community or tradition. For instance, the character Chopngomna lives up to his name. It means the name becomes a concept that can stand for the thing and can substitute the thing itself. So, when a particular person is not present, but conditions similar to their narrative are evident, you can apply that concept to the situation. Therefore, one can encounter a Chopngomna outside of the context of Mimboland. Chopngomna represents the civil service in Mimboland where illicit self-enrichment is normal.

Reflecting on the name "President Longstay", one clearly expects the type of African leaders who never retire despite the fact that they are already too old to rule. Longstay has been president for too long and is willing to remain in power forever. He is a powerful leader who wants to be respected, even worshipped. This is the characteristic of some African leaders who think that no one else is able to rule the country. His presidency can be seen in the picture on the wall of Grand Canari Bar "inscribed in bold-blood red letters: *"L'homme lion, l'homme des grandes ambitions"*[16] (TTD, 3) indicating his political ambitions: to be president for life. Some critics compare President Longstay to President Paul Biya who has been in power since 1982 (Manjoh, 2018). Longstay is an ironic and allegorical representation of the contemporary Cameroonian political elite. President Longstay represents all those African political leaders who are against Political alternation in their

[16] The lion man, the man of great ambitions

countries. It has been observed that this becomes the rule: “when they come into power, they seem to lose the objective of being there and they just recycle themselves in a way that seems pointless” (Nyamnjoh, 2023). President Longstay is a name which encompasses all the leaders who love power.

The names Monsieur and Madame Toubaaby in *The Travail of Dieudonné* represent postcolonialism. These characters are given such names to symbolise the former colonial master. They embody Westerners who migrate to Africa on a civilising mission. They are from Muzunguland. In West and Central Africa, *Toubab* refers to a white person or someone from Europe. Derived from a mispronunciation of the Arabic term *tabib*, meaning a doctor, the Toubaabys are the white couple in the novel with PhDs in Sociology (TTD, 17). Such advanced degrees reflect the colonial mindset that only white people could achieve such academic heights, and that only the coloniser could provide solutions to the problems of the colonised, due to their superior education compared to the indigenous population. The opposition is that they are the “*machines à fabrication des chômeurs*”.[17]

Unfortunately, Monsieur and Madame Toubaabys are not the solution to Dieudonné’s problems. The proof is the contrast between the salary they pay him (MM$ 6,000) and the money the couple spends on pets (MM$ 100,000), (TTD, 147). Through the Toubaabys, the author represents Western culture, in which people rarely share food and other things. Equally, it is not surprising that Dieumerci, the student, is forbidden from entering the house when the Toubaabys are eating and drinking. This is opposed to African culture of sharing even the least of food and drink available. From my analysis, I assert that this cultural differentiation appears to be a kind of hierarchised belonging that gives the impression that “if you do not belong to the circle, you are not welcomed”.

The satirical representation of society in this passage lies in the way Nyamnjoh uses names that both align with and contradict the characters' behaviours, as well as challenge the expectations of the readers. By choosing names that reflect the characters' actions or attitudes, Nyamnjoh seems to comment on the way societal labels, such as names, can shape or mislead perceptions of individuals. However, the presence of oppositionality, where a character's name contradicts their behaviour, points to the absurdity or hypocrisy inherent in society. This contradiction suggests a critique of how societal norms, expectations, and identities often do not align with reality.

[17] The machine for fabricating the unemployed.

Through these mismatches, Nyamnjoh may be satirising the societal tendency to create fixed, simplistic labels or categories for people, while overlooking the complexity of individual actions, motives, or circumstances. In this context, the opposition between names and behaviours reflects a deeper societal irony: individuals are often pigeonholed or misunderstood based on superficial labels, when in reality their identities and behaviours are far more nuanced and unpredictable. This aspect of his anthroponymy offers a satirical perspective on how societies impose rigid identities that often fail to capture the true nature of individuals.

2. 5. Thematising Mobility

Nyamnjoh's *The Travail of Dieudonné* and *A Nose for Money* also explore the theme of mobility, portrayed in different ways and capture the fluid and often turbulent movement of characters within social, political, and geographical contexts. These novels explore mobility and social stratification. In *The Travail of Dieudonné*, mobility is intertwined with the themes of social and economic status. Dieudonné, seeks to improve his life and social standing, and his physical mobility is often linked to his quest for better opportunities. However, his movement across spaces also reveals the rigid class structures and societal constraints that limit his potential. The mobility of Dieudonné becomes symbolic of the pursuit of better opportunities, but also the frustrations of trying to break free from systemic poverty and oppression. His journey shows the tension between personal agency and the limiting circumstances imposed by the larger social order.

Similarly, *A Nose for Money* portrays mobility in terms of the characters' attempts to improve their material circumstances. The concept of economic mobility is significant, as characters struggle with their limited access to wealth and power. This theme of economic mobility reflects a broader commentary on the inequalities in African societies and the ways in which individuals are often caught between ambition and the realities of a capitalist system that stifles true social mobility.

As characters travel physically or socially, they navigate new cultural accounters and are forced to negotiate their identities. The more they move, the more they are confronted by new challenges and contradictions, questioning who they are and where they belong. This exploration of identity through mobility is particularly evident in *The Travail of Dieudonné*, where Dieudonné's physical journey parallels his inner journey to define himself in relation to his country, his culture, and the changing world around him. In *A Nose for Money*, mobility also influences the characters' perceptions of themselves and others. The pursuit of material wealth, often through movement across different spaces, challenges the characters' integrity and their sense of self-worth. The idea

that mobility can sometimes be an illusion of progress or success is another critical point in Nyamnjoh's exploration of the theme.

This literary analysis considers mobility because it happens in specific places and takes different forms, such as social and geographical movement. Space is regarded as open, both objective and subjective, whereas place is a particular space that confers identity and a sense of belonging to an individual. Place, in this condition refers to the feeling of attraction people have to a specific piece of space and the meaning associated with it. While challenging the binary notion of subjectivity-objectivity, Lefebvre and Soja, (Low, 2017) argue that space is a physical and social landscape where every day social transactions take place at diversified levels. From the above, I therefore infer that the concept of space manifests in three dimensions. The first dimension is that space is perceived as a condition of emotions. From this dimension, I observe that space shapes people's behaviours towards each other. The second dimension considers that space is conceived and reproduced by ideologies and social power dynamics that influence our feeling and knowledge. Finally, the third dimension implies that space is a matrix where all the spaces meet: subjectivity and objectivity, abstract and concrete, perceived and conceived, local and global, rural and urban, etc.

As stated earlier in this chapter, in *The Travail of Dieudonné*, Mimboland, as both a physical location and a geographical entity, borders Warzone, a Francophone country which is Dieudonné's homeland. Additionally, Mimboland shares boundaries with the Republic of Kuti, an Anglophone nation featured in *A Nose for Money*. For the locals, Mimboland holds significant meaning as it is deeply connected to their cultural identity, evoking a strong sense of belonging. This connection is rooted in a feeling of autochthony and ethnicity. From this viewpoint, Mimboland represents a place where history, cultural memory, and everyday experiences converge. It is important to recognize that the material and the imaginary are intertwined, as they are mutually dependent on one another.

The analysis of the two selected novels reveals that protagonists engaged in mobility at two levels. The first level is transnational (external) and the second is national. In *The Travail of Dieudonné*, mobility is transnational. Dieudonné's mobility from Warzone to Mimboland shows that the protagonist left his native country and crossed the borders to Mimboland. The reason for this transnational mobility is war and the search for greener pastures. At this level, transnational mobility appears as a movement from human insecurity to human security.

War and poverty force Dieudonné into mobility. Warzone, as its name suggests is a nation that is ravaged by war and described as follows:

> "A bleeding catalogue of carnage, impunity and indifference," an embittered journalist has described Warzone recently. Yes, Dieumerci knew of this war of greed that had turned thousands of innocent children into soldiers, drug addicts, rapists and butchers. He knew of thousands of Warzoner refugees who were scattered all over Africa... (TTD, 34)

As stated above, transnational mobility is always due to certain reasons. The human being is normally satisfied with his/her natural habitat, that natural home or environment where they belong and are attached to. War is the reason for Dieudonné's mobility. Warzone is a country with a lot of natural resources, including iron ore, diamonds, uranium and the likelihood of huge deposits of oil. The war has brought Muzungulander merchants sniffing for opportunities into the so-called "Eldorado Oasis" (TTD, 35). This western invasion similarly happens in some African countries which also have a lot of minerals and this is translated in neocolonialism. Hardship during war forces Dieudonné to leave for Mimboland. As he declares: "I left home, the village and my country, pulled out by a force I could neither describe nor resist. I could not even say where I was going" (TTD, 59). He further adds: "I left home determined to start afresh…Then I found myself in Mimboland" (TTD, 61). Crossing linguistic, cultural and socio-political borders confers to Dieudonné a new and flexible identity as he now belongs to Mimboland.

With regards to the sense of belonging, and further to the perception of attachment, Nyamnjoh gives examples of how one can have very emotional and personal relationships with his home town. Characters' emotional relationships to places, according to Sale (1994: 319), depend on their degree of attachment. Dieudonné and Prospère are emotionally attached to their places, both before and after displacement as Dieudonné declares :

> Yes, our village had changed an awful a lot. Many of the old people we had left behind were dead and buried by the time we got back. My father, who missed them sorely, soon found out that he was about the most senior man around. But the village had ceased to be what it used to be. Almost every young man of fighting age had been swept off by the Muzungulander tides. (TTD, 58)

Dieudonné is displaced by socio-economic forces that he cannot control. This displacement is not only a simple removal from a geographic location (Warzone) but is compounded by its social and emotional effects provoked by his attachment to his land. From the above quotation, it is observed that the protagonist is attached to his village and his people who had been ravaged by the war led

by the Muzungulander[18]. Through this quotation, I note that Dieudonné's attachment to Warzoners is symbolic. He is attracted to his people and his country of birth through the genealogical linkage in history or family lineage. The loss and destruction of his community by the war bears scars that affect his identity and flexible citizenship. Not only the scars of war but the visible symptoms of poverty.

In *A Nose for Money*, Prospère's attachment to his village is depicted not through familial connections but through a deep-rooted spiritual and cosmological bond. This highlights a form of belonging that transcends the physical and social ties to one's birthplace. His journey back to his village, specifically to consult diviners and marabouts, reflects his ongoing reliance on spiritual guidance and practices, which play a crucial role in shaping his identity. This spiritual attachment signifies a belief system that persists regardless of his physical relocation to Nyamandem.

Prospère's actions suggest that his sense of self and place is intertwined with a cosmological order, where the physical location of his life is secondary to the metaphysical forces that govern his existence. The continued pull of his village, despite his geographical displacement, suggests that his identity and belonging are not bound solely to family or community ties, but are rooted in the spiritual and religious frameworks that shape his worldview. His belief in these practices offers him a form of continuity, grounding him in a sense of belonging that is more metaphysical than material, thus illustrating how spirituality can be a powerful force in defining one's connection to a place:

> There wasn't any reason why he should go to the village every now and again in the same way that other people did. He had no relations in Minka, having lost his parents at the very tender age of ten…. He prayed and hoped to find Seng in the village. Seng was a diviner whom Prospère was going to consult in Minka. He was an old man with a world of experience in the science of divination. (ANM, 67)

The change, to some extent, is motivated by a sense of attachment. Mobility is one of the determining factors of the change. We see through characters that mobility can not only change individuals but also their values and aspirations (social mobility). In *A Nose for Money*, Prospère is attached to his aspirations. He dreams to become rich one day. He starts saving money in order to achieve his aspirations. Through Prospère it becomes evident that attachment to aspirations brings a change of his identity and his citizenship becomes flexible. This change is achieved through mobility. When he moves from Sawang to Nyamandem, his whole lifestyle changes.

[18] The white(s).

Physical mobility causes social mobility. From a truck driver to a fully accomplished businessman, Prospère's attitude changes. He learns corruption, the order of the day for Mimbolanders in Nyamandem:

> He has scratched the backs of the director of customs and the Minister of Finance to be able to import containers of champagne and declare them as mineral water or toilet paper at the customs. Back scratching had made it possible for him not to pay his taxes honestly, and the simple act of wearing the uniform of the party in power had opened an incredible number of doors for him. (ANM, 160)

The tactics of knowing what to donate to whom in power on the appropriate occasion makes a great change in his flexible identity and belonging. This is due to the fact that Prospère has learnt and mastered the common practice of "the goat eating where it is tethered." He has been taught by his best friend and tribesman, Honorable Matiba. Honorable Matiba insistently demands of him a FCFA 30 million reward just to help him to bank the fortune he brought from Sawang. From this viewpoint, I ultimately assert that Prospère's experience shows that attachment to a place confers a new [flexible] identity which comes with changing practices.

Prospère's mobility in *A Nose for Money*, is national, from Old-Belle, the ghetto concentration of poverty in Sawang, to Nyamandem the capital city of Mimboland. From the rural to the urban, this internal mobility arises from socio-economic causes. Sometimes, people never tell the true reason why they are leaving (mostly in African culture). The reading of the novel shows that he lies to his friends and colleagues that his uncle has invited him to form a medium-size business (ANM, 92). As soon as Prospère resigns from his job, with the money left by Jean-Marie and Jean-Claude he decides to change city in order to materialise his dreams: "In Nyamandem, it would be easier to start things all over again, and with such a huge sum of money – FCFA200 million…my goodness" (ANM, 85). Prospère's socio-economic identity changes (social mobility). His dreams come true as he relocates to Nyamandem. This move not only represents physical mobility but also secures a social mobility. He settles in a grand and prominent mansion in the heart of the exclusive Petit Paris residential area, surrounded by influential politicians and diplomats. As he transitions from physical to social mobility, Prospère's sense of citizenship becomes more flexible, and the hierarchy of social belonging becomes increasingly differentiated.

My analysis of Prospère in *A Nose for Money* adeptly demonstrates how the urban milieu can corrupt identity, aligning flexibility or negotiation with disillusionment. Prospère's journey begins with an idealistic belief in the integrity and purpose of civil service. This faith reflects a

naive, almost utopian perspective on citizenship, where individuals are committed to working collectively and honourably for the greater good of the nation. However, the urban setting, characterised by its competitive, impersonal, and morally ambiguous nature, challenges these ideals at every turn.

As Prospère confronts the realities of his workplace, a tension arises between his personal values and the systemic dysfunction of civil service he encounters. The behaviours of colleagues, who often prioritise personal convenience over professional duty, serve as a microcosm of a broader urban culture steeped in self-interest. Under these pressures, Prospère finds himself compelled to compromise his principles, leading to a gradual erosion of his identity. What once was a foundation rooted in optimism and strong ethical values begins to fracture under the weight of pragmatism and moral ambiguity. This internal conflict illustrates a universal dynamic: navigating identity within a corrupt or disillusioning system often results in a profound sense of inner turmoil. The flexibility Prospère exercises to "survive" in this environment does not reinforce his sense of citizenship. Instead, it distances him from his idealistic vision, highlighting the corruptive influence of the urban milieu on individual identity. The once-structured, formal environment now seems chaotic and unprofessional.

Prospère's demeanour and posture reveal his inner turmoil. His once-steadfast admiration for the civil service gives way to a profound sense of betrayal as he confronts the pervasive culture of laxity, absenteeism, and opportunism that now characterises the system he serves. The city, with its towering skyscrapers and relentless bustle, becomes a symbol of the corrosive impact of urban life on his identity and ideals. This shift underscores the theme of how the urban environment distorts his sense of self and ethics, leading him to a corrupted understanding of what the civil service ought to embody. In Sawang, Prospère was regarded as insignificant. He was belittled by everyone, even enduring the ultimate humiliation when his wife betrayed him by engaging in an affair within their marital home. However, his fortunes changed when he relocated to Nyamandem. There, he found his worth, rising to become one of the most successful businessmen in the capital city, finally gaining the recognition and respect he had long deserved.

To sum up, mobility has conferred new and flexible identities to the two protagonists in *The Travail of Dieudonné* and *A Nose for Money*. From Warzone to Mimboland, by crossing linguacultural and socio-political borders, Dieudonné gets a new name after his baptism. He acquires new languages and works for expatriate Muzungulanders. Prospère equally moves to

Nyamandem from Sawang and learns about urban life through his experience with top civil servants, government ministers and diplomats.

2. 6. Conclusion

Nyamnjoh's *The Travail of Dieudonné* and *A Nose for Money* explore the complex and dynamic relationships between space, place, and identity in African literature, particularly in ethnographic fiction. My intervention in the analysis of the two novels was to highlight how both real and imagined geographies shape human experiences, identities, and social interactions. The texts' analysis underscores how imagined geographies serve as metaphors for societal struggles, such as those between the Anglophone and Francophone communities in Cameroon, as depicted in Nyamnjoh's works. These imagined spaces are shaped by social, cultural, and historical forces and offer insights into how power, domination, and exclusion manifest through spatial arrangements.

The Travail of Dieudonné and *A Nose for Money* further explore the use of allegory in the works of Nyamnjoh, specifically focusing on Mimboland, a fictional setting that serves as a metaphor for Cameroon. Through the concept of Mimboland, Nyamnjoh navigates complex socio-political themes such as identity, power dynamics, and the tensions between the Anglophone and Francophone communities in Cameroon. I aimed to analyse how allegory allows Nyamnjoh to create a flexible space where he can critique and explore these themes without being restricted by real-world geographical and political constraints.

The analysis of allegory called for the role of toponymy and anthroponymy. My focus has been on how Nyamnjoh uses these naming techniques in his ethnographic fiction set in Mimboland. By manipulating names and their associations, Nyamnjoh exposes the flaws and corruption in both individuals and societal systems. Mimboland, with its ironic name and characteristics, symbolizes a nation marked by irresponsible leadership and societal disorder, reflecting real-world issues such as political corruption and social inequality. The use of toponymy and anthroponymy in Nyamnjoh's work highlights how naming serves not only as a narrative device but also as a critique of societal norms and political structures.

In addition to the geographical opposition, Nyamnjoh's naming of characters furthers his social critique. Names such as "Prospère" and "Dieudonné" carry symbolic weight, reflecting both

personal aspirations and the tensions between idealised identities and harsh realities. “Prospère” represents social mobility and success, yet his rise is facilitated by corruption, critiquing the moral compromises often necessary to achieve power in a corrupt system. On the other hand, “Dieudonné,” meaning “God's gift,” serves as an ironic commentary on how names and identities in a post-colonial society often contradict one another, as his poverty starkly contrasts with the meaning of his name.

The use of names in Nyamnjoh's work as a tool for social critique and satire illustrates how names often reflect societal stereotypes, expectations, and contradictions. Characters like Chopngomna, President Longstay, and Monsieur and Madame Toubaabys symbolise broader societal issues, such as corruption, political stagnation, and postcolonial power dynamics. The names not only represent the behaviours or roles of these characters but also underscore the ironies and contradictions inherent in society.

The analysis of mobility in Nyamnjoh's *The Travail of Dieudonné* and *A Nose for Money* reveals a nuanced exploration of social, economic, and geographical mobility, which is intricately linked to identity, social stratification, and the constraints imposed by broader societal structures. The protagonists’ movements, both within their own countries and across national borders, reflect a deep tension between the pursuit of better opportunities and the limitations set by systemic inequalities, particularly those rooted in class and economics.

Literary representations of geography, whether real or imagined play a vital role in shaping characters’ identities and reflect broader societal issues. This dynamic interplay of space, place, and identity is a central theme in ethnographic fiction, offering critical perspectives on the lived experiences of individuals and communities in postcolonial contexts. In *The Travail of Dieudonné*, the protagonist's mobility symbolizes a quest for self-improvement and better social standing, yet it also exposes the rigid social structures that stifle upward mobility. Dieudonné’s journey is marked by both physical and internal transformations, as he navigates his identity amidst the backdrop of war and societal upheaval. This transnational mobility, from the war-torn Warzone to the more stable Mimboland, signifies a movement from insecurity to a hope for security, yet it also highlights the persistence of structural barriers that limit the characters' agency and potential.

Similarly, *A Nose for Money* examines the theme of economic mobility, with characters trying to improve their material circumstances in a capitalist system that often limits their ability to move beyond their socio-economic positions. The novel critiques the illusion of progress that mobility

sometimes represents, suggesting that the pursuit of wealth and success may ultimately come at the cost of one's integrity and self-worth.

Mimboland represents a place where the boundaries between real and imagined geographies blur, offering a metaphorical landscape where cultural, linguistic, and political divisions can be examined. The fictional setting of Mimboland, with its hybrid zones, highlights the tensions between different linguistic communities and their interactions. Ultimately, the allegory of Mimboland critiques the exclusion and marginalisation of Anglophones, suggesting that the path toward unity and social change lies in transcending these divisions through dialogue, understanding, and respect for diversity. The narrative encourages readers to reflect on the real-world implications of these allegorical spaces, urging a move towards a more inclusive and pluralistic society. Space and place are important in shaping mobility and identity. Space is not merely a physical entity but also a social and emotional landscape where people interact and negotiate their sense of belonging.

Chapter Three

Negotiating a Linguacultural Identity in *Married But Available* and *Mind Searching*

3. 1. Introduction

Negotiating a linguacultural identity in *Married But Available* (MBA) and *Mind Searching* (MS), involves a nuanced exploration of how language, culture, and identity intersect. This intersection addresses the theme of cultural hybrid identity. In this chapter, I examine Nyamnjoh's preoccupation with the negotiation of identity in a world where cultural boundaries are fluid, and linguistic choices play a central role in shaping personal and social identities. From this perspective, I aim at showing how individuals continually redefine themselves through language and cultural practices. Nyamnjoh's exploration of linguacultural identity emphasises the importance of language in understanding the complexities of cultural hybridity. This chapter explores how multilingualism serves as a narrative strategy. In this chapter, I argue that Nyamnjoh uses multilingualism not merely as a linguistic tool but as a means to negotiate complex linguacultural identities and inclusion in a nation where the Anglophone Problem continues to divide Cameroonians.

The Anglophone Problem, as outlined in the introductory chapter of this study, revolves around Anglophones' grievances concerning limited political opportunities, unequal regional representation, and disparities in regional development. From a sociocultural perspective, this issue is perceived as a deliberate attempt to erode Anglophone cultural identity (Manjoh, 2018) through the linguistic and cultural dominance of French over English in Cameroon. Numerous Anglophone writers and scholars have been instrumental in advocating for the promotion of Anglophone consciousness. Three Anglophone writers referenced in the introductory chapter of this study are Bate Besong, Bole Butake, and Alobwed'Epie.

Bate Besong, is a versatile Anglophone playwright and poet whose *Beasts of No Nation* published in 1990 depicts the Francophone exploitation of the Anglophones, reduced to second-class citizens. Bole Butake's *And Palm-Wine Will Flow* also published in 1990 portrays the Francophone's institutionalised corruption, greed, repression and savage dictatorship. Alobwed'Epie equally denounces the strong unitary state system through the metaphor of

marriage in his What *God Has Put Asunder* (1992). His argument in the portrayal supports a two-state federation for Anglophones and Francophones (Manjoh, 2018).

In *Negotiating an Anglophone Identity* (2003), Konings and Nyamnjoh explore Anglophone consciousness versus Francophone consciousness with regards to the lived experience of the Anglophone Problem. In this book the authors argue that there are significant differences of views in each of the consciousnesses. While Anglophones tend to support the separatist movements, Francophones continue to deny the existence of an Anglophone Problem, which consequently results in continuous conflicts due to mutual distrust and stereotypes (161). My analysis of the Anglophone Problem from a linguistic perspective reveals the domination of French over English as affirmed by some literary critics. Given that the language issue is central to the Anglophone Problem, Nyamnjoh's literary approach advocates for cultural pluralism and a convivial linguistic cohabitation[19], particularly in the context of African societies. His writing reflects a deep appreciation for the diversity of languages, cultures, and identities, which is a central theme in much of his work.

Similarly, Yosimbom's observation in this case is an illustration. He observes that Nyamnjoh's characters are neither lovers of English nor cherishers of French. This shows that, like it or not, Mimbolanders (Anglophones and Francophones) are compelled to depend on and complete one another. This is likely the linguistic resolution to the Anglophone Problem (Yosimbom, 2019). Nyamnjoh represents the force of language and the power of linguistic difference in the use of English and French. The constant use of code-switching and code-mixing is an illustration to support his idea that English and French are inseparable in Cameroon (Konings & Nyamnjoh, 2003).

Nyamnjoh's narrative style reflects a kind of adaptability that allows both Anglophone and Francophone characters to perceive and understand each other's language. From the above, I argue that such linguistic adaptability evolves the construction of a negotiated "we-ness" and belonging, as opposed to linguacultural difference and "otherness". The above consideration allows me to draw on Floya's theory. Floya Anthias' *Translocational Belongings: Intersectional Dilemmas and Social Inequalities* (2020) explores the complex interplay of identity, belonging, and social inequalities through a translocational lens. Anthias introduces the concept of "translocational positionality," which examines how individuals navigate and experience multiple and shifting

[19] Convivial linguistic cohabitation is a concept that Nyamnjoh frequently explores. It involves the harmonious coexistence of multiple languages within a society, where different linguistic traditions can interact without one necessarily overpowering or suppressing the others.

locations across national, cultural, and social boundaries. This approach emphasises the fluidity of identity and the ways intersecting factors like race, gender, class, and migration status shape social belonging. From this viewpoint, I argue that identity, particularly in its fluid dimension, encompasses both personal and collective narratives of the "self" and the "other." These narratives are tied to strategies of identification rooted in the past, present, and future. Floya (2020: 8) offers a nuanced understanding of belonging in her work, exploring how it extends beyond individual feelings of attachment or inclusion to include structural, cultural, and relational dimensions. Her concept highlights the complexity of belonging, which involves intricate intersections of identity, place, and power. Anthias' work prompts us to critically examine how belonging is experienced differently based on one's social position and its interplay with systemic structures. This perspective is particularly pertinent in discussions on multiculturalism and social cohesion.

In *Married but Available (*2008) Lilly Loveless, a doctoral student travels to Mimboland from Muzunguland[20] for her fieldwork in social geography with a research question that focuses on the intersection between sex, money, power and occultism. The majority of Loveless' research is conducted on the outskirts of the University of Mimbo during the period of the strike. Britney, who is a student from the University of Mimbo, serves as a research assistant. Interviews and encounters with informants during fieldwork reveal linguistic diversity in Mimboland. Loveless' fieldwork further reveals that Mimboland is a nation of linguistic diversity in which people speak English, French, Pidgin English and other vernacular languages. The linguistic difference is deeply rooted in the colonial history of Mimboland whose cartography offers two linguistic communities of Anglophones and Francophones. However, Mimbolanders from both sides interchangeably speak Pidgin English both uneducated and academics. This language combination is the allegorical representation of the linguacultural context of Cameroon, associated with the Anglophone Problem.

Mind Searching (2007) is about the contrast between the poor and the rich who, despite such social hierarchies, depend on each because they share the same language in their daily interactions. Judascious Fanda Yanda, the protagonist lives at Briqueterie,[21] a residential area for the poor where the huts are squeezed along the muddy streets and one's backyard is the another's front yard in terms of latrines and bathrooms. Bastos, by opposition, is the residence of rich people. It has a different layout: houses are built in lines, they are numbered, and streets are broad. Honorable Vice Minister, for instance, is one of the Bastos residents. Judascious is a pious young man. He is

[20] Europe, specifically France
[21] An area where bricks are manufactured, brickyard.

a Christian but wonders a lot. He thinks constantly and interrogates his own thoughts about his country which is artificially divided the two communities because of wealth. In a world of sociolinguistic cohabitation of the poor with the elite, including doctors, professors and university lecturers, Nyamnjoh presents Judascious as a perfectly bilingual Cameroonian who code-mixes and code-switches during his process of sharing thoughts. Moreover, other characters also are presented as speakers of either French, English or Pidgin English to show their linguacultural identity and belonging.

A few critics have reviewed *Married but Available*. Joseph Pfeffer in his thematic analysis of sexuality concurs with Olarinmoye that *Married but Available* is a double treatise, as both fiction and sociological treatise (Fominyen, 2020). As fiction, it deals with artificial human relations based on interest. As a sociological treatise, it is a critical overview of research methods in data collection. Fishkin (2015), in addition affirms the extreme materialism that characterises relations between Mimboland men and women in this novel. On the other hand, Yosimbom's analysis of *Mind Searching* through a deconstructionist lens affirms that Judascious' disappointment and hope make him traverse the artificial social boundaries (Nana and Ngeh, 2019: 99). Finally, Fishkin (2013) reviews *Mind Searching* as an account of Judascious who persists and endures the unjustifiable caprices of "nitwitted leaders" but finally joins the game (176). This chapter explores rather a different aspect as it focuses on a stylistic analysis of these two novels in order to establish the relationship between language and identity.

Multilingualism as a narrative strategy is a significant feature of Nyamnjoh's *Married But Available* and *Mind Searching*. Nyamnjoh utilises multilingualism not just as a linguistic tool but as a thematic and stylistic choice to reflect cultural diversity, negotiate identity, and enrich storytelling. Nyamnjoh's novels depict the Cameroonian multicultural society in which multiple languages coexist. By weaving together Standard English, Standard French, Pidgin English, and local African dialects, the narratives reflect the rich complexity and cultural hybridity of the local communities. To illustrate, in *Married But Available*, the characters' use of Pidgin English capture the informality and camaraderie of everyday interactions. In *Mind Searching*, shifts in language reflect differentiated social, political, and cultural realities.

Territoriality provides a vital link between language and culture, anchoring identity in both a physical and symbolic sense. There is a significant connection between language, identity, and territoriality. Language functions as a primary identity marker because it embodies and communicates the shared experiences, values, and cultural norms of a community. Language

reflects the geographical and environmental characteristics of a place. Indigenous languages, for example, frequently encode knowledge about the local flora, fauna, and ecosystems. This intertwining of language and environment reinforces the sense of belonging to a particular territory. Language serves as a vehicle for transmitting these cultural elements across generations, further linking it to the place where the culture developed. Territoriality in this context is perceived as an anchor of identity. Territoriality, understood as the connection to a defined geographical area serves as a physical anchor for cultural practices and linguistic use. People often associate their identity with the land where they inhabit and the language spoken in that territory becomes a symbol of belonging and unity.

The literary analysis of multilingualism can be approached through several theoretical frameworks, each offering distinctive perspectives for examining the implications, aesthetics, and functions of multilingual elements in literature. In this chapter, I employ the framework of Bakhtinian Dialogism. This theory, articulated by Mikhail Bakhtin (2010), underscores the interplay of multiple voices and languages within a text, explores heteroglossia – the coexistence of distinct languages, dialects, and sociolects within a single literary work – and focuses on the polyphonic nature of texts, whereby multiple languages contribute to layers of meaning.

Dialogism lies at the heart of Bakhtin's philosophy of language, literature, and culture, emphasising the dynamic, relational, and polyphonic character of meaning. Bakhtin's theory is centred on heteroglossia, which, in this study, refers to the coexistence of diverse voices, styles, and registers within a text. Nyamnjoh's novels incorporate formal speech, slang, dialects, and inner thoughts, reflecting the rich diversity of communication in a multilingual setting such as Cameroon. This concept highlights the multiplicity of meanings and perspectives inherent in language. Finally, dialogism encourages us to view communication, texts, and even identity as ongoing, participatory processes shaped by interaction and context.

Bakhtin's concept of heteroglossia sheds light on *Married But Available* as a polyphonic and ideologically layered novel, reflecting the linguistic and cultural complexity of postcolonial Cameroon. Nyamnjoh crafts a dialogic space where official discourse, local knowledge, satire, and street-level commentary interact unresolved, competing, and constantly negotiating meaning. Irony and parody function as dialogic tools. The novel's satirical tone, marked by exaggeration, exposes contradictions within social institutions. This dialogism is evident in its mockery of bureaucratic "officialese" through its juxtaposition with the informal languages of gossip, rumour, and resistance. The phrase "married but available" itself exemplifies this, it is a double-voiced

expression, laden with irony, and its meaning shifts depending on speaker and context, thereby satirising social and moral hypocrisy.

In *Mind Searching*, heteroglossia operates both as technique and theme. Nyamnjoh employs multiple voices not merely for stylistic effect, but to dramatise the difficulty of locating truth or identity within a world shaped by overlapping, often conflicting, influences. In line with Bakhtinian dialogism, meaning is shown to be negotiated rather than fixed, and identity as dialogic, formed in relation to others and never final. Literature, in this view, becomes a space to explore ideological struggle rather than to resolve it.

In Nyamnjoh's *Married But Available* and *Mind Searching*, sociological representations of linguacultural hybridity[22] provide a profound lens through which themes of territoriality, belonging, and flexible imaginaries of citizenship can be explored. These works exemplify how hybrid identities negotiate complex socio-political terrains and fluid conceptions of belonging, especially in postcolonial contexts. In Nyamnjoh's work, characters navigate multiple cultural worlds, drawing from various languages, practices, and identities, which symbolise their lived experiences and negotiations within the socio-political landscape. This hybridity is not merely about a mixing of cultures but reflects the adaptability and resilience of individuals in a complex world. Territoriality, in this context, refers not just to physical space but to the social, cultural, and political spaces that individuals occupy. In Nyamnjoh's narratives, the characters often grapple with overlapping identities and cultural landscapes.

From the reading of Nyamnjoh's novels, I observe the fluid and dynamic nature of belonging which resist to fixed definitions of the term. In these novels characters live in a world where citizenship and national belonging are not straightforward. In such a heteroglossic community like Mimboland, notions of citizenship and belonging are constantly contested due to historical and linguistic marginalisations based on colonial legacy, ethnic tensions and mobility. Characters with hybrid linguistic and cultural identities reject rigid boundaries and embrace more fluid, imagined forms of citizenship, informed by diasporic, transnational, or cosmopolitan ideals. Nyamnjoh's exploration of linguacultural hybridity is not only a literary device but also a way to interrogate how territoriality, belonging, and citizenship can be continuously reimagined.

The rationale behind the choice of *Married but Available* and *Mind Searching* is to show how linguacultural diversity plays an advantageous role in the difference, contestation and resistance.

[22] Linguacultural hybridity refers to the blending or co-existence of different cultural and linguistic elements, often as a result of historical, social, or colonial encounters.

While most studies on code-mixing focus on analysis within individual bilingual communities, this section specifically explores the treatment of code-mixing as a cross-cultural phenomenon. Code-mixing as a linguacultural element determines, and as I have said, confers a flexible citizenship to a bilingual individual or community. My reading of *Married but Available* (MBA) and *Mind Searching* (MS) draws on the framework of linguoculturology, in *Linguoculturological Approach in the Study of Literary Text* (2021) in which Shamsitdinovna argues that the literary text is a more complex formation as a combination of several [literary] variables – culture, language and thought – on which literary interpretation largely depends. Thus, understanding or even being able to interpret a literary work requires a sound understanding of the interdependence and the mutual influence between culture and language (90).

The analysis of linguacultural flexibility here further draws on Aihwa Ong's *Flexible Citizenship* (2022) which relates to the concept of nation-state and the clash of civilisations with a review of cultural strategies to overcome sociocultural hierarchies that come with capitalism, thus strategies deployed in the logic of cultural globalisation that bring about social changes. According to Ong, flexibility in citizenship is primarily informed by socio-economic reasons as people are motivated more by wealth than a shared identity or political rights. However, flexible citizenship in the context of this study asserts that people negotiate their acceptance of membership within a community when they negotiate[23] the language and culture of the host community, and this results in both linguistic and cultural hybridity. These are the entry points for socio-economic integration. The reason for identifying with the local community can be economic, social or political later.

3. 2. From Sociolinguistic Essentialism to Linguistic Hybridity

Sociolinguistic essentialism[24] argues that language is used in a static way by certain groups of people and that there is a direct link between factors such as race and class and language use (Cuddon, 2014; Biloa & Lozzi, 2011). Consequently, language choice has always been in the centre of debate in African literary criticism. while some African writers and critics choose African indigenous languages, others opt for European languages. Some others even opt for a mixture of the European with indigenous languages in order to harmoniously communicate with the audience. Decolonial scholars advocate for the use of African languages in order to capture the essence of

[23] To be able to fluently speak and write the language allows an acceptance and integration within a community.
[24] Sociolinguistic essentialism assumes that language and identity are fixed and directly tied to specific cultural or national origins. It often underpins ideas of linguistic purity and cultural authenticity, which may enforce rigid boundaries of belonging and exclusion.

linguistic nationalism. One of them is Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o. According to Ngũgĩ, European languages are associated with imperialism. His preference and advocacy to write in African languages is due to the fact that a language is not only a means of communication, but also the carrier of culture (Ngũgĩ, 2005:13). To Ngũgĩ, writing in European languages is just a hegemonic homage and a perpetual neocolonialism as he asks: "what is the difference between a politician who says Africa cannot do without imperialism and the writer who says Africa cannot do without European languages (26)?"

Ngũgĩ (2005) views sociolinguistic essentialism as the idea that the choice of language and how it is used plays a central role in how people define themselves in relation to their natural and social surroundings. Unlike Ngũgĩ, Chinua Achebe welcomes European languages in his creative writings. He believes that European languages, specifically English, imposed itself linguistically for literary works and allows a broad and global readership. This is further explored by Mukoma Wa Ngũgĩ (2018) who examines the contemporary authors' barriers to use African languages in their creative writings (7). Situated within this debate, this section interrogates the linguistic essentialism as an identitarian strategy for social subjects in Nyamnjoh's representation of Mimboland.

Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o passionately highlights the profound connection between language and culture. He contends that language is far more than a mere tool for communication; it serves as a vessel that encapsulates the cultural values, histories, and worldviews of a community. Through language, individuals gain an understanding of their cultural worlds, shaping their perceptions of life and identity. He emphasises that when a language is lost or diminished, the cultural knowledge and heritage it carries are also placed in jeopardy (Ngũgĩ, 2005: 16). Manjoh (2018), in her study on Nyamnjoh's Mimboland, similarly observes the following:

> In Mimboland, the English language has shaped the lives and culture of the Anglophones, while the French language has shaped that of the Francophones. This has gone a long way to shape their likes and dislikes. Each wants their own culture to be recognised as the high culture which was formed based on the respective colonial country's culture. (261)

Manjoh's analysis further reveals that in a nation of many languages, discrimination and marginalisation can possibly occur in various aspects of everyday life, either geographically, socio-economically or politically. The concept of nation-building, from this perspective, is developed from the linguacultural cleavage in which inhabitants view each other as outsiders-

within. Owing to the above, I assert that the Anglophone Problem imposes attitudes and codes drawn from the colonial legacies.

To Nyamnjoh, the use of language depends on whether his character belongs to the minority Anglophone or majority Francophone, and more importantly, whether a character belongs to the privileged few or to the deprived masses. I examine Nyamnjoh's narrative strategy which shifts from sociolinguistic essentialism to the linguistic hybridity. For this reason, my intervention focuses on the use of bilingualism, code-switching and code-mixing. My primary aim, therefore, is to examine how the author portrays language not simply as a tool for constructing identity, but as a means of illustrating a negotiated linguacultural identity, the one that gives rise to a form of flexible citizenship shaped by hybridity and adaptation.

Mimboland's linguistic cartography has a set of attributes that are necessary to Mimbolanders' identity. It is a set of linguacultural characteristics which make Mimbolanders exceptionally what they are. On an additional note, Nyamnjoh's narrative strategy draws on the assumption that there is a set of linguistic properties that truly characterise an individual as being a Mimbolander. These properties distinguish a Francophone from an Anglophone or define both as belonging to Nyamnjoh's world. The shift from sociolinguistic essentialism to linguistic hybridity in Nyamnjoh's *Married But Available* and *Mind Searching* reflects a commentary on linguacultural identity and flexible citizenship in Cameroonian society. In both novels, Nyamnjoh moves beyond sociolinguistic essentialism to celebrate linguistic hybridity, offering a nuanced critique of postcolonial identity formation. His narratives highlight how language, as a dynamic and lived experience, reflects broader socio-cultural transformations and the ongoing negotiation of belonging and self-expression in contemporary Africa.

Nyamnjoh critiques the concept of sociolinguistic essentialism by presenting characters and societies struggling with imposed binaries and the consequences of rigid classifications. In *Married But Available*, traditional gender roles and cultural expectations are mirrored in linguistic practices, highlighting the essentialist framework that defines relationships and identities. In this novel, hybridity becomes a mode of survival and resistance. Characters adapt their language to navigate complex social and professional spaces, highlighting the adaptability and resilience of African societies. For instance in *Mind Searching*, language is portrayed as a tool for control, often tied to colonial legacies and elite power structures. The insistence on "proper" language reinforces hierarchies. The tension between essentialism and hybridity surfaces in the protagonist's internal struggles and societal expectations. Language, therefore, becomes a site where these conflicting forces play out.

In Cameroonian literature, Biloa and Lozzi (2011) engage in a stylistic analysis of *The Crown of Thorns* (2009) by Asong, Linus Tongwo, *Son of the Native Soil* (2009) by Shadrach Ambanasom and *A Nose for Money* (2011) by Francis Nyamnjoh in an analysis entitled "English language use and the expression of the Cameroonian sociocultural identity in the Cameroonian novel of English expression." Exploring Cameroonian sociocultural identity in the novels of English expression, their study argues that these novelists use linguistic tools such as borrowing, coinage, translating local language expressions into English equivalents, code-mixing and code-switching, bilingual dialogue, and Cameroonian Pidgin English and French discourse, to express or construct Cameroonian sociocultural identity.

Drawing on the work of scholars such as Daniel Adjei (2015), Oppong, and Ibhawaegbele and Edokpayi (2012), I argue that Francis B. Nyamnjoh's fiction extends beyond viewing code-switching and code-mixing as tools of humour or linguistic realism. While existing studies highlight how such practices signal emotional bonds, cultural identity, or narrative function, Nyamnjoh offers a more dynamic and politically charged perspective, particularly in *Married But Available* and *Mind Searching*.

Rather than simply Africanising English or reflecting Cameroon's multilingualism, Nyamnjoh uses linguistic blending to foreground the fluid, negotiated, and contested nature of identity and citizenship in postcolonial Africa. In his work, code-switching becomes a metaphor for the hybrid and often precarious positioning of individuals navigating fragmented social and political landscapes. It is not merely a stylistic device but a deliberate expression of sociopolitical consciousness—challenging essentialist ideas of identity and exposing the contradictions embedded in rigid linguistic, ethnic, and national boundaries. Unlike earlier scholars who see code-switching as reflective of reality, Nyamnjoh shows how language constructs reality. His characters use strategic linguistic shifts to negotiate belonging, authority, and agency within complex hierarchies, offering a compelling vision of language as a site of resistance and flexible citizenship.

The relative underrepresentation of local African dialects in Nyamnjoh's novels warrants thoughtful reflection, particularly in light of Cameroon's remarkable linguistic diversity, often described as "Africa in miniature." Nyamnjoh predominantly employs Standard English and Cameroonian Pidgin English, a choice that is partly strategic. English, as the language of the educated elite, government, and formal institutions, lends itself well to satire and political critique.

Pidgin, widely spoken across ethnic groups, functions as a lingua franca in informal, everyday interactions.

The limited presence of indigenous languages such as Ewondo, Bassa, or Fulfulde stems largely from practical concerns: writing in these dialects would significantly narrow the novels' accessibility, both within Cameroon and beyond. Nyamnjoh thus privileges broader communicability through more widely understood languages. His fiction largely critiques postcolonial bureaucracy, modernity, and elite hypocrisy, dynamics that unfold primarily in urban spaces where local dialects are often overshadowed by dominant official or hybrid languages. Characters are constructed through the idioms of state power and urban informality rather than rural vernaculars. As a result, the linguistic landscape he portrays is deliberately aligned with the languages of power, resistance, and mobility, rather than those of ethnic tradition.

Ironically, the absence of local dialects may constitute a silent commentary on their marginalisation in public life. Official languages such as English and French, along with hybrid forms like Pidgin, continue to dominate, while indigenous languages are excluded from domains such as education, media, and governance. This reflects a deeper colonial legacy that Nyamnjoh's satire seeks to expose. However, this potential critique remains implicit. The novels stop short of directly interrogating the erasure of local languages, leaving a silence that, as you rightly observe, deserves further examination.

Nyamnjoh's use of linguistic hybridity in *Married but Available* and *Mind Searching* not only reflects the complex linguistic landscape of Africa but also deepens the thematic exploration of identity, globalisation, and cultural resilience. It highlights the creative potential of hybrid expressions to challenge colonial linguistic hierarchies and celebrate African linguistic and cultural diversity. These novels reflect a sophisticated engagement with linguistic hybridity, a hallmark of his literary style that resonates with postcolonial and transcultural narratives. Nyamnjoh's use of Code-Switching and Code-Mixing and his skillful blending of English, French and Pidgin English with indigenous languages and informal speech patterns mirrors the multilingual realities of Cameroon. It also serves as a tool for cultural negotiation, demonstrating how individuals navigate between the two linguistic divides.

The linguistic diversity in Cameroon likely influences Nyamnjoh's use of code-mixing and code-switching, alongside Pidgin English, in his writings. Interpreting this strategy as a negotiation for acceptance within either the Anglophone or Francophone communities highlights how linguistic complexity in Cameroon intersects with factors such as the minority status of Anglophones,

mobility, and national identity. Through code-switching and code-mixing, Nyamnjoh vividly conveys the bilingualism of Mimbolanders.

Code-switching is one of the major outcomes of languages in contact and refers to the ability of speakers of a language to pass one dialect or a variety of the language to another according to the situation of an utterance (Cuddon, 2014). From this viewpoint, code-switching can be considered as the act of alternation of two languages within a single sentence or discourse. Like code-switching, code-mixing also occurs in bilingual or multilingual situations and is a common phenomenon in parts of the world as a result of immigration or colonisation. Code-mixing, on the other hand, refers to the alternate use of constituents from two languages within a sentence (Biloa & Lozzi, 2011). My analysis focuses on code-switching and code-mixing in order to explore how Nyamnjoh portrays linguistic hybridity in his ethnographic fiction. From this viewpoint, I argue that the use of code-switching and code-mixing in Nyamnjoh's ethnographic fiction can be viewed both as a narrative strategy and a linguacultural representation to negotiate identity and belonging. Pidgin English, for instance is used by the masses due to their education level and background. However, it is also used by the educated and the elite when they are addressing to the masses, and *vice versa*. Heteroglossia here maps language use to the complex situations in which characters find themselves due to their social positions within the communities, and the roles they play.

Nyamnjoh's use of code-switching in his ethnographic fiction can be analysed through Green and Abutalebi's "adaptive control hypothesis" (2013) which postulates that speech production by a speaker and speech comprehension by a hearer are governed by control processes. In their study on the linguistic processes in bilingual individuals, Green and Abutalebi (2013) argue that bilingual individuals increase cognitive control depending on social demands in speech as defined by Saussure. These demands operate through internal linguistic conflicts within the bilingual individual, such as interference, selective response inhibition, and at some extent opportunities. Green and Abutalebi finally conclude that three interactional contexts impose such social demands, namely single language, dual language and code-switching.

By examining code-switching in *Married but Available* and *Mind Searching*, I support Green and Abutalebi's view that bilingual speakers use their languages across different situations, and that language control helps them mix elements from both languages. Since language both shapes and reshapes identity, this study explores how code-switching reflects a flexible or hybrid sense of identity and belonging. In looking at how Nyamnjoh uses code-switching, I also draw on Sapir's theory connecting language, thought, and culture (Vermeulen, 2009). Looking at the concept of flexible identity, I argue that our culture determines our language and influences thoughts about

the world, deconstructs our "self" and establishes the relationship between the "self" and the "other".

3. 3. Linguacultural Identity: Code-switching, Code-Mixing and Pidgin English

The focus in this section on Nyamnjoh's *Married but Available* and *Mind Searching* is to ascertain how code-switching[25] and code-mixing[26] convey not only the existing multilingualism in Cameroon but also the power of relations among French, English and Pidgin English[27]. This takes place within the framework of the Anglophone Problem, where the socio-political power dynamics between Anglophones and Francophones are marked by linguistic domination and the portrayal of language as a divisive force. The exclusion is perceived by Judascious, the protagonist in *Mind Searching* expressing his frustration when he says: "[…] unfortunately, I don't have a good command of French and Ewondo, the principal languages of the city's cathedral" (MS, 10). Judascious further complains of the fact that in an Anglophone region, even church services are conducted in French. As he says: "On several occasions he has complained that the city cathedral has no place for mass in English, despite the fact that 'our country is bilingual in English and in French'" (MS, 36). In my analysis of *Married but Available* and *Mind Searching* I argue that Nyamnjoh uses code-switching and code-mixing to represent bilingual speakers who repeatedly using them in various ways and circumstances. Furthermore, I also assert that they unconsciously use them as bilingual individuals to fit in with both Anglophones and Francophones, to develop their linguacultural skills and enforce their relationships.

Linguacultural identity therefore refers to the interplay between language and culture in shaping an individual's sense of self and their communication practices. It is often expressed through various linguistic behaviours, including code-switching, code-mixing, and the use of pidgin languages. Code-switching is relevant to linguacultural identity because it expresses multiple identities. Nyamnjoh's characters switch codes to signal their affiliation with different linguacultural communities or social groups. This linguistic practice suggests cultural authenticity in that switching languages preserves culturally specific ideas or expressions that might not

[25] Code-switching is the practice of alternating between two or more languages or language varieties within a single conversation, sentence, or discourse.
[26] Code-mixing involves blending elements (words, phrases, or even grammar) of two or more languages within the same sentence or utterance.
[27] A pidgin is a simplified language that develops as a means of communication between speakers of different native languages, often arising in trade, colonization, or multicultural settings. Unlike a full-fledged language, a pidgin has limited vocabulary and simplified grammar.

translate well into another language. Code-switching is also used for pragmatic needs, for emphasis, to include or exclude certain listeners, or to convey cultural nuances better captured in one language.

In *Married But Available* and *Mind Searching*, characters use code-mixing to reflect their hybrid linguacultural identity, shaped by their multilingual upbringing. This blending of languages fosters solidarity and a sense of belonging, as shared linguistic and cultural backgrounds connect the characters. In doing so, they creatively forge new linguistic norms within their community. Finally, Pidgin English is relevant to linguacultural identity because it facilitates communication and fosters a shared cultural identity in diverse communities as a shared cultural space. It also shows cultural identity coupled with resistance against linguistic dominance and allows the deprived to linguistically adapt their language to their own context and environment.

Hall and Nilep (2015) conceptualised code-switching as a literary device at four main levels. The first situates code-switching as a product of local speech community identities. The second analyses language alternation with reference to the contrastive nation-state identities constituted through processes of nationalism. The third views code-switching as a resource in minority communities for the performance of multicultural identities and the fourth level focuses on hybrid identities as the social corollary to the language mixing brought about through mobility and accelerated globalisation (599-600). As far as this study is concerned, all the above four frameworks really align with the author's representation of code-switching. I infer that Nyamnjoh's characters code-switch in order to shift between different versions of the "self", depending on the context. In doing so, these characters intentionally contest membership, negotiate a sense of belonging and gain acceptance to a contested space. While legitimating such belonging, Nyamnjoh refers to power dynamics or sociopolitical privileges that a space offers. The strategy behind code-switching in Nyamnjoh's writing is meta-messaging.[28] Through the use of code-switching, the author portrays the Anglophone Problem from the linguacultural angle and explores the perception of heterolingualism in his "imagined community". This analysis therefore explores the three main types of code-switching– intrasentential code-switching, intersentential code-switching and extrasentential code-switching.

A flexible linguacultural identity encompasses both hybridity and variation. This is particularly evident in intrasentential code-switching, where a character or narrator shifts between languages or dialects mid-sentence without any pause. There is no interruption. Portraying the hierarchies of

[28] The inner message implied from a message while reading between the lines.

belonging between the poor and the privileged few that dominate Cameroonian society, the author uses intrasentential code-switching through Judascious, the protagonist in *Mind Searching* in the following extract:

> How can I expect an Honourable Vice Minister, a distinguished member of the central committee of the ruling party, a Doctor of Philosophy, a Director in the civil service, a recognised business Spinster, a reputable Widow, a chief of service or even a chief of bureau to share a car with a pauper? *"un vaut rien"* like myself? (MS, 5)

By *"un vaut rien"*, Judascious treats himself as "a worth nothing". This French utterance underlines the social hierarchy in Mimboland, referring to the rich patrons of his congregation, Judascious complains about the practice of separating the rich from the poor even in the church. The rich are offered front seats which marginalises others, as Judascious concludes: "But then, it also means that some of us are really '*les Damnés de la Terre*'" (MS, 6). This code-switching here refers to Frantz Fanon's book translated in English as *The Wretched of the Earth* (1961). Fanon's book incisively attacks dehumanising effects of post-independence upon the masses created by elite animosities of the political class.

The rhetorical aspect of this passage is rich and multifaceted, blending linguistic and literary devices to convey a critique of social inequality and marginalisation. This code-switching shows allusion and intertextuality in the narrative. The explicit reference to Frantz Fanon's *The Wretched of the Earth* invokes a powerful critique of systemic dehumanisation and elitism. This intertextual link enriches the critique by situating the marginalisation of "others" within a larger historical narrative of exploitation and resistance. The shift from English to French in les *Damnés de la Terre* underscores the global and historical dimensions of oppression. By referencing Fanon's seminal work, Judascious links contemporary inequalities to broader colonial and postcolonial struggles, lending depth and intellectual weight to the argument.

The author highlights the contrast between the neighbourhoods of the rich and the poor through Judascious's reflection: "That evening I locked myself in my dark little room in the heart of Briqueterie, 'Le Quartier du bas fond' and prayed to God for instant forgiveness (MS, 18)." The name "Briqueterie," derived from the French word for brickyard, and the phrase "Le Quartier du bas fond," which translates to a neighborhood located at the bottom, emphasise this disparity. These terms evoke a sense of differentiated belonging. The intrasentential code-switching in the quoted text further underscores this divide, reflecting a hierarchy embedded in the contrasting living spaces. This passage can be related to spatiality by examining how the physical and

symbolic attributes of spaces are used to reflect and reinforce social hierarchies. In this context, the description of Briqueterie as *"Le Quartier du bas fond"*, literally a low-lying neighbourhood, conveys both a geographical and a metaphorical sense of marginalisation. Spatiality is emphasised through the explicit contrast between this downtrodden area and the implied wealthier neighbourhoods that are socially and spatially distant from it. The name *"Briqueterie"*, evoking an industrial brickyard, further reinforces the gritty, labour-intensive, and economically disadvantaged character of the space. Such naming situates the neighbourhood within a context of manual labour and poverty, in contrast to the affluence associated with other parts of the city. This spatial division mirrors the social stratification, creating zones of differentiated belonging and identity based on economic and social capital.

Moreover, the code-switching in the text shifting between French and the narrative language acts as a linguistic marker of the same divide, linking spatiality to social stratification. The use of French, a colonial and elite language, within the context of describing Briqueterie underscores the tension between the lived realities of marginalised spaces and the influence of dominant socio-political forces. Thus, spatiality in this passage is not only a matter of physical geography but also an articulation of power, identity, and exclusion.

In the novel, code-switching creates a distinct literary effect, particularly in characterisation. By shifting between languages mid-sentence, Nyamnjoh reveals the character's bilingual or multicultural identity, highlighting their ease and adaptability in navigating diverse linguistic and cultural contexts. Additionally, there is an emotional nuance in the way the character switches to a more familiar or intimate language to express vulnerability or frustration, signalling shifts in mood. Furthermore, the use of code-switching in this novel immerses the reader in the cultural and linguistic milieu of a bilingual Cameroon. It underscores that, despite linguistic divides, Cameroon can foster unity and harmony between its Anglophone and Francophone communities. Fabrice, a character in *Married but Available,* sends a fax message to Lizzy, his girlfriend. The message, in the form of intersentential code-switching, shows that Fabrice has a perfect mastery or command of both French and English:

> Lizzy, je t'envoie ce gentil fax pour te dire… You know I think to myself what life que je would be pars prématurément à Muzunguland. Without you baby. On all the good times that we… D'autre part je pensais aussi RV du… I can't picture myself without you baby. BMW, ma mère est bien d'accord. You gotta lovehold. You gotta a lovehold that's… De plus, après avoir discuté au BURGER on… So strong I need you to carry on…aurait peut-être pu arriver chez toi. (MBA, 244)

Code-switching in the above quotation enriches the narrative with a warm and relatable tone, suggesting a sense of humour softened by Fabrice's authentic emotions. The humour in this text arises from Fabrice's awkward yet endearing attempts to express his love and navigate cultural and personal complexities. The cumulative effect is a blend of light-heartedness and charm, as the reader can empathise with his sincerity while laughing at his self-consciousness. Code-switching surfaces humour from three elements. The first is the oscillation between English and French, which creates a playful rhythm, emphasising Fabrice's efforts to connect with Lizzy and perhaps impress her. The second element is the specificity of Fabrice's concerns, as his worry about Lizzy's sisters reading the fax adds a relatable and comedic touch, showcasing his anxiety in a sweet and exaggerated way. The last is Fabrice's offer of film genres. The casual mention of "horror, police, action, or comedy" feels amusingly incongruous with the depth of his romantic confession, adding an unintended levity.

Finally, in the extrasentential code-switching, Nyamnjoh makes characters switch from English to Pidgin English as seen in a conversation between Lilly Loveless and a taxi-driver. This is intended to also portray the differentiated belonging in Mimboland. This difference is that lower class people like taxi-drivers and others rely on Pidgin English to communicate with other people of higher social class, including foreigners:

> "So na how much you go pay?" he asked. "Waita minute," she told him, taking out her notebook. She consulted it, then said, "Not more than Mim$10,000. That's the amount Dustbin had advised her not to go over. "No, no. moni small plenty. No man for here go take you to Puttkamerstown for dat amount." The driver swore. (MBA, 6)

As previously in this section, Nyamnjoh additionally resorts to in-text translation to elucidate and clarify certain ideas. This is to show that Mimboland is a multilingual nation as Judascious mentions in *Mind Searching*: "[…] Cameroon is said to be Africa in miniature, to be a melting pot of cultural colonial and linguistic diversities (MS, 12). The in-text translation is used to describe poverty in Briqueterie. This area is where the protagonist used to live before becoming the Personal Secretary to Honorable VM. Nyamnjoh uses in-text translation in the following:

> The golden principle is that they must refuse to recognise that market things can perish before they are sold. So, they shout out with confidence: "Meilleure viande, meilleure viande"; "Fine meat, fine meat"; "Buy one kilo take two"; and so on, chasing thousands of fat dark flies away… (MS, 83)

Nyamnjoh's use of code-switching in its variety and the in-text translations is a kind of celebration of linguacultural hybridity and difference. The linguistic difference, which is the cause of the Anglophone Problem, cannot continue dividing Mimbolanders. The code switching suggests that characters, regardless of their linguistic belonging, are in conversation, and there is intelligibility. Nyamnjoh advocates for a convivial linguistic cohabitation between Anglophone and Francophone citizens in order to build a pluralistic society that promotes multiculturalism and possibly eliminates the effects of social hierarchies.

In a bilingual society like Cameroon and given the Anglophone Problem, the author aims at challenging views of normative monolingualism pretended by Francophone Cameroonians and the linguacultural domination of French over English. By using code-mixing, Nyamnjoh negotiates a linguistic cohabitation of the two communities separated by the ongoing Anglophone Problem. This section, therefore, examines Nyamnjoh's code-mixing as a multilingual person's capacity to use two or more languages in a single unit of discourse.

Code-mixing refers to the integration of linguistic elements from one language into another, where two language codes are combined within the same speech without altering the topic. According to Sridhar and Sridhar, code-mixing involves transitioning between linguistic units such as words, phrases, or clauses from one language to another within a single sentence (Ennin and Afful, 2015). Equally, Ennin and Afful (2015: 431) explain that code-mixing typically occurs when there is a lexical gap in both the superstrate and substrate languages. In Nyamnjoh's work, code-mixing reflects the unique traits of narrators or characters, making it easier to identify their dominant linguistic affiliations or sociolinguistic groups. This phenomenon highlights the linguistic divisions present in Cameroon, where code-mixing is particularly common in the two communities.

In a bilingual country where language poses a socio-political conflict like the Anglophone Problem, code-mixing is one of the stylistic devices which the author uses for such an audience. From the above, I therefore argue that code-mixing, the practice of blending words or phrases from two or more languages in a single discourse, is a powerful stylistic device in a bilingual context marked by socio-political conflict, such as the Anglophone Problem. In such settings, authors can use code-mixing deliberately to engage a diverse audience while addressing the linguistic tensions and power dynamics that shape their realities. Nyamnjoh's blending of English and French serves as a deliberate strategy to demonstrate that Anglophone and Francophone identities can coexist harmoniously, even in the face of the Anglophone Problem. Furthermore, his use of code-mixing

highlights the importance of language ideology in advocating for and promoting linguistic diversity.

Nyamnjoh employs various forms of code-mixing to convey complex sociolinguistic dynamics. For example, in *Mind Searching*, he uses alternation, shifting between languages in terms of both grammar and vocabulary. An example of this is the phrase: “un vaut rien like myself?” (MS, 5), meaning “a worthless person like myself.” This code-mixing reflects the social hierarchy between the poor and the elite, which even extends into the church, where the elite are given front seats while the poor are relegated to the back. This dynamic underscores sociopolitical power relations, which contribute to the Anglophone Problem.

In critiquing the so-called intellectuals and elites who fail to propose solutions for a better Cameroon, Judascious laments: “How often have I heard individuals referred to as ‘Les Intellectuels’ in public places here and there in this great city?” (MS, 24). This instance illustrates insertional code-mixing, where an English preposition like “as” is embedded into the narrative to indicate a characteristic or quality. The insertional code-mixing is particularly insightful, as it highlights how language blends can reveal deeper cultural or linguistic dynamics. The use of the English preposition "as" within the narrative, while the rest of the sentence is in French, exemplifies this phenomenon.

Another example is found in *Married but Available*, where Dr. Wiseman Lovemore questions the financial feasibility of infidelity in Mimboland: “‘Can anyone afford a deuxième bureau these days when things are so hard?’ And the answer, of course, would be: ‘No way, unless of course na njoh bureau’” (MBA, 27). Here, “a” (English) replaces the French equivalent “un,” while the Pidgin English phrase “na njoh” is inserted. In the quotation from Francis B. Nyamnjoh’s *Married But Available*, the term *“deuxième bureau”* (literally, “second office”) carries layered cultural and social significance. In Cameroonian urban slang, as in several Francophone African societies, *“deuxième bureau”* serves as a euphemism for a mistress or unofficial second partner, typically maintained alongside a legally or socially recognised spouse. It can loosely be interpreted as referring to a “second wife.” The literal meaning “second office” evokes the idea of a place where a man might claim to be working, while in reality he is engaged in extramarital affairs. It plays on the notion of deceit, where the man pretends to be at work but is instead at his “other” domestic site. The quotation foregrounds an economic critique. The rhetorical question *“Can anyone afford a deuxième bureau these days when things are so hard?”* points directly to the widespread financial hardship, particularly among university lecturers in the fictional University of Mimbo.

Maintaining a *"deuxième bureau"* entails significant financial outlay, from gifts and rent to general upkeep, and thus becomes a symbol of economic privilege. The question is laced with irony, suggesting that even extramarital indulgences are now beyond reach due to growing financial constraints.

The follow-up phrase *"unless of course na njoh bureau"* adds a humorous and culturally resonant twist. In Pidgin English, *"njoh"* implies supernatural intervention or sheer luck. The implication is that only someone blessed with mystical favour or extraordinary fortune could afford such a luxury in the current climate. This juxtaposition sharpens the satirical tone, exposing the absurdity of maintaining traditional masculine privileges amid modern economic precarity. Ultimately, the reference to *"deuxième bureau"* operates as a vehicle through which Nyamnjoh interrogates broader themes of male privilege, urban aspiration, and the persistence of patriarchal norms. Even in the face of economic crisis, these practices endure, revealing the tensions between inherited power structures and contemporary social realities. In this brief yet incisive exchange, *"deuxième bureau"* emerges as a potent symbol for exploring the intersections of gender, economy, and postcolonial identity. Nyamnjoh's critique suggests that in this society, relationships are often protected by lies, and some characters, like Judith, are content with their status as "Madame Numero Deux[29]," as seen in Britney's observation: "Judith seemed satisfied with being the Madame Numero Deux whenever Kenneth's wife was not around." This instance also demonstrates insertion, where "the" replaces the expected French article "la."

Nyamnjoh further employs a congruent lexicalisation approach, where English and French share a grammatical structure, allowing for the seamless replacement of elements from either language. An example from *Married but Available* is: "'No problem,' said Lilly Loveless, 'travel well.' She sat back at the table just as 'Donne-moi un peu d'amour' started to play, and Britney began recounting another story" (MBA, 109). This combination of insertion and alternation demonstrates a deeper interplay between languages, suggesting complex sociocultural underpinnings.

Beyond code-switching and code-mixing, Nyamnjoh employs other stylistic devices, such as heterolingualism and Pidgin English, to explore linguistic differences as a social force. Heterolingualism involves characters drawing from multiple linguistic systems simultaneously. Nyamnjoh's command of English, French, and Pidgin English enables him to use words and phrases interchangeably, depending on the context. This strategy rests on the assumption of shared

[29] Second partner/wife.

local understandings of the connections between specific languages and their social meanings. In a multilingual community like Cameroon, this shared understanding is crucial; without it, interlocutors would struggle to interpret instances of code-switching, code-mixing, heterolingualism, and Pidgin English effectively.

Pidgin English is often used in dialogue to highlight the interconnectedness of social groups within a society characterised by diverse identities. It plays a crucial role in communication, acting as a bridge between different segments of society. While Pidgin English reflects linguistic hybridity, it primarily serves as a means for marginalised groups to express their voices and assert their claims. Consequently, it is frequently spoken by characters who represent the lower class, rural communities, and those with limited formal education. Nyamnjoh often uses Pidgin English[30] to depict the everyday realities of lower-class or rural characters who, despite their lack of formal education, possess their own linguistic freedom to express their wisdom, experiences, and views. For instance, in *Married but Available*, the taxi driver, the hairdresser, and others speak to Lilly Loveless in Pidgin, while she responds in standard English. This highlights the linguistic divide between the more educated, upper-class characters and those from lower or common backgrounds. In *Mind Searching,* the conversation between Judascious and the Honorable V.M.'s close protection who is an uneducated gendarme of the lower rank, illustrates the use of Pidgin English:

> 'You no sabi whosai you deh?' he asks. 'You sleep for fine bed so, and you say you no know where you deh?' he expresses surprise, but my lost look tells him all. "Okay, make I tell you whosai you deh. You deh for the Honourable V. M's residence. (MS, 80)
>
> *'You do not know where you are?' he asks. 'You are enjoying the good bed and then say you do not know where you are?'. He expresses surprise, but my lost look tells him all. 'Okay, let me tell you where you are. You are at the Honorable V. M.'s residence.'*

However, the use of Pidgin English by the author is not, as one can assume, confined to Cameroon. Pidgin English is also spoken in Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Liberia, etc., but because Mimboland represents Cameroon, we can identify with Cameroon. Mimboland epitomises Nyamnjoh's compositeness of being and specifically lots of the characters in Mimboland are people with those characterisations. They realise that whatever language they speak despite the multilingual options

[30] Pidgin English, often referred to as "Cameroonian Pidgin" or "Kamtok," is a widely spoken creole language in Cameroon. It is an English-based pidgin, with influences from indigenous African languages such as Beti, Bassa, and others, as well as French.

is not enough to achieve a complete intelligibility. If you speak either French or English, only a few will understand; but if you speak Pidgin English, most people will easily understand.

The use of Pidgin English, which can be understood by both Anglophones and Francophones, is an expression of incompleteness, as Nyamnjoh remarks during the interview I conducted with him on 4 March 2023:

> So, every language seems to be incomplete in this country where if you realize that you can speak English, only some will understand you. If you speak French, only some will hear it. With Pidgin English you can move around much better with it. When you speak Pidgin English, you carry more than two languages: broken English and broken French.

Writing either in English or French pays respect to speakers of these two languages. Because Nyamnjoh appeals to everybody, he uses Pidgin English. As he says: "If you want to really write in a way that appeals to everybody, you have to account for everybody, you have to provide for everybody. You have to use a language that is composite, that brings everyone in". It is the complementarity that makes Mimboland what is today. Consequently, Pidgin English constitutes a unifying factor in a society where the rich interact with the poor. It therefore, transcends geolinguistic and sociopolitical boundaries. Ekanjume-Ilongo (2016: 157) affirms that Cameroonian Pidgin English is spoken in all parts of Cameroon, by both the English and French-speaking Cameroonians. In *Married but Available*, the married woman forces herself into prostitution after finding out that her husband always cheats on her with young girls. She says: "Mi papa hi house nobi de smell me before I go maret" (MBA, 144), which means "It was not the stench in my father's house that I could not stand that drove me into marriage". This is a part of a conversation held between the uneducated married woman with Britney and Lilly Loveless who speak English perfectly and belong to the sphere of educated people. From this conversation, illustrates how Pidgin English has to transcend hierarchies of belonging.

From the above, I therefore, conclude that flexible linguacultural identity is a pragmatic behaviour in which the brain of a bilingual individual is adjustable and accommodating. Nyamnjoh employs a multimodal narrative strategy, demonstrating flexibility by seamlessly integrating elements and lexicons from both English and French. This approach enables him to achieve his communication objectives without being restricted to the confines of the English language alone. Moreover, Mimbolanders use code-switching and code-mixing to tell a secret, and to help express their thoughts. This suggests that Mimbolanders negotiate membership acceptance for either the Anglophone or Francophone community.

3. 4. Double-voiced Irony and the Satirical Representation of Mimboland

Through Mimboland, Nyamnjoh employs double-voiced irony and satire to critique postcolonial Cameroon's socio-political realities, echoing a broader African literary tradition. Like Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o in *A Grain of Wheat*, he exposes the contradictions of post-independence governance, highlighting colonial legacies and elite complicity. His irony presents conflicting perspectives, mocking official narratives while revealing deeper truths through marginalised voices reflecting Onyeoziri's idea of "internal subversion" of dominant discourse. Satire amplifies the absurdities of political and social life, prompting readers to question power, identity, and resistance. Thus, Nyamnjoh uses these devices not just stylistically, but as means of resistance and critical reflection within a postcolonial context.

This subversive strategy proves instrumental in interpreting the postcolonial experience and the persistent tyrannies in Africa. This section examines Nyamnjoh's application of this approach in *Married but Available* and *Mind Searching*, focusing on how he critiques unresolved issues such as the Anglophone Problem and links these failures to the concept of "flexible citizenship." Nyamnjoh's writing underscores the dissonance between appearances and reality, challenging superficial interpretations of events. Such narrative strategies frequently subvert expectations, a trait that makes them both impactful and often misunderstood (Cuddon, 2014).

Irony and satire are vital tools in literary analysis, enriching a text's complexity, deepening its meaning, and engaging readers in active interpretation. Both devices reveal underlying messages: irony highlights contrasts between appearance and reality to uncover deeper significance, while satire uses exaggeration to critique societal flaws and human weaknesses. Irony, in particular, probes beneath the surface, exposing a text's hidden implications and broader resonance. Beyond uncovering a text's deeper meanings, irony and satire enhance reader's engagement by encouraging interpretation and challenging readers to decode the narrative's content. They also have emotional and intellectual impacts. Irony often provokes amusement through its contrasts, while satire stimulates intellectual engagement by blending humour with criticism, prompting reflection on societal issues or personal beliefs. Additionally, these devices foster critical thinking, as they compel readers to discern the author's true intentions. In this pursuit of understanding, readers develop analytical skills. Lastly, irony and satire shape tone and style by making the narrative more humorous, reflective, or critical, enabling readers to connect with the characters and themes portrayed in the text.

Friedrich Schlegel (Adjei, 2015: 195) attributes to irony an epistemological and ontological role, framing it as a means of confronting and transcending the contradictions inherent in the world. As an ideology, it allows to acknowledge that the world is perceived through various irreconcilable perspectives. Building on this assertion, I seek to argue that irony, as a narrative device, expresses the contrast between expectation and reality. It thus highlights the disparity between appearance and reality. In literature, this narrative device has two principal aims. Firstly, to juxtapose contradictory ideas to allow for multiple interpretations of a text, and secondly, to mirror real life. According to Onyeoziri (2011), storytellers commonly employ three types of irony to contrast expectations with reality: dramatic, verbal and situational irony. These are not only used to evoke humour and suspense but also to underscore a specific theme or subject.

Onyeoziri describes dramatic irony as occurring when a character lacks awareness of key information that shapes the plot. Among the various forms of irony, verbal and situational irony are the most commonly employed. In this regard, Cuddon (2014) highlights that verbal irony involves expressing something contrary to its intended meaning. Aligning with Johnson, Cuddon asserts that the primary goal of verbal irony is to convey a meaning that deviates from the literal interpretation of the words. Situational irony, by contrast, arises when a character's actions, intended to achieve a specific outcome, produce results that are unexpectedly opposite to those intentions (372).

My analysis of *Married but Available* and *Mind Searching* reveals that Nyamnjoh's irony is largely characterised by the use of flashback sequences. I also note that characters convey two seemingly contradictory realities: their sense of community and their unease or disagreement with one another. This double-voicing functions simultaneously as both engine and driver. From the perspective of the Anglophone Problem, as Linda Hutcheon (Adjei, 2015) describes, it represents the "scene" of irony. In this context, I examine Nyamnjoh's irony through a political framework as an issue which engages power relations predominantly centred on questions of exclusion and inclusion—who belongs and who does not—and, ultimately, who resides here but does not enjoy the same privileges as others (outsider-within).

In *Married but Available*, Nyamnjoh's representation of Lilly Loveless as a foreign PhD researcher (MBA, 1-5) can be viewed in two ways. Firstly, the novel critiques the way field research in social sciences is conducted in the global South by outsiders. Secondly, the novel critiques the socio-political and economic power dynamics that structure sexual relations in Mimboland (Ndi & Ankumah, 2017) and the paratextual perspective that *Married but Available*

interrogates the common practice of Mimbolanders who remain available for extramarital relationships despite being married. This can be seen in the story of Nicole who is married to a "Muzungulander"[31], as Britney narrates: "[…] after having three kids with her, he decides to take a second wife. Her husband would go so far as to sleep with his second wife and then show up in his first wife's bedroom" (MBA, 222).

Furthermore, socially speaking, the title *Married but Available* represents irony as seen in the following:

> The culture of resting at Mountain Valley, like everywhere else in Mimboland, Lilly Loveless was told, demands that the couple arrive like perfect strangers, and leave like perfect strangers. First, they walk or drive in separately, preferably to a pre-booked room under their aliases if they are regulars or really big guns protective of their identities. (MBA, 15)

This quotation provides a critical perspective on how cultural expectations and societal pressures influence human relationships, often resulting in paradoxical outcomes. The irony highlighted above represents the alienation of intimacy. Typically, resting places are meant to revitalise relationships. However, arriving and departing as strangers ironically emphasises emotional distance rather than connection. There is also an element of social pretence, as the author critiques how individuals often prioritise appearances or societal norms over genuine relationships, even in private, restorative spaces. This also reflects hypocrisy, as people often remain more anonymous in relationships, which undermines openness and authentic connections.

From an anthroponymic perspective, the name "Lilly Loveless" in *Married But Available* is deeply ironic. It reflects themes of manipulated and absent love, despite outward appearances. Loveless endures the pain of her father's absence, having been abandoned by him. He has left her mother and now lives with another woman in the same city. She is metaphorically "Loveless" because of this abandonment by her biological father (*MBA*, 19). Curiously, she wears a wedding ring even though she is not married (*MBA*, 10). Through my analysis, I argue that "Lilly Loveless" encapsulates her struggles with love, both within her familial relationships and societal expectations, making her a powerful symbol of disconnection and irony in the narrative. Her name suggests an absence of love, which resonates with her emotional reality.

[31] In Francis B. Nyamnjoh's novel *Married But Available*, the term Muzungulander is a coined expression blending the Swahili word "Muzungu" (white person) with the English "lander" (implying someone from a specific place).

Despite the implications of her name, her life is inextricably tied to the theme of love—her research interests even serve as a concrete example. The lack of paternal love in Loveless' life underscores her emotional void. Her father's decision to abandon her mother while living nearby with another woman highlights a stark and painful form of neglect. This act profoundly shapes her identity and reinforces the bitterness associated with her name. Her choice to wear a wedding ring despite being unmarried could be seen as a societal façade or a personal attempt to convey stability or belonging. This gesture might reflect an effort to mask her inner vulnerabilities or conform to societal expectations regarding relationships, despite the reality of her circumstances.

Nyamnjoh employs paradox in *Married but Available* to highlight the dire conditions at the Mountain View Hotel, where Lilly Loveless chooses to stay, and the prevalence of prostitution in the area. It seems ironic that a figure like Dr Wiseman Lovemore would invite Lilly to such a place for a drink. Adding to the humour of the narrative, Bobinga Iroko remarks, "Amazing coincidence: Loveless meets Lovemore. What does that yield?" (*MBA*, 29). The contrast between the names Loveless and Lovemore underscores the paradox, reflecting the complexities of their relationship. This juxtaposition raises questions about the research collaboration between Dr Lovemore, a PhD holder, and Lilly Loveless, a PhD student. Why would a professor of his stature plead to co-publish a paper with a simple Muzungulander student who has limited knowledge of Africa (*MBA*, 15–16)? Ordinarily, it would be the student seeking collaboration with the professor for credibility and visibility. Nyamnjoh's use of paradox invites readers to reflect on societal contradictions, illustrating how seemingly logical actions can lead to questionable outcomes. Through this lens, the narrative challenges readers to question the norms and assumptions of academic and social dynamics.

Married But Available further suggests irony of marriage as seen in the following:

> In Mimboland, women cheat for various reasons, major amongst which is the need to live a life which is not theirs. The pressures on them to dress well, do their hair, buy this and that, be here or there in a class and in places above their means or attainments, push them into the open arms of affairs with men who are either pretending or honest about bringing them to consumer paradise. (MBA, 64)

The above quote critiques a society that values appearances and possessions over authenticity. The phrase "the need to live a life which is not theirs" highlights the disconnection between true selfhood and the identity women are pressured to project. This societal expectation forces women to conform to ideals of beauty, success, and social class, which may not align with their genuine

desires or abilities. Dressing well, maintaining appearances, and engaging in status-oriented behaviours are portrayed as cultural demands rather than personal choices. This external performance is tied to societal validation.

Furthermore, the quote represents materialism and consumerism. The narrative criticises a society obsessed with material possessions, suggesting that consumer culture dictates the worth of individuals. Women are compelled to attain the consumer paradise, even at the expense of personal integrity. Infidelity here is framed not as a moral failing but as a symptom of broader systemic issues, economic inequality, and the commodification of relationships.
From the perspectives of gender dynamics and power imbalance, the quote indirectly critiques the power imbalance between men and women in Mimboland. Women's reliance on men to access the consumer paradise reflects economic dependency and the patriarchal structures that limit their agency. It also exposes the duality of male figures, specifically those who exploit women's vulnerabilities and those who provide material benefits as a means of control and influence.

Married But Available offers a critique of marital relationships, highlighting the prevalence of infidelity among both men and women. In the novel, some women engage in extramarital affairs to access luxury items such as fashionable clothing and expensive cars. Similarly, men pursue extramarital relationships to break free from sexual monotony and explore new experiences. An ironic twist is revealed when married individuals participate in same-sex encounters, challenging traditional gender norms and suggesting a subtle commentary on homosexuality, which contradicts the Cameroonian constitution: "Absolutely, 'she went out with the lady and her man,' said Britney […] 'so your friend had the wife during the week and the husband on weekends?'" (MBA, 164). This irony critiques societal views on relationships, raising questions about fidelity, loyalty and the complex nature of human connections. It also portrays an unconventional dynamic in which multiple partners interact in a shared space, blurring the lines between relationship roles and challenging gender expectations. The irony seems to further comment on a system of rotating relationships, where individuals switch between roles of husband and wife, depending on the time of week, exploring a lifestyle that departs from traditional relationship structures and perhaps delves into emotional or sexual freedom.

In *Married but Available*, the term "tropical paradise" is employed to describe the political situation in Mimboland. This phrase highlights the disconnect between the idealised depiction of Mimboland as a nation-state and its socio-political realities. It symbolises the fact that, despite its natural beauty and abundant resources, Mimboland is shaped by corruption, exploitation, impunity

, and inequality. This irony critiques the way Western perceptions of tropical regions often reduce them to simple exotic, idyllic destinations, disregarding the complex and frequently troubled realities of life in such places. By referring to Mimboland as a "tropical paradise," the text exposes how political imagery is manipulated for tourism and global consumption, suggesting that the "paradise" label conceals uncomfortable truths about power, inequality, and exploitation. This irony encourages the reader to question the value of such representations and reflect on what is lost when a place is reduced to a stereotype.

The following quotation exemplifies the socio-political and economic conditions shaped by corruption in Mimboland, which also constitute causes of the Anglophone Problem as critiqued by the author in the novel:

> Lilly Loveless was familiar with the yearly Transparency International corruption indexes, in which Mimboland was invariably amongst the world's most corrupt countries and most difficult places to do business. (MBA, 27)

The above quotation describes Lilly Loveless's awareness of the Transparency International corruption indexes, which consistently rank Mimboland as one of the most corrupt and challenging places for business. It provides context about Mimboland's governance and economic climate, reflecting its negative reputation in terms of corruption and business practices.

All Mimbolanders, irrespective of their role or status, are depicted as corrupt. President Longstay was expected to govern the country in a politically democratic manner, including the entire elite regardless of their regional origins. However, nepotism led to his downfall, ultimately resulting in the collapse of the system. This is supported by the narrator's claim that "from businessmen to politicians through academics, civil servants, the police, and the military, everyone is busy making money without producing it" (MBA, 38). These individuals, driven by substantial bribes and insatiable greed, are described as the "big engines of the national corruption."

Nyamnjoh uses "bushfalling" as a metaphor which incorporates both mobility and fortune chasing:

> If you go hunting in your backyard, what you are most likely to catch is a neighbour's goat or fowl, in which case you are branded a thief and disciplined accordingly. If I understand you correctly, real bushfalling is that which takes you to a distant bush, and from which you bring back real game, said Lilly Loveless, taking out her notebook. (MBA, 128)

This passage serves as a metaphorical reflection on ambition, success, and societal judgement, employing the imagery of hunting to convey the risks and rewards associated with seizing opportunities. “Bushfalling” is a term often used to describe leaving one’s homeland in pursuit of opportunities abroad, particularly within the context of African diasporic experiences. Genuine bushfalling entails venturing far beyond one’s comfort zone to regions regarded as abundant with opportunities (the distant bush). Returning with “real game” symbolises attaining tangible success or valuable rewards that justify the effort and risks undertaken.

Furthermore, “Bushfalling” metaphorically conveys the idea of mobility by associating it with travelling to a distant place in search of something valuable. By contrast, hunting in one’s own backyard implies staying close to home, where the outcomes are often limited, unremarkable, or potentially and socially problematic. The term highlights the contrast between the stagnation of remaining within familiar surroundings and the dynamism of venturing farther afield.

In *Married But Available*, Nyamnjoh uses irony and metaphor to expose Mimboland’s decay, reflecting the roots of the Anglophone Problem. Referencing Transparency International, he highlights entrenched corruption, marginalisation, and poor governance. A corrupt elite symbolises systemic exclusion and lack of accountability. The metaphor of “bushfalling” captures Anglophone despair and ambition, contrasting limited local opportunities with the hope of success abroad. These elements collectively critique structural injustice and underscore mobility as both escape and protest.

The concept of “real bushfalling,” involving travel to a distant location, signifies geographical or physical mobility. The tangible rewards or benefits derived from such movement underscore its productive and transformative nature, symbolising social mobility. Nyamnjoh employs the concept of “bushfalling” to depict the fluid identities of Cameroonians and other Africans who engage in continuous mobility in pursuit of opportunities and better prospects away from their homeland.

In postcolonial literature, satire serves as a significant sub-genre frequently employed by African writers to critique societal issues. One notable example is Chinua Achebe’s *No Longer at Ease* (1960), a satirical portrayal of Nigeria on the cusp of independence. The novel follows Obi Okonkwo, a civil servant grappling with the tensions between the moral and financial expectations of his traditional rural community and the demands of the urban colonial elite. Struggling to navigate a modernity marked by bribery, nepotism, and tribalism, Obi succumbs to corruption (Adkins, 2017: 398–408). Similarly, Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o’s *Matigari* (1986) satirises the

exploitative tendencies of black leaders and highlights their disregard for the needs of the people, including children (Meenakshi, 2021). Ngugi's work critiques the insensitivity and moral failures of the post-independence elite.

Wole Soyinka's *The Interpreters* (1965) presents a group of young friends, recently returned from foreign universities, as they grapple with the moral decay of Nigerian society. Each character seeks to define themselves in relation to societal challenges and discover the path to an ethical life. The novel reveals the internal contradictions of postcolonial Nigeria, where conservative forces clash with progressive individuals advocating for a new cultural identity (Ngaboh-Smart, 2010). A similar moral conflict appears in Ayi Kwei Armah's *The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born* (1968). The unnamed protagonist, referred to as "the man," resists a bribery offer, contrasting with his former classmate Koomson, who readily embraces corruption. The man's principled stance draws criticism from his wife and highlights the pervasive nature of corruption in society.

Lastly, Achebe's *A Man of the People* illustrates the satirical critique of postcolonial leadership through the character of Chief Nanga, an unscrupulous Minister of Culture focused on self-enrichment. Chief Nanga's opportunism and lack of refinement underscore the moral and political failings of postcolonial elites (Adjei, 2015: 195). These novels exemplify how African writers use satire to expose the flaws and challenges within their societies, employing wit and irony to draw attention to both specific and broader societal issues.

At its core, satire is both a form of social commentary and a tool for promoting change. It can take many forms, ranging from lighthearted parodies to sharp, biting critiques and can be used to address a wide range of subjects, including politics, religion, social norms, and human behavior. Satirical works often create a contrast between the way things are and how they should be, pushing readers to reflect on the disparity.

Sometimes, as the case of Nyamnjoh where repression is recurrent in his native country, telling a story requires strategies, and satire is one of them. On the use of satire in his ethnographic fiction, Nyamnjoh asserts:

> If you live in a context where people are so free in the way they tell the story, it might be quite different from people who are used to indirections or loaded language, layered language to say the same thing. Maybe because the way they have been called cultivated is to be respectful to

> power and authority, so they say things without hurting people's feelings in an obvious way, but you are telling them all the same.[32]

Nyamnjoh prefers indirection in his communication. As he declares: "I learned to use indirection for example, I use a lot of metaphors to tell a story." His readers have also remarked the same. In *Mind Searching* he satirises and critiques those in power for having sold out the state, those individuals like president Longstay and his ministers as well as top civil servants, including businessmen who profit from the Anglophone Problem in these terms:

> I recognise all these cars that speed pass. Why are they in such haste? Scrambling for a place in Heaven, or merely for a seat in a terrestrial place of worship? Why can't any of them express some brotherliness by stopping for me to jump in? Aren't we members of the same club? No! God forbid! I am being unrealistic, a sinner. (MS, 5)

The excerpt from *Mind Searching* highlights societal inequities in Mimboland, with particular focus on the behaviour and mindset of those in positions of power and privilege. The details of the quote reveal three key points for interpretation. The first is the satirical critique of power, wherein hypocrisy and self-serving pursuits dominate the lives of the privileged few, who disregard the plight of the less fortunate. The second point is the alienation and loss of brotherhood. Wealth and power foster a detachment from community and solidarity. The protagonist's yearning for "brotherliness" underscores a desire for a shared sense of humanity, which has been undermined by greed and self-interest. Lastly, there is a critique of corruption and inequality. The protagonist's mention of "members of the same club" serves as a satirical indictment of the exclusivity of those in power, who prioritise their own advancement at the expense of collective welfare.

The above quotation further shows the arrogance and selfishness of these powerful Mimbolanders. Nyamnjoh satirically portrays a Cameroonian society of the privileged few who are not ready to share. "How can those who are going to the same congregation, same church cannot give others a lift when there are still vacant seats in the car?" Judascious wondered (MS, 6). Through this protagonist in *Mind Searching*, Nyamnjoh challenges the generosity of Mimbolanders who claim that their culture is community life. However, this can probably be due to the Western influence based on individualism.

Moreover, Nyamnjoh's satire points out the differentiated citizenship that exists among Mimbolanders. For example, a minister, a Doctor of Philosophy or a director in the civil service

[32] From an interview held with Francis Nyamnjoh on 04 March 2023 at UCT.

as well as a top businessman cannot share a car with a pauper. When Nyamnjoh satirises Mimboland as a nation-state, his aim is to criticise or mock the political elite and members of the Mimboland government through humour or exaggeration. His intention is, rather, to warn the public against the prevailing corruption, provoking thought and encouraging the public to question or reconsider accepted moral norms and behaviours. Satire, in this context, serves as a form of social commentary to raise awareness in order to promote behavioural change. In *Mind Searching*, he bitterly complains about poor decision-making, which he highlights through the protagonist: "To be honest, our church is a very small one with very few seats. I don't know how the parish council didn't vote for basic infrastructural improvements, instead of a car for our former priest" (MS, 6). Examining this quotation in *Mind Searching*, I note that it serves as a microcosm of themes explored by the author in the novel particularly, leadership and moral priorities, highlighting the tension between collective welfare and individual interests. The protagonist complains against misallocation of resources by the parish council. They prioritise buying a car rather than improving the parish infrastructure. This is a failure by the leadership to align with immediate needs of the community.

The common citizens or the masses are suffering from the wrong decision to buy a car instead of attending to parish priorities. The author therefore satirises that decision which affects the masses who have to stand up throughout the entire church service. Despite the differentiated belonging among Mimbolanders, the whites just see them alike. To the whites, blacks are the same, there is no difference. They have to be treated equally. Judascious, in his thought exercise narrates that, "Le Pere Jean Mouton" the new priest, could tolerate anything but inequality amongst blacks and declares: "No monkey is less a monkey than another" (MS, 8).

From this perspective, I argue that Nyamnjoh employs satire in *Mind Searching* to critique issues of inequality and social justice, emphasising how decisions made by the privileged few (such as purchasing a car instead of addressing community needs) affect ordinary citizens. In the case of the Anglophone problem, this satire highlights how political and economic decisions made by a Francophone-led government often overlook the reality of Anglophone citizens, who continue to suffer in silence. "No monkey is less a monkey than another" critiques social inequalities and their impact on the common person. In analysing the Anglophone Problem, this critique underscores how misplaced priorities and external perceptions can exacerbate existing divisions and inequalities, further entrenching the struggles of the marginalised.

The humoristic aspect of Nyamnjoh's satire in *Mind Searching* is largely enhanced by the protagonist's name, "Judascious", which carries deep layers of irony and satire. The name itself is

associated with self-serving betrayal and moral decadence. This name immediately signals a satirical critique of the protagonist's character and actions. This name invites the reader to question the true nature of "Judascious" as a person and as a potentially hypocritical figure. The satire highlights the contrast between what he said that God is proposing to use him to liberate his people and the reality of his actions. In essence, the humour in the name "Judascious" not only spices up the story but also enriches the thematic exploration of identity, morality, and societal expectations in *Mind Searching*.

The name Judascious is also used as an engine to move the narrative forward. Although Judascious is in a psychological dilemma, he is a dynamic and unpredictable character. His moral values constantly change. His name identifies a personality that can betray and change colour at any time as he describes himself: "But not a Chameleon like Judascious Fanda Yanda to whom the church is what the streets are to beggars (MS, 1)". He confesses that this name makes him appear like the wicked biblical betrayer of Christ, Judas Iscariot, as a traitor so real than he can betray anyone (MS, 98). Judascious' unpredictable attitude is revealed at the very start of the story. He begins as an ordinary man full of virtue, moral values and a church-going person. He even claims that God is proposing to use him to save the people from the total frustration. Unfortunately, he unexpectedly ends up as a fully corrupt man. He then confesses: "life is too sweet and too short to be wasted on petty matters of ideology and principle" (MS, 154). His life changes when he is employed as a Personal Assistant by Honorable Vice-Minister:

> Haven't I become used to monthly tips that greatly surpass my salary? Haven't I attended many an important conference? Is there any state secret I do not know? Can I remember when last I bought food, beer or whisky with my own money? Don't I just need to come home from a cocktail party, a party meeting or a seminar with the amount of whatever food and drinks I want? …And as a proof of all these changes, those who knew me when misery was my closest companion have had to revise their representations of me. (MS, 146)

Nyamnjoh explores several communication channels in his satiric writing. These channels are semantically flexible, reproducing both flexible meaning and humour at the same time. He does so, either through protagonists or narrators. In the process, the narrator or the protagonist poses like an upright person who looks with horror at the ills of his time with an angry eye and heart consumed with frustration. The author employs two communication strategies: direct and indirect satire. In *Married but Available*, Nyamnjoh employs indirect satire through the voice of a narrator. Conversely, in *Mind Searching*, the satire becomes direct when expressed through the protagonist.

Judascious, for example, appears to take on a dual role. When he complains, he adopts the satirical perspective of the narrator. However, he is in fact involved in corruption as we see when he becomes the Personal Assistant to the "Honourable Vice-Minister". I also note that this character is in a psychological dilemma because of his mental ramblings.

Politically, Honourable Vice-Minister is satirised as a caricature of the lifestyle of the privileged few in Mimboland. He represents the power-drunk elite attached to President Longstay. The integrity of this character remains questionable despite the fact that he is a church-goer:

> If ministers are corrupt, I've heard apparently intelligent people argue, the Honourable V.M. must be an exception. He goes to church regularly. Do you think he could believe in God and be corrupt at the same time?...Some however argue that only a mad fool who grossly ignores the realities of Cameroon, would expect the Honourable V.M. to behave with integrity. (MS, 25)

The above quote clearly suggests that Nyamnjoh openly satirises Cameroonian authorities. There is use of humour, exaggeration, or ridicule to expose and criticise the political leadership and President Longstay's administration based on the principle of "divide and rule". President Longstay appears to be ridiculously discredited by the corrupt practices which characterise his government. What if he were repressed because of his attacking and mocking President Biya who is referred to as President Longstay[33] This illustrates the author's awareness of happenings in his native country in his allegoric representation.

In *Mind Searching*, the metaphor of "Africa in Miniature" refers to Mimboland as Cameroon. This reference represents Cameroon not only as a culturally and linguistically diversified nation but also a nation full of social ills:

> He can't even say why his country is known as 'Africa in Miniature'; because he has spent precious time reading only about fourth and fifth republics in the West. Suppose I told him that Cameroon is 'Africa in Miniature' because it embodies every single vice that one is likely to identify in other African countries. (MS, 53)

The above metaphor suggests that Cameroon is Africa in miniature because all sorts of social ills found elsewhere in Africa can be found in Cameroon. My analysis of Nyamnjoh's satire classifies Mimbolanders in three main categories. The first group consists of those who just do not care

[33] President Longstay is often depicted as a satirical representation of autocratic leadership. His character embodies themes of political longevity, authoritarianism, and the problematic nature of postcolonial governance associated with Cameroonian president Paul Biya seen as president-for-life.

about the nation. In this category, we have President Longstay, government ministers and top civil servants. The second group comprises those who look at everything from their ethnicity and autochthony. This category comprises Mimbolanders who privilege their linguacultural affiliation. They only care about fellow Mimbolanders who speak their language(s). As a result, tribalism and nepotism establish themselves as a rule. For this reason, when he is still a man full of virtue, Judascious blames President Longstay's poor leadership:

> The whole problem is a simple and straightforward one. Our nation's tragedy is that the right men are never made to occupy the right places; they are never made to occupy any places at all! We prefer to flirt around with the idea of regional balances in representation as if goodwill doesn't suffice as criterion. The fact that we stress regional and ethnic balances so much in government and high office belies our very sinister, cloudy designs. (MS, 23)

This excerpt critiques systemic issues in governance, particularly the mismanagement of leadership, highlighting the flawed prioritisation of regional and ethnic representation over competence and goodwill. This misplaced focus results in inefficiency and undermines the nation's potential for progress. It questions the legitimacy of systems that prioritise regional and ethnic balance at the expense of competence and ethical leadership. The author, therefore, calls for a reconsideration of values, advocating for fairness, inclusivity, and a focus on the common good. The narrative also reflects the author's disillusionment with the mechanisms of power and the broader societal consequences of these flawed practices. Moreover, the narrator denounces the prioritisation of regional balances in government appointments, framing it as a diversion from more merit-based or ethical decision-making. In the context of the Anglophone Problem, this dissatisfaction resonates with perceptions of tokenistic or superficial representation. English-speaking Cameroonians often feel underrepresented in meaningful government positions, despite regional or ethnic quotas that ostensibly aim to ensure inclusivity.

Finally, the last group has a messianic outlook. These are individuals for whom Nyamnjoh expresses a sense of expectation and an urgent desire for change. This sentiment is reflected in Judascious's hope: "But I sense a change, a great change; a change that would rock the corrupt foundation of the country with banners of freedom and peace" (MS, 23). Although society is depicted as being wholly corrupt at present, there remains hope in those who aspire to drive change. In *Married but Available*, Nyamnjoh juxtaposes these societal ills with the ironically named Iroko Bobinga, one of the most influential characters. This name symbolically represents two of the strongest and most expensive timbers in Cameroon's equatorial rainforest "Iroko" and

"Bobinga." It signifies the rarity of qualities such as resilience and determination, which are embodied by Bobinga, a character who never gives up. As a journalist, he is "the voice of the voiceless", fighting against the social ills of the society:

> Bobinga Iroko is stubborn in his determination to fight until Dr Wiseman Lovemore and all who have been detained without trial, illegally transferred to the regime's notorious maximum-security prison in Nyamandem are released. He has planned a journey of protest to Nyamandem in the coming weeks… (MBA, 298)

Iroko Bobinga represents moral values, truth, strength and determination, qualities which, although Mimboland is a corrupt country, known internationally, there are a few people who uphold integrity as a core value (MBA, 12). Although Iroko moves the story, he does not change his values like Judascious in *Mind Searching*. It means that even if Mimboland is classified among the most corrupt nations in the world, there are some people within this nation who still will uphold integrity.

In *Married but Available* and *Mind Searching*, Nyamnjoh uses allegories for two reasons. The first is that he wants to keep a distance from the subject matter being narrated. He does so because his fiction is based on ethnographic research (on facts). While using characters like President Longstay (MBA, 12), Nyamnjoh illustrates his conceptual idea of a poor post-independence leadership. Nyamnjoh's satirical depiction of Mimbolanders, achieved through his skillful manipulation of language, highlights how societal issues can destabilise the nation-state project, drawing parallels with the real-life Cameroon and beyond. The author serves as an inspiration for a class of leaders who genuinely prioritise the welfare of the people, championing inclusivity and compassion irrespective of linguistic and cultural differences, leaders who can be described as "true men of the people."

The term "true men of the people," when applied to political leadership, typically denotes leaders who are sincerely dedicated to addressing the needs and interests of ordinary citizens. Such leaders possess a deep understanding of the struggles, aspirations, and concerns of the general populace. They advocate for policies and initiatives that uphold fairness, social justice, and equal opportunities for all, especially for marginalised or disadvantaged groups. Acting with integrity, these leaders place the collective good above personal ambition, political careers, or external pressures.

3. 5. Conclusion

Nyamnjoh's *Married But Available* and *Mind Searching* explore the social, cultural, and psychological dimensions of contemporary African life. While both novels examine themes of identity and belonging, *Married But Available* delves into personal and social identities in a rapidly changing world, particularly as individuals navigate the interplay between traditional African values and modern influences. *Mind Searching*, on the other hand, reflects on inner struggles and the quest for a stable sense of self amidst societal pressures. Both works also address themes such as gender and relationships.

Married But Available places significant emphasis on romantic relationships, scrutinising the complexities of love, infidelity, and societal expectations surrounding marriage and gender roles. *Mind Searching* offers a broader contemplation of interpersonal relationships, considering how societal constructs shape human connections and emotions. Additionally, both novels critique the socio-economic challenges faced by individuals, including inequality, corruption, and the pressure to conform to materialistic standards. Through irony and satire, Nyamnjoh examines themes of morality and hypocrisy. *Married But Available* exposes societal hypocrisy, particularly in marriage, where external appearances often conceal personal struggles or moral failings. *Mind Searching* challenges readers to interrogate societal norms and confront the moral ambiguities embedded in personal and collective decisions.

The sociolinguistic landscape in Nyamnjoh's works reflects a departure from essentialist notions of language as a fixed marker of identity, instead celebrating linguistic hybridity as a tool for cultural negotiation and identity formation. Through the use of code-switching, code-mixing, and Pidgin English, Nyamnjoh vividly portrays the multilingual realities of Cameroon, which contribute to the Anglophone Problem. In these novels, language becomes a site of negotiation, resistance, and adaptation. This hybridity not only mirrors the socio-political complexities of Cameroon, which Nyamnjoh refers to as Mimboland, but also challenges colonial linguistic hierarchies, highlighting the creative and transformative potential of multilingualism.

Nyamnjoh's narrative strategy underscores the fluid nature of identity in a context shaped by cultural and linguistic diversity. By engaging with the binaries of Anglophone and Francophone identities and critiquing colonial legacies, he highlights the resilience and adaptability of African societies. His ethnographic fiction, rooted in both local and global realities, advocates for flexible citizenship and a reimagined sense of belonging that transcends rigid linguistic and cultural

boundaries. Ultimately, Nyamnjoh's works demonstrate that linguistic hybridity is not merely a narrative device but a profound reflection of the lived experiences and aspirations of individuals in contemporary African societies.

Through *Married But Available* and *Mind Searching*, Nyamnjoh skillfully employs code-switching and code-mixing as literary devices to explore and depict the multilingual and multicultural dynamics of Cameroon. These linguistic strategies offer a lens through which to examine the sociopolitical and cultural tensions underpinning the Anglophone Problem, where power dynamics and linguistic domination perpetuate division. Through the linguistic practices of his characters, Nyamnjoh portrays the fluidity of linguacultural identity and the adaptability of bilingual individuals who navigate the intersections of English, French, and Pidgin English.

Code-switching in Nyamnjoh's works not only highlights the hybridity and interconnectedness of Cameroonian identities but also critiques social hierarchies, marginalisation, and linguistic dominance. It underscores how language serves as both a tool of resistance and a medium for fostering solidarity, inclusion, and cultural authenticity. The interplay of intrasentential, intersentential, and extrasentential code-switching, alongside in-text translations, illustrates the vibrancy of Cameroon's multilingualism and the potential for harmonious coexistence between Anglophone and Francophone communities.

From the perspective of the Anglophone Problem, Nyamnjoh advocates for a pluralistic society that embraces linguistic diversity and challenges normative monolingualism. His works argue for transcending linguistic and cultural divides, promoting multiculturalism and mutual understanding. By leveraging the stylistic potential of code-switching and code-mixing, Nyamnjoh reflects the lived realities of a bilingual Cameroon and calls for linguistic cohabitation and the dismantling of social hierarchies. Ultimately, his narratives emphasise the power of language as a unifying force, capable of bridging divides and fostering a shared national identity and sense of belonging.

Chapter Four

Souls Forgotten and *The Disillusioned African*: A Critical Evaluation of the Anglophone Problem through Minority Discourse

4. 1. Introduction

The protection of minority rights has been a key concern in the postcolonial era. As part of nation-building efforts, some states have, for example, outlawed discrimination based on language, race, ethnicity, and religion. From this ideological framework, postcolonial scholars and writers have produced scholarly papers and even creative works that foster equality and protection of minorities. For instance, McNamara (2018) explores the ambivalent relationship between minorities and secularism in India and Sri Lanka. In his book, McNamara shows how writers who belong to the oppressed communities use secularism as a mode of expression to challenge dominant ideologies based on upper-castes and religious hierarchies. The book reveals that secularisation has created essentialised identities with tensions between majorities and minorities. Similarly, Ashfaq's "Representing the 'Other': Minority discourse in the postcolonial Indian English novel" (2018), examines how literary representation affects religious minorities in some Indian selected fiction in English. Focused on the analysis of postcolonial fiction of violence, Ashfaq asserts that these novels interrogate the politics of suppression which govern nationalist discourses, the politics of marginalisation, and exclusion of cultural and religious minorities in India.

This chapter employs minority discourse to analyse the representation of minority communities in *Souls Forgotten* and *The Disillusioned African*, exploring perceptions of minority identity. In Cameroon, the Francophone-led regime has silenced Anglophone minorities, prompting writers to use minority discourse to challenge dominant narratives. In Anglophone literature, this discourse unfolds in two distinct phases.

The first phase critiques the "othering" of colonial literature. As a critical decolonising process, Cameroonian writers produce literary texts which give a voice to the subaltern as minorities. These texts further challenge and contest marginalisation. The second phase produces literary texts which portray minority discourses as an imaginative response to the socio-political and linguacultural marginalisation. Called "horizontal" colonialism and "aesthetics of victimisation" respectively by

Emmanuel Fru Doh and Lyonga (Ashuntantang, 2016), this phase includes texts which point at the Francophone political leadership which victimises Anglophone minorities. According to Ashuntantang, the most influential writers in this period are Butake, Bate Besong and Victor Epie Ngome. These writers play the role of mobilising people against the suppression of minorities and build the foundation for a new and equal society which fosters social justice and a sense of communal belonging.

Equally, Juliana Makuchi and Francis Nyamnjoh are the two Cameroonian more contemporary writers than the others mentioned above who engage minority discourse in their creative writings. Juliana Makuchi and Francis Nyamnjoh are distinguished Cameroonian authors who explore themes of identity, marginalisation, and the experiences of minorities through minority discourse in their works. Makuchi's contributions to minority discourse examine issues of gender, ethnicity, and cultural hybridity, as reflected in her *Your Madness, Not Mine*, which portrays the struggles of individuals navigating the divide between traditional and modern identities. Nyamnjoh's works on the other hand, focus on social inequality, globalisation, and the tensions between modernity and tradition. Both authors make significant contributions to discussions surrounding inclusion, cultural diversity, and the importance of amplifying the voices of marginalised communities.

For instance, Makuchi's *Your Madness, Not Mine (1999)* is a collection of short stories which depict the domination of Anglophones by Francophones. Makuchi's minority discourse actually takes the form of feminism in which female characters are portrayed as survivors of domination. Eloise A. Brière (Ashuntantang, 2016) asserts that: "the characters [who] Makuchi creates are survivors; they are scrappy and they are strong, especially [the] women." Brière argues that Makuchi's characters shift from silence to a new mode of expression in which they claim their rights as minorities. Those characters, therefore, grow and change, indicating that they are dynamic in this context. Another creative writing based on minority discourse is Makuchi's *Accidents are a Side Show*. Originally published in 1999, it depicts the fragile relationship between minority Anglophones and majority Francophones in Cameroon. The story is about a traffic accident involving Manda (an Anglophone woman). She drives her private car and collides with a taxi driver. The incident promptly escalates into questions of identity and citizenship. As both modes of literary expression and scholarship, Makuchi's minority discourse expresses identity politics and the othering of minority Anglophones. The Francophone taxi driver, referring to her and her friend as "Anglos", quickly attacks Manda's "Anglophoness" by saying that Anglophones should remain with Nigerians. The stereotype assigned to Anglophone Cameroonians highlights the doubt over their identity as Cameroonians. They are conferred a Nigerian origin. After

reunification in 1961, Anglophone minorities are not only dominated but also treated almost as foreigners in their country. This justifies my use of the concept outsider-within in this study. Bole, in an interview with Makuchi attributes this domination to the colonial legacy (Nfah-Abbenyi, 2016). Bole further argues that Francophone Cameroonians maintain the domination of the Anglophone minorities through their attachment to France. They still receive ongoing support from France as Bole states: “when a Francophone tells you he is going home, he is thinking of Paris" (Makuchi, 2016:16). The Anglophone Problem is perceived by minorities as a form of neo-colonialism.

From the above, Makuchi and Nyamnjoh depict the Anglophone Problem with the traumatic experience minorities are going through. Cameroon Anglophone literature reflects the complex interplay of history, culture and identity, especially within the context of minority discourse. From this context, writers like Nkemngong Nkengasong, Joyce Ashuntantang and Dibussi Tande employ minority discourse as a literary expression to resist hegemonic forces.

Nkengasong’s work delves into the socio-political struggles of the Anglophone minority. One of his novel, *Across the Mongolo* (originally published in 2004, previously quoted in this study) is a critical exploration of the marginalisation of Anglophones in Cameroon and captures themes of identity alienation and resistance. Through his vivid storytelling, Nkengasong critiques the erosion of cultural and linguistic heritage and advocates for unity and identity preservation within minority communities. As a poet, Ashuntantang uses her literary voice through minority discourse to explore the double marginalisation faced by Anglophone women. The dual oppression as Anglophone and as woman highlights how socio-political marginalisation intersects with gender-based discrimination (seen in her poetry collection *A Basket of Flaming Ashes*, 2010). Tande’s poetry collection *No Turning Back: Poems of Freedom* (2009) is a profound exploration of the Anglophone struggle for recognition and autonomy. His poems are a compelling voice in the fight against marginalisation because they merge personal reflections and political commentary.

Finally, the terms Anglophone and Francophone, as Nfah-Abbenyi (2020) posits, “are endowed with complex meanings beyond being a speaker of English or a speaker of French” (171 – 172). This subsequently necessitates exploring minority discourse versus majority discourse because Anglophones represent the minority and Francophones represent the majority. Drawing on minority discourse, my intervention examines how Nyamnjoh represents it as a liberatory praxis to negotiate nationalism, belonging and flexible Cameroonian Anglophone identity. The framework of minority discourse, therefore, allows me to explore how domination of the minority

affects their flexible identity. To examine how minority discourse is used as a liberatory praxis, my intervention in this context draws on two critical readings, specifically Mamdani's theory elaborated in *Neither Settler nor Native: the Making and Unmaking of Permanent Minorities* (2021) and Ojaide's *The Theory and Aesthetics of Minority Discourses in African Literature* (2020).

In *Neither Settler nor Native*, Mahmood Mamdani advocates a fundamental reorientation of political thought: from identity-based politics to political belonging, from state-centric solutions to the reimagining of inclusive political communities, and from the language of minority rights to the dismantling of the structural frameworks that produce minority conditions. His intervention challenges both liberal and nationalist paradigms within minority discourse and calls for a transformation towards a more inclusive vision of political modernity. Mamdani offers a radical rethinking of the modern nation-state and its role in the creation of permanent political minorities. At the heart of his argument is the claim that the modern nation-state, shaped by colonial legacies, has been constructed on a foundation of violence, particularly through its division of populations into "natives" and "settlers"[34], and the consequent socio-political and legal exclusion of certain groups as minorities. In essence, Mamdani's theory compels us to re-examine how sovereignty and citizenship are constituted and to confront the ways in which they systematically exclude. Sustainable peace and justice, he argues, cannot be achieved through assimilation or the mere protection of minorities, but rather through a radical reimagining of the political order that produces the binary of majority and minority in the first place.This theoretical framework is particularly pertinent to the Anglophone Problem in Cameroon, where the Francophone-majority regime has institutionalised group identities based on colonial divisions and linguacultural distinctions.

Similarly, Tanure Ojaide's *The Theory and Aesthetics of Minority Discourses in African Literature* (2020) presents a pioneering framework for understanding and legitimising the voices of marginalised groups within African literary traditions. His work offers a theoretical and aesthetic model that is particularly relevant to my thesis, as it foregrounds the literary expressions of Africa's marginalised communities, notably in relation to the Anglophone Problem in Cameroon. Ojaide redefines African literature beyond hegemonic paradigms by asserting that genuine decolonisation necessitates the elevation of minority voices, their narrative forms, and worldviews. In this regard, literature functions both as an archive of resistance, a form of liberatory

[34] "Native" and "settler" are not just who people are, but what the state makes them become.

praxis and as a site of cultural affirmation for silenced African communities. Ojaide's central concern lies in how minority writers and communities, often overlooked or marginalised in dominant nationalist and postcolonial discourses use literature to assert identity, agency, and resistance. In a similar vein to Mahmood Mamdani, he defines minority discourse not in terms of numerical inferiority but through socio-political, economic, and linguacultural marginalisation within the nation-state. These minorities often comprise ethnic groups, peripheral regions, or linguistic communities excluded from national literary canons and policy considerations. From this perspective, Francis Nyamnjoh's literary output can be viewed as a tool of cultural survival, resisting the pressures of assimilation and documenting Anglophone Cameroonian worldviews, histories, and lived realities. In his book *Neither Settler nor Native: The Making and Unmaking of Permanent Minorities* (2020), Mahmood Mamdani introduces the concept of "permanent minorities" as a consequence of colonial and nation-state formations. He writes:

> I seek to understand colonisation as the making of permanent minorities and their maintenance through the politicisation of identity, which leads to political violence—in some cases extreme violence (p. 18).

Mamdani contends that the creation of nation-states often entails the construction of a dominant national identity, thereby consigning other groups to the status of perpetual minorities. This process, grounded in colonial practice, politicises identity and entrenches divisions that may give rise to persistent conflict. He calls for a reimagining of political communities beyond fixed identities, in the pursuit of more inclusive and equitable societies.

Moreover, Mamdani's notion of the "permanent minority" is crucial to understanding the dynamics of the Anglophone Problem. Exclusion is not accidental but is politically engineered by the Francophone-dominated regime, where minorities are denied equal citizenship and marked as inherently different. I contend that this is illustrated in *The Disillusioned African*, where the labour and contributions of rural peasants are ignored by the political elite. I will explore how systemic marginalisation leads to violence, displacement, and a diminished sense of belonging, ultimately undermining the very notion of citizenship. Based on Mamdani's framewrok, I read the narrative in *Souls Forgotten* as a reflection of the marginalisation of Anglophone communities, exemplified by the government's indifference to the victims of the Lake Abehema disaster. Their abandonment is emblematic of their exclusion from national belonging, as though their Anglophone identity renders them invisible to the state. This, I argue, exemplifies Mamdani's claim that post-independence nation-states have perpetuated colonial frameworks, thereby maintaining a logic of exclusion and unequal citizenship.

Like Ojaide, Nyamnjoh critiques the African literary establishment for privileging elite, Westernised voices while neglecting those from the margins. Both scholars advocate for a pluralistic literary theory, the one that embraces diversity and seeks to decentralise dominant languages and cultural forms in order to construct a more inclusive African literary landscape. Nyamnjoh employs literature as a lens to examine broader sociopolitical issues, particularly the marginalisation of minority identities and the disillusionment stemming from systemic inequalities. *Souls Forgotten* (SF) and *The Disillusioned African* (TDA) provide fertile ground for a critical analysis of the Anglophone Problem in Cameroon. This chapter offers an in-depth evaluation of the Anglophone Problem through the framework of minority discourse as portrayed in these selected texts.

Souls Forgotten is the story of Emmanuel Kwanga whose family and other villagers invested hope in him as a saviour of his people after his studies. Unfortunately, the French-based academic curriculum at the University of Asieyam excludes him. This academic guillotine prevents Emmanuel from achieving his dreams. A disaster damages his village Abehema following the explosion of Lake Abehema from unknown causes. Subsequently, both humans and animals are killed. As minorities, Abehema villagers are denied humanitarian assistance. The foreign aid and assistance are embezzled by the people appointed by the government. Minorities are marginalised in the novel because of their linguistic and geographical belonging. Kwanga decides to return to his village and sets up a non-governmental organisation (NGO) to assist the discriminated members of his community.

In *The Disillusioned African*, Charles who moved from Mimboland to Manchester to study returns home. His communications contained in a series of letters to Moungo reveal frustrations caused by colonial legacy in Mimboland. He observes the difference between England and Mimboland, where politicians and the elite crush the peasants who do their best to produce without any assistance from the government. Peasants are exploited through taxes, but Mimboland does not progress at all. The fact that Charles is involved in several incidents in Congo Kinshasa and his home country does not stop him from his commitment to work for the marginalised. He withdraws to Bamenda and Douala before retiring to Menchum Division in order to revolutionise the marginalised members of his community.

There is limited existing literature on *Souls Forgotten* and *The Disillusioned African*. Nevertheless, some literary critics have previously reviewed these two novels. For instance, Benjamin Fishkin's analysis of *Souls Forgotten* in the book, *The Repressed Expressed: Novel*

Perspectives on African and Black Diasporic Literature (Ndi & Ankumah, 2017: 82), examines education and democracy. Yosimbom similarly writes a chapter in the same book whereby he analyses *The Disillusioned African*, drawing on the concepts of domination and superiority. Additionally, Ambanasom (2009) analyses *The Disillusioned African* from the Marxist perspective, looking at alienation as a condition imposed on the minorities. Finally, Artwell Nhemachena (2010) explores the binary opposition between the modern and the traditional in *Souls Forgotten.*

This chapter examines how minority discourse intersects with Nyamnjoh's ethnographic fiction. In so doing, the following question guides my investigation: how does Nyamnjoh imagine minority discourse as a liberatory praxis to negotiate nationalism, belonging and flexible Cameroonian Anglophone identity? From this main question, I centre this chapter on four main sections. The first section introduces and problematises minority discourse and the second section examines how Nyamnjoh portrays the perceptions of majorities versus those of the minorities on the Anglophone problem. The third section analyses how the linguistic domination of minority Anglophones affects their identities and or citizenship. The last section deals with minority discourse as a liberation praxis to challenge the domination in *Souls Forgotten* (SF) and *The Disillusioned African* (TDA). From the scope of this analysis, my study is in conversation with Joyce Ashuntantang through her contributing chapter on the "Anglophone Cameroon Literature" in the *Routledge Handbook of Minority Discourses in African Literature* (2022).

The *Routledge Handbook of Minority Discourses in African Literature* provides a comprehensive overview of various minority discourses across the African continent, addressing issues related to politics, language, gender, and more. Ashuntantang's contribution (2022: 62 – 76) offers valuable insights into the complexities of Anglophone Cameroonian literature and its place within the broader African literary landscape.

In her chapter on "Anglophone Cameroon Literature", Joyce Ashuntantang offers a critical intervention in the field of African minority discourses by foregrounding the literary output of Anglophone Cameroonians as a distinct and politically charged body of work. Her contribution situates this literature within the broader context of postcolonial resistance, cultural affirmation, and identity politics, highlighting its vital role in confronting marginalisation and linguistic subjugation within the Cameroonian nation-state. Ashuntantang positions Anglophone Cameroonian literature both as a product of minority experience and as a critique of minority status, serving as a voice for a historically silenced community within a fractured postcolonial nation. Ashuntantang's work critically examines how Anglophone Cameroonian literature

emerges from and responds to its minority status within the nation, highlighting the complexities of cultural and linguistic identity in postcolonial Africa. In her seminal work *Landscaping Postcoloniality: The Dissemination of Cameroon Anglophone Literature* (2009), she addresses the dual role of Anglophone Cameroonian literature as both a product of minority experience and a critique of that status. She asserts:

> The pattern of production and dissemination of Anglophone Cameroon literature is not only framed by the minority status of English and English-speaking Cameroonians within the Republic of Cameroon, but is also a reflection of a postcolonial reality in Africa... (42)

This perspective underscores how Anglophone Cameroonian literature emerges from a context of marginalisation, serving as a voice for a historically silenced community within a fractured postcolonial nation.

From the perspective of minority identity and language politics, Ashuntantang underscores the significance of language, specifically English as a marker of minority identity in a predominantly Francophone context. Chapter three of this study has illustrated how this linguistic dynamic is further complicated by Nyamnjoh's use of code-switching, code-mixing, and Cameroonian Pidgin English, which together reflect the struggles of a linguacultural minority striving to assert legitimacy and retain identity within national and literary discourses. This makes Ashuntantang's conception of Anglophone literature as minority discourse particularly relevant to my study, as it echoes the thematic concerns explored in Nyamnjoh's ethnographic fiction, notably oppression, identity, displacement, alienation, and the politics of belonging.

In my study, minority discourse can be understood as a form of resistance and a celebration of heterogeneity in the context of the Anglophone Problem by examining how it challenges dominant narratives and highlights the diversity of identities, perspectives and experiences within historically marginalised groups. My analysis of Nyamnjoh's novels focuses on aspects of minority discourse that explore resistance to dominant power structures, whereby minority discourse serves as a counter-narrative to hegemonic power structures, which, in the case of the Anglophone Problem, might include colonial legacies, centralised governance, and linguacultural dominance. My analysis emphasises the heterogeneity within marginalised groups, underscoring that these communities are far from being monolithic. Ultimately, I examine minority discourse as a form of activism, exploring how narratives and declarations within this discourse draw attention to systemic inequalities and injustices faced by Anglophone populations. Furthermore, I consider minority discourse as a dialogic space, arguing that the articulation of grievances creates

opportunities for dialogue and compels recognition of pluralistic identities within a national context. A close reading of Nyamnjoh's *Souls Forgotten* (2008) and *The Disillusioned African* (2007) centres Nyamnjoh's thematic engagement challenges the political rhetoric of domination. Therefore, I argue that despite the fact that Nyamnjoh challenges this domination through the unbalanced power dynamics between English and French, his ethnographic fiction advocates for a linguaculturally diversified Cameroon which accepts and includes all Cameroonians – where conviviality[35] is prevalent.

Cameroon is fragmented by the Anglophone problem. Makuchi and Nyamnjoh's creative works show that this fragmentation is a result of "Anglophone" and "Francophone" constructed identities which serve to control rather than to unify (Nyamnjoh, 2017; Makuchi, 2020). In these conditions, Nyamnjoh's protagonists become victims of the domination of French over English. They become, therefore, individuals without agency, which further indicates the existence of linguacultural hierarchies of belonging.

4. 2. The Anglophone Problem: Perceptions of Majorities versus Minorities

In their scholarly book *Negotiating an Anglophone identity: A study of the politics of recognition and representation in Cameroon* (2003); Konings and Nyamnjoh (2003) recommend that in order to have a better insight on the Anglophone Problem, consideration should be given to also looking at the views of the majority Francophones, because listening to one side of the story may result in biased conclusions. Therefore, in this section, I also examine the perceptions of majority Francophones on the Anglophone Problem and how they treat their counterpart Anglophones.
Perceptions of domination which Nyamnjoh portrays can be interpreted from Fanon's idea of national consciousness. Normally, national consciousness should be the all-embracing crystallisation of the Cameroonian people's innermost hopes after the reunification of the two regions since 1961.

Through this book, Fanon discusses the socio-political and cultural implications of the dehumanising effects of colonisation on the individual. It is the same way Nyamnjoh's portrayal of the Anglophone Problem in *Souls Forgotten* and *The Disillusioned African* discusses, through

[35] Nyamnjoh's idea of conviviality invites reflection on how societies can embrace complexity, contradictions, and diversity, fostering spaces where different groups can coexist and thrive despite the tensions and challenges inherent in human interactions.

the minority discourse, the psychological effects of domination on minorities and the challenges of membership acceptance.

Fanon proposes violence as one of the alternative solutions to overcoming colonisation and neocolonialism. He argues that because there was no negotiation between the oppressors and the natives to dispossess them from their land, there should be no friendly negotiation for decolonisation. Fanon regrettably observes that when the oppressor chose to divide and rule, national consciousness becomes questionably weak after independence. As a result, the new political elite "secure their slice of the independence cake". Corruption, domination, nepotism become endemic, which is the continuity of the colonial system as Charles, in *The Disillusioned African* complains:

> The crimes that the African continent commits against her kind are of a dimension and, unfortunately, of a nature that appears to constantly provoke memories of the historic wrongs inflicted on that continent by others. There are moments when it almost appears as if there is a diabolically continuity. (TDA, 50)

The excerpt above addresses the persistence of systemic issues such as corruption, domination, and nepotism in post-colonial African societies, arguing that these problems are not merely remnants of colonial rule but have evolved into self-sustaining challenges. Charles's lament in *The Disillusioned African* reflects a critical perspective on the enduring impact of historical injustices, such as colonial exploitation, on the governance and societal structures of African nations. The phrase "a diabolical continuity" is particularly striking, as it implies a deliberate, almost sinister perpetuation of these issues, now inflicted by Africans upon themselves. This sentiment highlights the complexity of post-colonial identity, where external oppression becomes internalised and systemic, perpetuating a cycle of harm.

The passage also underscores a profound irony: the injustices historically imposed on Africa by external powers now find parallels in the actions of African leaders and institutions towards their own people. This mirrors the broader discourse in post-colonial theory, emphasising how the effects of colonialism remain deeply entrenched, shaping power dynamics and societal behaviours long after formal independence. From this reflection, my analysis encourages readers to consider the interplay between historical legacy and contemporary responsibility, urging a critical examination of how these issues might be addressed to break free from such cycles of "diabolical" continuity.

According to protagonist Charles, the ruling class, the new political elite and the urbanites are to blame in this situation because they are and remain the cause of the current political condition in Africa. I further note with consternation that the new political elite have adopted dictatorship as a mode of leadership which needs sophisticated methods to uproot. In fact, the protagonist observes the same thing as in Fanon's observation of the colonial and neocolonial systems when he says:

> What we are witnessing are the signs of a crumbling system, one deaf and blind to the needs and wishes of our people. One in which the stomach has for thirty years been the only political compass. (TDA, 220)

This passage from *The Disillusioned African* presents a compelling critique of political systems that prioritise self-interest and personal gain over the collective good. The metaphor of the "stomach" as the "only political compass" epitomises the pervasive greed and corruption that have prevailed for decades. This imagery criticises leaders who act solely in their own interests, neglecting the needs and aspirations of their people. The reference to a "crumbling system" not only highlights systemic failure but also foreshadows an inevitable collapse due to an inability to adapt or address widespread discontent. By being "deaf and blind," the system symbolises apathy and a refusal to engage with the voices of the governed, further alienating the populace.

From the above quotation, I observe that Nyamnjoh captures the disillusionment experienced by many Africans with regard to post-independence governance, where promises of prosperity and equity have often been supplanted by authoritarianism and exploitation. The quotation calls for introspection and reform, urging systems to prioritise accountability and the welfare of the people over selfish ambitions.The protagonist is even shocked at observing that "in fact, Africa's greatest enemy is its leaders" (TDA, 44). Fanon's approach to minority discourse advocates combating colonialism and neocolonialism through violent upheaval or any other available means, while Nyamnjoh's perspective portrays minority discourse as a non-violent literary struggle, urging participants to fully leverage both their strengths and weaknesses. As Charles in *The Disillusioned African* declares: "The violence and bloodshed show the tyrant as cornered and desperate, and with a little more effort and coordination on our part, tyranny would have met Waterloo" (TDA, 220). The quote from Charles in Nyamnjoh's *The Disillusioned African* encapsulates a profound moment of reflection on the nature of tyranny and resistance. The reference to "Waterloo" serves as a metaphor for ultimate defeat, suggesting that tyranny is not invincible but vulnerable when confronted with organised and determined opposition. This statement underscores the potential power of collective action and coordination in dismantling oppressive systems. It also implies a pivotal moment where perseverance can tip the scales, highlighting the moral and strategic aspects

of resistance movements. Majority discourse encourages servitude and domination to silence the deprived. Given that the instrument of majority discourse for domination is violence, I note and concur with Nyamnjoh that the non-violent approach can be the best tactic to get rid of domination.

The concept of victimhood is equally relevant in this chapter for a better understanding of the minority discourse in Nyamnjoh's depiction of the Anglophone Problem. Victimhood in literature examines the psychological effects of characters based on their socio-political experience in a given context. Scholars and literary critics have explored the theme of victimhood in African literature. To mention a few, Muhwati (2005) reviews Shona novels to problematise victimhood in Zimbabwe. Examining the crisis of identity, Muhwati's analysis concludes that the clash between Shona and Western cultures is the cause of the victimisation of the Shona people in Zimbabwe (16 – 17). Cyril Adonis (2018) explores generational victimhood in post-apartheid South Africa from a historical perspective and concludes that human rights violations victimised black descendants. Analysing the trauma which apartheid caused, Adonis argues that victimhood affects current generations and could even affect future generations in South Africa (48). According to Adonis, victimhood is a trauma based on history, beliefs or cultural origin of an individual which is unjustifiable by any standard with a constant fear of retaliation from the aggressor at any time.

Looking at the Anglophone Problem in Cameroon, victimhood comes from the colonial legacy. Therefore, in most cases, the victim has the perception that the world is indifferent to his/her plight. From this point of view, victimhood encompasses legal, socio-political and cultural factors. Putting Adonis' idea and the Anglophone Problem together, I assert that victimhood produces an unequal and fragmented society, which subsequently reproduces a generational victimhood, resulting in minoritisation. When a group of people are minoritised, hierarchies of belonging are also reproduced. Being minoritised is about power dynamics and inequity. I observe from *Souls Forgotten* and *The Disillusioned African* that it is evident that domination psychologically affects Nyamnjoh's characters. They are minoritised because of their identities and belonging. Anglophones are minoritised because of their linguacultural identity. This domination is not necessarily a numerically-based one, although Anglophones are a numerical minority, but it lies in the disproportionate treatment of those in the fringes, the Mimbolanders who are excluded.

My understanding of victimhood in *The Disillusioned African* surfaces a perception of neo-colonialism. The theme of victimhood in Nyamnjoh's *The Disillusioned African* is intricately linked to a perception of neo-colonialism, reflecting how postcolonial Africa struggles with the

persistence of colonial legacies within its social, economic, and political structures. Nyamnjoh examines how the African identity is shaped and constrained by these ongoing external influences. The notion of victimhood emerges as a central motif, with many characters in the novel experiencing a sense of powerlessness or alienation within a system that seems to perpetuate the inequalities of the colonial era. This feeling of being trapped in a cycle of exploitation and subjugation is further exacerbated by the failure of post-independence leadership to break free from the structures of neocolonialism. Exploitation in *The Disillusioned African* is symbolised by cartoon of Africa as a cow being milked by a black leader under the strict supervision of a seemingly fat white businessman (TDA, 17). All the product milked from Africa is taken away by the fat white businessman. Charles complains about the exploitation of peasants: "The tragedy of the African peasant today is that, unlike in the past, he is exploited" (TDA, 33). The bitter reality for Charles is that not even a single peasant represents fellow others in the political parties which pretend to voice the rights of the marginalised.

In *The Disillusioned African*, the protagonist is presented as a victim. Charles becomes a victim of the closure of the Department of African Philosophy. This closure also shuts down his ambitions. To go to Congo, he boards the same SABENA flight to Kinshasa with an opposition leader returning from exile. He is again a victim when Mobutu's repressive forces attack the airport, and Charles gets injured and loses his personal effects (TDA, 240). He is medically evacuated and repatriated to Cameroon where he spends three weeks at the Laquintini Hospital. His arm is amputated but healed. After healing from his injuries, Charles decides to withdraw to Bamenda and becomes again the victim of another incident during a riot and consequently loses the remaining arm. He finally moves to Douala at Moungo's before retiring to Menchum Division (TDA, 242). To sum up, Nyamnjoh's protagonist experiences the psychological and physical effects of victimhood.

Despite the fact that Charles is a victim of so many incidents, he keeps being optimistic and hopeful when he declares: "Whenever the rays of change do at last penetrate the darkening thickness of our suffocating jungles, it shall be the result of a massive all-involving effort, the fruit of our collective suffering" (TDA, 240). The passage from Nyamnjoh's *The Disillusioned African* is a profoundly evocative reflection on the transformative potential of collective effort and shared suffering in addressing systemic challenges. The metaphorical language, particularly "the rays of change" and "the darkening thickness of our suffocating jungles," suggests a transition from oppression and stagnation towards enlightenment and progress. The imagery captures both the difficulty of escaping entrenched conditions and the hope that such transformation is achievable.

The phrase "massive all-involving effort" highlights the significance of unity and collective action, indicating that meaningful change cannot be achieved in isolation but requires the active participation and commitment of all of those affected. Similarly, "the fruit of our collective suffering" suggests that shared hardship can serve as a unifying force, fostering resilience and a shared sense of purpose. This passage can be interpreted as a critique of individualism and a recognition of the interconnected nature of struggles within societies grappling with profound structural inequalities. It advocates for solidarity and perseverance in the pursuit of progress, acknowledging that such progress is often hard-won and born out of adversity.This, takes us back to Fanon's idea of national consciousness, arguing that the nation normally should be a kind of crystallisation of hopes for all people. Unfortunately, Fanon observes that the national consciousness of the post-independence elite is just an empty shell. Hope and optimism for a change can be possible only if the minorities fight back to liberate themselves. Inactive minorities who surrender will never see their dreams to set themselves free realised.

In *Souls Forgotten*, Emmanuel appears to be of this kind when he has dropped out of the university. He does nothing to change his situation but rather spends time in bars drinking beer. He even refuses to look for a job but instead challenges Patience (his girlfriend): "You who persist in making me feel guilty for not working. Where have you found a job of the type I have just described" (SF, 81)? He violently reacts when Patience advises him to get at least a small job as a house boy or a hotel receptionist: "Because you insist, let me repeat what I've said many times before: cleaning cups and serving drinks is not what my parents bargained for when they sent me to school" (SF, 83). Instead of continuously lamenting, Emmanuel should get a job and change his life. However, as far as agency is concerned, Emmanuel is a dynamic character. He makes up his mind that he must do something to reverse his situation. This change journey starts when he first of all questions himself: "Should we cease living each time we cannot realise our big dreams?" (SF, 82). The answer to Emmanuel's question is also found in the narrative: "Failure is not going to mean the end of the world" (SF, 7). After dropping out of the university, Emmanuel needs time to take control of his fate and that of his fellow villagers who invested hope on him. As the saviour of his people, he represents a man with determination and courage who takes the destiny of his community seriously in hand and changes their fate after the painful experience of disaster.

The majority domination of Anglophones induces the idea of Francophone Cameroonians that there is no Anglophone Problem in the country. This ignorance makes the ignorant inactive. Instead of developing mechanisms for moving the nation forward, they do nothing, thinking that the nation is very fine. The Anglophone Problem to them is just an excuse used by separatists. The

extract of President Biya's speech held in Bamenda, dated 13 December 1991, clearly illustrates it (Konings & Nyamnjoh, 2003):

> Mind you, at the start of this century Cameroonians were neither Anglophones nor Francophones. Why should the wars of others and the culture of others divide Cameroonians at the dawn of the third millennium? (150)

President Biya's speech extract highlights a poignant reflection on the socio-political identity of Cameroonians. His remark underscores a key idea supported by the majority discourse: the divisions based on colonial legacies (Anglophone and Francophone distinctions) are external impositions that do not inherently define the essence of Cameroon's identity. The phrase "at the dawn of the third millennium" carries an aspirational tone, urging Cameroonians to transcend these inherited divisions as they move into a new era. It advocates for a collective identity based on shared values and aspirations, rather than colonial dichotomies. This quotation is inspired by majority discourse and enforces the unitary state without acknowledging the existence of minorities with their problems. Similarly, Mono Ndjana (Konings & Nyamnjoh, 2003: 153) ignoring the Anglo-Francophone divide, argues that the Cameroonian population is homogeneous, one and indivisible.

Emmanuel is a victim of his failure in *Souls Forgotten* is seen as "inclination to see his mishaps as intended consequences of conspiracies by the powerful against him and the downtrodden folks" (SF, 146). He blames his failure on a corrupt system and academic cannibalism of which he is a victim. The disorder and corruption which dominates the University of Asieyam in providing accommodation is indicative of the domination of minorities. This domination transforms identity and creates and enforces wealth among majorities. The French-speaking system actually dominates the university of Asieyam and frustrates Anglophones. This power dynamic translates to a kind of domination termed by Yosimbom as "Francophonisation of the educational system". From the victimhood perspective, it is called "the Anglophonization of the Lake Abehema Disaster" (Yosimbom, 2021):

> When compared to the Francophones, the others are still the minors for whom the Francophones, the adults of Mimbolandian world, have to continue to take charge. In Mimboland, the worldview and constructions of the Anglophone have remained "minor." (1)

To Yosimbom, the majority perceptions are that Anglophones remain a small group of individuals to assimilate. Despite of their differing heritage, they must acquire Francophone culture and mode

of life. from the above, I can attribute the majority discourse to Francophone identity, which I view as a self-serving ideology imagined in the centre to which all minority discourses pushed to the margins must be subordinated (Cuddon, 2014; Mohamed & Lloyd, 2014). Yosimbom (2018) further considers majority discourse as a force which governs an antagonist community to inherently deserve more and special treatment while ignoring others. The illusion of hierarchies of belonging characterises majority discourse in this context. The consequences of domination of minorities can be visible as majority discourse comes with the hazardous behaviours that majorities display.

4. 3. Linguistic Domination affecting Minorities

Linguistic domination is a central theme in *Souls Forgotten*, illustrating how language can marginalise and disempower minority groups, particularly Anglophones in a predominantly Francophone society. Set in a context reminiscent of post-colonial Cameroon, the novel explores the struggles of linguistic minorities navigating a system that privileges one language and culture over others. Such linguistic domination negatively impacts Anglophones, who are often excluded from key societal processes such as education, employment, and governance, as the dominant language (French) serves as the primary medium for upward social mobility. Additionally, linguistic domination suppresses Anglophone identity and culture. The novel highlights how prioritising French marginalises English and its associated cultural expressions, contributing to feelings of alienation and the erosion of cultural heritage. Ultimately, the linguistic marginalisation of Anglophones fosters a sense of inferiority and frustration. For instance, Emmanuel, the protagonist, grapples with identity crises as he is forced to either conform to the dominant linguistic culture or risk ostracism.

Marginalisation, however, engenders resistance and resilience at the same time. Despite challenges, Anglophones in the novel demonstrate resilience by forming communities that preserve their language and culture. This resistance underscores the tension between assimilation and cultural preservation in the face of linguistic domination.

In *Souls Forgotten*, domination by the majorities is perceived in the imposition of the French language in the educational system throughout the entire Mimboland (Cameroon). This subsequently violates the agreements to preserve and promote the cultural heritage of Anglophone minorities as per the provisions of the reunification of 1961. The strong unitary state of the

Cameroonian nation also imposes the Francophone system in all domains. Therefore, it results in the domination of Anglophone minorities.

In the field of transport and communication for instance, Bernard Fonlon (Konings & Nyamnjoh, 2003) notes the change of driving rules from left to right as in the French-speaking regions. Economically, the Franc (FCFA) has replaced sterling as the legal tender. He regretfully remarks that there has been no Francophone system aligned with the Anglophone (57). Moreover, there has been no reciprocity in this situation where Anglophone system has been introduced in Francophone regions. If it is agreed that language is the first element of culture, I therefore concur with Fonlon that there is no culture without language and there is no language without culture. From this assumption, I infer that language plays a critical role in identity formation. The domination of French, the language of the majority at the University of Asieyam questions the bilingual status of Mimboland. This shows that bilingualism in this nation seems to be and remains theoretical.

In Souls Forgotten, French, as the dominant language, is granted prestigious national roles over English across nearly all sectors, including education. Nyamnjoh portrays this linguistic domination through allegorical representations, respectively assigning the names Muzungulandish and Tougalish to French and English respectively in *Souls Forgotten*. Muzungulandish imposes itself as the language of teaching and research at the university:

> What! The lead article is in Tougalish? Perhaps this is the beginning of the long-awaited change in this institution. Sometimes, articles had to be translated into Muzungulandish to make them publishable. Isn't it ironic that the Faculty of Social Thought gave a Tougalish name to its journal? (SF, 4)

In such a dominant system, Francophone majorities perceive the minority Anglophones as if they do not exist. Even if they exist, they are outsiders who must comply with the argument of force and not the force of the argument. Subsequently, the French-dominated educational system automatically excludes Anglophones. This is the cause of Emmanuel's academic failure. Nyamnjoh incisively qualifies such a marginalising system as an unacceptable imprisonment which forces the Anglophone minority to failure. Education for Emmanuel in this case is just an incompatible and ineffective world because his ambitions are blocked.

Similarly, Baker (2015) examines bilingualism in Cameroon and observes the frustrations of Anglophone patients who are treated by Francophone doctors. These doctors show no interest in English but complain that "Cameroon is bilingual but not Cameroonians". Constitutionally and

officially, Cameroon is bilingual, recognising both French and English as official languages. This bilingualism is intended to reflect the country's dual colonial heritage from France and Britain. Policies and official documents promote the idea of equality between the two languages, and institutions such as the National Bilingualism and Multiculturalism Commission are tasked with fostering harmony. However, while the state promotes bilingualism in theory, the reality for most Cameroonians is quite different. The majority of French-speaking Cameroonians (Francophones) rarely use or learn English effectively, and vice versa. This creates a divide, where bilingualism exists more as an aspirational policy than as a lived reality for citizens.

"Cameroon is bilingual but not Cameroonians" confirms what Nyamnjoh (2006) calls "cosmetic bilingualism"[36] which critiques the way linguistic diversity is often celebrated in theory but not effectively implemented or valued in practice. In the specific context of Cameroon, where the novel is set, cosmetic bilingualism refers to the country's official adoption of both English and French as national languages. However, this bilingualism often exists more as a façade, with French tending to dominate in political, economic, and social spheres, leaving English marginalised. This results in linguistic inequities and a lack of genuine inclusion or mutual respect for both linguistic groups. The Anglophone identity is melted into the Francophone system and the loss of identity becomes imminent. Most among the vulnerable minority like Emmanuel Kwanga are simply forgotten. Nyamnjoh thus interrogates the importance of bilingualism in a society whereby one linguistic community dominates another and attempts to suppress the other through an assimilationist policy. This policy regards Anglophone culture as inferior to the Francophone.

The linguistic domination is manifested in the form of power inequality, observed when Emmanuel is forced by the soldier to speak French as he threatens Emmanuel:

> "*P-p-parlez Mm-muu-zzzu-ngulandais*!" the soldier stammered. "*J-j-je n-ne c-c-comprend pas Tougalais*," he pulled a wry rebuking face, his stammers worsened when he heard Emmanuel's Tougalish, which was as irritating to him as the sound of a mosquito during siesta. (SF, 113)

In addition, the domination as portrayed by the author is not only linguistic but also cultural. To illustrate, in *Souls Forgotten*, despite the fact that Emmanuel and Patience are now living together as a couple, they do not share the same cultural perceptions. That cultural difference exists even between Emmanuel and Patience:

[36] Refers to the superficial or performative use of bilingualism within a sociopolitical or cultural context.

> […] hailing from a different part of Mimboland than he did, Patience had enormous cultural differences, differences which were a barrier to their sharing common meaning on certain culturally specific occurrences… (SF, 101)
>
> And to think we are bilingual Mimboland, bilingual in Muzungulandish and Tougalish. (SF, 114)

It is worth mentioning that due to the above patterns of domination, and given the situation of minorities, specifically the power dynamics, Nyamnjoh advocates for a renegotiation and reconstruction of the worldview of the minorities. This has to be done, according to Nyamnjoh, in the light of equality of opportunities while treating each other as equal partners. For this reason, I analyse his novels through minority discourse as a liberation praxis to explore how he challenges domination and renegotiates a flexible citizenship.

4. 4. Minority Discourse as a Liberatory Praxis to resist Minoritisation

In this section, I explore how marginalised or minoritised groups can utilise their voices, experiences, and cultural practices as instruments for liberation and resistance. From this standpoint, I contend that minority discourse, when employed as a liberatory praxis, becomes a vital mechanism for countering the forces that seek to marginalise or oppress such groups. In this context, "minoritisation" refers to the systematic process by which certain groups are rendered less important, less valuable, or less powerful within a society. This process frequently results in social, political, and economic marginalisation.

The liberatory praxis involves a deliberate effort to resist oppressive structures and to champion freedom and justice. In the case of minority discourse, it entails leveraging language, culture, and social engagement to confront and dismantle the systems that perpetuate the oppression and minoritisation of certain groups. Minoritisation is not merely a social phenomenon but also a political process that diminishes the status and opportunities available to specific groups. By engaging in a liberatory praxis, minoritised groups actively resist this process, reclaim their narratives, and assert their rights. Such resistance may take various forms, including activism, art, literature, and community organisation.

In the 1980s, JanMohamed introduced the notion of minority discourse in the analysis of psychological effects on characters of novels in postcolonial literature. In one of his critical papers

on the nature and context of minority discourse, JanMohamed argues that the neo-colonialist hegemony of the contemporary era is basically informed by the consent of the minority to be dominated. Abdul R. JanMohamed's "Humanism and Minority Literature: Toward a Definition of Counter-Hegemonic Discourse," published in *The New Centennial Review* in 1984 examines how neo-colonial hegemony is perpetuated through the psychological internalisation of Western values by minority groups, leading to a kind of consensual domination. JanMohamed further argues that the political nature of minority literature is often repressed by various forms of humanism. He therefore concludes that the processes of colonisation and pseudo-emancipation are inherently political, consequently, education being the means through which minority writers learn the dominant language and culture has a psychological influence on those minority writers. This is perceived as an immersion in the politics of domination and subordination which constitutes a major and inescapable ingredient of the psychic and social formation of minority writers (Parry, 2023: 714-747). From this point of view, I assert that while being submissive, the minorities make majorities powerful, especially when they do not resist domination.

From a postcolonial perspective, Mbembe's *On the Postcolony* (2001) contends that both rulers and subjects share an aesthetic of power. In this context, the aesthetic of power pertains not merely to physical control or domination but also to its representation and lived experience. Both rulers and subjects internalise this aesthetic, wherein the ruler's image of strength and omnipotence is juxtaposed with the subject's image of helplessness or resignation. Despite that Mbembe's book does not explicitly engage with the Anglophone question in Cameroon, his incisive reflections on power, subjectivity, and the complexities of postcolonial African states strongly resonate with themes found in Francis B. Nyamnjoh's fiction.

Nyamnjoh's fiction richly integrates and animates Mbembe's postcolonial themes, particularly those concerning state power, identity, and the performative nature of citizenship in the African postcolony. In works such as *The Travail of Dieudonné* and *Digital Uprising: The Flower of Freedom in Mimboland*, Nyamnjoh dramatises the absurdities and excesses of state authority, echoing Mbembe's depiction of power in the postcolony as both grotesque and banal. Characters in Nyamnjoh's novels frequently confront a state that is at once omnipresent and hollow, what Mbembe terms a "commandement" that demands ritual loyalty while often failing to meet its obligations.

Identity in Nyamnjoh's Mimboland is unstable, performative, and under constant negotiation, a direct literary parallel to Mbembe's concept of postcolonial subjectivity, wherein individuals must

continually manoeuvre through overlapping layers of domination, mimicry, and improvisation. For example, in *The Travail of Dieudonné*, the protagonist's fractured sense of self and linguistic hybridity ("I am a nothing man. I am l'homme falsifié par la vérité") reflect the psychological dislocations and alienations that Mbembe identifies as central to postcolonial identity. The fusion of English and French here underscores the distortions of colonial legacy and the continued search for authenticity in a society shaped by foreign impositions.

Furthermore, Nyamnjoh's use of satire and irony aligns with Mbembe's emphasis on the carnivalesque nature of power in the postcolony. In *Digital Uprising*, the state's surveillance and authoritarian posture are undermined by popular resistance, folk humour, and digital defiance, illustrating the interplay between coercion and creativity that Mbembe sees as vital to postcolonial political life. Through storytelling, Nyamnjoh gives form to the ambivalences of postcolonial governance: the intimacy between rulers and ruled, the coexistence of complicity and defiance in everyday life, and the capacity of ordinary citizens to contest official narratives.

Ultimately, Nyamnjoh transforms Mbembe's abstract theoretical reflections into textured, lived experiences. His characters embody the contradictions Mbembe describes, both victims and agents, silenced and expressive, marginalised yet resourceful. In doing so, Nyamnjoh not only narrativises postcolonial power and identity but also contributes to knowledge-making that complements and deepens Mbembe's critical vision. The Anglophone Problem, as depicted in Nyamnjoh's ethnographic fiction and other creative writings by other Cameroonians presents a similar picture of domination of the minorities by the majorities. Most of these Anglophone Cameroonian writers call for resistance and liberation in one way or another.

Moving on, one question emerges: why should Anglophones resist minoritisation? Answering this question requires to look at the concept of citizenship as portrayed by Nyamnjoh and his fellow Anglophone writers. Nyamnjoh represents citizenship from a similar perspective as Bate Besong. Besong's historical play, *The Banquet* (1994) portrays domination and loss of identity, which questions citizenship. Nyamnjoh is then inspired by Besong and to some degree by Spivak's *Can the Subaltern Speak?* (2009). Nyamnjoh considers minorities as subaltern under the domination of majorities. Being submitted to the authority of President Longstay in Mimboland, those minorities have to free themselves from subjugation. The theme of resistance in literature was explored by literary critic Ghassan Kanafani (Cuddon, 2014). Kanafani's work, particularly his involvement in the Palestinian literary and political movements, placed a distinct emphasis on resistance against colonialism, occupation, and oppression in the Middle East. His writings,

including both his critiques and fiction, highlight the role of literature in opposing political and social injustice. However, he was not the first to address resistance in a broader literary context. His contribution was unique in its specific political context and the way he intertwined resistance with national liberation, yet the theme itself had long been explored across various cultures and historical periods.

Similarly, Barbara Harlow's *Resistance Literature* (1987) is a seminal work in postcolonial studies that examines the role of literature in resistance movements. Harlow explores how writers from colonised or oppressed societies use literature as a tool for political resistance, highlighting the power of narrative to challenge domination and give voice to marginalised communities. The book discusses works of fiction, poetry, and drama from various contexts, particularly focusing on texts written in the wake of political oppression, war, and social injustice. Harlow draws on a range of examples, including writers from Latin America, Africa, and the Middle East, to illustrate how literature can embody and shape political resistance. She argues that literature does not merely reflect social realities but can actively participate in the transformation of society by offering alternative narratives to dominant ones. The work also engages with critical theory, especially the relationship between culture and politics, and examines how literary forms evolve in response to colonial or neocolonial pressures. *Resistance Literature* has had a lasting influence on the field of postcolonial literary studies, offering a theoretical framework for understanding how literature and political resistance intersect. Harlow's book introduced the political role of literature in armed struggle (McNamara, 2018). Highlighting the political role of resistance in literature, specifically in the liberation movements of the Global South in the 20th century, it denotes non-violent resistance of the subaltern to hegemony and challenges the literature produced under occupation.

Resistance is one of the central themes in both Nyamnjoh's *Souls Forgotten* and *The Disillusioned African*, though it is explored in distinct ways in each work. These texts reflect on the broader socio-political and cultural struggles in post-colonial Africa, as well as individual attempts to challenge various forms of oppression, alienation, and exploitation. In analysing *Souls Forgotten* and *The Disillusioned African*, I argue that Nyamnjoh's works highlight the diverse forms of resistance in African societies, focusing not only on external struggles but also on the internal and ideological battles individuals face in navigating post-colonial realities.

In *Souls Forgotten*, resistance is primarily depicted as a personal and collective struggle against cultural erasure and the persistence of colonial legacies. Emmanuel, the protagonist in this narrative is caught between his traditional roots and the overwhelming influence of colonial

structures and modernity. The "forgotten souls" represent those Mimbolanders who have been marginalised, displaced, or silenced by the dominant majority. These individuals resist oppression through cultural practices and personal choices that challenge both the dominance of the colonial legacy and the pressures of contemporary Cameroonian identities that have shaped citizenship. Nyamnjoh uses this character to explore how African people continue to resist cultural assimilation and the loss of identity imposed by both colonialism and globalisation. The narrative suggests that resistance can take subtle forms, such as reclaiming cultural values, asserting local languages, and maintaining a sense of heritage in the face of alienation.

In *The Disillusioned African*, resistance is explored more explicitly as a political and intellectual rebellion against the failures of post-colonial governance and the betrayal of revolutionary ideals. The disillusionment reflected in the work stems from the realisation that many African leaders have perpetuated systems of oppression and corruption, mirroring the colonial powers they once fought against. Such failures reveal the neo-colonial character of their governance. Here, resistance takes the form of critical engagement with the socio-political status quo, as well as a rejection of the notion that independence has led to true freedom for African societies. Nyamnjoh's portrayal of *The disillusioned African* reveals an internal resistance, as the characters confront their own complicity in the broader social and political systems. This resistance is not only against external oppression but also against the internalised betrayals and disappointments that many feel as they witness the failure of post-independence ideals.

A paratextual analysis of the titles of *Souls Forgotten* and *The Disillusioned African* provides additional meaning to the narratives. *Souls Forgotten* implies that the forgotten members of the Abehema community are detached from the care and the services of the government. It suggests another form of hierarchies of belonging. It further indicates that the minority's imagined and expected life is not what they have experienced: "the world has changed and things are no longer as they used to be (SF, 2)." As a hope for the change, Emmanuel has to do something to make sense of what good life means – for himself and for the entire Abehema village. In *Souls Forgotten* and *The Disillusioned African*, resistance, though non-violent, appears as agency. Protagonists are offered the freedom of choice. In that way, they decide on their own liberation from domination. They are the heroes of their communities who invite fellows and accept collaboration with them for the fate of their communities.

Charles and Emmanuel respectively in *The Disillusioned African* and *Souls Forgotten* have freely decided to return to their native villages in order to work and support villagers. This resistance is a liberation process. For instance, in *The Disillusioned African*, Charles denounces the dictatorship of African leaders. They use repressive methods inherited from colonial masters to dominate. Similarly, Emmanuel complains about the corrupt government of President Longstay which crushes the minority Mimbolanders in *Souls Forgotten*. Nyamnjoh's characters denounce and resist domination. They express disenchantment through the feelings of disagreement. Through minority discourse, they voice their claims and criticise the prevailing practices in Mimboland while demanding equal opportunities.

In *The Disillusioned African*, I note that Charles represents the archetype of a resistance fighter as he condemns the dictatorship and selfishness of African post-colonial leaders. I also note that his resistance is both intellectual and moral as he challenges the failure of these leaders to fulfil the political promises of liberation from exploitation. Charles, therefore, opposes the oppressive systems sustained by African leaders who, instead of dismantling colonial legacies, replicate them in the form of neocolonialism. By speaking out against corruption, nepotism and the erosion of democratic values, I assert that Charles aligns himself with the struggle for justice and accountability. His critique underscores a profound disillusionment with leaders who prioritise personal gain over national progress.

Close reading of *The Disillusioned African* further reveals that Charles continues his resistance and determination notwithstanding the amputation of his two arms. Retired in Menchum Division (TDA, 243), Charles fights to liberate the peasants and the marginalised:

> Time has come to quench a thirst long ignored; the thirst to be liberated from all sorts of discriminatory treatments, including dictatorship, corruption and mediocrities that result from bad governance and poor leadership. (TDA, 208)

From my analysis of the above quotation, I note a profound awareness of structural injustices, including dictatorship, corruption, and mediocrity resulting from poor governance and leadership. Moreover, the metaphor of quenching a "thirst long ignored" evokes a deep, visceral human need for freedom, dignity, and equitable treatment, one that has been suppressed or neglected for far too long. It suggests that liberation is not merely an abstract ideal but a fundamental, urgent necessity for the marginalised. This excerpt further conveys a strong resolve for liberation and resistance against systemic oppression, particularly in the context of marginalised communities. Charles's retirement in Menchum Division becomes a new chapter of activism, symbolising the notion that

the fight for justice transcends personal milestones such as physical disability. His commitment to the peasants and the marginalised underscores a selfless dedication to societal transformation.

Charles' philosophy is what Yosimbom (2017: 1 – 23) calls the "philosophy of liberation". His return to Menchum Division is a kind of messianic return which has been beneficial for his people. Despite his double amputation, Charles does not give up. He denounces electoral fraud. He also castigates the hypocrisy and double standards and trickery of the political leaders (TDA, 243). Charles understands that a successful liberation is possible only through a well-coordinated collective effort: "The African ulcer is a chronic condition that calls for more than individual sacrifices. The cross is too heavy and the path to Calvary too long and thorny, for the single-minded enthusiasm of a lone crusader. It needs the collective energy of an entire people" (TDA, 207, 215). Charles's insight reinforces the idea that liberation is not merely an act of isolated valor but a shared struggle that demands coordination, perseverance, and the pooling of resources and determination. This perspective invites readers to consider the interconnectedness of individual and collective agency in the broader fight for justice and equity.

Nyamnjoh's selected novels, when analysed through the lens of minority discourse as a liberatory praxis, operate at two primary levels: political subjugation and educational and cultural deprivation. On the political front, Charles' resistance confronts the divisive "divide and rule" rhetoric, aiming to dismantle President Longstay's regime of nepotism and one-party dominance. This resistance is symbolically described as "the boxing ring" (TDA, 214) of pluralistic politics, advocating for multipartism and democratic freedom. Nyamnjoh proposes this non-violent approach as a means to challenge and ultimately overthrow dictators. The narrator reinforces this idea on the same page, stating: "[…] as dictators are always greedily obsessed by power, they can even self-destroy […]."

Similarly, when the District Officer in *Souls Forgotten* imposes embargo and restrictions on all Mimbolanders visiting Abehema to assist victims of disaster, Emmanuel resists this decision because Abehema villagers are abandoned by the government. In such a situation, people should at least go to find out if their relatives are still alive or need assistance. He wonders: "Tell me, do you think it's wise of the D.O. to stop people from going to find out what is actually happening?" (SF, 230). Despite the restrictions, Emmanuel does not give up. He successfully engages the District officer through a kind of non-violent resistance.

Another political resistance is the fact that Emmanuel decides to return to Abehema to work for his people who are abandoned by the government:

> 'I have decided to give up on the state,' he told Patience. 'That isn't through problematic state structures that change shall see the light of day in Mimboland,' he explained. Still Patience failed to understand what he was driving at. 'what I'm saying is that if we wait for the government to change our lives, we shall have to wait forever. There is no hope in that direction.' (SF, 353)

The corrupt system in Mimboland causes Emmanuel's despair. He decides to return to his home village. This return is messianic, as stated above, because he goes back to Abehema to work for his forgotten community: "I have decided to start an NGO to do for my dead and alive what the government and Tchopbrokpot have failed to do with the Disaster Account" (SF, 354). His NGO is called FOVILAD.[37] The principal role of the NGO is to raise funds within and outside Mimboland in favour of the victims and survivors of the disaster for their rehabilitation. Emmanuel is now and again a hope for his community. His return to the village has helped the forgotten souls to hope for a better future.

At the second level, there is resistance in the form of rejection of inappropriate education and culture. The narratives surface a resistance of individual life (community versus individualism). Normally, education should be a force for social mobility and personal growth for Emmanuel and Charles. It would further be source of ambition and self-improvement. Unfortunately, education turns out to be a nightmare for the two. Emmanuel's resistance in *Souls Forgotten* is perceived as a way for him to reject an unacceptable education based on the Francophone-dominated system. It does nothing other than prepare the Anglophone minority for failure. Emmanuel's failure is compared to a prison journey (Ndi & Ankumah, 2017: 15 – 18, 72), being like in a room which has no doors, no windows but only the four walls, floor and ceiling; he has to look for the way out of there. That way only starts from resistance. Finally, Emmanuel's dismissal from the university turns him against the society. It manifests in the form of resistance ; "He strikes back at any person who tries to insinuate that, as a drowning man, he ought to cling to anything" (SF, 82). He refuses to work in a Francophone-dominated system which he sees as corrupt and even refuses to go to church because even those who go to church are full of blasphemy and hypocrisy (SF, 139

Souls Forgotten also critiques the disconnection between indigenous knowledge systems and Western scientific paradigms. The resistance of Abehema villagers to scientific explanations,

[37] Foundation for the Forgotten Victims of the Lake Abehema Disaster.

alongside their reliance on the interpretations of diviner-healers, underscores a cultural and epistemological divide. Scientists do not agree with what diviners foretold, and Abehema villagers resist the scientific explanations of the causes of the Lake Abehema disaster:

> That four years ago. Today they are still waiting, waiting with fading hope for the scientists' famous master verdict. The diviner-healers pronounced theirs a long time ago, but no one in high office would listen to them, being schooled in science as modern politicians and civil servants all pretended they were. (SF, 342)

The delay in the scientists' verdict highlights the inadequacies and inaccessibility of institutionalised science for rural, marginalised communities, who often feel excluded or overlooked in state decision-making processes.

Similarly, in *The Disillusioned African*, Charles complains against a neocolonialist education based on an irrelevant curriculum. This type of educational system enforces ignorance of African realities among African intellectuals while creating a complex of inferiority:

> [...] doesn't this reveal, in black and white, that no matter what they might say to the contrary, the "modern" African elite still acknowledges his supreme inferiority to the white man? (TDA, 47 – 48)

Because Charles notes that the superiority of whites and the inferiority of blacks are seldom informed by science, resistance would be a solution for a decolonised education to show that education should be based on the values and culture of a people which should aim to resolve their problem. From this perspective, education must be relevant to the local needs. A close reading of *The Disillusioned African* highlights the ineffectiveness of an education system that fails to address African issues. Charles critiques this irrelevant and Eurocentric-based education, expressing his discontent:

> They are callous about their subjects and countries' problems, because they know next to nothing about them. Imagine an individual who received European education from when he was a child to when he became leader. All he knows is American history, English history, French history – Western history in short. (TDA, 48)

The reason is that the Eurocentric education, as Charles observes, continues to keep Africans dependent on others. This suggests a kind of educational neo-colonialism. Charles confesses that such an education system, which is not based on African realities, delays economic liberation and maintains dependence on financial aid and the World Bank, while forcing Africans to remain the

first-class beggars of the world (TDA, 14, 60). Similarly, Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o's *Petals of Blood* (1977) portrays education as a defining factor of an individual's personality which shapes personality, perception and worldview. For instance, Siriana Boarding School in the novel changes African students' personalities because its Eurocentric curriculum forces students to act as Europeans. Such an education is deemed to fabricate Euro-African intellectuals, with a compromised personality and citizenship.

Finally, the pursuit of formal higher education is one of the major themes depicted in *The Disillusioned African* and *Souls Forgotten*. In these two novels, Nyamnjoh metaphorically indicates that the education system in Mimboland and elsewhere is still under the control and interest of the Francophone hegemony. This perpetuates a form of neo-colonialism in which education fails to promote development. In Nyamnjoh's article, *"Potted Plants in Greenhouses: A Critical Reflection on the Resilience of Colonial Education in Africa"*, he critiques colonial education systems in Africa for being fundamentally not aligned with realities, needs and aspirations of Africans:

> Education in Africa is a victim of the Western epistemological export that takes the form of science as ideology and hegemony. So, hard to achieve because it is based on the Western ideology rather than African needs, education is compared to a pilgrimage to the 'Kilimanjaro' or the tortuous route to Calvary for alternative ways of life. (161)

The core of his argument revolves around the idea that colonial education is only an ideological export from the West that perpetuates educational hegemony. From the article, it is seen observed that Nyamnjoh's main critique is about epistemological hegemony, an education system which is irrelevant to African needs and which is based on alienation and mimicry. His metaphor of "potted plants in greenhouses" supports the idea that African intellectuals are being like pooted plants in artificial greenhouses nurtured and controlled by foreign systems. This pilgrimage reflects the difficulty of attaining meaningful education within a framework that is detached from African realities.

To Nyamnjoh, colonial education does not allow Africans to represent and imagine local cultures, identities and belonging. Subsequently, it produces and reproduces Eurocentric intellectuals. The metaphor "Lake Abehema eruption" in *Souls Forgotten* (SF, 218) symbolises the sudden and violent eruption of deep-seated grievances, akin to a volcanic eruption. It highlights the intensity and force with which the Anglophone Problem emerged, transforming from a peaceful demonstration into a significant conflict in 2016. The Anglophone minority population absorbs

the accumulated pressure, frustration, minoritisation and marginalisation in the education as a volcanic pressure. The appointment of Francophone teachers who are unfamiliar with the Anglophone education system served as the catalyst, akin to triggering the eruption in Cameroon. Moreover, the government's robust and violent response to the peaceful protest also symbolises eruption itself. The metaphor suggests that unresolved tensions caused by irrelevant education system imposed to Anglophones if it was resolved could not result in dramatic consequences, similar to a volcanic eruption that could have been mitigated with appropriate approaches.

The concept of minority discourse as a liberatory praxis can be applied to *The Disillusioned African* by exploring how resistance and agency function as tools for reclaiming power and identity in contexts of systemic oppression and marginalisation. Reading this novel reveals that resistance is used as agency. Charles's declaration embodies the essence of minority discourse as a praxis of liberation. His recognition of the transformative potential of collective resistance, symbolised by the peasants "pulling down their scales" and triggering "riotous anger" (TDA, 40) reflects a refusal to accept the imposed minoritisation of his community. This act of resistance is a conscious effort to disrupt oppressive structures and reassert the community's agency. In this case, resistance comes with hope for change which requires as Charles emphasises, collective efforts to subvert inequalities and oppression as means to resist minoritisation and achieve transformative change.

The literary analysis of the protagonists in *Souls Forgotten* and *The Disillusioned African* reveals several similarities. Emmanuel and Charles share commonalities in their roles as ambassadors of hope and agents of change for their neglected and marginalised communities. Both characters devote themselves to supporting these overlooked populations. Emmanuel focuses on aiding victims of the 1986 Lake Nyos disaster, helping them rebuild their lives and fostering a renewed sense of purpose. Similarly, Charles, upon retiring to Menchum Division, works with the local peasants, empowering them to recognise their potential as catalysts for transformation. Charles explicitly articulates a vision of liberation as a liberatory praxis, emphasising the inevitability of change through collective action and the dismantling of oppressive systems. Emmanuel's actions align with this vision, as his work implicitly supports the idea that change arises through empowering the oppressed. Both characters express a belief in the transformative power of community-led change. Charles' assertion that the day will come when "there shall be no turning back" reflects a shared determination and conviction in the eventual triumph of justice and equity, a hope that is also embodied in Emmanuel's actions.

4. 5. Conclusion

This chapter provided a thorough examination of the marginalisation of Anglophone minorities in Cameroon, analysing the issue through the lens of minority discourse as portrayed in Nyamnjoh's works. By exploring *Souls Forgotten* and *The Disillusioned African* within this framework, the analysis demonstrated that the Anglophone Problem represents a systemic marginalisation, wherein the Francophone-led regime silences and represses the Anglophone minority. Nyamnjoh's novels serve as potent literary tools for investigating themes of identity, resistance, and systemic neglect, shedding light on the lived realities of marginalised communities and critiquing hegemonic power structures.

Nyamnjoh's *Souls Forgotten* and *The Disillusioned African* align with the principles of minority discourse, which focus on amplifying the voices of marginalised groups, highlighting their agency and challenging dominant power dynamics. His novels emphasise the representation of the subaltern, critique of hegemony and themes of cultural preservation and resistance. Through the struggles of his characters to maintain their identities amidst marginalisation, Nyamnjoh reflects the Anglophone community's resistance to cultural and linguistic erasure, drawing parallels with activism that confronts Cameroon's Francophone-centric narratives.

Minority discourse provided a critical framework for analysing these literary texts, underscoring the importance of amplifying silenced voices, critiquing dominant narratives in order to foster discussions on equity and social justice. This framework reveals how literature can serve as a space for activism, cultural preservation and advocacy for inclusive societal transformation. By situating the Anglophone Problem within global postcolonial struggles, the analysis connected Cameroon's experience to broader issues of equity recognition, and resistance against neo-colonial forms of domination.

The chapter also engaged with Juliana Makuchi's perspectives, which regard minority discourse as a vital tool for challenging domination. Makuchi's feminist lens highlights the resilience of marginalised individuals, particularly women, in navigating identity crises and societal oppression, while Nyamnjoh critiques the linguistic and cultural hegemony imposed on Anglophone Cameroonians. Together, their works advocate for a linguistically and culturally inclusive society, challenging the binaries of majority and minority and promoting visions of equitable belonging in fragmented communities.

Drawing intertextual connections with Fanon's *The Wretched of the Earth*, the analysis emphasised that the Anglophone Problem reflects a broader postcolonial struggle. It exposes the systemic marginalisation perpetuated by internal governance and external legacies, fostering cycles of victimhood and resistance. Nyamnjoh critiques the psychological toll of minoritisation while addressing leadership's failure to achieve equitable unity or national consciousness.

The characters in Nyamnjoh's novels embody both the victimhood and resilience of marginalised groups. In *The Disillusioned African*, Charles exemplifies the collective impact of victimisation on fragmented communities, while in *Souls Forgotten*, Emmanuel's journey reflects the consequences of despair and the potential for resistance. This resonates with Fanon's critique of neo-colonialism, where promises of liberation are subverted by complicit elites. However, Nyamnjoh suggests that non-violent strategies, cultural affirmation, and collective action offer pathways for transformation, advocating for a reassessment of power dynamics and systemic oppression.

Ultimately, Nyamnjoh's *Souls Forgotten* and *The Disillusioned African* transcend linguistic and cultural divides, presenting a universal call for justice, identity preservation and human dignity. They critique the complacency of dominant groups and the passivity of the marginalised, urging active, unified efforts to achieve equality. By foregrounding the transformative power of resistance and cultural reclamation, *Souls Forgotten* and *The Disillusioned African* highlight literature's role as a liberatory praxis, inspiring resilience and the pursuit of an inclusive national consciousness in postcolonial Africa.

Chapter Five

"Outsider-within": Constructing a Differentiated Belonging in *Homeless Waters* and *Intimate Strangers*

5. 1. Introduction

This chapter further examines the complexities of identity, positionality, and belonging, particularly in contexts where individuals are both integrated into the host community and yet remain marginalised at its edges. I examine the paradoxical closeness and distance shaped by homelessness or non-belonging. As the concept of outsider-within suggests belonging versus non-belonging, I analyse how characters create a sense of self and community while remaining distinct from dominant majorities. From the above, the following three main questions shed light to the analysis: How do *Homeless Waters* and *Intimate Strangers* depict the negotiation of identity in spaces of liminality? What role does the concept of "marginalised insider" play in revealing power dynamics or critiquing dominant ideologies? How is "belonging" constructed, disrupted, or reimagined in these works? While liminality refers to transitional spaces where individuals or communities exist between defined categories or constructed borders, both *Homeless Waters* and *Intimate Strangers* explore how characters inhabit these in-between spaces to navigate identity. In *Homeless Waters*, the theme of belonging intersects with displacement and survival. The text reimagines belonging as less about fixed locations and more about solidarity and shared resilience even in transient spaces. In *Intimate Strangers*, belonging is intricately tied to emotional and physical proximity.

Using the concept of "marginalised insider," the Anglophone Problem in Cameroon underscores the marginalisation of Anglophones, who are treated as internal outsiders within the nation. This marginalisation significantly affects their sense of citizenship and belonging. In response, Anglophones navigate flexible citizenship by pursuing alternative pathways to acceptance and belonging, often involving increased mobility. At this juncture, citizenship becomes a critical determinant of identity and inclusion. Shifting the cartographic imaginary of Mimboland allows one to understand the concept of outsider-within in Nyamnjoh's novels in order to explore how he extends his thematisation of "otherness" into other imaginative geographies. This surfaces a further dimension, the hierarchy of belonging, constructed by the differentiation: autochthonous versus foreigner, ethnic versus non-ethnic. This analysis of the concept of outsider-within further shows how belonging is differentiated with a view to argue that autochthony and ethnicity

hierarchise flexible citizenship. This chapter draws on Patricia Hill Collins[38]' concept of the outsider-within (Collins, 1990: 221-238; 2000: 9-10). According to Collins, the concept of outsider-within refers to a unique position that marginalised individuals, occupy within dominant social structures. Within the context of feminism, Collins uses this concept to describe the experience of being discriminated against because of gender, race and class both outside the mainstream and within the social structures because those individuals are not directly involved in the key roles within societies, as a consequence, their identity and belonging become affected. From Collins, it can be asserted that the concept of the outsider-within is deeply connected to the theory of intersectionality, which appears to surface the complex intersections of marginalised identities and belonging (gender, race, class, culture, language, nationality and citizenship, etc.), which the dominant groups exclude because they do not fit with their perception. This conception of the marginalised insider can be put into productive conversation with the Anglophone Problem. The term " outsider-within" highlights a sense of belonging through citizenship, geography, or historical ties, yet underscores how individuals or groups are relegated to the margins in terms of power, voice, and recognition.

In the context of literary studies even beyond, outsider-within relates to a group of people or members of a community who are at the margins because of their cultural identity. They thus become powerless. The power difference is due whether to hierarchies of belonging and the level of acceptance or to the linguacultural identity, ethnicity and citizenship. The positionality of the margins matters because they find themselves at the periphery. "Marginalised insider"therefore, is examined in the context of this study as an "incomplete membership"[39] (Manjoh, 2018), a situation in which the "self" is perpetually discriminated against by the "other(s)" (Geschiere and Nyamnjoh, 2000). Incomplete membership in belonging occurs due to some of the following factors including exclusion, discrimination, social disconnection, personal identity conflict, social hierarchies causing psychological stress and social alienation. My investigation of *Homeless Waters* (HW) and *Intimate Strangers* (IS) aims to read belonging in terms of territoriality from the concepts of autochthony and ethnicity. This scope, therefore, shifts my cartographic of Mimboland to explore how characters, having lived in a specific setting for a while can still be considered as "marginalised insider."

[38] Patricia Hill Collins (1948) is an American academic specializing in race, class, and gender. She is particularly known thanks to her critical engagement with the black feminist thought in the matrix of domination.

[39] Incomplete membership in belonging refers to a situation where an individual or group does not fully experience or participate in the sense of belonging to a community, organization, or social group. This feeling of incompleteness can stem from various factors such as exclusion, marginalization, or not fully meeting the criteria or expectations of the group.

This chapter explores the construction of a differentiated belonging from two concepts: “outsider-within” in *Homeless Waters* and “Makwerekwere” in *Intimate Strangers*. The rationale behind the choice of *Homeless Waters* and *Intimate Strangers* is that *Homeless Waters* explores themes of identity and the challenges faced by the protagonist as he navigates the space between traditional values and modern influences. It emphasises the tension between cultural heritage and the aspiration to integrate into a world undergoing rapid change. Additionally, the rationale behind the choice of this novel is that it evokes a sense of rootlessness and being adrift. The characters frequently experience estrangement from their surroundings, capturing both physical and emotional displacement. My intervention draws on marginalisation and discrimination characters face, which flag themes of outsider-within, autochthony and ethnicity which subsequently lead to the analysis of the complexities and dynamics of identity and belonging.

Intimate Strangers involves the story of a diasporic Mimbolander who has been living out of Mimboland for years, in a foreign country and is perceived as a “Makwerekwere”[40] despite of many years spent within that foreign country. From the literary perspective, and as well as this study is concerned, I explore “Makwerekwere” at two levels. At the first level, I examine it as an expression of xenophobia and at the second level, I interpret the concept as a symbol of exclusionary challenges that immigrants face in a society which considers other foreigners as outsiders-within.

The concept of “Makwerekwere” resonates deeply with the Anglophone Problem in Cameroon, where Anglophone Cameroonians, though citizens, are often treated as internal "others" by the Francophone-dominated state. Just as "Makwerekwere" reduces fellow Africans to outsiders, the marginalisation of Anglophones reflects a similar logic of dehumanisation and rejection within a shared Black identity.

Mobility is however internal in *Homeless Waters*. The story is set in Mimboland. Despite that the protagonist is adopted by a step-father, this latter still considers him as a stranger who does not really belong to the family and more broadly to the village. Therefore, he is an outsider-within. It is important to mention that most of Nyamnjoh’s novels are set in Mimboland, except *Intimate Strangers*, which is set in Botswana. In *Intimate Strangers*, mobility is transnational due to the fact that the protagonist shifted from Mimboland where she was born to Botswana. Nyamnjoh’s

[40] Makwerekwere often pejoratively represents reference to foreigners. In the context of this study, it particularly refers to black immigrants from the other African countries. This concept emphasizes the idea that an individual does not belong to the South African soil and has to be treated as a foreigner who has immigrated in search for green pasture. Additionally, there is an aspect of exclusion in that despite the fact that Makwerekwere is socially integrated, s/he is still considered as an outsider-within.

exceptional choice highlights his perception of the concept of mobility in the reconceptualisation of space and place (Yuval, 2010; Aguiar, 2019). Setting *Intimate Strangers* in Botswana is provocative. Not because Nyamnjoh lived and worked there, but because it allows him to represent autochthony and ethnicity as determining factors of a flexible citizenship which amounts to a differentiated belonging. Moreover, this chapter also looks at the way geographies, both rural and urban, national and transnational, affect flexible citizenship.

Mobility in my study therefore refers to the representation by Nyamnjoh of displacement and is both physical, social or emotional. Through mobility, I examine the effects of the movement on Nyamnjoh's characters in order to study how identity and belonging shape the concept of citizenship. While themes related to physical mobility such as travel, exile, and migration enable an analysis of their impact on cultural identity, social mobility, on the other hand, reflects shifts in social class and examines how socio-economic and cultural boundaries shape characters' sense of identity and belonging.

Finally, my analysis also examines the emotional effects, exploring the psychological and affective responses elicited by negotiating modes of mobility, including movement, displacement, or dislocation. Central to this concept are the fragmentation of identity and the challenges of forging connections with new "others." It encompasses the trauma resulting from displacement, such as the loss of a sense of home and the struggle to survive in unfamiliar surroundings, alongside efforts to achieve acceptance within a new community. Ultimately, my analysis focuses on the transformation and change experienced by characters as they navigate these processes. To sum up, through the analysis of mobility in Nyamnjoh's ethnographic fiction, I reflect on the nature of identity, the boundaries between cultures and classes, and the ways in which individuals and societies are shaped by movement itself.

In her feminist thought, Collins also associates outsider-within with knowledge production. She argues that black women are considered as "outsiders" within institutions of knowledge such as academia or mainstream media. Collins further suggests that black women's perspectives are often marginalised or ignored but that their experiences offer crucial insights into systems of power, oppression, and resistance. Equally, this concept suggests empowerment of the margins. While this position is often associated with exclusion, it not only offers opportunities for resistance but also for transformation. Characters develop potentials from distinctive angles. Combining both insider and outsider experiences allows them to operate critical transformations of their citizenships, devise liberation strategies and foster social change.

The analysis of *Homeless Waters* and *Intimate Strangers* reveals that outsider-within does not only call for resistance but is also associated with agency. Marginalised individuals navigate systems of oppression with agency. Even when these individuals are situated within oppressive structures, they find ways to negotiate, resist, challenge, and subvert the norms and power dynamics that seem to block them. It is therefore viewed as resilience and this resilience and capacity for resistance are key elements of Collins' broader critique of the ways in which social structures function to maintain inequality. Finally, the concept of outsider-within calls for the question of social identity. *Homeless Waters* represents minority Anglophones in Cameroon who occupy social positions inferior to the ones occupied by the dominant Francophone majorities. Similarly, in *Intimate Strangers* Individuals who do not belong, specifically referred to as "Makwerekwere" are just relegated to subaltern positions.

The systemic marginalisation faced by minority Anglophones is often intertwined with ethnic dynamics. Ethnic identity is closely linked to language. For Anglophones in Cameroon, their minority status frequently overlaps with ethnic or cultural distinctions that differentiate them from the Francophone majority. Furthermore, ethnicity interacts with language to exacerbate disparities. Anglophone identity in Cameroon is not solely defined by language; it also encompasses historical, cultural, and regional factors that collectively shape their minority status. This connection demonstrates that ethnicity is not merely about biological or ancestral traits; it often intersects with other identity markers, such as language, influencing how groups experience social hierarchies and discrimination.This, therefore, shapes the way individuals experience the world and how they understand their own identity within complex social structures. To sum up, Collins' concept of outsider-within in Nyamnjoh's novels offers means to understand the complex positioning of marginalised individuals who experience exclusion and oppression due to their subordinate membership.

The outsider-within calls for flexible citizenship, a dynamic process which is basically a negotiated process of social integration. Negotiating flexible citizenship requires from the subject to establish, maintain and change identity (acceptance). Close reading of *Homeless Waters* and *Intimate Strangers* reveals that the two protagonists are confronted by the local forces (insiders). We see how they struggle to integrate a sense of "self" into different social groups and dimensions, such as ethnicity (Ngoma in *Homeless Waters*), nation and territory (Immaculate identified as "Makwerekwere" in *Intimate Strangers*). Because this chapter looks at the specific form of

belonging, the nation as an imagined community[41] as asserted by Benedict Anderson is explored from the perspective of commonality, to argue that although national identities are constructed by the shared experiences, common territoriality is used to accept those who belong and exclude those who do not belong.

Owing to the differentiation of belonging, this chapter reviews citizenship from the concept of outsider-within in two main points. The first point examines ethnicity in *Homeless Waters* to explore how invisible borders reproduce other sets of hierarchies of belonging within the national context, internally to interrogate who is an outsider and who is an insider. The second point focuses on the analysis of borders and a sort of rooted identity as a site of national belonging in *Intimate Strangers*. At this level, I explore how it produces hierarchies of belonging.

From this context, imagined geographies of national identity in Nyamnjoh's novels are shaped by the construction and representation of territoriality through spatial imagination. In *Homeless Waters* and *Intimate Strangers* , these geographies influence the formation of national identity by emphasising belonging to specific places and acceptance by particular groups, while simultaneously marginalising or excluding others. This dynamic demonstrates that national identities are not inherent but are actively constructed and reconstructed through narratives about space and place. In *Homeless Waters*, belonging is framed within the context of exclusion and othering, further underscoring the interplay between geography and identity. Similarly, in *Intimate Strangers*, the foreigner becomes a marker of identity, with national identity being defined by both physical and imagined borders. Geographical boundaries, therefore, play a crucial role in determining who is considered part of Botswana as a nation and who is excluded. The imagined geography involves the process of exclusion as illustrated through Ngoma, the protagonist who is marked as "other" in a family that adopted him because he is not really a biological son.

To sum up, Nyamnjoh's portrayal of each of these two characters through the concept of belonging plays a crucial role in the formation and maintenance of flexible identities. Space, at this extent is not just about physical spaces but is deeply embedded in cultural narratives and the symbolic power of places. Analysing how flexible identities are imagined through the concept of outsider-within allows a better understanding of the key factors which determine belonging, inclusion and exclusion. In the foregoing, my main question in this chapter is to explore how the concept of outsider-within constructs a differentiated belonging in Nyamnjoh's *Homeless Waters* and *Intimate Strangers* . To attempt to further elaborate on this question, firstly, I will look at the way

[41] The "imagined geography" of a nation may shift to account for global interconnections while maintaining distinct national symbols and values.

the titles of *Homeless Waters* and *Intimate Strangers* signal the theme of "otherness" to surface differentiated belonging. Secondly, each of the novels needs to be read separately. I will read *Homeless Waters* through the concept of ethnicity to point out how this concept represents hierarchical belonging and explore *Intimate Strangers* from the perspective of autochthony. In both novels, the concept of the outsider-within, refers to individuals who simultaneously belong to a social group while remaining marginal within it. I argue that this closely aligns with the notion of flexible citizenship, particularly in a globalised world where identities and affiliations are fluid.

5. 2. Theorising Autochthony and Contextualising the Concept of "Marginalised Insider"

Autochthony provides a critical theoretical basis for the analysis of the concept of "marginalised insider" in Nyamnjoh's *Intimate Strangers* and *Homeless Waters* by exploring the tension between belonging and exclusion. I use the concept of autochthony to challenge the notion of a fixed identity or belonging, which is often manipulated to exclude certain minority groups, especially in the context of ethnicity, and socio-political power dynamics. In *Homeless Waters*, I use the framework of autochthony to critique the experiences of the protagonist, his mother, sister and brother as displaced persons. I argue here that individuals caught in liminal spaces, between, ethnic groups face a unique form of alienation and belonging. In this context, autochthony's focus on indigeneity and the politics of belonging highlights how these individuals are often treated as "outsiders" despite their deep, intimate connections to the land, culture, and history of the region.

Thus, autochthony provides the lens through which the complex experiences of the outsider-within are understood, showing how individuals simultaneously navigate belonging and exclusion, often within the same social and political spaces. This theoretical framework helps to unpack the ways in which colonial and post-colonial structures continue to shape identities and the meanings of home and belonging in contemporary African societies. Similarly, through an analysis of *Intimate Strangers*, I discuss how Nyamnjoh portrays the outsider-within status of characters, particularly migrants and marginalised groups. I further show how the politics of autochthony is often used to assert authentic or native belonging, leaving migrants and others who do not belong excluded from full participation in the community. The outsider-within is thus a position that embodies both exclusion from the mainstream identity and an intimate involvement with it, as these individuals are both implicated in and affected by the dynamics of power, culture, and politics.

This section explores autochthony as a trope in its context of defining the "self" versus the "other". The concept of autochthony bears symptoms of exclusion because being a son/daughter of the soil excludes those who are not. This claim is perceived as a struggle between autochthons and strangers, which sometimes results in community splitting or displacement of populations. Today, this phenomenon has increased. Ceuppens and Geschiere (2005: 385) argue that it is unfortunately used by politicians to divide and rule: "The past 15 years have brought an upsurge of autochthony. It has become an incendiary political slogan in many parts of the African continent".

The very illustrative case is the brutal exclusion in Ivory Coast when the "*Opération Nationale d'Identification*"[42] under former president Laurent Gbagbo led to the question of "*Ivoirité*"[43]. Although initiated by Henri Konan Bédié, this concept was politically implemented by Gbagbo to describe the purported intrinsic characteristics of an autochthonous Ivorian, in contrast to a settler or immigrant. This claim for autochthony devastated the country in 2002. The Anglophone Problem in Cameroon also bears similar stems of autochthony. I also notice, from these two cases, that autochthony does not only call for the notion of borders, but also and most specifically a sort of rooted identity as a site of national belonging. In the two cases of Cameroon and Ivory Coast, the consequences of claiming autochthony brought loss of identity, denial of citizenship and exclusion. In Cameroonian Anglophone literature, Bate Besong's historical drama, *The Banquet* (originally published in 1994) also portrays this. Inspired by Spivak's *Can the Subaltern Speak?* the drama engages in a mental journey of a people suffering loss of identity due to the claims of autochthony by the majority. *The Banquet* is a literary description in postcolonial terms of Cameroonian society nurtured by claims of who belongs and who does not belong.

Autochthony and ethnicity are the two main concepts of interest which need to be elucidated in this chapter. While autochthony is the fact of being a native of the soil, which relates to a direct birth from that soil, ethnicity is the quality of belonging to a specific group of population that share the same cultural characteristics (Cuddon, 2014). It is noted from the above considerations that citizenship is a kind of national belonging. From this context, Geschiere interestingly interrogates how a group of Cameroonians, because of their linguacultural identity can be considered as outsiders within their own soil. This chapter focuses exactly on this question, which I attempt to explore through a literary analysis of *Intimate Strangers* and *Homeless Waters* from the lens of the Anglophone Problem.

[42] The Ivorian National Identification Campaign
[43] Who is Ivorian and who is not.

Geschiere analyses the concept of belonging and exclusion in his work, based on the Cameroonian case whereby he asserts that some Cameroonians, despite being native to the country are labelled as outsiders due to their ethnic and regional identities. Building on Geschiere's central idea, my analysis examines the complex interplay between insider and outsider identities, which are deeply embedded in political, social, and economic dynamics. To illustrate, I examine how mobility patterns or inter-ethnic tensions result in some groups or individuals being marginalised or pushed to the periphery, even within their own country by others. From Geschiere's work, I also note the complexities of classifying some people as outsiders and others as insiders, which challenge the general idea that national borders determine belonging. Furthermore, I also explore how mobility complicates notions of flexible identity and citizenship, suggesting that even those born within the nation can be considered as outsiders due to the perceived linguacultural differences. Equally, Geschiere explores how concepts of autochthony and identity as being "autochthonous" shape social and political life, fueling processes of inclusion and exclusion. Nyamnjoh employs this thematisation to illustrate how exclusion stems from the notion of being deeply rooted in a specific place, which typically defines an individual as an [authentic] member of society. Geschiere further explores tensions between the formal legal status of citizenship and the social and cultural sense of belonging through citizenship and exclusion.

This chapter further draws on Mudimbe's *The Idea of Africa* (1994)[44]. Mudimbe's central argument is that Africa, as conceived in Eurocentric terms, has often been shaped by external projections rather than by any inherent essence. This "idea of Africa" has been constructed through colonial discourse, where Africa has often been imagined as a land of savagery, primitiveness, and mystery, a place that Western intellectuals and missionaries sought to understand and "civilise (13)." This external construction of Africa has, according to Mudimbe, significantly shaped how Africa has been understood globally, from history and anthropology to literature and philosophy. Mudimbe reacts to such Eurocentric conception when he highlights how African thinkers, scholars, and intellectuals have wrestled with these foreign representations of Africa and have tried to redefine a more authentic African identity. Relying on Mudimbe's analysis on how people are perceived and how they perceive themselves, this chapter investigates the feeling of a sense of belonging, which confers characters the status of outsiders-within. My analysis explores how the characters perceive their identity, questioning their status as autochthons, indigenous people, foreigners,

[44] Mudimbe's *The Idea of Africa* is a key work in postcolonial studies and African philosophy which explores the complex intellectual history of Africa and how the continent has been represented, both by outsiders and its own thinkers, over the centuries. *The Idea of Africa* is a profound critique of the ways Africa has been historically constructed and represented, in one hand and a claim of redefinition of African identity on the other hand.

outsiders, or insiders within a specific territory. This perception shapes their sense of safety, comfort, and acceptance.

Homeless Waters (HW) tells the story of Ngoma, a young adolescent from Safang village navigating between two identities through modern education. He grows up without knowing his biological father. He is not an autochthonous boy in the village because even his unknown biological father is not a son of the soil. His father left Safang village because he was frustrated by the fact that all other villagers reminded him of his ethnicity as a foreigner and that he did not belong to the community. Ngoma and his sister Shaka grew up under the exclusive care of their mother. Their mother gets married to another man, a trader who originates from Bonfuma village. Ngoma and his family relocate to Bonfuma, yet they do not belong to this village either. They are treated as foreigners. Although Ngoma is adopted by his stepfather Lumawut, he is still treated as one who does not belong to the family because he is not Lumawut's biological son. The feeling of a differentiated belonging unfolds when Ngoma fights to protect his mother beaten by his stepfather. Lumawut kicks him out of the family and he is also dismissed from school after impregnating a fellow student. *Homeless Waters* is an exploration of belonging which metaphorically suggests the fluid, unstable nature of modern existence, where the individual is either fully accepted or totally rejected by the community. Through *Homeless Waters*, Nyamnjoh explores themes of exclusion, resilience, and the quest for social justice, underscoring the importance of recognising the humanity of displaced individuals and providing spaces where they can rebuild their lives. The novel offers a portrayal of belonging and struggles of the individual(s) to be accepted by a community. It illustrates such struggles as leaving the native geographies and seeking opportunity elsewhere (mobility). Through the personal narrative of Ngoma, the author provides a social commentary and discusses the emotional and psychological toll of displacement, as well as the tensions that arise between outsiders and insiders.

Intimate Strangers is the story of Immaculate, a Mimbolander who has been living in Botswana for thirteen years. Differentiated belonging unfolds when she gets a job with *Sun Power*, the biggest horticulturalist in Botswana. She is treated differently from other workmates due to her Mimboland origin. She is not a daughter of the soil as a matter of fact. She is thus grouped with other foreigners who have no native ties to the land. All those foreign Africans from Cameroon, Nigeria, Ghana, Zimbabwe and Malawi are referred to as "Makwerekwere"[45] in Botswana. This stereotypical categorisation creates hierarchies of belonging. *Intimate Strangers* is about sharing life with people who are apparently intimate but deeply divided. This novel is an exploration of

[45] Strangers, those who do not belong in the Botswanan community.

complexities of belonging in various forms. Through this work, the author portrays the ways in which people from different geographies, social classes and cultural backgrounds live together and interact, often in intimate proximity, while simultaneously maintaining a sense of estrangement and distance due to social divides. The concept of "intimate strangers" is used to depict the paradox of relationships among people who are close in a number of common aspects, but quite separated by differentiated belonging created by hierarchies. The author educates us on how mobility and modernity shape social relations and individual experiences in African societies. This idea of intimacy coexisting with estrangement is explored through both personal narratives and broader sociopolitical observations. The novel is a critique of the concept of unity while emphasising on how personal and collective identities are shaped by complex interactions with the "other", whether through autochthony, ethnicity or other geographical influences. The novel also addresses the relationship of diaspora communities with locals illustrating how these interactions can reinforce both closeness and distance. Being a rich depiction of belonging, this novel treats cultural transformation as a determining factor of citizenship.

Homi K. Bhabha's "Third Space" discusses how identities are not fixed but are always negotiated, particularly in post-colonial contexts where the encounter between the dominant and the subaltern creates a third space where new national identities are formed (Saman, 2018). The paratextual analysis of *Homeless Waters* also suggests the representation of ethnicity. The protagonist and his biological father are pushed to the margins. From the same perspective, Ndi (2017) observes from the title of *Homeless Waters*: that "[…] every river has a source, a bed, two banks, and a mouth to empty itself into an Ocean or another bigger body of water. When a river loses all or one of these elements, it becomes homeless […] (211)". Ethnicity, in this context invokes outsiderness. In the same way, an individual loses the sense of belonging when membership is denied. Similarly,the paratextual analysis of *Intimate Strangers* surfaces some elements of exclusion. The title of this novel suggests that despite the fact that people have been or are living together, becoming even intimate, they still consider each other as strangers. At some point, autochthony is represented here as a determining element of belonging. From the above I assert that both autochthony and ethnicity surface otherness, which shows the distancing of the "self" from "other(s)", and othering. Protagonists are perceived and treated as strangers. The fact that Immaculate is "labelled" as "Makwerekwere" and Ngoma being referred to as "not a son of the soil" indicates that they belong to the margins or subordinate social classes. This shows that the titles of *Homeless Waters* and *Intimate Strangers* signal the thematisation of outsider-within reflected in the concepts of autochthony and ethnicity.

5. 3. *Homeless Waters:* Ethnicity as Invisible Borders for a Differentiated Belonging

The Anglophone Problem is historically and socio-politically linked with autochthony and ethnicity in Cameroon. Being intertwined, the Anglophone Problem, autochthony and ethnicity shape Cameroonian identity and citizenship. The way these issues construct and deconstruct belonging of both Anglophones and Francophones in Cameroon contributes to tensions and conflicts over the years. I note that the concept of autochthony as being original habitant is significant in understanding ethnic and regional relations which fuel tensions in Cameroon. To maintain cultural autonomy and ownership of the land, Anglophones distinguish themselves from the North-West and South-West regions. Being autochthonous in these regions contrasts with the majority Francophone-led government which dominates the national political arena. In these conditions, Francophones and Anglophone populations view each other as foreigners.

Geschiere (2009) argues that ethnicity plays a significant role in the nation's political and social fabric. In both Anglophone and Francophone regions, ethnicity shapes identity, social dynamics and political allegiances. I concur with Geschiere and Nyamnjoh (2000: 423–452) that autochthony is tightly associated with belonging. Ethnicity intersects with the Anglophone Problem in that ethnic identities often overlap with political and cultural claims for autonomy and some ethnic groups have priorities that differ from others, ranging from political to economic, which result in ethnic divisions. The connection between the Anglophone Problem, autochthony and ethnicity is perceived through calls for the self-determination and Anglophone autonomy based on linguacultural and ethnic preservations.

In *Homeless Waters*, Nyamnjoh thematises autochtony and belonging by demonstrating that ethnicity rather than being a unitary factor, is used as an exclusionary mechanism which determines a differentiated belonging. Through this novel, I explore the way identity, belonging and exclusion are negotiated and how relevant factors shape social life of characters. Ethnicity as an invisible border divides people. The boundaries dividing people are not physical but rather constructed through socio-political processes of the differentiation of who belongs and who does not. Ethnicity shapes how individuals experience inclusion and exclusion, which creates varying levels of belonging depending on one's cultural or ethnic identity.

In Cameroon, ethnicity is not only linked to the Anglophone Problem. Even in Francophone regions, ethnicity continues to impose hierarchies of belonging. In Yaoundé, for instance, tensions

associated with ethnicity are recurrent between the Beti people and Bamileke people. While the Beti consider themselves as natives of the local ethnic group in Yaoundé, the Bamileke, from western Cameroon are perceived as immigrants. This ethnic tension is mostly socio-political as the Beti fear becoming a minority in their own native land. From the above, Geschiere (2005: 374 - 433) observes that in many parts of Cameroon, the fear among local people of being overrun by immigrants from other provinces was much more certain. This perception is directed especially against the Bamileke who originate from the western highlands because they currently dominate trade. Geschiere further interestingly remarks that it is difficult to strictly apply ethnicity in Yaoundé and Douala because these cities were first of all populated by immigrants from the early start of urban development. Unfortunately, politicians are now using this as a political tool to instrumentalise and divide the population during elections (Manjoh, 2018). Recently, there have been political demonstrations against Paul Biya's regime in Cameroon due to his exclusionary politics based of hierarchies of belonging. Ethnicity, according to Konings and Nyamnjoh (2003) has been used as a political instrument to maintain Biya in power for what seems like eternity. This is the reason he is satirically portrayed as President Longstay in most of Nyamnjoh's novels.

In *Homeless Waters*, the rural-urban divide deepens the exclusion of Ngoma and his unknown biological father, both perceived as "outsiders-within" in the village of Safang due to their lack of ties to the local ethnic group. In rural Safang, where traditional customs and kinship bonds determine belonging, the father's outsider status automatically excluded him. Unable to withstand this discriminatory treatment and negotiate rigid social barriers, Ngoma's father possibly departed for an urban setting, a space often associated with anonymity and the possibility of reinvention. Furthermore, this rural-urban tension is reflected in Ngoma's mother's account of her father's staunch adherence to tradition.

Even Ngoma's grandfather insisted that his daughter should not be married to a stranger, as Ngoma's mother confesses:

> Your father was not a son of the soil. But he was an admirable man, who believed in the wisdom of his legs…we would be married now if your grandfather had behaved less rigidly. But your grandfather would not hear of any of his daughters getting married to a stranger, a "no man", someone without a base in our land. (HW, 3)

The phrase "wisdom of his legs" suggests the mobility and freedom linked to urban life, in contrast with the rootedness and exclusivity of Safang's rural community. While rural Safang imposes a rigid cultural framework that excludes outsiders, urban spaces symbolise a potential, albeit

uncertain escape from these traditional structures. Yet, the father's departure also highlights the alienation and loss which come with leaving one's roots, leaving Ngoma and his mother to confront the enduring prejudices of rural society alone. The famous proverb that "a child belongs to he who owns the bed" in the novel indicates that no Safang women would be married to those who do not belong to the soil. Strangers are relegated to the peripheral position which consequently creates hierarchies of belonging. This is exactly a similar situation when Francophones flag Anglophones as "Anglo" as they treat them as people who belong to Nigeria, not to Cameroon.

The 1961 reunification of Anglophone regions of Cameroon with "La République" is represented in the novel by the adoption of Ngoma by Lumawut, his step-father. Ngoma is still considered as an outsider-within even though he is now called Ngoma Lumawut after the adoption (HW, 24). The hierarchies of belonging are further represented by the bad treatment of Ngoma's brother and sister by their stepmother when their mother is forced to return to Safang where she belongs. They are sent to collect firewood and fetch water, this is an evidence that they are treated as slaves and are not full members of Lumawut's family. When little children are submitted to such a treatment, it is child labour. When no one can treat their biological children in that way, Ngoma's kins are considered as belonging to periphery. They are rather outsiders-within who deserve nothing as their stepmother threatens: "Fools, you eat my food for nothing! I will have to tell my husband to send back to – whatever you call her – where she comes from (HW, 142)". This threat shows how the stepmother relegates them to Safang village where their biological mother has returned to. Moreover, hierarchised belonging surfaces when both stepmother and stepfather make it clear that Ngoma and his siblings are not their biological children. They have to return where they belong: "you can carry them away from this compound […]" also indicates the outsider-within status. "But not before you have refunded the huge sums of money my husband has spent on you for school" (HW, 143), the stepmother threatens again. When Lumawut tells Ngoma to "follow your evil mother back to Safang" (HW, 145), it translates a similar attitude of Francophones who claim that Anglophones should return to Nigeria where to stay with Nigerians.

The differentiation of Safang villagers from Bonfuma (HW, 1, 13) suggests the idea of ethnic otherness. Ngoma, his mother and siblings are treated as foreigners in Bonfuma village. Belonging extends to the exclusionary context of "blood" and "soil" in this aspect. In *Homeless Waters*, the concept of outsider-within suggests a differentiated belonging, which comes with the exclusion of an individual who has a sense of being already accepted by a community. Nyamnjoh shows that one can belong in so many ways: academically, socially, religiously and locally. From the perspective of the Anglophone Problem, we observe that belonging is claimed as national

citizenship, autochthony and ethnicity. Nyamnjoh's work depicts the Anglophone Problem in Cameroon as a case whereby "ethnicity is rather in competition with the national citizenship" (Geschiere, 35). The differentiated belonging calls for a nuanced understanding of how belonging is experienced. I infer that differentiated belonging suggests the various ways in which different people experience different belonging due to their identities, citizenships, social classes, etc. leading to different forms of exclusion or inclusion. For example, a member of the Anglophone community in Cameroon may experience belonging differently from a member of the Francophone community, due to the unbalanced power dynamics.

There is a differentiation among Cameroonian citizens who think they belong locally and others who are recognised as Cameroonians but are incomplete members. They feel like having less rights than the majority Francophones. Nyamnjoh portrays this differentiation in *Homeless Waters* by opposing wealth to poverty. Thus, Ngoma the protagonist is associated with poverty because he belongs to the rural. However, the author further shows that despite the difference, people can still live together. To illustrate, Ngoma, a poor boy falls in love with Colette and Camille, daughters of the influential urban rich. This also brings the rural and the urban together in the form of invisible borders. He then accepts the difference:

> How could a poor, miserable and primitive wretch of my calibre be so crazy and unrealistic as to think of declaring my sentiments to a girl of such high status: both natural and social? I was reasonable enough to know my limits. (HW, 90)

These words show hierarchies of belonging and highlights the differentiated belonging at the same time. Despite the fact that they were in love, Ngoma keeps hinting to Colette about his poverty. He tells her that his parents are poor peasants from the rural. As such, "he insists that the affair remains as clandestine as possible to avoid the gross abuse that a girl of her type can attract to herself by dating a poor boy like him (HW, 91). The invisible borders surfacing between the rural and the urban, the poor and the rich suggest the growing uncertainties due to the hierarchised citizenship as a result of structural inequalities.

Moreover, the differentiated belonging in the novel is further observed at the campus. Those students from wealthy families go out for drinks or to dance at Night Clubs during weekends whereas the poor ones remain on campus. Social mobility can also impact the differentiated belonging. Ngoma, who comes from a poor family, successfully mixes with the sons and daughters of wealthy families.The change of his name from Ngoma to Richard, Rick or Richy is a proof of

full social integration into the club. For instance, his girlfriend Camille boasts that he is the son of a father who spent twenty years in Europe:

> He refused to study in Europe without first of all getting his Ordinary Level papers here in the country. As a prominent leader of tomorrow, he insists he wants to study in the country to get to know it thoroughly. (HW, 123)

The performativity of adopting a name such as Richard, Rick, or Richy can be analysed as a means of navigating identity and assimilation within a particular socio-cultural space. This act transcends a mere change of nomenclature; it represents a strategic performance of belonging and acceptance into a privileged or exclusive social circle. By discarding the name "Ngoma," which may evoke connotations of cultural or ethnic specificity, and adopting a more Westernised name, he performs a form of social integration aligned with the values and expectations of the group he seeks to join. The performative aspect is twofold.The first aspect is social integration as performance, wherein the name change operates as a symbolic gesture signalling conformity to the group's norms, enabling him to be perceived as "one of them." It reflects an internalisation of the group's values and a desire to diminish markers of "otherness" that might obstruct full acceptance. The second aspect concerns the negotiation of identity. This renaming is not solely about assimilation but also about navigating power dynamics and strategically positioning himself to access the social and material advantages associated with the group's status. This resonates with Bourdieu's (1986) concept of social capital, wherein individuals adopt behaviours and symbols that facilitate entry into networks of privilege (Bourdieu, 1986).

From the outsider-insider dynamics Ngoma's cultural identity is not fixed but negotiated through his relationships to both his family's heritage and broader societal forces. His identity is formed at the intersection between the rural and the urban, or from the local to the global where he exercises agency in shaping his sense of belonging within multiple spheres of belonging. In addition, there is a sense of flexible citizenship. Ngoma's navigation between tradition and modernity highlights his ability to move between different cultural spheres and adopt multiple identities that suit varying contexts. I thus note that he is not only assimilating or adjusting but also actively choosing how to align his identity with both his rural identity inherited from his family background and the urban etiquette to shape his newly acquired identity. Furthermore, the change of name from Ngoma to Richard, Rick or Richy illustrates the outsider-insider dynamics because both family name and the western names are signs of multiple identities. From Ngoma, a family name based on cultural heritage to more Westernised versions is indicative of modernity and represents a social mobility

from the insider identity belonging within his family and cultural group to an outsider position in the cosmopolitan context. Therefore, Ngoma's acceptance to adopt new names signifies an attempt to navigate and craft a hybrid or flexible identity, blending the demands of tradition with those of a modern world.

In Nyamnjoh's *Homeless Waters*, the interaction between Ngoma and Camille illustrates a tension between outsider and insider dynamics, particularly concerning social class, cultural identity and belonging. Ngoma's cultural identity positions him as an outsider to the circle of urbanites where Camille belongs. He was used to the local and cheap tastes but Camille upgrades him to a high-class boy (HW, 122). This further reflects a negotiation of belonging that serves as a proxy for negotiating a kind of citizenship, wherein identity and social standing are fluidly reshaped through impressions and performances. Ngoma's outward persona, shaped by Camille's portrayal of him as a connoisseur of refined tastes, places him within a social stratum to which he does not inherently belong. This constructed identity functions as a form of flexible citizenship, granting Ngoma access to social privileges and recognition typically reserved for those of higher socioeconomic status, the wealthy urbanites. We see how Camille projects him as someone who fits seamlessly into the lifestyle of the wealthy urbanites. This misrepresentation contained in "fabulous lies" as Ngoma puts it, suggests that Camille wants to see him as an insider to a wealthy club where he does not truly belong.

Ngoma's awareness of this deception, along with his passive acceptance of it: "I did nothing to make Camille discontinue telling fabulous lies" (HW, 124), highlights his own struggle with belonging and the external pressure to conform to a particular image. His reluctance to challenge the false narrative placed upon him reflects a form of complicity, where he allows the outsider-insider dynamics to persist for the sake of negotiating social acceptance and fulfilling expectations. This illustrates how social boundaries and class distinctions are not only fluid, but also how individuals can be trapped between multiple identities. When authentic identity is less than the fake one which the social circumstances impose, Ngoma's predicament speaks to the complex nature of identity in a society that prizes certain appearances over genuine belonging and how people negotiate their positions within or outside of established norms.

Ngoma's journey encapsulates a profound crisis of ethnicity, marked by personal dislocation, fractured family ties, and shifting societal landscapes. Growing up without a father, a key figure in the transmission of ethnic identity in many African cultures Ngoma experiences not only a personal loss but also a symbolic rupture in cultural continuity. His reflection, "we grew up

without a father, without even contemplating the necessity of one," reveals a formative void that disrupts his sense of self and belonging. The family's relocation from Safang village to Bonfuma further deepens this dislocation. Geographic movement serves rooted community ties, diluting the ethnic identity traditionally anchored in place and shared customs. This spatial shift exacerbates Ngoma's sense of fragmentation and alienation.

Ngoma's identity crisis unfolds within broader dynamics of ethnicity, autochthony, and power. Belonging becomes a contested space, where identity is not inherited but negotiated. Nyamnjoh's portrayal of autochthony underscores how social boundaries, often defined by ethnicity construct insider/outsider hierarchies. These distinctions, tied to access to power and resources, reveal that citizenship and belonging are fluid, shaped as much by exclusion as by inclusion. Ultimately, Ngoma's story reflects the tensions of navigating identity in a world where ethnic affiliation is both a source of meaning and a mechanism of marginalisation.

5. 4. *Intimate Strangers*: Exploring Xenophobia in "Makwerekwere"

The term "xenophobia" (Cuddon, 2014) is generally associated with attitudes and behaviour against individuals or groups of people that are different from members of a particular social or ethnic group. These attitudes and behaviours can range from negative emotions and thoughts about different groups to behaviour that discriminates and persecutes these groups. Xenophobia often comes with hostility and fear of the other. Fear, uncertainty, and sudden changes that arise in any given period can lead to protectionist behaviour and resistance. The term "minoritisation" stems from the fact that society does not see a certain group that lives within its own borders as the owner of these borders and acts as if this group does not have any power in social and cultural dynamics.

This section delineates the ways in which the margins are minoritised and discriminated against by dominant majorities. By describing how the concept of outsider-within constructs a differentiated belonging, this chapter further reexamines the harmful social impacts of living on minoritised individuals and how such impacts affect their flexible citizenships. Comparing marginalisation in the Anglophone Problem with that of xenophobia, I draw on the concept of "Makwerekwere" to argue that discrimination of outsiders due to imagined geographies can bear serious consequences on individuals who are considered as outsiders-within. The power dynamics between the migrant and the native being unbalanced as seen in *Intimate Strangers* shows that the native, due to privileges, income, status, and rights is dominant and "Makwerekwere" at this level

is considered as an "enemy other" created by the differentiated belonging. The situation for the migrant group is clearly a negative one as defined by their minority status.

"Makwerekwere" has a very specific connotation in terms of intra-African migration & southern African xenophobia. While the term literally means "foreigner," it specifically refers to black Africans who are perceived as being outsiders. These migrants often come from other African countries in search of work or better opportunities. The term also reflects autochthony because it reflects a perception that these migrants are culturally, linguistically, and ethnically different from Southern Africans. The term thus highlights the divide between the host population and the migrants. The negative connotations of the term "Makwerekwere" are intertwined with xenophobic sentiments that have surfaced in Southern Africa, especially in the context of economic competition. Many South Africans, particularly those in lower-income, see migrants as a threat, competing for scarce jobs and resources. This economic competition has often been linked to violent anti-immigrant rhetoric and attacks, leading to outbreaks of xenophobic violence, where "Makwerekwere" serves as a marker of this "otherness." In summary, "Makwerekwere" is more than just a term for a "foreigner." It has evolved to symbolise a cultural and economic divide in Southern Africa, highlighting the challenges of integration, social exclusion and the fraught relationship between local populations and African migrants from elsewhere on the continent. Within the socio-economic dynamics, "Makwerekwere" is becoming a symbol of the friction between the local population and the growing numbers of foreign nationals.

Literary works depict xenophobia in various forms as a lens to critique the South African society. Some of the critical writers include for instance, J.M. Coetzee. His work *Disgrace*[46] originally published in 1999 depicts the themes of social segregation, alienation and even "the fear of the other" which is expressed though xenophobic practices which characterised the South African society and their relationship with foreigners. This work engages with xenophobia in a way that reflects the complexities of post-apartheid identity and also addresses the ways in which fear, prejudice, and historical divisions continue to shape South Africa's relationships with its African neighbours and immigrant communities.

[46] *Disgrace* is a novel by J. M. Coetzee, published in 1999. It won the Booker Prize. The writer was also awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature four years after its publication.

The term Makwerekwere, a derogatory label for African foreign nationals, is a potent symbol of xenophobia and social exclusion. In *District 9*[47] (2009), this concept is explored through a dystopian lens, reflecting real-world prejudices in post-apartheid South Africa. The film mirrors societal fears by portraying foreign nationals, particularly Nigerians as criminal and exploitative, reinforcing stereotypes rather than subverting them (Janks, 2011). Through this depiction, *District 9* illustrates how xenophobia manifests in both language and representation, with Makwerekwere embodying the dehumanisation and scapegoating of the Other in times of social strain.

Nyamnjoh's *Intimate Strangers* is a nuanced literary response to xenophobia and the fear of the Other. It exposes the irrationality of exclusion and emphasizes the interconnectedness of people across borders. Through its narrative, the novel invites a rethinking of identity, urging societies to see strangers not as threats, but as integral to their own existence and evolution. The narrative devolves into fear of the other and feeling of insecurity. Nyamnjoh's central theme revolves around the discomfort with, and suspicion of, those perceived as different, be it by nationality, ethnicity, or culture. The "stranger" in the novel is not only foreign in terms of geography but also represents anything that disrupts the norm. The fear of the Other in the story is rooted in a deep-seated insecurity, both individual and collective. Communities and institutions define themselves by who they exclude, reinforcing rigid boundaries between "us" and "them."

The title *Intimate Strangers* is a striking paradox, suggesting that those labelled as "strangers" are in fact intimately present in our lives, living, working, and struggling alongside us. Nyamnjoh uses this irony to challenge the idea that strangeness is inherently foreign, presenting the stranger as a mirror reflecting societal contradictions. The novel explores relationships marked by both familiarity and suspicion, illustrating the ambiguous nature of identity in a globalised yet divided world. By portraying xenophobia as a systemic issue embedded in institutions, media, and policy, Nyamnjoh critiques how societies construct exclusionary identities. Drawing on postcolonial African contexts, particularly South Africa and Cameroon, he highlights how migrants are often scapegoated based on arbitrary differences. Through satire and symbolism, Nyamnjoh exposes the absurdity of narrow nationalism and the myth of cultural purity. His characters subvert stereotypes, revealing the fragility of labels and the irrationality of exclusion. Ultimately, *Intimate Strangers* calls for a rethinking of identity, championing inclusivity, hybridity, and shared humanity over simplistic binaries such as native versus foreigner.

[47] *District 9* utilises a documentary-style format interwoven with traditional narrative filmmaking. The film draws parallels to apartheid-era South Africa, employing the treatment of the aliens as a metaphor for racial discrimination and social inequality.

In Chapter Two of *Intimate Strangers*, the narrative delves deeply into the prejudices and hostilities faced by African immigrants, who are derogatorily referred to as "Makwerekwere". An example from the novel highlights the protagonist Refentše's observations regarding the perception and treatment of immigrants. For instance, Nigerians are stereotyped as drug dealers or criminals, while immigrants from other African countries are often blamed for societal issues such as rising crime rates and the spread of diseases like HIV/AIDS. These perceptions underscore the systemic xenophobia and the scapegoating of non-South Africans (23–46).

Looking at the autobiographical aspect, Nyamnjoh has lived and worked in Botswana. He is currently living and working in South Africa. In these contexts, "Makwerekwere" translates his experience of the complex immigration relationships between autochthons and foreigners where Southern Africans perceive foreigners as a threat to their socio-economic lives. When socio-economic interests are threatened, they view foreigners as competitors, which thus results in xenophobic treatments. This justifies my exploration the concept of "Makwerekwere" as a metaphor for otherness and marginalisation, particularly in the context of African identity, migration, and xenophobia.

"Makwerekwere" is a term that Nyamnjoh uses in his *#RhodesMustFall: Nibbling at Resilient Colonialism in South Africa* (2016: 56 – 60)[48] , a critique of xenophobia, identity, and the historical impact of colonialism in Africa. Using this term to refer to Cecil John Rhodes in his book has both historical and sociopolitical connotations. He draws a parallel between Rhodes as a colonial figure and the kind of exclusionary, xenophobic attitudes that the term embodies. Rhodes represents colonial exploitation, land dispossession, and the imposition of European identities on Africans.

In *#RhodesMustFall: Nibbling at Resilient Colonialism in South Africa* (2016), Nyamnjoh employs the term "makwerekwere" to interrogate the xenophobic dynamics confronting African migrants in post-apartheid South Africa:

> Rhodes took over, ruled, developed and exploited for his personal profit and that of Britain the lands and bodies of those he conquered, turning them into amakwerekwere [a pejorative term for outsiders] on their own native soil, their homeland. (28)

[48] Nyamnjoh's book Rhodes Must Fall: Nibbling at Resilient Colonialism in South Africa (2016) delves into the #RhodesMustFall movement that erupted in South Africa in 2015. The enduring relevance of this movement lies in its call for justice, equality and a reimagining of post-colonial societies. By challenging resilient colonial structures, it continues to push for a more inclusive and equitable future.

Nyamnjoh's analysis of “makwerekwere” also exposes how postcolonial African states often replicate the colonial logic of domination, entrenching systems that resist pluralism and marginalise perceived ‘non-conformists’. He argues that “bounded notions of citizenship and problematic representations of African mobility by Rhodes and his fellow makwerekwere of European origin of yesteryear (representations unfortunately uncritically reproduced by so-called independent African nation-states) are at the heart of current articulations of citizenship and belonging as a zero sum game in South Africa and throughout the African continent” (p. 229).

Nyamnjoh’s analysis of “makwerekwere” also exposes how postcolonial African states often replicate the colonial logic of domination, entrenching systems that resist pluralism and marginalise perceived ‘non-conformists’. The term encapsulates how postcolonial state systems continue to reproduce hierarchies belonging rooted in colonial legacies. When placed in dialogue with the Anglophone Problem in Cameroon, this concept proves particularly illuminating, as Anglophone Cameroonians, despite being legally recognised citizens are frequently treated as internal outsiders due to their linguistic identity. While “makwerekwere” typically refers to non-nationals in Southern Africa, it resonates metaphorically in the Cameroonian context, where fellow citizens are rendered foreigners in their own land.

Nyamnjoh’s analysis of “makwerekwere” reveals how postcolonial African states often replicate the colonial logic of domination, entrenching systems that resist pluralism and marginalise those deemed ‘non-conformist’. The term encapsulates the enduring hierarchies of belonging that originate from colonial legacies. When considered alongside the Anglophone Problem in Cameroon, this concept becomes particularly illuminating. Although Anglophone Cameroonians are legally recognised as citizens, they are frequently treated as internal outsiders, marginalised due to their distinct British colonial heritage and linguistic identity. While “makwerekwere” commonly refers to non-nationals in Southern Africa, it resonates metaphorically in the Cameroonian context, where citizens are rendered strangers within their own nation.

This condition parallels Mahmood Mamdani’s notion of the “permanent minority”, wherein colonial governance fixed populations into rigid categories of inclusion and exclusion. In the postcolonial state, Mamdani argues, these classificatory structures persist through the politicisation of identity, rendering certain citizens perpetual outsiders when they do not conform to the dominant national narrative. In a similar vein, Tanure Ojaide critiques the failure of postcolonial states to foster inclusive civic identities, observing that “the postcolonial state continues to behave like the colonial master, alienating its own people in the name of order and

unity." Collectively, the works of Nyamnjoh, Mamdani, and Ojaide expose the troubling continuities between colonial and postcolonial exclusions. They underscore the extent to which citizenship in postcolonial Africa remains a contested and unstable construct, frequently undermined by inherited and entrenched practices of cultural and political marginalisation.

The comparison between "makwerekwere" and the Anglophone condition reveals that, in both the South African and Cameroonian contexts, citizenship is unevenly practiced, granted in principle but often withheld in substance. Belonging is measured against constructed notions of cultural and linguistic conformity. Both cases reveal the persistence of colonial residues within postcolonial constructions of citizenship, with "makwerekwere" in South Africa and "Anglophone" in Cameroon each representing the broader failure of African nation-states to decolonise in an inclusive and equitable manner. Thus, Nyamnjoh's concept of "makwerekwere" transcends its immediate context to offer a pan-African critique of exclusionary nationalism and incomplete decolonisation. It provides a potent analytical lens through which to understand the Anglophone Problem not as a parochial or merely linguistic dispute, but as symptomatic of deep-rooted contradictions in African statecraft, notions of belonging, and the practice of citizenship.

As an outsider-within, Immaculate, in *Intimate Strangers* is viewed as a diasporic Mimbolander. She is from Mimboland with a cultural heritage different from Botswana. She now lives outside the traditional context of her homeland. Diasporic because she identifies with both her native cultural roots and the Botswana experiences of a diasporic existence. She is now navigating and negotiating identity in a new environment. This can as well be interpreted to some extent as an autobiographic portrayal of Nyamnjoh himself. Nyamnjoh is a diasporic Cameroonian who adapts and reinterprets the Cameroonian cultural heritage while living in a different country. He even lived and worked in Botswana where this story is set. From this viewpoint, Nyamnjoh's novel appears to be a blending of his experience as a native Cameroonian with aspects of influences of the overseas. There is an anthropological dimension requiring a literary interpretation of "Makwerekwere". Nyamnjoh's statement highlights the prejudices and stereotypes faced by immigrants, particularly in how their education and intelligence are often disregarded due to their nationality or darker skin tone. Despite being more educated or skilled than many locals, these individuals are still viewed through a lens of inferiority, primarily because of their perceived "foreignness" and skin colour. This reinforces how race, skin colour, and nationality intersect to perpetuate social hierarchies, even within the wider African community.
(Nyamnjoh, 2007 & 2016).

"Makwerekwere", in the novel, are those blacks coming from a distant Africa. Although this term is used for those who come from North of the Limpopo including Zimbabwe, Zambia, Malawi, Mozambique; in the novel, nationals from southern African countries are not referred to as "Makwerekwere", except Zimbabweans. Angel, one of the characters confesses it in her conversation with Immaculate:

> It is a shame we use the word the way we do, to refer to a particular type of foreigner from distant parts of Africa. Our neighbours from South Africa, Lesotho, Swaziland, they are not Batswana, but they are not called "Makwerekwere" either. (IS, 9)

Despite that all are blacks, Batswana feel more comfortable with South Africans, the Sotho and the Swazi than with Zimbabweans, Zambians and other Africans from east, west or centre. This perception of the "other" differentiates and hierarchises belonging. The fact that "Makwerekwere" are used as maids, helpers and security guards (IS, 13), enforces hierarchies of belonging. Moreover, there is a perception of hegemony in this term, which creates a "regime of belonging" (Hall, 2013). It also contains patterns of inequalities which produce unbalanced power dynamics. Socially, the term is derogatory and stereotypical as indicated earlier. Nigerians as "Makwerekwere" are referred to as "crooks". Angel, one of the characters continues her confession to Immaculate: "About Nigerians, they would say, Ha! These Nigerians! Ah! Those people! They are crooks. And some would add, 'are you people crooks like Nigerians?' (IS, 34)" when Immaculate Politically compares Botswana to Mimboland, she concludes that Botswana is more democratic and peaceful than Mimboland. Botswana is doing better economically than Mimboland and other African countries (IS, 24 – 25). This can be the reason why other Africans immigrate there, which increases a feeling of superiority. Batswana even think that all the other foreign blacks immigrating into their country are hungry, looking for food. However, Immaculate observes that Botswana is not only more dangerous due to the proliferation of HIV/AIDS but there is also a lack of respect for gender and women than in Mimboland.

Themes of identity and belonging are conveyed through the concept of autochthony. Autochthony[49] as the fact of being a "native" or indigenous to a particular land surfaces hierarchies of belonging. It is noted that Nyamnjoh uses autochthony in *Intimate Strangers* as a critique of hierarchies to delineate who belongs and who does not. Autochthony is used by Batswana as a means to exclude "Makwerekwere" from all aspects of the everyday life despite that those

[49] Autochthony refers to the fact of being native to a particular place, or originating and existing in a specific region. This term is often discussed in terms of national identity, the rights of indigenous peoples, or the claims of original versus settler populations.

"Makwerekwere" have lived in the country for years. This is reflected in the way Batswana connect autochthony to culture and citizenship, which subsequently produce social hierarchies. For instance they claim that they are superior Zimbabweans despite that both of them are black Africans. The modus operandi in Xenophobia and "Makwerekwere" is similar. For example, the "clean up" expression in *Intimate Strangers*, means that all those strangers who do not belong to Botswana should be disposed of. Similarly, the "litter" campaign in which foreigners are collected and deported back to their countries is another illustration in the same novel. All the non-autochthonous are sent back to where they belong (IS, 10). In this context, autochthony signifies "nativeness" as a defining characteristic of belonging and stands in contrast to the notion of the "settler." Due to her citizenship status, Immaculate faces stereotypes, marginalisation, and exclusion. Despite that the term "Makwerekwere" is used to describe foreigners in Botswana, it is primarily applied to those from distant African countries. In contrast, migrants from neighboring southern African nations, such as Lesotho, Swaziland, and South Africa, are regarded as kin, either cousins or brothers. This distinction reflects a hierarchical social stratification of citizenship, where individuals from these neighbouring countries receive preferential treatment over those labeled as "Makwerekwere".

Nyamnjoh's *Intimate Strangers* highlights the social and political consequences of hierarchies of belonging. My analysis of the tensions between autochthons and strangers extends beyond geographic origins. It is deeply rooted in social dynamics that shape relationships, negotiations, and resistance. Autochthony, as an exclusive identity, asserts that only native Batswana have a legitimate claim to the land, leading to exclusionary practices. However, Nyamnjoh demonstrates that autochthony is not merely about birthplace but often serves as a political tool to justify domination and marginalisation. Moreover, *Intimate Strangers* also highlights peaceful resistance through friendship. Nyamnjoh proposes that one way to counteract various forms of exclusion is by cultivating intimate and personal relationships. The protagonist has formed friendships with clearly defined boundaries. By nurturing these bonds, individuals can challenge the rigid divisions imposed by the politics of autochthony, negotiating fluid spaces where belonging is not confined by ethnic or national identity.

When autochthony is considered in its strict meaning of insiderhood, the membership circle reduces and subsequently excludes "others". Only few members enjoy belonging and others are kept distant, consequently becoming outsiders-within, and belonging becomes hierarchised. The hierarchies are created by the dichotomy between the centre and the margin. The fact that

Immaculate is treated as “Makwerekwere” relegates her to a second-class position of belonging. The fact that Zimbabweans are treated worse than other southern Africans shows the differentiation based on borders as Immaculate narrates during her conversation with Dr Winter-Bottom:

> Immediately they hear that you are a foreigner, they suspect you are a Zimbabwean, especially when you are black. And they do not want to know anything beyond that. To them an African is a poor person by definition. But when you are from Zimbabwean especially, it is worse. (IS, 70)

The concept of hierarchised belonging renders even citizenship incomplete. The marginalisation of Zimbabweans illustrates how autochthony establishes social hierarchies. For instance, irrespective of physical appearance, a Zimbabwean may still be perceived as thin by Batswana simply because they originate from a place associated with hunger (IS, 51). As a result, they are labelled *Batswakwa*, a term meaning “people who suffer a lot” (IS, 58–59). Examining autochthony through the lens of national belonging in the novel suggests that Batswana are highly protective of their land, and this safeguarding becomes a means of exclusion. This exclusionary treatment is evident in the use of the term “Makwerekwere”. As a derogatory term, “Makwerekwere” refers to foreign nationals, particularly those from other African countries, and carries xenophobic connotations. The term is used to stereotype and marginalise foreigners. Linguistically, it denotes people who speak different languages or have distinct accents from the local South African languages. Closely associated with xenophobia, “Makwerekwere” has been a significant issue in South Africa, where some local populations harbour resentment towards immigrants, leading to tensions, discrimination, and even violent attacks.

My analysis of the term “Makwerekwere” as a hierarchy of belonging unfolds at two levels: social and political. As used by South Africans and Batswanans, the term socially refers to a person who does not speak the local languages. When the person is unable to speak the local language(s), it is assumed that s/he is not a native of the soil. Unfortunately, if a person cannot speak [the] local languages, South Africans and Batswana qualify him/her as a primitive who is socio-economically and culturally backward. Politically, *Intimate Strangers* is another way to show that South Africa has experienced various forms of xenophobia, often directed at immigrants, particularly from neighbouring African countries, as well as from the broader African diaspora, deeply rooted in the complex layers of South Africa’s history, both colonial past and apartheid. South African

literature, both before and after apartheid, has grappled with issues related to race, identity and belonging (Floya, 2020).

On another note, the term "Lekgoa"[50] is also a concept which determines a differentiated belonging based on race. While "Lekgoa" symbolises a white person, it reflects the historical and social relationships between the Southern African blacks and Europeans. These relationships are influenced by the colonial legacy and apartheid. This term is often used to represent colonial powers and sometimes carries negative connotation associated with sad history of oppression, exploitation and the imposition of European cultural values upon local cultural identity. In Southern African literature, "Lekgoa" represents the negative effects of colonialism and apartheid in which the white man is depicted as an activist of a differentiated belonging and hierarchised citizenship who has a civilising mission in Africa. As opposed to "Makwerekwere", "Lekgoa" represents the Batswana's perception and attitude toward whites. It is portrayed in the novel that:

> One thing about Batswana, they respect whites. Their women like whites because socially whites treat them well. Most of them prefer whites in almost everything. They treat a white man nicer than a black person. (IS, 35)

The above discriminatory treatment and preferential attitude signal a differentiated belonging in the novel, which makes Anderson's "imagined communities" utopic. The terms "Makwerekwere" and "Lekgoa" exemplify a form of differentiated belonging, which Youkhana (2015: 10) describes as a complex web of interpersonal relations. This web encompasses a range of dynamics, including attachments, exclusions, hierarchies, marginalisation, and differentiation. Domestic workers, such as maids, house helpers, and guards, must navigate the process of gaining acceptance within their employers' homes. Similarly, foreign nationals in Botswana also must negotiate flexible citizenship in order to survive. The challenges domestic workers face can vary significantly depending on their employer. For instance, the experience of working for a white, black, or Indian employer differs substantially, as illustrated in an interview that Dr. Nanny had with Immaculate, who was asked to compare maids' experiences working for a white person versus a non-white person:

> It depends on individuals…some black people are fine, and some white people are not good. But it's the person's heart that matters.… Indians, they are good at making you feel like a child. Sometimes if you ask to go home, they might say you can go at

[50] In Sotho and seTswana languages, it means a white person.

> Easter, but there's no pay when you return. They say, 'No pay for no work.' So, you are not supposed to go home if you want to be paid.
>
> …You have to work as a gardener outside and as a maid inside. There is no lunch break….They do not allow us to rest. Living in the Servants' Quarters means they can call you at any time to work. In the evening, they'll summon you to make coffee. You have to come inside and do whatever they say. (IS, 44)

This exchange exposes the harsh realities of domestic labour, particularly its dehumanising and exploitative nature in contexts shaped by racial and class hierarchies. While acknowledging individual kindness, the narrative underscores systemic inequalities that constrain domestic workers' lives. The working conditions such as the lack of breaks, constant availability, and infantilising treatment emphasise the exploitative essence of domestic labour. Employers exercise immense control over workers' time, mobility, and financial independence, reducing them to mere instruments of labour, devoid of recognition of their humanity. The policy of "no pay for no work" reflects a transactional and punitive approach to labour relations, where workers are penalised economically for seeking rest or family time.

The mention of living in "Servants' Quarters" highlights spatial segregation and the hierarchies of belonging, reinforcing employers' control. By keeping workers physically close, employers blur the lines between work and personal life, effectively eliminating the worker's right to rest. The demand for constant availability "In the evening, come and make coffee" demonstrates temporal control, with workers expected to be on call at all hours. Working for a Motswana employer is described as even worse. The protagonist notes that, "Batswana are in their comfortable country. They do what they want." Such employers exploit workers who do not have visas or work permits and sometimes, refusing to pay them (IS, 46). They even call the police to report and deport them without cost (IS, 48). Faced with these conditions, Immaculate must navigate and negotiate her identity and acceptance as a diasporic Mimbolander, seeking space and dignity within an oppressive system.

The issues of xenophobia, racialised belonging, and social exclusion in *Intimate Strangers*, exemplified through the terms "Makwerekwere" and "Lekgoa", powerfully resonate with the Anglophone Problem in Cameroon. These dynamics, rooted in differentiated belonging, hierarchical citizenship, and postcolonial identity crises form a critical bridge between the novel's themes and Cameroon's own sociopolitical struggles. "Makwerekwere" and "Lekgoa" are

explicitly linked to the Anglophone Problem in so many respects, including the representation of differentiated belonging and identity politics, language, power, and exclusion, colonial legacies and hierarchies of belonging.

By juxtaposing Makwerekwere, Lekgoa, and the treatment of migrant labourers with the Anglophone Problem, Nyamnjoh presents a transnational critique of belonging, identity, and postcolonial failure. These themes reveal how exclusion, whether based on race, language, or nationality remains embedded in everyday social and institutional structures. The novel thus functions not only as a commentary on xenophobia in Southern Africa but also as a broader reflection on the struggles for recognition and dignity in postcolonial African societies, including Cameroon.

5. 5. Conclusion

At some extent, autochthony, ethnicity and the Anglophone Problem render identity and belonging flexible. Nyamnjoh regards autochthony as a dynamic concept, shaped by socially constructed boundaries that make the notion of belonging flexible and adaptable. In the context of Cameroon where ethnicity and autochthony are associated with power and socio-political interest, we infer that belonging, if linked with ethnicity and autochthony is a matter of negotiation as Geschiere (2009) asserts. This negotiation is also and remains subject to acceptance. Because ethnicity and autochthony imply collective identity and solidarity, strangers are discriminated against. This marginalisation, therefore, creates hierarchies of belonging. As a result, terms like "Makwerekwere" in South Africa and Botswana, "Anglo" and "Frog"[51] coined from the Anglophone Problem in Cameroon are the products of these hierarchies.

This chapter has explored the theme of otherness and hierarchical belonging in Nyamnjoh's two novels, *Intimate Strangers* and *Homeless Waters*. It focuses on how the concept of "outsider-within" is portrayed through the characters' experiences with ethnicity and autochthony. In *Intimate Strangers*, otherness is represented by terms such as "Makwerekwere" and "Lekgoa",

[51] Anglo and Frog, sometimes derogatory, are expressions of Cameroon's lingua-cultural divide between the Anglophone and Francophone communities. These terms have socio-political connotations. While Anglo refers to natives from the English-speaking regions, Frog is used to identify natives from the French-speaking region of Cameroon. The two terms are used to distinguish and sometimes create a sense of separation between Anglophones and Francophones.

which distinguish between those who belong and those who do not, based on ethnic and territorial factors.

In the context of Nyamnjoh's exploration of the concept of "outsider-within," Mimboland is the site for geographic representation of the Anglophone problem. This site broadens the relevance of flexible citizenship by highlighting how social and political belonging transcends territorial boundaries. The Anglophone problem in Cameroon is often portrayed in terms of regional differences between the Anglophone minority and the Francophone majority, where Anglophones face systemic marginalisation despite being citizens of the same country. This regional divide illustrates how ethnicity and autochthony influence notions of citizenship and belonging, even within the same national territory.

My analysis of Nyamnjoh's novels underscores that belonging is not just about geographic proximity or physical borders but is intrinsically tied to social constructs, such as ethnicity, language, and political power. The concept of outsider-within, particularly in the context of the Anglophone crisis, demonstrates how Anglophones, despite their national citizenship, are marked as outsiders due to their cultural and linguistic differences from the dominant Francophone majority. This situation reflects the ways in which power, identity, and territoriality converge to determine who belongs and who does not.

The concept of flexible citizenship, as examined through the experiences of characters like Ngoma in *Homeless Waters*, demonstrates how individuals navigate between multiple identities and allegiances, seeking acceptance in a fragmented society. Ngoma's struggles to belong in urban spaces, despite adopting various identities, mirror the experiences of Anglophones who, though geo-politically and legally part of Cameroon, remain excluded from full participation in national life. The tensions between Anglophones and Francophones in Cameroon echo the societal divisions seen in Nyamnjoh's novels, where ethnicity and autochthony create invisible barriers that shape individuals' opportunities, rights, and status.

The analysis of *Intimate Strangers* and *Homeless Waters* reveals the fluid and negotiable nature of citizenship. In a country where territorial boundaries are supposed to define citizenship, the lived experiences of Anglophones in Cameroon for instance show that belonging is more contingent upon cultural and political recognition than physical location. Flexible citizenship, in this sense, reflects the complexities of identity in seen in *Intimate Strangers* which explores the multiple facets of the concept "Makwerekwere" in Southern African context, where ethnic and

regional differences often define the contours of inclusion and exclusion, further highlighting the need for more inclusive and equitable frameworks for citizenship and social justice.

Chapter Six

General Conclusion

This literary analysis of Nyamnjoh's ethnographic fiction focused on the representation of the Anglophone Problem. The close reading comprised the scope and corpus of all the eight novels written by Nyamnjoh, which reveals that flexible citizenship, as one of the critical elements of identity and belonging, is portrayed through the concepts of spatiality, linguacultural identity, minoritisation, autochthony and ethnicity.

My research has explored the Anglophone problem in Nyamnjoh's ethnographic fiction through a critical examination of the themes of nationalism, belonging, and citizenship in Cameroon. The reading of Nyamnjoh's work delved into the complexities of identity formation and the socio-political implications of Cameroon's postcolonial history, where the Anglophone minority struggles to negotiate its place within the broader national fabric. Through the literary analysis of Nyamnjoh's ethnographic fiction, the research has further highlighted how Nyamnjoh uses fiction to reflect on the contested notions of belonging, national identity, and the fluidity of citizenship in Cameroon's divided linguistic landscape. This dissertation sheds light on the ongoing quest for recognition and self-determination within the framework of Cameroon's complex and evolving socio-political realities.

The literary analysis of Nyamnjoh's *The Travail of Dieudonné* and *A Nose for Money* reveals the complex interplay of space, place, and identity within African literature, specifically within the context of ethnographic fiction. Nyamnjoh uses both real and imagined geographies to highlight the ways societal struggles such as the Anglophone and Francophone tensions in Cameroon are manifested. These imagined spaces, particularly the fictional setting of Mimboland, serve as metaphors for real-world issues like political corruption, social inequality, and the struggles of marginalised communities. The concept of Mimboland allows Nyamnjoh to critique these issues flexibly, using allegory to address identity, power dynamics, and the broader socio-political context of postcolonial Cameroon.

The manipulation of toponymy (place names) and anthroponymy (personal names) in Nyamnjoh's work adds layers of social commentary, reflecting contradictions and ironies within the society. Characters like Prospère and Dieudonné embody the tensions between personal aspirations and

societal realities, revealing how names, as societal markers, often serve as tools for critique. Nyamnjoh's symbolic onomastic practice exposes how individuals navigate or are constrained by social expectations, political systems and their own identities.

Furthermore, the theme of mobility, both social and geographical underscores the protagonists' attempts to transcend socio-economic barriers, yet it also reveals how systemic inequalities limit opportunities for upward mobility. The novels critique the illusion of progress, particularly in capitalist societies, where economic mobility often comes at a moral cost. Through the protagonists' movements, Nyamnjoh explores how space and place are not just physical locations, but social and emotional landscapes, shaping characters' identities and their interactions within a divided society.

Nyamnjoh's work illustrates how the dynamic relationships between space, place, and identity can serve as powerful tools for exploring societal issues. The blending of real and imagined geographies in Mimboland provides a space for examining the divisions and complexities inherent in post-colonial African societies, urging readers to reflect on the need for unity, dialogue, and inclusivity. The critique of mobility, naming, and social structures within these novels highlights the ways in which literary representations of geography offer critical perspectives on the lived experiences of individuals and communities in Africa.

Nyamnjoh's *Married But Available* and *Mind Searching* offer profound explorations of the social, cultural, and psychological dimensions. Nyamnjoh's work, while rooted in the Cameroonian context, offers a broader reflection on Africa as a whole, highlighting shared sociopolitical experiences across the continent. Both novels engage deeply with themes of identity, societal expectations, and the complexities of human relationships, all while critiquing socio-economic challenges and moral hypocrisies. Nyamnjoh's use of linguistic hybridity, including code-switching and code-mixing, serves as a powerful narrative strategy that not only mirrors the multilingual realities of Cameroon but also critiques colonial legacies and linguistic hierarchies. Through these strategies, Nyamnjoh emphasises the fluidity of identity and the resilience of African societies in navigating cultural and linguistic diversity.

Moreover, the novels reflect the socio-political tensions surrounding the Anglophone Problem and advocate for a pluralistic, multicultural society that transcends linguistic and cultural divides. By portraying the adaptability and agency of bilingual individuals, Nyamnjoh highlights language as both a tool of resistance and a means of fostering inclusion, solidarity and shared national identity.

Ultimately, his works champion the potential of linguistic hybridity to bridge divides, challenge societal norms and reimagine belonging in a more inclusive, flexible, and culturally rich society.

Chapter four of this research aimed to critically examine the Anglophone Problem in Cameroon through the lens of minority discourse, highlighting the systemic marginalisation of the Anglophone minority by a Francophone-dominated regime. The analysis of Nyamnjoh's *Souls Forgotten* and *The Disillusioned African*, emphasised the complex realities of Anglophone identity, resistance and systemic neglect. These texts serve as potent literary tools for critiquing hegemonic power structures while advocating for cultural preservation, social justice and equity. The exploration of minority discourses situates the Anglophone Problem within the broader context of postcolonial struggles, illustrating how systemic oppression and neocolonial structures perpetuate cycles of victimhood and resistance.

From a postcolonial perspective, Achille Mbembe (2001) presents a nuanced critique of power in postcolonial Africa, proposing that both rulers and subjects partake in an "aesthetic of power." This concept extends beyond coercion to encompass the symbolic and performative dimensions through which power is lived and reproduced. Power thus becomes a spectacle, ritualised, dramatised, and embedded in everyday life. Mbembe shows how postcolonial rulers project exaggerated images of authority, while subjects engage with these displays through mimicry, irony, or resignation. This mutual performance blurs the lines between complicity and resistance, rendering political life deeply ambiguous.

Though Mbembe does not explicitly engage with the Anglophone question in Cameroon, his insights resonate with Francis B. Nyamnjoh's fiction. In works like *Married But Available*, Nyamnjoh explores how ordinary citizens navigate postcolonial systems of patronage and hypocrisy, using satire and irony to expose the theatricality of power. Together, Mbembe and Nyamnjoh reveal how both the ruler and the ruled sustain the spectacle of postcolonial governance.

Nyamnjoh's works critique the psychological toll of minoritisation and the failure of leadership to foster true national unity. Through characters like Emmanuel and Charles, the novels depict victimhood as both an individual and societal condition, while also suggesting that resistance, whether collective or individual, offers a pathway to change. Nyamnjoh's advocacy for introspection, solidarity, and cultural affirmation challenges the dominant structures of power and calls for a reevaluation of power dynamics. This consideration allows me to argue that the Anglophone Problem transcends linguistic and cultural divides, underscoring the need for an

inclusive national consciousness and the dismantling of systemic oppression. The chapter concludes by reaffirming the potential of minority discourse as a liberatory praxis, capable of inspiring transformative change, advocating for justice, and empowering marginalised communities to reclaim their narratives and agency in the face of adversity.

Finally, chapter five chapter examined the theme of otherness and hierarchical belonging in Nyamnjoh's *Intimate Strangers* and *Homeless Waters*, emphasising the nuanced concept of the outsider-within and its implications on identity, ethnicity, and autochthony. Through the characters' experiences, particularly those of Immaculate and Ngoma, the novels reveal how marginalised individuals, despite their proximity to or involvement with dominant groups, continue to face exclusion based on their ethnic or cultural origins. The analysis underscores that belonging is not determined solely by geographic proximity, but is deeply shaped by social, political, and historical factors. In both the rural-urban and foreigner-citizen divides, Nyamnjoh critiques the exclusionary practices rooted in ethnicity and autochthony, illustrating how they perpetuate divisions and inequality in African societies. The works also explore the psychological and emotional toll of being caught between multiple identities, highlighting the need for a more inclusive and flexible approach to belonging. Ultimately, this chapter argues for a broader, more inclusive understanding of identity, one that resists rigid hierarchies and challenges the politics of exclusion, urging for greater recognition of marginalised individuals within the social and political fabric of African nations.

This study can therefore be used as a model that enables researchers and literary scholars to comprehend literary representations of the Anglophone Problem, in one hand and a critical tool for the literary analysis of ethnographic fiction in the other. Given the scope and time, my study has explored spatiality, linguacultural identity from minority discourse with a focus on the concept of outsider-within. While this study has not exhaustively covered all the aspects which have to do with flexible citizenship in its full potential, other studies can go beyond this scope and explore other aspects. There are new forms of citizenship to be examined in Nyamnjoh's ethnographic fiction. For instance, these future studies can focus on citizenship as acceptance of membership in universal community and multiple communities within and beyond the nation-state. They can basically look at the cosmopolitan and dual citizenship which examine all humans and diasporic Cameroonians as citizens with multiple affiliations. Another aspect to explore in Nyamnjoh's ethnographic fiction is gender and sexuality in order to identify ways in which cultural identity is shaped by these issues.

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Appendix 1

Interview with Professor Francis B. Nyamnjoh – the Novelist
Cape Town, 04 March 2023.

Summary of the Interview

The interview with Professor Francis B. Nyamnjoh, a social anthropologist and novelist, discusses his distinctive approach to fiction, which he terms "ethnographic fiction." Nyamnjoh regards his writing not as mere entertainment but as a means to share lived experiences and perspectives, blending anthropology and literature. His work creates a composite reality by drawing on real-life observations, interviews, and personal experiences, rejecting purely imaginative fiction in favour of narratives grounded in lived experiences, much like anthropological fieldwork.

Nyamnjoh highlights the connection between ethnography and fiction, stressing their shared role in creatively engaging with social realities. He advocates for the recognition of artists, writers, and other culturally engaged individuals as essential contributors to anthropology, challenging the traditional view that anthropology is an exclusively academic discipline. In his work, satire serves as a tool for critiquing power structures, often employing metaphor, as seen in the writings of Amos Tutuola.

Nyamnjoh also reflects on how his creative work intersects with his academic career, describing his fiction as a form of autoethnography that integrates both personal and collective experiences. His novels, set in the fictional "Mimboland," critique sociopolitical realities, exploring themes of mobility, belonging, identity and citizenship. He advocates for more fluid and inclusive approaches to identity and citizenship, particularly in Cameroon, rejecting rigid notions of identity. His writing, which employs hybrid language, reflects African linguistic diversity and challenges the contradictions of African identities. Ultimately, Nyamnjoh calls for a world in which identities and citizenship are flexible, embracing mobility and transformation.

The full Interview

Leon Bomela: Dr Francis B. Nyamnjoh is a world-renowned professor of social anthropology at the University of Cape Town, He is the author of both scholarly and fictional books. This interview concerns his fiction, selected as a corpus to the PhD study entitled *The Anglophone Problem in Nyamnjoh's Ethnographic Fiction: Negotiating Nationalism, Belonging and Flexible Cameroonian Anglophone Citizenship.* The eight novels are *Mind Searching, The Disillusioned African, A Nose for Money, Souls Forgotten, The Travail of Dieudonné, Married but Available, Intimate Strangers* and *Homeless Waters.* Good afternoon, Professor. So, what comes to mind when one thinks of Francis Beng Nyamnjoh?

Prof. Francis Nyamnjoh: That's not a question for me to answer. It's a question for the person who is doing the thinking and who meets me. So, I could ask you that question what comes to mind when you meet Francis Ben Nyamnjoh?

Leon Bomela: Thank you very much. This comes to mind that we are in front of a professor of anthropology, who is at the same time a novelist. Talking about your creative writings, which are categorised as ethnographic fiction. Why are they called so?

Prof. Francis Nyamnjoh: The first thing is that I don't write to entertain. That's why I always joke to say, my novels are the most boring fiction you can ever read, if you're reading for entertainment. I write to share my perspectives and my risk as a student of society. I believe that I have a certain curiosity about the context in which I live, the people I encounter in my life, the unfoldings of the world, and I document them meticulously either in writing or in various forms of record keeping in the world, in my embodiment of what I've been, what I've seen, you know… We as humans basically, right from birth, are like incomplete containers and throughout life you get fulfilment through your interactions with the world outside yourself. Whether these are fellow humans, or these are the natural environments, and if you will belong to a cultural community, these are some supra- or sensory experiences. And each time you take yourself out to the world, out there, you are simultaneously taking the world out there into yourself. So, we become the embodiments of the world. And if you tell a story that is informed by those experiences, the stories are ethnographic in the sense that when an anthropologist goes to the field, it is almost that they interview others or they observe them and they have conversations with them, they are documenting the realities of the various communities and people they encounter through the processes of re-activating what they have internalised as experiences or socialisations as participations in their society. So, you could argue that the anthropologist is in the process of

making fiction out of fiction, as Clifford Geertz has described in this thick description. When you, meet somebody as you are doing now with me, interviewing that person, you are actually asking that person to reach out to the depths of their experiences, extrapolate, extract from them, and tell an account which according to you, you hope would make sense to you in terms of getting to know this person and the context in which they live. I am involved in giving you fiction, not fiction in the sense that it is totally a figment of my imagination, but that I'm reaching out into things that I unnecessarily do not have a logical recording of them, and scientifically being able to excavate and deliver them to you. I am more or less reconstructing here and there now and again from memory or from various students in, my reading of the environment to give to you. So, if I do that, as an anthropologist, I am doing the same as an anthropologist now who has studied society either consciously or informally through my field research and drawing on it now to stream together accounts for you to be able to read as fiction.

Some would say that it is much more of, some would give it alternative names to be creative nonfiction. But what I do is basically having the liberty, what makes it fiction is having the liberty to string together different experiences that may not necessarily be from the same person or the same character that are interviewed in the field or I observed. But in order for a good effect, you are not inventing anything, what you're doing is presenting a composite reality from your experience of different disparate situations. So, you have the liberty to compose, just as a scholar has the liberty to compose a thesis, from interviews, from observation, from readings and so on. And because I don't invent, I don't even have the capacity to invent something purely from my imagination, I dwell on things that I've already accumulated through my personal experience and so on and so forth. For me, that amounts to ethnography, not different from what I've distilled to write in scholarly papers. But if you want a much more substantiated discussion of ethnographic fiction, I will send you to the book I published, *Drinking from the Cosmic Gourd: How Amos Tutuola Can Change Our Minds* and in it I described, I discussed the meeting of literature and anthropology, as a creative encounter, that could be very good at telling African stories to those that want to know Africa from different vantage points. And I believe that anthropology stands to enrich itself through those extended conversations with literature and vice versa.

Leon Bomela: Thank you very much, Professor. This directly answered the questions as to, what connections you make between ethnography and the fiction, given that ethnography is research based on facts whereas fiction is based on imagination, but the follow-up question may come…

Prof. Francis Nyamnjoh: I might even add that good facts in social reality have a strong element of imagination, you see. You live your social reality in a predictable standardised, routinised

manner when you are deeply buried in the heart of the context that you take for granted. When a situation, when you encounter a situation, then it triggers your faculties you begin to imagine possible solutions or possible ways of dealing with it. It pushes you to go to the frontiers of your taken-for-granted daily existence. And that frontier experience is, is a very imaginative process. So, culture in that sense, and the cultivation of people, is not a finalised process. Again, I started by saying we are all incomplete, cultures are incomplete, humans are incomplete, our social projects are incomplete. When we encounter a challenge, then it challenges us. It provokes us to become creative, and imaginative, to look for innovative ways of dealing with this, and therefore, fiction and ethnography are not different basically. They are about creative endeavours, taxing your imagination, only they do it in different ways, you see. So that's the point I really want to make here. You know, the scholarship is about creating communities of shared interests and shared practice and shared conceptualisation. First, in order to create jobs for one another, it doesn't mean that society is compartmentalised in that fashion. Every discipline, and ethnography, anthropology and literature basically use exactly the same tools for authentication of what they want to tell us stories and how they go about telling those stories, is systematic and it is quite logical. That is why you can analyse a novel through standard indicators of what makes a good story.

Leon Bomela: Okay, that brings us to the question of how does satire come in?

Prof. Francis Nyamnjoh: Oh, satire, satire might be a distinctive attribute of my relationship to the world. I believe often that culture and cultivation [are] about communication. There are different styles of communication for different effects. If you live in a context where people are so matter of fact in the way they tell the story, it might be quite different from people who are used to using indirections or loaded language, layered language to say the same thing. Maybe because the way they have been called “cultivated” is to be respectful to power and authority, so they say things without hurting people's feelings in an obvious way, but you are telling them all the same. So, indirection is a way of speaking is a form of communication, not everybody approaches in the same way, but I have been told that I'm guilty of a lot of satire, sarcasm and irony in the way that I go about telling stories. In academia as well. I learned to use indirection for example, I use a lot of metaphors to tell a story. The book I am telling you about how Amos Tutuola changes our minds, can change our minds, you will realise that there are lots of characters in it and one of the characters is The Skull. He uses The Skull to tell a fascinating story about incompleteness about debt and indebtedness, and about lots of different things in the society. I draw that Skull into my scholarly writing as a metaphor for telling the stories about incompleteness, mobility, encounters, compositeness of being, debt and indebtedness and ultimately conviviality.

Leon Bomela: Yeah, sure. So, as we are talking about ethnographic fiction, who can actually write an ethnographic novel? Does this necessarily require one to be an anthropologist or anyone can just write an ethnographic novel?

Prof. Francis Nyamnjoh: Anthropologists are not born, Anthropology is a practice within the academy that has crystallised over the years through people who felt that missing in the academy were particular accounts of certain types of people that were mostly at the time giving colonial and imperial encounters outside of Europe. And that when Europe, Europeans mobilised themselves to go around the world, and they encountered others, and they felt that what they could learn from these other societies was useful for enhancing what they knew about Europe, which was basically studied by disciplines such as sociology, psychology, and so on and so forth. So, anthropologists, which was started by missionaries, would travel as, and all these are people that went out to see other places came by with accounts letters and memories and artwork, and so on. Eventually, it crystallised in a discipline. So, you can realise that anthropology started with people from all these disparate backgrounds and professions, tourists and so on and so on. Why should it now be that anybody who remotely has something that is connected to anthropology cannot pass for an anthropologist unless those who have been certified with degrees and professional accreditations to be anthropologists? Nonsense.

So, anthropology can be done by anyone and in the particular case of Africa, where anthropologists were victims of repression by colonial colonialists and imperialists, many people did not want to touch that discipline. So, it means that even people who had wonderful anthropological accounts of their own societies had to hide on the other disciplines that were most as a sensible and more respected. One of the more respected disciplines was literature and literary study, it does not mean that Conrad was all respected. You can see Chinua Achebe's critique of literature from Conrad and all the others, but at least compared to anthropology, you could tell your own story counter to the imperial narrative, much better than you could do in the structures of academic writing. In Anthropology, like writing the monogram or calling to the canons of the discipline or writing a paper. So, there was more room for novel, in storytelling, in poetry, in theatre, and so on and so forth. The short form is that anthropology is the result of immersion within a given cultural and identity context. And anthropologists do not have the monopoly of that. Immersion and I mentioned thick description a while ago. Many people who have written the stories of Africa if you look very keenly, whether you talk to Chinua Achebe or you talk to Amos Tutuola or Zakes Mda here in South Africa, you talk to any writer, there is a sense of, you cannot pretend and get away with it and, be qualified a good writer if you don't know the society or the context in which

you are writing. And good writers have been those who have immersed themselves, who know the society, the relationship, the cultural context, the dynamics through history of that particular society that they have written about.

Take the *Song of Lawino* which I think is one of the best sociological texts we can ever see on Africa. It happened to have been written by somebody who was an anthropologist. He was a footballer, he went to England, and then he never came back. He did anthropology, but still, he passes more for a writer, and you could see how it is so profound, as a text. Long story short is that it does not need an anthropologist to write anthropology isn't it, to write good anthropology. There are so many bad anthropologists out there. But there are so many writers who do not describe themselves as anthropologists whom I would rather have listened to than some anthropologists.

Leon Bomela: Okay, thank you very much, Professor for clarifying this relationship between anthropology and the literature. We are now closing our first part of the interview with this question: how does your prolific creative work that we call ethnographic fiction and your academic career as an anthropologist complement each other? Conclude this point.

Prof. Francis Nyamnjoh: It is autoethnography. Although I would argue that apart from the fact that I embodied experiences through relationships with others, all the experiences I write about cannot be collapsed to be my mine at a primary level. So, they are more than just autoethnography in the sense that an autoethnography would be my experience primarily but not necessarily the accounts of others that have become used to and I have internalised, and I embody, and I'm able to share, so I think it's much more of the latter than just telling my own story. In a narrow sense of the word.

Leon Bomela: Okay thank you very much. Now coming back to your eight novels, it has been noted that they cover thematic interests, and interventions that include incompleteness, mobility, encounters, belonging, citizenship, flexible or not, identity and conviviality. Would you kindly tell us what do these concepts mean from a literary perspective? And in which novels, each of the concepts is portrayed?

Prof. Francis Nyamnjoh: I think it should be every novel, every one of these novels is about incompleteness and about mobility and about all of this. Just take any of them it is about the making of the human. Being human is not possible without mobility and encounters and compositeness of being and debt and indebtedness, even right from the womb. We have already skipped the stage where your mother and your father conceived you, which is an element of incompleteness, reaching out at a primary level and making something whole from something

disparate, two different things, isn't it? But I am saying even when you are in your mother's womb already, you are mobile, you are able to survive thanks to be capacity for your mom to keep you alive through an umbilical cord, that channels all sorts of goodies that she takes from the outside world in to is to give your sustenance. So, your links almost in a very direct Ubuntu-like way through that Ubuntu, umbilical cord, we might as well call it your Ubuntu cord call to the wider world. There is no better example than that. So that is why you see, they say, and I repeat those sayings in some of my novels, “one person's child is only in the womb”. And if I were to write again, I would even change that, not even in the womb do you encounter one person's child, you see. Because I have already given you an example of how the person in the womb is already getting sustenance from the wider world. Participating in the debates, participating in the nourishment that the mother is part of. When you go to Shoprite, the child knows you were in Shoprite today. You go to Pick n Pay they know, or Checkers or Woolworths from the quality of the nourishment that comes her way or his way. You go to or you drink sugary things and the child notices that mom has been running around with dangerous foods, but what do I have to say? And so on and so forth. If you get it bad mood from work, emotionally the child feels it as well.

So, the child even in the womb is already participating in immediate environment that enhances it, that mobilises it, that activates even more so when the child comes out. But the child cannot move around and then through various forms of techniques that we have developed which in anthropology we call techniques of the body, if you want to read more on that you can look at somebody like Marcel Mauss. They shape you; they teach you how to stand up, how to move in different ways and so on and so forth, how to develop your neuromotor system and we do it in particular ways. Then if you grew up in a context where people go farming through up hills already for the age of a child, your mother has you on her back and she is climbing a hill. Eventually once you can start walking, they say come and walk with us, you can walk. So, you acquire all these techniques of mobility and self-activation when you are a child and that carries you throughout life. So, we are characterised by mobility by incompleteness and mobility as a permanent attribute of life. If you were complete, you will not be here studying me. Because to tell you that completeness is never completely overcome, is the fact that you are a very big man with the UN, you have a very good job, you are well established, but you still feel you need a PhD, not to be complete, but to enhance yourself to be able to do certain things that you can't do now without a PhD. So, you imagine, so you are acquiring this. As soon as you get a PhD it maybe something else. Okay, I see lots of people who are ministers in DRC and they do not even have the qualification I have. Maybe it is time for me to use my PhD to open up opportunities for me into government, and so on and so forth.

Even when we are six feet deep, our story has not been finished. We realise that we do not need our flesh to continue living on the ground. So, we try to share the flesh and the flesh becomes like manure. I plant my tomatoes on your graveyard, and I get a very bumper harvest and people say I am not a cannibal? Or that I am not that I'm a vegan only. I am not a vegan only, I fish I eat on flesh, human flesh for that matter through indirections. I planted tomatoes, it grows on human flesh, and I cannot describe myself in any complete terms as a vegan only. You see, so in a way I am just using this dramatic example. Some of them shocking, to give you the point of incompleteness and mobility are permanence in our lives. And when you move you move as a stranger because you are moving from zones that you're familiar with, to zones that you're unfamiliar with. So, when you encounter others, they encounter you as a stranger and you encounter them as strangers. That means that each and every one of us in our incompleteness once we move for opportunities and so on and so forth, we are always potential strangers. And once we encounter others and they inspire us, we ingest strangers just metaphorically. So we become composite beings by always being ourselves in addition to all the strangeness that we have accumulated, from your mother and the sustenance she gave you through the Ubuntu cord, to the people around you, you're constantly taking in strangers ingesting them, not in a destructive way, but as a way of activating yourself as a way of charging yourself you're charging your phone. We take strangers in to charge yourself and your relationship to them who also see you as a stranger, charges them up. So, you are charging up comes from strangers, you discharge into strangers, and you are recharged by strangers, isn't it? Yeah, yeah,

Leon Bomela: Professor, we are moving forward. As in your writing, you exploit space very meaningfully. Because most of your stories in the novel take place in a location. That location is called Mimboland, which is a special arrangement that perfectly fits with the themes you depict. The question now is to know the rationale behind this choice and what does Mimboland represent?

Prof. Francis Nyamnjoh: I must own up to say that I have experimented with my writing for some from the first to the last. And I became, I had the freedom to exercise my creative imagination and to tell my story with the different components with the compositeness of being. The best when I moved from writing, about Cameroon to create in my own country without the structures or the caprice of countries we know. So, you could have Cameroon as a country subjected to the caprice of politics and politicians for this and that and I could have my Mimboland, where I have President Longstay for example in my Mimboland. I can meet a restaurant in the north of the country and because my story is taking place at centre of the country's central province for example, I could import those restaurants through some magical process of geographies moving and locate it in the

central province. So even things even geographical things and institutions move in my stories in Mimboland. I could not do that same thing in a country that is located in real terms in a geography of its own and move things around in a way.

People are bound to know that this guy, this writer is taking lots of liberties it's just as when ethnographers leave the field with all of the material they've harvested, they go back to the ivory tower of the institutions of origin, sit there and with the power of imagination and peer dynamics talking to one another they come up with a monograph. A monograph of those who interviewed and those who were observed in the field might not immediately grasp if you did not undertake a restitution visit to them, for them to read through to say okay this is how I dealt with the things we discussed when we were in this place. "Oh, really that's magic!" and then they might tell you, "That's pure fantasy", the villagers or whoever you were researching. "What a figment you call scholarship, it is a figment of the imagination, a caricature of our realities". So, they think because we are the ones doing the talking and the villagers are those ordinary people we research never talk back, we tend to think that we are more intelligent than them. So, the capacity I am just adding on to this idea that the capacity to move things around is not a monopoly of the writer as writer of fiction. Every writer indulges in a certain creative manoeuvring and manipulation, not because you want to tell a lie but because what they have acquired to fit a particular logic of narrative within the canons of, of the community, that that of practice that they are part of.

Leon Bomela: Exactly. This capacity, as you said to move things around, is what can be called magic imagination, which can be seen through your novels, where you also imagine some neighbouring countries like War Zone, like Republic of Kuti. So, in your description, of Mimboland, you depict the people with a particular national identity. Did you have any target? A target that fictionally symbolises such an identity. If yes, who exactly and where are the targets?

Prof. Francis Nyamnjoh: Life imitates fiction and fiction imitates life; they mutually inspire one another. That is why I say if you cannot write from the void, you cannot imagine from the void both as a scholar writing from the thick description, there has to be thick description for you to write a monograph. It cannot be just totally from the void. Every imagination is immersed in particular sets of experiences and relationships. It depends on what you do with those experiences. You might decide to caricature to be disparaging in their regard, you might decide to honour them, to treat them with the respect that you think they deserve. So, it is more the attitude that you bring to bear in the story you tell. But not as if you can tell a story creatively entirely from the void. Something must be there for you, to serve you or to prepare your imagination. Yeah, isn't it? Yeah, isn't that so? Yeah, there must be some ingredient.

Leon Bomela: Exactly Prof. Can you please say something about those neighbouring countries Warzone about the security situation there? They are allowing people I mean, forcing people to relocate and the other side of the border, the Republic of Kuti that you called the Republic of Fake.

Prof. Francis Nyamnjoh: Yeah, you could say is that. You are likely to, a good thing with writing is not to be too specific. Because when I am insulting in general, I will say look at this man with his idiotic face. A man with an idiotic face, I've already, but if I say Leon is a man with an idiotic face, I have already specified his soul to the extent that every other idiotic face can go home, and sleep, we're saying that it was not me. You understand? So, if I refer to a Republic of Fakes, it is important to leave it to everybody's reality to bring their own particular experience of fakeness to bear on that description, rather than to say maybe he was talking about Nigerians or he was talking about DRC or was talking about this. So, I prefer to nourish a wider population with my narrative style than particularize it.

Leon Bomela: True that, Professor, you are not only exploiting space, in your creative writing, but also the people. So, names as markers of identity are a source of a wide variety of information. Mimboland as a nation-state is under the rule of the person that you call President Longstay. Is there any reason why you created in the name this character as President Longstay?

Prof. Francis Nyamnjoh: I mean, the whole place we do not even need an imagination to name people Longstay in Africa, who are in power, it seems to be the rule. When they come to power, they seem to lose the objective of being there and they just recycle themselves in a way that you wonder, what is the purpose of all? So, in a way, I think what would have been more striking was to have a President Longstay in Africa, that would have been an exception, but Longstay does not require any creativity. Maybe? Yeah, it is all Longstay. Perhaps the name strikes you because it is an unusual name that describes the function rather than say the person now you say, if you said Peter, President Peter, who stayed in power for 100 years. Others who are not Peter would say, okay, it was not me. But they are equally Longstay. So, it is better to describe the attribute, Longstay, those who come in and are in no hurry to leave. For me that captures it more. And one who was there can die and another person will come and fulfil that same function.

Leon Bomela: This makes sense to what we can say that everybody finds himself within, accommodated in your creative writing. Yes, just a follow-up to this above question. What is the rationale behind the naming of the following characters in your novels as Judascious Fanda Yanda, Charles Keba, Prospère, Emmanuel Kwanga, Dieudonné, Loveless, Immaculate, and Ngoma?

Prof. Francis Nyamnjoh: Or you can have the proliferation of names of others as Chief Anyway, Professor Dr. Spineless, Simba Spineless. You can have a lot of them, Adapepe and she shows lots of the men relations with them. No, it is about an element of seeking to have maximum effects to see whether the name can stand for the activity or in some cases the aberration. Now, if you have somebody who is called Professor Simba Spineless, you have Professor Lovemore, and he lives up to his name. It means the name becomes a concept that can stand for the thing, can substitute the thing, isn't it? Yes. And so that when the particular person is not there, and you find the same conditions of telling their story you can attribute that concept to it, you could say, I have met Lovemore outside of the context of Mimboland, or I have met Spineless outside of the context of Mimboland. So, these are exportable names.

Prof. Francis Nyamnjoh: Yes. And you can export them elsewhere and so on as well…

Leon Bomela: As we can also find elsewhere?

Prof. Francis Nyamnjoh: Yes, yeah, exactly. I do not want to credit; you have to go to Mimboland to find these fictional. Go to real places and you will find Mimboland actualised. Go to the real places, that you consider real, and you will find the replication of Mimboland. A lot on academic freedom, I did not mention that. In the repression in universities, you will find them in Mimboland and its almost as if it predated lots of what is happening in universities you know, including the one you are doing your PhD.

Leon Bomela: Yes. Okay. We haven't talked about space, about names of your characters. Let us talk about language, the way you use your language. Now looking at your style, it is observed that you explain certain things, expressions, ideas in French when expressed in English, or vice versa. In addition, your use of Cameroonian Pidgin English coupled with local and African languages makes your style hybrid. What is your aim in so doing? And what connection do you make between such heterolingualism, your characters, your themes, to your audience, or your readership, the people who are reading you?

Prof. Francis Nyamnjoh: I will start by saying that the pidgin English that I use is not confined to Cameroon. It is pidgin English in Nigeria; it is pidgin English in Sierra Leone and so on. So, it is pidgin English that others outside of Cameroon if you choose Cameroon would identify with. But in Mimboland, Mimboland epitomises my compositeness of being and lots of the characters in Mimboland are people with some major as in their quest in the context in which they found themselves, they realise that language, whatever language they take does not quite enable them to be able to fulfil themselves. So, every language seems to be incomplete in this country where in

English you realise you can speak it and only some will understand you. Pidgin English you can move around much better with it, French only some may hear. You begin to carry two broken-down French and broken-down English to pidgin in French and in English to get your way around. But it is not about choosing if you have to pay respect to everybody as you rightly said that I am very conscious of or have regard for everyone.

If you want to really write in a way that appeal to everybody, you have to account for everybody, you have to provide for everybody. You have to use a language that is composite, that brings everyone in. It must be tedious – I told you that I do not write to entertain so that might be one of the reasons everybody reading this says this is a difficult nonsense text. The person is sending us everywhere, sending me to a dictionary, and all over. But I think that is the distinctiveness of the text because you're writing to make a point and the point is more than just entertainment. It is about the contradictions or the complementarities that make us African or that makes us Mimbolanders. Remember that umbilical cord of Ubuntu, if you really take in the outside in and it blends in, and take the inside out, the inside out is not this logical homogenised essentialised being, it does inferences pop up every now and again and you have to accommodate them. They are who you are, isn't it? Yes. You are not just a son of your father you are a son of your mother, isn't it?

Leon Bomela: Son of a whole village

Prof. Francis Nyamnjoh: Son of the whole village and so on and so forth. So, it's in that sense.

Leon Bomela: Okay, Professor reading your…

Prof. Francis Nyamnjoh: So, Bakunte calls it linguistic code-switching, I don't think it's code switching. Whatever it is, I'm not a linguist, but it is about describing your compositeness of being, expressing your compositeness of being…

Leon Bomela: Reading your, your biography you are identified as an Anglophone Cameroonian.

Prof. Francis Nyamnjoh: How unfortunate.

Leon Bomela: So, reading your novels. We noticed that the Anglophone identity citizenship and belonging are central to your trajectory as a diasporic writer. What are your views about the Anglophone problem as far as your literary engagement is concerned?

Prof. Francis Nyamnjoh: I think people render, if you read the novels very closely and didn't get carried away by the passing, ephemeral situations, you will realise that most of my stories actually

set in the part of Cameroon, a part of Mimboland that would be described geographically speaking as Francophone, even when the characters are Anglophones. And that one of the elements of the novels is that of mobility into different geographies. Anglophone, Francophone and so on, so nobody is immobilised enough to begin to leave these identities as essentialised identities. So, it is in their novels in which identities are not taken for granted and they are constantly tested at the push of the frontiers to, again to expose the benefits of this composite massive being, even as you own fact of being Anglophone and Francophone. If anything, those will be the starting points of your journeys of citizenship or compositeness as an ever-unfolding identity. So, I challenge identifications, rather than see an identity as something that is accomplished, and it is settled, and you can resolve it. It is normal encounters with strangers, I say strangers makes the stranger an insider and you're reaching out to the others, you are taken in by the stranger and you take in the stranger that's a fact whether you like it or not. When you meet up, there is no way it doesn't rub off on you. You may hate him with a passion after meeting him that's an effect. You may like him by luck. You may over the time of first meetings, you realise that I didn't have any reason for hating on this passion because things have unfolded, you've encountered him in different locations you see that he's not as harmful as you imagined that he was initially. So, taking the other in, is not always an immediate process. You may first be greeted with a sentiment of hostility. You get to know the other person they get to know you, there's some calling as if it were forming a sort of relation between you. And then you take up aspects of one another that is to revise for some degree of neutral accommodation. And then you become good bedfellows. And then you make the one, village chief instantly and you offer them a handbag from the … isn't it? So, we should not freeze essentialised relationships and talk about Anglophone and Francophone as stuck dichotomies. Even look at most of my writings, it's never about that. It's been about documenting it, so that we can begin the process of undoing these stereotyped identifications.

Leon Bomela: So, Francophone or Anglophone, the most important problem is mutual accommodation as you say, yes, yeah. But in your writing, reading your novels closely, you deal to some extent, with a minority right to discourse. How do your novels engage and challenge dominant discourses in terms of the political rhetoric of inclusion and exclusion?

Prof. Francis Nyamnjoh: The very idea of creating characters that transgress geographies of exclusion or geographies of binaries, of binary opposition. The very idea that you have Francophone who could speak and interject English, the very idea that when they eat, they might despise one another but they eat in the same eating places, the very idea that I may be Francophone and I hate Anglophones with a passion, but when they come and tender bribe to me, I warm up to

it. Anglophone money is not dirty money. It tells you about zones of interconnection that we shouldn't dismiss in a hurry. Their shared cultures whether cultures of corruption or cultures of promise and nation-building that actually respect one another in a way that has space for one another is useful. The idea that even when you meet a prostitute in town, and they can …Anglophone his idea to warm up to you is not in doubt it is your culture of pain that is in question.

Leon Bomela: Even if it is on the market…

Prof. Francis Nyamnjoh: Market and so on and so forth. So, basically, I think what I tried to do is to call two areas and zones of promise, even when the rhetoric of divisions and conflict might point in a different direction. That's why I said to create identities that are truly inclusive and recognising our common humanity, we have to be ready to be generous about the idea of debt and indebtedness. Debt is not to the monopoly of some to the exclusion of others, life is all about debt and indebtedness through relations, charging, discharging and recharging, like the metaphor of before.

Leon Bomela: Yes. We are almost at the end. Because everything you talk about, gives new questions and the interview becomes very interesting. When you were explaining that you move your characters from one region to another, because you want to show this incompleteness and conviviality. When we talk about flexible citizenship, which is considered as a negotiated belonging. So, do you have some protagonists in your novels who can be identified as Anglophone citizens?

Prof. Francis Nyamnjoh: Of course, you have Anglophone citizens, like Emmanuel who is at the university. He is a very stubborn one. He doesn't warm up to those in his environment. He has a lot of grudges, he bears a lot of grudges against people probably because of his experience of negativities at the university where he can't do normal progression. He came there thinking he was the best from his home area only to be greeted by the challenges of being in a university, where there are other currencies in operation that are not made immediately scholarly. But there are other characters also that transcend all those divisions like Dieudonné. You have another character who is from there, but outside of Mimboland and further up in Africa, like Immaculate, the one in *Intimate Strangers*. Mobility is not just within Mimboland, circulation within Mimboland but even crossing the borders of Mimboland with the Mimboland that we embody in another context and comparing notes with others that you encounter, like *Intimate Strangers* is a very good example, isn't it? Yeah. And then there's the social mobility, the mobility of bodies, even as they appear

unified and single, like in Lily Loveless. Lily Loveless is about fascinated dimensions of mobility where even the idea of sexual freedom is a body that is, dismantled in his orientations in his cultural orientations and rearranged according to new dictates of sexuality, which comes through in Lilly Loveless in a fascinating way. You have people who are sexually mobile like what they call themselves *bilingue bisexual*, like the occasion, meeting the meeting that Lily has in the plane with a minister who was called, who gives out his card and says am *bilingue* and you know what *bilingue* is? He is both heterosexual and homosexual. Yes. So, you have various forms of mobility and flexibility in citizenship. They talk, you hear these days, they talk about all kinds of citizenship, digital citizenship, cultural citizenship, so we could also talk about sexual citizenship, linguistic citizenship and the various forms of flexibility that come with it and that are depicted in the books.

Leon Bomela: Okay, Professor, we are at the end of our intervention. So, we are talking about mobility. How does mobility affect flexible citizenship and how does incompleteness, encounters and conviviality construct a flexible citizenship?

Prof. Francis Nyamnjoh: It is so obvious, in the sense that if you operate in a world where you take incompleteness seriously, the problem is that we don't take incompleteness seriously. We always, our cultivation and the templates we have been made to live our life is all about trying to sweep incompleteness under the carpet, as if it was a negative thing. Try to hide it, and so on. The novels are all about disabusing ourselves of this propensity to hide incompleteness. This is about inviting us to celebrate incompleteness and to see how it mobilises itself through geographies and through relationships of various kinds. And therefore, my argument would be that, it is only in the context of where completeness remains the stubborn templates at play, that you see, attempts, not to police mobility, you see attempts to disparage incompleteness, you see attempts to outsource one's incompleteness of those in power to others whom they are dominating as if they could confine and pretend as if they're complete they are supreme they are superior, which is what Longstay does. Longstay is all about outsourcing his incompleteness to others. When you move around, like Immaculate moves, or like Dieudonné moves around and tells the story of how his mobility has been policed in different places, that mobility has been policed through the template of completeness. The books are there when they showed us accounts, it is for us to disabuse ourselves of that particular template, because it doesn't answer any questions. So, if I were to be asked about my ideas of nationalism in Cameroon or in Mimboland, it will be a nationalism that is inclusive, where the template at play is not that of exclusion, where identities and citizenship is traced through exclusion, but rather one that challenges you to premise and articulate citizenship

through inclusion, nationalities through inclusion. It is not one of xenophobia as we are seeing around the world, but one where you always open up to take the stranger in, as a way of taking yourself out. Do not be too much in a hurry to level and dismiss others as strangers as not belonging, as not one of us. See those zero-sum games have no place in the world where we take incompleteness and mobility seriously.

Leon Bomela: Thank you very much Professor for your time. Do you have something else to add?

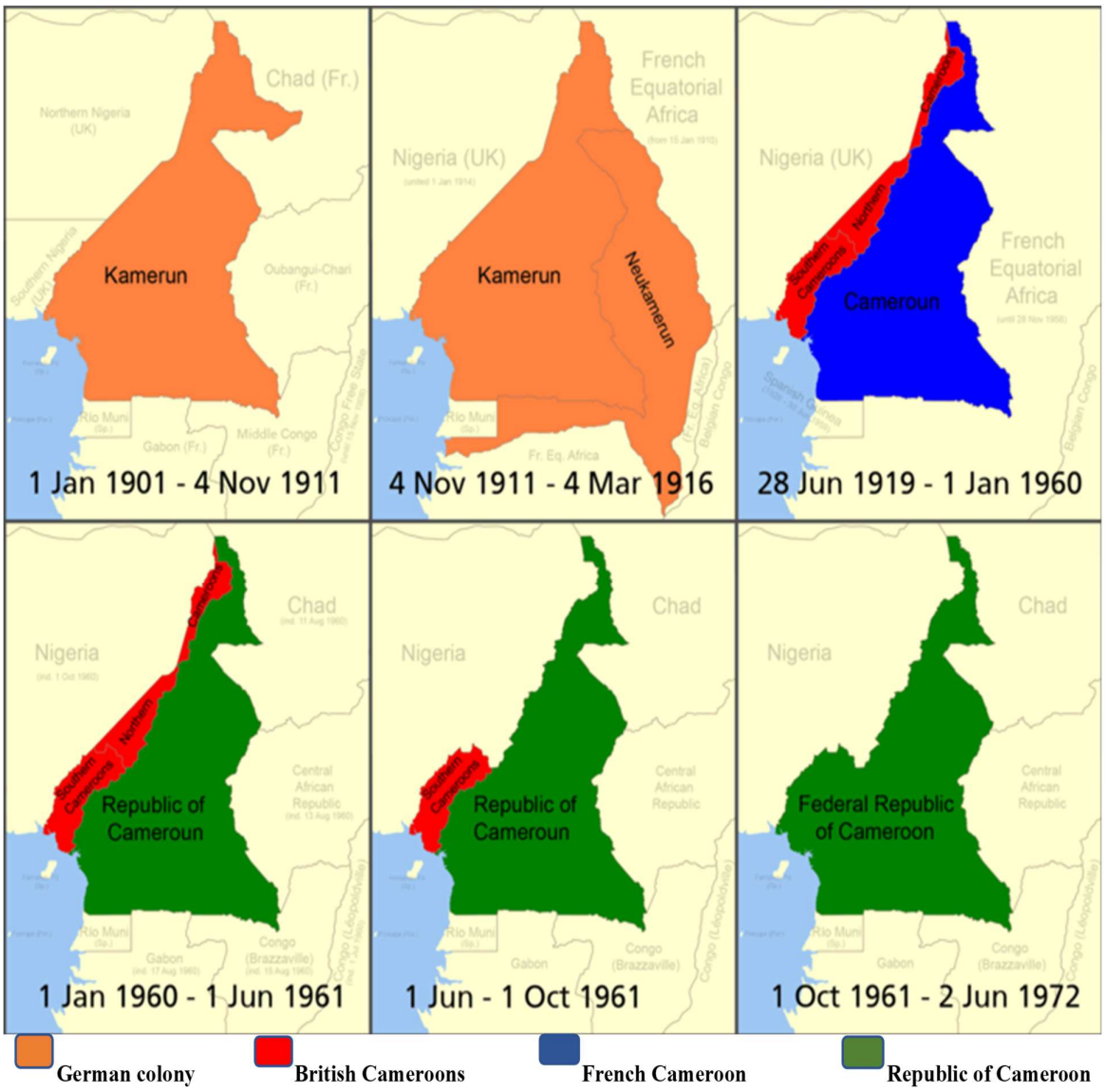
Prof. Francis Nyamnjoh: Not at all, just to wish you well with your PhD. And I hope that what we have had is a useful conversation.

Leon Bomela: Thank you very much Professor for your time.

[The end]

Appendix 2

Historical Representation of Cameroon



Source: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Cameroon_boundary_changes.PNG, accessed on 21 May 2020.

This representation is based on the colonial legacy.[52] French Cameroon was administered as part of French Equatorial Africa, focusing on cash crops and forced labor. British Cameroon was governed as part of Nigeria, leading to cultural and administrative differences.

[52] Manjoh (2018)

Note:

The historiographical representation of Cameroon, based on its colonial legacy, is multifaceted, shaped by its experiences under both German and French/British colonial rule. The colonial period played a significant role in shaping the social, political and economic structures that continue to influence Cameroon today. Furthermore, this historiography, as viewed through its colonial legacy, reflects a complex and contested history, shaped by both the actions of the colonial powers and the resistance of the indigenous population. The colonial legacy continues to have a profound impact on Cameroon's sociopolitical and economic structures, making it a crucial area of study for understanding contemporary Cameroon