

CRISES, COMMUNICATION AND UNIVERSITY PEDAGOGY: THE POETICS OF LIVING TOGETHER IN *ALSO ON CAMPUS AND SYMPHONIC SHADES* BY ERNEST VEYU, DAISY BARRO AND KELVIN NGONG TOH

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Abstract

This paper examines the challenges of mass communication faced by Cameroonian universities at the crossroads of the global lockdown due to the Corona Virus and the political crises in the North West, South-West and the Far North regions of the country. Metaphorically described as Njanga Land in *Also on Campus* and *Symphonic Shades*, Ernest Veyu, Daisy Barro and Kelvin Ngong Toh blend poetry, drama and prose in narratives that interrogate the adaptability of new information technology in university pedagogy. Hinging its argument from a postcolonial theoretical perspective, the paper hypothesises that the successful introduction of WhatsApp, Facebook, Twitter, Google and Online Newspaper outlets in the didactic process in universities as captured in the two texts at the time of global lockdown reveal an avant-garde style that interrogates and facilitates the teacher-student relationship which contributes enormously in conflict resolution and prevention in Njanga Land. It further argues that the bilingual nature of universities serves as a melting pot for teachers and students from multicultural origins and becomes the appropriate place through which information technology should be used to communicate, educate and encourage the political discourse of a rainbow nation that celebrates unity in diversity in times of crises. As such, *Also on Campus* and *Symphonic Shades* celebrate the success of communication in distance education through information technology and satirise its abuse or misuse in the pedagogic process and during the political crises nationally and internationally.

Keywords: communication, crises, university pedagogy, poetics, information technology, living together.

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Introduction

Bentley: The attitude people have here in Jova is, 'Wuna no worry me abeg. After all, if Corona no kill me, bullet go kill me; if bullet no kill me, hungry go kill me; if hungry no kill me, goment go kill me. (*Also on Campus*, 57). The 2019 health crisis that started in Wuhan in China was underestimated in many countries around the world because it was the first of its kind and people never foresaw such far-reaching consequences in human lives in the twenty-first century. The case of Cameroon is peculiar because the COVID-19 pandemic met a country that was already hard hit by the Boko Haram (radical Islamic terrorists) insurgency that started in northern Nigeria in

2009 and spread across the lake Chad Basin including northern parts of Cameroon and the Anglophone crisis in the North-west and South-west (NOSO) regions of the country since 2017. These crises which are health and political have left families, communities and regions with massive human and material losses, exoduses and a great impact in the educational systems of Cameroon. The global lockdown measures communicated by the World Health Organisation and its partners, the political crisis in NOSO and the Boko Haram attacks in the far north has seriously affected the country's educational system from basic to higher education. The socio-cultural, economic and political implications of these crises still remain a call for concern to many Cameroonian writers whose works communicate short- and long-term solutions to the crises as well as education through sensitisation of the masses on the barrier and social inclusion measures.

This paper discusses the different measures of mass communication in *Also on Campus* and *Symphonic Shades* which metaphorically describe Cameroon as Njanga Land and present the University of Ewanda (metaphor for the University of Yaounde I) with its billboard at the entrance to the campus that reads, "WE LIVE TOGETHER." This is ironical because the political crisis in the Njanga Land is rooted in the government's inability to communicate back frankly to the grievances of the disgruntled regions (NOSO) at a time when multiculturalism should be a symbol that unifies the country. Conversely, party politics, greed and tribalism have turned Njanga Landers against one another thereby affecting the very principles of university pedagogy. As such, the political crisis in Cameroon is because of the relegation of Anglophones to the background, a people described as exiles by Arnold (1982, p. 71) who says their exilic status has orphaned them. He postulates that:

The Commonwealth has an orphan whose existence is known to few in its family, and whose talents are unknown to those who realise it lives. Nearly one third of Cameroon's people are Anglophone, but since most of them decided to join French Cameroon in a 1961 plebiscite - a few went to Nigeria - they have been cut off from the English-speaking world and left to maintain whatever legacy they are able or care to in isolation.

To Arnold, as a country that enjoys membership of the Commonwealth of Nations, the Anglophone problem has not been addressed and communicated properly, resulting to the prevalence of many separatist armed groups in the regions. Consequently, *Also on Campus* and *Symphonic Shades* satirise such political balkanisation of the country and how this affects university pedagogy that could serve as a melting pot for the country's multicultural nature and whose pedagogy should communicate togetherness like citizens of the world.

Communication During COVID-19 Lockdown and University Pedagogy

The advent of the COVID-19 lockdown universally and the internal political crisis came as a challenge to many developing countries especially Cameroon, whose educational systems are not fully developed to use modern technology in pedagogy. The case of some universities in Cameroon is peculiar because the student population is very high with insufficient infrastructures which make it difficult for teachers to successfully communicate with their students from a distance. Moreover, access to information technology by teachers and students in most Cameroonian universities is still insufficient due to poor network systems and insufficient electricity supply in several parts of the country and most often, poorly managed equipment.

That notwithstanding, according to Ernest Veyu, Daisy Barro and Kelvin Ngong Toh in *Also on Campus* and *Symphonic Shades*, Njanga Land (Cameroon) braves these challenges and provides online classes in universities by introducing new methods in information technology. Through the different WhatsApp and e-mail exchanges between Professor Lim and Bentley (his third-year student), we see the effectiveness of social media platforms in disseminating vital information throughout the country. The lockdown is communicated over the media by the Minister of Interior in Njanga land as Bentley's WhatsApp exchanges with Professor Lim reveal:

Bentley: Good morning.
Hope you slept well.
I heard about the school lockdown
again On the 6:30 a.m. news some
minutes ago This time from the
Minister of Interior. Any news from
school?

Lim: The University of Ewanda locks down.
From 17th March to 13th April.
This is in connection with the Corona virus stuff. (*Also on Campus*, p. 42)

According to Ernest Veyu and Daisy Barro in *Also on Campus*, lockdown becomes the new challenge to the University of Ewanda especially because “the media is scaring everyone to death! We have a single case here!” (Ibid). It is ironical that the people of Njanga land do not believe in all the social media broadcasts about the rising number of cases killed by the Corona virus around the world. That is why as a university pedagogue, Professor Lim in another WhatsApp message to Bentley sensitises his students on the approved preventive measures “Get your face mask before they are off the market” (p. 43). Arguably, the authors celebrate Professor Lim’s communicative consciousness because many Njanga Landers believe that COVID-19 is another social media conspiracy theory concocted by Western countries to reduce the populations in developing countries. Professor Lim further explains to Bentley in an e-mail letter what has been circulating over social media thus:

I know you have heard about the New World Order. They may need to be taken more seriously than we have this far. They are up to something. These guys are ... well. Benie, can you imagine that the so-called Corona is supposed to have been created/invented as far back as 2003. It is not new. You find it in extant scientific and artistic literature. It is in film and where nor? (*Also on Campus*, p. 60)

Worthy of note is the fact that social media broadcasts gave different causes of the Corona virus and these created a lot of confusion in Njanga Landers at different levels of the social ladder. The confusion is heightened by another theory circulating over social media in Njanga land that the virus is caused by the 5G network which Western countries are trying to implement. In another e- mail letter, Professor Lim explains to Bentley that:

This began in Wuhan, China, and under its effects, people were falling and dying. Other countries that opted for the 5G are having the greatest effect of the virus. Russia has not implemented the 5G at public level, and they are not having the purported virus. (*Also on Campus*, p. 61)

These conspiracy theories over social media according to Professor Lim are responsible for the disbelief in many Njanga Landers who do not have the possibilities of connecting to the internet for proper edification on information received because government suspended internet connection in the conflict-stricken regions. Consequently, this lack of communication is detrimental for Njanga Land that needs to connect to the outside world for trade and other exchanges in the twenty- first century. Krishna (2009, p. 121) examines the importance of the internet and other forms of information technology in post-colonial countries and highlights:

In more recent years, globalisation and various movements that oppose its spread have also energised indigenous politics the world over. On the one hand, the technologies of globalisation such as the Internet have enabled indigenous

movements in various parts of the world to learn from and about one another. Websites and cyber communities that link indigenous populations have spread throughout the world, raising awareness of legal precedents, rights of aboriginal populations in different contexts, strategies of the struggle, and the like.

To Krishna, information technology has impacted the rise of indigenous movements in various parts of the world, but the manipulation of this information may have negative consequences on several societies if not properly checked. Such misinformation as was the case reduced migration nationally and internationally because the introduction of the vaccine against the corona virus equally brought in new conspiracy theories over social media as Professor Lim's e-mail further opines:

These guys are implementing a global vaccination strategy, supposedly to fight the virus. But in fact, they are injecting chemicals that light up the vaccinated to respond even more to the radiation. They will have chips in them that may respond to their equipment. It will therefore, be easy to pick out those who have not been vaccinated. These will be denied a number of social services all over the world. (*Also on Campus*, p. 62)

This version of the conspiracy theory leaves the poor people indifferent given the difficult socio- economic situation of Njanga land, many people consider Corona virus as a disease for Europeans and Njanga Landers of the upper class. Moreover, those of the lower class who do not believe in the existence of the virus go about their daily businesses without respecting the communicated barrier measures. The scare of the virus instead pushes the local population to fear and discriminate against Europeans and Chinese in their communities. Bentley's experience in the market reveals the discriminatory nature of the people of Jova in an e-mail to Lim that:

I was also at the market the other day when a Chinese man appeared. He was obviously there to shop like the rest of us, but almost immediately, a huge circle with about 1.5 metre radius formed around him, as the people received an epiphany that it was time to practise social distancing. They did this, but without paying attention to the fact they were clustering too close to each other. (*Also on Campus*, p. 55)

Ironically, these people who believe that the Corona virus is a western disease and discriminate against the Chinese are ignorant that social distancing is necessary for everyone. That is why in Professor Lim's reply to Bentley's e-mail, he advises her to sensitise the people of her community because many are still ignorant of the actual causes and how contagious the virus can be. Their fear and hatred for the Chinese are animated by the hatred for colonialism and the assimilated neo- colonial leaders. McLeod (2010, p. 115) explains that "certainly, postcolonial studies in recent years has been marked by the gradual rejection of the ideas of nation and nationalism on the grounds of their ultimately tyrannical and coercive characteristics". In this light, they tend to hate the neo-colonial leaders and institutions who talk about the virus the same way they did to the colonial masters. That is why Bentley's pedagogy from the university has trained her to educate her community about the communicated lockdown measures due to corona and the armed conflict in Jova.

In order to ensure continuous teaching during the general lockdown, the government of Njanga Land instructs universities and other schools to use information technology and other social media outlets to communicate with their students all over the country. Even though this was not a very welcomed solution by both teachers and students because of the limited logistics available and constant power failures, the passage of time proved that it was worth the effort because the government and all the actors in the pedagogy chain helped to

ensure continuous lectures. Appreciating the experience of teaching online through Zoom meetings for the first time, Professor Lim writes to Bentley in this WhatsApp message:

Lim: Been doing lessons for my students, since we teach only online now. Quite a new experience for most of us who have had the traditional classroom experience for ever. Good experience, challenging, though.

Bentley: It must be. I wonder how you guys are going to examine us.

Lim: That is being studied already. Before long the technology for such will be put at the disposal of all. The administration is working hard at that. You, study. (*Also on Campus*, pp. 145-146)

The efforts by universities to put courses and teach online only come to add to the efforts by the President of the Republic through the Ministry of Higher Education to distribute free computers to students in state universities all over the country every year over a certain period. Added to this, many students in state universities had been receiving for a long time excellence award scholarships (50,000CFA) from the President of the Republic through the ministry of higher education. As such, students who received these computers could use this money to pay internet charges to connect to the different online class platforms and study successfully.

Moreover, in respect of advice from the university body during the lockdown period, serious students occupy themselves by reading other online material besides their notes in order to broaden their intellectual horizons. This is the case with Bentley seen in her e-mail to Professor Lim that:

Some people who also never used to take time out to meditate are now beginning to do so, as they find themselves with much more time in their hands. I am benefitting from the confinement too as I finally have time to read a number books I always wanted to read but did not have the time. As you can tell by now, I am taking every day in strides. (*Also on Campus*, p. 58)

Bentley's message equally reveals some aspects of domestic life that to a greater extent, impact students' education in the universities. The bond between parents and children are strengthened when they see and communicate through WhatsApp, messenger calls etc with family members every day because of the lockdown especially those living in hostels in Ewanda and other university towns far from families. Arguably, this constant physical communication or eating home-cooked meals psychologically satisfies these students and make them fit for both online classes and research. She concludes that:

I am at least happy that there's some good coming out of the confinement. People get to spend more quality time with their families. My daughter calls the virus "Cokona virus," amusing everyone who whenever she speaks of it. Members of my family who never had the habit of watching the news are doing so now, as they watch some of us spend every waking moment before a TV screen, eager to know what's happening around the world. (*Also on Campus*, p. 57)

In conclusion, the confinement to a greater extent contributes in strengthening family ties and more exposure to mass communication through social media and use of information technology.

Social Media Propaganda and the Political Crises

Njanga Land is a country plagued by two crises; the Boko Haram insurgency in the northern parts and the Anglophone crisis in the north-west and south-west (NOSO) regions of the country since 2017. These political crises have affected mass communication and the daily lives of the citizens in all sectors. Ernest Veyu, Daisy Barro and Kelvin Ngong Toh in *Also on Campus* and *Symphonic Shades* project and satirise the attitudes of several

politicians and academics in the universities in handling these crises. Worthy of note is the fact that the strength of Njanga Land is because the country is bilingual nature (English/French), divided into ten regions with over two hundred and fifty ethnic groups. This multiculturalism is reflected in the different amphitheatres in universities all over the country because that was the dream of the founding fathers of Njanga Land as John tells Christina, Fatima and Jean:

John: This University was created with the idea of the brotherhood that politicians from the West and East dreamed of. My brothers and sisters, it was not majority and minority flexing muscles at each other. It was not that in the end, I be called enemy and underprivileged. That, I, John won't take it on this campus and in this country. Never. (*Symphonic Shades*, p. 12)

John's outburst is because the university which is supposed to be apolitical has now become a place of political manipulation. Students from particular regions especially from regions with the highest political support for the ruling party tend to consider others as second-class citizens. In a debate between Jean who comes from the Eastern part of Njanga Land and Christina from the coast of the western part of the country, he clearly communicates this political divide that has entered the university in the following words:

Jean: It is not he who wants in this university and country. It is he who can and we are in charge here. As long as we rule here, things must be done our way. If you don't like it go and build your own university and country. Here, we are in charge.

Christina: And who wants to have something to do with you? Maybe you don't even know that your behaviour constitutes what is wrong with this country. Know it today that Njanga Land's problem is the waywardness of the Eastern Njanga Landers like you. (*Symphonic Shades*, p. 12-14)

According to Ngong Toh, the balkanisation of Njanga Land has affected university pedagogy as both teachers and students are divided into camps due to their political ideologies. This has contributed to the Anglophone crisis in the Western parts of the country and the rise of insurgent groups that target both university students and lecturers. This insecurity has put the government and everyone constantly on the alert. In order to prevent terrorist incursions on campuses and political hate speech in classes, several security measures have been taken by the state. But these measures do not really address the main causes of the problem. In his analysis of the Anglophone problem, Nkengasong (2012, p. 53) alludes to Alexandra Lewis when he argues that:

Alexandra Lewis has stated that "postcolonial literatures and theories engage in unlocking unspoken, unheard or silenced pasts (of individuals, communities, genders, nations) thus expanding the scope of possibility for culturally and politically viable presents and futures." One consequence of the process Lewis describes is that the degenerate situation of Anglophones in Cameroon - masterminded by the Francophone administration, which for almost half a century has pushed the Anglophone Cameroonian to an indeterminate margin - has been sonorously articulated in Anglophone literature.

Nkemngong concludes that "reunification" was a mere neo-colonial scheme, an anathema, and an affront to cultural, social, and political justice - designed effectively to obliterate Anglophone identity in a country where

Anglophone political activism and literature have immensely reshaped national thinking. This national thinking is what John satirises in Jean who is encouraging hate speech that the Easterners are finding it difficult to lead because of the opposition from the Westerners as seen in their exchange below:

John: If it is not easy, let them leave. Who is begging them to lead? People are gnawing on us and saying it is not easy. Does the mosquito pity us when it sucks of our precious blood? This is a police-controlled university. Ears are everywhere. No one can hide on this campus. And a full-grown man is preaching the strange sermon of not easy to rule.

Jean: The centre of politics in this country is in this university. And so, it is good to silence our rowdy detractors; professional noise makers who, when you follow, no longer care about you when their mouths are full. So why even follow them? Here we are in charge. (*Symphonic Shades*, p. 10-11)

When the President of the Republic instituted democracy and multiparty politics in Njanga Land in the early 90s, his dream was to build a country where different political parties could contribute their ideas and help the government build a stable nation, one that will celebrate difference and not condemn it. Ironically, over the years, some overzealous politicians have transformed this good political ideology to a selfish game animated by communications that reveal hate speech for the opposing camps. In their selfishness and greed, they convert university students and lecturers on their sides and the university which was formally apolitical has become a playground for political parties. Partisan politics therefore has a negative impact on university pedagogy as John explains to Jean:

John: The University in Njanga Land needs help. The scholars are partisan and stomach-centric. They are appointment focused and their conscience is on what they will eat or which car to drive and so on and so forth. They are not to be trusted and the people have lost faith in them. Turn on the television and radio and hear the lies they vomit.

Jean: *Chop I Chop* has ruined Njanga Land. In this war even, I see many benefitting and making a lot of wealth. (*Symphonic Shades*, p. 46)

Evidently, the political differences are communicated in amphitheatres in the universities in Njanga Land and as Ngong Toh explains, any lecturer who speaks in opposition to the ruling party is summoned to the police station for questioning. This confirms the presence of spies and security men disguised as students in classrooms which explains why Prof cannot meet her appointments in class for lectures because she is at the police station for questioning. But as a crusader of moral and social justice, Prof prefers to die for the truth. Her position can be justified from the perspective of Anderson (2006, p. 144) when he says:

Dying for one's country, which usually one does not choose, assumes a moral grandeur which dying for the Labour Party, the American Medical Association, or perhaps even Amnesty International cannot rival, for these are all bodies one can join or leave at easy will. Dying for the revolution also draws its grandeur from the degree to which it is felt to be something fundamentally pure.

Prof believes that the revolution that can change the country must start through communicating an avant-garde pedagogy to the universities as lecturers need to teach students principles of living together and freedom of speech. Ironically, some of the hate speeches are pronounced and encouraged by university graduates and lecturers

because the educational system is polluted by greedy politicians. Such phenomena is satirised by Fonlon (2013, p. 25) when he interrogates what is happening in African universities thus:

Is it not true that some universities are so riddled with political meddling that they have become all but political outfits or worse? Is it not true that in this mess some highly qualified academics prostitute themselves to the point where they lose intellectual integrity and become base scheming politicians, Machiavellis in the Academy? How can intellectual enterprise burgeon and blossom and bloom in such circumstances?

Fonlon's testament is a call against the interference of politics in the university milieu because academic excellence can only be achieved when students are taught to judge politics from a developmental perspective, not a playground for communicating hate speech. Furthermore, the crisis in Njanga Land is fuelled by contradictory social media reports. It is important to note that mass communication during crisis periods need to be properly checked or censored. Social media if not censored can communicate false information that can be counterproductive to the government's attempts at maintaining peace and security. The case in Njanga Land is peculiar because of the hate speech, horrifying war images and lies that are circulating all over social media, with some coming from the sponsors of armed groups abroad and others from some overzealous politicians. All these cause fear and uncertainty in the minds of the citizens as John and the other students read the headlines of different news outlets from their mobile phones that:

John: Njanga Land is burning my brother. The messages we are reading are not good at all my brother.

[Facebook comes in and speaks as the boys fade behind.]

The haters of this land will die and be buried upside down. Thieves that have dishonoured the land. Blood thirsty rulers. You shall drink your own blood and eat your own flesh.

[WhatsApp comes in and speaks as the boys fade behind]

The terrorist state military has consumed 200 villages in Western Njanga Land. People are dying and a genocide is in the making and the world is silent.

[Twitter comes in and speaks as the boys fade behind]

Send all Eastern Njanga Landers away. Do not buy from them. Burn their houses. They are spies. (*Symphonic Shades*, pp. 45-6)

These social media outlets circulate contradictory information about the crisis in Western Njanga Land and while the students turn to the different print media outlets, the confusion is evident. Jean further laments the fate of his country when he picks up several print newspapers and read their reports to John thus:

Jean: *[A news report from Njanga Tribune]*

Njanga Land has a little crisis. But the very foundation of the nation remains untouched under the skilful and most experienced leadership of the humanist, God-sent and all-wise leader of Njanga Land to whom we as citizens of Njanga Land unanimously extend our humble motion of support.

Jean: You get that?

[*The Njanga Sunday Herald*]

Reports reaching us say that more and more children are being initiated and trained to handle AK47s to fight government forces in Njanga Land. This report, according to Human Right Look, is very disturbing.

John: That is not all.

[*Njanga Mutates.*]

More than 600.000 people from western Njanga Land have fled their homes to neighbouring Emeka Land. This is because of the ongoing fighting between government forces and separatists in Njanga Land.

[*Government Voice*]

We are going to silence and neutralise those who want to destabilise our great nation. We, however, continue to dialogue with their elites and people of good will to seek solutions.

[*Western Njanga Voice*]

We will die to the last person for the restoration of our land. Colonialism and annexation we shall fight. Our struggle is a moral one and God is on our side. (*Symphonic Shades*, pp. 47-8)

An assessment of the different newspaper reports by *Njanga Tribune*, *The Njanga Sunday Herald*, *Njanga Mutates*, *Government Voice* and *Western Njanga Voice* added to those over WhatsApp, Twitter and Facebook reveal not only the dehumanising consequences of the crisis, but also the different propagandist talks by architects on both sides of the conflict. Information technology which is supposed to be used to edify people on the ills of war is instead used by many to communicate rebellious feelings in the citizens especially through hate speech.

Consequently, the balkanisation of Western Njanga Land affects university pedagogy adversely because the general lockdown due to COVID-19 only comes to add to the sporadic lockdowns imposed by separatist fighters since the start of the crisis. Added to the massive exodus due to the war, many families are separated especially those whose members belong to the army and other security services like Professor Emelie. She is married to a military officer and has been living happily with her husband on till the start of the political crises when he is transferred as Professor Lim tells Bentley in a WhatsApp message:

Bentley: Is she married?

Lim: Yes, her husband works out of town. May come back during the weekends.

She used to be quite gone with him, except of recent when he was appointed and transferred to the restive town of Amenda. (*Also on Campus*, p. 22)

Professor Emelie is a lecturer in the University of Ewanda and a good friend to Professor Lim. Many female students like Bentley see her as a role model and inspiration because of her intelligence, charisma and crusade to encourage and empower female students to attain higher heights in academics especially as many come from patriarchal societies. Her crusade for the rights of women in higher education can be attributed to Nana (2010, p. 121) whose argument especially about post-colonial societies states that:

The insertion of women's experiences in postcolonialism may be a feminist act,

but only to an extent [...]. Linked to the Women's Liberation Movement, its political agenda is premised on a belief in the political, social, legal and sexual equality of women and in their ability to achieve their full potential. In its very beginning, feminism sought to create a homogenous women's standpoint that had its basis in commonly held epistemology about women. There was the assumption that women shared a common history of patriarchal oppression through the political economy of the material conditions of sexuality and reproduction that even where these conditions varied, the knowledge through which women responded to their common oppressions remained uniform.

According to Nana, postcolonialism has opened up perspectives on domination and power, and made it possible to communicate women's capacity to excel and perform masculinity. The most significant impact that feminism has made on postcolonialism, however, can be seen in the vigorous debates between feminism and black feminism and between feminism and womanism.

Professor Emelie's husband is a military officer sent to Amenda because of the political unrest and lockdown of the town by separatist fighters. She, like many other families is afraid because of the killings of military men in the region whose gruesome images are usually circulated online by the terrorist groups to boast their prowess and this fear affects her intellectual output in the university. In those parts of the region like Amenda and Jova, beside the lockdown imposed by separatists, several social amenities like electricity supply, internet connection, schools, churches, hospitals, etc. are destroyed or sabotaged by resistant groups which plunges entire communities in difficulties as Bentley informs Lim in an e-mail letter:

It is no secret that the people of Jova have been living in confinement even before the Corona Virus outbreak, due to the armed conflict in the area. You can imagine how bad it is now. To compound it all, power shortages have been rampant these past few weeks. Imagine being forced to stay indoors all day without power. The silence gets so loud; one can actually feel the continents drifting. During the day, such eerie silence favours very elongated naps. Everyone is on the edge and instantly gets apprehensive when there's a knock at the door. When night-time finally comes, you stay in bed wide awake to the sound of gunshots. All our neighbours fled a very long time ago, and so now, ghosts really walk the streets. What a life! (*Also on Campus*, p. 56)

The situation of the crisis in Amenda and Jova is so preoccupying to the state because of the online images showing massive killings, destruction of state and private-owned properties which hamper mass communication and living together. The towns are deserted and the constant gunshots and uncertainty prevent the smooth functioning of the universities. Several attempts by the government at restoring some of these social amenities fail because these separatist groups keep multiplying in size and number and the different sporadic attacks and kidnappings for huge ransom scare many citizens. This accounts for the mass exodus from the Western parts of Njanga Land. Consequently, even the online classes become a problem for students and teachers as Professor Lim in his e-mail to Bentley explains:

For a system where schooling meant sitting in a classroom and listening to a professor give lectures, many students are totally lost in the present circumstances. I talked to some yesterday who are not visiting the Online Platform, and don't know how much work awaits them there. True, some lecturers are having challenges getting their courses ready online, but most have. There is no losing of the academic year. (*Also on Campus*, p. 159)

With the constant power failure, internet cuts and rising insecurity, university pedagogy is almost grounded in the warring regions as the slogan “No Public Schools” communicated by separatist rebels makes university lecturers and students targets for the armed groups for killing or kidnapping for ransom.

Communicating National Unity Through University Pedagogy

The introduction of information technology as new methods of teaching in universities in Njanga Land during the COVID-19 pandemic and the political crisis has revolutionised university pedagogy as can be read in *Also on Campus* and *Symphonic Shades*. To these authors, the nature of university pedagogy should be based on the principle of unity in diversity. As a country considered a conglomeration of heterogeneous people, teachers as well as students should treat each other as citizens of the world without referring to political, ethnic, race or religious identities to define them. Such calibre of lecturers should serve as inspiration for national unity as Ngong Toh describes:

Professor is a woman and is generally called Prof. [...]. She is full of morale with a characteristic inclination to Christian values. She is very principled and commands respect among her students. Her ethnic identity is not known and this is atypical of Njanga Land, where people use where they come from to favour or tear down others. She treats all with respect and honours the human being. She is a great humanist to the core. No one can tell if she is from the East or West Njanga Land. Her conscious accent and boundless mastery of English and French languages makes it difficult to speculate where she comes from. (*Symphonic Shades*, p. 4)

From the same charismatic and inspirational perspective, Professor Emelie is described in the WhatsApp messages below:

Bentley: She’s got her work cut out for her. She is a nice person, though. She carries herself with a lot of nyanga. I like her.

Lim: She is one of the rare female professors in her domain. She’s got both a head and a body. (*Also on Campus*, p. 23)

It is important to note from the portraits of the two female professors that they are bilingual and devoted to their jobs and care about the wellbeing of their students. As such, they are embodiments of national unity which should be the backbone of intellectualism as communicated in the university.

Given that Njanga Land is a bilingual country, the strength of universities in the country is their bilingual nature, training students from different ethnic groups to freely interact and socialise in all the four corners of the country. This ties with the government’s policy of promoting bilingualism and multiculturalism which is why many opportunities come to Njanga Landers that are fluent and can communicate in English and French both in the country and abroad. For effective communication, she needs a bilingual degree as she explains in another WhatsApp message:

Bentley: Really, my boss is very progressive and supportive.
I do a lot of work online, though.

Lim: Even with that, the guy is good.

Bentley: He is banking a lot on my English/French bilingual degree. As soon as I am done, we open the company in French-speaking West African countries. (*Also on Campus*, p. 6)

As a student, Bentley also works as a communicator for a travel agency that books flights and trains airport staff and hostesses. For efficient mass communication, she needs a bilingual degree to successfully handle customers who speak either of the two languages. The pedagogy in the Bilingual University of Ewanda trains her to excel in the two languages and it's good for her career because her boss plans to expand his business to French West Africa. The importance of such bilingual citizenship is highlighted by Anderson (2006, p. 140) when he says:

As bilingual intelligentsias, however, and above all as early-twentieth-century intelligentsias, they had access, inside the classroom and outside, to models of nation, nation-ness, and nationalism distilled from the turbulent, chaotic experiences of more than a century of American and European history. These models, in turn, helped to give shape to a thousand inchoate dreams. In varying combinations, the lessons of creole, vernacular and official nationalism were copied, adapted, and improved upon. Finally, as with increasing speed capitalism transformed the means of physical and intellectual communication, the intelligentsias found ways to bypass print in propagating the imagined community, not merely to illiterate masses, but even to literate masses reading different languages.

That is why to improve on her bilingualism and to be more performant, Bentley takes online courses in IOSE Tuition-free Online University as advised by Professor Lim in order to gain more knowledge and use of information technology with regard to her future job as public relations officer. This explains why bilingual nature of Njanga Land universities can be summarised through the pedagogy of "twoness". This philosophy of unity in diversity is what Ngong Toh describes as the concept of "TWONESS" through the lectures of Professor to her students:

Prof: There are many naïve people in this country and on this campus. There are many feeding rich on your fights on both sides of the divide. I belong to both sides and it is not cowardice my dear young woman. My twoness makes me as an Easterner and a Westerner. I see all of you as children of this beloved country longing for a future that no one has the right to deprive you of. My task as a Christian, an intellectual and an activist is to bring twoness to Njanga Land, where all people are born free, equal before our laws and guided by the fear of God and human dignity; where we share love and the ideals of what brings us together and respect our difference; where we mix cultures and not melt them cultures; where tribal and regional balance is not allowed to flourish; where justice lives and reigns, my children. (*Symphonic Shades*, p. 27)

Her lecture which focuses on "twoness" is inspired by the rhetoric of politicians like WEB Du Bois, Martin Luther King, Bob Marley, Bernard Fonlon, Nelson Mandela, Thomas Sankara, Patrick Lumumba, John Fru Ndi and writers like Derek Walcott, Wole Soyinka, Chinua Achebe, Bate Bisong etc., who all clamour for the unity of the human race even at the expense of their lives. Their ideologies are solid foundations on which countries are built. This lecture communicates unity in Njanga Land and the ambassadors of this message are the university students because they are the leaders of tomorrow. That's why at the end of the lecture, the students realise the need for setting aside their multi-cultural and political differences and love each other for the betterment of their university and country as they say:

Jean: Let us love and build this university and make it
ours; Let us love and build this country and make
it ours; Let us love and recognise our past,
A past that we should be proud of and not
Run away from.

John: I belong to two identities.
That is my strength;
The strength of our university,
The strength of Njanga Land;
The hope of the world
The treasure of justice and peace.

Christina: Away the spirit of
marginalisation, Away the language
of supremacy, Away the demon of
arrogance,
Away the annexation of a people, We accept to integrate nationally, We accept to
live together,
With all feeling as one and happy. (*Symphonic Shades*, p. 38-40)

With such pedagogy in the University of Njanga Land, these students are oriented to think and carry out research that communicates peace building and national unity. This is because the different crises in Njanga Land have become good themes to write about in their long essays, dissertations and theses as is the case with Fatima's long essay when she tells her friends about her encounter with her supervisor:

Fatima: He gave me a research design which was not regime-like. Even though I
have no problem with any regime-like idea if it will genuinely resolve this
crisis and stop people from dying. The research design is more of Prof's
idea of twoness. My mind went to Butake's *Family Saga*. I am opting to
be a peace crusader in Njanga Land.

John: I agree with you. The war has to stop. People need to live as free men. I
think we should go and see Prof and seek some advice since we all want to
be peace crusaders. The blood flow must stop. (*Symphonic Shades*, p. 51-
52)

With such dissertations defended, they edify future generations reading about the different crises in the country. University pedagogy encourages students to work on current and innovative issues in their societies and a dissertation on crises resolution and living together is a celebration of how the English language is important in communicating unity in diversity. Ashcroft (2001, p. 10) equally examines the importance of the English language and culture in post-colonial societies and explains:

Clearly, the prestige of English goes hand in hand with a particular view of
culture
- a particular form of culturalism. This is one, as Raymond Williams elaborates,
in which 'culture' is regarded as 'art' rather than a 'way of life'. So, as a form of
cultural studies, the discipline of English, the repository of civilised and
universal values, depends heavily on the interpretation of 'culture' and value
which Arnold formulated. However, the force and tenacity of Arnold's influence
lies in the fact that he created a vocabulary of criticism which entered the

language and even today manages to take a firm hold of cultural discourse.

To Ashcroft just like to Ngong's Prof, the post-colonial cultural studies tend to recognise the way in which intellectual endeavour orientates state power by suggesting political efficiency from the perspective of contemporary cultural studies. The post-colonial intellectual like Prof must perform a self-conscious reflection upon their own conditions of production. It is for this reason that the Njanga Land government appoints to positions of authority in the universities people whose moral integrity can serve as an inspiration to both students and parents. This is justified with the appointment of Prof as Vice Chancellor of the university and whose welcome speech during the convocation and graduation ceremony displays the move towards national unity as she pronounces:

Ladies and gentlemen, we have the task of making our communities and the world a better place for ourselves and children and generations to come. Let greed and selfishness that has misled Njanga Land for these years never be our guiding principle again. Today we are at war with ourselves; we say abominable things about ourselves; we torture and kill one another. Is that a good legacy? I encourage us to forgive one another and look ahead to a better community, university and country. (*Also on Campus*, p. 54-55)

Such a unity speech from the new Vice Chancellor clearly communicates what university pedagogy in Njanga Land should advocate especially because of the bilingual nature of the students who come from multicultural backgrounds. This is the premise from which Cardinal John Henry Newman looked at university pedagogy, its graduates and lecturers as Fonlon (2013, p.15) further highlights:

I fervently endorse Newman's thesis that the university should open its doors only to those who come in search of wisdom; that to offer this wisdom, in all its dimensions, the university should seek to acquire, to develop, and to possess, in fullness, the True, the Good, and the Beautiful and the Sublime in substantial being, should strive to explore all departments of knowledge, should exhibit all diversities of Intellectual Power, should enthrone Science, Philosophy and Taste as a royal court, should recognise no Sovereignty but that of Mind, no Nobility but that of Genius; in other words, in order to promote these exalted aims, it should make perennial war against mindlessness, against mediocrity and ineptitude, against whatever smacks of the shoddy, should all have no room whatsoever within its domain to intrigue and expediency.

Fonlon's perspective of unity is enshrined in the principles of peace, work and fatherland which can be achieved if university pedagogy trains students to respect everyone, regardless of racial, tribal, religious and cultural differences. It becomes clear that the postcolonial problematic remains relevant in many Commonwealth countries including Njanga Land stretching far beyond its initial disciplinary heartland in Anglophone literature. Hargreaves and Murphy (2008, p. 224) celebrate the Anglophone heartland and posit that "it is equally clear that theoretical models conceived in that heartland cannot be imported into other regions in a mechanical, one-size-fits-all fashion." Therefore, in trying to dilute this cultural paradigm through miscommunication, Eastern Njanga Landers have opened a Pandora box leading to massive killings of humans and material losses are broadcast every day in Western Njanga Land over WhatsApp, Facebook, Twitter, Google, online and print Newspaper outlets.

Conclusion

The political crisis, the Corona virus and the general lockdown mark a turning point in the history of Njanga Land especially because the resilience of the government and citizens are put to test. Through *Also on Campus* and *Symphonic Shades* by Ernest Veyu, Daisy Barro and Kelvin Ngong Toh, this paper has interrogated the

adaptability of new information technology and mass communication in state universities. The introduction of WhatsApp, Facebook, Twitter, Google, online and print Newspaper outlets in the didactic process in universities have ameliorated university pedagogy, the teacher-student relationship and continues to contribute enormously in conflict resolution and prevention in Njanga Land. While satirising the abuse of information technology by communicating hate speech and greedy political agendas, this paper proposes that the very pillars of national unity like bilingualism and multiculturalism remain vital in university pedagogy because these values carve a niche for Njanga Landers to think and behave like citizens of the world. It is from this new ideological frame that communicating unity and nation building will be attained.

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